

Your Community Voice for 50 Years

PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

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Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

PonteVedraRecorder.com



INSIDE Check it Out!

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



Nominate your favorites!

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Gov. DeSantis back in Ponte Vedra

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Congratulations to the Class of 2021 Graduates!

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ABOVE: St. Johns County School District Superintendent
Tim Forson addresses the crowd during Ponte Vedra
High School's graduation on Saturday, June 5,
at TIAA Bank Field.

Photos by Paris Moulden

BELOW: St. Johns County School District Board Member
Kelly Barrera addresses the crowd during Nease High
School's graduation on Thursday, June 3, at TIAA Bank Field.



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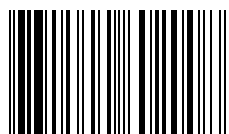


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Send us your news

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

Visit our website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com



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

ADOPT A PET

CAT OF THE WEEK

Hello, my name is Julep. I am a 2-year-old female domestic shorthair cat. I came to the Pet Center with



my sweet baby kittens, who have all found wonderful new homes. Now it's my turn to get all the attention and love a momma cat deserves. I am anxious to find a new home to call my own. Please call the shelter and arrange a meet and greet. I promise you will fall in love. #58682



DOG OF THE WEEK

Hi! My name is Boomer. I am a 5-year-old male lab/terrier mix. I found myself at the Pet Center as a stray, I have made lots of friends here, but I am ready for a real home, one to call my own. My ideal family will just love me and understand that, while I am heartworm positive, I can be easily cured of this disease and go on to live out my days bringing my new family joy. I know several commands and am very gentle. Come see me at the Pet Center today. #58732

Note: The Friends of the SJC Pet Center, offers a \$250 voucher towards treatment of Boomer's heartworm treatment. His case is easily treatable with preventatives.

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.**

Send us your nominations for Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra

The Ponte Vedra Recorder has launched its third annual Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra contest, covering ZIP codes 32082 and 32081.

Readers currently have the chance to nominate their favorite businesses, professional services, organizations and more in multiple categories online. From best new business to best charity event, best real estate agent to best personal trainer and best seafood to best boutique, the categories run the gamut and are sure to include your favorite things.

Nominations can be made on the website at pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2021.

Anyone can nominate a business or person — there is no limit to the number of nominations each person can submit. Online voting will begin once nominations are complete. The nominees who receive the most votes will be named 2021 Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra.



Nominations and voting are completely free and open to the public.

The Best Of platform on The Recorder's website will feature lists of nominees in an easy-to-use format. Nominees can participate in advertising packages that promote their entry by expanding their listing to feature additional details on the business.

Winners will receive a free framed certificate and a Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra window cling. Each winner will also be listed in our Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra special section and on the winner's website. Winners will be notified by Ponte Vedra Recorder staff at the end of July.

For more information or to find out how to get your nominated business or product involved in promotions that will be going on throughout the contest cycle, contact your sales representative, email susan@opcfla.com or call (904) 686-3938.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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9	1	5	8	6	3	4	2	7
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Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

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BRIEFS

State budget includes funding for variety of St. Johns County projects

Gov. Ron DeSantis recently signed the “Florida Leads” fiscal year 2021-2022 state budget, which totaled \$101.5 billion and includes \$169 million in tax relief. The “Florida Leads” budget focuses on education, environmental incentives, infrastructure improvements and support for military and veterans.

The budget contains funding for a variety St. Johns County projects and initiatives including, \$3.5 million for Ponte Vedra Beach/North Beach dune restoration, \$2 million for County Road 2209 and International Golf Parkway intersec-

tion and roadway improvements, and \$1.65 million for improvements to the State Road A1A corridor from Mickler Road to Marsh Landing Parkway. In addition, \$300,000 was appropriated for the St. Augustine/West Augustine septic-to-sewer program, \$694,000 for St. Augustine Beach resiliency improvements, \$1.3 million for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office detox program, and the county has acquired a new county judge, the first to be allocated to St. Johns County since 1973. Funding was also allocated to economic development, substance abuse treatment programs, health and human services programming, the St. Augustine Lighthouse, and law enforcement pay

BRIEFS continues on Page 5

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DeSantis signs legislation benefitting veterans, military personnel during Ponte Vedra visit

By Shaun Ryan

Gov. Ron DeSantis was in Ponte Vedra on Friday, June 4, to sign three pieces of military- and veteran-related legislation at American Legion Post 233.

During his presentation, he also took an opportunity to address the budget, the COVID-19 response and hackers attempting to steal unemployment benefits.

“Florida is the most military- and veteran-friendly state in the nation,” DeSantis said. “In my time as governor, we have worked hard to serve those who have served our country by making investments in military bases, schools around those bases and programs that serve veterans and their families.”

Under House Bill 429, the state Department of Education will establish a Purple Star Campus Program to identify schools that support military-connected children and demonstrate a commitment to provide critical transition supports to military families.

The legislation recognizes that “students from military families experience academic and social-emotional challenges as they relocate to new schools due to a parent’s change in duty station.”

To mitigate these challenges, the schools in the program would designate a military liaison to support families, post resources for military students and families on their websites, offer a student-led transition program, expand relevant staff training opportunities and reserve seats for military-connected students to ensure school choice opportunities.

House Bill 435 helps identify apprenticeships, internships and fellowships for servicemembers in their final 180 days in uniform. It allows them to gain work ex-



Gov. Ron DeSantis shows off newly signed legislation with some help from son Mason, daughter Madison and wife Casey during the governor’s visit to Ponte Vedra on June 4.

DeSantis signs legislation that will benefit active-duty military personnel and veterans in the state. DeSantis carried out the ceremony June 4 at American Legion Post 233 in Ponte Vedra.

Photos by Shaun Ryan

perience while maintaining their military salaries and benefits as they prepare to make the transition to the civilian workplace.

Senate Bill 922 authorizes state and

political subdivisions to waive certain postsecondary educational requirements for employment for eligible servicemembers and veterans. It also enhances point preferences for veterans and their family

members when a numerically based selection process is used for hiring.

In addition to signing the bills, DeSantis has approved about \$26 million for the governor’s share of the CareerSource Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding. Of that, \$7 million would directly benefit veterans and military spouses.

“These \$7 million in funds will provide targeted, in-demand employment opportunities through career training and support services to active-duty military spouses and veterans facing barriers to employment,” DeSantis said.

He specifically mentioned those who were homeless or disabled.

In reference to the \$101.5 billion budget, which DeSantis signed two days prior, the governor called Florida “the lowest per-capita-tax state in the country.”

“Yet, if you look, our infrastructure is better than these high-tax-states,” he said.

He touted provisions addressing infrastructure, K-12 education and \$1,000 bonuses for each law enforcement officer, firefighter and first responder.

He added that the budget provides \$28 million for Florida’s military families and support of the military presence in the Sunshine State. This includes: \$2 million for the Florida Defense Support Task Force, \$1.6 million for the defense infrastructure program, \$7.2 million for armory maintenance, \$2 million for military base protection, \$4.1 million for National Guard members seeking higher education degrees and \$11 million to support scholarships for children and spouses of deceased and disabled veterans.

DeSantis also took issue with the

DESANTIS continues on Page 5

Fucci pleads not guilty in Tristyn Bailey slaying

Defendant’s mother arrested on evidence-tampering charge

By Shaun Ryan

The teen arrested in the slaying of Tristyn Bailey, 13, has filed a written plea of not guilty. The filing was made through his attorney, Assistant Public Defender Joshua Mosley, on Thursday, June 3.

Saturday, June 5, the defendant’s mother was arrested on a charge of tampering with evidence in connection with the case.

Aiden Sean Fucci, 14, will be tried as an adult, according to court records.

Initially, Fucci was charged with second-degree murder after his May 10 arrest, but the charge was upgraded to first-degree murder after a grand jury hearing.

A felony arraignment has been scheduled for 9 a.m. June



Aiden Sean Fucci



Crystal Smith



Tristyn Bailey

10. A felony pretrial hearing is set for 9 a.m. July 28.

Bailey was reported missing by her family at about 10 p.m. May 9. Her body was discovered the next day near a retention pond east of the Saddlestone Drive cul-de-sac.

Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Predrag Bulic determined that the cause of death was sharp force trauma by stabbing. In a press conference May 27, 7th Circuit State Attorney R.J. Larizza said Bailey had sustained 114 stab wounds.

Fucci’s mother, Crystal Lane Smith, 35, surrendered herself to the custody of the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office

on Saturday in relation to the evidence-tampering charge. She was released on a \$25,000 bond.

On video surveillance obtained from Smith’s home, deputies observed Smith taking blue jeans from Fucci’s bedroom to the adjacent bathroom and appeared to be scrubbing them in the bathroom sink, according to the arrest warrant.

Deputies report Smith and a witness could then be seen inspecting the jeans before Smith returned them to Fucci’s bedroom. After executing a search warrant, law enforcement officials reported that the blue jeans and the drain of the bathroom sink tested positive for the presence of blood.

In a statement released by the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office, Sheriff Robert Hardwick said he was proud of the men and women of his office for their thoroughness in the investigation.

