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Recorder

March 11, 2021

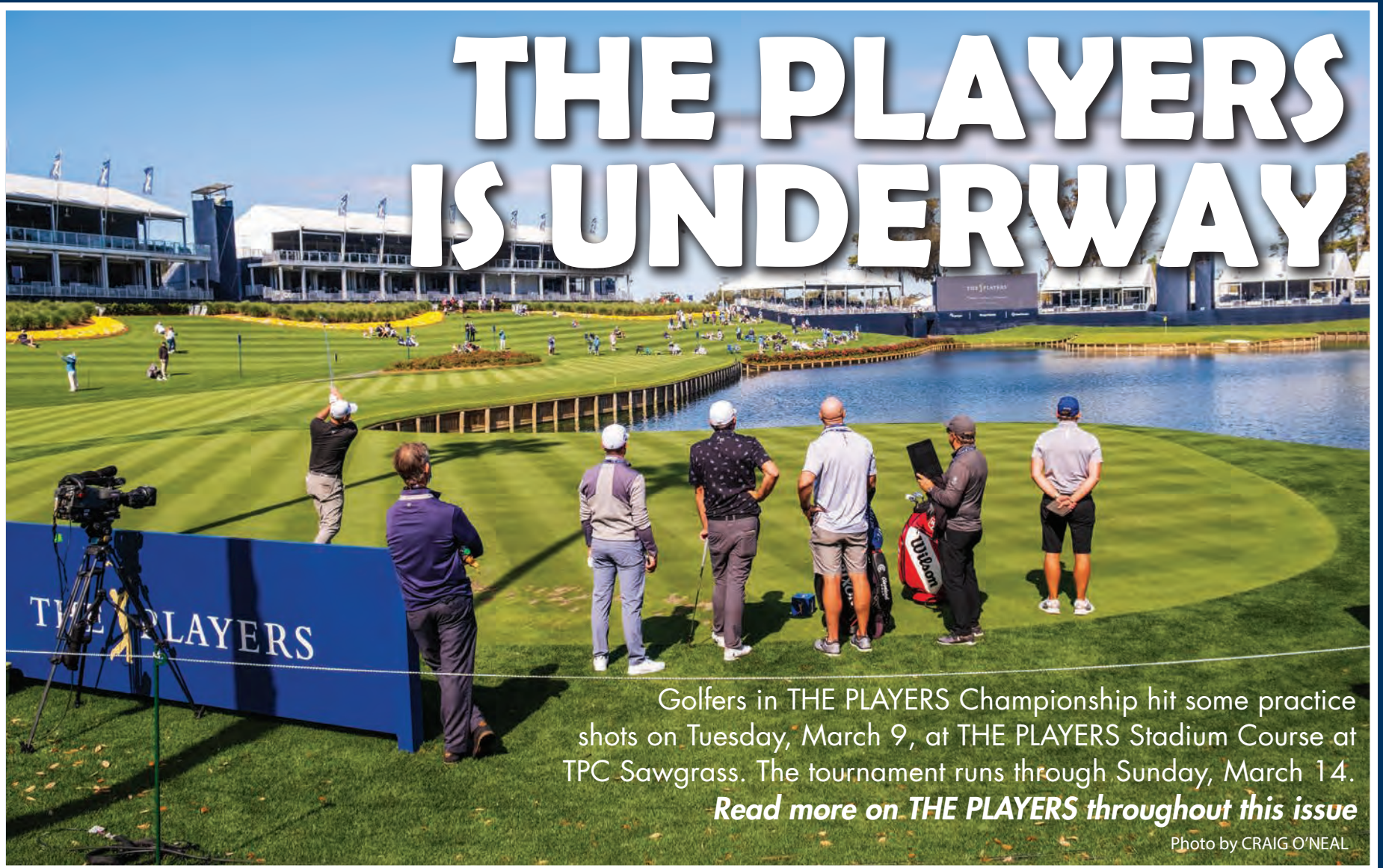
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75 cents

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PonteVedraRecorder.com

THE PLAYERS IS UNDERWAY



Golfers in THE PLAYERS Championship hit some practice shots on Tuesday, March 9, at THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass. The tournament runs through Sunday, March 14.

Read more on THE PLAYERS throughout this issue

Photo by CRAIG O'NEAL

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THE PLAYERS hosts health equity forum with expert panel, **page 5**

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INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

The Recorder's Entertainment EXTRA featuring TV listings, streaming information, puzzles and more!



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Sports
Pages 41-45



LOTUS INCENTIVE PROGRAM



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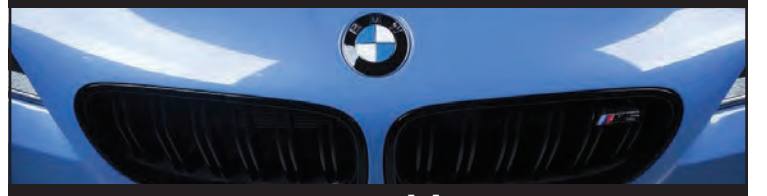
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Send us your news

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

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

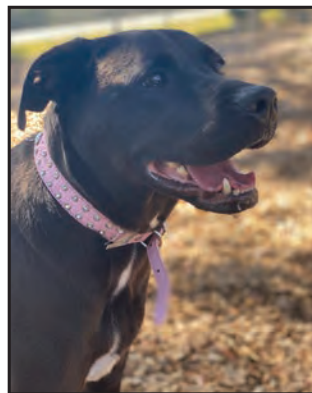
NOTE TO READERS

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. 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

St. Johns County is now accepting COVID-19 vaccination appointment preregistrations for persons who are 60 years of age and older. In addition, persons deemed by a physician to be extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 may also receive the vaccination through St. Johns County with a Florida Department of Health COVID-19 Determination of Extreme Vulnerability form signed by a physician. Qualifying individuals

who are interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine may preregister for an appointment by visiting 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

BRIEFS continues on Page 3

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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A	E	O	N		G	A	L	E	S	M	E	A	R					
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6	7	4	3	8	5	2	9	1
9	1	8	2	6	4	7	3	5
5	3	2	9	7	1	4	8	6
7	2	5	8	4	3	6	1	9
8	4	6	1	9	2	5	7	3
3	9	1	7	5	6	8	2	4

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

CALLING ALL EXPLORERS

Spring Zoo Camp registration now open!



Register today at jacksonvillezoo.org



Briefs

Continued from 2

60 years of age, proof of employment as a K-12 school employee who is 50 years of age and older, a sworn law enforcement

officer who is 50 years of age and older, a firefighter who is 50 years of age and older, a healthcare provider with direct patient contact, or a Florida Department of Health COVID-19 Determination of Extreme Vulnerability form signed by a physician. 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.

Johns County residents, or approximately 22% of the total population, have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

St. Johns County vaccination program recognized statewide

Gov. Ron DeSantis recognized St. Johns County for having the highest senior population vaccination rate in the State. As of March 4, St. Johns County has administered more than 40,000 COVID-19 vaccines at the Solomon Calhoun Community Center COVID-19 vaccination site. Approximately 79% of the more than 55,000 St. Johns County residents who are 65 years of age or older have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, more than 59,000 St.

Spyglass Beach Walkover temporary closure

The Spyglass public access beach walkover, 8202 A1A S., will be closed beginning March 15 to rebuild the steps damaged during Hurricane Dorian. The project is scheduled to be complete in three weeks, and access to the walkover and parking area will be restricted during construction. For a complete list of St. Johns County beach access points, visit www.sjcfcl.us/Beaches/Access. For more information, call Beach Services at (904) 209-0331 or follow @SJCBeaches on Facebook.



Jeff Hart Memorial Service Above Self Scholarship
Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Palm Valley

One \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded to the top applicant from Ponte Vera and Allen D. Nease High Schools.

Applicants must be:

- Involved in community service/volunteer work
- A junior or senior at Ponte Vedra or Allen D. Nease H.S.
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125th Fighter Wing conducts annual flyover to honor and celebrate military

By Shaun Ryan

Health and safety protocols may have forced the suspension of the Military Appreciation Day ceremony this year at THE PLAYERS Championship, but one annual tradition was upheld Tuesday.

At noon, four F-15 Eagles from the 125th Fighter Wing/FLANG roared across the sky over the clubhouse at TPC Sawgrass, the No. 18 fairway and the iconic No. 17 hole.

Minutes later, the jets flew over Naval Air Station Jacksonville, the St. John River and finally downtown Jacksonville, afterwards landing at Jacksonville International Airport. Prior to their arrival at TPC Sawgrass, the 125th Fighter Wing flew over Naval Air Station Mayport.

“The 125th Fighter Wing, Home of the Thunder, is extremely proud to perform the flyover for Military Appreciation Day in honor of our fellow service members and community of supporters,” said Col. Matthew J. French, commander. “This year’s flyover will be even more meaningful as it’s an opportunity to show our gratitude to all of our Florida National Guardsmen, first responders and medical providers that are serving locally at COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites, bringing peace and calm to our families, friends and neighbors throughout Jacksonville and across this great state.”

In fact, the 125th Fighter Wing played a crucial role in the state’s response to COVID-19 over the past year.

Since March 2020, more than 580 125th Fighter Wing airmen have been on duty at community-based testing sites, assisted living facilities, airports and food banks providing support. They have assisted with testing, screening, food distribution and traffic control.

Currently, 100 personnel have been activated across the state.

In reference to those serving at the



Photos by Craig O'Neal

A veteran walks the grounds at TPC Sawgrass during Military Appreciation Day.

testing and vaccination sites, French called the flyover “a small demonstration of a huge appreciation we have for their selfless service and steadfast resolve to support us all in these most trying times.”

More than 1,600 citizen-airmen are assigned to 25 units within the 125th Fighter Wing. It operates across seven geographically separated locations.

In addition to its F-15 air superiority mission, citizen-airmen provide experienced CV-22 operations and maintenance support to Air Force Special Operations Command missions from Hurlburt Field, operate counter-space systems at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, provide joint force-communications from MacDill Air Force Base and deliver rapid engineer, heavy construction, repair capability and combat weather forecasting from Camp Blanding Joint Training Center.



ABOVE: Four F-15 Eagles from the 125th Fighter Wing/FLANG fly over THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass on Tuesday, March 8.

LEFT: Military service members take part in the festivities during it THE PLAYERS' annual Military Appreciation Day.

THE PLAYERS to host essential workers and leaders serving community during pandemic

Complimentary tickets provided to organizations to share with personnel

Although fewer tickets are available to THE PLAYERS Championship 2021, it did not stop the PGA TOUR’s flagship event in committing tickets for essential workers and leaders serving the Northeast Florida community during the pandemic.

From Thursday, March 11, through Sunday, March 14, these community members will have access to hospitality venues on the famous Island Green 17th hole.

“After everything that these essential workers have gone through over the last year, collaborating with our Proud

Partners to provide these heroes with access to the tournament is the very least we could do,” said Jared Rice, executive director of THE PLAYERS. “We have a responsibility to honor and recognize their selflessness as well as the many sacrifices they have made, and are continuing to make, during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are honored to give them a special experience at this year’s championship.”

THE PLAYERS, Optum host discussion on health equity in Northeast Florida

Health care leaders address root causes, propose solutions for disparities

By Shaun Ryan

In two Jacksonville ZIP codes five minutes apart — 32209 and 32207 — life expectancy differs by 15 years.

In an effort to address the root causes of disparity in health outcomes — not just in that part of Jacksonville but everywhere — a panel of five experts gathered Friday, March 5, at TPC Sawgrass for a virtual discussion accessible to the public via Zoom.

“Place Matters: Understanding Conditions that Influence Health” was hosted by THE PLAYERS and its Proud Partner, Optum.

Charles Griggs, a board member for 100 Black Men of America, a men’s service organization with a focus on mentoring, was the moderator for the discussion, which began by looking at health disparities between Northeast Florida counties.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, St. Johns County ranks first in the state for quality health outcomes. By comparison, Clay ranked 27th, Nassau 33rd, Duval 45th and Baker 49th.

Dr. Leon Haley Jr., UF Health CEO, broke down the outcomes into two elements: length of life and quality of life. The latter related directly to the discussion topic as this was the realm in which disparities could be identified and solutions proposed.



Photo by Susan Girffin

Charles Griggs (far left) moderates a health equity panel discussion as health care experts Michael Currie (from left), Dr. Leon Haley Jr., Dr. Lauren Husband, Megan Denk and David Garfunkel weigh in on the reasons for, and possible solutions to, health care disparities in Northeast Florida during a live-stream event hosted by THE PLAYERS Championship on Friday, March 5, at TPC Sawgrass.

One of the central issues was the relationship between health and social determinants, such as education, employment, housing, transportation and infrastructure.

“If you’re food insecure, and you don’t know where your next meal is going to come from, everything else is null and void,” said Dr. Lauren Husband, director of public policy and community engagement for Feeding Northeast Florida.

She said that in 2020, her organization provided 55 million pounds of food to those in need. To move people away from food lines and toward a more desirable outcome, she suggested the creation of community-based, nonprofit grocery stores.

That’s because many live in areas considered “food deserts” where there are no groceries nearby. The reason for this is

that small communities cannot financially sustain a supermarket.

“Take out the ‘super,’ and just concentrate on the market,” Husband said. “We need to have a market that that community, based on income level, will be able to support.”

A major factor in health outcomes, as

HEALTH continues on Page 15

PGA TOUR player Billy Horschel hosts campaign for Feeding Northeast Florida; invites others to join him in fighting hunger



Recorder file photo

Billy Horschel is hosting the #DriveOutHunger campaign benefitting Feeding Northeast Florida through Sunday, March 14.

By Shaun Ryan

THE PLAYERS Championship is back and so is a campaign by one of the PGA TOUR’s top golfers to fight hunger in the region.

Once again, five-time PGA TOUR winner, 2014 FedExCup champion and Ponte Vedra Beach resident Billy Horschel is hosting his #DriveOutHunger campaign for Feeding Northeast Florida (FENEFL).

The nonprofit provides healthy food and critical resources to those struggling with food insecurity across eight regional counties.

Horschel will donate \$1,000 for every birdie and \$5,000 for every eagle he makes during THE PLAYERS to Feeding Northeast Florida. He is also encouraging

CHARITIES OF THE DAY

Read more about Feeding Northeast Florida and other Charities of the Day THE PLAYERS Championship is supporting. Pages 12-15

fans, supporters, friends and sponsors to do their part by going to www.feedingnefl.networkforgood.com/projects, choosing “Billy Horschel’s #DriveOutHunger Campaign” and selecting the desired donation amount.

Supporters can also go directly to the donation site at <https://feedingnefl.networkforgood.com/projects/13210-billy-horschel-tpc-challenge>.

2021 marks the campaign’s seventh year.

“Brittany and I got involved with the

food bank after we had our first daughter, Skyler,” said Horschel by email. “It became more clear to us how important it is to put food on the table for children. Food insecurity is not just an issue for the homeless, but for hard working families who often work two or three jobs to make ends meet. Families who have to choose to pay the electric bill or buy groceries. To be able to help make a difference means a lot to us.”

He said a single dollar will provide six meals at the community food bank.

“It doesn’t take a lot of money to make a big difference,” he added.

Each day in Northeast Florida an estimated 326,000 live with food insecurity,

HORSCHEL continues on Page 15

Nancy Nichols of Atlantic Beach chairs the gallery management committee for THE PLAYERS Championship. She has been volunteering with the tournament since 1976.

Nancy Nichols

As told to Shaun Ryan

How did you first become involved with THE PLAYERS?

I was involved in the National Association of Insurance Women. We worked closely with a lot of the insurance agencies in town, and one of those agencies was Haynes, Peters & Bond.

Hank Haynes later became one of the volunteer tournament chairmen. Hank asked me and other people to come out and help him — he was over commissary that year.

So, there was a group of us that went out and helped run the commissary committee. It was a different vendor than we have today. So, Kiwanis might have had a hot dog and hamburger stand and then Rotary might have had something. Those types of things.

My older brother had volunteered for a number of years, even all the way back to when it was the GJO. So, I was aware of it, and what it lent to the community and all of Northeast Florida, actually, and the charities and that whole aspect of it.

But, that was my first year out there, working with Hank Haynes on the commissary committee.

What committees have you been involved with?

I went from commissary to the patrons committee. There was a bank here in town called Atlantic National Bank, and Al Sinclair was president. The bank sponsored the patrons at that time; it had a tent located off the green on No. 9.

