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PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

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10 YEARS SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED



K9s For Warriors representatives gather for a group photo beside the organization's new logo during the 10th anniversary celebration for the Ponte Vedra-based nonprofit on Tuesday, March 30. For more, go to page 5

Photo by Holly Tishfield

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Kids Summer Fun Guide

Recorder Spring coloring contest!

Kids Summer Fun

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Celebrating Easter

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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.

Visit our website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com



Find the Recorder on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder



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 Mystic. I am a 2-year-old female domestic medium-hair cat. I was a stray, and I am blind in one eye — but I can still see the good in people. I am looking for a quiet home with a lot of love. I am timid at first, but with your patience, we can quickly become friends. So come on in to meet me. I will keep my eye open for you. # 57871



DOG OF THE WEEK

Hi! My name is Astro. I am a neutered male Staffordshire bull terrier. I am 1½ years old and still have the energy of a puppy. I have spent my whole life in a rusty cage and I finally have been saved, but don't despair, this place is awesome. I love the treats and toys I get!! The other dogs here are so nice — and I give the girls lots of kisses (wink, wink). Now all I need is a human family of my own so I can show them all the love I have to give. So come see me today. You might just get some kisses too. # 57147

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

St. Johns County now vaccinating Florida residents 16 years of age and older

St. Johns County is now accepting COVID-19 vaccination appointment preregistrations for persons who are 16 years of age and older to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. Qualifying individuals who are interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine may preregister for an appointment by going to 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 identification and proof of Florida residency. Individuals under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. 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.

BRIEFS continues on Page 3

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

J	A	C	K	S	A	P	R	L	E	S	T
O	M	A	N	I	D	U	E	E	A	R	T
E	A	S	E	D	A	S	H	N	I	S	E
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R	I	D	E	S	T	I	L	T	B	O	N
C	E	A	S	E	A	S	E	A	S	K	I
H	U	M	A	N	E	T	A	B	U	E	E
W	A	L	M	A	R	T	M	O	P	T	O
A	X	I	A	L	C	P	U	A	U	T	O
F	L	A	I	L	H	E	R	I	D	I	O
T	E	R	N	Y	A	K	D	E	C	R	Y

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

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.



**SATURDAY, MAY 22
& SUNDAY, MAY 23**

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Save the Date

The Art in the Garden Festival is a weekend celebration of creativity in all its forms—intriguing art, curated music, demonstration classes, extraordinary living pictures—all within our lush gardens. Learn more at jacksonvillezoo.org.



Arrest made in fatal 2020 A1A crash

Authorities have made an arrest in a fatal collision that occurred on Feb. 17, 2020, at State Road A1A and L'Atrium Drive.

Regan Amy Lester, 40, of Ponte Vedra Beach was arrested Tuesday, March 23, on charges of DUI causing death and manslaughter by vehicle, according to St. Johns County jail records online. In addition, she faces one count of DUI causing serious bodily injury and three counts of DUI with property damage.

The crash claimed the life of Sarita May Sparrow, 82, who was a passenger in a

Toyota Prius driven by David Sparrow, 74. The Prius was turning left onto L'Atrium Drive when it was struck by a Lexus driven by Lester, according to Florida Highway Patrol.

The Lexus overturned and the Prius spun, striking a pole, FHP reported. Both drivers were taken to Memorial Hospital, with David Sparrow in critical condition.

A third vehicle was also struck by debris, although the driver was not reported to be injured.

Bond has been set at \$365,000.

Briefs

Continued from 2

Ponte Vedra Zoning and Adjustment Board meeting set for April 5

The regularly scheduled public meeting of the St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Zoning and Adjustment Board will be held at 3 p.m. Monday, April 5, in the county auditorium at the St. Johns County Administrative Complex located at 500 San Sebastian View in St. Augustine. Applicants are advised failure to appear may result in the delay or denial

of their application. This agenda may contain both regular business items and specially advertised public hearing items. This agenda is subject to change at the discretion of the Ponte Vedra Zoning and Adjustment Board and further subject to proper notice requirements as may be required for individual agenda items. The meeting may be conducted remotely and may provide remote public participation under communication media technology (CMT). A person may attend this CMT meeting by calling (904) 209-1265 and viewing the meeting on GTV or at www.sjcfcl.us/GTV/watchgtv.aspx.

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For more information, contact Missy DeKay: 904.613.2445

House bill would help preserve historically significant sites

By Shaun Ryan

Northeast Florida Congressmen John Rutherford, Michael Waltz and Al Lawson are hoping this is the year that they can get a key historic preservation bill passed. If they are successful, it will mean, among other things, funding for recovery of underwater historic sites, especially shipwrecks.

Monday, March 29, Rutherford and Waltz were at the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum to announce the reintroduction of HB 2107, which would establish the Nation's Oldest Port National Heritage Area. The bill had been introduced last year and met with no resistance but did not come up for a vote.

"This legislation would designate large areas of Northeast Florida as a National Heritage Area, promoting federal support for historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation and heritage tourism," Rutherford told those assembled for the announcement.

"The goal of the National Heritage Area is to celebrate the unique heritage and natural resources of the region and to recognize this area as a special place in the history of Florida, as well as the United States," said Bob Buehn, museum board of trustees chair. "The story of this region cannot be told without diverse voices. Our history, traditions, seascape, military heritage, arts and foods are important to share with our many visitors and residents."

The museum has been working toward the proposed designation for about 10 years.

Nicholas Budsberg, administrative director for the Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program (LAMP), said there were about 500 known historic ship-



Photo by Shaun Ryan

U.S. Rep. Michael Waltz, left, listens to remarks made by U.S. Rep. John Rutherford during an announcement regarding the Nation's Oldest Port National Heritage Area bill.

wrecks in the area. That number could reach into the thousands when considering all the watercraft that wrecked offshore but for which there was no record.

"There's so much below the water, below the sea, below the sand that we still don't know about," Budsberg said. "So, this really gives us an opportunity to ac-

cess resources to continue telling stories here at the lighthouse, to be able to do a lot with this for decades to come."

Chuck Meide, LAMP director, explained the importance of exploring shipwrecks.

"Through their scientific study, we can understand with great detail the lives of

the men and the women who were on these ships," he said. "The men and the women who lived here in St. Augustine made their lives on and by the sea and relied on these ships to move people, ideas and goods."

Soon, in fact, LAMP will be conducting the first underwater excavations ever undertaken at Fort Mose State Park.

Waltz pointed out that support for the bill is bipartisan, something that can help its chances of passage.

Still, the bill has to come up for a vote. Toward this end, Rutherford suggested that the museum write to House leadership to emphasize the legislation's value.

"We're looking to preserve some very important historical sites," he said. "They need to hear that. Because the challenge is not getting the support. If we could have gotten the bill to the floor last session, it would have passed. But it's getting the floor time, to get the bill to the floor, and the leadership controls that."

The proposed National Heritage Area includes the entire coast from the St. Marys River to the southernmost border of Flagler County. It includes a swath of ocean and extends west to most of the St. Johns River.

A National Heritage Area is a region designated by Congress where the natural, cultural and historical resources combine to form a significant shared landscape. There are 55 such areas in the United States, including the National Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor that extends from South Carolina to Florida.

National Heritage Areas are eligible for up to \$10 million in federal matching grants during their first 15 years of designation, though actual cash awards are much lower as the money is divided between recipients.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requests Vilano Beach residents remove temporary items from dunes

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, requests homeowners and residents in the Vilano Beach area assist in the success of the recent St. Johns County beach renourishment project.

The Corps requests residents remove temporary furniture, athletic equipment and similar items from the top and seaward sections of their dunes as workers plant vegetation in the restored areas to strengthen them, enhancing the resilience of the recent beach protection project. Beach and patio furniture, volleyball nets, temporary fencing and similar seasonal amenities make

it difficult or impossible for workers to effectively carry out their planting missions.

This does not apply to walkovers or similar, fixed items.

Homeowners and residents are requested to temporarily remove items in advance of the scheduled vegetation planting at their specific locations. Planting will be ongoing, seven days a week, progressing from north to south along Vilano Beach and is planned to be complete by the end of April. The Corps requests residents refer to the maps and schedules of the dune planting pro-

gram and temporarily remove their items in advance. Items can be brought out on the dunes once planting is complete.

Bear in mind that progress maps indicate latest projected locations and dates. The actual schedule may change due to unforeseeable weather, personnel or other issues. Maps will be updated weekly at facebook.com/JacksonvilleDistrict. The public are requested to check back for the latest information.

For more information about Corps projects, go to www.saj.usace.army.mil.



K9 For Warriors CEO Rory Diamond (left) and Greg Wells, manager of the training program, unveil the new, official logo for the K9s For Warriors organization during the 10-year anniversary celebration on Tuesday, March 30, in Ponte Vedra.



A K9 graduate and his owner wait patiently to hear Diamond speak.



K9s For Warriors graduate Erica D., with her service dog, expresses her gratitude to the organization.



ABOVE: K9s For Warriors Board Chairman Daniel Bean reminisces about the creation of the organization at the unveiling ceremony.

RIGHT: Trainers and graduates with their dogs line up to witness the new logo unveiling.

Photos by Holly Tishfield



K9s For Warriors marks 10th anniversary by unveiling new logo

By Holly Tishfield

On March 30, 2011, K9s For Warriors, a local dog rescue organization that pairs service animals with veterans, officially became recognized as a 501 [c] [3] non-profit organization.

In the 10 years since its creation, the organization has helped save thousands of dogs and paired them with hundreds of Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy veterans.

The K9s For Warriors program, which is backed by extensive research from Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine, is a unique one. The organization provides a three-week training program on its Ponte Vedra-based campus, where its focuses on helping veterans and their paired service dogs create a bond and facilitate healing/recovery. Nearly 100% of the nonprofit's service animals are rescued from shelters

across the country and given to veterans at no cost to the veteran.

Founder of K9s For Warriors Shari Duval, who passed away in early February after a long battle with cancer, was at the helm of the K9s For Warriors mission, personally ensuring that veterans felt at ease speaking with her about all manner of topics.

"Her spirit of fighting, fighting, fighting for the warriors lives on throughout our organization," said Rory Diamond, CEO of the organization.

On Tuesday, March 30, K9s For Warriors marked its 10th anniversary. The organization held a small ceremony at its new Shari Duval K9s For Warriors National Headquarters in Ponte Vedra, where it also unveiled a new logo for the company and announced plans for future expansion.

