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Recorder

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PonteVedraRecorder.com

July 29, 2021
Volume 51, No. 91
75 cents



BOUND FOR POLAND

Life has been good for Ponte Vedra High School alum Beau Beech, who has signed to play his sixth professional season and was recently married.

Read more about his journey and what the future may hold for this local sports figure on page 36.

Photo provided by Beau Beech

What's Available NOW On **NETFLIX**

TEACH HER YOUR STRENGTH

FLORIDA WOMEN'S TEAM GROUP

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

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Preserving history of St. Johns County **Page 5**



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Sports
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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

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

DOGS(S) OF THE WEEK

Hi! My name is Rose. I am a 2-year-old female Jack Russell terrier who came to the shelter as a stray. I am a little shy at first but once you let me smell you and get acquainted with you, you will see me blossom. Come visit me at the Pet Center today! #59589



Hello my name is Tucker. I am a 1-year-old male Labrador mix. I came to the shelter as an owner surrender when my family's living situation changed. I am very friendly and good with dogs and kids. Not sure how I feel about cats as I have never had the pleasure of meeting any. I am crate-trained. Come and visit me at the Pet Center today. # 59609

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 offers free disposal of yard waste at Republic Services facility

Due to the national workforce shortage, residents in northern St. Johns County have been experiencing delays in their yard waste collection. In an effort to provide additional options to the community, St. Johns County is allowing residents to bring yard waste to the Republic Services facility, 445A International Golf Parkway, free of charge. The service will be offered immediately to residents and will continue until Republic Services can return to its regular schedule. At this time, there should be no impacts to household garbage or recycling collection services.

Note the following information:

- Drop-off service is for St. Johns County residential customers only. No commercial trucks or vehicles will be allowed.

- Drop-off hours are from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

- Residents must unload waste. No staff assistance will be available for unloading.

St. Johns County Solid Waste Division is working alongside Republic Services to resume timely curbside service.

For more information, call the St. Johns County Solid Waste Division at (904) 827-6980 or go to www.recyclestjohns.com for updates.

Portion of Vilano Landing parking lot temporarily closed

The southwestern portion of the parking lot at Vilano Landing, 101 Vilano Causeway, is closed due to a dredging project in the Vilano basin and is anticipated to reopen in winter 2021. The dredging will remove an estimated 5,700 cubic yards of material from the basin and will improve boaters' ingress and egress to

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

M	A	Y	S		C	R	T			I	D	S					
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5	8	1	6	9	4	2	3	7
2	9	6	7	3	8	4	5	1
3	7	4	1	2	5	6	8	9

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

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Briefs

Continued from 2

the Intracoastal Waterway. The boat ramp will remain open to the public for the duration of the project, and ramp users are encouraged to exercise caution. For more information, call (904) 209-0341.

ElderSource seeks St. Johns County representation for Advisory Council

ElderSource, a nonprofit organization that works to empower elders, adults with disabilities and their caregivers in order to age with dignity and independence, is seeking volunteer members to its Advisory Council, specifically seniors who reside in St. Johns County.

Duties for an Advisory Council member are to report on the needs of elderly and emerging issues in their respective counties; review and comment on the agency’s Area Plan; study legislative issues and advocate on behalf of the elderly; assist in promoting the mission, programs and activities of the agency; and to educate the public about the needs and the contributions of the elderly.

Meetings are held the third Thursday of every other month from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and conducted virtually using the Zoom platform.

For more information about how to become an ElderSource Advisory Council member, call (904) 391-6631 or email Volunteer Coordinator Anita Thaxton at Anita.Thaxton@MyElderSource.org.

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Live east of A1A in this updated move-in-ready home ideally located in old Ponte Vedra. Renovated interiors with wood floors, shiplap details, custom built-ins, and coastal accents. The kitchen features white cabinetry, open shelving, quartzite countertops, a farmhouse sink, and a gas stove. The fenced-in backyard features a screened-in porch, outdoor patio, and room for a pool. **3 Bedrooms, 2 Full Baths, 1 Half Bath. \$938,500.**



Ultimate Atlantic Beach Lifestyle

Live the ultimate beach lifestyle in this midcentury modern on double corner lot just one block from the ocean and only 6 blocks from Atlantic Beach Town Center. Large open great room and kitchen with barn door pantry looks onto private backyard with pool and outdoor kitchen. Spacious master, 3 additional bedrooms & bathrooms plus laundry upstairs. **4 Bedrooms, 4 Bathrooms, 1 Half Bathroom. \$3,600,000**



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1-cent bed tax hike to generate additional funding for St. Johns County beaches, recreation

On Tuesday, July 20, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners allocated 40% of the additional one cent bed tax toward the improvement, maintenance and renourishment of publicly-owned beaches, as well as an additional 40% of the 1 cent of bed tax for leisure and recreation.

The additional 1 cent of bed tax, officially known as the Tourist Development Tax, is levied on short-term overnight stays at hotels, bed-and-breakfasts and other overnight accommodations. The county will begin collecting the additional 1 cent in

October. The levy of the additional 1 cent increases the county's bed tax from 4 cents to 5 cents, and is estimated to generate an additional \$3 million in revenue annually. The funding allocated for leisure and recreation can be used for tourist-oriented projects, including but not limited to, boat ramps and sports complexes.

St. Johns County currently has beach and dune restoration projects underway or planned. The new funding generated by the Tourist Development Tax may be used for future beach renourishment projects.

During Tuesday's meeting, the Board of

County Commissioners unanimously voted to remove the northernmost three miles of Ponte Vedra Beach from an Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study as well as a one-time beach restoration project. This area's erosion has not been as critical as the rest of the project areas, as sand migrates south from the neighboring Duval County Army Corps of Engineer's project.

This three-mile portion could be addressed in the future if conditions change. The exclusion will not affect the already approved FEMA Dune Enhancement Project, which will bring additional sand

to the entirety of Ponte Vedra Beach later this year. The county is currently assessing the extent of renourishment needed for the section of Ponte Vedra Beach generally located between Sawgrass and the northern boundary of Serenata Beach Club, which includes Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park.

The additional funding from the 1 cent bed tax increase will also allow for an investment of approximately \$300,000 annually in arts, culture and heritage resources and approximately \$300,000 annually in marketing and promotion.

Sheriff's Office, St. Augustine Glory plan basketball game

Community partnership at heart of friendly challenge set for July 31

By Shaun Ryan

A new community partnership will tip off Saturday, July 31, when the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office meets the St. Augustine Glory for a basketball game in the Flagler College gymnasium.

The game, the first component of a larger partnership, will provide an opportunity for strengthening relations between the community and its law enforcement officers.

"In these challenging times in our nation's history, it's important for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office to partner up with anyone we can help in our community, further engage with our citizens, educate each other and come together as one," said Sheriff Robert Hardwick.

"Our mission is to create a winning community through basketball," said St. Augustine Glory team owner and player Bradrick Clark. "It is important for law enforcement officers and professional athletes to be seen working together hand-in-hand for the betterment of our communities."

Clark, who was born in St. Augustine, has worked in various business roles and helped players succeed on middle and high school teams and earn college scholarships.

The St. Augustine Glory is affiliated with the American Basketball Association.

Hardwick and Clark announced the upcoming game Thursday, July 22, at THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida. They encouraged the public to attend and show their support.

The doors will open at 3 p.m. with various activities, such as a youth dunk contest. Tip-off will be at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for children age 12 and younger and \$20 for adults.

The deputies will face a tough rival on the court, but Hardwick said the game isn't about winning or losing.

"It's about the community partnership, community engagement, and then being involved with the only professional team of any sport in St. Johns County: the St. Augustine Glory," he said.

The idea for the partnership began at a St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce event when Clark had an opportunity to speak with Hardwick.

The men took some time to get to know one another and talk about their views. Clark said he was impressed with the sheriff's candidness and "genuine heart of



Contributed photos

Backed by members of their respective teams, St. Johns County Sheriff Robert Hardwick and St. Augustine Glory owner Bradrick Clark pose for a photo holding the official American Basketball Association ball. The teams will play each other Saturday, July 31, as the first component in a community partnership.



Photo by Shaun Ryan
St. Johns County Sheriff Robert Hardwick and St. Augustine Glory owner Bradrick Clark announce an upcoming basketball game set for Saturday, July 31.



Hardwick holds up a jersey for his team, the Deputies, who will play the St. Augustine Glory in a game Saturday, July 31.

service for this community."

"I felt in that conversation that we got very, very far, and this is the right thing to do," Clark said.

Flagler College gymnasium is located at 12 Granada St. in downtown St. Augustine.

For information or to purchase tickets, go to www.sauglory.com. Tickets can also be found at the Eventbrite.com site at bit.ly/3rA8XCw.

Place in history

County preserves present with time capsule



St. Johns County Commissioners Christian Whitehurst, Jeb Smith and Paul Waldron stand in front of the encased time capsule following the 200th anniversary ceremony on July 21.

Photos by Anthony Richards

By Anthony Richards

St. Johns County decided to commemorate its 200th anniversary as a county by placing various items of the day in a time capsule during a July 21 ceremony.

The time capsule will be stored away and the plan for it to be opened 50 years from now on July 21, 2071, as part of the county's 250th celebration.

According to keynote speaker Dr. Thomas Graham, professor emeritus of history at Flagler College, St. Johns County was established as one of the first counties after Florida was commandeered by the United States in 1821.

"St. Johns County can continue to lead in many ways," St. Johns County Commission Chairman Jeremiah Ray Blocker said.

Graham stated that when the county reached its current size the initial population was 13,000 and now it has surpassed 265,000.

"We are one of the state's fastest growing counties," Graham said. "Let's look forward to the next 200 years."

Several government departments and county organizations presented items to be placed in the capsule.

St. Augustine Beach Mayor Margaret England offered up a photo cube with images depicting the events that took place in 2021.

"What a better way to preserve memories than by locking them in a time capsule," St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Isabelle Renault said.

Adding to the memories, Renault placed a photo of the county Chamber years ago as well as one of the current board taken just a month earlier.

Looking back on the past 200 years, Richard Goldman, president/CEO of the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau, decided to focus on the impact of Henry Flagler, who was known for coming down from the northern United States and building renowned hotels.

"Flagler brought with him the beginnings of modern tourism," Goldman said.

His focus on tourism promoted him to place tourist guides of the beaches from the past year.

Medallions and flash drives with info stored on them were popular items given for the time capsule.

However, just about every person presented a flash drive followed it up with making a joke about not having the means to read what's on the drive because of continued technological advancements that may make them obsolete in the future.

One of the medallions in the time capsule was put there by the Rev. John Tetlow, who is the pastor at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine.

"It was here that the seeds of Christianity were planted on this soil," Tetlow said.

St. Johns County Sheriff Robert Hardwick gave a badge to represent his department and the sheriffs that came before him over the years.

"It's been a privilege to serve the county for 200 years," Hardwick said.

No one can know for sure what the future will look like



Medallions and flash drives with info stored on them were popular items for the time capsule.



St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Isabelle Renault holds up a black and white photo of past chamber members to be placed in the time capsule.