We would go out and pick up patrons when they came and parked in the club parking lot. We had food, and they had some bars and a TV set. We had a telephone in there — back before the days of cell phones. It was just basically a chalet-type tent for patrons.

I did that for a few years. Then I moved over to marshal committee, and I've been on marshal committee in some form or another since then.

This year, it got changed to gallery management. The name is more reflective of the duties of the committee.

What do you do on the committee?

I have been chairman of the committee for the past four years.

I started out as a hole marshal, and hole marshals are the folks that stand out there and put their hands up and tell people to be quiet, man the ropes and kind of help spot balls and whatever else needs to happen out there around the hole.

Then, after a number of years being a hole marshal, I was asked to become a hole captain. My first hole that I was captain on was hole No. 5. I did that for a number of years, and then I was asked to become what at that time we called majors, but now they're called coordinators. As a coordinator, you manage three holes.

This year, we have 451 volunteers for that committee — in years past, it's been about 700 — and you can't just have a chairman. You know, you're trying to manage 700 people. That's impossible. Or it would not be very well run.

So, there's sort of an internal hierarchy. You've got the individual on the hole. You've got captain, and then you've got a major or coordinator. Then you have assistant chairs: one over the front nine and one over the back nine.

I also have a third assistant chair who is over our personal headquarters area. And then I'm the chairman of the committee.



Photo provided by Nancy Nichols

How has COVID affected what you do?

Last year, we had to shut the whole thing down on Thursday. And this year has been interesting for everybody, because of the challenges with trying to put on a tournament the size of THE PLAYERS and reintroducing gallery — even though it's a much lesser number of gallery spectators.

So, everybody will wear a mask, including spectators. You'd be wearing them the entire time you're there during your volunteer shift, and there are sanitation stations around.

The gallery management volunteer stands right there by the ropes. They're stationed all around the hole. And when it's necessary — let's say the player's ball came over and was resting just a foot or two from the rope and you want to try to maintain at least six feet — they're going to be asking people to step back.

Tell me about your volunteers.

Over 45 years, obviously, there have been some wonderful times and great experiences meeting amazing people from our local community and people that come in from all over the United States. We have a lady that lives in California, and she comes every year to volunteer and be a hole captain. And we have people come down from Canada. I have one gentleman, he lives in Scotland; he's been coming over here for years and years volunteering. And he's bummed out because he can't come this year.

Do your volunteers interact with the players?

I've always tried to impress this on all the volunteers in this particular committee: the players, although they're wonderful, nice people, they're at work. So, they're not going to walk over and joke with you and tell you stories. So, while there are times when you have some interaction with players, it's kind of rare.



Photos provided by The Bolles School



Bolles PVB Campus 2nd graders stage drive-through wax museum

Second graders on the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus sharpened and shared their public speaking competencies at the school’s annual second-grade Wax Museum on March 4.

This year’s presentation was a little different than years past, but the “drive-through” visitor experience proved to be a wonderful enhancement to the event. Typically held onstage indoors, the 2021 Wax Museum was relocated to the carpool drop-off sidewalks where parents and other guests enjoyed a mobile tour of the exhibition.

The showcase demonstrated students’ grasp of research material and their ability to present it. Preparation for the annual Grade 2 Wax Museum event requires significant research and presentation skills of students, who spend weeks beforehand studying historic luminaries and readying accurate portrayals.

The event is a rite of passage for students on the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus. After selecting their historical figure, students began learning key facts about their characters — from their childhood interests to their biggest achievements in life. In art

class, they painted portraits of their subjects. In the final weeks, students considered how they might portray their characters onstage — writing scripts and developing costumes and props that would best tell their story in a performance setting. This year’s event also includes a pre-recorded video production.

Some of the characters included Abraham Lincoln, Beethoven and Sacagawea among many others. About 25 second-grade students practiced the art of public speaking by sharing their historical findings with confidence and presence.



Atlantic Beach Retreat

Ideally located in Atlantic Beach, this 3-story townhome is only two blocks away from the ocean, as well as the Beaches Town Center. Enjoy the home’s rooftop deck or the easily maintained backyard oasis complete with a 6-ft. privacy fence, covered patio, and relaxing hot tub.

3 bedrooms, 2 F/2H bathrooms \$810,000



Pristine Craftsmanship on Ponte Vedra Blvd.

Thoughtfully designed and showcasing exquisite craftsmanship throughout, this custom coastal home offers master suites on both floors, along with an office, loft area, ample storage and a flex space ideal for a 5th bedroom.

4 bedrooms, 5.5 bathrooms \$2,150,000



Stunning Riverfront Estate

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

5 bedroom, 6 full bath, 5 half bath \$5,995,000



Well Appointed Sawgrass Country Club Patio Home

This patio home was fully renovated in 2020 with waterfront views and southeastern exposure. Impeccable attention to detail in interior design includes Master BR/BA both upstairs and down, and fully heated and cooled detached 2 car garage. Lush landscaping, courtyard entry and outdoor lighting are the finishing touches. **3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms + office. \$1,595,000**



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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.

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 and click on the "Nominate a Local Hero" link on the home page.

The deadline for submission of nomi-



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

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
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!***



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Southeastern Grocers increases COVID-19 vaccination locations, expands eligibility groups

Southeastern Grocers, Inc., parent company and home of Fresco y Más, Harveys Supermarket and Winn-Dixie grocery stores, in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is now offering an additional 5,900 free Moderna vaccines in 124 store locations, while supplies last.

This expansion now includes appointments for newly eligible groups such as daycare workers, preschool teachers and educators in elementary, middle and high schools to be vaccinated with no age limit, in accordance with new Federal Retail Pharmacy Program guidelines. In addition, Fresco y Más, Harveys Supermarket and Winn-Dixie stores will also administer vaccinations to persons under the age of 65 deemed medically vulnerable by a physician, in accordance with the recent execu-

ST. JOHNS COUNTY LOCATIONS
Winn-Dixie Store No. 2: 2220 County Rd. 210 W., Ste. 200, Jacksonville, FL 32259
Winn-Dixie Store No. 5: 290 Solana Rd., Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082 (new)
Winn-Dixie Store No. 182: 3551 N. Ponce de Leon Blvd., St. Augustine, FL 32084 (new)

tive order by the state of Florida. As a preferred retail partner in the fight against COVID-19, the grocer will also continue to offer free vaccines to health care workers, residents and staff of long-term care facilities and adults ages 65 and older in accordance with the Florida health authority guidelines, as available.

The grocer has also expanded vaccine allocations to 55 new store locations and 11 additional Florida counties, including Broward, Columbia, DeSoto, Flagler, Jefferson, Lee, Osceola, Palm Beach, Seminole, Suwannee and Walton, in efforts to reach even more underserved communities. The 55 new stores are in addition to the 69 loca-

tions that are currently administering the vaccines throughout the state of Florida.

All qualified individuals are encouraged to go to www.frescoymas.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine, www.harveysupermarkets.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine and www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine for timely updates including vaccine availability details, participating store locations and to schedule an appointment online, as available. The vaccines are free, with or without insurance and appointments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. Those with health insurance must provide their health insurance card during their scheduled appointment, and those with-

out insurance will need to present a valid driver's license or social security card.

While making their appointment, educators will need to follow the prompts in the online scheduler to attest to their eligibility. Medically vulnerable individuals under the age of 65 will need to present the FDOH form for physicians to certify that they are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 and eligible to receive the vaccine. A link to the form can be found on the online scheduler website for easy reference and use.

As future vaccine allocation continues to be determined and prioritized by the state of Florida, HHS and the CDC, SEG has robust plans in place to administer additional free vaccines directly to the front line at all in-store pharmacies. SEG strives to be a trusted health resource to the communities it serves and operates 231 in-store pharmacies throughout the Southeast, including 159 pharmacies within the state of Florida.

OBITUARIES

Kay Slayden

Kay Slayden was born in Lyons, Ga., on December 1, 1934, to parents Herbert and



Kay Slayden

Marion Slayden. He was married to wife Nancy, who pre-deceased him, for 64 years. He is survived by two sons, Kevin and Steve, daughters-in-law Nancy and Tiffany, brother Herbert, sisters Martha and Janice, and seven grandchildren (Kevin, Jr., Spenser, Stewart, Sophie, Lucas, Lila, and Stephen).

Kay led an admirable life as a star athlete, a wonderful husband and father, and distinguished businessman. He earned All State honors in football, basketball, and baseball while in high school in Columbus, Ga., and started at center for 4 years on the Auburn University basketball team.

Following military service as an Air Force officer in Korea, Kay worked as an engineer in the 1960's space program and

race to reach the moon. He went on to serve as CEO of the Fortune 500 conglomerate Fuqua Industries. Later in his career, PGA Tour Commissioner Deane Beman asked Kay to start the Tour's highly successful marketing division.

Golf was a central feature of Kay's life. He taught both sons to play, with Kevin playing at Princeton University and Steve qualifying for multiple USGA championships after two years as a QB in the NFL. His golf legacy continues with his 4 grandchildren in Ponte Vedra who all play well (Kevin, Jr., Spenser, and Stewart all earning college golf scholarships and Lucas a highly ranked junior).

Despite Kay's many accomplishments, we will remember him most as a caring husband, father, brother, and grandfather.

A celebration of Kay and Nancy's life will be held at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra this summer.

Nasuf Hatibov

Nasuf Hatibov, 90, of Ponte Vedra,

Florida, died March 5, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Mahendrakumar Kantilal Jarecha

Mahendrakumar Kantilal Jarecha, 71, of Saint Johns, Florida, died March 4, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, (904) 249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com

Mary Jane Marino

Mary Jane Marino, 85, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died March 4, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. (904) 249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Brian Woodard

Brian Woodard, 40, of Neptune Beach, Florida, died March 2, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

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SPECTRUM
REALTY

THE PLAYERS assists Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation efforts to provide health care to vulnerable populations

By Shaun Ryan

THE PLAYERS Championship continues to support the community this week by shining the spotlight on a local charity each day.

The Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation is the designated charity for Thursday, March 11.

The foundation, established in 1982, provides outreach and service to the community by offering health care for the underserved in Northeast Florida. It has 24 outreach programs.

"Our most well-known, and the one that we partnered with THE PLAYERS on, is our Mobile Health Outreach Ministry, which is essentially a doctor's office on wheels," said foundation President Virginia Hall.

The unit provides primary care, school immunizations and school physicals in five Northeast Florida counties free of charge for those without insurance.

"Optum has also graciously and generously donated to help continue those programs since 2017," Hall added.

Optum is one of the tournament's Proud Partners and part of the United-Health Group. It is a leading information



Photo provided by Ascension St. Vincent's

The Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation's Mobile Health Outreach Ministry helps provide quality health care to vulnerable populations in Northeast Florida.

and technology-enabled health services business dedicated to helping make the health system work better. With more than 180,000 people worldwide, Optum delivers solutions that help to modernize the health system and improve overall population health.

Optum selected the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation as one of this year's charities of the day for the tournament.

In addition, Optum will be making a donation to fund operations for the foun-

and technology-enabled health services business dedicated to helping make the health system work better.

Last year, the foundation provided more than 7,000 patients with free health care, including medication management, free prescriptions and even glasses.

This year, the coronavirus has created more need in the community.

"Since the pandemic, the demand for our services has increased dramatically," said Hall, "because a lot of people lost their jobs, and a lot of those people are ones who kind of live on the edge and are

in need of health care."

She called support from THE PLAYERS and Optum "a big deal."

"It means that more people in Northeast Florida, who would never have access to care, are able to receive free health care, which is life-changing for most people," she said.

Helping people get the health care they need also helps them get back to work and be productive members of society. It helps improve their self-esteem and feelings of worth.

Rory McIlroy, an Optum Health ambassador and the winner of the 2019 PLAYERS Championship, visited the Mobile Health Unit earlier this month and met with Daniela and Diego Suarez – two teens who have received care from the unit.

"We are so grateful for Rory's support as well as the entire Optum team," Hall said. "This powerful partnership is making a real difference in the lives of those most in need."

In addition to these partnerships, the foundation depends upon donations from the community to fulfill its mission. To learn more or to make a donation, go to givestvincents.org.



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Book Trust to be THE PLAYERS' March 12 Charity of the Day

Nonprofit gets books into hands of students

By Shaun Ryan

THE PLAYERS Championship will shine a light on literacy Friday, March 12, when its Charity of the Day — selected by Proud Partner Morgan Stanley — will be Book Trust.

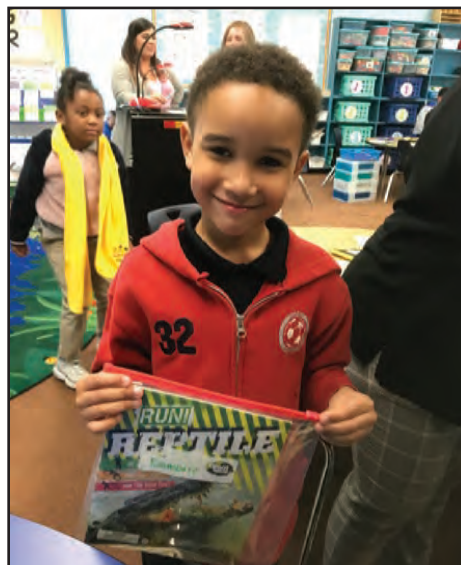
Book Trust is a national early literacy nonprofit founded 20 years ago in Colorado that today has programs in 21 states, including Florida. Locally, it has been carrying out its mission since 2018 at Mayport Elementary School in Jacksonville.

“It’s been a really successful program at the school,” said Book Trust CEO Kellie O’Keefe. “We have a great relationship and partnership with Morgan Stanley and PGA and the Kate & Justin Rose Foundation.”

The nonprofit seeks to help every child discover “the joy and power of reading,” according to O’Keefe.

Students in the program get to order two books a month out of a Scholastic flier, the idea being that when children choose books they want, they are more likely to read.

The hope is that students will then create home libraries and share their books



Photos provided by Book Trust

Book Trust aims to help elementary school children with little or no access to books fall in love with reading and become lifelong learners.

with siblings and caregivers.

“The focal point is to create a culture of literacy both in the classroom and at the school that we support, as well as in the living room and in the home,” said O’Keefe.

This has been especially helpful over the past year when circumstances have curtailed access to books, even at public libraries.

“I think that the Book Trust home libraries in particular are acting as a learn-

ing safety net right now what with all of these school closures due to the pandemic and all of the distant-learning piece,” said O’Keefe. “It is just really critical for kids to actually have physical books in their hands.”

This year, Book Trust delivered more than 4,000 books to 500 students at Mayport Elementary. Since the program started there, it has delivered nearly 18,000 books to more than 1,400 students.

O’Keefe called Morgan Stanley “an

amazing partner.” For one thing, local employees of the investment bank and financial services company volunteer at the school by reading to the students.

Morgan Stanley and its brand ambassador, PGA TOUR pro Justin Rose, also support Book Trust through the Eagles for Impact Challenge. For every eagle made at THE PLAYERS Championship, the company will donate 1,500 books.

“These are excellent golfers, so they make a lot of eagles, which we love,” said O’Keefe.

To date, Morgan Stanley has donated more than \$1 million through the Eagles for Impact Challenge.

Normally, Book Trust would have a tent on the course during the tournament. But with restrictions necessitated by the pandemic, that isn’t possible this year. So the PGA and Morgan Stanley have been promoting the nonprofit via social media.

O’Keefe said Book Trust can easily expand into other schools. All it needs are a willing principal, teachers open to ordering for the kids and some funding to support the effort.

“We can basically start a new program at a school really within a month’s time,” O’Keefe said. “It’s just a question of bringing those elements together.”

To learn more about Book Trust, go to booktrust.org.

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AN SRI-MANAGED COMMUNITY

THE PLAYERS, Grant Thornton share mission with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville

By Holly Tishfield

For its fourth year in a row, local advisory firm Grant Thornton is the Official Professional Services Provider of the PGA TOUR, and a Proud Partner of THE PLAYERS Championship.

As a Proud Partner of THE PLAYERS, Grant Thornton can select a local charity as its official Charity of the Day, and for this year's tournament, it has chosen the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville.

Despite this being the company's first time selecting the RMHC as its Charity of the Day, this is not the first time the Jacksonville firm has volunteered with RMHC, and with the pandemic radically effecting the way many nonprofits work, it could not have been better timing.

The Grant Thornton firm has begun donating meals to families staying within the RMHC facilities, noting that due to safety regulations with the pandemic, the RMHC is relying on less volunteers than usual.