K9S continues on Page 9

Match4Military campaign raises nearly \$140K

This year, THE PLAYERS Championship and the community joined forces to generate support for Northeast Florida nonprofit organizations who serve military members, veterans and their families. The

response was tremendous.

For more than a decade, THE PLAYERS has kicked off tournament week with a Military Appreciation ceremony and concert, which includes a charitable

contribution to a nonprofit organization chosen by the concert artist.

In light of the reduced capacity and health and safety protocols, THE PLAYERS developed the #Match4Military

campaign to demonstrate a shared commitment to area military.

Due to support from the community and amplification from media partners, #Match4Military raised a total of \$139,020.

Dr. Stephanie Kinsey, DDS, is the owner and founder of Palencia Dental, in St. Augustine. She has been practicing dentistry for more than 20 years of practice, and has been serving patients in Florida since 2005.

Dr. Stephanie Kinsey

As told to Holly Tishfield

Can you please briefly tell us about your background?

I graduated from college in Austin, Texas, and dental school with honors in 1994 from the University of Colorado Health Science Center in Denver, Colorado. I was accepted into general practice residency in Chicago, Illinois, at the Illinois Masonic Medical Center and was invited to stay for a second year to serve as chief resident. I practiced dentistry in Colorado for seven years before moving to St. Johns County with my husband and our three children. My interests in implant surgery and restorative dentistry include neuromuscular diagnosis, treatments and procedures, sedation specializations, aesthetics, cosmetic dentistry and more, all to create a beautiful and healthy smile.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I love being able to change people's lives through the work that I do by giving the gift of health, beauty and confidence, especially when my patients have been told improvements were not possible.

What are some of the challenges that your industry/company is facing?

All industries and professions have been affected by the pandemic events of last year and currently. As a sole provider and independent contractor practitioner, I recognize the large corporate dental practice entities are trying to flood the market. Being in health care, Palencia Dental is highly concentrated and well-equipped to handle any dental disease prevention. Our practice is a safe place to be with CDC and specific professional guidelines. We are instrumental in preventing other diseases as the mouth has a significant effect on the body.

What are your primary roles/responsibilities?

I continue my advanced training and research in all facets of dentistry and patient safety to serve the community and educate patients on the importance of dental and oral health, and address the concerns of COVID 19 in the medical and health environment.

The practice team ensures the health and safety of all patients and staff with a medical team that cleans and disinfects the dental operatories between interactions with patients. Palencia Dental maintains the highest level of sanitation practices for employees and patients.

I am a American Academy of Dental

Sleep Medicine (AADSM) Qualified Dentist and a Fellow with The International Association of Physiologic Aesthetics (IAPA), and serve as a member and Fellow with IAPA's founding organization, the Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LVI). The innovative coursework that I've completed includes components of patient cases with neuromuscular dentistry, TMJ and TMD, evaluations and records, comprehensive head and neck radiographic assessments, and obstructive sleep apnea with the TMD relationship. I constantly

study and practice advanced problem solving and difficult cases. TMD and TMJ are medical terms that cover pain and or dysfunction of the muscles, and joints that move and or connect the lower and upper jaw to the skull including the malady as temporomandibular joint disorder. Our St. Augustine and Northwest St. Johns County dentistry practice is dedicated to restoring and enhancing the natural beauty of one's smile combining conservative and state-of-the-art procedures along with advanced dental medicine and aesthetics.

What do you enjoy most about living in the North Florida area? What do you like to do in your free time?

North Florida has much to offer the active individual and families. I love the rich history of the area. The weather brings so many people to St. Johns County with the semblance of four seasons I enjoy playing tennis, golf, along with skiing for my winter enjoyment. It's been amazing to watch our area grow with the influx of entrepreneurs, restaurateurs and a myriad of businesses.



Photo provided by Dr. Stephanie Kinsey

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The link partners with Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach to bring art, classes, programming to community

By Shaun Ryan

A unique co-working space and innovation incubator set to open in June is expanding its focus to include the arts.

The link, a 22,500-square-foot facility at Nocatee Town Center, is a place for tech entrepreneurs to launch their companies and then flourish. But it also places a significant emphasis on lifestyle, energy conservation and the health and safety of its occupants and their families.

Toward that end, link founder and innovator Raghu Misra has announced that his team is working with The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach to form a partnership to incorporate arts and culture into the mix.

According to Misra, activities associated with science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics — often identified as STEAM — are at the core of what the link will represent.

“The link is very excited to partner with (the Cultural Center) to bring the arts and culture to our member community,” he said.

Summer and winter camps will be offered for children, but the partnership will include much more.



Photo by Susan Griffin

Entrepreneur Raghu Misra refers to artistic renderings of The link during a presentation June 25, at Trelor Park Restaurant in Nocatee. The link, which is currently under construction at 425 Town Plaza Ave. in Nocatee, is working with the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach to incorporate more art and culture programs and more to The link’s mission.

“We’re going to be doing a lot of programming for people of all age groups,” Misra said.

That means exhibitions of work by local, regional, national and international artists, events, art classes, lectures, workshops, after-school programs and adult programming.

“The link is paving the way for a partnership that is visionary,” said Donna Guzzo, Cultural Center president and executive director. “The Cultural Center believes in connecting the community while engaging the link members and others in a remarkable and rewarding cultural experience.”

Guzzo said the center’s mission — to

bring the arts into the life of the community — dovetails with that of the link. In announcing the creation of the link last summer, Misra said he wanted it to provide “everything a family needs to learn, play, think and do.”

“We look forward to working with the link in our local market to uplift our non-profit during the pandemic and to help the community have access and engage in the arts in a pioneering way,” Guzzo said.

According to Misra, some people neglect art as a field of study, even though it plays an integral role in innovation, product design being one example.

“What we wanted to do was to see how we can bring that back into the mix,” he said. “And also support a lot of local art and artists — you know, showcasing their talent.”

He pointed out another area that technology meets art — in the creation of digital art, which has been gaining popularity.

“We are confident that Donna and her team will inspire thought, imagination, productivity and human development across all age groups of our members and help them to thrive holistically,” he said.

The link is under construction now at 425 Town Plaza Ave.



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Learn more at [FlaglerHealth.org/Nocatee](https://www.FlaglerHealth.org/Nocatee)

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

"Never underestimate the healing power of a quiet moment in the garden."



Kathy Esfahani
Columnist

CLIMBING FLOWERS AND PLANTS

Gardening can be a very relaxing pastime, so why not consider elevating your landscape with planting some climbing plants to give your yard that extra inviting feel, while adding a bit of stunning ambience for your trouble!

Climbing, flowering vines can provide such a unique touch to any garden or landscape. They're textured, colorful, and can often grow in unusual places. They can act as a natural accent wall to your outdoor space, provide some welcome privacy, and spruce up any empty space, including bare walls and fences.

Climbing plants can give your yard an organic and inviting feel, and add beautiful ambience.

What are some of the best flowering vines for Northeast Florida?

Here are some of the beautiful climbers we carry at the nursery:

Allamanda: Fastest growing vine with



Photos provided by Kathy Esfahani
Allamanda vine

bright yellow blooms. Great vine to have around a patio or pool but be careful: Its seeds are poisonous to humans and animals.

Bougainvillea: This vine is a tropical plant that loves Florida heat and requires full sun to create such vibrant blooms. They will bloom most of the year right up until winter in our zone and climbs quickly.

Bleeding heart: Another tropical vine that thrives with full shade or morning sun. This vine has dark green leaves and clusters of red and white flowers that can be pruned into the shape of your choice.

Carolina jasmine: This vine has a fragrant, yellow bloom and can grow to 25 feet. It blooms in late winter/early spring and thrives in this zone, as long as we don't have a harsh winter.

Mandevilla: This vine loves the Florida heat but needs some shade in the hottest



Flower of the Week: Bougainvillea

part of the day. Also an easy grower, this vine comes in a variety of bright colors.

Confederate jasmine: Easy grower in partial-to-full sun. They grow to be at least 6 feet long and bloom a small white flower each May.

Passion vine: This vine creates a 3D flower in purple that butterflies love! They can grow in full sun or partial shade and up to 25 feet tall.

Start planning your own vine-based vertical paradise.

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

K9s

Continued from 5

The logo embodies important issues the K9s For Warriors organization stands for. The star on the left of the logo represents the 650-plus graduates who have worked with the nonprofit so far; the star on the right of the logo represents all the dogs saved; and the star in the middle — the largest star — is the merging of those two things, Diamond said at the ceremony.

"The stripes above the stars are our commitment to fight for our warriors who have, and continue to, fight for America," he said.

For the future, the nonprofit plans to continue expanding its mission and training programs around the country, to further assist lowering the veteran suicide rates. By July, the organization expects to finish construction on a training center in Texas, and, by the end of 2021, it hopes to open the new Mega Kennel, its largest training center yet.

"Over the next 10 years we have one clear mission," Diamond said. "To put ourselves out of business and end veteran suicide."

To learn more about K9s For Warriors or to volunteer, go to k9sforwarriors.org.



Water to Golf Views in Marsh Landing

Exquisite lagoon to golf views from this cul de sac beauty. Open floorplan/kitchen/dining spaces w/fireplace and oversized windows. Guest ensuite, 1/2 bath & laundry room finish off the first floor. Master retreat w/ fireplace, HIS & HERS baths/closets, wet bar w/ fridge leading to outdoor deck & hot tub. Private with Summer Kitchen and fire pit overlooking pool and lagoon. **5 Bedrooms, 5 Bathrooms. \$1,450,000**



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**



The Perfect Beach Escape

Located between The Lodge and the Cabana Beach Club, this second-story condo gives elevated views of the beach while maintaining the unit's privacy and security. Includes a large covered balcony and ground floor storage.

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Nease JROTC is best drill team in NE Florida, Georgia



Head Judge 1st Sgt. Tyrone White inspects Nease NJROTC's cadets during personnel inspection at the Area-12 Drill Championship in Leesburg, Georgia, on March 27.

For seven consecutive years, Nease NJROTC has traveled to Georgia in pursuit of the Area-12 State Academic, Athletic and Drill Championship. And for the seventh straight year, the 40-cadet varsity team has returned to Ponte Vedra as Area-12 champions – the top program of the 60 schools from Atlanta to Jacksonville.