St. Johns County Commissioner Paul Waldron enjoyed having his daughter Ashley Zapata and grandson Avery Zapata on hand for the 200th anniversary ceremony.

50 years from now, but one thing for sure is that those who open the time capsule will get a glimpse of who they are and who they have been as residents of St. Johns County.

"I've been in this county for 22 years, and we have seen a lot of growth and changes, but the character of the county has remained very much the same," County Commissioner Christian Whitehurst said. "People come here expecting a lot, and I would imagine 50 years from now, no matter how many people are here, that they will be very much like the people that are here today."

According to Whitehurst, he believes as a commissioner, he has the ability to make sure the county's fabric remains the same by listening to the people that call it home.

"You have to have the history of the county in mind and understand that people have high expectations of their local government," Whitehurst said. "I feel the burden of those expectations and want to strive to meet them. That's why you run for these offices, so you can make a difference."

Greg McGarity lives in Ponte Vedra and took over as Gator Bowl Sports president and CEO in March. Prior to that, he was athletic director at the University of Georgia, where he developed relationships with legends such as Herschel Walker. He looks to lean on his extensive expertise over the years to make sure Gator Bowl Sports has a bright future.

Greg McGarity

As told to Anthony Richards

Can you briefly tell us about your background?

I was born and raised in Athens, Georgia, and graduated from the University of Georgia in December 1976.

Afterwards, I worked with UGA athletics from 1977 to 1992, then with University of Florida athletics from 1992 to 2010 before being the UGA athletic director from August 2010 until December 2020.

I assumed the president and CEO responsibilities at Gator Bowl Sports on March 1. During this 40-plus-year time frame, I have been able to experience virtually every facet of the college experience ... from serving as head women's tennis coach, assistant sports information director and associate athletic director at Georgia, being senior associate athletic director at UF and then AD at UGA, to now president and CEO of Gator Bowl Sports!

I am a very lucky person who was in the right place at the right time and had wonderful mentors to help me along the way.

What led you to get involved with Gator Bowl Sports?

Being able to remain involved with college football and belonging to an organization that serves our community in so many impactful ways.

What do you enjoy most about your current role as Gator Bowl Sports president and CEO?

Being surrounded by a strong staff and motivated volunteers who love Gator Bowl Sports and their desire to make a positive impact in our community.

What are some of the challenges that you encounter in your industry?

To insure we are doing everything within our power to make the bowl experience the best it can be for the participants and volunteers! We want to insure we remain focused on "things we can control" and paying attention to details.

The state of college athletics at this moment is in a precarious position. With NIL (name, image and likeness) matters at hand, to the Supreme Court ruling on the Alston case, to the transfer portal challenges. Athletic directors are faced with multiple concerns, which will change amateur sports as we know it today.

Tomorrow's world of college athletics is in for significant change, and we must be ready to adapt to that change.

What are the mission and goals of Gator Bowl Sports?

To conduct a highly respected annual postseason football game (TaxSlayer Gator Bowl), collegiate athletic events (e.g., FSU-



Photo provided by Greg McGarity

Greg McGarity (right) poses with Georgia football legend and 1982 Heisman Trophy winner Herschel Walker.

UF baseball) which provide an economic benefit to our community.

Other goals include to support the community through multiple charities; to support the City of Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Jaguars in opportunities to advance facility enhancements; to elevate the profile of our bowl game and be in consideration for expansion of the College Football Playoff; to honor the historical aspects of the Gator Bowl, dating back to our start in 1946; and to prove that our community fully supports college football by way of corporate and private engagement that translates into attendance and financial

levels that illustrate this commitment, regardless of the participants in the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl game.

What do you enjoy most about living in Ponte Vedra/ North Florida area?

The weather, our neighbors, and the close proximity to necessities. Food, fun and fellowship!

What do you like to do in your free time?

Spend time with my family, cook outside, exercise and enjoy the outdoors. I'm very low maintenance!

Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club Foundation raises more than \$95,000 for local charities

The Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club Foundation announced the recipients of the annual Mineral City Celebration on Monday, July 26.

Founded in 1983, the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach is part of the global network of Rotary International. It has grown to more than 130 members who dedicate themselves to fulfilling Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self." As part of its commitment to service, it hosts the annual Mineral City Celebration to raise funds for local charities.

The Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit through which the club provides financial support to dozens of local charities. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the Mineral City Celebration benefit the foundation, which then distributes the funds to dozens of local charities through a rigorous application process. The foundation has allocated \$1.5 million to Beaches-area nonprofits that make a valuable contribution to the lives of local residents.

This year, local charities receiving awards included: The MaliVai Washington Foundation, American Red Cross NE Florida, Arc of St. Johns, Art with a Heart in Healthcare, Beaches Habitat for Humanity, Beaches Museum, BEAM,



The Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club Foundation raised more than \$95,000 to benefit local charities.

Big Brothers Big Sisters St. Johns, Boys & Girls Club of NE Florida, Council on Aging (St. Johns County), Dial a Ride - Council on Aging, First Coast Cultural Center, Hands4Life, K9 for Warriors, Kate Amato Foundation, Language Exploration Enrichment, Mission House, Mo-

nique Burr Foundation, Operation New Uniform, PACE, Salvation Army - NE Florida Area, Seamark Ranch, Smiles for a Lifetime, United Way of St. Johns County, Volunteer Life Saving Corps, Volunteers in Medicine, Wounded Warrior Project, YMCA at Ponte Vedra Beach.

Photo provided by The Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club

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June 3 thru Sept. 2
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Nease cadets complete summer leadership training

Nease NJROTC, the No. 1 program in northern Florida and the state of Georgia, and the No. 2-ranked program in the nation, strengthened its high-performing cadet leadership ranks as cadets completed significant training programs held across the country.

From June 9-17, Kaitlyn Boggs, Gabrielle Espedido, Olivia Kerrick, Bernadine Olivier, Isabella Rivera and Harley Shuster successfully completed Florida Girls State in Tallahassee.

From June 20-26, Juan Cervantes, Donovan Chapman, Christopher Debus, Nate Fagen, Khush Gandhi, Daniel Mahoney, Brodie Mongon and Ben Prohovsky successfully completed the Florida Boys State program in Tallahassee. Cadet Fagen was elected as attorney general and Cadet Gandhi was elected as agriculture commissioner.

From June 21-26, Cadets John Alves, Nicholas Gallego, Braden Holmes, Peter Lemos, Emmelie Neff, Anthony Tucker and Lauren Villareal completed the week-long intensive academic, physical fitness, drill and leadership training at Duluth High School in north Georgia. Cadets Alves, Gallego and Holmes received medals for outstanding personnel inspection; Gallego also received the outstanding Physical Fitness medal and Holmes received the top Academic medal. Senior cadets Kaitlyn Boggs, Isabella Rivera and Hallie Spell provided weeklong leadership as cadre providing hands on training to the 26 trainees from six different schools.

From June 28 to July 2, Cadet Braden Holmes attended the U.S. Air Force Academy Advanced Cyber Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. Holmes serves as the captain for Nease's CyberPatriot competition team.

From July 11-16, Cadets Kaitlyn Boggs and Isabella Rivera participated and graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Introduction Mission program in New London, Connecticut. Cadet Rivera received the award for top female athlete among the 250 trainees from around the nation.



Nease NJROTC instructors and cadets completed the Area-12 Leadership Academy from June 21-26 in Duluth, Georgia. From left: GYSGT Duane Hanson, cadets Braden Holmes, Nicholas Gallego, Peter Lemos, Anthony Tucker, John Alves, Hallie Spell, Isabella Rivera, Kaitlyn Boggs, Lauren Villarreal and Capt. Scott LaRochelle.



Cadets Isabella Rivera and Kaitlyn Boggs successfully completed the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Introduction Mission program July 11-16 in New London, Connecticut.



Nease cadets Christopher Debus, Donovan Chapman, Daniel Mahoney, Nate Fagen, Khush Gandhi, Brodie Mongon, Ben Prohovsky and Juan Cervantes successfully completed the Florida Boys State program in Tallahassee on June 20-26.



Photos provided by Nease NJROTC
Cadet Braden Holmes successfully completed the USAFA Advanced Cyber Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, on July 2.



Photo provided by K9s For Warriors

K9s For Warriors graduated three people from its inaugural dog trainer apprentice program on Tuesday, July 27.

K9s For Warriors recognizes graduates of inaugural dog trainer apprentice program

On Tuesday, July 27, K9s For Warriors recognized three individuals who graduated from its inaugural dog trainer apprentice program. The five-month class (which garnered more than 500 applicants) was conducted at the organization's Gold Family Campus (Alachua) in a strategic effort to develop a pipeline of highly qualified service dog trainers.

A critical element of the apprentice program is how it will help contribute to K9s For Warriors' broader mission, as the largest provider of trained service dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD and other military-related trauma.

The number of veterans being paired with a service dog through the organization soon will be greater than ever. K9s For Warriors will break ground on a Northeast Florida

mega kennel facility next week that can house more than 150 service dogs-in-training, and in September will officially open the Petco Love K9 Center in San Antonio, which will rescue larger canines to be trained as service dogs.

"It's not as though we can simply turn a switch and make more copies of well-trained service dogs," said Paul Mundell, chief program officer at K9s For Warriors. "The skill sets required of both the dog and trainer are unique. This program will allow us to ensure quality control and uniformity, regardless of location."

The inaugural class of apprentice trainers will spend the next month or two working

BEAM helps seniors impacted by housing shortage



Photo provided by BEAM

Debbie Andalora, BEAM senior program case manager, stands next to a client, Neil, who was forced to leave his apartment when the new owner decided to renovate it.

The local housing boom has not been good to everyone.

As the housing market soars at unprecedented levels, local seniors are being forced to leave their rental properties as new owners eye revitalization. Many of these seniors have lived in their rental properties for decades and have been blindsided in discovering that they must leave their homes with no affordable rental properties nearby.

“I received a call from one of our senior clients, Neil, stating that he was being kicked out of his home after 15 years of renting the property,” said Debbie Andalora, senior program case manager for the Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM). “He was in fear that he would become homeless.”

At 69, Neil was forced to leave the Atlantic Beach apartment when the owner sold the property to an investor who had plans to complete major renovations.

When Neil connected with BEAM he had no idea what he was going to do. He was scared and anxious as he had no control over his situation. He did not have family members to turn to.

Andalora provided emotional support and was able to work with Neil to find a supportive community that fit his budget. BEAM helped him with his first month’s rent and covered the cost of movers who helped him gather his belongings and get him settled in his new home, a low-income senior facility.

“BEAM profoundly changed my life,” Neil said.

But Neil’s case was just the tip of the iceberg.

“Then, the calls started flooding in,” said Andalora, “Multiple clients were experiencing the same problem due to the housing market. We knew we had to step up and provide immediate one-on-one care to

SENIORS continues on Page 10

Betty Griffin Center names new chief financial officer

The Betty Griffin Center hired Palm Coast resident Henry Estrada as its new chief financial officer.