"We are stepping in to be able to offer support," said Carol Tarver, head of sponsorship and marketing at Grant Thornton.

Selecting the RMHC as its Charity of the Day at TPC Sawgrass also gives the



Provided photo

Grant Thornton representatives deliver "smile kits" to children as part of its Purple Paladin program. Grant Thornton has selected the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville to be the Charity of the Day on Saturday, March 13, at THE PLAYERS Championship.

charity an opportunity to receive even more local and financial support through the PGA TOUR.

"Our firms tend to take on community efforts that speak to their local community, and we have used our Proud Partnership to highlight them at more of a national

level," said Tarver.

One of Grant Thornton's nationwide efforts to support local nonprofits is its Purple Paladins Program, where select nonprofit social entrepreneurs who tackle challenges like disease, hunger, poverty and inequality receive funding, business

guidance, volunteer support and a platform for public attention from the firms.

On Feb. 11, Grant Thornton used two of its Purple Paladin selections to deliver goods to children and families staying within the RMHC facilities.

Coming Up Rosies, Grant Thornton's very first Purple Paladin recipient, donated "smile kits" for children to color, while Weird Enough Productions, another recipient, donated comic books.

These smile kits and comic books donated at the RMHC were meant to help children feel empowered and defy stereotypes.

"Sometimes our children's mobility is limited, but the superheroes [in the comics] show our children that it is all about self confidence, and that you are still strong and capable of anything you want to do," said Ashley Strickland, marketing manager at RMHC.

The Grant Thornton organization selected these two Purple Paladin recipients because it felt that they aligned perfectly with the mission at RMHC, and that it was a mutually beneficial relationship.

"These are the people that are going to do the best for the community," said Tarver. "They align with our core values."

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Photo provided by the PGA TOUR

Billy Horschel and THE PLAYERS team with the PGA TOUR and TPC Sawgrass staff load food items for Feeding Northeast Florida at TPC Sawgrass on March 13, 2020 in Ponte Vedra Beach. THE PLAYERS and TPC Sawgrass will again be donating to Feeding Northeast Florida, which is the Charity of the Day for Sunday, March 14, after this year's tournament.

THE PLAYERS to aid Feeding Northeast Florida again with food donations, Charity of the Day proceeds

By Holly Tishfield

Feeding Northeast Florida, a nonprofit with a branch in Jacksonville, is the region's largest nonprofit food bank and hunger relief network. In 2018 alone, Feeding Northeast Florida distributed more than 17 million pounds of food and more than 14 million meals to over 257,300 food-insecure men, women, children, seniors and families within its service area.

The Feeding America network provides food for more than 61,000 food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters across the nation.

The Feeding Northeast Florida organization is no stranger to THE PLAYERS Championship, having partnered with PGA TOUR player Billy Horschel for nearly seven years with his #DriveOut-Hunger campaigns.

During the 2020 PLAYERS Championship, after official calls were made to cancel the remainder of the tournament, Susan King, CEO of Feeding Northeast Florida, received an unexpected call from TPC Sawgrass saying it wanted to donate the remainder of their food to the organization. King said 3½ tractor-

trailers, roughly 22 tons, of food were donated to FNEFL facility.

This year, TPC Sawgrass plans to contribute to the FNEFL facilities yet again by donating all remaining food to the organization after the tournament, so nothing goes to waste. On top of that, Horschel will be hosting his #DriveOutHunger campaign yet again, where he plans to donate \$1,000 for every birdie and \$5,000 for every eagle.

"Having somebody like Billy, who embraces the work we do... it is powerful," King said. "And to have TPC's partnership and highlighting... it creates awareness in markets we may not connect with."

Feeding Northeast Florida is TPC Sawgrass' Charity of the Day on Sunday, March 14. In previous years, this would have meant tables, features and giveaways at the actual PLAYERS Championship, but things look a little different now. The FNEFL organization will not be physically present at THE PLAYERS, but TPC Sawgrass will honor them as part of its new campaign titled 'Defining Moments,' where important moments from the last year of TPC Sawgrass will be highlighted.

Health

Continued from 5

identified during the discussion, is poverty.

David Garfunkel, CEO of Lift Jax, a community-based initiative aimed at eradicating poverty in one of Jacksonville's hardest hit neighborhoods, said the model his organization uses has four pillars: mixed-income housing, cradle-to-career education, community wellness and long-term financial vitality.

He also emphasized the importance of working in partnership with residents rather than just coming in to make changes

unilaterally. It was a perspective echoed by other panel members.

Michael Currie, senior vice president and chief health equity officer for UnitedHealth Group, proposed three things needed to address health disparities: commitment, partnerships and resources.

"Partnerships are important," he said, "because no organization can address this by themselves."

It was a point also expressed by others.

Megan Denk, representing the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, addressed one area that affected the health outcomes for a community: the rate of infant mortality.

"Why in 2021 are we still dealing with infant mortality?" she asked rhetorically. "We have modern science and modern medicine."

She said that, in 2018, 147 babies in the region did not make it to their first birthdays. Examining the causes, social determinants reappeared. Sixty-one percent of the women in these cases didn't have access to health care prior to their pregnancies.

Poverty, a source of stress, was also a key factor.

"The women are dealing with toxic stress," Denk said.

This led to a discussion of the shortage

of behavioral health services. Institutional racism was also identified as a source of disparities.

Though solutions were proposed, Haley emphasized a need to address the myriad issues one step at a time.

"It is not a quick fix," he said. "These are long-term problems. It took years to get to the problems, and it's going to take years to solve them, but we have the resources if necessary."

The panel discussion was one of several events and activities that THE PLAYERS Championship hosts to generate awareness and support for organizations and communities in the five-county area.

Horschel

Continued from 5

according to feedingnefl.org/driveouthunger. The food bank connects millions of pounds of food to a network of more than 150 social service agencies and programs. It does this by "rescuing" high-quality food that would otherwise be wasted and then turning it into meals.

In 2018, Feeding Northeast Florida

provided more than 14.1 million meals, up from 12.5 million the previous year.

Though THE PLAYERS Championship was canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 situation, Horschel followed through with his generosity and commitment to feeding the hungry.

"Last year, when the tournament was canceled and we weren't able to play, I felt it was more important than ever to still make a donation and donated \$20,000 to FNEFL," he said. "In addition, I was

honored to help load the food trucks with seven tons of food that was left over from the canceled event."

That food had been prepared for almost 10,000 people and would have gone to waste but, with the help of TPC Sawgrass Senior Executive Chef Azhar Mohammad and his team, it was donated to Feeding Northeast Florida.

This year, Horschel is returning to his traditional means of helping to fight food insecurity.

"I am looking forward to being back at Sawgrass," he said Friday, "and hope to play four days of great golf, make lots of birdies and a few eagles for Feeding Northeast Florida. Everyone can make a difference; please pledge to donate at least \$1 and provide six meals to those who need it."

The campaign is ongoing through Sunday, March 14.

To learn more about Feeding Northeast Florida, go to www.feedingnefl.org.

5 manatees released from Jacksonville Zoo

Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens had been caring for five manatees at the Manatee Critical Care Center — the highest number of the animals that have been housed in the facility at the same time — and celebrated their successful release at Blue Spring State Park last month.

Females Amelia and Irma were released Monday, Feb. 15, after spending almost a year at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. They were rescued in 2017 as orphaned calves and first taken to SeaWorld Orlando.

Orphaned manatees need to be large enough before they can return to the wild, so Amelia and Irma came to Jacksonville on Feb. 20, 2020, to continue their development.

Three males were released at Blue Spring on Tuesday, Feb. 16, each coming to the zoo this winter to be treated for symptoms of cold stress, including skin lesions and dehydration. When manatees spend too much time in water colder than 68 degrees, cold stress starts to occur and will affect many organ systems.

Manatees migrate to warm water sources in the winter, such as springs and powerplant discharges, but they sometimes become entrapped in areas with cold water and may not make it to the warmer water.

Two of the males were rescued in Merritt Island on Dec. 29 and Jan. 11. The third was rescued in the Ortega River in Jacksonville on Jan. 18.

The releases at Blue Spring were assisted by the zoo's partners in the Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Save the Manatee Club and Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute. Staff from Blue Spring and the Volusia County Marine Mammal Stranding Team also provided help.



Photo by Joel Bell

People gather to return a pair of manatees to the water.

Each manatee was outfitted with a satellite tag and will be monitored to ensure they are adapting in the wild and staying in the warm water.

“Releasing these animals not only marks the successful rehabilitation of five more manatees, it also frees up critical space so additional manatees can be treated at our zoo,” said Craig Miller, Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

curator of mammals. “This has been a tough winter for manatees, so we hope we can help a few more with our partners ... It truly takes a team to protect this threatened species and I could not be prouder of the dedication of all those involved with this program.”

To report an injured marine mammal, call the FWC hotline at (888) 404-3922 or dial *FWC on a cellular device.

St. Augustine Humane Society partners with WorkStarter to train and hire St. Johns County high school graduates in 2021

The St. Augustine Humane Society has partnered with the WorkStarter program for a fourth year while seeking the attention of St. Johns County high school seniors. The Humane Society has been chosen once again to offer veterinary technician and pet groomer training positions for 2021 high school graduates.

Since 2018, The WorkStarter program seeks to create meaningful entry level jobs for high school graduates who are not currently considering further education or career training. The graduates are matched with local non-profit organizations for an employment period of one year and an hourly wage. WorkStarter donates the full cost of the annual employment amount to the non-profit organization with additional human resources to help pursue its goals and the high school graduate receives earnings while demonstrating and further building job skills.

The WorkStarter program is funded through the Big Drawer Fund of the American Endowment Foundation. Since May 2018, WorkStarter has successfully matched St. Johns County high school graduates with the Humane Society and a myriad of local nonprofit groups.

WorkStarter candidates are required to be 2021 high school graduates of any age, and may hold a General Educational Development (GED) degree, and other equivalents while looking for a full-time entry-level job in St. Johns County.

The St. Augustine Humane Society has two available positions including a veterinary technician trainee and a pet groomer trainee. For more information, go to the website and apply at www.workstarter.org, and send a resume directly to Carolyn Smith, St. Augustine Humane



Photo provided by St. Augustine Humane Society

Riley Brown, WorkStarter pet groomer trainee at St. Augustine Humane Society from 2020.

Society's executive director at admin1@staughumane.org.

For the veterinary technician trainee position in the Humane Society's clinic, the accepted participant will begin as an assistant and gradually work to become a vet tech

while gaining competency in general vet tech skills and proficiency in all aspects of surgery preparation, surgical assisting and post-operative care along with various clinic administration and management skills.

“If making a difference in the lives of pets is important to you, then this is a great job. The employment outlook for vet techs is excellent,” Smith said. “As St. Johns County continues to grow, there are more veterinarians moving to the area and the need for trained vet techs is at an all-time high.”

For the pet groomer position, the Society Pet Spa is a comprehensive pet grooming salon located at the Humane Society. The program participant will receive hands-on training from the director of spa services and two experienced groomers. As an entry-level groomer, responsibilities include bathing pets and will advance to more complex tasks along with learning how to use veterinary and grooming practice software.

Upon mastery of all the grooming requirements, the participant will receive a groomer's kit of professional tools, and eventually have the ability to transition to a commission-based salary.

“Opportunities are found in veterinary clinics, large retail pet store grooming salons, independent pet spas, and boarding facilities with an excellent employment outlook as the pet industry continues to grow,” said Smith.

At the Humane Society, the successful candidates are encouraged to display the following characteristics with compassion for animals, attention to detail, good communication skills, responsible work ethics, be a team player, and physically fit to work with dogs and cats.

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Sea Tow St. Augustine marks 10 years of service to community

By Shaun Ryan

When your car breaks down along the highway, you call a towing service. But who do you turn to when your boat runs into trouble?

For the past decade, the answer has been Capt. Chris Hampton, who owns and operates Sea Tow St. Augustine.

“Boating has always been a huge part of my life,” Hampton said. “Every day I am able to get out on the water and help boaters. I love what I do.”

Sea Tow St. Augustine offers not just tows, but also jump starts, fuel deliveries and pretty much “any type of assistance you need on the water,” he said. That includes freeing boats that have gotten grounded and, on occasion, rescues.

“We work very closely with Fire Rescue and law enforcement,” Hampton said.

The service covers the coastal areas from the Palm Valley bridge south to the Flagler Beach bridge. Its coverage extends into the ocean, and Sea Tow St. Augustine has occasionally been called upon to help boaters on the St. Johns River.

Hampton, who is originally from the New Smyrna-Edgewater area, first got involved with Sea Tow 17 years ago when a friend bought the local franchise and asked that he come to work with him.

“I decided to quit repairing garage doors and go to work with my buddy,” Hampton said. “I didn’t have a captain’s license when he asked me to come and work with him, but because I had spent so much time on the water, obtaining one wasn’t hard.”

In 2011, he was presented with the opportunity to take over the business.

He owned the franchise just five years before facing one of the biggest jobs of his career: cleanup after Hur-

ricane Matthew.

“There were a lot of marinas that were just complete wreckage,” he said. “I actually had a crew from Sea Tow Destin come to assist because the volume of work was so high.”

The biggest challenge was getting boats back into the water after the storm surge had swept them off their lifts and into people’s yards or way up into the marshes.

And then, it happened again the following year.

“Matthew and Irma — it was like a one-two punch,” Hampton said. “Just when I thought I was recovering, we got hit again.”

Though anyone can contact Sea Tow St. Augustine for assistance via the Sea Tow app, the services are much more affordable for those who first obtain memberships. In addition, members get priority when Hampton has multiple jobs pending. In all, he has about 1,000 members in the St. Augustine area.

Hampton’s work has earned him accolades.

In 2018, his franchise was recognized by the Sheriff’s Office with its Community Partnership Award.

In 2019, the Sea Tow Foundation presented him its Foundation Hero Award for promoting boating safety, including his support of the foundation’s Life Jacket Loaner Program, which provides life jackets for anyone to borrow daily at no charge. Hampton has helped establish 13 loaner stations at boat ramps throughout the area.

In addition, Hampton and his team have been actively involved with the derelict vessel program to rid the waters of dilapidated vessels left in the local waterways. To date, they have removed about 30 boats that had been abandoned and were safety hazards for boaters.

“We’ve cleaned up a lot of boats that have sat on the bottom and in the mud for long periods of time,” Hampton said. “Some of those jobs are difficult in the



Contributed photo

Capt. Chris Hampton is celebrating 10 years at the helm of Sea Tow St. Augustine.

fact that they take a while to get them cleaned out so that they will float again, and we can get them hauled out and disposed of.”

The derelict boats are unsightly in a tourist-friendly town like St. Augustine, and they pose environmental problems as well, making their removal a critical service to the community.

“We are thrilled to congratulate Capt. Chris on the 10th anniversary of business,” said Sea Tow CEO Capt. Joseph Frohnhoefer III. “We take pride in the services that we offer the boating community, and Sea Tow St. Augustine maintains those standards in all they do.”

For further information on Sea Tow St. Augustine, the app and membership, go to seatow.com.

St. Augustine to resume permitting of events

The St. Augustine City Commission unanimously agreed to lift the moratorium on permitting special events at its Feb. 22 meeting.

For an event to be permitted, organizers must submit a compliant plan with the “Events and Gatherings: Readiness and Planning Tool,” an eight-page document prepared by the Centers for Disease Control.

Many events, including the Celtic Fes-

tival, St. Patrick’s Day Parade, Easter Parade, Drake’s Raid and the Lion’s Seafood Festival have been cancelled this year.

The date for Rhythm and Ribs has permanently been moved to the third weekend in October, and Festival of Chariots and The Lighthouse 5K have been postponed.

However, several events are expected to take place soon, including The Old Town Art Show on March 27-28, The Bless-

ing of the Fleet on March 27, Coquina Church’s Good Friday in the Gazebo on April 2, Family Fun Fest on April 24, A Latin Music Festival on May 1, The Alligator Farm Raptor Run on May 9 and the “As If” festival, a ‘90s festival, on May 15.

“We’re going in the right direction. ... These events are crucial to the economics of our not-for-profit community that have suffered for a year,” Mayor Tracy

Upchurch said at the meeting. “And when we weigh this, I’m willing to resume the spring events with the expectation that the application will have a COVID plan.”

For more information on permitting events, contact Kim Mayo, event and venue coordinator, at (904) 825-1004 or via email at kmayo@citystaug.com. The application process for Francis Field Events can be found at www.CityStAug.com/eventpermit.