With seven straight state championships beginning in 2015, Nease established itself as arguably Northeast Florida's most dominating high school championship program.

Nease competed against the top 12 Navy high school JROTC drill teams in Area-12, which includes all of northeastern Florida and the entire state of Georgia.

Sixty programs competed at local drill meets during the fall and winter with the top 12 advancing to the state championships. Nease earned its berth by winning first place at each of its qualifying competitions at Mandarin, Terry Parker and Stockbridge (Georgia) high schools.

"This team faced a mountain of adversity this year amidst the uncertainties of COVID," said Capt. Scott LaRoche, senior naval science instructor. "But the cadet leaders maintained discipline, practiced diligently and never took their eye off the prize."

In addition to winning the overall



Cadet Rachel Tawdrous sprints during the 16x100 relay. Nease set a team record of 3 minutes, 27 seconds in claiming first-place honors.

championship, Nease claimed first place in personnel inspection commanded by Juan Castillo, overall drill, armed exhibi-

NJROTC continues on Page 12



Nease NJROTC's unarmed basic team performs its winning demonstration during the Area-12 Drill Championships in Leesburg, Georgia, on March 27.

Photos provided by Nease NJROTC

annette görtz
fall/winter 2021

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Cross-country cyclist raising money for charity makes it to West Coast

Just over two months ago, Jacksonville native Greg Taylor embarked on a six-month journey of bike riding 11,500 miles across the country to raise money for local cancer support charity, Chemo Noir.

During this time, Taylor has travelled west through Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, and as of March 24, Taylor has officially made it to California. This completes the first leg of his journey, which next will take him up the West Coast to Seattle, and then back East along the northern half of the country. He is already two full weeks ahead of schedule and predicted to remain ahead in the continuation of his travels.

Taylor has made most of the ride solo but has never actually been alone. He has steadily collected a following on his Instagram page, where he films daily shoutout videos and updates of his travels.

“Instagram has become his journal,” said Katrin Casey, Chemo Noir founder and one of Taylor’s close friends.

Through social media, support-

ers have been able to see the country through Taylor’s eyes as he stops at important landmarks and details the people he has met along the way.

Taylor remains brutally honest about the difficulties of his journey, but his constant optimism proves a refreshing take on the important meaning of the trip: raising money for Chemo Noir.

When Taylor set out, his goal was to raise \$100,000 for the Chemo Noir charity. As of his 34th day of bike riding, Casey said that Taylor had already raised more than half of that through his shoutouts on social media and merchandise sales.

“What I found so amazing is that he is connecting all of these communities,” said Casey.

Taylor has encouraged followers on Instagram to join him in exercising or bike riding “alongside” him as he travels, all to raise awareness about his mission.

“[He] has been building a following and an awareness,” said Casey.



Photo provided by Greg Taylor

Cross-country cyclist Greg Taylor stops to snap a photo with a sign commemorating the curve Forrest Gump ran in the movie “Forrest Gump” after Taylor made it to the West Coast during his cross-county bike ride to raise money for local nonprofit Chemo Noir.

To follow Greg Taylor’s journey up the West Coast and back to the East, follow him on Instagram at @usacancercycle, or go to usacancercycle.com to make a donation and read more about his ride.



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Wounded Warrior Project enlists expert partnership for veteran brain research

Collaboration with Concussion Legacy Foundation will improve traumatic brain injury resources

Wounded Warrior Project is addressing potential long-term effects of traumatic brain injury through a collaboration with the Concussion Legacy Foundation.

The collaboration will power CLF's Project Enlist, an effort to increase the number of veteran brains donated for research on TBI, chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Posthumous research at the Veterans Affairs-Boston University-CLF Brain Bank and other leading brain banks, can lead to crucial discoveries about CTE and other consequences of TBI's — leading to diagnosis during life, treatment, and better outcomes.

"Taking on brain injury is a priority at Wounded Warrior Project, so spreading the word is vital," said Alex Balbir, PhD, MBA, WWP Independence Services

director. "Working with the Concussion Legacy Foundation can help us learn better ways to care for and treat these invisible wounds."

The Department of Defense reported more than 400,000 TBIs in service members in the last 20 years. In WWP's 2020 Annual Warrior Survey, more than one in three warriors report experiencing a TBI during their service.

"We don't have all the answers for veterans right now," said Chris Nowinski, Ph.D., CLF co-founder and CEO. "Brain bank research is an essential step in developing effective treatments for TBI, CTE, and PTSD so we can protect and support the heroes who courageously fight for our nation."

WWP addresses TBI through a number of programs and services. WWP's

Independence Program helps warriors and families living with moderate to severe TBI. Independence Program helps warriors overcome obstacles and exceed goals. WWP's Warrior Care Network is a partnership with four top academic medical centers that treat post-traumatic stress disorder and TBI. Clinical treatments at Warrior Care Network sites improve symptoms and quality of life.

CLF supports athletes, veterans and all affected by concussions and CTE and works to end CTE through prevention and research. CLF also provides resources for those struggling with brain injury, including its free CLF HelpLine, which offers personalized assistance and connections to clinicians and peer support volunteers. Nearly 8,000 people, including more than 1,000 veterans, have pledged to donate their brain, to support CTE research.

To learn more and or pledge, go to ProjectEnlist.org.

OBITUARIES

Barbara Balog Vanderschoot

Barbara (Barb) Balog Vanderschoot, 74, of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, formerly of Elizabeth, NJ, passed away in her home Wednesday, March 24, 2021, surrounded by her loving, devoted husband, Frank, and her grandson's dog, Bagel, which brought her great joy in the last months of her life.

In respect for Barb's wishes, there will be no funeral service or wake.



Barbara Balog Vanderschoot

Barbara was born February 13, 1947 in Elizabeth, NJ, the daughter of Frank and Julia Balog. After graduating from high school in NJ, she moved with her parents to Ft. Lauderdale where she eventually met her future husband, Frank, floating on a raft on the ocean in Pompano Beach.

Barbara was a loving, caring, compassionate lady who was always concerned about the needs and problems of others before her own. After a long banking career with BOA, she resigned from her job to become a stay at home grandma and raise her two grandsons, Jacob and Andrew. She loved kids, animals, and most of all, her family and friends. Her favorite things to do were eating out, taking cruise vacations, and socializing with her many girlfriends at luncheons, water aerobics class, and boat trips to local beaches. Probably, her most admired trait that everybody loved was her unique sense of humor which always made people laugh. Her presence brought laughter and rays of sunlight into everyone's lives who had the privilege of knowing her.

Survivors include her husband of 35 years, Frank Vanderschoot, her daughter Jennifer, her grandkids Jacob, Andrew, Noah, Jeremy, and Eve, her older sister Judith Lugo, and her cousins Patricia Janda and Sandra Kordyla.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her honor to Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (pancan.org/honormemorial-gifts), or Community Hospice and Palliative Care (www.communityhospice.com/foundation/memorial-giving/). Please visit the Tribute online at www.quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by



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

Margaret Giles

Margaret Giles, 95, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died March 25, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Joseph Gorman

Joseph Gorman, 77, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died March 25, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, (904) 249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com

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NJROTC

Continued from 10

tion commanded by Brandon Donovan, unarmed exhibition commanded by Amber Vidler, unarmed basic commanded by Brodie Mongon; overall athletics (sweeping all three athletic events), team sit-ups, team pushups and the 16x100 relay.

Cadet Emellee Neff earned an individual medal as the top female in sit-ups for the second consecutive year with 314. Cadets Isabella Rivera, Kaitlyn Boggs and Keegan Mapa also earned medals for

finishing in the top five in either female or male sit-ups. Rivera, Boggs, Hailey Pitches, Mongon and Castillo earned medals for finishing in the top five in pushups. Cadet Ben Prohofsky placed third in academics.

"Our seniors have never lost a drill meet in Area-12," said cadet Jordon Mayberry. "Collectively, we underclassmen weren't about to let them lose today."

The Navy Nationals championship will be conducted virtually in 2021 as other regional champions across the country are unable to travel to the in-person competition in Pensacola.

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Fight for Keegan (Facebook group)

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KIDS

SUMMER FUN

Guide



APRIL 1, 2021

Your Community Voice for 50 Years
PONTE VEDRA

Recorder

Spring coloring contest

Preschool students display artwork



A treat for the whole family:
Homemade ice cream

Nonprofit's program focuses on helping **children thrive in challenging times**



Preschool artists exhibit works at Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church

By Shaun Ryan

The Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church was the place to be Thursday, March 25, for one of the biggest art events of the year: the Promisetown Preschool Art Show.

One hundred and eight children between the ages of 1 and 6 exhibited countless works of art they did themselves. Each piece was accompanied by a photo showing the young artist at work.

Thursday night, parents were able to visit and see their children's completed art projects. A variety of media was represented. There were paintings, silhouettes, three-dimensional constructions and flowers pressed between wax paper sheets to resemble stained glass. Images were painted with brushes, sheets of bubble wrap, plastic flowers and fingers.

The show was scheduled to coincide with "Spirit Week," a time for fundraising and celebration. The show is held every March. Because of the difficulties arising from COVID-19, this was the first time the school was able to hold a large event on its campus this year.

"We're excited to have everyone here," said parent Samantha Boyle, who works in the office. "This lets parents see what the kids do in the classroom."

To facilitate social distancing, the show was moved into a series of hallways this year. Families could walk through to view the art. Also, visitors were asked to wear masks.

Marleen Lee is Promisetown Preschool director.



ABOVE: Alessia Milo, 3, stands near her work of art at the Promisetown Preschool Art Show.



RIGHT: Hayden Westberg, 5, stands beneath his work of art for the Promisetown Preschool Art Show.



Creative creatures flutter about at the Promisetown Preschool Art Show.



A picture created by one of the children at Promisetown Preschool.



Beckett Boyle (left), 4, and Kennedy Gordon, 5, stand near caterpillars they created for the Promisetown Preschool Art Show.



ABOVE: Children's art decorates a hallway at the Promisetown Preschool Art Show.

LEFT: Eye-catching silhouettes occupy one wall at the Promisetown Preschool Art Show.

Photos by Shaun Ryan

Free program focuses on helping children thrive in challenging times

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children will present “Let’s Talk About Thrivers,” an educational webinar with Michele Borba, Ed.D., from noon to 1:30 p.m. April 14.

This free, live webinar is open to all. To register, go to [us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kionw_hXSJWIPMNul_8gw](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/9tjcktcgv4).