“Our goal in any investigation is to ensure proper accountability across the board for successful prosecution,” Hardwick said.



Attendees mingle and admire the luxury vehicles lined up to participate in the 45-mile-long charity drive.

Charity drive brings racing legend Hurley Haywood back on the road

By Holly Tishfield

On Saturday, June 5, the fourth annual Highway to Help Heroes Charity Drive took place at Ring Power Corporation headquarters in St. Augustine.

The charity drive, which is funded by both The Leb Family Foundation and the Sissine's Office Systems, was created with the intention of supporting the officer of the First Coast who serve and protect the community every day, and to honor the men and women who have been injured in the line of duty.

Highway to Help Heroes donates their proceeds to two local organizations that support first responders, including the Jacksonville Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Foundation's Fallen Officer Welfare Relief Fund and K9s For Warriors. The FOP is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 351,000 members, and celebrates the life and sacrifice of police officers who have paid the price for their communities. K9s For Warriors is well-known in the North Florida area, and the country, as the nation's largest provider of service dogs to military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma with a program that is unique, comprehensive and proven thanks to groundbreaking research conducted in partnership with Purdue University's OHAIRE Lab.

Hurley Haywood, legendary motorsport icon who was inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame in 2005, led this year's car rally up a 45-mile course along I-95 and A1A into downtown Jacksonville.



ABOVE: Legendary motorsports icon Hurley Haywood prepares to lead the drive of nearly 100 vehicles up the stretch of I-95 and A1A.

LEFT: K9s For Warriors, a local nonprofit helping pair disabled veterans with service dogs, is one of the main charities that the drive raised donations towards.
Photos by Holly Tishfield

"I'm thrilled to lead the charge during this year's Highway to Help Heroes event," Haywood said in a press release. "It is such a treat to join car enthusiasts from across Florida for this event to honor the work of our police force and military."

Haywood's career spans an impressive 45 years of racing, with a total of 10 wins across the Rolex24 at Daytona, 24 Hours

of Le Mans, and 12 Hours of Sebring. His participation in the event sparked inspiration in many, and with his help, the charity drive raised over a generous donation for their selected charities.

Nearly 100 individuals registered their personal luxury vehicles to participate in the charity drive and afterwards were treated to an exclusive Studio 54-themed event at Cowford Chophouse.

Briefs

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increases. For more information on the governor's "Florida Leads" State budget, go to www.boldvisionforabrighterfuture.com/HomeFY22.htm.

Ponte Vedra Boulevard temporary closed for JEA work

Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) crews will temporarily close Ponte Vedra Boulevard between Solana Road and Corona Road from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on June 14 and 15 for the installation of new fire hydrants. JEA recommends that motorists utilize State Road A1A as an alternative route. For more information, contact JEA Project Outreach at (904) 665-7500 or projectoutreach@jea.com.

SJC School District offers summer reading volunteer opportunity

If you are willing to spend a little time this summer helping others, there is an opportunity waiting for you. RSVP of St. Johns County is looking for community members to assist once a week in the St. Johns County School District summer reading program by remotely assisting in reading activities. Hours are flexible, and you will be able to help from the comfort of your home. Volunteers will be meeting with students on their computers. Training for computer connection, reading strategies and logistics will be provided. For more information, contact RSVP at (904) 547-3952 or Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

DeSantis

Continued from 4

CDC's sailing orders governing cruise ships, which he called "administrative overreach."

The CDC has issued a "Framework for Conditional Sailing Order" following months during which cruise ships have been forbidden to sail.

"They will issue these fiats that have no basis in science and certainly no legislative authority for them to be doing this," he said.

The state has filed suit against the federal government and the CDC as a result.

"They literally said if you're sunbathing on a cruise ship, you have to wear a mask," DeSantis said. "Really? Come on. I mean, give me a break."

DeSantis also addressed the problem of people creating false identities to steal unemployment benefits.

"This has been a constant issue," he said, "because people realize that there's an ability to get a lot of money."

He added that Florida has prevented the theft of "billions of dollars" and suggested that states simply awarding benefits to everyone who signs up without verification have lost "tens of billions" of dollars.

Scott Bunkosky is a Ponte Vedra Beach resident who is heavily involved in local youth sports. He has four sons, all of whom played or play sports for local schools, and has been a PA announcer at both Nease and Ponte Vedra high schools. He and his wife, Stacy, have lived in Ponte Vedra since 2001 and have the unique distinction of rooting for both the Sharks and the Panthers.

Scott Bunkosky

As told to Paris Moulden

Can you tell me about your background in the local sports community?

We've been in Ponte Vedra since 2001. Our boys have grown up playing Pop Warner football, in the PVAA (Ponte Vedra Athletics Association), playing with the baseball association and rec league basketball with the YMCA. So, we've been plugged in sports-wise for quite some time having four boys. I also tried to help coaches as much as possible. I definitely don't know everything, but love being involved on the sidelines with the football and coaching their basketball teams throughout their years and assisting with baseball.

Can you tell me your sons' names and where they went/go to school?

My oldest one is Noah. He graduated from Ponte Vedra in 2017. And then, Nic. He's 20. He graduated from Nease in 2019. Nathan is a sophomore at Ponte Vedra, and then Nehemiah is in seventh grade at Landrum Middle School.

Noah played sports at Ponte Vedra (basketball and baseball), Nic went to Nease and played football and Nathan is at PVHS and playing basketball and football, so you've rooted for both. Is that a weird position to be in?

You know what, it was very unique to say the least. It was a rivalry, but in a way it wasn't because you were just rooting for your son. We knew so many kids that had grown up playing sports at Ponte Vedra then went to Nease, and vice versa, so we were more rooting that they would play well. We were just rooting for the kids. At the time when Noah had graduated, we wanted Nic to win and beat PV for maybe the second time in the history, but just growing up with all of those kids made for a fun rivalry.

That's like being an Auburn and Alabama fan, I think. Correct?

Correct. Yeah, so sometimes the house is divided, no doubt. Noah had graduated from PV but came back and rooted for his brother while he was at Nease, and they all root for Nathan. Now Nic comes back and sits on the PV sideline and cheers for Nathan to be successful. I mean, I don't know of anybody else who has that same connection. Not to brag, but Nic was a pretty good football player. And his younger brother Nathan is starting to make a name for himself as well. So it's just an interesting, interesting dynamic, but we love both schools, which is probably something you don't hear often.

With Nic playing in college and Nate playing in high school, how did you all deal with the pandemic and its impact on being able to play sports?

Well, Nathan ended up doing home school this year. He's a very good student, so he just said, 'Dad, I have to focus on doing home school.' And he was lucky that we did it quick enough to where we've transitioned into FLVS, and then he was able not to miss any games. So, throughout the season, a lot of kids have gotten COVID, quarantined for COVID and missed a week or more, so he was very fortunate that he was home-schooled and he was able to not miss anything. He was the only student that didn't miss any basketball games, so he made the right decision. As for Nic (in his third year at South Alabama), it changed everything for them. You know, he only had one class in person. He had to get COVID tested



Scott Bunkosky with Noah Bunkosky



Scott Bunkosky with Nic Bunkosky



Scott and Stacy Bunkosky with Nathan Bunkosky



Scott and Stacy Bunkosky with Nehemiah Bunkosky

every single Monday. A very unique situation as far as the college aspect of it.

You still have Nate in school, and you have a younger son, Nehemiah, who is still pretty young, but after they've graduated, do you still see yourself maintaining your involvement in the local sports community?

Absolutely. You know, we're blessed with such great coaches. Todd Fordham over at the Landrum, he's really in it for the right reasons. It's just a really good small community where you know a lot of great people, a lot of great athletes come out of this area, and you just continue to give back and volunteer. Even if you're not coaching, just support them by going to high school games. We used to go to high school games before we even had anybody in high school, just to support the local community. We plan on retiring here, so we might go support them and root for them. And we root for Nease as well. We're blessed in this area to have two schools within five miles apart that are doing it the right way for the right reasons and trying to be competitive and successful at the same time.

The huge rivalry should have an extra element next season as PVHS and Nease will be in the same district. How do you see that going?

It'll be interesting to see to how the whole Nease-PV rivalry plays out next year. It makes that game even bigger for the coaches. I think the coaches probably at some point will play the game down a little bit, but now

with it meaning something as far as districts go. It's more than bragging rights, more than the trophy of the Bridge. I think this game is going to be a really big event this year.

That almost makes it fun, more fun, but for you, is that going to create more family friction?

Yeah, I don't know. That just all depends. Fortunately, Nic won't be home, so there won't be any strife in the household because he'll be focusing on his game. But yeah, it's gonna be interesting. I think it's going to be on TV this year, so that'll be fun. I'll be announcing it.

What do you enjoy most about living in Ponte Vedra?

I think it's just the small-town community with such great amenities. You have the fantastic schools. You're right by the beach. It seems like the sports side of the community is very close knit. Good former athletes who live here that like to give back, so the youth here are getting some really good teaching and coaching and they've always been successful because of it. I think that's one of the reasons we like it so much.

What do you like to do in your free time?