“We were fortunate to find someone with Henry’s experience so quickly in our current economic environment, and especially a CFO that has worked extensively in the nonprofit sector and is also very familiar with our existing software systems,” said Betty Griffin Center CEO Joyce Mahr.

Estrada previously served as chief financial officer for The House Next Door, Inc., a nonprofit based in Deland, that provides family-centered programs including counseling, in-home family support and after-school support and mentoring.

Prior to that, Estrada served as a financial consultant for Children’s Village, a social service organization, and also served as controller with the St. John’s Welfare

Federation in St. Augustine — and held the same position with Children’s Village in Dobbs Ferry, New York.

Fluent in English and Spanish, Estrada received his bachelors of science degree in business administration from C.W. Post College at Long Island University, after receiving an associate’s in applied science degree in economics. He also received certification as a junior fellow through the

United Way of New York Baruch College of Public Affairs.

The Betty Griffin Center was founded in 1990 by concerned citizens and incorporated as the Safety Shelter of St. Johns County to develop plans to provide shelter for local victims of domestic violence and their children.

For more information, go to www.bettygriffincenter.org.

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AN SRI-MANAGED COMMUNITY

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

"Every flower that ever bloomed had to go through a whole lot of dirt to get there."



Kathy Esfahani
Columnist

SHADE LANDSCAPING

As Florida is the Sunshine State, we are always talking about plants that need full/ mostly sun. Finding pockets for shaded plants can be difficult, or you may not know what to plant in a fully shaded area. The same rule still applies: You need the right plant in the right place!

These tips will help guide your shaded gardens:

■ **Know your shade:** Understanding the amount of shade and indirect light the area is getting is the biggest key to success of plants in this area. All plants need sunlight to survive so look for areas with indirect sunlight instead of dark areas with wet soil.

■ **Light and color:** Just because it's a shaded area does not mean it had to be a green plant. There are quite a few varieties, such as caladiums, that have beautiful color to add to a shaded garden.

■ **Mixture of heights:** A mixture of ground cover and medium/tall plants will create depth for a lush, shaded garden.

Some shade-loving plants: Asiatic jasmine, border grass, cast-iron plant, begonias, caladiums, coleus, ornamental gingers and so much more!

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.



Flower of the Week
Portulaca

Photos provided by Kathy Esfahani

OBITUARIES

Jose Barberis

Jose Barberis, 46, of Jacksonville, Florida, died July 17, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Joan Bowling

Joan Bowling, 72, of Ponte Vedra Beach, died on July 22, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home, Jacksonville Beach, FL, (904) 249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com.

Robert Joseph Cappock

Robert Joseph Cappock, 90, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died July 20, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com (904) 249-1100

Paula D. Egan

Paula D. Egan, 76, of Jacksonville, Florida, died July 20, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre (904)249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Joan Lindsey

Joan Lindsey, 92, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died July 18, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Jaykumar Pattani

Jaykumar Pattani, 83, of Windermere, Florida, died July 21, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com (904) 249-1100

Stephen Peace

Stephen Peace, 66, of Jacksonville, Florida, died July 19, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com (904) 249-1100

Marcia Pearsall Rorick

Marcia Pearsall Rorick, 91, of Ponte Vedra Beach, died July 23, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. (904) 249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Francis James Smyth, Jr.

Francis James Smyth, Jr., 85, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died July 20, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com (904) 249-1100

Janice Lee Strickland

Janice Lee Strickland, 69, of Mayport, Florida, died July 23, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. (904) 249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

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Apprentice

Continued from 8

under the direction of a mentor trainer at K9s For Warriors' national headquarters. Following that span and upon familiarizing themselves with their new responsibilities and surroundings, they will officially transition into a full-time trainer role.

With plans to utilize the apprentice program as the hiring standard for future prospective trainers, K9s For Warriors will welcome six individuals to take part in a second class of apprentice trainers this fall.

Developed over the past few years, the

apprentice program curriculum is intended to prepare its graduates to seamlessly transition into full-time dog trainers. The immersive training focuses on things such as acceptable training methods and dog-learning theory, along with dog behavior and modification.

Apprentices are evaluated through research assignments, quizzes and written exams, three "check point" skills evaluations and an ability to read dog body language. Apprentices are responsible for training a "string" of multiple dogs specifically assigned to them.

For more information on the program, go to www.k9sforwarriors.org/blog/k9s-trainer-apprentice-program

Seniors

Continued from 8

make sure these seniors had a safe place to go."

Neil is one of five displaced low-income seniors that BEAM has recently helped due to the turnover of low-income rental property and scarcity of affordable housing for seniors at the beach and throughout Jacksonville.

BEAM started its Senior Case Management Program in 2018 and has helped more than 147 local seniors regain independence and self-sufficiency.

For more information, go to jaxbeam.org.

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Sand Castles

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Photo provided by Tina Webster

Inside this section:

- Market Watch: Looking at the local real estate market from multiple angles
- Sports Spotlight: Meyer's fate may depend on QB Lawrence
- Recipe Spotlight: Singing the Blues
- An evening in Aspen with Sarah Huckabee Sanders
- Travel Spotlight: Trekking through Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic
- A look at some amazing local listings

JULY 29, 2021

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Recorder

Welcome to Sand Castles: The Summer Issue



Janet Westling
Contributing Editor

Welcome to the Summer Issue of Sand Castles, a luxury, lifestyle and real estate seasonal section.

A few years ago, I wrote about the “Dog Days of Summer,” that begins July 3 and runs until Aug. 11. Webster defines those days as “a period marked with lethargy, inactivity or indolence.”

This year, while the temperatures indeed are rising, lethargy is not. In fact, people are traveling more than ever, and our beaches and restaurants are filled with record numbers.

In this issue we hear from Alex Wulbern, world traveler with part two of his adventures throughout Thailand.

It is great to hear about wonderful places to visit, but as we all know, there is no place like home.

With all eyes are on real estate these days, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices CEO Kevin Waugaman presents a thorough analysis and look at the housing market from multiple angles in our Market Watch.

Here on our First Coast, seven seasoned Realtors share the stories of their listings from the waterfront to the golf course and in between.

If you are spending a lot of time outdoors this summer, especially dining al fresco, read food columnist Alice Hickox’s recipes for a summer salad with blueberries and her fresh blueberry basil margaritas. A perfect recipe for summer entertaining.

If you have your eye on the fall and cooler weather, check out Jaguars columnist Brian Sexton’s article, titled, “Lawrence to determine Meyer’s professional fate.” Sexton offers an in-depth analysis on the coming season and our new head coach Urban Meyer.

Our home is our castle, and at the beach it is our castle in the sand. From palm trees to sand dunes, golf courses to resort living, Ponte Vedra Beach and the beaches communities offer the most desirable real estate in Northeast Florida!

Janet Westling, REALTOR, GRI, CIPS
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty
Sand Castles creator and contributing editor
Award-winning section
www.janetwestling.com

MARKET WATCH

The housing market from multiple angles

By Kevin Waugaman

CEO, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

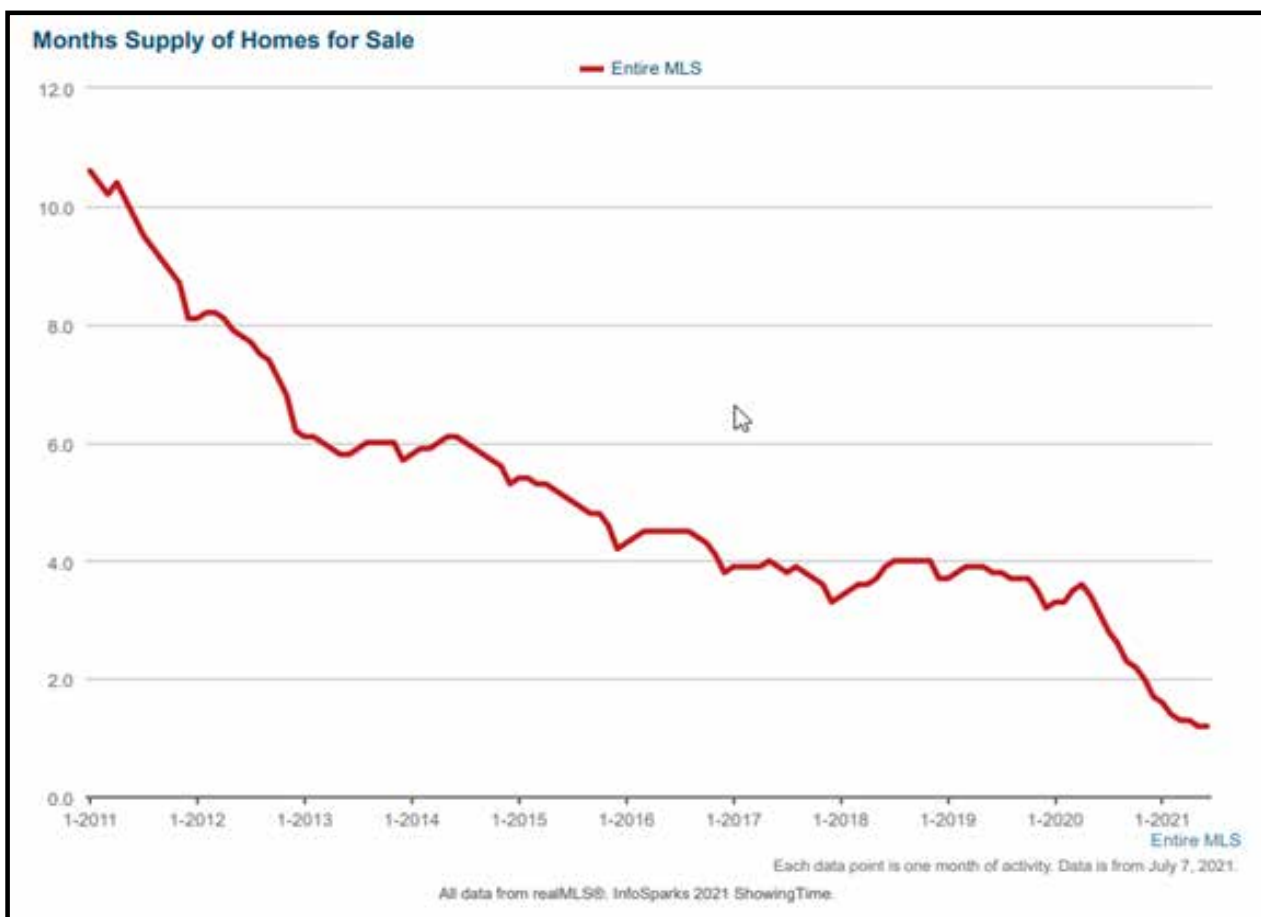
This market report is focused on our Northeast Florida region and will give a broad view of real estate from an economic vantage and a practical point as well.

We know the market continues to bend toward a seller advantage and will continue to do so until there is enough supply to satisfy demand. There is a 1.2-month supply of homes. This means that if no additional inventory comes online, current demand would absorb the homes on the market in 1.2 months. We have been tracking this indicator for decades — compare to June of 2011 when there was a 9.8-month supply and buyers had plenty of options (see figure). Economists consider a normal market to have six months supply. Anything above is a buyer’s market, anything below tilts to sellers’ favor.