During the webinar, Borba will discuss her new book, “Thrivers: Surprising Reasons Why Some Kids Struggle and Others Shine.” Her program will demonstrate what she has learned about resiliency in kids, how to identify the seven essential character strengths which set thrivers apart and the best ways to support children.

Due to the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic, many kids are failing to thrive socially and academically, and are reporting higher levels of anxiety and depression.

Borba is an educational psychologist, best-selling author, and “Today” show contributor who has spoken to more than a million participants, including countless media outlets around the world concerning child development issues. She merges her 40 years of teaching and consulting experience along with the latest research to offer sound, realistic advice to parents, teachers and child advocates, ultimately helping children to thrive.

She offers practical, evidence-based meth-

ods to reach kids and help them overcome adversity, become more resilient and learn skills they will need both now and in the future to succeed in the real-world.

The webinar will be beneficial to both parents and professionals who work with youth, including school counselors, educators, child advocates, outreach and prevention specialists and youth-serving organization staff.

All webinar attendees will be entered in a chance drawing for a free copy of Borba’s book. Winners will be randomly selected among the attendees of the live webinar and notified via email.

“Dr. Borba will demonstrate the ways in which you can use the book and other resources she has developed to promote resiliency in children, including providing education within your own communities about these teachable skills,” said Lynn Layton, foundation president and CEO. “The mental health of our youth is just as crucial as their physical health. We have the ability to help prevent mental health crises and help kids thrive in the real world through educating ourselves and those around us on how to instill resiliency in youth. I encourage everyone to attend this webinar and learn more.”

For more information about the webinar, go to www.mbfpreventioneducation.org/mbf-webinar/ or call (904) 642-0210.



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Tips to making delicious ice cream at home

Ice cream is a favorite dessert across the globe. The average American consumes more than 23 pounds of ice cream per year, says the International Dairy Foods Association.

Even though a trip to the local ice cream parlor can yield many different opportunities to indulge, making ice cream at home is easier than one may believe. Also, creating homemade ice cream can be a fun way to experiment with unique flavors and textures. It is easy to customize concoctions based on what everyone likes best. Making ice cream also is a fun way to bring the family together with the reward of a tasty prize for all of the effort. Here are some tips for making ice cream at home.

■ **Buy quality ingredients.** Choose fresh, high-quality ingredients. Real vanilla beans or extract can produce better flavor than imitations. Select in-season berries and other fruits and, if possible, use organic milk. All of these ingredients will blend together for fresh flavor.

■ **Freeze equipment early.** Cold equipment is necessary to produce ice cream. Store the bowls of an ice cream maker in the freezer to keep them frozen and ready for when the mood strikes to make a batch of ice cream.

■ **Avoid ice crystallization.** According to Food 52, a foodie equipment and recipe resource, ice crystals in the ice cream can ruin texture by making ice cream crunchy. Freezing ice cream quickly at very cold temperatures is essential. That means freezing the bowl and keeping the ingredient mix cold. Spinning the ice cream and transferring it quickly to the freezer helps keep ice crystals small.

■ **Keep mix-ins small.** Mix-ins, like cookie pieces or cake crumbs, can add a different dimension to ice cream. Chill the ingredients and make sure they are small (roughly the size of chocolate chips). Add them after the ice cream is entirely frozen.



■ **Watch alcohol usage.** Alcohol can create a tipsy ice cream experience, but adding too much can interfere with ice cream's ability to freeze. Therefore, use alcohol sparingly.

■ **Store ice cream smartly.** According to David Lebovitz, author of "The Perfect Scoop," store ice cream in a shallow container to keep it softer. Also, cover the surface of the ice cream with plastic wrap to prevent ice crystals from forming.

Homemade ice cream will last for roughly a week in the freezer. Making ice cream can be a challenging but rewarding endeavor.

GRADUATION SCHEDULE

The St. Johns County School District announces the schedule of 2021 graduation ceremonies for St. Johns County high schools.

ST. JOHNS VIRTUAL SCHOOL

When: 4:30 p.m. Thursday, May 27

Where: FCTC, Bldg. C, CCI Conference Center

ST. JOHNS TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

When: 7 p.m., Friday, May 28

Where: St. Augustine High School Auditorium

ST. AUGUSTINE HIGH SCHOOL

When: 7 p.m., Tuesday, June 1

Where: TIAA Bank Field, Jacksonville

PEDRO MENENDEZ HIGH SCHOOL

When: 7 p.m., Wednesday, June 2

Where: TIAA Bank Field, Jacksonville

ALLEN D. NEASE HIGH SCHOOL

When: 7 p.m., Thursday, June 3

Where: TIAA Bank Field, Jacksonville

BARTRAM TRAIL HIGH SCHOOL

When: 7 p.m., Friday, June 4

Where: TIAA Bank Field, Jacksonville

CREEKSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

When: 9 a.m., Saturday, June 5

Where: TIAA Bank Field, Jacksonville

PONTE VEDRA HIGH SCHOOL

When: 7 p.m., Saturday, June 5

Where: TIAA Bank Field, Jacksonville

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3 endangered otter pups debut at Jacksonville Zoo

Adorable triplets join 4 other siblings at exhibit

Three giant otter pups have made their much-anticipated public debut at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. The two females and one male, born on Oct. 16, are the second litter of this endangered species to be born at the zoo in its history.

The first few months after birth are a critical time for vulnerable otter pups, so staff members have been monitoring the family behind the scenes.

The parents are 9-year-old Sarave, who came to the zoo in 2018 from Zoo Miami, and 13-year-old Buddy, who arrived in 2011 as a rehabilitated animal from Guyana.

Buddy is blind and the most genetically-valuable animal of the Giant Otter Species Survival Plan in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. He was born on the banks of the Rupununi River in southwestern Guyana, one of the most biodiverse regions in the world.

Orphaned as a pup, Buddy got a second chance at life at the Karanambu Lodge and Trust where he was raised by his surrogate mother, the late Diane McTurk. McTurk and her highly-trained staff rescued, rehabilitated, and reintroduced more than 50 giant otters during her lifetime.



Three giant otter pups, born on Oct. 16, have made their debut at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens.

Photo by John Reed

Buddy was blinded in an accident at a young age and came to rely on McTurk and her staff for his care. Though Buddy learned to be a successful hunter through

trips to the Rupununi River, the fact that he was blind made it impossible for him to return to the wild.

McTurk decided to send Buddy to Jack-

sonville Zoo and Gardens where he could be matched up with a potential mate.

“Buddy’s second litter with Sarave is a huge success for the captive population,” said Dan Maloney, deputy zoo director for animal care, conservation and wellness.

“We were elated to celebrate the first pups, and now we are even more excited to welcome their siblings. This is not only Buddy’s and Sarave’s success story, but a win for conservation of this endangered species as we strive to maintain a healthy, and diverse population.”

Giant otters are endangered and the rarest mammal on the South American continent, facing threats from hunting and habitat loss. The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has continued to support conservation and research in Guyana, including the work of UF wildlife biologist Matt Hallett and programs at the Karanambu Lodge and Trust.

Funds provided by the zoo have allowed Karanambu to hire and train staff to follow the protocols pioneered by McTurk.

The pups are now visible in the Emerald Forest Aviary within Range of the Jaguar with their 1-year-old siblings, Aiden, Eleanor, Olivia and Coker.

Tickets at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens must be purchased online, in advance at JacksonvilleZoo.org.



2021 SUMMER Events

Tommy Hulihan Basketball is offering sports camp, basketball camp, basketball league, and basketball training this summer!

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8 activities to keep kids entertained

What parent hasn't heard their child utter the familiar phrase "I'm bored" at some point? Despite a seemingly vast array of toys, electronics and other items at their disposal, children can be quick to sulk and say there's nothing to do. Parents can counter "I'm bored" with these eight boredom-busting activities that are certain to help pass the time in entertaining and sometimes educational ways.

1. Craft time: Pick a theme and gather the materials for the project. For example, kids can evoke a trip to the ocean by creating handmade sea creatures. Paint a paper plate and hang brightly colored yarn underneath it to create the "tentacles" of a jellyfish. Kids can use salt dough clay to fashion seashells, sea snails or crustaceans.

2. Painting: Shaving cream is a great sensory material that is relatively easy to clean up. Kids can whip up a batch of shaving cream paint and use it to finger paint on a table or even in the bathtub. Simply mix shaving cream with food coloring in a bowl, or use a muffin tin to separate the colors.

3. Build a birdhouse: Birdhouses or bird feeders can be made from scraps of material found around the house. Scavenge for spare lumber or other supplies in the shed or garage. An adult or older sibling can help cut the wood into pieces. Young children may enjoy painting the house. Wood adhesive or screws can be used to assemble the project.

4. Plan a garden: Kids can help to design a garden the entire family will maintain and even be responsible for a special parcel that's all their own. Gardens can grow food, flowers and more. Add a touch of whimsy with figurines for a fairy garden or even small superhero figures for a spot for boys to tend.

5. Box makeovers: Tissue boxes or cereal boxes can be made into many different creations with paint or construction paper. Use a few craft supplies like pom-poms or wiggly eyes to turn boxes into "monsters."

6. Boat races: Build a small sailboat for each member of the family. Fill up a long, shallow container and take turns racing the boats by blowing on the sails.

7. Leaf art: Gather leaves and twigs from around the yard and then combine pieces to make them look like various animals.

8. Spray park: Create an at-home spray park with a garden hose and a pool noodle. Poke several small holes into the pool noodle on all sides. Stick a garden hose into the end of the pool noodle and hot-glue a wine cork into the hole at the other end. Turn on the water and let kids run through.

Head off kids' boredom by having plenty of ideas at the ready.



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

Junior Achievement of North Florida sets date for Hall of Fame Luncheon

Junior Achievement of North Florida has set the date for the Hall of Fame Luncheon, the nonprofit's largest annual fundraiser, for Thursday, May 27.

JA of North Florida is currently looking for sponsors for the event which supports its mission to empower the next generation through JA learning experiences designed to lead youth to economic success. The Hall of Fame Luncheon also recognizes outstanding individuals in the community. This year, three awards will be handed out; the Thompson S. Baker Award, and new to JA of North Florida, the Entrepreneur of the Year Award and the JA Inspire Award.