During my free time when I'm not at the ballpark or the gym? I love pickleball and play golf. That's my two things.

This is an abridged version of the story. For more, go to pontevedrarecorder.com and click on One of Us.

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

Love is the flower you've got to let grow"
 — John Lennon



Kathy Esfahani
 Columnist

BEAT THE HEAT PLANTS FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE

The summer months in Ponte Vedra Beach and Jacksonville are often hot and humid and require plants that can withstand these sometimes harsh

conditions. June, July and August are hot, humid months and require tough plants that can tolerate these conditions.

Ideas for planting heat-tolerant, full-sun plants are black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.), blue daze (*Evolvulus glomeratus*), coleus, bush daisy, globe amaranth (*Gomphrena globosa*), melampodium, gaillardia (also called blanket flower), gazania, ornamental peppers, Texas sage, milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.), pentas, periwinkle/vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*), moss rose (*Portulaca* spp.), purslane, zinnia, lantana, dune (or beach) sunflower daisy and all types of sedums and succulents.

Carolina jessamine, aka yellow jessamine, grows as a vine, so it's a perfect choice to climb up a landscape feature such as trellis arbors or pergolas. These butterfly-yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers release a



Flower of the Week: Mexican Heather

sweet fragrance and are very heat-tolerant.

Blue daze is salt tolerant and does great in Eastern exposure.

Once established, it requires little care other than extra water during dry weather. The plants are covered with small, blue flowers that close during the afternoon heat; no deadheading required.

Vinca/periwinkle is a great annual flower that comes in a variety of colors for hot, dry weather. Their needs are minimal: low water and fertilizers.

Some of the top performers include beach sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia* spp.), bulbine, bush daisy (*Euryops pectinatus*), blanket flower (*Gaillardia pulchella*), cuphea spp. like Mexican heather, firebush (*Hamelia patens*), firespike (*Odontonema cuspidate*), hibiscus, hydrangea, plumbago, salvia,

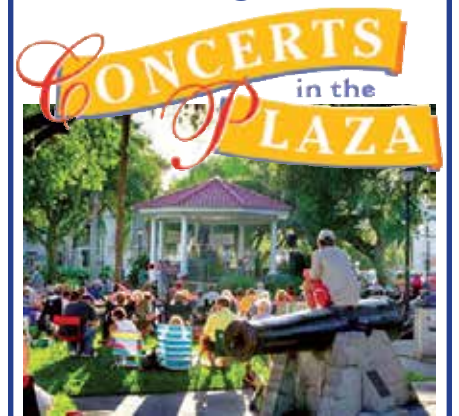
shrimp plant, jacobinia (*Justicia* spp), lantana and yellow elder (*Tecoma stans*), also called Esperanza.

Some heat-tolerant shade/foliage plants are impatiens, such and New Guinea impatiens, wax begonia and euphorbia Diamond Frost, all annuals, then Alternanthera app like Brazilian Red Hots or Joseph's Coat, Alocasia or philodendron, ornamental sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*), Persian shield (*Strobilanthes dyerianus*), Hawaiian ti plant (*Cordyline*), stromanthe, Arbicoloe, foxtail fern, agapanthus (Lilly of the Nile), red salvia (Summer Jule) and caladiums.

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

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

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Congratulations to the Class of 2021 Graduates!



Photos by Paris Moulden

Nease High School seniors line up to receive diplomas during graduation ceremonies as other members of the 2021 graduating class brave a heavy downpour during graduation ceremonies on Thursday, June 3, at TIAA Bank Field.

Nease weathers storm to graduate its largest class

By Paris Moulden

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on graduation ceremonies last year, forcing many to be done virtually, if at all, so the Nease Class of 2021 wasn't going to let a little thing like a virtual monsoon of a rainstorm stop it from celebrating its accomplishments.

The largest graduating class at Nease High School braved the torrential downpour on Thursday, June 3, at TIAA Bank Field, to listen to speeches from school leaders, collect their diplomas and close out their high school careers after more than a year of facing the unknown of what their future would hold.

St. Johns County School District superintendent Tim Forson reminded students of the unique trials they faced, but also noted how it brought the students closer together, despite having to be further apart physically.

"... Hopefully you don't have to hear these words again for a long time — quarantine, social distancing, temperature checks, classroom dividers and, also, in some cases, illness," Forson told the 642 graduates in attendance. "And I know that's been a part of this year and this experience. And I hope that we don't ever have to go through that again. But what really happened is that you, as a class, the largest graduat-

ing class of Nease High School, have grown closer together. You can see it in your faces, you can see in the conversations that were taking place before the ceremony, and it's just a wonderful, wonderful sight to see this graduating class move forward together."

Salutatorian Shivam Shaw, who will be attending the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Business School, shared his thoughts on his high school experience, provided philosophical advice from rapper Wiz Khalifa and offered encouragement about the future.

"Standing here today, so many emotions in my head — joy, frustration, excitement, sadness — thinking about the four years that we will never forget. Through our entire lives, our parents have told us snippets about the mystery that we call the future. And here we are, we made it. Your future begins today."

Nease valedictorian Lark Harrington applauded her classmates for their strength and perseverance in getting through these difficult times.

"Through this year's unique challenges, it was difficult for us to keep sight of what we were working towards," said Harrington, who will attend Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

"And I know that there have been times



Photos by Paris Moulden

Ponte Vedra High School seniors line up to receive diplomas as other members of the 2021 graduating class await their turn during graduation ceremonies on Saturday, June 5, at TIAA Bank Field.

PVHS grads looking ahead after uncertain senior year

By Paris Moulden

"Take it all in. When you get a chance to walk across the stage, enjoy every step. Look to Mom and Dad, look to your family, and just enjoy the moment."

That's the advice St. Johns County School District Superintendent Tim Forson gave to the graduating class of Ponte Vedra High School. After more than a year of COVID-19 concerns, school closings, virtual learning, athletic competition cancellations and uncertainty about the future, 464 graduates from Ponte Vedra High School took the field at TIAA Bank Field on Saturday, June 5, to enjoy the moment of being together, celebrate their accomplishments and shift their focus to what's ahead.

SJC School Board District 4 member Kelly Barrera lauded the students on their resiliency and perseverance.

"... This is a milestone that is so worthy of being celebrated," she said. "And it is such a joy to be with you tonight to celebrate your accomplishments, even more than I think in years past, because it's taken more for you guys to get here."

PVHS principal Dr. Fred Oberkehr applauded the students' perseverance in the face of adversity, and expressed gratitude for the graduates' supports system, which helped make their success possible.

"So many influence our lives, some in

small ways as others are more impactful," he said. "I am grateful for the support that we had this year from our board of education, Superintendent Forson and all the district's administration. The support from our parents and families and volunteer, our PTO, athletic, drama and band boosters, has been like no other year, and we thank you all."

Last year, PVHS seniors picked up diplomas in a drive-through ceremony, celebrating their graduation from vehicles, apart from their classmates. As the year began, this year's group of seniors didn't know what awaited them as their final year of high school came to an end, but the Class of 2021 was able to celebrate together in front of friends and family.

It's what Forson focused on in his speech to the graduates, reminding them of all they'd overcome and the strength they've built dealing with adversity.

"... COVID really overwhelmed us. It's overwhelmed our community, it overwhelmed our country and overwhelmed the world," Forson said. "And the fact that you took it on as seniors, you overcame the challenges in front of you."

Salutatorian Carolina Mechetti discussed how different her high school experience was from what she expected, and how she and her classmates learned to adapt.

Nease

Continued from 8

where many of us have struggled to keep going. Somehow though, we have all made it through the worst of this to be here today.

“Despite living through unprecedented loss and change, it is difficult as we reached the finish line, not to look back and feel some disappointment at what the pandemic has taken from us or wonder where we might be today if our lives had not been touched by the virus. For many of us, the success we have enjoyed just not yet feel [like] enough to make up for the trials we’ve experienced.”

Harrington also expressed positivity and confidence for the future.

“I have confidence that the best of our lives, and of ourselves is yet to come,” she said. “Each of you receiving your diploma today has weathered this storm and this literal storm. And though you may not see it yet, you will be stronger for it. You may already feel like your life has gone back to normal or likely you may just now be finding the light at the end of the tunnel. Regardless of how you feel in this moment, the simple fact that you are here today is a monumental accomplishment.

“That means even more than it has been years prior. Each one of us has so much to be proud of,” Harrington said. “Thanks to the struggles we have faced this past year, we can enter the rest of our lives confident in the knowledge that we are ready for anything.”