Rubber Ducky race to raise money for service organizations

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra is partnering with Learn to Read of St. Johns County to present the 7th annual Rubber Ducky Regatta, taking place at noon May 16.

For the first time in race history, the duckies will be dropped from the north side of the Palm Valley/Ponte Vedra (County Road 210) bridge. The ducks will waddle to the finish line opposite the Palm Valley Outdoors Bar & Grill, 377 S. Roscoe Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach – headquarters for the event.

Prizes for top finishers include multiple \$100 gift cards and four one-way tickets from Southwest Airlines to anywhere in the United States, including Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

The event raises money by encouraging people to “adopt” a duck or group of ducks in the race. Adoption fees range from \$5 for one ducky up to \$100 for the “Quacks Galore” package of 25 duckies.

Ducks can be adopted by going to <https://learntoreadst->

[johns.org/product/rubber-ducky-regatta-adoption/](https://learntoreadst-johns.org/product/rubber-ducky-regatta-adoption/).

All proceeds from the event benefit Learn to Read of St. Johns County and the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra.

Learn to Read of St. Johns County is a volunteer-based 501(c)(3) organization that teaches more than 200 students a year to read, improve math skills and prepare for the GED. It also provides English for speakers of other languages, adult conversation classes and U.S. citizenship exam preparation.

Local nonprofit supports children in foster care, families

'Night of Arts' fundraiser set for May 1 at Fantasy Farms

During her years teaching at Title 1 schools, Flagler College alumna Aubrie Simpson-Gotham saw a wide gap in services for local children in foster care and foster families. She found that St. Johns County foster children needed mentorship, career coaching and access to resources.

So, in 2019, she established Fostering Connections St. Johns (FCSJ).



Aubrie Simpson-Gotham founded Fostering Connections St. Johns to help children in foster care reach their potential.

“St. Johns County is the only county in Florida that doesn’t have a nonprofit arm running its foster programs,” she said. “There are more than 170 kids currently in foster care in St. Johns County’s Family Integrity Program. It’s a unique system and one that needs the help of the community to make sure that these kids have all of the support they need.”

The goal of FCSJ is to help all foster youth reach their full potential and connect volunteers and community leaders to opportunities to assist foster families in providing stable, loving homes for children in transition.

The organization is supported by an all-volunteer board of directors and advisory council. Some of the services offered include providing care packages and other essential items to children who are entering foster care and a Career Readiness Academy program for teens.

“Career Readiness Academy, a three-class job-training program held twice a year for teens in foster care, was started last summer in partnership with The Kookaburra, a local coffee shop and roastery,” said Simpson-Gotham. “It’s an amazing program where students learn foundational skills they need to secure a job, including writing a resume, interview skills and working as a team. At the end of the program, students apply for paid internships with our business partners to receive job coaching and develop a professional plan.”

Fostering Connections St. Johns is seeking business and corporate sponsors, volunteer job coaches, soft skills teachers and mentors for its Career Readiness Academy. Fostering Connections St. Johns will host its “Night of the Arts” fundraiser from 6 to 10 p.m. May 1 at Fantasy Farms, 194 South Roscoe Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach, with live painting demonstrations, auctions, cocktails, catering by Sporks and more. The event will be primarily outdoors at 50% capacity with social distancing precautions in place. Tickets are \$75 per person and can be purchased at bit.ly/307hW1k. For more information, go to fosteringconnectionsstjohns.org.



Photos provided by Fostering Connections St. Johns

Fostering Connections St. Johns provides mentorship for youth in foster care.

BEAM partners with Renewing Dignity in fight against period poverty

With funding from the Ponte Vedra Women’s Civic Alliance, Renewing Dignity, a Jacksonville-based nonprofit, supplied five pallets, totaling 86,400 sanitary pads, to the Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM) food bank in January.

Using the food bank’s distribution channels allowed for quick dispensation to low-income women living in Jacksonville’s beach communities who struggle to afford feminine hygiene products. Sanitary pads and tampons are not covered by SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, often referred to as food stamps.

Before the pandemic, one in four women struggled to purchase menstrual products due to a lack of income. With the pandemic still affecting much of the country and many families continuing to feel the financial stress of the pandemic, these essential items continue to be an expense that many local women cannot afford.

“Many people are unaware that one in five women report missing work, school or an event due to a lack of access to period supplies,” said Jan Healy, Re-



Contributed photo

Meagan Anderson, BEAM food bank manager, left, and two volunteers express their thanks to Renewing Dignity for its recent donation of feminine hygiene products.

newing Dignity founder. “This problem is more prevalent for females who are experiencing food insecurity. Partnering with BEAM allows us to serve these

clients most efficiently and leverages our impact.”

Toilet paper, diapers, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and feminine hygiene

products are just a few of the items not covered by SNAP. Because of this, these basic hygiene items are highly requested by BEAM clients.

“This donation from Renewing Dignity will make a big difference in the lives of many women and girls,” said Meagan Anderson, BEAM food bank manager. “In addition to supplying our food pantries, we have delivered a pallet to the Mayport USO to help local military families and distributed boxes to six of the local public middle and high schools in the beaches area.”

“Period poverty” affects a large number of American school children. Menstrual products are not provided with any systemic approach in schools.

“It breaks my heart to know that I have neighbors who are struggling and are having to choose between buying menstrual products or putting food on the table,” said Caleigh Quast, BEAM development coordinator. “No woman should be without these products; it is an absolute necessity to everyday life. BEAM is honored to be part of the fight against period poverty in our area.”

THE PLAYERS hosts 10th annual Military Job Fair

By Holly Tishfield

Kicking off a week of exciting events leading up to THE PLAYERS Championship, TPC Sawgrass hosted its 10th annual Military Job Fair in partnership with the Jacksonville Military Veterans Coalition on Saturday, March 6.

The JMVC is an organization that honors military veterans and currently serving members of the National Guard and Reserve by facilitating business, career and education opportunities within the community. It is no stranger to partnering with THE PLAYERS, having hosted the Military Job Fair together in previous years, as well.

Though the day of the job fair itself was a bit rainy and overcast, attendees were in high spirits as they greeted one another in person for likely the first time in a long time.

Twenty-five companies had representatives on-site accepting resumes and talking to interested attendees, while even more were available on the Jobs for Vets website. In previous years, the job fair hosted more than 50 companies at a time, but due to new COVID-19 regulations the event capacity was cut in half.



Photos by Holly Tishfield

Many of the attending companies were local organizations, such as Clay County, FSCJ, UNF, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Jacksonville Fire and Rescue, while others were from nationally recognized

JOB FAIR continues on **Page 22**



Employers, colleges and military and employment service organizations set up booths to help service members, veterans and military spouses find employment or further their education during THE PLAYERS Championship's Military Job Fair on Saturday, March 6, at TPC Sawgrass.

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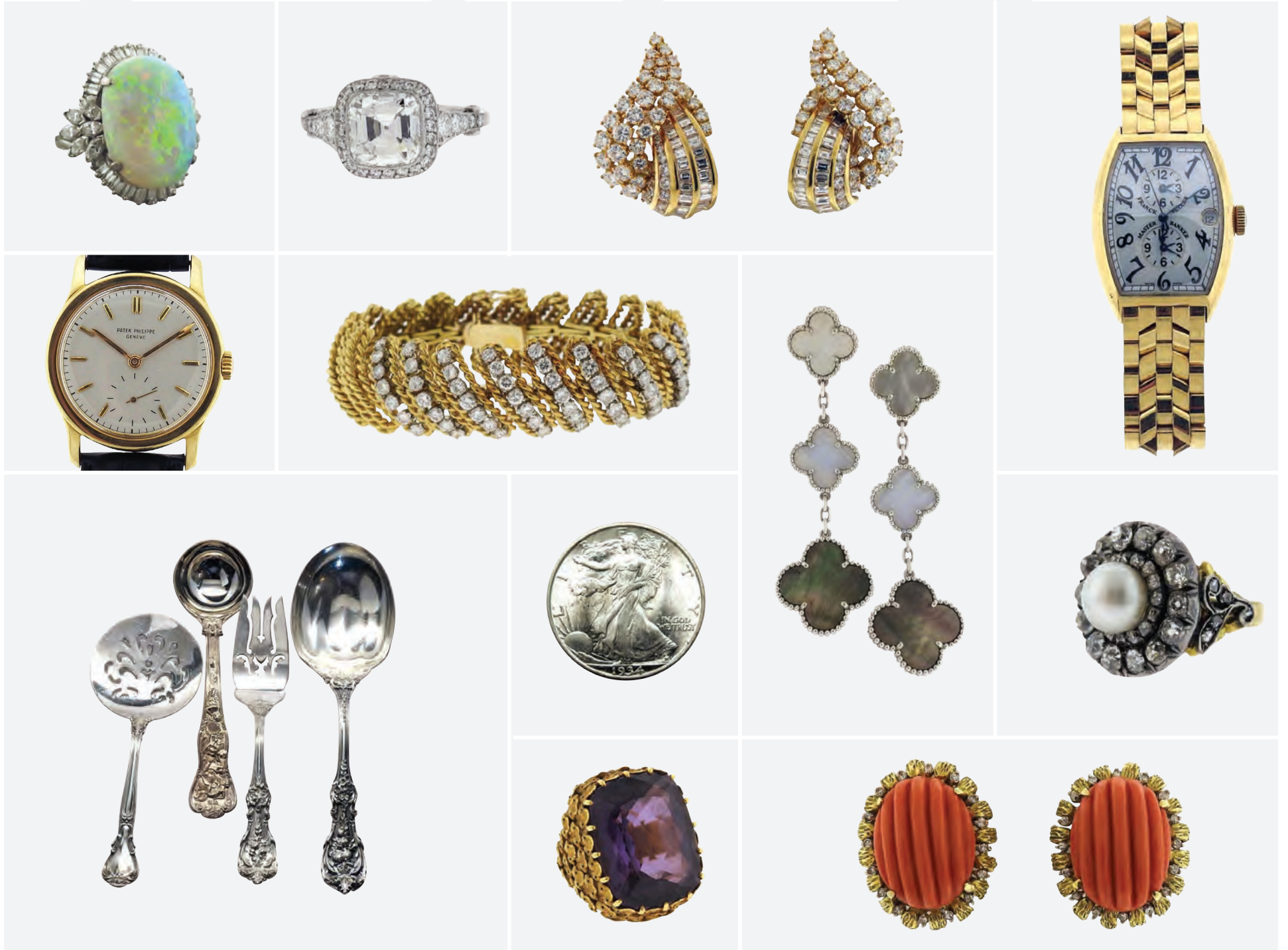
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in 2020

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Mission House hosting community scavenger hunt in Jacksonville Beach

Mission House is hosting a Jacksonville Beach Community Scavenger Hunt. Find the Rainbow: Scavenger Hunt is a community event set for Saturday March 13 from 1 to 3 p.m.

During the scavenger hunt, participants will go to different nonprofits in Jacksonville Beach. Participating nonprofits include the Beaches Museum, Beaches Go Green and Fur Sisters. At each stop, participants will complete a small activity. At the conclusion of the scavenger hunt, there will be food trucks and prizes. This event will be family friendly and socially distanced.

"Mission House is so excited to bring an educational and fun scavenger hunt to our beaches community," Mission House Director Carina Saladino said. "We're glad to incorporate our partnering nonprofits and bring awareness to the immediate needs of our homeless community."

To participate, form a team of three-to-five people and register. Teams can register ahead of time or the day of the event. Same-day registration is \$15 per team and \$10 for early registration.

For more information or to register a team visit our website at www.MissionHouseJax.org/RainbowHunt.

"We are providing a unique opportunity for kids to learn about homelessness," said Jessica Dumas, Mission House board member and event sponsor.

All proceeds from the fundraiser will go directly to Mission House to help serve the community. Due to COVID-19, Mission House has had to find new ways to raise funds and awareness for its work.

Mission House is a nonprofit that has been serving the homeless community of Jacksonville Beach since 1997.

Go to www.MissionHouseJax.org to learn more about programs offered.



Photo by Holly Tishfield

Veterans, service members and military spouses take part in the annual Military Job Fair held Saturday, March 6 at TPC Sawgrass.

Job fair

Continued from 20

companies such as Amazon, Walmart and United Rentals, which was the presenter of the event.

Three of TPC's Proud Partners, Grant Thornton, Optum and Morgan Stanley,

were also in attendance at the job fair and accepting resumes.

The job fair itself was free and open to all military personnel, veterans and military spouses who were seeking employment. With layoffs and unemployment rates skyrocketing in the last year due to the pandemic, the job fair offered a spark of hope for the future.



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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



Kathy Esfahani
Columnist

TIPS FOR SPRING

Tips for your spring cleaning and planting:

Ensure to rake dead grass in your lawn to allow new grass to grow.

Prune and fertilize azaleas as soon as they finish blooming. You can transplant azaleas once they have stopped blooming for the season.

Remember to start heavy pruning of hedges any time after mid-March.

If you haven't already begun, now is a great time to start planting your annuals.



But be prepared to protect your new plantings should any late-season frost appear. You can use mulch, pine-straw, newspaper, or other plant and vegetation protective equipment to cover in case of freeze.



Flower of the Week: Pentas

Photos provided by Kathy Esfahani

Flowers you can plant in your yard or favorite flower beds now:

Annuals: vinca, pentas, marigolds, dusty miller, supertunias, delphiniums, bacopia, marigold, verbena

Perennials: shrimp plant, sapphire duranta, hibiscus, confederate jasmine, galardia, gazania

Get even more ideas for March/early spring planting courtesy of the North Florida Gardening Calendar via University of Florida IFAS Extension. Go to https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep451#SECTION_3.

Happy Planting!

Email Kathy at 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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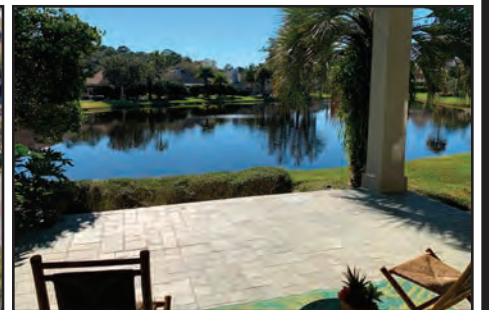
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The staff at Ocean Palms Elementary presents members of the JT Townsend Foundation with a check from the student ambassadors' kindness card project. Back row, from left: Michael Marimpietri, Lyndsey Smith, J.T. Townsend's aunt Pat Jackson, Executive Director Pauline Gerry, board member-Carlos Zeigler, Kaleigh Kessler, Lee Serino and Tiffany Cantwell. Front row, from left: Faie Pellegrino and Jess Weeks.



Photo provided by OPE

OPE 5th-graders share act of kindness with local charity

In honor of National Random Acts of Kindness Day on Feb. 17, the students at Ocean Palms Elementary School had an opportunity to send kindness cards to their friends, teachers and peers. The cost — a \$1 donation — went to a local charity chosen by the fifth-grade student ambassadors who spearheaded the endeavor.

The chosen local charity was the JT Townsend Foundation, whose mission is “bettering the lives of children and adults with disabilities on the First Coast by providing financial assistance, adaptive

equipment, and research funding.”

This organization recently helped Ocean Palms acquire its new play structure by providing funding for the adaptive otter float portion of the play structure, which is wheelchair accessible.

All told, the ambassadors raised more than \$1,200 by selling kindness cards. Additionally, a sponsor donated an additional \$1,000 in support of the project, bringing the total to more than \$2,200.

To learn more about the JT Townsend Foundation, go to JTGivesBack.org.

THE PLAYERS Championship celebrates Northeast Florida’s newest champions

This week, THE PLAYERS Championship welcomes the best golfers in the world to compete in the PGA TOUR’s flagship event. Area families who are welcoming newborn babies will also have an opportunity to commemorate this milestone.

THE PLAYERS is gifting babies born in local hospitals during the week of the championship, March 9-14, with a special onesie, “Crawl, Walk, Golf,” along with a birthday card containing the ABCs of safe sleep practices from THE PLAYERS Center for Child Health at Wolfson Children’s Hospital.

“This week is such a special one in our community,” said Jared Rice, executive director of THE PLAYERS. “We are honored to celebrate and connect with those who share this milestone with us.”