"We are asking businesses and individuals to join us for the Hall of Fame as we embrace the challenges of today and continue our mission to prepare the leaders

of tomorrow," said Shannon Italia, president of JA of North Florida. "We will also be celebrating individuals who have given back incredibly and positively. We have chosen three amazing people to recognize this year with our prestigious Thompson S. Baker Award and two new ones which recognize individuals who have made a positive impact through business and service."

Duval County Superintendent Dr. Diana Greene has been named this year's Thompson S. Baker "Solid As A Rock" Award winner. Greene will become the 23rd recipient of the award which was named for its first winner, Thompson S. Baker, the founder of Florida Rock Industries. The award was created in 1997 to recognize a local hero who has made a positive impact on business and education in the Jackson-

ville community through leadership, hands-on involvement and philanthropic deeds.

Greene was recently named the 2021 Florida Superintendent of the Year by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents for her significant accomplishments in Duval County Public Schools since she took over the position in July 2018. Greene also garnered community support for a \$1.9 billion master facilities plan to renovate and replace crumbling school infrastructure with the passage of a voluntary surtax.

Chosen to be the inaugural winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award is Craig Mandeville, founder and CEO of Forcura. This new award was designed to recognize an inspirational business leader committed to making a positive regional impact through their innovation, passionate entrepreneurial spirit, and personal integrity and influence. Mandeville founded Forcura in 2012 to improve patient care through improvement in the digital management of medical records and secure communica-

Jennifer Chapman, division chair of public affairs for Mayo Clinic in Florida, is the first winner of the JA Inspire Award. It was created to acknowledge a person whose passion, purpose and commitment to the community are demonstrated through outstanding volunteer service and community engagement. Chapman has spent much of her professional career focused on connecting the private sector with the community through volunteerism, fundraising, corporate grant-making and legislative advocacy.

Greene, Mandeville and Chapman will be presented with the awards at the Hall of Fame luncheon on Thursday, May 27. The event will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Adam W. Herbert University Center at the University of North Florida. Sponsorships are available at many levels from the \$25,000 Presenting Sponsor to the \$2,500 Chairman level. For more information, contact Shannon Italia at shannon@janfl.org, (904) 398-9944, ext. 228, or go to www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-norflor/ja-hall-of-fame.

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THEME: SCIENCE 101

ACROSS

- 1. Type of tide
- 5. Sin over tan
- 8. Schooner pole
- 12. Part of temple floor plan
- 13. Made a basket
- 14. *Main artery in the body
- 15. *____-carotene
- 16. Swear, not curse
- 17. Reputation-damaging gossip
- 18. *Physicist of theory of relativity fame
- 20. Salty drop
- 21. Turn upside down
- 22. Mark on Pinterest
- 23. *Everything around us
- 26. Porch in ancient Greece
- 30. Not St. or Blvd.
- 31. Percussion instrument
- 34. "Aim High... Fly-Fight-Win" org.
- 35. Walks like Long John Silver
- 37. "Dog ____ dog"
- 38. Like TV or phone in 2021
- 39. Measuring roll
- 40. Catch in a net
- 42. Gorilla or orangutan
- 43. Pull-over parkas
- 45. *One of B-vitamins
- 47. Anger
- 48. Open disrespect

- 50. Full of excitement
- 52. *Explanations that can be tested and verified
- 55. Words to live by
- 56. Sword handle
- 57. Large West African republic
- 59. "Encore!"
- 60. Unrivaled
- 61. From a second-hand store
- 62. Cleopatra's necklace
- 63. Second solfa syllable, pl.
- 64. Makes stitches

DOWN

- 1. Pick up a perpetrator
- 2. Dueling weapon in "The Three Musketeers"
- 3. ____ Spumante
- 4. Treat for Dumbo
- 5. Witches' get-together
- 6. Egg-shaped
- 7. Made with stitches
- 8. *Product of mass and velocity of an object
- 9. *Equals length times width
- 10. *Alpha Centauri A, e.g.
- 11. Toni Morrison's "____ Baby"
- 13. Like rheumy eyes
- 14. On the move
- 19. Four-eyes' gear

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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.

- 22. Short for "politician"
- 23. Tiny European republic
- 24. Type of flu
- 25. Moderato, e.g.
- 26. Toupee spot
- 27. *Scientist Newton
- 28. *Wrist bones
- 29. More than occasional
- 32. Department store department
- 33. "Pow!"
- 36. *Mendeleev's ____ table
- 38. Bake, as in eggs
- 40. Make bigger
- 41. Persnickety
- 44. *Ar, inert gas
- 46. Bad blood
- 48. Use a shoe polish
- 49. *Smallest units of life
- 50. Jason's ship
- 51. Wheel inside old clock
- 52. God of thunder
- 53. Alleviate
- 54. Boatload
- 55. Tom of "Tom and Jerry"
- 58. Dog tags

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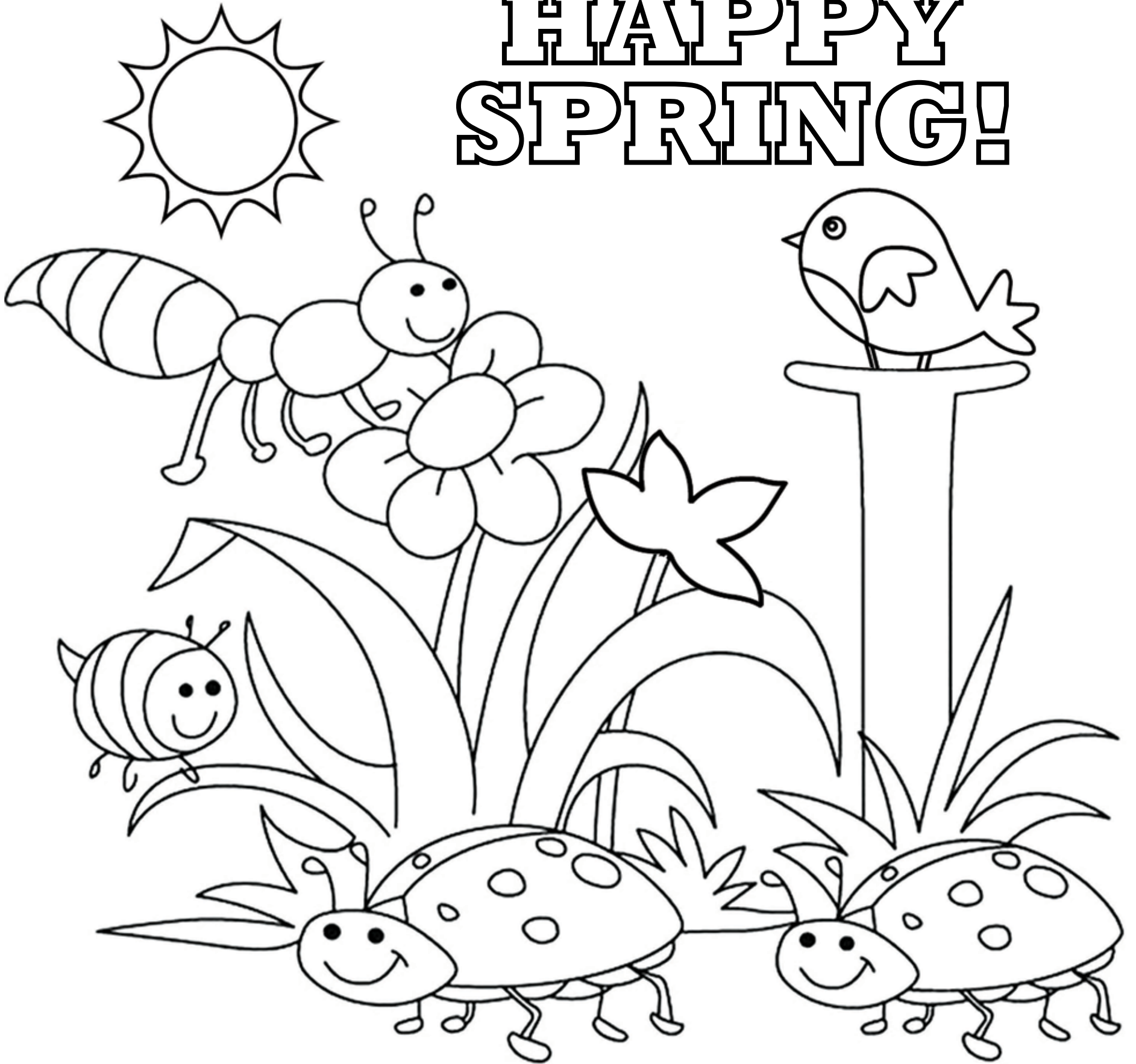
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Business Weekly

PAGE 21 THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021

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Photo provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Area transportation professionals participated in a panel discussion March 26 during a meeting of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Council. From left are: moderator Shannan Schuessler of The Fiorentino Group, St. Johns County Transportation Development Manager Phong Ngyuen, Florida Department of Transportation District 2 Secretary Greg Evans and Jacksonville Transportation Authority CEO Nat Ford.

Experts discuss future of transportation in Northeast Florida at EDC breakfast

By Shaun Ryan

At its first indoor, in-person event in more than a year, the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce welcomed area transportation experts to participate in a panel discussion. The Chamber's Economic Development Council held its quarterly breakfast Friday, March 26.

Panelists included Florida Department of Transportation District 2 Secretary Greg Evans, Jacksonville Transportation Authority CEO Nat Ford and St. Johns County Transportation Development Manager Phong Ngyuen.

Ford said that he and Mayor Lenny Curry have announced a plan to increase

the gas tax in Jacksonville from its current 6 cents to 12 cents to address "an exhaustive list of transportation infrastructure projects."

One of those projects is rehabilitation of the city's aging skyway, which would be expanded from 2.5 miles to 10 miles.

Ford said the tax plan would need support from the Jacksonville City Council and, if implemented, would generate about \$1 billion to be evenly split between JTA and the city.

The expanded tax would also fund about 30% of the design for commuter rail between St. Augustine and downtown Jacksonville.

"That's a long journey; I want to be

very careful with expectations here," said Ford. "But we need to start talking about other modes of transportation, as we're all interconnected in Northeast Florida."

Indeed regional transportation beyond the city's limits occupied a significant portion of the program. Ford noted that the St. Johns Express Select Service, which provides rides between the county's Government Center and downtown Jacksonville is now operational.