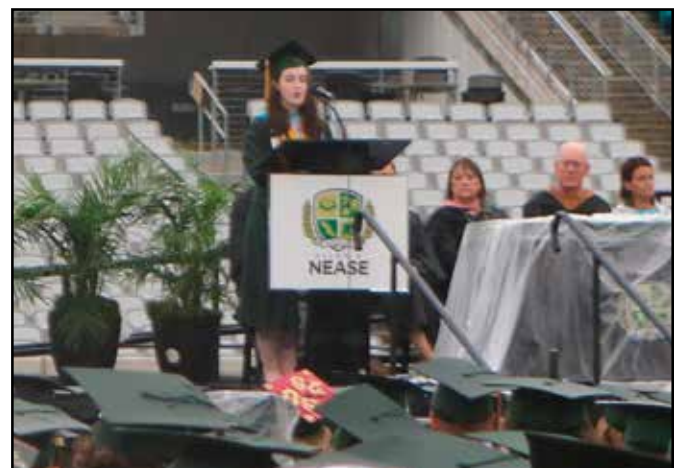
Members of the award-winning Nease NJROTC Drill Team open up ceremonies at the Nease graduation.



Nease graduates enter the field ahead of graduation ceremonies on Thursday, June 3, at TIAA Bank Field.



Nease Salutatorian Shivam Shaw speaks to his fellow graduates and their supporters during graduation.



Nease Valedictorian Lark Harrington delivers her speech to the Class of 2021 on Thursday, June 3.



PVHS principal Dr. Fred Oberkehr is shown on the jumbotron as he addresses attendees at PVHS' graduation at TIAA Bank Field.



Family members, friends and supporters show their support for the PVHS Class of 2021 at graduation ceremonies.

PVHS

Continued from 8

“During my early teenage years, I frequently imagine high school through the lens of ‘High School Musical,’ fun and light-hearted place with people singing and dancing and every corner we’re studying with secondary. As a freshman, I soon realized that the mix of excitement and trepidation that my initial view of high school would be wildly different from the movie.”

But what she couldn’t have predicted was the obstacles presented by COVID-19 during her high school years.

“Since March of last year, our school life has been determined by uncertainty,” Mechetti said. “But throughout all of these distractions, one thing has remained; our commitment to persevere and succeed.”

Valedictorian Matthew Shen thanked the teachers and administrators for their strength and commitment despite the obstacles of the last year.

“Thank you to our devoted teachers and coaches for going the extra mile in preparing us for life, for our future academics and beyond,” Shen said.

Shen also lightened things up amid a year of trepidation, drawing laughs from fellow classmates, faculty and guests with his witty insight on dealing with life’s uncertainties and the potential importance of TIPS (Treasury Inflation Protected Securities) when it comes to dealing with uncertainty.

“As you all embark on your individual journeys and embrace whatever level of optimism you’re most comfortable with, I urge you to find constancy when you can, to find adventure in the uncertain and to ask your financial advisor if TIPS is right for you,” Shen quipped.



PVHS Salutatorian Carolina Mechetti speaks to fellow graduates and guests during graduation ceremonies.



PVHS Valedictorian Matthew Shen delivers his speech to the Class of 2021 on Saturday, June 5.

St. Augustine Commission recognizes Ponte Vedra High senior with Citizenship Award

By Shaun Ryan

A Ponte Vedra High School student was among eight graduating seniors recognized May 24 by the St. Augustine City Commission for their leadership and service to school, community and other students.

Lucy Morfit received one of this year's Citizenship Awards at a ceremony in The Alcazar Room of City Hall. She is a member of Link Crew, Feminist Club, Sand Sharks, Athletic Leadership Council, National English Society, National Honor Society and Rho Kappa National Honors Society.

A cross-country athlete, she has competed in track and field.

Morfit is also the recipient of the Blue Shark Award, Coaches' Choice Award and the Hammerhead Shark Award.

She volunteers with jaxTHRIVE, Girls Empowered by Math and Science and the Woodson Warrior Scholarship Program.

She plans to attend Florida State University in the fall.

"One of the most rewarding experiences of graduation season is witnessing the youth of our community complete one

stage of life and cross the threshold into another," said St. Augustine Vice Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline prior to bestowing the awards. "For our high school seniors, it is a time they have worked for ... and most certainly looked forward to ... for a long time. It is an honor for me, and the entire City Commission, to take a few moments to recognize some of the outstanding graduating seniors and to wish them well as they begin a new chapter of their lives."

Each year, the city asks St. Johns County high schools to identify a graduating senior who has exemplified the characteristics of citizenship by their leadership and service to both school and community to receive the City Commission's Citizenship Award.

The eight students chosen for the award received a commemorative plaque, a city lapel pin and \$200 to help defray the cost of their continued education.

All but two schools submitted a candidate this year.

The other students who received the award were: Abigail Huber of Bartram Trail High School, Jacob Douberly of Creekside High School, Ja'Myra Harris of



Photos provided by the City of St. Augustine

Lucy Morfit, a graduating senior from Ponte Vedra High School, received the City of St. Augustine's Citizenship Award on May 24. From left are: City Commissioner Barbara Blonder, City Commissioner Roxanne Horvath, Morfit, City Commissioner John Valdes and Vice Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline.



Morfit (fifth from left) was among the eight graduating seniors to receive this year's Citizenship Award from the City of St. Augustine. Other recipients, in no particular order, were: Abigail Huber of Bartram Trail High School, Jacob Douberly of Creekside High School, Ja'Myra Harris of Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, Peyton Gatlin of Pedro Menendez High School, Devon Philcox of St. Augustine High School, Seth Bowman of St. Johns Technical High School and Chiara Brambilla of St. Joseph Academy.

Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, Peyton Gatlin of Pedro Menendez High School, Devon Philcox of St. Augustine

High School, Seth Bowman of St. Johns Technical High School and Chiara Brambilla of St. Joseph Academy.

Two local grads welcomed into honors program at UF

Two graduating seniors from the Ponte Vedra area are among the 36 honors scholars in the incoming class of 2025 at the University of Florida.

Ponte Vedra High School graduate Katherine Bi-Ji was welcomed as a Lombardi Scholar in the university's Honors Program. Allen D. Nease graduate Izabela Zmirksa is a recipient of the university's Stamps Scholarship.

The John V. Lombardi Scholarship and Stamps Scholarship are premier undergraduate awards that fully fund four summers of enrichment experiences, including three international programs and a week-long domestic leadership expedition.

Eleven scholars will travel to Maine this summer to take part in a weeklong sailing expedition with the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School along the Eastern Seaboard. In summer 2022, the scholars will travel to the Yucatán Peninsula for five weeks to study the ecology of tropical Mexico and the Maya culture with the UF in Mérida study-abroad program.

Katherine Bi-Ji was her school's first female wrestler and was an active member of the varsity swim team. She has tutored refugee children with jaxTHRIVE, organized annual remembrance walks for victims of gun violence in a leadership role on Students Demand Action and is

dedicated to six honor societies.

She is pursuing a degree in finance and is planning for a career in the legal field. She was a four-year delegate in the Model United Nations and served on the executive board for Women in Model United Nations as chapter organizer.

Izabela Zmirksa plans to major in biomedical engineering. She has won the International Sustainable Chain of Transportation Competition as a member of an all-girls team. She also founded the Upcycling Club and created the Doorsteps to Donations campaign to provide items for shelters across Northeast Florida.

She has also self-directed research on

diatoms and epiphyton through the Young Scholars Program.

"It is a pleasure to welcome this remarkable group of students into the Honors Program," said Honors Associate Director Regan Garner, who coordinates the internal scholarships. "Honors scholars come to UF seeking academic rigor, rich experiences and limitless opportunity. I am confident our program and the broader campus community will support them with the resources they need to thrive."

Honors scholars receive a stipend of \$2,700 each fall and spring for eight semesters or until they earn an undergraduate degree.

INK!, Take Stock in Children recognizes students, mentors, educational leaders

Take Stock In Children and its local umbrella organization, INK!, held a graduation ceremony May 26 at St. Augustine High School for all program students.

"The graduation event served as an extremely exciting time, as we get to recognize an outstanding group of graduates from the class of 2021," said James Wheeler, Take Stock in Children program director with INK! "It has been our tradition to honor our students and bring in the new class of eighth graders at the same event each year. With all of the happenings due to the pandemic since March 2020,

this year holds a special celebration for a respected group of graduates."

St. Johns County School District Superintendent Tim Forson offered opening remarks and recognition of school board members, dignitaries, area high school principals, INK! staff, teachers, mentors and sponsors, among others.

"We are extremely grateful for the years of dedication and devotion from local volunteer mentors for our senior class," said Forson. "If you look up the definition of mentor, it reads, 'A trusted counselor or guide.' I have adopted a new description of

what a mentor means to our students and families, and it's less dictionary and more real world. A mentor is someone whose hindsight can become your foresight."

Wheeler added that mentors in Take Stock in Children give their time, experience and listening skills to students at critical points in their young lives.

"A mentor's impact is truly profound, lasting well beyond the high school years of our young scholars," he said.

Fifteen mentors who have guided hundreds of students from their eighth-grade year in public school to graduation status,

were recognized. One of the mentors has been in the volunteer program for more than 14 years.

Outstanding seniors were called to the stage with family members and friends to be recognized with their scholarships, gifts and medals while the audience was told about each student's high GPAs and school and sports performance.

Honored students were from Allen D. Nease, Bartram Trail, Creekside, Pedro Menendez, St. Augustine and St. Johns



ABOVE: Episcopal's Beaches Campus fifth-graders graduated May 20.