A one-month supply is extremely low and simply means there is far more demand than supply relative to a normal market. This does not mean there is “no inventory.” Clearly there is supply as we are up 5% in sales in June 2021 over a strong June 2020, and up 12.4% over June 2019 if you want to factor out last year’s COVID impact. Today’s supply just doesn’t stay available on the market for very long.

There is no true crystal ball to predict when the market will normalize.

There is some indication that inventory is beginning an upward movement; however, it is too soon to tell if it is a trend or just a blip. In addition to resale inventory, we can look at leading indicators on the supply side like permits. In Northeast Florida (Jacksonville MSA), the Northeast Florida Builders Association’s Permit Data report shows that permits pulled year-to-date through



May 2021 (most recent data as I write this) were up about 51% compared to the same period in 2020 and 2019. This is good news, but the supply and labor shortages are causing a variety of issues on delivery of finished product. With demand, there may be a little lag now that people are traveling and moving about the country. And, of course, some buyers are hesitant given the run-up in pricing.

That upward pace may continue, though at a moderate pace. Keeping Current Matters reports, “In more good news for homeowners, the most recent Home Price Expectations Survey (a survey of a national panel of over 100 economists, real estate experts and investment and market strategists) forecasts home prices will continue appreciating over the next five years, adding to the record amount of equity homeowners have already gained over the past year. (Note: The graph on page 13 shows the expected year-over-year rates of home price appreciation from the report.)

In addition, interest rates remain low so purchase

demand will more than likely remain robust. There is a far greater impact on long-term cost of ownership if rates move up, so recent price trends may not be the best reason to wait on a purchase. For every 1% increase in interest rates, purchasing power decreases approximately 10% as a general rule on a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage.

Our mortgage company, Prosperity Home Mortgage, is led by Eric Spottswood, who said, “The mortgage industry remains busy despite a slight increase in interest rates this year. National 30-year fixed averages went from 2.75% to 3.25% and have stabilized of late. This allows borrowers continued access to near-historic lows. While rates are expected to trend up, most industry insiders expect that trend to be very slight and rates to stay mostly suppressed in the coming year. Some buyers are experiencing fatigue after missing out on multiple bids and opting to put their applications on hold until inventory improves. Other buyers are taking

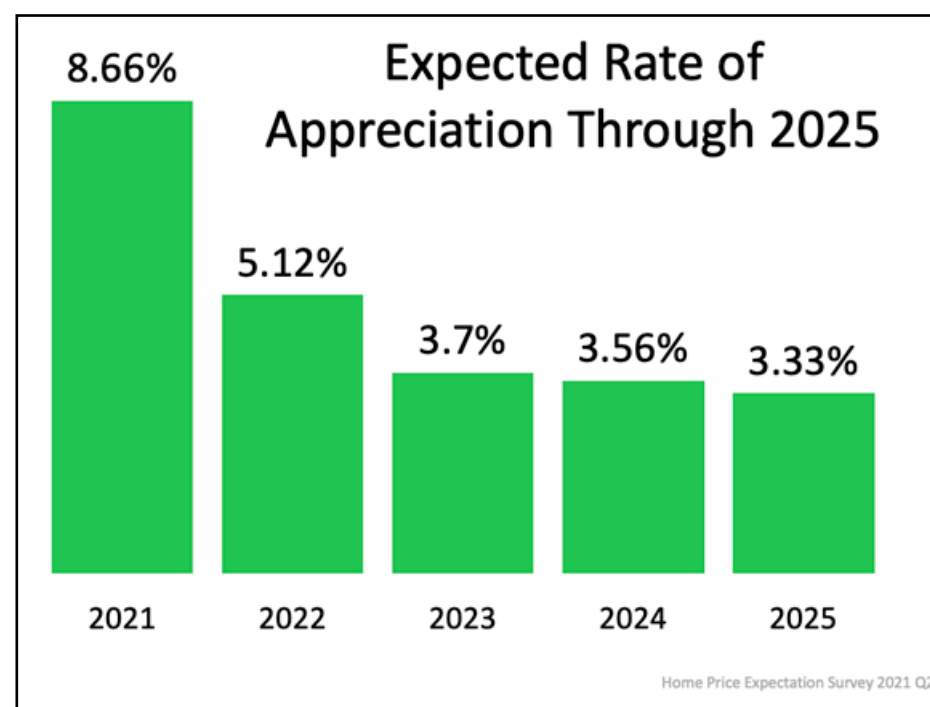
Market Watch

Continued from 12

advantage of the additional time needed to find inventory by leveraging programs like Prosperity Home Mortgage's Buyers Advantage program. This allows buyers the opportunity to send in all documents needed to complete the loan process prior to putting in a contract on a home. This shortens the time frame and requirements needed once the contract is signed and strengthens their position with sellers when bidding on homes."

Dennis Luettich, general counsel for Berkshire Hathaway Home Services FNR and general manager for Gibraltar Title Services, notes, "There has been an extraordinary growth in the volume of closings that we have seen over the past 18 months. Comparing the first six months of 2020 to the first six months of 2021, we have seen over a 25% increase in the number of files closed as the migration to Northeast Florida increased. During this same time, we have seen a 3% reduction in the rate of refinances as the interest rates have slightly increased from their lows during 2020. All indications seem to show that we will continue to close near record numbers of transactions in the coming months as the demand for housing in Florida remains hot and interest rates remain historically low."

Shelby Heinemann, who leads our property management division, Florida



Network Property Management, offered her expert perspective.

"The property management industry is mirroring the sales market," she said. "There is a lack of inventory from one-bedroom condos to large family homes. FNPM has rented homes recently with increases of \$300 to \$700 more per month. Investors buying at these higher prices are still able to generate a return based on the commensurate increase in rents. Listings are receiving multiple applications within the first 24 to 48 hours. We could literally rent

each of our properties 10 times over. We normally tell our owners that we can rent a property within 15 to 30 days. Now we laugh and say we will have an accepted application in two days."

And now, for the buyers and sellers out there, make sure you have a strong Realtor, who is focused on long-term relationships versus short-term transactions. It helps to have in-house resources like the experts cited in this article, too. Trust is the most important word in real estate, and it is so incredibly valuable in order to gain clarity and

confidence in decision-making. After consulting a Realtor, buyers may decide to be most competitive by:

- Preparing in advance to have the capacity to move quickly when the right home is found
- Getting a full conditional approval (i.e., Buyers Advantage mentioned above) vs. a prequal letter when financing the purchase
- Working with the seller on a closing date that is convenient to both parties
- Making offers more attractive with limited contingencies or reduced timelines
- Making offers more attractive with perks such as seller's coverage home warranty or lease back so the seller can find their new home

And sellers will want to:

- Review offers in entirety, focusing on price and all additional terms of the contract to minimize fall-throughs
- Consider placing competing offers in back-up position in the event the primary contract falls through
- Pay attention to pricing trends. It is an amazing time to sell real estate right now, and it is still important to have a pricing strategy in place
- Work with your Realtor to determine where you will go when your home sells, and develop a strategy to move quickly when possible

Thank you for reading and let us know if we can help make your real estate dreams come true.

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1892 Beach Avenue, Atlantic Beach \$995,000 · 3 Beds · 3.5 Baths
Recently remodeled home with peek-a-boo ocean views and multiple covered balconies

Natalie Bryant and Suzanne Schinsing are a team of real estate agents affiliated with Compass, a licensed real estate broker that abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Information is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is subject to errors, omissions, changes in price, condition, sale, or withdrawal without notice. Photos may be virtually staged or digitally enhanced and may not reflect actual property conditions.



Photos provided by Gwinn Volen

Old Ponte Vedra golf course property – a perfect place to call home

By Gwinn Volen

Keller Williams Luxury International

With inventory remaining incredibly low at just 1.2 months' supply in Ponte Vedra Beach (six months of supply is considered a balanced market), we don't expect this new listing to last long.

Built on a high and dry lot in the Old Ponte Vedra neighborhood, this classic Florida home at 314 Pablo Road offers a plethora of conveniences including walking distance to the clubs and the beach.

Why should you buy this home? Loca-

tion, size and finishes.

The home is perfectly perched on the 9th fairway of the renowned Ponte Vedra Inn & Club's Lagoon Course with five bedrooms, four full baths and one half bath in one of Jacksonville's most highly sought-after communities.

The light and bright first floor includes two owner's suites, plus two additional bedrooms, along with a white chef's kitchen, family room, living and dining room, plus an office. The primary owner's suite is completely separated from the other bedrooms allowing for the ultimate in privacy.

Upstairs is the fifth bedroom plus a bonus room, perfect for a game room, playroom, theater or home-school space.

314 Pablo Road is beautifully updated, with two major structural renovations in 2007 and 2010, and other stylish interior finish updates along the way.

Did we mention there's a pool? Leaps and bounds above your average pool, this home includes a 10-foot deep, heated, saltwater pool with fountains plus a large hot tub. With the eastern views to the front, you are sure to hear the ocean and feel the cool breezes while drinking your morning

coffee on the lovely front porch. The western rear exposure showcases golf course views beyond the mature shading oak trees and is the perfect spot to sit poolside and watch the sun show off its sunset glamour with a cocktail after a long day!

Lush landscape surrounds this 4,917-square-foot home with paved circular drive for ease of access and plenty of guest parking, plus a two-car garage with added space for storage.

This home is listed by Gwinn Volen of Keller Williams Luxury International in Ponte Vedra Beach.



Photos provided by CiCi Anderson

Maintenance-free living at Marina San Pablo ... your waterfront paradise where your playground awaits

By CiCi Anderson

Marsh Landing Country Club Realty

On the banks of Northern Florida's lush Intracoastal landscape is a natural wonder, waiting to be discovered.

Marina San Pablo is more than an elegant condominium and townhome community. This is the lock-and-leave lifestyle that everyone dreams of. This property features a gated entrance, exquisitely landscaped grounds and a private marina, as well as luxurious open floor plans with

designer finishes. And the views cannot be surpassed with panoramic views of the marina and Intracoastal Waterway. At every turn, Marina San Pablo is a destination, where natural wonders never cease to amaze. There's even a community fishing pier where the fish are jumping as the dolphins and manatees pass by.

The Yacht Club houses the fitness center, a beautiful gathering room, a catering kitchen with sitting area, bar and TV. Outside is the sparkling pool, hot tub, grill area, marina and walking promenade.

Fifty-foot boat slips are right in your backyard for all your water sports: boating, jet skiing, kayaking or paddle boarding. This is the easy lifestyle you have been dreaming about and searching for.

Marina San Pablo is located off San Pablo Road just south of J. Turner Butler Boulevard. It is only a short drive to the many beautiful beaches in Ponte Vedra Beach and Jacksonville Beach, close to the St. Johns Town Center and the world-renowned TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course, and next door to the prestigious Mayo Clinic.