Evans gave an update on the First Coast Expressway, a multi-lane, limited-access toll road that will eventually cross

TRANSPORTATION continues on Page 22

The big disconnect



Harry Pappas
Columnist

I am guilty of having strong and stubborn convictions, so if you want to hear some truth sprinkled with a little sarcasm about a topic that is often on my heart and regularly on my lips, gather around like a baby pig at the state fair, and let's roll.

The repeated phrase that makes me want to paint myself with honey and jump in a nest of fire ants is, "Stocks are booming but the economy is so bad. Something is not right."

The only thing that is not right is that you are trying to figure out why (sarcasm). Daaang it, don't do that to yourself! It's not worth it. Instead of getting into the weeds, just remember five words, stocks are not the economy!

Mike Santoli, from CNBC, was spot on when he said, "In 2020, as the virus surged, economic growth crashed, unemployment shot up, poverty spiked, and democracy crumbled, what happened to stock prices? They soared to record highs, of course. Why? As is usually the case in economics, it's complicated — and everyone has a pet theory."

If you want to nerd out and read some of the pet theories, simply ask Mrs. Google and she will be happy to oblige you with a truckload of articles that will likely satisfy your nerd instincts, albeit at the risk of possibly reading the wrong article that makes you divert from your well-balanced and prudent game plan. Therefore, proceed with caution at your own peril.

There will always be plenty of news stories to support bearishness and bullishness no matter our political viewpoint. Regardless of how we slice it, there are always two sides, so we need to take what we read with the proverbial grain of salt, as most peeps have an agenda.

Nevertheless, I steadfastly argue that we should focus less on the short-term news headlines and market volatility while seeking more wisdom from what history teaches us. For example, as I have questionably preached way too many times, history has clearly shown that the stock market always goes up over time, always has and likely always will, albeit, not in a straight line, of course. Moreover, since we cannot predict when the stock market will rise or fall, we must toughen up mentally.

Yep ... Toto, we are not in Kansas anymore! We are in the big leagues now.

Investing is often a dangerous business, especially for the ones that believe he or she is

PAPPAS continues on Page 22

GreenPointe names new regional president

GreenPointe Developers, LLC recently announced the promotion of Liam O'Reilly to regional president.

In his new role, O'Reilly manages the company's operations in southern St. Johns, Clay, Flagler and Volusia counties. For the past three years as senior land development manager, O'Reilly has worked with GreenPointe Regional President Mike Taylor in successfully growing North Florida as the company's largest region.

"We are pleased to recognize Liam's exceptional leadership skills with this well-deserved promotion," said GreenPointe Developers President Grady Miars. "Liam has



Liam O'Reilly

contributed meaningfully to our growth in North Florida, and I trust he will help us achieve great things as we move forward and expand the company's footprint throughout the region."

To continue the company's growth, Taylor will remain GreenPointe regional president focused on northern St. Johns, Duval, Nassau and Southeast Georgia with O'Reilly leading new developments to the south and west. His day-to-day responsibilities encompass all aspects of community acquisition and development.

GREENPOINTE continues on Page 22

Transportation

Continued from 21

parts of Duval, Clay and St. Johns counties. “We’re coming your way,” he said.

In addition, construction on a new bridge over the St. Johns River just south of the Shands Bridge is expected to begin later this year and be completed in 2029. The cost of that project is about \$334 million.

Construction on a new road from east of the County Road 16A spur to Interstate 95 in St. Johns County is expected to begin in early 2023, with completion projected

for 2030. The cost of that project is \$303 million.

Emerging technology, too, is demanding the attention of transportation officials. One area of concern is the so-called self-driving car.

“Autonomous vehicles,” said Ford, “it’s not a question of if; it’s a question of when.”

Evans said this would require development of technology connecting these vehicles to the necessary systems.

And, as electric vehicles become more prevalent, there will need to be a new way to ensure those motorists pay their fair

share of the cost of road maintenance. Right now, that is funded through the gas tax, but that revenue stream will dry up as fewer vehicles rely upon fossil fuels.

That will probably mean a transition to a different type of road usage tax.

Also, as transportation evolves, so too will the need for professionals trained in the field.

“We need to start developing our next generation of transportation professionals,” said Ford. “We also partner with (Florida State College at Jacksonville), where we’re actually going to be creating a curriculum around autonomous vehicles.”

Pappas

Continued from 21

smarter than Mr. Market. Don’t play that game. Instead, let’s be real pro’s and handle the wild ride akin to the Oracle of Omaha, Warren Buffet.

The declines in stocks are always painful and are often gut wrenching, but if we focus on history, keep the faith and stay the course while ignoring the pouting pundits of pessimism, we should be just fine, at least that is what history teaches us in spite of talking heads who scream from the rooftops that Armageddon is near.

Let’s keep our itchy finger off the trigger and just relax. Let’s stop over-thinking. The stock market is a remarkably powerful wealth-building tool, but far too often, we,

as investors, repeatedly mess things up by thinking we can outsmart it. I should know, I have the scars to prove it from back in the day when I was naive, wet behind the ears and just plain stupid.

Please don’t be like the younger me!

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GreenPointe

Continued from 31

An industry leader with more than decade of professional experience, O’Reilly successfully managed land development for a national home-builder prior to joining GreenPointe. A licensed professional engineer, O’Reilly has significant experience in the planning/designing of all types of private real estate development including single- and multi-family residential, commercial, retail and mixed-use development.

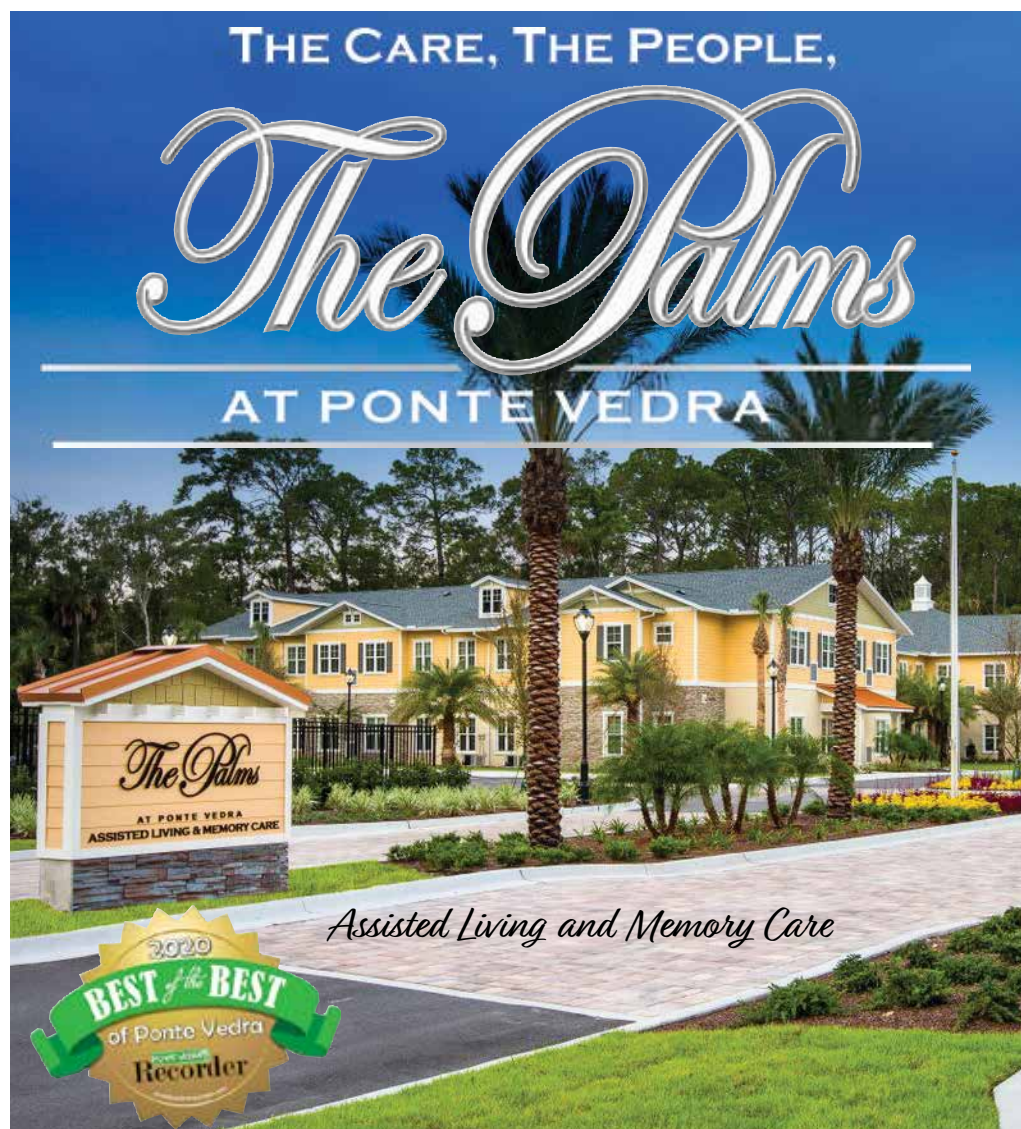
O’Reilly is actively involved with the JAX Chamber Hightower Emerging Leaders Fellowship. An alumnus of the 2018 class, O’Reilly is serving a three-year term on the board of directors including as vice chair of the board in 2020. He is a member of Northeast Florida Builders Association and ULI North Florida, where he serves on the Florida Product Council for Community & Housing Development. O’Reilly serves as a volunteer and fundraiser for the Monique Burr Foundation for Children. O’Reilly earned a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Florida State University.

For more information on GreenPointe and their communities, go to www.GreenPointeLLC.com.

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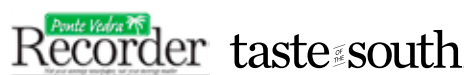
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8 tips for dyeing Easter eggs successfully

Coloring eggs is a beloved Easter tradition. Eggs long have been symbols of fertility and rebirth, making them fitting icons for spring.

One story links eggs to Easter as well. According to some religious scholars, Mary Magdalene, the woman who was the first person to see Jesus Christ after His resurrection, was holding a plain egg in her hand while waiting for the emperor to share the good news. The emperor then told her that Jesus' resurrection was as improbable as that egg suddenly blushing. The egg then turned red.

Dyeing eggs is an entertaining activity, but one that also may have some religious significance. Many families will color eggs this Easter, and these guidelines can make the process go smoothly.