Each week, more than 500 babies are born at local hospitals, prompting THE PLAYERS to work with area hospitals to share in the celebrations. Families at the below hospitals will receive onesies to share with their newest champions: Baptist Medical Center-South; Wolfson Children’s Hospital NICU-South;



Photo provided by Baptist Jax

Baptist Medical Center-Beaches; Baptist Medical Center-Nassau; Wolfson Children’s Hospital NICU-Downtown; Baptist Health Labor & Delivery-Downtown; Ascension St. Vincent’s Labor & Delivery; University of Florida Health; Orange Park Medical Center; Memorial Hospital; Flagler Health+.

Additional youth and family experiences at THE PLAYERS Championship 2021 include:

■ **Youth days presented by Nemours Children’s Health System:** Up to two youth ages 15 and under are admitted free with a ticketed adult on Tuesday and Wednesday. All youth will need a ticket to attend the tournament on Thursday through Sunday. In order to access a hospitality venue, youth will need a ticket Tuesday through Sunday.

■ **Family Care Suite presented by Wolfson Children’s Hospital:** Open to all ticketholders, the Family Care Suite is an air-conditioned space with private rooms for parents to change diapers and feed babies. Diapers, wipes, hand sanitizers and other necessary products will be provided in the suite.

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Source: Real Value of Joining a Local Chamber of Commerce
Shapiro Group, 2012.

NAVIGATING THE PLAYERS

Parking

Parking is purchased separately at THEPLAYERS.COM parking. New in 2021, the parking experience will be completely digital.

General Parking Lot address:
5360 Palm Valley Road
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

Parking passes are required on all tournament days, Tuesday-Sunday.

All parking passes are daily passes and must be purchased in advance via THEPLAYERS.com/parking.

Volunteers will not sell parking passes in the lot, and parking will not be sold at Will Call.

"Four or more for free" parking vouchers are not available in 2021.

Tuesday and Wednesday parking costs \$15 per day and Thursday- Sunday costs \$40 per day.

Rideshare Information

Rideshares will drop off and pick up at the Couples Entry off of ATP Boulevard, which is just steps from the 15th hole. Rideshare vehicles will be staged outside the Couples Entry making this one of the easiest modes of transportation for spectators.

Rideshare instructions:

Getting to THE PLAYERS Championship

Enter Destination – THE PLAYERS Championship

Enter the tournament through the Couples Entry

Leaving THE PLAYERS Championship:

Exit tournament grounds through the Couples Entry

Follow the tournament signage to the designated rideshare pick up area outside the Couples Entry

Get in available rideshare and head to preferred destination



Photo by Craig O'Neal

Other

Pedal to THE PLAYERS

THE PLAYERS offers complimentary bike parking during the tournament, from the time entries open until end of play. Spectators can ride their bikes to Gate B located inside the Sawgrass Gates off of PGA TOUR Boulevard in the back of lot 5 only (110 PGA TOUR Blvd.). Bike racks are available free of charge. Bike parking is not available in the general parking lot.

Golf Cart Parking

THE PLAYERS offers complimentary golf cart parking services Tuesday through Sunday at Gate B located inside the TPC Sawgrass Gates off of PGA TOUR Boulevard in the back of lot 5 only (110 PGA TOUR Blvd.). Golf cart parking is free of charge and is available from the time entries open until end of play. Golf cart parking is not available in the general parking lot.

Disabled Guest Services

THE PLAYERS Disabled Guest Services program provides shuttles during the championship. Fans who have handicap parking access are still required to purchase a parking pass in advance for THE PLAYERS general parking lot (off CR 210).

Fans with a handicap parking hang tag, as well as a PLAYERS parking pass, will be directed to park in a specific part of the general parking lot. From there, golf carts will take them to one of the designated Disabled Guest Services locations on the golf course.

Carts will run from the time gates open until 30 minutes after play ends and will only pick up and drop off from the below designated locations. They will not stray from the official route under any circumstances.

- Behind 16 Green by Couples Gate and The Bier Garden
- Behind 17 Tee adjacent to the Welcome Experience and the Food Court
- Players left of 9 Fairway by Wine & Dine on 9.
- Players left of 9 Green by Past Chairman Hospitality.
- Clubhouse area behind 3 Tee
- Players right of 16 Tee
- Players right of 15 Fairway at Taste of JAX

If disabled guests need assistance from a location without shuttle access, they should contact any tournament official with a radio.

NAVIGATING continues on Page 30

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For many of our riders, this service is their **only way to get around** and out of the house. Senior isolation and depression is rampant during this COVID period. Please support this vital Beaches Council on Aging program. Visit our website at <https://www.beachescoa.com/take-action> to make a secure online donation. If you are **70.5** or older, you can also make a tax-free donation from your IRA account. (Please consult your tax advisor.)

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 DISABLED GUEST SERVICES SHUTTLE STOP

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- E SAWGRASS SQUARE**
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• 4Rivers BBQ

- F TASTE OF JAX**
Seating, permanent restrooms and shaded area, plus local food and drinks for purchase
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• Mojo Kitchen
- G BIER GARDEN**
Featuring a variety of craft beers on tap located behind 16 Green
- H COUPLES ENTRY**
Rideshare pick-up and drop-off location
- I TRUCKS ON 10**
Local food and drinks for purchase
• Carolina Jax
• Mama's
• Tikiz
• Twisted Okie BBQ & Tacos
- J TACOS ON 12**
TacoLu, Jacksonville's most popular Baja Mexicana, serving food and beverages. Venue includes seating and shaded areas
- K THE GROVE BAR FEATURING MAESTRO DOBEL**

ELKINGTON ENTRY

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- CC** CHAMPIONSHIP CLUB
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- 17G** 17 GREEN HOSPITALITY
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- PE** PERFORMANCE CENTER
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• The Patio
• 17 Bleacher
• 16 Bleacher
• 12/13 Bleacher
- 9/18** PRIVATE HOSPITALITY

TPC SAWGRASS • STADIUM COURSE

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	HOLE	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	IN	TOTAL
PAR	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	3	5	36	PAR	4	5	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	36	72
YARDS	423	532	177	384	471	393	451	237	583	3651	YARDS	424	558	302	181	481	470	523	137	462	3538	7189

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THE PLAYERS®

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PROUD PARTNERS



Navigating

Continued from 29

Policies

PLAYERS PRIDE

THE PLAYERS PRIDE stands for showing personal responsibility when enjoying the best fan experience in golf. We ask that all attendees help make this event our Gold Standard by keeping the course beautiful, clean and safe. Have fun and enjoy the ultimate experience this championship provides, but remember to show the same respect to those around you as the players show each other.

Help keep THE PLAYERS clean and safe.

Fans can text THE PLAYERS from anywhere on the course to notify a staff member of an on-site issue. Text 69050 to reach a staff member while at the tournament.

Fan Code of Conduct

Spectators will be subject to expulsion and the loss of ticket privileges for the following breaches of etiquette:

- Making rude, vulgar or other inappropriate comments or gestures;
- Verbal or physical harassment of players, volunteers, officials or spectators;
- Distracting a player or any disruption of play;
- Behavior that is unruly, disruptive, unsafe or illegal in nature;
- Failing to follow the instruction of a championship official, volunteer or security personnel.

Fans can text THE PLAYERS from anywhere on the course to notify a staff member of an on-site issue. Text 69050 to reach a staff member while at the tournament.

Mobile Device Policy

Spectator Mobile Device Policy for PGA TOUR

Tournaments (please see ticket for complete terms):

- Devices must be on silent at all times; flash may not be used.
- Devices may be used to capture video, audio and photos (content) in all areas throughout tournament week.
- Content may be used for personal purposes (e.g., personal social media); no commercial use.
- No live streaming or real-time coverage (e.g., no shot-by-shot coverage).
- Data use (e.g., texting) is permitted in all areas throughout tournament week.
- Phone calls are allowed only in designated areas.

Please be respectful of play and do not interfere with players, caddies or media.

All posted signage and instructions from tournament staff must be observed.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in the revocation of your ticket.

Food Policy

THE PLAYERS allows fans to bring in their own food in a 1-gallon clear, plastic bag where food items are also wrapped in clear wrap. Fans can refill their empty water bottles at the filtered water stations. THE PLAYERS will allow reusable plastic or metal cups up to 32 ounces at entries, as long as they are empty.

Alcohol Policy

Strict adherence to alcoholic beverage consumption laws will be enforced on the course and in all hospitality areas.

Alcohol will not be served to anyone younger than 21; proof of age will be required for anyone younger than 35.

Only two drinks may be purchased at a time; spectators are not allowed to carry more than two drinks at any given time.

Bags + Permitted/Prohibited Items
Opaque bags measuring 6x6x6 inches and smaller or clear bags 12x6x12 inches and smaller are allowed inside the course grounds.

THE PLAYERS allows fans to bring in their own food in a 1 gallon clear, plastic bag where food items are also wrapped in clear wrap.

THE PLAYERS will allow reusable plastic or metal cups up to 32 ounces at entries, as long as they are empty.

Merchandise

There will be a PGA TOUR Fan Shop within the Welcome Experience (main entrance) as in years past. In addition, the Welcome Experience and Fan Shop will be open to the public the weekend before the tournament (March 5-7), so that our Northeast Florida community can come check out the unique merchandise collection and purchase commemorative items and apparel. No ticket is required, and guests can park in the public parking lot off CR 210.

Friday, March 5: Noon to 5 p.m.

Saturday, March 6: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, March 7: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cashless experience: Payment processes at the PGA TOUR Fan Shop, all vendors and all concession stands will be digital, contactless and cashless throughout the entire tournament property.

What's New in 2021

Vineyard Vines custom PLAYERS-inspired T-shirt designs for men, women and youth

T-shirts embellished with the local color and culture of Ponte Vedra Beach and Northeast Florida – sun, surf, palm trees, golf and the PGA TOUR's flagship event.

Trendy prints on polos with the sought after swinging Goldman logo by Peter Millar.

Best Sellers and Key Offerings

Large selection of apparel for men and woman in comfortable fabrications and trend setting colors and prints

More than 20,000 hats available. Choose your fabrication, color and style.

Cheers to THE PLAYERS! Enjoy your favorite beverage in a PLAYERS logo tumbler, barware, mules, coffee mugs, koozies and more.

Exciting gifts and souvenirs for the youngest fans. Toys, apparel and headwear available from newborn to youth.

Over 10,000 T-shirts for that casual lifestyle.

Health and Safety

The PGA TOUR Fan Shop will be complying with a strict set of health and safety protocols in order to maintain a safe environment for all guests. These protocols include:

Open air

■ One way in, one way out

■ Electronic counter at the entrance and exits to ensure capacity is not exceeded at any time

■ Social distancing decals on the ground throughout the Fan Shop

■ Directional signage to guide fans throughout the Fan Shop

■ Face masks required

■ Cashless and contactless payment system



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Navigating

Continued from 30

- Hand sanitizing stations throughout the Fan Shop
- Plexiglass guards at all checkout counters and at bag check
- Staff will be sanitizing the counters and their hands after each transaction
- Health screening checks for all staff, volunteers and vendors upon arrival

Food & Drink

- Taste of JAX – 11 green/12 tee
Cousins Maine Lobster – serving up its 100% premium, wild-caught, sustainably harvested lobster from Maine.
- MOJO BBQ – a premier barbecue, Southern food, and craft cocktail destination with eight locations in North and Central Florida.
- Wine & Dine on 9 presented by Meiomni Wines – 9 fairway

Enjoy food from Bonefish Grill and a glass of wine from Meiomni Wines, the official wine of the PGA TOUR, in a beautiful garden setting. Freshen up at the permanent restrooms here as well.

Relax, unwind and discover the unrivaled taste of Meiomni Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Rosé. Cheers! (Please enjoy Meiomni wines responsibly.)

- Food Court – THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience
- Homespun Kitchen – Healthy fast food. Whether you are vegan, gluten free or paleo, you will find tons of options at Homespun.
- Firehouse Subs – This sandwich shop was founded in Jacksonville.
- Daily's – Since 1997, Daily's convenience stores have served communities throughout the state of Florida.



Photo by Craig O'Neal

- Trucks on 10
This venue offers flavors from local, favorite food trucks and an open-air Michelob ULTRA Mobile bar.
- Twisted Okie; Carolina Jax; Mama's; Tikiz
- Tacos on 12 – 12 green
One of the most well-trafficked food venues on the course, featuring food and drink from TacoLu, Jacksonville's most popular Baja Mexicana.
- Sawgrass Square – 10 tee
Located at the Davis Love III Entry, grab a doughnut from Mini Bar and/or some BBQ from 4 Rivers Smokehouse.
- Mini Bar – Jacksonville's first mini doughnut shop will be serving up a set menu of mini-sized doughnuts in more than a dozen unique flavors. Some examples include

fruity pebbles, samoa, pop tart, maple bacon and coffee cake.

- 4 Rivers Smokehouse – a sophisticated Texas-style smokehouse
- Sawgrass Splash – The signature cocktail of THE PLAYERS. The Sawgrass Splash is made with vodka, fresh lemonade, orange juice and lime juice, as well as simple syrup. It's best served tall and over ice.

YETI pint cups

Fans can purchase 16-ounce PLAYERS-logged YETI pint cups in all draft beer locations, and the YETI can be refilled with beer only and for the price of a regular draft beer, on the day of purchase. Locations include: Bier Garden, Oasis Refreshment and #18 Landing Refreshment.

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Business Weekly

PAGE 32

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

Check out some hot items at the PGA TOUR Fan Shop at THE PLAYERS

Page 38

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com



Guests attend a pop-up "A Preview of Reunion with Chef Art Smith" on Tuesday evening at the Sawgrass Marriott Resort and Spa.

Sawgrass Marriott hosts celebrity chef Art Smith for tasty 'A Preview of Reunion'

By Holly Tishfield

For an exciting culinary event to fulfill any TPC week cravings, the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa is hosting a five-course, prix-fixe dining experience at Vernon's First Coast Kitchen & Bar with cooking from famed Chef Art Smith.

The pop-up, dubbed "A Preview of Reunion by Chef Art Smith," is a sampling of the culinary creations that Chef Art will serve later this year at his new Chicago based restaurant on the Navy Pier, Reunion by Chef Art Smith, with dishes heavily influenced by his southern roots.

"As a North Florida native, I'm excited to come home and provide a glimpse of my new restaurant to the community," Smith said in a press release. "I've been a fan of Sawgrass Marriott for years, so bringing 'A Preview of Reunion' to the resort was a seamless decision."

Smith attended Florida State University while also completing culinary internships at places such as The Greenbriar and the Disney College Program. He rose to fame after spending many years as Oprah's personal chef, and through encouragement from his now-husband Jesus, he began opening his own restaurants across the country.

Today, after appearing on numerous television programs such as Bravo's 'Top Chef' and ABC's 'Good Morning America,' he owns and operates restaurants such as Blue Door Kitchen & Garden in the heart of Chicago's Gold Coast, Southern Art and Bourbon Bar in Atlanta's Buckhead, Art Bird & Whiskey Bar in the iconic Grand Central Termi-



Photos by Holly Tishfield

A special five-course meal was served to guests at the pop-up event with celebrity chef Art Smith on Tuesday evening at the Sawgrass Marriott Resort & Spa.

ART SMITH continues on Page 33

Say yes to no!



Harry Pappas
Columnist

If we want to have a life full of stress-relieving, life-appreciating, joy-delivering, mood-lifting, source-connecting, butt-kicking feelings, than we need to say NO more often! We must harness the power

of a little word that often takes incredible courage to say and remarkably hard to receive; NO! When most people are asked to do something, especially for friends, family, or relatives, they fold like a paper bag and say YES. I refer to this behavior, as the "disease to please." I suggest that 19th-century American humorist Henry Wheeler Shaw (AKA Josh Billings nailed it when he said, "Half of the troubles of this life can be traced to saying, 'yes' too quickly and not saying, 'no' soon enough." Life is only as complicated as we let it become, which is why we must learn to say NO to the things that damage us without feeling guilty, awkward or scared, so we can say yes to health, abundance, and happiness.

Tyranny of the urgent is a battle that we all fight, which takes time away from what is truly important while we focus on the urgent. Very seldom is the urgent things the most important things. The conflict between urgent vs. important is a recurring theme in Dr. Stephen R. Covey's work from The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Unless we can get better at saying NO, our lives are likely to feel out of control and overcrowded. Love, joy, and peace are incompatible with hurry. Therefore, if you are like me, it's time to stop and consider the cost of succumbing to YES. NO liberates while YES commits! Although NO is perceived as a confrontational word, I beg to differ. I suggest that it is a beautiful word. Maybe one of the most beautiful we will ever speak, as it helps us to become better, stronger and wiser. Moreover, when we say NO we are giving the gift of truth. In other words, we are not saying YES when the truth is that we want to say NO. Perhaps Dr. Seuss conveys my position more clearly, "Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't

PAPPAS continues on Page 35



Art Smith

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nal in New York City, and Chef Art Smith’s Homecomin’ at Walt Disney World’s Disney Springs in Orlando. Chef Art Smith has also prepared meals for many esteemed figures, former President Barak Obama, Florida Governor Bob Graham, and even pop singer Lady Gaga.