We are offering an incredible top-floor condominium with magnificent postcard views of the Intracoastal. This four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath condo with office is offered for \$1,450,000 and includes a 50-foot boat slip. We also have a three-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath condo with an office offered for \$999,000. Both condos also come with a full golf membership to Marsh Landing Country Club, which is just a few minutes drive away. These properties are represented by MLCC Realty and listed by Cici Anderson and Jenna Fisher.



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PALM VALLEY MINI ESTATE
166 S. Roscoe Blvd.

2 Acres, 5 Bedroom, 3 Full Baths, 1 Half Bath, guest house, 3550 SF garage, outdoor kitchen, pool.
MLSID: 1118197 Price: \$3,000,000
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JUST LISTED



OLD PONTE VEDRA- GOLF COURSE VIEW
314 Pablo Road

5 Bedroom / 4 Full Bath, 1 Half Bath, 4917 SF
MLS: 1120878
Price: \$2,995,000
The Volen Group
(904) 314-5188

SOLD



HARBOUR ISLAND

24600 Harbour View Drive
5 Bedroom/ 6 Bath, 7,147 SF, 40 ft. boat slip
MLS: 1030196
Sold Price: \$2,500,000
Joni Zwick, PA
(904) 910-7607

SOLD



SAWGRASS COUNTRY CLUB
22 Walkers Ridge

4 Bedrooms / 4 Full Bath, 3 Half Bath, 3118 SF
MLS: 1112892
Sold Price: \$1,060,000
Joni Zwick, PA
(904) 910-7607

JUST LISTED



PONTE VEDRA
334 Big Island Trail

3 Bedrooms / 3 Full Baths / 1 Half Bath, 3060 SF
MLS: 1120945
Price: \$685,000
Joni Zwick, PA
(904) 910-7607

OCEANFRONT



PONTE VEDRA BEACH
2643 Ponte Vedra Blvd.

5 Bedrooms / 3 Baths, 3245 SF
MLS: 1120945
Price: \$1,795,000
Lisa Barton Team
(904) 465-9139

OCEANFRONT



PONTE VEDRA BEACH
2619 S. Ponte Vedra Blvd.

MLSID: 1118685
Price: \$1,398,000
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DEEP WATER ACCESS



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MLSID: 1104540
Price: \$1,699,000
Lisa Barton Team
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125 Ocean Course Drive

MLSID: 1115987
Price: \$1,295,000
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*Source: Keller Williams Multi-Trend Report & MLS



Sarah Huckabee Sanders speaks to guests at a July 19 cocktail reception hosted by John and Patsy Shields at their home in Aspen, Colorado.



Sarah Huckabee Sanders (center) with Julie Wells, Janet Westling, John Shields and Patsy Shields.



Bryan Sanders and John Shields

An evening in Aspen with Sarah Huckabee Sanders

By Janet Westling

On July 19, John and Patsy Shields from Ponte Veda Beach hosted a cocktail reception with Sarah Huckabee Sanders, press secretary to former President Donald Trump from 2017 to 2019, author of "Speaking for Myself" and candidate for governor of Arkansas, at their summer home in Aspen, Colorado.

Huckabee Sanders has been an ardent supporter of Trump and his MAGA agenda, and this event was filled within days. More than 50 friends attended and had the opportunity to meet Huckabee Sanders and pose for photos.

The summertime temperatures made the perfect garden setting for an open-air venue for an outdoor reception on the terrace under the trees, with the Colorado mountains as a stunning backdrop.

Huckabee Sanders is a genuine and natural speaker and made quite a connection to all who attended. She was the third woman and first mother to hold the position of White House press secretary. Huckabee Sanders lives in Little Rock, Arkansas, with her husband Bryan, their three children, Scarlett, Huck and George, and their golden retriever, Traveler.



Former Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant and Huckabee Sanders



Victoria Ramsey, Jason Ramsey, former Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant, Rebeccah Woodard and Art Fischer.



Bryan Sanders, Patsy Shields and Art Fisher

Photos provided by Janet Westling



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Enter this gated estate and be blown away by the magnificent house, sweeping green lawn, sparkling pool and expansive ocean view. This amazing lot has everything a buyer could wish for located on the ocean in prestigious Ponte Vedra Beach. Lightly lived in, the house shows like a model and takes advantage of the ocean views from every room on the 1st and 2nd floors. Offered for \$9,750,000.



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**Call Janet Westling
(904) 813-1913**





Photos provided by
Katie Hughes Johnson

Penthouse condo offers incredible location with downtown views

By **Katie Hughes Johnson**

McAfee Hughes Group & RE/MAX Specialists PV

This luxury penthouse condo at San Marco Place affords unparalleled views of the St. Johns River, downtown Jacksonville and TIAA Bank Field. A complete remodel was recently finished in 2020 with upscale designer selections throughout.

With 3,940 square feet, three bedrooms, three-and-a-half bathrooms, plus a large bonus or entertainment room, this open-concept home boasts two-story ceilings

and stunning waterfront views from almost every angle. The main level consists of all living spaces, kitchen, a second master bedroom with large en-suite bathroom that is ADA capable, plus a powder bathroom. The second floor has the larger of the two master bedrooms, an exquisite master bathroom with soaker-free standing tub, oversized shower and two water closets (aka ... the marriage keeper). There is an air-conditioned closet off the remarkable master closet. There is an additional guest bedroom and bathroom on the second

level, plus laundry room. Wrap-around terraces with river and city views are on the first two levels of the home allowing for the perfect entertainment spaces and ultimate relaxation. On the top floor, there is a bonus or entertainment space currently used as an office. A covered crow's peak is the perfect spot to unwind to breathtaking and peaceful views. Additional storage is on the third floor.

The kitchen features high-end interior finishes, wide-plank wood flooring, contemporary cabinetry, Miele appliances,

including the Miele coffee system, steam oven and convection oven, plus a Blue-star gas range. The white quartz countertops complement the sleek design of the smooth cabinets and elegant lighting offering an elegant ambiance.

Enjoy an incredible location, views, floor plan and finishes, while overlooking the heart of the city!

The property is presented by Katie Hughes Johnson, listed by McAfee Hughes Group & RE/MAX Specialists PV and offered at \$1,890,000.



Photos provided by
Tina Webster

Ponte Vedra Boulevard home features beach views, exquisite design

By **Tina Webster**

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

As you drive South on Ponte Vedra Boulevard past the prestigious Ponte Vedra Inn & Club and newly renovated world-class Sawgrass Country Club, you will fall in love with the canopy of gnarled oak trees and large oceanfront lots. Enter the gates to 901 Ponte Vedra Blvd., and the privacy really sets in with the lush landscaping that surrounds this estate. As you drive up the lovely circular driveway, the views of the Atlantic Ocean appear on the 200-foot-wide oceanfront lot. A country club-style pool overlooking the Atlantic is waiting for you to take

a dip on your way to enjoy the gorgeous sandy beaches that Ponte Vedra has to offer. This part of the beach is so pristine and quiet you sometimes feel like you are on your own private island. Bring your water toys as kayaking, paddle boarding and kite surfing are all part of the scenery at 901 Ponte Vedra Blvd. These beaches are also perfect for biking and running, and shark-tooth hunters find teeth in abundance on this private stretch of the beach.

From the moment you walk through the front door you enter a fabulous foyer with stunning ocean views. As a matter of fact, every downstairs room in this home stares out at the Atlantic Ocean. This design-

er-owned home has been beautifully renovated leaving you time to just move in and enjoy yourself without the hassle of construction. Enjoy your morning cup of coffee watching the sun rise over the ocean from the gourmet kitchen. If you enjoy entertaining, this home was made for the finest parties with its stunning living room and many decks overlooking the ocean and the pool. Six bedrooms with en suite baths complete this designer's dream home.

If you ever want to leave this magnificent estate, Ponte Vedra Beach has everything you dream of in a fantastic beach life setting. PVB is the home of THE PLAYERS Championship and many other

well-known golf courses are just minutes away, making this location a golfer's dream. Don't forget your rackets as there are also world-class tennis facilities in the area. Ponte Vedra Beach has many great dining spots and shops. For all of you boaters out there, the Intercoastal Waterway is just a few miles away and the St. Johns River is close by in Jacksonville.

If you are looking for the ideal coastal lifestyle in this fantastic private, oceanfront estate, give us a call today for your private showing.

This property is listed by Tina Webster and Elizabeth Hudgins with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services FNR and offered at \$9,750,000.

COMING AUGUST 19!



The Ponte Vedra Recorder has conducted the third annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32082 and 32081** and the results will be published in August 19th issue.

(Until then, we're keeping the results under wraps!)

Readers have been voting for their favorite businesses, professional services, organizations and more in various categories online and the winners will soon be notified.

Find out how you can thank those who voted for your business, organization, etc. in our special section on August 19th!

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Ponte Vedra Club Realty



Photos provided by Jennifer Sexton

Take time to explore historic Riverside and Avondale

By Jennifer Sexton

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

With 22 miles of beaches along the coast in Jacksonville, it's difficult for many of us to break away from the sand to "cross the ditch" unless absolutely necessary.

Less than 30 minutes to the west of Ponte Vedra Beach lies the charming tree-lined streets of historic Riverside and Avondale. Listed in the National Registry of Historic Places, Riverside is one of Jacksonville's oldest and trendiest com-

munities. Voted as one of the country's top 10 Great Neighborhoods, Riverside and Avondale have an extraordinary mix of history, culture, charm and modern design. Take a drive to see the many historic homes with some dating back to the 1800s. The impressive architecture ranges from farmhouse to Mediterranean revival. Other properties, such as 3805 Park St. in Avondale, a three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bathroom with 1,976 square feet, have been newly constructed to precisely preserve the vintage charm of the area.

This home is in the heart of Avondale and sits on a corner lot with a detached garage.

Multi-million-dollar riverfront homes and high-end condo buildings are common, but there's nothing pretentious about this area. Instead the vibe is that of community, urban living and supporting local business. The world-class Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens is located in the Riverside neighborhood as is the eclectic Riverside Arts Market (RAM). Avondale offers beautiful parks such as

the 28-acre Boone Park and many chic eateries to choose from. And let's not forget the artsy Five Points district. Hop from funky boutiques to breweries to parks within minutes. The possibilities are endless, so grab a friend or your family and discover the Riverside and Avondale neighborhoods this weekend!

The property at 3805 Park St., in Jacksonville is listed by Jennifer Sexton, and represented by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty and offered at \$499,000.



Photos provided by Nancy Massengill

A rare opportunity in exclusive Sawgrass Country Club

By Nancy Massengill

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

With residential real estate values at an all-time high in Ponte Vedra Beach, here comes a rare opportunity to own a single-family detached home in coveted Sawgrass Country Club.

This highly sought-after Spy Glass neighborhood is a single cul-de-sac street with only 16 homes, all of which have either water or golf course views. You will never want to leave this picturesque setting.

The distinguished 5-Star Platinum Club of America designation has been awarded to Sawgrass Country Club. The clubhouse has been recently renovated and is "just amazing," and is the perfect complement

to the beautiful Beach Club overlooking pristine natural beaches. Enjoy awesome sunrises at the Beach Club and toast stunning sunsets from this dune-top facility.