LEFT: Several graduates of Episcopal's Beaches Campus receive plaques recognizing their achievements.

Photos by Laura Evans Photography



Episcopal's Beaches Campus holds graduation ceremonies

Episcopal's Beaches Campus celebrated sixth- and fifth-grade graduates in two separate ceremonies on May 19 (sixth grade) and May 20 (fifth grade). Students would normally graduate in sixth grade, but because the school consolidated to one sixth grade on the Munneryn Campus for next year, fifth-graders also graduated.

Both days began with an art show organized by Gretchen Henson, Beaches Campus art teacher, and celebrated each graduate and their artwork this year.

Following the art show, the graduates participated in a ceremony that recognized their achievements and hard work at the Lower School Campus.

Graduates then received their certifi-

cations of achievement for meeting all the requirements to move up to middle school. The days concluded with outdoor receptions at the McCormick Hall Lunch Pavilion with refreshments and photo opportunities for families.

Grade six plaque awards: Aubrey Clark received the Rector's Award, and Tatiana Burgess received the Head of Lower School Award.

Grade five plaque awards: Jackson Carl Margolin received the Academic Achievement Award, Benjamin Terrance Calloway received the Athletic Achievement Award, William Gibbs Dodrill received the Fine Arts Achievement Award and Davis Parker Philips received the Faith, Character, Culture Award.

GRADUATING TOGETHER



Photo provided by Janet Westling

Ponte Vedra High School graduates Patrick Quinlann (from left), Max Houser, Jack Polian, Lauren Bing, Rory Mayer and Jackson Hughes pose together following graduation ceremonies Saturday, June 5. The friends have been in school together since kindergarten at Palmer Catholic School.

INK!

Continued from 12

Technical high schools.

Many students also received additional scholarships from local and national educational foundations and other funding sources.

The Take Stock in Children Florida Outstanding Senior Award went to Spencer Wolfe of Bartram Trail High School, and the RSM Foundation Super Senior Scholarship was awarded to Germari Rickerson of St. Augustine High School.

The event included a presentation recognizing the largest Take Stock in Children graduating class in the local program's history, as well as student perseverance during the pandemic.

"We really wanted to be able to do something meaningful for these students, and funding to do this was a challenge," said Wheeler. "Then, amazingly, we had an anonymous donor present significant gifts to graduating students with all receiving brand-new laptop computers to help them as they transition to their next academic journey."

INK! provides innovative resources to support academic success for all St. Johns County public schools to benefit 44,000 students and approximately 2,785 teachers. The office is located at 1 Christopher St. in St. Augustine. For further information, contact INK! Executive Director Donna Lueders at 904-547-7120 or email Donna.Lueders@stjohns.k12.fl.us. The website is www.ink-stjohns.org.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATING CLASS OF 2021.

We wish you the very best in your future!



Kelly Barrera

ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD



OBITUARIES

Jerome Sloan Fletcher

Jerome Sloan Fletcher, 92, of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, died peacefully in his home surrounded by the love of his children, grandchildren, and close family members. Jerome was born in Orlando,



Jerome Sloan Fletcher

Florida to Mildred and John Zabud Fletcher. He was raised with his brother John in Riverdale, NY and spent summers in Jacksonville, FL. His education included Riverdale Country School, Staunton Military Academy then Yale University graduating in the class of 1951. After graduating from Yale, he was an officer in the United States Army in psychological warfare.

Jerome took over his father's insurance brokerage business in 1962. By the time he sold it in 1977 to focus on his land development interests, it had become the 12th largest privately-held insurance brokerage firm in the country.

Jerome was a creative and driven business leader with industry-leading experience in the insurance, construction, and real estate development sectors. In the early 1960s, Continental Consolidated Construction Company, for which Jerome provided surety bonding, encountered financial difficulty and asked Jerome to step in to right the ship. Under his leadership, the company subsequently built Launch Complex 39A at Cape Kennedy to accommodate the Apollo and later Saturn missions, and the Cheyenne Mountain Complex in Colorado Springs, better known today by the acronym of its only occupant, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

Jerome and his brother, Paul, are known for their iconic investment of over 50 years in high-end real estate projects in the greater First Coast area and beyond.

In 1972, the Fletcher brothers purchased 5,200 acres south of the St. Johns County line. Over the next several years, Fletcher Land Corporation created the first "Development of Regional Impact" in North Florida and broke ground on a 1,100-acre development, now known as The Players Club section of Sawgrass. The vision the Fletcher's had for this property culminated in 1979 by selling 400+ acres to the PGA tour for \$1, which is now the home of the PGA Tour. The Fetters developed and managed many well-known projects including, but not limited to Marsh Landing, Baymeadows, and Palencia and prestigious beach clubs such as The Lodge and Club and Serenata Beach Club.

Throughout his life, Jerome also devoted his time, talent, and treasure to numerous charitable and cultural institutions. He was a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL for many years. He co-founded the Ponte Vedra Public Education Foundation for the Arts, chaired the board of the Museum of Science and History, and took the helm of the board of Jacksonville Country Day School at the end of the 1970s. He left a lasting impact on these institutions and on the constituencies they serve.

He is survived by his daughters, Jessica Fletcher Laubacker (Dan) and Brittany Fletcher Dudley (Isaac), their mother, Michele Fletcher, his grandchildren, Sloan, Locklan, Daniel Jr., and Drake Jerome Laubacker and Jude Dudley, his brothers Tucker and Paul Fletcher (Connie), his nieces Susan Fletcher Batten (Michael) and Stephanie Fletcher Peterson (Greg), Naniscah Fletcher (Andrew), Trisha Dyess (Tom), Connie Fletcher Staton (Aaron), nephews Scott Diamond, Lou Fletcher (Sarah), John L. Fletcher, Tucker Fletcher, and Charles Fletcher, and other grandnieces, grandnephews, family, and friends.

Jerome is preceded in death by his mother, Mildred Baker Fletcher and his father, John Zabud Fletcher, and brothers John Newton Fletcher and Charles Fletcher.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests

contributions be made to one of the following charities:

- The Peace of Heart Foundation (The Heal Foundation)

PO Box 50064
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32240
www.pohc.org

His grandchildren's school:

- Ponte Vedra Christian Co Op

73 North Roscoe Blvd.
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

Service was held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, June 8th, 2021 at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL with a reception immediately following in the Parish Hall.

Please sign the online guest book at www.PonteVedraValley.com.



Geraldyn Thornton Ray

Geraldyn Thornton Ray passed away at home early on Wednesday morning, May 26, 2021. She had been under Hospice care for the previous three weeks.

Mrs. Ray was born in Buffalo, NY on February 9, 1935. She became a Registered Nurse and worked in Pediatrics at Buffalo General Hospital for two years. After joining the Navy Nurse Corps in 1957, she was stationed at NAS JAX. Later, she was in the Army Reserves,



Geraldyn Thornton Ray

reaching the rank of Lieutenant colonel before resigning due to illness. She was the first school nurse in the Health Office at UNF in the early seventies and went on to become the school nurse at Jacksonville Episcopal High School. She received her Master's Degree in Health Education from UNF. After moving to California in 1978, she received her second Master's Degree in School Administration. During the next twenty-five years, she was the School

Nurse Coordinator in Simi Valley, CA and then in the San Diego area before retiring. She has been a resident of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL for the past twelve years.

Mrs. Ray is survived by her husband of 62 years, W. Allen Ray, two daughters, Donna Iverson and Lisa Pascale, both of Ponte Vedra Beach, and a son, Scott, of San Diego, CA. She is survived by her grandchildren, Forrest Iverson, Grace Iverson, Michael Pascale and Christopher Pascale.

Honoring her wishes, there will be no service.

Ligia E. Garcia

Ligia E. Garcia, 103, of Jacksonville, Florida, died June 1, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Robert Terrence Garrison

Robert Terrence Garrison, 87, of Jacksonville, Florida, died May 30, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. (904)-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com.

Margaret A. Heyward

Margaret A. Heyward, 88, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died June 5, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com, (904) 249-1100.

Duane Johnson

Duane Johnson, 70, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died May 31, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

John Michael Twardowski

John Michael Twardowski, 79, of Jacksonville, Florida, died June 5, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com, (904) 249-1100.

Linda Overton Wolf

Linda Overton Wolf, 79, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died May 31, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. (904)-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

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Business Weekly

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The Clean Issue: Ways to
organize and declutter
room-by-room

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Members of the 2021 Leadership St. Johns program, coordinated by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, gather at a new home built by the St. Johns County Habitat for Humanity organization.

Photo provided by St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Members of Chamber's Leadership St. Johns class of 2021 selected

The members of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership St. Johns class of 2021 began its class year on April 9-10 with the opening retreat at Guy Harvey Resort in St. Augustine Beach.

The 23 program members hail from all sectors of industry, commerce and public service in St. Johns County. The leadership development program was

started in 2001 and has more than 300 alumni including the former St. Johns County School District Superintendent of Schools and current Flagler College President Dr. Joseph G. Joyner; the new St. Johns County Sheriff, Rob Hardwick; St. Johns County School District Superintendent of Schools Tim Forson; Flagler Health+ President and CEO Jason Barrett; local entrepreneur and St.