- Wait until just before coloring to hard-boil eggs. Good Housekeeping recommends boiling eggs for 11 minutes for a hard boil. Do not chill the eggs afterward; warm eggs absorb color more effectively for more vivid results.

- Egg dye can stain furniture, clothing or tablecloths. Therefore, dress in clothing that you're not worried about staining. Also, cover work surfaces with an old tablecloth and newspapers to soak up any spills.



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

- Make a drying rack to ensure that eggs will dry evenly. This can be a rimmed cookie sheet lined with layers of paper towels to absorb any excess dye that runs off the eggs. Or push pins into thick foam board and place the eggs on top to allow air to circulate.

- Consider using glass bowls or ceramic mugs to house the colored dye solutions. These vessels are more sturdy

than plastic cups, and less likely to be overturned by eager young hands.

- Scissor-style tongs are ideal tools for retrieving eggs from the dye. Eggs tend to slide off of the spoons or wire rings provided in kits, leading to splashing and kids dunking their fingers in to grab eggs.

- Stir dyeing cups often to guarantee consistent color.

- Use electrical tape to make patterns on Easter eggs. Dip the eggs and let dry. Afterwards, remove the tape to reveal the designs.

- If food coloring-based dyes seem too messy, use watercolor paint sets and allow everyone to get creative.

While some people may want to use Easter eggs for recipes later on, it may be safer to boil up a fresh batch of eggs for that purpose, even if it seems wasteful. According to Emily Rubin, RD, LDN of the Thomas Jefferson University Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, "Hard-boiled eggs should be refrigerated within two hours of cooking and discarded if left out for more than two hours at room temperature."

Chances are it may take two hours or more for children to find hard-boiled eggs hidden by the Easter bunny.



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Photos by Susan Griffin



EASTER EVENTS

St. Johns County to host 3 Easter egg drive-through hunts

St. Johns County is hosting three drive-through Easter egg hunts from 9 to 11 a.m. April 1-3. The event times and locations will be Thursday, April 1, at Nocatee Community Park in Ponte Vedra, Thursday, April 1, at Veterans Park in St. Johns and Saturday, April 3, at Treaty Park in St. Augustine. Parents will need to register for a ticket in order to pick up an Easter bag for their child(ren) ages 3-8. Parents may not register

for more than five bags. The event is free. To register or for more information, contact Brian James at (904) 209-0365 or bjames@sjcfl.us.

Easter Bunny to visit Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee

The Easter Bunny is making a special visit to Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee from 4 to 6 p.m., Thursday, April 1. No appointment needed. Go to flaglerhealth.org/events for more information.



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- GOOD FRIDAY:** 11-12 NOON HOUR OF PRAYER
- SPRING FLING FESTIVAL:** SATURDAY APRIL 3RD 2-4PM
- EASTER SUNDAY:** 8:30 AM TRADITIONAL (INDOOR) 10 AM CELEBRATION (OUTDOOR)



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- Easter Sunrise - April 4, 6:45AM at Mickler's Landing*
- Easter Sunday - April 4, 9AM & 10:30AM at PVPC
- Easter Sunday - April 4, 10:30AM at Waypoint

Childcare Available Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday Services at 9am & 10:30am.
*In case of inclement weather for Sunrise Service, please check our website or FB page for updates





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Local painting studio with a fun twist to hold grand-opening ceremony in April

By Holly Tishfield

When Libbi Poole contacted her sister, Lesley Vitel, last year and said that she wanted to open her own business, Vitel was not immediately on board.

Poole had never owned or operated an independent business before, so Vitel was worried about all the things that could go wrong, but, when the sisters received an email last October that the Painting With a Twist store in Ponte Vedra Beach was for sale, it felt like fate.

Lesley Vitel is a full-time Realtor. She has been in the business for over 15 years and absolutely loves her job, but she was ready for something new and exciting, and she wanted a partner. Her sister, Libbi Poole, is a kindergarten teacher with a background in art and education who currently lives in Georgia. Poole plans on finishing out the year in Georgia, and then making the full move to North Florida once school ends, to dedicate her time to running their new business.

The Ponte Vedra Beach location of Painting With a Twist has been in the area for some time now, but when Poole and Vitel took over the business at the end of 2020, they redesigned the entire shop to fit their vision of making the space more inviting.

Painting With a Twist is a business with a unique take on art lessons. The shop employs artists to coordinate painting lessons for groups, which can be reserved on their website. They offer



Photo provided by Lesley Vitel

Libbi Poole and Lesley Vitel pose in their new Painting With a Twist studio in Ponte Vedra Beach.

classes for paintings such as sea creatures, landscapes, cartoon characters and much more. The “twist” of Painting With a Twist is that guests are encouraged to bring their favorite bottle of wine and snacks along with them to the lessons.

This makes it the perfect place for parties and celebrations, which can be reserved privately on their website, as well.

“People come in and generally leave with something they are proud of,” said Vitel. “Non-artists can still come in and enjoy painting.”

With the pandemic in mind, Painting With a Twist also offers take-home kits for virtual painting lessons, so that guests can experience the fun of adult art les-

sons from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

According to Poole and Vitel, the business has been doing extremely well since their soft opening in March. The community has responded positively, booking up the Girls Night and Date Night classes week after week.

“This is fun art,” said Vitel, “not fine art.”

The Ponte Vedra location of Painting with a Twist is hosting a grand opening ceremony with a ribbon cutting at 5 p.m. Thursday, April 8. To learn more about their classes, and the fun events they host, go to paintingwithatwist.com/studio/ponte-vedra-beach/.

St. Johns Cultural Council and Ancient City Poets celebrate National Poetry Month

Enjoy free events and activities in April as the St. Johns Cultural Council and Ancient City Poets collaborate with local arts organizations to celebrate Poetry Month in St. Johns County.

This programming is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH AT FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK

When: 5 -8 p.m., Friday, April 2

Where: Art Studio of St. Augustine Beach, Cultural Arts Center, St. Johns County Pier

Info: Meet local poets, enjoy poetry writing activities and browse an old-fashioned book fair featuring local authors during April’s First Friday Art Walk.

POETRY MONTH PROCLAMATION

When: 9 a.m., Tuesday, April 6

Where: County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine

Info: The Board of County Commissioners proclaim Poetry Month in St. Johns County

POETRY IN MOTION FILM SCREENINGS AT LIGHT BOX

When: 6:30-9:30 p.m., Thursday, April 8

Where: Art Box, 137 King St., St. Augustine

Info: Enjoy an evening of spoken word documentaries and poetry videos, curated by filmmaker James Scott, followed by discussion. Meet local authors with books available for purchase.

POETRY ACTIVITIES AT AIRSTREAM ROW ARTISAN MARKET

When: 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, April 17

Where: 190 Vilano Road, St. Augustine

Info: Enjoy poetry activities and meet local poets during April’s Vilano Beach Artisans Market.

ANCIENT CITY POETS OPEN MIC

When: 2:30-4:30 p.m., Sunday, April 25

Where: Outdoor Art Patio at 137 King St. in the San Sebastian Art District

Info: Experience the spoken word scene at St. Johns County’s longest running monthly poetry reading series. Sign up starts at 2:30 p.m. and emcee Chris Bodor calls up 15 readers beginning at 3 p.m.

“WRITERS DO THEIR P.A.R.T” EXHIBITION

When: Throughout April

Where: Art Studio of Saint Augustine Beach, Cultural Arts Center, St. Johns County Pier

Info: Experimental art show featuring 10 Ancient City Poets on display during the entire month of April. Gallery hours are posted at www.beachartstudio.org.

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Blues legend John Mayall to perform at Concert Hall

“The Godfather of British Blues,” John Mayall, will return to the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall on June 13. He last performed there in October 2016.

Tickets for John Mayall are available at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office and online at Ticketmaster.com. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall box office will remain closed at this time.

Mayall’s musical career spans more than 50 years. The English blues singer, pianist, harmonica player, guitarist and songwriter founded the band John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers in the 1960s. Members included many celebrated blues and blues rock guitarists such as Eric Clapton, Peter Green, Jack Bruce, Mick Taylor, Walter Trout,



Photo provided by Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

Coco Montoya and Buddy Whittington.

Attracted by the West Coast climate and culture, Mayall then made his permanent move from England to Los Angeles in 1969 and began forming bands with American musicians.

Throughout the next three decades, Mayall became further revered for his many jazz/rock/blues innovations featuring such notable performers as Blue Mitchell, Red Holloway, Larry Taylor and Harvey Mandel. Mayall’s popularity continued with a succession of dynamic albums including the Grammy-nominated “Wake Up Call” that featured guest artists Buddy Guy, Mavis Staples, Albert Collins and Mick Taylor.

In 2008, Mayall made the decision to permanently retire the Bluesbreakers name and in 2009 started a new era of touring with band members Rocky Athas on guitar, Jay Davenport on drums and Greg Rzab on bass. They toured together for over seven years, averaging about 100 shows a year,

and are featured players on four of Mayall’s studio albums.

In 2015 and 2016, Mayall released a couple of never-before-heard live albums from 1967 featuring Peter Green, John McVie and Mick Fleetwood, which have been enthusiastically received by critics and fans alike. Mayall has hired a new member to be added to all live shows, Carolyn Wonderland. She is the first woman to hold the position of lead guitarist in any of Mayall’s bands.

The St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. Payment will only be accepted via debit or credit card.

Butterfield Gallery features St. Augustine painter as artist of the month for April

St. Augustine painter Martha Ferguson is Butterfield Gallery’s featured artist in April. Her well-loved interpretations of St. Augustine are awash with light and color. Ferguson will be in the gallery from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on First Friday, April 2, to talk about her work and painting style.

Ferguson’s style is impressionistic and she paints primarily in oil and watercolor. She loves to paint old gritty towns, capturing the feel of the area and the locals that walk the quaint streets and is drawn to architecture and the way the light comes through the subject.

“I want my paintings to be more than a likeness but an experience or a nostalgic feel,” Ferguson said. “I can walk by the same scene many times and then all of a sudden there is a moment that tells a story. That’s what I seek to capture, that’s when the painting is successful. Painting is a journey that provides me with a determination to learn, create and master my

technique, while keeping my own sense of style.”

Over the last few years, Ferguson has become passionate about plein air painting. She works on small studies in the open air, many of which later become larger paintings that she paints in the studio. Examples of both are displayed in the gallery. Her paintings regularly win local and national awards, and Ferguson’s paintings of old town St. Augustine have become popular collector pieces for visitors and locals.