15 Spy Glass Lane is a beautiful single-family, three bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath property. It is located on a very private wooded home site of approximately 1/3 acre, which backs onto one of the many lakes in the community. It even has a dock for evening sky gazing. Enter the courtyard gate into the beautiful butterfly garden, which features a paver walkway, the serene sounds of the fountain and, oh yes, monarch butterflies.

The home itself features over 2,600 square feet of open floorplan with hardwood flooring in the main living areas.

Volume ceilings give the home an even more spacious feel. The gourmet kitchen includes new stainless-steel appliances, granite countertops and is loaded with contemporary cabinetry surrounding an island and the breakfast room, which has plenty of room for your favorite table and chairs. Also included in the kitchen are a large pantry and wine closet with beverage cooler.

Flooded with natural light, the large family room with vaulted ceilings is the heart of this home. The focal point of this room is the gas fireplace featuring a floor-to-ceiling stone surround and a large mirrored dry bar for entertaining family and friends. From the family room you enter the bright open Florida room. The entire back of

the house is flanked with floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors with expansive views of the beautifully landscaped backyard and free-form paver patio.

Spy Glass Lane is located in the exceptional St. Johns County School District, which boasts some of the highest rated schools in Florida. We are blessed to have world-class medical facilities just minutes away. Numerous shopping and dining opportunities await your visit.

If its watersports you desire ... you are home! Located between the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway for boating or the expansive beaches of the Atlantic Ocean for sunning, surfing and paddle boarding, it is all here!

Welcome home to Ponte Vedra Beach.

SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

Lawrence to determine Meyer's professional fate



Brian Sexton
Guest Columnist

We're just weeks away now from our first glance at an entirely different football team. Seven months of speculation and guessing will finally give way to actual evidence of new head coach Urban Meyer's grand scheme to build a better football team. Regardless of opinion on Meyer's lack of professional experience or Tim Tebow's ability to transition to tight end there is only one story that Jaguars fans need focus on, and that's Trevor Lawrence.

Lost in all the hoopla around one of college football's best coaches and Jacksonville's favorite sons is the understanding that it's the quarterback that makes the coach and not the other way around. Don't forget that Bill Belichick was 13-19 as the Patriots' head coach going into the final weeks of the 2001 season when Drew Bledsoe went down

with an injury and Tom Brady strode off the bench in relief. Twenty years and six Super Bowl championships later, Belichick is among the greatest coaches of all time, and he is a great coach. But what if Brady was in New York or Chicago instead of the famously forgotten sixth round, compensatory pick from the 2000 NFL Draft watching from the sidelines in New England?

Lawrence has the look of a quarterback who could send his coach to the Hall of Fame also. Watching him figure things out on the practice field during OTAs in May and June was to see a young man, who is not only a great player and student of the game, but a guy who obviously loves what he does. You don't need to read anything else about a player you've probably watched since his now-famous NCAA Championship game against Alabama; the kid is a great football player.

I don't have any doubt, and I've never said that about a football player in nearly three decades covering the NFL, that

JAGUARS continues on **Page 25**

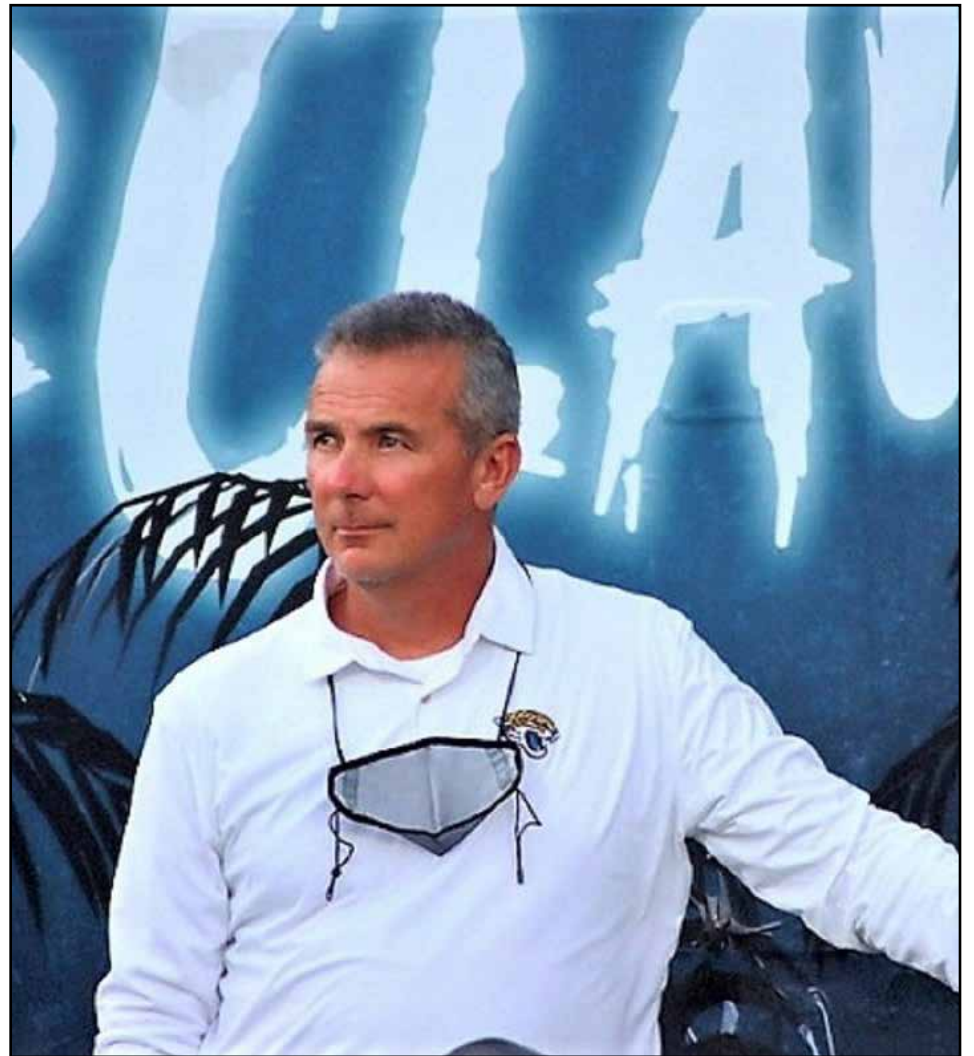


Photo by Nancy Beecher

ABOVE: Jaguars coach Urban Meyer waits to address the draft party crowd on April 29 at TIAA Bank Field. The Jaguars had the No. 1 pick in the draft and selected quarterback Trevor Lawrence, who could be a defining factor in Meyer's success at his first NFL coaching gig.



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Photos provided by
Pam Watt



Don't miss this Mediterranean-style gem at Villini at Glen Kernan

By Pam Watt

The Watt Team with RE/MAX Connects

Nestled off Hodges Boulevard, close to the beach, highways and Mayo Clinic, is a small, gated, boutique community called Villini at Glen Kernan. It has property amenities to include a recreational facility swimming pool, spa and covered grilling area. You can also enjoy a social membership to Glen Kernan Country Club.

This stunning 3,586-square-foot home is on the market and includes four bedrooms, three-and-a-half baths, plus an office and elegant features throughout. From the curbside, you see the coastal Mediterranean

home with a tile roof and three-car oversized garage with gorgeous “old world” stained-wood doors. But when you walk through the paver courtyard entrance, you discover so much more!

First, the private detached casita shows off a bedroom/flex area and full bathroom — great for guests, teenagers and/or privacy. Walking into the main home, you immediately see hardwood floors, beautifully exposed wood beams, two separate gas fireplaces and a gorgeous wine closet with antique mirror tile, wine refrigerator and iron gate. Walk around the foyer to the large open living spaces in the kitchen and breakfast room overlooking the family

room, office with French doors and shelving and beautiful formal living and dining areas, all with stylish light fixtures. You will find a chef's dream gourmet kitchen with white upgraded cabinetry, lovely Carrara marble-top counters, high-end Thermador gas-range top and double oven, GE Professional Monogram refrigerator and a built-in Miele coffee station with warming drawer. Wind up the wood floor stairway to a cozy sitting area and large master suite, featuring an upstairs terrace, very large closet and bathroom with upgrades to include Carrara marble, frameless shower and Kohler top-quality fixtures including falling water faucets. Two additional bedrooms, a full bath

and laundry room complete the upstairs. Take a walk out of the French doors from the family room to a large paver patio overlooking the peaceful lake, with plenty of green space to create more outdoor living.

The owners have exquisitely furnished this home, which makes it even more enjoyable to walk through this beauty. Their taste in furniture and home accessories feels like you are thumbing through a high-end magazine. As most wonderful homes today, the owners enjoyed multiple offers and are under contract to close this month.

This home is represented by The Watt Team with RE/MAX Connects and offered at \$795,000.

Designing a pool and garden for your Florida home that is simply stunning

By Janet Westling

(Originally ran May 25, 2017)

I have wanted a swimming pool in my backyard since we built our house over 25 years ago, and as much as I wanted a pool my husband did not.

He grew up with a pool in Florida in the 1960s and associated a swimming pool with a lot of work. He was right! But the pros outweigh the cons. A pool with the right scale and landscape design will enhance a home, provide a place to exercise and be the backdrop that is perfect for entertaining ... Ponte Vedra style!”

So where do you begin?

You might start with looking through design magazines and putting a portfolio together of designs that you like. That is what I have done. In fact, I have an article that I have kept since it was published in Traditional Home magazine in 2006. The pool and garden were designed for a home in Birmingham, Alabama, and the landscape architect Norman Kent Johnson created a stunning space that I simply love!

I have met with pool designers and consulted with landscape designers, but my home and property is unusual. Situated on a corner lot, my home sits diagonally on the property. I had hesitated to go forward with this project. I decided to call the ar-



Photo provided by Janet Westling

chitect whose designs I have admired for years. What follows is my conversation with noted landscape architect Norman Kent Johnson.

Here are a few of the tips he shared for

planning the perfect back yard oasis:

Clear your mind of preconceptions. “Spend five-to-10 hours of not looking at magazines,” Johnson suggested. (I shared with him that I had invested years in do-

ing the exact opposite — perhaps explaining why I have taken so long to start my project!)

Look at your garden as an enhancement to your home and property. “You don't need a pool nearly as large as you think you do,” he said. “It should be part of the garden — not a Buick parked in the back yard!”

Approach the design as if you were planning a rose garden. Get past the idea of a grandiose swimming pool, Johnson suggested, and plan it as part of the overall garden design.

I began to understand what he was saying. The line I recall from the article I saved was “planning for a purpose.”

I accomplished more in this short conversation than in all the articles I have read and saved, and all the consultations I have had with numerous pool companies. Johnson and I made plans to meet in early June to begin my pool and landscape design that is long overdue.