“A Preview of Reunion by Chef Art Smith’ features four courses of the Chef’s creation. Course one is a Southern Pickle Board with Buttermilk Benne Seed Crackers, Goat Pimento Cheese, House-made pickles, and more. Course two offers two options, Shrimp and Grits or Fried Green Tomatoes. Course three, the main course, gives guests the options of Buttermilk Fried Chicken, Wagyu Beef Zabuton, or Cornmeal Seed Crusted Snapper. Finally, for dessert, the mouth-watering choices include a Smith Family 12-Layer Chocolate Cake, Hemp Seed Meyer Lemon Cake, or a Buttermilk Panna Cotta.

This exclusive pop-up by Chef Art Smith is happening now through the end of TPC on Sunday, March 14th, at

Photos by Holly Tishfield

A special five-course meal was served to guests at the pop-up event with celebrity chef Art Smith on Tuesday evening at the Sawgrass Marriott Resort & Spa.

the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa. To buy tickets, visit [eventbrite.com/e/a-preview-of-reunion-by-chef-art-smith-tickets-141190523657](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-preview-of-reunion-by-chef-art-smith-tickets-141190523657), and while you are at dinner you might be lucky enough to see Chef Art Smith himself wandering about greeting guests.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices FNR hosts Mega Open House Weekend on March 20-21

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty recently announced its Mega Open House Weekend returns on Saturday and Sunday, March 20-21. The event offers dozens of open house viewings of the company’s listings of available homes.

“With current low inventory and market demand, our Mega Open House weekend makes it possible to view several homes and neighborhoods in one weekend,” said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty President and CEO Christy Budnick. “For sellers, the Mega Open House is an outstanding way to showcase your home to prospective buyers.”

Go to OpenHouseNEFlorida.com for a list of open houses. Go to the company’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FloridaNetworkRealty, to see the homes virtually during the event.

Everyone is welcome to tour homes for sale during the Mega Open House weekend. For more information, visit FloridaNetworkRealty.com.



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Powered by breakthrough technology, this facial helps restore the architecture of the face using potent nutrients found in plant actives to help support the extra-cellular matrix. A conditioning facial massage and tightening jowl and chin masks help restore youthful contour to the cheeks and jawline, leaving skin hydrated and supported.

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MEMBER OF MARRIOTT BONVOY

Sabrage offers views of St. Augustine and surroundings from water

By Shaun Ryan

St. Augustine is a picturesque town from all vantage points. And one of the most popular ways to see the Nation's Oldest City and its surrounding environment is from the water.

That's why so many tour operators offer cruises along the bayfront. The newest of these enterprises is Sabrage Charters, which is docked at 117 Dockside Drive and picks up passengers at the dock in front of Culinary Outfitters Waterfront Restaurant, 173 Shipyard Way.

Owned and operated by Capt. Glen Davis, Jonathan Cordero and Ian Bartlett, Sabrage is a 63-foot custom Cooper catamaran equipped with high-end finishes, spacious decks, two restrooms and comfortable seating for up to 110 guests.

"We are thrilled and grateful to have the opportunity to bring Sabrage to St. Augustine," said Davis. "Our mission is to show our guests a relaxing, safe and memorable experience. Everyone that comes out can take a break from the norms of life and just have a good time. It's what being on a boat is all about. With us, you can just kick back and enjoy the ride!"

Sabrage specializes in daily excursions and group charter events, including a sunset cruise and an eco cruise.

"We cruise up the San Sebastian River and the Intracoastal Waterway," Davis said. "They get great views of downtown and the Bridge of Lions, the inlet and the lighthouse. Sometimes, we head out to Vilano and just cruise. So you see a lot of beautiful scenery."

Also available is a wine tasting cruise and private charters for weddings, receptions and parties.

And, while groups often make up the Sabrage customer base, the boat is available for individuals as well.

"St. Augustine has grown so much in the last few years," said Davis. "We feel the market here is ready for all that we have to offer. Sabrage's versatility, size, style and class enable us to offer our trips to every demographic there is. We love to customize private trips for each customer, including food and beverage packages and live music/DJ options. I've always said that this is the best job ever. We get to go have fun on the water and show people a great time!"

CHARTERS continues on **Page 35**



Sabrage business partners, from left are: Jonathan Cordero, Capt. Glen Davis and Ian Bartlett.



Sabrage has a bar and space for catering private charters.



Capt. Glen Davis stands aboard the Sabrage catamaran. Business partners Jonathan Cordero and Ian Bartlett are in the background.



Anes Beaz (left) and Yirel Morillo were among local representatives of the hospitality industry who attended the event aboard the Sabrage catamaran for a sunset cruise early in February.

What does sabrage mean?

Sabrage is a French word referring to a technique for opening a champagne bottle with the blunt side of a saber. During victory celebrations, members of Napoleon's cavalry often opened bottles this way. The saber is slid along the body of the bottle and strikes the lip, breaking it and the cork from the neck. Anyone attempting sabrage is advised to carefully check the drinking glass or flute for small shards of the bottle's glass before consuming the champagne.



Passengers board the Sabrage catamaran for an event held for local representatives of the hospitality industry.



The St. Augustine skyline is seen at sunset from the Sabrage catamaran.

Photos by Susan Griffin

Flagler Health+ appoints new executive VP and chief physician executive

David Rice to replace Miguel Machado, who plans to retire in September

David Rice, M.D., has joined Flagler Health+ as executive vice president and chief physician executive. In this role, Dr. Rice will oversee clinical quality, patient safety, performance improvement, infection prevention, medical affairs and related functions across the Flagler Health+ enterprise. He will lead efforts to further advance the organization's culture of high reliability, working closely with medical staff leadership, First Coast Health Alliance and other key stakeholders.

Rice brings more than a decade of executive-level leadership experience and



Dr. David Rice

proven expertise in advancing the quality, safety and efficiency of patient services. He most recently served as the senior vice president, system chief medical officer and chief quality officer at Baptist Health. Prior roles included chief quality officer of Coastal Community Health and chief medical officer of Baptist Physician Partners.

"Dr. Rice is an accomplished, creative and dedicated physician and healthcare executive with distinguished academic and professional background," said Flagler Health+ President and CEO Jason

Barrett. "He brings expertise, experience and interpersonal skills to this role that are key to our continued success as we deploy a very aggressive growth strategy and our vision to advance physical, social and economic health for the communities we serve."

Rice is board-certified in internal medicine. He earned his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Florida and a Master of Healthcare Leadership from Brown University. He is committed to lifetime learning and has completed professional certificate programs at Stanford University and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"I am honored to join the Flagler Health+ family and look forward to partnering with the Board, health system

leadership, team members, physicians and our community to continue the mission of the organization," Rice said. "Flagler Health+ has a long and storied reputation of clinical excellence, the provision of high quality care, and the focus on people necessary to succeed in healthcare today."

Rice's appointment comes as current EVP and Chief Medical Officer Miguel Machado, M.D., announced his plans to retire in September of this year. Rice will work alongside Machado in the coming months. Recognition of Dr. Machado's contributions, distinguished career and more than 20 years of service to Flagler Health+ will be issued at the time of his retirement.

To learn more about Flagler Health+, go to flaglerhealth.org.

Pappas

Continued from 32

matter, and those who matter don't mind."

People comment about my ability to keep up a highly disciplined and structured schedule. They think I am naturally disciplined. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, I am methodical, and I maintain strict habits, but nothing is natural. Just like most people, my rational mind wants a fabulous beach body, but my emotional mind wants the chocolate chip cookie. I fight the temptation every day to say YES to distractions, but I have become good at saying NO because I know the pain of discipline hurts a lot less than the pain of regret. Say no to grow! Confucius never said that but he definitely was thinking it!

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Charters

Continued from 34

Prior to launching the local business, Davis ran a catamaran day charter in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, for 27 years. With tourism nearly at a halt in the Caribbean due to hurricanes and the pandemic, the partners were able to fulfill their four-year-long goal of bringing Sabrage to St. Augustine.

The boat arrived in August and Sabrage

began renting in October. And one of St. Augustine's signature events helped the business really get off the ground.

"Nights of Lights was great for us," said Davis. "We learned a lot, met a lot of nice people and fun local groups."

He said the response has been very positive.

"Everybody's been super cool," he said.

Go to www.sabragestaugustine.com or call (904) 310-4999 for more information.

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- MARSH LANDING - Instant relaxation! This one-story home was designed with windows that capture the views of magnificent natural surroundings around the lagoon. Wood-like tile flooring throughout, totally updated kitchen, all-season Florida Room, 3-car garage! \$1,189,000.
- PONTE VEDRA BOULEVARD - Across from beach access, near The Lodge & Club, this stunning courtyard home sits on a large lagoon lot. The center atrium provides complete privacy. 5 bedrooms have baths en suite! Built like a rock! \$3,250,000.



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Chefs Marshall and Tasha Peters: Giving, living and feeling lucky!



Leigh Cort
Table Talk

Preparing dinner for yourself or for someone you care for, creating a dinner party for friends or a romantic dinner for two... takes more time than just putting plates on the table. There are hours involved in planning the entree,

shopping, multi-steps in preparation, cooking and finally enjoying a well-balanced delicious meal. When Chef Marshall Peters and his dynamic wife Chef Tasha met two decades ago during their early restaurant years as corporate managers for Ruby Tuesday — they couldn't have imagined that their paths would lead them to creating "By Design Catering" — and BDC Meals — as they have become recognized in St. Johns County, Florida.

"We can't believe how many people we have been able to serve through BDC Meals," Marshall Peters said. "We're really caregivers — nurturing our clients by offering them ready-to-eat entrees that also gives them the gift of time. When our clients sit down to a meal, we know that they haven't had to spend time doing anything except relaxing, eating dinner and getting on with life! But most important — we cherish our client who is an immunocompromised patient, or a recovering cancer patient, or someone's elderly parent who just can't take great care of themselves any longer. There are times when Tasha and I get off the phone after hearing "why" they are ordering meals and we just cry. We're amazed how our little ready to eat meal company can be a blessing for so many."

A graduate of Johnson & Wales University, Chef Marshall began as a personal chef that set the bar for their company today — especially when they were bringing meals to the Jacksonville Jaguars; they also needed nutritionally balanced food that helped them function better as athletes. This is when the Peters started refining their culinary talents by researching the anatomy and physiology of how food is a masterful combination of delicious taste and meaningful balance of healthy ingredients. Imagine a chef whose mission is to create something that gives comfort in your soul like when his mother reached his through his stomach. He doesn't just do one style of cooking — he enjoys trying to do it all.

Chef Tasha Peters brings her own lively style to the table — since 2009 when she launched HER first business 'Big Mouth Catering' — while watching a TV show called "Recipe for Success" on the Food Network. She knew that taking charge of her own destiny depended on doing something she loved. The lightbulb went on when she realized that she could put families back around the dinner table, considering how much we all dine out.



Photo by sarahannayphotography

Chefs Tasha and Marshall Peters, owners of By Design Catering, have created tasty ready-to-eat meals for customers to enjoy at home.

Creating meals for busy people leading busy lives — brought her talents to the forefront of BDC Meals.

Marshall and Tasha take the stress out of meal preparation by allowing clients to pre-order meals each week that cater to dietary preferences and restrictions. BDC Meals cooks, cools, packages, labels and then delivers ready-to-eat entrees to St. Johns County residents every Sunday. The Peters do NOT deliver ingredients in a box that require preparation and cooking! With new menus offered weekly, many meals can be customized for those who go meat-free without sacrificing taste!

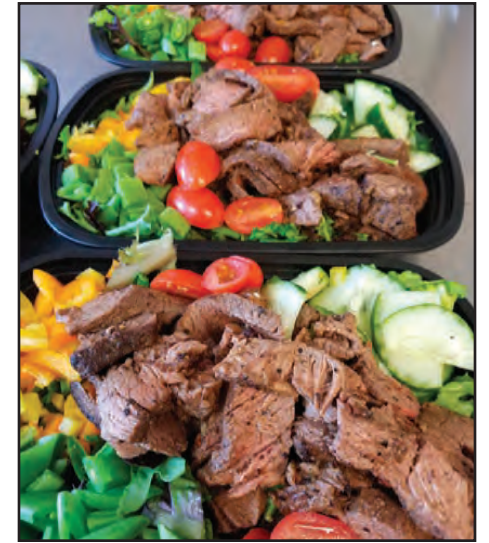
It seemed very simple; so, I placed my weekly order and left a large cooler at the front door to experience their Sunday delivery service without needing to be at home. The delivery was made on time late afternoon as promised. I couldn't wait to open the heavy-duty insulated delivery bags and select which dishes were going to be enjoyed at dinner. They were perfectly presented in attractive microwaveable containers with clear tops so I could see how attractive they would be when I plated them at the table.

Whether ordering the 3- or 5- meal weekly choices, the portions are generous and balanced, with the 'Clean' option including calories on each label. Each

week's menu offers a matching SIMILAR version of each dish but pares back the calories by eliminating carbs, sauces, cheeses, etc.

With a strong emphasis on cuisine that Chef Marshall proudly creates evoking 'comfort', the weekly menus offer variety and the ability to try something new each time you receive the BDC email newsletter. Options are consistently varied — imagine Lemon Butter Flank Steak with Smashed Potatoes, Balsamic Chicken with Rice and Roasted Brussel Sprouts, Pork Carnitas Fajitas with Yellow Rice and Sofrito Beans, Spinach & Artichoke Chicken Pasta. These two chefs are dedicated to making all of the meals with love, preparing restaurant quality food for a margin of the price.

I appreciated that there is NO commitment week-to-week, since a busy lifestyle makes BDC Meals feel like a special gift when you open your frig on that night when you just can't imagine having spaghetti or canned chili one more time! This week, I'm planning to order three meals that will compliment dining on the patio under the stars: Shrimp, Chicken and Sausage Jambalaya — Swiss & Mushroom Burger with Southern Potato Salad AND Parmesan Walnut Pork Medallions with Mashed Potatoes!



Photos provided by Leigh Cort

Steak Power Salad



Spinach and artichoke chicken with vegetables

How can their kitchen handle two high-energy dynamic chefs? When Tasha and Marshall met, it was like fireworks in the restaurant industry. Today they're creating raving fans with their BDC meals — and we can only imagine what the coming year is going to bring. Could it be true when Tasha refers to him as a "...giant piece of apple pie?" Obviously, she means that EVERYONE loves him and loves his food!

The Peters are a family who love the community in which they live. When they think of 'giving' they believe in "You reap what you sow". Giving is a huge part of their lives, not just a donation but giving of themselves in time and service. When people ask, they give.. and do it through servitude to others. THEY GIVE WHEN NO ONE'S LOOKING! Marshall prides himself on his positive energy, gleaned from how great he feels his life is together with Tasha and their place in St. Johns County. They balance each other — and thrive from their respectful shared energies. They feel blessed to be so close, so comfortable working with each other and still get along. They are best friends and couldn't imagine doing this or anything else without each other!

I can't wait until I receive my next delivery, now that I know Chef Marshall and Chef Tasha Peters are impassioned with working in the food industry on their own terms. They've created a life by their own design. They write the story and feel lucky — Now we're lucky to meet them and enjoy their By Design Meals!

Go to www.BDCMeals.com for more information.

Cookbook features vegan recipes from popular St. Augustine restaurants, food trucks and more

By Holly Tishfield

It is no secret that St. Augustine offers a wide selection of culinary delights. From gourmet ice pops in downtown to specialty omelettes at backroad diners, there is a little something for everyone.

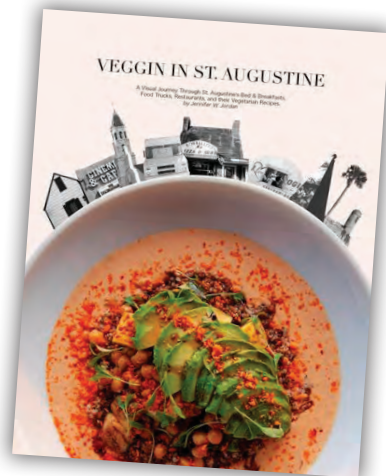
One St. Augustine resident, Jennifer W. Jordan, decided to compile some of her favorite nooks and crannies for vegetarian treats in a brand new cookbook titled “Veggin In St. Augustine.”