Ferguson holds a B.A. in fine art from Flagler College and also studied watercolor and print-making at the University of Charleston. She continued studies at The Art Student League of New York and various master artists workshops. She credits Emmet Fritz, a local painting legend whom she often encountered painting the scenes of St. Augustine during her college years at Flagler. It was in those days she fell in love with painting.



Photos provided by Butterfield Garage Gallery

Oil paintings by artist Martha Ferguson include *Cattin' Around* (left) and *Afternoon Light No. 2*.



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Sports

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SHARKS ROUT PANTHERS IN BOYS LACROSSE MATCHUP



Contributed photo

The Ponte Vedra boys lacrosse team routed rival Nease 15-4 on Tuesday, March 23, at Ponte Vedra High School. The Sharks jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the first six minutes of the game. PVHS sophomore Maddox Johnson led all scorers with five goals. Junior Sean Ciaracciolo added three goals for Ponte Vedra. The Sharks currently boast a 12-0 record after 9-8 win against Creekside on Saturday, March 27, in the inaugural "Rivalry on the River," and a 19-2 route of Menendez on Tuesday, March 30. PVHS is currently ranked the No. 1 team in the state and the No. 8 team nationally. The Sharks next play at Episcopal at 5 p.m. Thursday, April 1. Nease was 7-5 before heading into a matchup with visiting Matanzas on Wednesday, March 31. That game was not over by press time. The Panthers will then play at Providence at 6 p.m. Friday, April 2.

Artis Gilmore and the Cinderella team that put Jacksonville on the map



Scott A. Grant
Guest Columnist

On March 21, 1970, the Jacksonville University Dolphins basketball team took the court in College Park, Maryland, to play in the finals of the NCAA Tournament. Their opponent was the UCLA Bruins, winners of three titles in a row and five of the last six.

The mighty Bruins were led by legendary Hall-of-Fame coach, John Wooden. The improbable matchup between basketball aristocracy and the unknown upstart from Jacksonville would have seemed impossible just a few years earlier. JU had only been playing basketball for six years. As a pretty, blonde-haired, dewy-eyed cheerleader exclaimed on film in a bewitching Southern drawl, "A year ago, they didn't even know we had a school!"

The route that brought Jacksonville to that momentous event is worth remembering. Jacksonville University was the first Florida school to make it to the tournament at all. Credit for the rapid rise rests largely on the shoulders of flashy-dressing, young head coach Joe Williams and his willingness to defy convention and prejudice in order to win. During his career, Williams would take three different schools to the NCAA Tournament.

Jacksonville was his first. Williams recruited some high-profile players, including, not one, but two 7-foot African Americans — Artis Gilmore and Pembroke Burrows. The "original twin-towers," stood out in the segregated South. By contrast, the entire SEC only had one Black player at the time.

Gilmore and Burrows were playing for junior college programs one year before the team's magical run. Gilmore would lead the team in points, rebounds and blocked shots and go on to a long and storied career in the ABA and NBA. He still holds an NCAA record for most rebounds per game for a career. The two 7-footers were joined on the front line by another junior college transfer, 6-foot-10 Rod McIntyre. Those three coupled with high-scoring guard Rex Morgan and little Vaughn Wedeking from Indiana, who played point guard, combined to form a high-powered offense that regularly scored over 100 points a game.

Williams believed his team should have fun. They never had a curfew, although the Black players were warned to never cross the river into the city. He never yelled at his players during games other than to offer encouragement and he took them on trips to Hawaii and the Virgin Islands to play games. The team began the season unranked against Morehead State. JU administered

GRANT continues on Page 29

Girls wrestling team at PVHS sets up for productive season

By Holly Tishfield

Ponte Vedra High School is no stranger to successful wrestling teams, but its all-girls wrestling team is relatively new in creation, forming just last year before the pandemic began.

Coach Josean Gonzalez, who also coaches the boys wrestling team, began the team with a group of high school hopefuls. He said that they had a healthy turnout for the new team, although most of the participants were inexperienced to the world of wrestling.

"We were starting from scratch," said Gonzalez. "It was a brand new thing to them."

After spending the beginning of 2020 training the girls, gearing them up for tournaments and prepar-

ing them with techniques, everything came to a halt when the pandemic struck. Schools closed for in-person classes, and sports practices shut down along with it.

The 2020-2021 school year brought students back to campus, but Gonzalez said the pandemic had altered the way students felt about being on the wrestling teams.

"In wrestling, there is no social distancing. There are no CDC guidelines that can be followed beyond wearing a mask," he said, referring to how high-contact the sport is. "It was difficult to convince these girls, and their parents, to come back."

Gonzalez said that they lost more than a few



Photo provided by Josean Gonzalez

The Ponte Vedra High School girls wrestling team was officially sanctioned this year, meaning bigger tournaments and competition are ahead.

WRESTLING continues on Page 29

Grant

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a 117-63 drubbing, and after the game, Morehead's coach announced, "If there is a better team in the country, I don't want to play them this year." JU slowly climbed the standings as the Dolphins just kept winning. They beat Harvard and Georgetown. Gilmore blocked 16 shots in the Harvard game. Georgetown quit in the first half.

The Dolphins scored in bunches and often annihilated weaker opponents. Sports Illustrated, reporting on a game versus Evansville, alleged that the Dolphins "toyed with the opposition like so many porpoises tossing a ball around Marineland." As the team won, it won the hearts of local fans. Jacksonville was craving a winner and finally had one. Games were moved from the JU campus to the Jacksonville Coliseum in order to meet the demand for tickets. The team finished with one regular-season loss. That loss came at the hands of Florida State.

Jacksonville was not a part of any conference and made it to the 25-team field as an at-large bid. Critics suggested the team did not belong, that it had played a weak schedule. Gilmore and company quickly silenced the critics by reeling off three straight victories against Western Kentucky, Big Ten Champion Iowa and the venerable University of Kentucky. Jacksonville scored over 100 points in each of those games. Kentucky, led by legendary coach Adolph Rupp, was making its 18th appearance in the "Big Dance," Jacksonville its first. JU's 106-100 win sent the Dolphins to the Final Four. The win stunned the sport's world. Basketball experts expected Rupp's all-white squad would end the upstart Dolphins' improbable run. Morgan led the team with 28 points. Gilmore added 24 more and 20 rebounds.

In the semifinal game, JU faced St. Bonaventure. The Bonnies were considered to be the stronger team, but they were without star player Bob Lanier, who went on to Hall-of-Fame career in the NBA. Lanier's injury led to 91-83 win for the Dolphins and a date with UCLA to decide the National Championship. Jacksonville fans were all atwitter. The day of the game, all eyes in the city were seemingly glued to the television. They call it, "the day Jacksonville stood still." The Dolphins

got off to a 14-6 lead and then fizzled. The star of the game would be UCLA's Sidney Wicks, who out-rebounded Gilmore and blocked his shot five times. Gilmore, who was not used to having his shot blocked by anyone, let alone someone 5½ inches shorter, got flustered and began to force bad shots. After the game, Artis lamented, "Wicks played like he had springs on his feet." The Bruins were basketball royalty and the Dolphins' Cinderella run ended in an 80-69 loss.

Despite the loss, 10,000 fans turned out at the Gator Bowl to welcome the team home. They say the team's phenomenal run brought the city together. Racked by a decade of racial strife, Jacksonville was initially reluctant to support an integrated basketball team, but as time went on, the city embraced its new heroes. Winning has a way of doing that. And the team deserved its celebrity. We love the underdog and to this day, Jacksonville University (3,000 enrollment) is still the smallest school ever to make it to an NCAA Final. At the time, some said the team put Jacksonville on the map.

The loss was controversial. Critics pointed out that UCLA shot 27 more free throws than the Dolphins. Then there was the question of those five blocked shots. It was impossible to legally block Gilmore's shot, some argued, since he was shooting down at the basket. Some felt that the basketball establishment made sure that the Dolphins did not win. Jacksonville, they argued, challenged the status quo. Some of the players wore afros, they warmed up to the Harlem Globetrotter theme song, "Sweet Georgia Brown" and even dunked in warmups.

Artis Gilmore went on to a long professional career that ended with his induction into the Basketball Hall of Fame. Rex Morgan played two years for the Boston Celtics and then became a basketball coach. Pembroke Burrows never played in the NBA. He became a Florida State trooper and is remembered as the tallest person to ever hold that job in any state. Vaughn Wedeking, the little guy from Indiana who ran the big show, married a Dolphins cheerleader and settled down to become a successful dentist.

Scott A. Grant is a local columnist, author and historian. He is a regular contributor to the Recorder. By day, he serves as president of Standfast Asset Management.

Wrestling

Continued from 28

members, almost having to begin the team from scratch, but beginning from scratch also meant that they had the opportunity to introduce girls wrestling to a whole new group of hopefuls. They ended up gaining sophomore and junior girls who were excited to learn more about the sport.

The girls wrestling season ended in the middle of February this year, and after a short break, Gonzalez said the team will begin practice soon, with a focus on freestyle wrestling, which is common for girls' teams.

PVHS' girls wrestling team was officially sanctioned this year, thus allowing

them to compete in bigger tournaments. "The sport is growing, it is exploding," said Gonzalez. "You can see the participation gaining momentum."

The team won their inaugural home tournament, hosted earlier this year at the school, with a tiebreaker against Kissimmee/Osceola. Team captain Josie Sagasser placed 3rd in the tournament.

State finalist Olivia Richie also had a season of accomplishments, pinning the returning state champion in the semi-finalist round.

The upcoming girls wrestling team, which begins soon, will be the one to qualify girls for the state team, which competes at nationals.

"We have quite a few girls that could make Team Florida," said Gonzalez. "We are aiming for that state championship."

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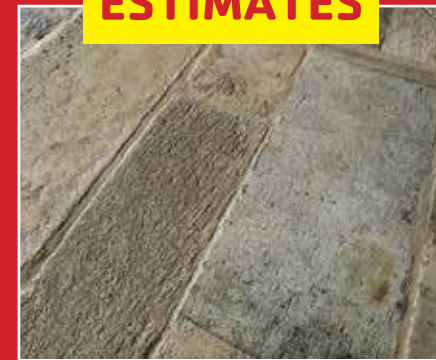
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