Norman Kent Johnson holds a bachelor of landscape architecture from Louisiana State University, where he is listed as a Distinguished Alumnus of the College of Design. He has served as garden design editor of Southern Living, associate editor of Landscape Architecture and founding editor of Garden Design magazines. He has worked as a residential garden designer since 1984.

Providing peace of mind

Submitted by AmeriPro

AmeriPro provides a network of trusted resources created to give real estate agents, insurance agents and home buyers peace of mind. While AmeriPro Inspection Corporation handles all types of real estate inspections, AmeriPro Pest Control complements them with a comprehensive pest management system. AmeriPro is fortunate enough to have a working partnership with Inspection Depot Inc., which provides custom technological solutions for the inspection industry. AmeriPro Inspection Corporation, AmeriPro Pest Control and Inspection Depot Inc. all work together to provide exceptional service to every client.

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Jaguars

Continued from 23

he's going to be a superstar signal caller. What I'm anxious to learn about Lawrence is if he is a competitor on the level of Brady, Peyton Manning and Drew Brees. Those three epitomized what it meant to be at the top of the game since the early 2000s. They each saw the other two prepare on and off the field and found a way to take the film room or a nutritional plan to an entirely different level. They were great leaders in the huddle but could be cruel competitors amongst their own teammates with guys who made silly mistakes or weren't available for extra work after practice or in the offseason. Those three — with a combined 10 Super Bowl rings — re-wrote the record books and captivated the football world for more than 20 years.

If Lawrence, who seems to be as good a person as he is a player, can sharpen that edge against guys like Patrick Mahomes, Lamar Jackson and Justin Herbert, and prepare to push his teammates hard — really, really hard — then Meyer is going to be a wildly successful head coach. And, from my viewpoint, he had to know what was possible with the pride of Cartersville, Georgia, and Clemson, South Carolina, before Meyer left a great job in television and his championship legacy in college football for a franchise in distress in North Florida. Lawrence will decide how good a professional coach Meyer will be and not the other way around. That's how it works in the NFL.

Brian Sexton is the senior correspondent for the Jacksonville Jaguars and has served more than 20 years as the voice of Jacksonville's NFL franchise.

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TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT

A view of Phuket, Thailand, during pandemic

By Alex Wulbern

Traveling during a pandemic offers a totally unique perspective on places commonly visited. I have been living in Phuket, Thailand for the last three months and I have had the opportunity to experience a completely different Phuket than most have ever seen.

We live like kings among the struggling locals. Many of the hotels are closed and the remaining open hotels are heavily discounted. Many attractions have also cut their prices to encourage the remaining tourists to visit.

When out with friends, they talk about Phuket before the pandemic and their stories and experiences are totally different from the current Phuket. Many of the veteran tourists describe Phuket as a 24-hour party with bars and restaurants busy around the clock.

Pre-pandemic, Phuket was a bustling tourist hub with almost 10 million annual visitors. The streets overflowed with tourists and expats and all kinds of vendors capitalizing on the opportunities.

Now the Island is mostly closed or restricted. In particular, the night life is very restricted. The rules always change at the last minute making it difficult to keep up. It feels like every day we wake up to new rules.

For now, the nightlife is mostly shut down with the occasional bar getting away with opening for a night and always closing earlier than before the pandemic.

The beaches are wide open and free of the typical crowds. Which is a benefit as it is easy to find a spot on a beach and there are plenty of beaches to choose from. Normally these beaches are packed with sunbathing tourists.

There are also very few people visiting the typical tourist spots like



Photos by Alex Wulbern

The beautiful beaches in Phuket, Thailand, were largely empty during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Like in many other places, businesses in Phuket that rely on the tourism industry, like restaurants and bars, took a big hit during the pandemic.

TRAVEL continues on Page 27

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ABOVE: Popular tourist attractions in Phuket like the big Buddha statue, had few visitors during the pandemic.

RIGHT: Exploring the beaches in Phuket, Thailand, was a unique experience as they were largely empty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photos by Alex Wulbern



Travel

Continued from 26

temples, so there are fewer people to get in the way of your pictures.

Another benefit is the pricing of everything has dropped, so it is easier than ever to find an affordable hotel and a scooter. It is also easy to find restaurants that are having discounts on food and alcohol.

Usually, the streets here overflow with cars, motorbikes, rickshaws and all manner of transport making the roads very crowded. Now there are few cars on the roads and there's little traffic and getting a parking spot is easy.

When I first arrived in Phuket, bars and clubs were closed and alcohol serving was restricted. There was no curfew and of course masks were required everywhere including while driving a motorbike.

After a few weeks, a nightly curfew was in effect, and everyone had to be in their home by 10 p.m. and restaurants closed at 9 p.m. Since then, the hours have moved around and now there are restaurants that are open until 11 p.m. and are now allowed to serve beer again.

While all these strict rules were in effect and seriously enforced, that did not mean that everyone obeyed. Many restaurants would still sell you a beer if you asked, but they would bring it in a

TRAVEL continues on Page 29



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Alice Hickox
Lettuce Do Dinner

Does anyone else remember the song, “I found my thrill on Blueberry Hill?” When I was little, my dad used to play this song a lot, and I always loved it. Multiple artists sang it, but he particularly loved Elvis’ version.

It was, and still is, a timeless, fun and happy song. The other day it hit my brain on the “repeat” cycle as I thought about some of my favorite summer recipes with none other than blueberries!

I am a huge fan of all berries, and all berries are great superfoods for everyone to eat, but blueberries are particularly beneficial. Not only are they one of the foods with the highest amounts of antioxidants, but also one of the most popular superfoods to consume. Blueberries have tons of nutrients. With so many antioxidants, they are often in the top-10 superfoods lists. They are a powerhouse in helping with anti-aging, improving your skin and hair, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol and improving mental health. These baby blues literally fight the blues! Who knew? A lot of us could use about a gallon of

them right about now. Last but not least, blueberries can proudly boast about their cancer-prevention properties. They practically seek out and destroy cancer cells with their high antioxidants.

I’ll stop with the nutrition class and talk about the next excellent thing about blueberries — they are super easy to add to your diet. Try to add some blueberries to your oatmeal or cereal in the morning, have a handful of them with your lunch or add them to your morning yogurt or smoothies. And why not? They are at their peak season and almost every supermarket features them as soon as you walk in. I’m pretty sure they even wave at me ... they know how much I love them!

We are all familiar with the classic blueberry recipes ... muffins, cobblers and the like. But I’m going to share some more fun and up-to-date, if you will, healthy ways to get these beautiful blues in.

My first recipe is a blueberry spinach salad with my favorite balsamic vinaigrette. This salad is loaded with flavor, color and nutrition and can be served as a main entree or as a side for any main dish. We have this at least once a week in the summer, often topped with grilled chicken or shrimp or as a side to my lightened-up turkey meatloaf. You

can add or swap out strawberries (I love to add them) or a can of drained mandarin oranges, which is perfect in winter when fresh berries may not be available. You can truly make it your own.

I’m also bringing back my blueberry margarita from last summer — it was a hit! As I said, everything is a little bit healthier with blueberries, right? So grab a big salad bowl, a mason jar and put on a little Fats Domino or Elvis, and let’s get our “thrill on Blueberry Hill!”

BLUEBERRY SPINACH SALAD WITH BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

(Serves 4)

- 4 cups loosely packed baby spinach (preferably organic), washed
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 cup fresh sliced strawberries
- ¼ cup thinly sliced red onion
- ½ cup roasted pecans, walnuts or slivered almonds — go with your fave
- 1 small block of feta cheese, crumbled by hand

Balsamic Vinaigrette

- ¼ cup good quality balsamic vinegar
- ½ teaspoon both salt and fresh cracked pepper
- 1 large garlic clove, crushed and mashed into a paste with back of spoon
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ½ cup good quality olive oil



DIRECTIONS:

In your favorite salad bowl, add baby spinach. Sprinkle red onion, blueberries and strawberries all around on top. Finish with crumbled feta cheese and pecans.

For dressing: In a small bowl, or in a mason jar, add balsamic dressing first, then salt, pepper and fresh garlic. Shake or whisk to infuse salt and garlic into the balsamic. Add honey and whisk/shake, then finally add olive oil and give it another good shake. Just before serving, drizzle about half of the dressing over salad and toss, toss, then taste. Add the rest if you like. A little of this dressing goes a long way.

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Recipes

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FRESH BLUEBERRY-BASIL MARGARITAS

(Serves 2)

- 4 ounces 100% agave silver or Resposado tequila
- 3 ounces fresh orange juice
- 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) fresh-squeezed lime juice
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar or simple syrup, more to taste
- 4-5 fresh torn basil (or mint) leaves
- ½ cup frozen or fresh blueberries



DIRECTIONS:

Rub the rim of two margarita glasses with a lime wedge. Dip rims of glasses in a small pile of kosher or sea salt. Add ice cubes to glasses. In a cocktail shaker, muddle the blueberries, lime juice and a few torn mint or basil leaves (if using) until blueberries are crushed and infused with lime juice. Add the orange juice, tequila, simple syrup or agave nectar and a handful of ice cubes. Shake vigorously for 15-20 seconds, then strain into glasses. Garnish with a lime or orange wedge.

Travel

Continued from 27

weird cup that did not look like a beer. It is not because all these businesses are rebels; they need the money.

The people have become incredibly stressed about the situation as they fear losing business and livelihoods.

There are other business owners who have kept their shops closed this whole



Photo by Alex Wulbern

Popular tourist attractions in Phuket, Thailand, had few visitors during the pandemic.

time and are now working on renovations as they aim to capitalize on the expected influx of tourists as the island begins opening.

Now, more than a year since the first lockdowns, Phuket has begun a soft opening called the “Sandbox,” which is open for vaccinated tourists. As we approach opening, I have seen the prices of some hotels already going up.

When I first got here in April, the restaurants were empty, and I would often

be the only one in the room. Since then, I have seen the tourist and expat population beginning to return very slowly. I am noticing more traffic and busier restaurants and cafes.

It is sad to see the crumbling tourist industry in the state that it is in, however I am excited to come back and see Phuket fully reopen and have the opportunity to see it both closed and open. We are living in a moment of history, and I am excited for the experience.

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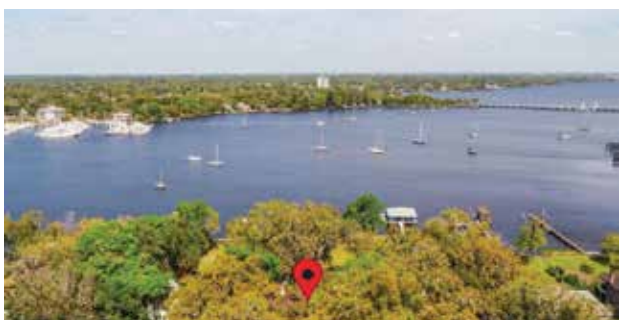
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Business Weekly

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Chemo Noir Director of Partners and Sponsors Nicole Bickford and the nonprofit's founder and chairman Katrin Casey at the Jewelry and Wine Pairings for a Cause event July 22 at the St. Johns Town Center location in Jacksonville.