The cookbook features many recipes from St. Augustine favorites, such as Serenata Beach Club, while also providing recipes from local food trucks and bed and breakfasts.

Michael’s Steakhouse specifically created two vegan recipes for Jordan’s cookbook, and told her that the delicious food options are now available on their regular menu in the restaurant, as well.

Jordan is no stranger to being involved in the St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra Beach communities, having worked at places like the Lightner Museum and the Cultural Center in previous years. When the pandemic struck last spring, it gave Jordan a moment to pause and reflect on her life/career. She decided she wanted to change what she was doing, but still find a way to benefit the community, and thus the idea of a local cookbook was born.

As a vegetarian, Jordan knew this would be a good oppor-



tunity to feature the many incredible places in St. Augustine that offer vegetarian/vegan food options.

“I have met so many people, and made so many new relationships in this process,” she said.

One of the recipes Jordan says she is most excited to try is the Paneer Cheese, an idea provided by Punita Patel, owner of popular food truck BackYard Buffalo.

“It was important for me to represent the broad culinary experiences that St. Augustine has to offer,” Jordan said in a press release. “This book appeals to both local food adventurers as well as people who love St. Augustine like to take a taste of it home with them.”

Although she was nervous to publish the cookbook, so far she has found that community reaction has been overwhelmingly good.

“The whole community has been so positive,” she said. “It is wonderful!”

Jordan plans to create a vegetarian cookbook every year, where she will feature a new set of recipes from new locations within St. John’s County. With so many well established locations to go through, and so many new locations continuously popping up in the area, Jordan will certainly have her hands full for the next edition.

You can now purchase the “Veggin In St. Augustine” cookbook on Amazon.



A self portrait of author Jennifer W. Jordan in her home in St. Augustine..

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-Hubble® 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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8 buys you don't want to miss at the PGA TOUR Fan Shop

The PGA TOUR Fan Shop at TPC Sawgrass is open and in full swing, attracting many excited fans with its new merchandise items. Take a look at some of the popular items for THE PLAYERS Championship 2021.

Here are eight buys at this year's event you don't want to miss.

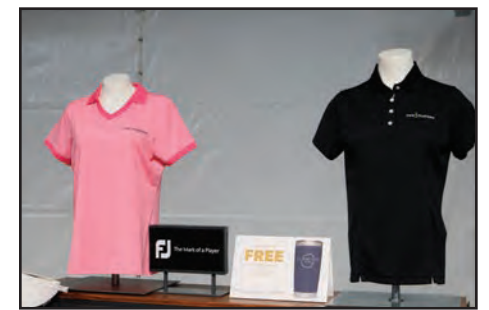


Photos by Holly Tishfield

THE PGA TOUR Fan Shop at TPC Sawgrass boasts all types of unique and collectible items for THE PLAYERS Championship.



Women's Arita Local, Available in Pink and Purple, \$35



Women's Open Collar Polo, Available in variation of colors, \$80



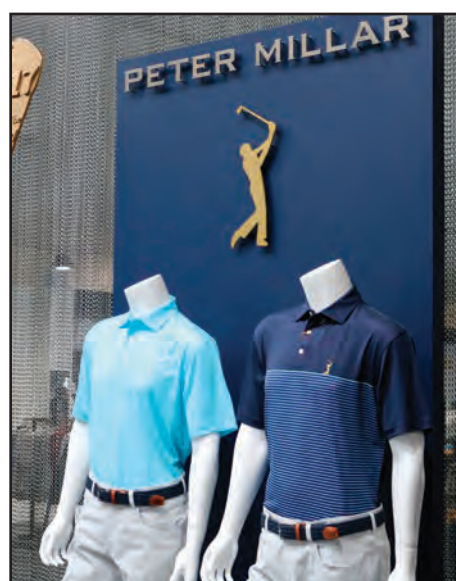
17th Hole Ale Glasses and Sterling Party Cup, \$12 and \$10



TPC Inspired Stainless Growler, \$50



Men's Seabreeze Core Logo, Available in White and Grey, \$35



Peter Millar Men's Printed Jellyfish Polo, \$103



Men's Golf Hats, \$30-\$40



Women's Golf Hats, \$30-\$40



Shoppers check out the PGA TOUR Fan Shop during the store's opening weekend March 5-7.

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 Celebrating 30 years

Lighthouse boat builders donate replica of historic boat to Fort Mose

By Shaun Ryan

Thanks to the Heritage Boatworks of the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum, Fort Mose Historical Society can once again exhibit an important part of the local community's distant past.

At the monthly Fort Mose military muster on Saturday, March 6, the boat builders donated a new barca chata to the museum in the park. The vessel replaces one they had built in 2010 that had fallen into disrepair.

A barca chata was a Spanish flatboat commonly used as a barge for hauling items in the 17th and 18th centuries. It would have seen frequent use in the days when Fort Mose was active. It would help feed the community and help protect the fort.

Boats of this type also played an important role for enslaved African men and women of the time who used them to escape slavery in the Carolinas and make their way to Spanish Florida and freedom.

During the unveiling, archaeologist Chuck Meide told those assembled that the first recorded instance of enslaved Africans using this type of boat to escape the northern British colonies was in 1687. There were eight men, two women and one infant.

"We have a wonderful engraving from 1860 from the Civil War of boats that looked just like this barca chata," Meide said. "The design didn't change very much over the years."

He said that enslaved Africans also used boats like the barca chata in the 19th century to make their way to freedom again,



Photos by Shaun Ryan

The barca chata was a commonly used boat in the distant past.

this time to the North.

Jane Mahoney, executive director for the Fort Mose Historical Society, approached the Heritage Boatworks several months ago and asked them to build a new barca chata for Fort Mose State Park. The boat was completed in plenty of time for the historical society's 25th anniversary celebration, set for June 26.

Mahoney expressed gratitude to the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Mu-

BOAT continues on Page 40



Standing in front of the barca chata are, from left, Fort Mose Historical Society President Charles E. Ellis, boat builders Gene Veltri and Steve McMullen, and archaeologist Chuck Meide.



Visitors gather to see the new barca chata at Fort Mose State Park.



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For more information please visit our website at fchambermusic.org

Blues Hall of Famer Robert Cray to perform at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

Blues Hall of Famer Robert Cray will return to the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall on Nov. 13. Cray last performed there in January 2020.

Tickets are on sale at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre Box Office and online at Ticketmaster.com. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall Box Office is closed at this time.

Cray has been bridging the lines between blues, soul and R&B for the past four decades, with five Grammy wins, a Blues Hall of Fame induction, receipt of the Americana Lifetime Achievement Award, countless tours and more than 20 acclaimed albums.

“That’s What I Heard” is the title of – and idea behind – Cray’s newest album.

“The first time I played the album, I was struck by what seemed to me to be a distinct Sam Cooke vibe to the music, an impression initially sparked by the rollicking gospel groove of ‘Burying Ground,’ but also by the sweet singing and classic 6/8 feel of ‘You’ll Want Me Back,’” said Cray. “It wasn’t just the churchiness of the former,

nor the tuneful sophistication of the latter; it was the way those two elements intertwined to create a feeling that was just as evident in the other songs.”

The album’s R&B covers fall into two camps, the sweet and the funky.

Of the former, “You’re the One” comes from the Bobby “Blue” Bland songbook. Cray’s version, colored by his jangly rhythm guitar, has a more pronounced 6/8 feel, and his singing is more insistent, making it feel more like a statement of love than Bland’s relaxed, almost resigned, rendition.

“There’s this thing where I feel you kind of gotta get out of your own head when you’re covering one of your heroes,” Cray explained. “Bobby’s one of those. You just let yourself go and do the song because you love it.”

Then there’s “You’ll Want Me Back,” which Curtis Mayfield wrote for Major Lance.

“Curtis Mayfield melodies are just totally irresistible,” said Cray.



Photo provided by the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall



Re-enactors at Fort Mose demonstrate their monthly militia muster March 6 prior to the unveiling of the new barca chata.

Boat

Continued from 39

seum’s boat builders for what she called “one of our most valuable interpretive resources.”

“We appreciate their expert craftsmanship and dedication to historical accuracy and detail,” said Charles E. Ellis, president of the Fort Mose Historical Society. “The boat builders have created an important interpretive element for the park, one that will pique the interest of many park visitors and serve as an important resource for telling the Fort Mose story.”

The barca chata unveiled March 6 was the work of Steve McMullen and Gene

Veltri. They worked on the boat nine hours a day for three days each week, completing it in about a month.

Veltri said they used the former boat as a guide in creating its replacement. Though these types of boat were common, they weren’t preserved, so it was difficult to do research on their attributes.

“These boats were kind of thrown together and used to pull around, and the bigger ones they’d just build at one end of the river, float it down, tear it up and sell the lumber at the other end,” McMullen said. “So it was a utility boat. It could be any size you wanted it.”

The men built a stand to hold the boat above the ground to preserve it and to make it more easily viewed.

The Heritage Boatworks Program is run by St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum volunteers. It is dedicated to keeping the traditions of boat building alive in the Nation’s Oldest City. The boat builders focus on construction projects to replicate boats common to North Florida waterways in the past.



Photos by Shaun Ryan

Steve McMullen (left) and Gene Veltri unveil the barca chata they built for display at Fort Mose State Park.



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Motorcycle Photography by Jim Dohms
1952 Vincent Rapide - owned by Gene Brown

Sports



THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021 • PAGE 43

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Photo provided by Colleen Mabe

The Ponte Vedra girls soccer team celebrates after winning the Class 5A state championship against Archbishop McCarthy on Friday, March 4 in DeLand.

Ponte Vedra girls soccer wins state championship

Lady Sharks end season with shutout victory over Archbishop McCarthy

By Paris Moulden

Just like last year, Ponte Vedra and Archbishop McCarthy faced off with the Class 5A girls soccer state championship title on the line. Also, like last year, the game ended in a 2-0 shutout.

But unlike last year, this year it was Ponte Vedra that was celebrating at the end of the game. The Lady Sharks continued their streak of shutout postseason wins with the biggest win of all, beating Archbishop McCarthy in the state title game on Friday, March 4 in DeLand.

What a difference a year makes, and what a crazy year it has been,

Because of COVID-19, there was a question whether

STATE TITLE continues on Page 44

McIlroy to defend title again ... this time for sure

By Kathy Bissell

Last year, Rory McIlroy was all set to defend his PLAYERS title, one of his five most prestigious victories, the other ones being the 2011 U.S. Open, the 2012 and 2014 PGA and the 2014 British Open.

Then, in the middle of PLAYERS week, the COVID-19 crisis began, and the tournament, which had been all systems go on Wednesday, began with an announcement that after Thursday, there would be no spectators. We still anticipated a Sunday finish.

After one round was played, McIlroy might have made the best prediction of all when he said, "I think we just have to play it by ear and take it day by day, and as someone said to me yesterday, today's overreaction could look like tomorrow's underreaction. So just got to take it day by day and see where this thing goes."

Where it went was down a horrible rabbit hole.

There was a domino effect. In the U.S., the NBA canceled games. The NCAA Tournament was canceled. When Disney and Universal closed down, that was the siren call to stop everything. The PGA TOUR cancelled the rest of THE PLAYERS and postponed any golf for three weeks. St. Johns County had one case of COVID.

Three weeks quickly became three months. Thousands became ill across the country. Many, tragically, died. However, many more had mild symptoms, like Jack Nicklaus, and his wife Barbara, who tested positive but felt fine.

MCILROY continues on Page 45



Photo by Micah Green

PGA TOUR commissioner, players speak ahead of tournament

By Kathy Bissell

One reason we like golf is that the players, for the most part, are not shy about sharing their thoughts. Here are some of the best comments from Tuesday. Even PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan got into the action.

Commissioner Monahan: “While we anticipated a strong interest from fans in attending THE PLAYERS, little did we know that we’d sell out our four competition days in less than one hour on February 16th.”

Rory McIlroy, on being defending champ for two years: “I guess it’s nice, like I get another bite at the cherry...”

Jon Rahm, on hitting the tee shot to 17: “You’ve got to go out there and be brave. Simple as that. There’s no other way. On paper it’s an easy shot, yes, but you’ve

got to go out there, step up and hit a good shot.”

Justin Thomas, on playing TPC Sawgrass: “It’s not like a lot of courses where you can -- even if you’re playing bad you can just kind of skank it around and hit it on one side. You really have to step up on each tee, on each par-3, par-4, par-5 and just hit the golf shot that it requires.”

Bryson DeChambeau, on going for the 12th green with his drive: “If it’s downwind, yeah, I’m sure I will. Even if I can hit it up next to the green and chip it on.”

Webb Simpson, on playing TPC Sawgrass: “I just learned that you have to respect the golf course. There’s trouble on every hole. You can try to pin the tail on the donkey, but eventually you’re going to get kicked in the teeth.”

Commissioner Monahan, on the number of fans this year: “This is a stadium golf

course with 20 percent capacity. You can see every single shot as a fan here from various perspectives on the golf course. Now at 20 percent, your ability to do so and space out, this place lends itself really well to it.”

Jon Rahm, on why it is hard to maintain a high level of play in golf: “I do think golf should be one of the top three most intricate and difficult sports there is with some of the most amount of variables when it comes to the golf game.”

Webb Simpson, on the Olympics: “I think it would be an honor to represent the country. I feel like it would really shoot me in the foot for the Playoffs, and right now in my career, Playoffs are more important to me than the Olympics.”

Justin Thomas on what it’s like with no fans: “You can make a 60-footer on 17 when you’re even par, and in an event

with no fans, it’s just another putt. But when you get a big crowd like we could potentially have here this week or like normal, you feel that buzz and you feel that energy.”

Commissioner Monahan, on vaccinations for PGA Tour players: “We’re going to do everything we can to support vaccination for our players when it’s appropriate to do so.”

Bryson DeChambeau, on what he did after winning the Arnold Palmer Invitational: “I had a chocolate milk, and I had some Arnold Palmer gummies. It was like iced tea and lemonade gummies. That was kind of funny, it was kind of a tribute to him.”

Rory McIlroy, on this year’s tournament: “I think at least we know this year the tournament is not going to be canceled, unless something pretty crazy happens again.”

Who does the crystal ball see as THE PLAYERS champion?

By Kathy Bissell

What a year.

It has been nearly 12 full months since the The Players

Championship 2020 was canceled. My Crystal Ball went into shock when that happened, and it took some serious resuscitation to bring it back. The doctors said it was a medical miracle that it hadn’t disintegrated into sand. The Ball was honestly in a daze until golf came back in

May with the two special events, the first one featuring Rory McIlroy and Dustin Johnson against Rickie Fowler and Matthew Wolff.

The Ball really likes Rickie and is partial to orange.

It perked up.

Then it started giving off sparks when Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson teed it up with Peyton Manning and Tom Brady for the second special event. Even Brady’s ripped pants didn’t upset it. And the Ball thought Peyton Manning was a blast.

Thankfully, when the PGA TOUR held its first event of the restarted season in Fort Worth at the Charles Schwab Challenge, the Ball was almost back to normal, whatever normal is for a cracked Crystal Ball. Now it’s starting to sparkle, and might be ready to provide illuminating guidance as to who will win the THE PLAYERS Championship 2021.

This year will be different. Really different. There will only be 20% of the normal amount of fans. That’s a shame, but necessary. It will still be more than at any golf tournament since last March. There will be some welcome cheers and shouts for good shots and appropriate moans for water balls.

Having fans may give an assist to twice-defending champ McIlroy, who admitted

several times during the last year that he misses them. He thinks his game is not quite as sharp without their presence. For that reason, he’s not the Ball’s favorite to win, although the Ball is quite partial to Rory as are many golf fans. McIlroy has just not had a great golf year, although with the birth of his first child, Poppy, he has had a great personal year. The thing is, you never know when the switch will flip on and turn a down trend into fabulous success on the golf course. Maybe the 20% of fans at the Arnold Palmer and at THE PLAYERS will be enough to push him over the edge. That might be as many as 10,000 people each day. Can they do it? We’ll see.