Augustine Distillery co-founder CEO Phillip McDaniel; and City of St. Augustine City Manager John Regan.

The Leadership St. Johns Program was established to educate, connect and encourage elite and emerging professionals as they strive to make a positive impact on the local economy and community.

CHAMBER continues on Page 15

Sawgrass CC holds clubhouse grand opening, ribbon cutting

On Thursday, May 20, Sawgrass Country Club held its new clubhouse grand opening and ribbon cutting.

Festivities included food, entertainment and a ceremony with members to celebrate the completion of the new structure that was six years in the making, after an 80% approval vote by the members.

Special guests in attendance at the ribbon cutting included vendors, contractors and members who assisted with the project: SCC Ad Hoc Committee, Auld



Photo provided by Sawgrass Country Club

Sawgrass Country Club President John Brantley (from left), Fritz Skeen, Sawgrass Country Club Board of Governors member and past president, Doug Miller, Sawgrass Country Club committee chair and Leedom Kettell, Sawgrass Country Club committee member, participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new clubhouse at Sawgrass Country Club on Thursday, May 20.

CLUBHOUSE continues on Page 16

Flagler Health+ names chair for board of trustees

Todd Neville replaces Bill Kopf

Flagler Health+ recently announced the appointment of Todd Neville as chair of the Board of Trustees. Neville has been an active member of the Flagler Health+ board for more than a decade and has held several leadership posts, including his most recent role as vice chair.



Todd Neville

“Todd Neville brings tremendous expertise, community perspective and a proven track record of leadership to this role,” said Flagler Health+ President and CEO Jason Barrett. “His vigor for achievement combined with a commitment to

service in private, public and nonprofit sectors will be instrumental to our success, as we continue to advance the physical, social and economic health of area communities.”

Neville currently serves as the managing partner of Neville Wainio CPAs. He is very active in the community and notably served as vice mayor of the City of St. Augustine. Neville is also past president of the St. Augustine Rotary Club, past president of Ancient City Road Runners, and past vice chairman and treasurer of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. He is a graduate of Indiana University Bloomington.

Neville succeeds Bill Kopf, who has served on the Flagler Health+ Board of Trustees for more than 15 years in numerous capacities, including terms as both vice chair and chairman of the board, as well as chair of the Information Technology Committee. Kopf also served on the Flagler Health Care Foundation Board of Trustees for six years.

“I would like to thank Bill for his steadfast leadership of Flagler Health+, particularly during this last year, as we navigated the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic,” Barrett said. “Bill’s tireless commitment to service and particular expertise in the information technology sector has had a lasting impact on our organization.”

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

Free webinar on senior downsizing set for June 17

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty is offering a free virtual seminar for seniors on “The Essential Steps of Downsizing.” The live webinar streams at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 17.

To register for the webinar, go to <https://activeafter50.webinarninja.com/live-webinars/1933896/register>.

The webinar details how to begin a plan customized for seniors’ needs and establish the time frame to make a suc-

cessful downsizing transition. The seminar covers a wide range of topics, including: finding the next place to live, minimizing belongings and preparing a home for sale.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty offers complete support to help downsizing seniors and their families make a smooth transition. In addition to helping clients sell an existing home and find a new home, the company provides resources to assist

with downsizing belongings, household repairs, moving services, legal services and more.

For more information about the Senior Downsizing Program, call (904) 672-4350 or email Linda.Lindemoyer@FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

For more information about Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, go to FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

Chamber

Continued from 14

According to Bob Porter, the Chamber’s LSJ program director, the class of 2021 will be a historic one. “Following a year of pandemic restrictions, this class began its work following CDC guidelines for safe gatherings,” he said.

The 2021 program runs from April through September. Class members are committed to meeting each program day. The program will provide an in-depth overview of the challenges and opportunities faced by St. Johns County’s many industries, government agencies and nonprofits.

Class members who successfully graduate from the program are accepted into the prestigious ranks of leadership alumni in St. Johns County and across Florida, and many LSJ graduates have been accepted into the state-wide Leadership Florida

program. For additional information and to register when nominations are open for the 2022 program, go to www.sjchamber.com/leadership-st.-johns.

The members of the Leadership St. Johns Class of 2021 are: Trish Becker, Anastasia Mosquito Control Board; Randy Bradley, Northrop/Grumman; Jason Caban, St. Johns County Sherriff’s Office; Jennifer Michaux, St. Augustine Police Department; Diane Denholm, Supporting Strategies, Northeast Florida; Melissa Derrick, St. Augustine Youth Services; Tres Edenfield III, St. Johns County Sherriff’s Office; Melissa Cecil, Flagler Health+; Whitney Kersey Graves, St. Johns County Tax Collector; Bonnie Hayflick, Bonnie Hayflick PR ; Meghan Holder, Independent Agent, PrimERICA; Dawn Infanti, United Way; Lauren Howington, Herbie Wiles Insurance; Heidi Jameson, JAXUSA Partnership; Gurpreet Misra, self-employed Entrepreneur; Vicky Ann Oliveri, St. Johns Title, LLC;

Dianne Pittman, Watson Realty; Jennifer Ravan, St. Johns County Tax Collector; Christina Parrish Stone, St. Johns County Cultural Council; Josh Underwood, St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office; Greg Wells, K9s for Warriors; Meredith Breidenstein, City of St. Augustine; and Casey Woolsey, Woolsey/Morcom PLLC.

Isabelle Renault, the Chamber’s president/CEO and a graduate of Leadership St. Johns and Leadership Florida, suggested involvement in LSJ can be a stepping stone to participating in nonprofit and volunteer government advisory boards as well as potential involvement in future elected office.

“We also want our class members to consider using the skills honed through the LSJ experience to engage actively in the governing of St. Johns County,” said Renault.

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit business membership organization. The Chamber

is the second largest business networking organization in Northeast Florida.

For more information about the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, go to www.sjchamber.com.

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The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 52 years of community news excellence, is conducting our third annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32082 and 32081.**

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HURRY, last day to nominate is June 14th!

www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2021



Photo provided by Sawgrass Country Club

A grand-opening celebration is held at the newly renovated Sawgrass Country Club on May 30.

Clubhouse

Continued from 14

& White Constructors LLC, Peacock & Lewis Architects, Planners LLC, Abbey Civil Engineers Inc., and the CMS Group LLC.

The \$25 million Sawgrass CC Clubhouse demolition and reconstruction features amenities such as a pub-style bar, banquet rooms, office spaces, event spaces, locker rooms, family activities center, a golf shop and extra parking.

The building's orientation is positioned to feature expansive views of water and the golf course from the indoor and outdoor dining areas and a covered veranda. The 67,100-square-foot structure is 25%

larger than the previous clubhouse.

"The members' enthusiasm for reinvesting in their own infrastructure has created a great atmosphere to continue making wonderful memories," said Sawgrass CC General Manager C.W. Cook.

The club's Phase III Master Facility Plan is part of a larger improvement project that also included an expansion of parking areas at the Club's Tennis and Fitness Center, renovations of the golf course west nine bunkers, and relocating the practice/putting green. Due to these investments, the club now enjoys a wait list. All of the improvements are in alignment with Sawgrass CC's mission/vision statement to provide an exceptional club experience for our members and the club of choice for prospective members.

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Tips to help organize, declutter room-by-room

Getting organized is a common goal for many.

Clutter can be a major source of stress that affects how individuals feel about their spaces. Psychology Today indicates messy homes and work spaces can contribute to feelings of helplessness, anxiety and overwhelming stress. Clutter bombards the mind with excessive stimuli, makes it more difficult to relax and can constantly signal to the brain that work is never done.

Tackling messes no matter where they are lurking is not a one-time project. Much like losing weight and getting healthy, clearing a home of clutter requires dedication and lifestyle changes. With these organizational tips and tricks, anyone can work through their home room-by-room and conquer clutter.

FIND A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING

Clutter creeps up as people accumulate possessions over the years. Over time, failure to regularly go through belongings and thin the herd can lead to the accumulation of clutter. But clutter also can accumulate if people fail to find a place to put items. Racks for garages, organizational systems for closets and furniture with storage capacity, such as storage ottomans, are some storage solutions that



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

can help people find a place for their possessions.

UTILIZE VERTICAL SPACE WHEN POSSIBLE

Getting items up and off the floor can maximize square footage in a home.

Bookshelves, hanging wall shelves, hooks, cabinetry, built-ins, and other storage solutions that rely on walls and ceilings are simple and effective storage solutions. Unused space behind cabinet or closet doors are some additional places to store belongings. Hang razors or tooth-

brushes on medicine cabinet walls and curling irons and other hair tools on the interior of cabinet doors in bathrooms.

CREATE A CODING SYSTEM

Home offices can be some of the more disorganized rooms in a house simply due to the volume of electronics and paperwork within them. HGTV suggests using a color-coded system for important files to keep them organized. Label important items, whether they're paper or digital files, in accordance with your system.