Phil Mickelson, who turned 50 last June, can still bash the golf egg. He’s a past champ, so he’s knows how to beat TPC Sawgrass, which is half the battle. He finished high enough in FedEx points to qualify for the tournament. However, his accuracy has been as off as the Crystal Ball’s psyche was for a while. It’s an achievement that Phil was still in the top 125 after last season. His last PGA TOUR victory was a little over two years ago at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. However, he won both events he played on the PGA TOUR Champions Tour. If he decided to take the Henrik Stenson route and play a 3-wood off the tee instead of driver, I would not count him out for a second victory. Phil’s just that talented, but he’s a sucker for distance.

Now, this last 12 months brought several new players into the limelight. Collin Morikawa, who won the PGA at TPC Harding Park. Bryson DeChambeau, who took apart Winged Foot in the U.S. Open. Daniel Berger, who finally got uninjured and won at the Charles Schwab, (it’s hard not to say the Colonial because that was the name for so many years). Patrick Cantlay is another who is finally healthy. Then there’s Victor Hovland, the former U.S. Amateur champ,

who is from Norway.

While Bryson won tournaments before he went on his chase of distance, he was hitting his drives an average of 20-25 yards shorter. If he can throttle back a bit, he’s got the mental ability to challenge Pete Dye’s design. Like Phil, he’s got the bombs-away mentality, and every course doesn’t require it. TPC Sawgrass, for instance.

Morikawa seems to be suffering from success a bit, which is not surprising. It happens to most everybody who wins a major. They get overwhelmed with offers, and it’s tough to sort everything out for a while. But he’ll be back. He does have the kind of game that can do well here. He’s long enough, but not super long. He’s in the fairway a lot, which is important at TPC Sawgrass, and he’s an OK putter, according to the stats. However, he’s a West Coast guy and it takes them a while to get used to playing overseeded Bermuda like we have in Florida and other places in the Southeast.

Daniel Berger seems to have all the shots as he showed in winning at the Charles Schwab. He said while he was out with injury, he realized that he really did love to play golf. It changed his attitude, he said. It must have because he just won again at Pebble Beach. Berger is a Florida native and went to Florida State, so you can cheer for him enthusiastically, whether in your family room or on the course. How about a little Bergermania?

Patrick Cantlay has been a player in the making for quite a while. He, too, was sidelined with injury (his back). But this season, he’s been living on leaderboards. He won the ZOZO which was played at Sherwood CC outside Los Angeles. And he had close calls at TPC Scottsdale and Pebble Beach. Cantlay is a Southern California guy so it makes sense that the West Coast swing would be good for him. Like

Morikawa, coming east means overseeded Bermudagrass, which is an acquired taste. But he’s a very good player who is playing very well currently.

One guy who seems to be really solid is Viktor Hovland. He hits a lot of fairways and even more greens. He’s an adequate putter, and if he hits it close enough, he can rake it in for a victory. Hovland has already won twice, and he’s ranked 14 in the world, which is astonishing for a guy who only turned pro after the 2019 U.S. Open. Golf is really all about hitting fairways and greens, and he’s good at that. Amazingly, he also went to Oklahoma State — somebody there is great at recruiting! The Ball likes his steady style for TPC Sawgrass, but maybe it’s just the OSU orange thing.

Of players who have been around for a while, Patrick Reed seems to hit bullets when he’s on. He’s a former Masters champ and just won in San Diego at the Famers Insurance Open. He is a bit of a ruling magnet, but it will be all hands on the ruling deck at THE PLAYERS. Officials will be able to handle anything.

There’s Justin Thomas who has already won the PGA Championship and 13 tournaments. However, his grandfather, who he was close to, recently died. And that may have a few lingering effects. However, the Crystal Ball likes his fighting attitude. When he’s on, he’s amazing. His feet actually leave the ground on his drives. That’s how hard he hits it. Also, 59s don’t grow on trees, and he has posted that score in a PGA TOUR event. He’s definitely a go-low guy. By March he could be ready for another challenge.

I’m sure you wonder why the Ball hasn’t mentioned Jordan Spieth. Well, he’s still hitting it off the planet every once-in-a-while on hit tee shots, and it’s hard to win

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State title

Continued from 41

the PVHS soccer team would have a season at all. But the team rallied around each other and their coaches and just focused on their goals.

“This was obviously a lot different because of the pandemic,” PVHS coach Dave Silverberg said. “We really didn’t know if we were going to have a season, and it was day-by-day, game-by-game, so we were just happy and grateful to be out there for practice and games and no knowing if it’s going to continue. So, to get it all in and then win, that’s just an incredible bonus.”

The Sharks weren’t necessarily looking for revenge for last season’s title loss, but it didn’t particularly hurt.

“Anytime you win, it’s exciting,” Silverberg said. “And to beat the team that beat you, it’s a little redemption, although I have a lot of respect for that team. I know that coach, and they do a great job, so we were joking about doing it again next year.”

PVHS stormed through the postseason in dominating fashion, allowing just one

goal in its run to the state championship.

“We focus a lot defensively, and know when there are big games and the opponents are quality teams, a lot of times it comes down to one goal games,” Silverberg said. “We’ve been in a lot of those so we were used to it, which helped us. And defensively, we just kept getting stronger and stronger.”

The team also had the added struggle of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, wondering if there would even be a season, and having players quarantine, but that also left the door open to give other players a chance to hone their skills.

“We do have a great core,” Silverberg said. “One of our strengths this year was our depth. We had a bunch of players who could play, so we didn’t have to count on just one or two or three.”

The team also focused on working together and building a cohesive unit.

“Going into the postseason, our thoughts were ‘this is it, this is the end of the season,’” said senior Ella Shapiro. “We knew we wanted to give it all we had. We really were good at motivating each other and we really were trying to play for each other to get the end result that we wanted.”

Shapiro didn’t play on the team last season but was a big contributor to its success this season.

“It is indescribable,” Shapiro said of being state champions. “After this year, not knowing how many games we would have or if we would have a season, just ending on such a high note after working so hard, it’s incredibly memorable.”

Shapiro hopes to continue playing soccer on the collegiate level, but because of COVID, the recruiting process has been in flux. But she’ll take to college her memories of Friday’s momentous win and what followed.

“There were tears of joy happening and everyone was just speechless,” Shapiro said. “We knew we could do it and I think we played our best game of the season and it all just came together.”

Silverberg said the team carried that momentum throughout the season, and it kept building as the season progressed.

“They had this confidence that was building and building the last month of the season, so I didn’t really have to say or do much,” he said. “It was all them, and they performed incredibly.”

The teamwork was team bonding was key to this year’s success, said senior co-

captain Eli Mabe.

“We focused a lot more on being closer as a family,” Mabe said. “We had a meeting about and just said ‘we’re here for each other and we’re all in this together, so let’s just get as close as we possibly can and finish out the ride for each other.’”

For the five seniors, they will leave on a high note and with the knowledge the team is in good shape amid the multi-talented teammates who are left. Mabe, and other starters, faced quarantine several during the season, but Mabe felt comfortable knowing how solid the entire group was.

“Knowing there are other teammates who are able to step up and fill in our positions was very important,” she said. “And this team definitely stepped up and did that.”

The end result to the season was particularly special for Mabe, who plans to attend college and focus on art and other creative endeavors.

“I knew going into my senior year that this was going to be my final year of soccer, so we just told everyone to give it their all because this is my end of my 14-year chapter of soccer,” Mabe said. “That was the end, but it was a good end.”

THEME: BASEBALL

ACROSS

- Turkey trot, e.g.
- Dadaist Jean
- * ____ crew, Milwaukee Brewers fan base
- Poppy seed derivative
- Afghan monetary unit
- Hotel room option
- Category of artistic composition
- Between north-east and east
- Relating to pond scum
- *Babe Ruth’s first major league team
- * ____-and- ____ sport
- Dog command
- Bald eagle’s home
- Witchy woman
- Back wound?
- Siskel or Ebert
- Smoothing appliance
- Distinctive flair
- Stomata, sing.
- Burlap fiber
- Archeologist’s find
- Estimated arrivals
- Discompose
- Cobbler’s concern
- Merlin or Gandalf
- *B in RBI
- Close by
- Spade for stony ground
- Karl of politics
- Between ready and go
- *Left, center or right one
- *Yankees’ only #4
- Blast from the past
- Crew tool
- Helped
- ____ one’s time, past tense
- Schiller’s poem
- Express contempt
- What Simon does
- Cut grass
- Intoxicating

DOWN

- *Eat a hot one at the game
- Copycat
- *Number of standard baseball positions
- Miss Muffet’s meal
- Vomiting
- Highest point
- *Scoring unit
- Annapolis frosh
- Tulip’s early stage
- Capital of Latvia
- Et alibi (2 words)
- Water source
- Bacchus’ attendants
- Weasel’s aquatic cousin
- *Baseball trajectory
- Diver’s edible reward
- Muslim woman’s headscarf
- Caribbean island destination
- Gained access to (2 words)
- Hoppy beers
- Individual unit
- Bottom line
- Idealized image
- *Katie ____ or “ ____ at the Bat”
- Empty when kids leave
- World’s longest river
- Cut it out
- Moved a flock of sheep
- Certain John’s or Jane’s last name
- Re-use old ideas
- Car sound, to a toddler
- Trinity
- Small door-opening devices
- One of the hip-bones, pl.
- Whirlpool
- “Big Little ____”
- What Jack’s beanstalk did
- It comes to mind
- Turned to the right, like a horse
- Commotion or fuss
- Wine quality

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

- Diver’s edible reward
- Muslim woman’s headscarf
- Caribbean island destination
- Gained access to (2 words)
- Hoppy beers
- Individual unit
- Bottom line
- Idealized image
- *Katie ____ or “ ____ at the Bat”
- Empty when kids leave
- World’s longest river
- Cut it out
- Moved a flock of sheep
- Certain John’s or Jane’s last name
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- Small door-opening devices
- One of the hip-bones, pl.
- Whirlpool
- “Big Little ____”
- What Jack’s beanstalk did
- It comes to mind
- Turned to the right, like a horse
- Commotion or fuss
- Wine quality

McIlroy

Continued from 41

Millions of people were stranded at home trying to figure out how to work, what to do about schooling for youngsters, what to do about older relatives. You know. You were doing the same thing.

McIlroy was like everybody else. He worked jigsaw puzzles and took joy from the little things. His wife was expecting their first child, so if there was ever a time to be at home more than normal, this was it.

While there, McIlroy launched a new career of sorts by becoming a Peloton superstar, reaching No. 1 status with his rides. Billy Horschel, Justin Thomas, Charley Hoffman, Ian Poulter and Jimmy Walker chased. Poulter actually had two Pelotons (golftour.usatoday.com/2020/03/24/pga-tour-stars-push-each-other-on-peloton-during-coronavirus-pandemic).

When Florida golf courses in his area opened up, McIlroy kept his hand in, playing with the PGA TOUR players in the area: Dustin Johnson, Rickie Fowler, Justin Thomas and Shane Lowrey.

McIlroy's coach, Michael Bannon, based in Ireland, sent him a video camera. Bannon couldn't easily travel to the U.S. and get back home without quarantine on each end.

"Michael and I will probably be on FaceTime quite a bit," McIlroy explained in May. "I'll be sending him a lot of swings, and, you know, we are just going to have to do it remotely for the time being, which is, you know, it's a new normal for a lot of people."

Also, in May, McIlroy became one of the first four players to return to televised golf in a charity match with three other PGA Tour players, the TaylorMade Driving Relief event supported by United Health. Money went to the American Nurses Foundation and the CDC Foundation.

He had Dustin Johnson as a partner and they faced Matthew Wolff and Rickie Fowler, both of whom were Oklahoma State grads.

"It's going to be fun, but I'd like to think that there will be a little bit of trash talk," McIlroy said before play. "Rickie, DJ and I go back a long ways. We played against each other in the Walker Cup in 2007 and then fast forward 13 years, and we're doing something like this. We've got a bit of history."

In a playoff, McIlroy and Johnson won. With what the sponsors put in, \$5.5 million was raised in all, \$1.1 million pledged by viewers.

About three weeks later, tournament golf returned for McIlroy when the PGA TOUR restarted at the Charles Schwab Challenge at Colonial CC in Fort Worth, Texas.

"I'm excited to be back on the road and doing what I'm supposed to do, play golf and compete," he said before the Schwab. "I think that's the one thing I'm looking forward to the most and the one thing I've missed the most over the past few months is just the competition."

Between mid-June and the end of August, McIlroy played nine tournaments out

of the 13 that were held. He played tournaments on courses that may not have been best suited for his game, like Colonial, like RBC Heritage, both of which are very tight and not exceptionally long.

After the Travelers, he seemed unhappy with his play.

"Just over the last few weeks I've made too many mistakes, too many bogeys, too many loose shots, and that was sort of what it was this week, as well," he said. "The way I'm feeling right now, I feel like a couple weeks off."

He finally saw Michael Bannon just before The Memorial, which was mid-July, but after the PGA Championship in August, he sounded a bit like he was searching.

"Maybe I'm just not as good as I used to be. I don't know," he said after the final round of the PGA. "I can't really put my finger on it. I go out there and try my best every single day. Some days I play better than others, and just got to keep going and keep persisting and see if you can do better the next time."

This is not the thinking of a recent world No. 1 player.

However, things were looking up at home. The McIlroys' first child came into the world in the last week of August. Poppy Kennedy McIlroy. Does that sound Irish or what?

McIlroy was back on the golf course for the TOUR Championship, right after the baby was born. He finished 8th, his best since the June restart.

Then, the McIlroy family took a few weeks off to have some family time. Who wouldn't want to do that?

Near the end of October, he played the CJ Cup and the ZOZO both of which had been moved from Asia to the U.S. because of COVID. His last tournament of 2020 was The Masters, which was held two weeks before Thanksgiving. He finished fifth. It was progress.

"I'm trying not to be impatient," he said in Abu Dhabi in January. "I try to stay as patient as possible, but what I will say is that last win does feel like quite a long time

ago at this point."

It was, in fact, the 2020 World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions, which was played in the fall of 2019.

He cited his problem stats from 2020.

"One of the things was approach play out of the rough, which is sort of random, but I hit 60% of fairways, so that means 40% of the time I'm hitting out of the rough, which is quite a lot," he explained.

In 2019, he hit the fairways 61.82% of the time. In 2020, it was 56.34. So far in 2021, he's 58.43%.

Getting better out of the rough is a challenge.

"Who goes and drops a bag of practice balls in the rough?" he questioned. "You go to the range and hit off a perfectly manicured piece of turf, and that's nice but that's not what you're always doing on the golf course."

His second shots — the ones to the green — he thought, were similar to the previous season, but his putts from four to eight feet had been off.

"Obviously if I get those better, my game will become better," he added.

One change he recently made is to put an alignment line on his golf ball which he also did in 2014, one of his best years.

"I won a tournament with it. I won Wentworth during that stretch. I had my best-ever strokes gained putting round at Memorial using the line," he said. "It's something I've sort of went back and forth with over the years."

He also won The British Open and the PGA that year.

Whether the line on the ball is the magic key to future success, whether he stays with it for more than a day or even a week remains to be seen, but as golfers will tell you, when you aren't playing the way you want to, you've got to change something. Who knows, maybe drawing a line on the ball will help him win THE PLAYERS again. Maybe it will even help him win the Masters which would complete his career grand slam. The fate of a career could hang on a Sharpie marker.

Prediction

Continued from 43

that way. It can be done, but it takes a lot of Tums. Hank Haney said on a podcast interview sometime in 2020 that Jordan was so far down in terms of stats performance that it was going to take him three years to recover his form. However, Haney had no doubt that Spieth would be back. He just said from where he was last year, it's a three-year climb to get anyplace near where he was. We are in year two. I have a lot of faith in Hank when it comes to knowing golfers and golf swings. If Hank says three years, it's going to be three years. However, there was some progress after Jordan had a tete-a-tete with Butch Harmon. That might speed it up, but not in time for THE PLAYERS. I'd like to be wrong on this, but don't think I am. The Ball is turning dark as I write this. It doesn't like it. I understand.

But my guess is none of those previously mentioned players are going to win.

This time around, no matter what the Crystal Ball says, I'm going with Dustin "The Dominator" Johnson. I mean move over Arnold Schwarzenegger. Dustin Johnson can eat golf courses for breakfast and crush them by dinner. He has all the shots now. He's really practiced his short game, and his putting gets better all the time. He just might be the next player to win not just THE PLAYERS this year, but in the future, the PGA and the British Open. That would make him one of three to do that. The Super Slam, let's call it. The other two? Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods.

The Crystal Ball is lighting up and shooting rainbows over this. I'm pretty sure this is one time when I'll be right!

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