PUT IT AWAY

When you finish using an item, return it to its storage location. This eliminates piles of belongings strewn around the house - and hunting and pecking for missing things. If you can't put it away immediately, have a few baskets on hand labeled for the different rooms in the house. Pop the items in the requisite baskets and then routinely take each basket around the house to return the items.

Investing in custom cabinetry and organizational systems also can help people organize their belongings. Tackle rooms such as the garage, basements, bedroom closets and pantries or those areas that tend to accumulate clutter the fastest.

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In the Arts



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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

PAM Jam to feature local poets, artists and musicians

An event begun in 2020 to feature local poets, artists and musicians (PAM) is expanding this year.

The inaugural PAM Jam STA (St. Augustine) worked with Ancient City Poets, Butterfield Garage Art Gallery and local musicians, and the event was a success.

This year, the Fall Arts event will expand into Ponte Vedra and Jacksonville.

PAM Jam PVB will feature poets from A Gathering of Poets, paired with artists from the Cultural Center of Ponte Vedra Beach. The showcase will be held Nov. 1-30 at the Ponte Vedra Branch of the St. Johns County Library. Poetry previews are scheduled for 3-5 p.m. Oct. 17 via Facebook Live.

Participants will provide a “sneak preview” from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. July 15 at the grand opening of the new Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach location at the link in Nocatee. It will feature works



Photo provided by Chris Bodor

The band Skin & Bonz turned a poem by Chris Bodor into a song and they performed it in a video featuring “Molly,” the inspiration for smiling dog in the corresponding painting by Laura O’Neal, during last year’s PAM Jam event.

by noted local artist and instructor Ellen Diamond and several of her students, along with their poet and musician pairs.

PAM Jam JAX will feature poets from North Florida Poetry Hub, sponsored by Hope at Hand and paired with artists from The Art Center Cooperative. The showcase will be held Oct. 3-29 at the cooperative in San Marco. Poetry previews are scheduled for 3-5 p.m. Sept. 19 via Facebook Live.

Both groups include participants from Women Writing for (a) Change and local musicians.

PAM Jam is a platform where poets, artists and musicians come together to inspire, collaborate and create a video that showcases their talents. PAM Jam St. Augustine resulted in 18 videos.

PAM Jam participants have opportunities to give back to their communities and raise funds for scholarships. Donations and funds raised in 2021 will go to participants and scholarships for partner organizations.

For further information, go to pam-jam.com. To sign up for events, go to facebook.com/pamjamflorida.

Apex Theatre presents ‘Annie’ at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

The Apex Theatre Studio will launch its eighth consecutive summer season with the Broadway hit “Annie” on June 17-19 at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

Based on the popular comic strip by Harold Gray, “Annie” has become a worldwide phenomenon and was the winner of seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical. The book and score by Tony Award winners Thomas Meehan, Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin feature some of the greatest musical theater hits ever written, including “Tomorrow.”

“We are so excited to head back to our second home at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall,” said Managing Director Ian Mairs.

The Thursday, June 17, and Friday, June 18, performances will live-stream at 7:30 p.m. from the Concert Hall stage.

The two Saturday, June 19, performances will be live and in person. Showtimes are 2 and 8 p.m.

“Having more than one format allows our young artists to share this joyful show with their extended families, who may live in another part of the country,” said Mairs.

Tickets for Apex Theatre Studio’s “Annie” in-person performances are on sale now at The St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office and Ticketmaster.com. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall box office remains closed at this time.

Streaming performances will be available at www.showtix4u.com/event/apex-annie.

Note that all tickets are digital. Reserved seating tickets are \$23.

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

For more information, go to www.apex-theatrejax.com or www.pvconcerthall.com.

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Image provided by Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

Concerts for a Cause raises \$72K for Alpha-Omega Miracle Home

The second in a series of fundraising concerts, Concerts for a Cause, raised \$72,000 for Alpha-Omega Miracle Home, a local nonprofit organization that provides housing, counseling and education for the new faces of homelessness — single mothers, their children and senior women.

The sold out, outdoor event at Tringali Barn at Heritage Farms welcomed American country band Diamond Rio, featuring Walker Montgomery, on May 22.

“This was our second sold-out event since the inaugural Concerts for a Cause kicked off on March 5,” said Chris Shee, owner of Tringali Barn at Heritage Farms and founder and CEO of MasterCraft Builder Group. “Our first event raised \$34,000 for Investing in Kinds (INK!). It’s an amazing feeling to double that amount and then some for Alpha-Omega

in just our second concert.”

Shee said the next Concerts for a Cause event will be held in late September with the musical act yet to be determined. He plans on holding the concerts at least four times per year with each event benefitting a different local nonprofit organization.

“Breaking the cycle of poverty cannot be accomplished alone,” explained Lisa Franklin, founder and CEO of Alpha-Omega Miracle Home. “We’re so incredibly grateful for Chris and Dawn Shee and their passion to help change family legacies. The money generously raised at Concerts for a Cause will generate true hope for a brighter tomorrow. These funds will give current residents a new opportunity to learn life skills and become self-sufficient, and we’ll also be using \$50,000 of the funds toward our new campus.”

Country star Darius Rucker to headline Furyk & Friends concert

Darius Rucker will headline the Constellation Furyk & Friends concert, with opening act Scotty McCreery on Oct. 5. The concert, presented by SRS Distribution, is a salute to America’s service men and women.

Constellation Furyk & Friends is a PGA TOUR Champions event to be held Oct. 8-10 at Timuquana Country Club.

Fans who purchase any tournament ticket starting at \$25 may purchase a concert ticket for \$50. The concert will be held at 1 Daily’s Place, Jacksonville. Tickets are available now at www.ConstellationFurykandFriends.com.

“Outside of the amazing golf that will take place at the Constellation Furyk & Friends presented by Circle K, we are planning to have a great time celebrating our community here in the greater Jacksonville area, and this concert will be a big part of that celebration,” said Tabitha Furyk, president of the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation. “Darius Rucker has been a friend and supporter of Furyk & Friends for many years and having him be here to kick off our tournament week is a perfect fit. The one thing Darius might love as much as music is golf, so we are excited to see him bring his enthusiasm and energy to our event.”

Rucker first achieved multi-platinum status in the music industry as lead singer and rhythm guitarist of the Grammy Award-winning band Hootie & the Blowfish, which has sold more than 25 million albums worldwide.

Since releasing his first country album in 2008, Rucker has earned a new legion of fans with four No. 1 albums on the Billboard Country chart, including RIAA platinum-certified “Learn to Live” and

“True Believers,” plus nine No. 1 singles on country radio.

In 2014, Rucker won his third career Grammy Award for best solo country performance with his eight-time platinum version of Old Crow Medicine Show’s “Wagon Wheel.”

Delivering more than 130 online performances for fans, country radio, charitable events and media outlets, opener Scotty McCreery had one thought in the back of his mind this last year: readying new music for fans when he could again return to the road. That time is upon him with the launch of his “You Time” tour this month.

The North Carolina native released “You Time” in September as the first single from his upcoming new album, which he plans to put out in the fall.

Jim Furyk and his wife Tabitha launched their foundation in 2010 to bring awareness and funding to charities throughout the region.

In September 2020, Furyk joined Arnold Palmer and Bruce Fleisher as the only players to win their first two starts on PGA Tour Champions.

In addition to his 17 career PGA TOUR titles, Furyk represented the United States on seven Presidents Cup teams and nine Ryder Cup teams, highlighted by his 2018 captaincy in Paris. The former University of Arizona golfer, who notched a major championship title at the 2003 U.S. Open, became the first player in TOUR history to post 58. He accomplished that in the final round of the 2016 Travelers Championship. To date, he is the only player in history with two sub-60 rounds in TOUR-sanctioned events (59, 2013 BMW Championship).

THEME: SUPERHEROES

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ACROSS

1. Golf club handle
5. Aviation safety agency
8. Although, for short
11. “Give me your tired, your _____.”
12. Homecoming guest
13. PhD in Great Britain
15. Legendary NFL quarterback Graham
16. Like Old Mother Hubbard’s cupboard
17. Propelled like Argo
18. *Batman’s romantic interest
20. Wildebeests
21. Use the other end of a pencil
22. Cherry middle
23. *Thor’s weapon
26. Brays like a donkey
30. Another word for Tokyo
31. Makes a sum (2 words)
34. *Like The Joker
35. Without self-control
37. Black gold
38. Buddy
39. Site of Leaning Tower

40. Canvas ceiling fan
42. *____man, one of original X-Men
43. Comes to the fore
45. *____Woman, first female in the Justice Society of America
47. “Rub A Dub Dub” vessel
48. Paralysis-causing disease, for short
50. Smoothie berry
52. *a.k.a. the Caped Crusader
55. “Encore!”
56. Pupil’s place
57. Like Arizona in summer
59. *Ben Grimm of “It’s clobberin’ time!” fame, with The
60. Eyeglasses glass
61. Buggy terrain
62. Gingerbread creation
63. *Superhero creator, Stan ____
64. Eurasian duck

10. Not new or borrowed or blue
12. “All ____!”
13. Motherless calf
14. *Wakanda’s Black ____
19. Make havoc
22. Coach’s locker room speech
23. Oodles
24. ____ one, on a pass
25. *Mighty ____
26. *Known to say: “You wouldn’t like me when I’m angry”
27. Steer clear
28. Grimace in pain
29. More cunning
32. Make pretty, two words
33. Break a commandment
36. *America’s title
38. Vienna Boys’ group
40. Public house, for short
41. Devoid of reverence
44. Seeking damages
46. Wondering ones
48. Put through a blender
49. Offer two cents
50. Turkish honorific
51. Jealous biblical brother
52. Perfect houseplant spot
53. Bob ____, famous boxing promoter
54. Cat o’how many tails?
55. Cash dispenser
58. Morning condensation

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Sports

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Send your sports news to
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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Sharks' inaugural Alumni-Varsity game a success

Fans get to celebrate past, future of PVHS basketball

By Jim Moyes

Special to the Recorder

Ponte Vedra High School basketball fans were treated to a view of the past, as well as the future, when the first annual Alumni-Varsity basketball game was played on June 3 at the Shark Tank. The game featured more than 25 former Ponte Vedra players, including current pro, former University of North Florida star and the all-time scoring leader at PVHS, Beau Beach.

For many of the fans who were part of the large crowd and missed out on seeing the current Sharks team play due to COVID-19 restrictions, it would mark their first glimpse of the current PVHS squad, which posted an all-time best record of 22-5 this past season.

After an entertaining evening where they witnessed about 1½ hours of basketball, it became very clear that Ponte Vedra will have a rosy future with those returning for the 2021-22 basketball campaign.

Yet another highlight of the evening took part midway through the festivities when senior guard Alex Madson officially signed a tenure to attend and play basketball for Transylvania University.

Two of the regulars from last season's stellar squad — Jack Polian and Rory Mayer — suited up for the alumni, and they were joined by a large contingent of former Sharks, who displayed their talents against the young varsity.

The varsity Sharks came out on fire in



Photos by Eric Prosswimmer

Ponte Vedra High School varsity basketball players and former PVHS players pose together at the inaugural Alumni-Varsity game June 3 at Ponte Vedra High School.



PVHS varsity players and former players compete in the inaugural Alumni-Varsity game.

the first 10-minute period, giving Sharks fans a promising preview of what lies ahead next season. Although 6-foot-5 senior Luke Pirris, who has been busy with numerous football camps, made just a token appearance, a number of his teammates



Amid support from family, Sharks teammates and former players, Alex Madson signs his letter of intent to play basketball for Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky.

have shown they have certainly raised their game.

With 6-foot rising junior Nathan Bunkosky leading the attack as the point guard, the Sharks opened the first period by outscoring the alumni 31-16. Rising

senior JT Kelly drilled four 3-pointers in the frame and tallied 14 points with Bunkosky netting seven points while dishing out four assists.

Although the score was highly irrelevant, the teams played five 10-minute quarters with the fifth period consisting of players who saw limited action in the first four frames. After displaying some understandable rust, the vets rallied back from a large first-period deficit to make the final score 105-96 after four periods, showing the varsity Sharks winning by nine points.

In addition to Beach, Quinn Carey, the third leading PVHS point producer of all time, traveled down from New York to play and visit with his teammates from the past.

Making his first public appearance in a Sharks uniform, and one who will certainly make a huge impact for the upcoming season, was 6-foot Ross Candolino, a transfer from Bishop Kenny. Candolino, the son of former Bolles head coach Anthony Candolino, will bring a lofty 14 points-per-game scoring average to the Sharks next season.

Also playing very well for the Sharks varsity was 6-foot-3 rising junior Israel Nuhu, who in addition to his eight points, led all Shark rebounders with 11, as well as four blocked shots. A pair of brothers who will make the jump from the junior varsity team also showed some exceptional promise. Rising junior Ben Ritchie tallied 13 points during the contest, while his younger brother, sophomore-to-be Sam Ritchie, was also in double figures with 10 tallies.

The event was such a success that it now appears the Varsity-Alumni game will become an annual affair with next year's contest tentatively scheduled to be played over the 2022 Memorial Day weekend.

CLASS OF 2021

Senior-heavy PVHS girls lacrosse team built unbreakable bond

By Paris Moulden

It's no wonder the Ponte Vedra girls lacrosse team had such a successful run this season despite missing most of the previous season because of the COVID-19 pandemic. After playing together so long, becoming like family and learning to overcome adversity they could never have foreseen, the team's unbreakable bond helped launch a bright future for PVHS girls lacrosse.

In its impressive run to the Final Four, PVHS amassed a flurry of goals

and dominated opponents. Although the season ended just short of a state championship, it was a season to celebrate for sure, especially given that the senior-laden team started the school year not knowing if there would be a season at all. The PVHS girls lacrosse team graduated nine seniors last weekend, and as the rebuilding process gets underway, the team will have a lot to build on.

The four senior captains — Sami Lowinger, Taylor Rocha, Pierson Schuchart and Katie Stoudt — have all had a hand in building the sister-like bond

and leaving a strong foundation for the next group of leaders on the team.

"By far, this is definitely my favorite year of high school lacrosse," said Schuchart, who plans to attend and play at Long Island University. "Our team really worked together and just came together. And even though like we didn't win our last game, we weren't so disappointed, because every single day felt like a win together because we worked so hard and built relationships that I know that will continue throughout our years going on."

The strength of the team was obvi-

ous in its play, but the behind-the-scenes aspect early on contributed greatly to the season's success.

"I feel like us showing up early in the morning and coming after school to practice really bonded us," Rocha said. "I felt like we have that, not only emotional, sister bond as a team, but we also were able to get stronger together."

Coach Jen Conway guided the team with a steady hand. The coach has also been a big part of the bond the team

Seniors

Continued from 20

shared, having coached many of the seniors for a big part of their lives.

“I think I can speak on behalf of the whole team when I say Coach Jen has seriously made such an impact on all of our lives on and off the field,” said Stoudt, who will be studying business at the University of Mississippi. “She has been coaching a lot of us, and myself, since the very start in our rec program. She’s been there with us all. I mean she’s seriously the backbone of growing up in Ponte Vedra lacrosse. So I really think that she’s created us into the team that we are,”

For Schuchart, who relocated to Ponte Vedra her junior year from Milton, Georgia, the experience of playing for this Sharks team has been unparalleled.

“I’ve ever been more happy or happier to have moved down here, because it really helped me come out of my shell as a player. and meeting the girls has really developed my character, too,” Schuchart said. “I have not seen girls who worked so hard, and just love each other and love the game. So, I’m so glad that I moved here.”

A lot of what carried the team to the state semifinals this season was its immense depth, on the field and off.

“Any girl on our sideline could step out onto the field and be a huge contributor in the game and I think it was really cool to be a part of a team had so much depth,” said Lowinger, who will play lacrosse at



Photo provided by Jen Conway

Ponte Vedra girls lacrosse 2020-21 season captains Pierson Schuchart (from left), Taylor Rocha, Sami Lowinger and Katie Stoudt.

Mercer University. “I think leaving that on that last game, it was so heartbreaking because we just wanted more time together. Before that game, throughout the week, I kept saying, ‘Let’s earn some more time together.’ And of course we wanted to win. But ultimately, I think we just wanted to have fun and play together as long as we could.”

Many of this season’s seniors also kept last season’s seniors in mind, knowing they didn’t have the opportunity to complete their season because of the pandemic.

“We had nine seniors this year, so we

are the big class and then for seniors last year who didn’t get to finish their season. We really had a lot of heart into the season,” Stoudt said. “It’s such a fun sport and such a fun time. So we’re really just enjoying it, being together, having good memories.”

This year’s senior’s started their final high school year not knowing what their season would hold either, so being able to complete the regular season and go deep into the postseason was extra special.

“We’re grateful,” Lowinger said. “That was our word of the season — gratitude. And I think honestly, I’m just very grate-

ful that [we were] pretty healthy throughout the season, and we got to play.”

Rocha, who will be playing for Ohio State, also noted the special bond, which was the catalyst that propelled the team.

“You need to be bonded, because that’s what will carry you through the season, a lot farther than people who are out to play individually and for themselves,” she said. “We’ve had a lot of successes [this] season, because we’re playing for each other and not for ourselves.”

The senior captains are also comfortable with the lessons and goals left behind for the players who are still there, and Lowinger just wants them to embrace the moment during their high school careers.

“Since they’re losing so many players after graduation, we just really tell them to soak up the four years because they truly go by so fast,” she said. “And I know I had an amazing senior class when I was a freshman, and it’s so crazy to think that now they’re seniors in college. It’s just crazy how fast time flies, and I would truly do anything to put that uniform on and play one more game. So I really just encourage them to cherish every moment.”

The impact of the seniors and the season’s success isn’t lost on Conway.

“I’ve watched them grow up, and I’m super proud of how they’ve played,” the coach said. “They’re so vibrant. They are really special girls, who smile and are happy and have a great work ethic. It’s been a really important position to be in to empower young girls, so I’m just glad I was able to be a part of that.”



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