Chemo Noir partners with jewelry store to fight cancer

By Anthony Richards

Jewelry and wine seem to be a match made in heaven, which is exactly what Ponte Vedra Beach-based nonprofit Chemo Noir was thinking when it developed a partnership with Diamonds Direct.

The two organizations teamed up in conjunction with Diamonds Direct's summer sale to host the Jewelry and Wine Pairings for a Cause event at the St. Johns Town Center location in Jacksonville.

"We used to do cocktail parties with our sales, but we thought it would be fun to add on and tie in one of our nonprofit partners," Diamonds Direct Marketing Manager Kasey Bubb said.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Dori Wortmann and Lisa Bubb look at jewelry during the showcase.

PARTNERSHIP continues on Page 32

C'mon, be honest: Have you experienced schadenfreude?



Harry Pappas
Columnist

I've got to be real with you; the raw and uncut version. I have an embarrassing confession to share, so away I go. ...

Far too often, I feel good when others feel bad. Yep! I regrettably admit it and, of course, I wish I did not succumb to this disgraceful characteristic of human behavior

known as schadenfreude, especially when philosophers like Arthur Schopenhauer refer to schadenfreude as "an infallible sign of a thoroughly bad heart and profound moral worthlessness," the worst trait in human nature."

The German scholar, affectionately known as the "philosopher of pessimism," said that anyone caught enjoying the suffering of others should be shunned from human society. Yikes! Am I that bad? Well, YES! According to Merriam-Webster, Schadenfreude is a compound of the German nouns Schaden, meaning "damage" or "harm," and Freude, meaning "joy," so schadenfreude means joy over harm or misfortune suffered by another.

Whether or not you want to admit it, I would bet you too have experienced the guilty pleasure of someone's problem. If not, I tip my hat and applaud you for a job well done, as I find that kind of rare humility wonderfully attractive. Nevertheless, I suggest that we are living in a golden age of schadenfreude. If there is any doubt, all we have to do is watch, listen or read

PAPPAS continues on Page 32

Desperately seeking homes to sell in Northeast Florida

Northeast Florida's housing market desperately needs more homes.

In June, the region's residential market continued its frenzied pace, with low interest rates and a limited inventory fueling record high sales prices.

With an available months' supply of inventory, declining 58.1% to a mere

1.3-months of inventory compared to the same time last year when it boasted 3.1 months, June's housing market numbers showed another record increase in average and median sale prices. Also, worth noting was a 55% decline in the number of days homes stayed on the market — 71 days in June 2020 to 32 days in June of this year.

Specifically, June's median sales price of \$301,000 leapt 18% from \$255,000 in June 2020. Meanwhile the average sale price of a home on the First Coast was \$373,378, a dramatic 20.7% increase from the year before when the average price was \$309,269.

"Many buyers have gone to the side-

lines and are continuing to rent or double up with others, as the affordability of homes compared to incomes becomes a bigger issue," said Missi Howell, president of the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors. "Sellers continue to reap the

HOMES continues on Page 32

The partnership between Chemo Noir and Diamonds Direct promoted a festive atmosphere during a July 20 event inside the Diamonds Direct store at the St. Johns Town Center.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Partnership

Continued from 31

There were also certain designated jewelry and wine pairings where if someone purchased any of them, all the proceeds would go toward Chemo Noir.

“I’ve kind of always had this idea to do jewelry and wine pairings,” Bubb said. “I just figured it would be a fun evening for people and a good way for us to utilize a successful sale by giving back.”

As part of the partnership, Diamonds Direct offered to donate a portion of all sales during the two-hour showcase to help in Chemo Noir’s mission to help those who are fighting cancer locally.

“Everybody you know is affected by cancer in some way, shape or form,” said Nicole Bickford, director of partners and sponsors with Chemo Noir.

Bickford and her husband were founding members of Chemo Noir and saw her role increase over the past couple of years since taking over as director of partners and sponsors.

“It’s been really fun seeing the organization grow to the point where it is



Sheila Moore and Dennis Seevers were on hand for the first-ever Jewelry and Wine Pairings for a Cause event.

at today,” Bickford said. “With all the different events that we’re doing, it’s just a really exciting time.”

Bubb had brought up her idea before and it had previously been looked at to possibly tie something on to Chemo Noir’s annual gala.

However, she was happy with the turn out and thought that having it dur-

ing the summer sale was a perfect fit.

“We hope we can do a pop-up like this at the gala as well,” Bubb said.

Chemo Noir is always trying to find new and creative ways to get the community involved and excited about supporting their cause.

Guests were able to sip on a variety of wine while they looked over the selection of jewelry.

“It is unique, and it’s our first time doing something like this,” Bickford said. “We’re super excited about it.”

It has been a busy last month for Chemo Noir with the Chemo Noir 1 Mile race and Wine Tasting event in late June and the return of cyclist Greg Taylor from his cross-country bike ride to raise funding for the nonprofit on July 17.

Although Diamonds Direct hosted the event, Bickford was quick to point out that to put on a public event like that it takes contributions from several partners to make it happen.

“The great thing about this is that there are a lot of partners involved,” Bickford said. “We have an event company, a floral company, a cheese company. It is definitely a group effort, which makes it even more fun for us.”

96.1 in June 2020. Also in June, 43.3% of closed sales sold for more than the most recent list price, a 220.7% increase over June 2020 when that was 13.5%.

Home builders are trying to meet the increased market demand with new construction. Housing starts were up 3.6% in May from April, according to the U.S. Commerce Department. “Builders are building, but labor and material shortages have elongated their timelines,” said Howell.

“Several builders have slowed production due to uncontrollable and unforeseen but anticipated price increases that may have them building beyond what the market value appraisal could bring. First-time home buyers have been the hardest hit with their budgets blown due to rapidly increasing prices coupled with a lower supply of money

in the state’s housing trust funds to help with down payment and closing-cost assistance. T

he institutional investors, which include iBuyers, institutional investors, and local real estate investors, continue to be strong players in our Northeast Florida market, buying up homes to turn around and rent,” she continued, referring to iBuyer companies that use technology to make offers on homes instantly.

“The summer demand and supply will be interesting to watch, as peoples’ eyes turn from listing and selling to focus on travel and vacations. But they generally turn back to listing and selling as the summer wanes. At present, there is little to no relief in sight for the lack of homes needed in our market,” Howell said.

Pappas

Continued from 31

political commentary.

It is shameful!

So why do so many of us fall prey to having pleasure in others’ adversities? I believe it has to do with the disease of comparison, which I argue is rampant in today’s culture thanks to the world of social media, which allows us, with a click of a mouse, to scroll through thousands of photos of other people’s perceived “perfect lives” while we lament about our shortcomings.

There is a growing body of evidence that screams how the comparison trap is incredibly harmful to our mental and physical well-being.

Although I am guilty of catching the comparison disease from time to time, I clearly understand and appreciate that when I am attached to how I think things should be, I will never be content or happy.

I like what Teddy Roosevelt said: “Comparison is the thief of joy.”

Now, when the comparison monster rears its ugly head and tries to fill me with schadenfreude, I immediately say, “C’mon Harry! Really? You are better than that! Don’t go there, as you know that where the love flows the blessings go!”

At the risk of ending this narrative on too much of a downer, I wanted to share a quote from the cultural critic Friedrich Nietzsche, whose writings focused on truth and morality; “To see others suffer does one good. To make others suffer even more so. This is a hard saying, but a mighty, human, all-too-human principle.”

Folks, let’s just say NO to schadenfreude and then we can watch the magic appear in the form of peace, gratitude and joy!

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Homes

Continued from 31

benefits, as long as they have somewhere to go that can fit within their budget. Many sellers continue to choose not to sell, because they have nowhere to go, leading to the undersupply of existing homes for sale.”

If they do have a home to move to, sellers have a lot of incentive to put their residences on the market. In June, sellers received 100.5% of their original list price. This number is derived from dividing a property’s sales price by its original list price and taking the average for all properties that were sold in a given month, while not accounting for seller concessions. This also represents a 4.6% increase over the percentage of

Differences between weather warnings and watches

Weather is hard to predict. Meteorologists have many tools at their disposal to help forecast storms and other phenomena, but it is impossible to predict the weather with 100% accuracy.

When the weather takes a turn for the worse, the National Weather Service may issue certain notices to prepare the public. Understanding the level of threat a notice carries can help people take appropriate action and avoid serious consequences.

The NWS uses a four-tier system to alert the public of hazards. Here's a closer look at what each tier constitutes.

OUTLOOK

This is the least serious weather alert. It

usually means that hazardous weather may approach in the next three to seven days. The public should monitor the situation and stay tuned for further updates.

ADVISORY

With an advisory, weather conditions are not overly serious but could prove inconvenient. Individuals should be cautious and prudent when preparing supplies or traveling.

WATCH

During a weather watch, there is an increased risk of a hazardous weather occurrence, though the timing or location is still uncertain. This is when it is essential to

practice an evacuation or preparedness plan and stock up on any last-minute supplies.

WARNING

The most serious of the weather impact notifications, a warning constitutes an imminent or likely event. The weather may cause a threat to property or life. Immediate action to stay safe is necessary.

While these alerts are based on the severity of impending weather, it is important

to note that the NWS will not necessarily follow the same timeline with issuing alerts. That depends on how fast a weather situation develops.

If there is time, an advisory, then a watch and then a warning may be issued. However, if a storm moves in rapidly, only a warning may be issued. People always should pay attention to weather notices so they can be prepared should severe weather be in the forecast.

COUNTY'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SPEAKS TO ROTARY CLUB OF PALM VALLEY



Photo by Susan Griffin

Kelly Wilson, the deputy director of Emergency Management for St. Johns County, speaks to members of the Rotary Club of Palm Valley on Tuesday, July 20, at Nona Blue. Previously having served as a planner for the City of Key West, Wilson specializes in comprehensive emergency management planning and mitigation, and holds a master's of science degree with a focus in environmental science. Her tenure within the Emergency Management Division and environmental expertise has been instrumental in seeing the county through numerous natural disasters, including hurricanes Matthew, Irma and Dorian.





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Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach changes name

Nonprofit will now be First Coast Cultural Center

Reflecting its expanding reach into Northeast Florida, The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach has changed its name to First Coast Cultural Center.



Donna Guzzo

Previously located for more than 25 years at 50 Executive Way in Ponte Vedra Beach, the Cultural Center now has offices at 3972 3rd St. South in Jacksonville Beach. The nonprofit conducts arts and music programs in First Coast communities, including Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Ponte



Vedra Beach, St. Augustine and Nocatee and within St. Johns County schools.

According to Donna Guzzo, president and executive director, the artists, volunteers and participants in the center's many programs are from throughout the First Coast.

"The Cultural Center Board of Directors felt that a name change was appropriate

given our strong presence in the region, and we expect our outreach to continue to broaden," said Guzzo.

The nonprofit organization has served the community as a gathering place to learn, experience and appreciate the arts and culture in its many forms. The Cultural Center exhibits local, regional and national artists in a variety of media.

It also provides opportunities for adults, children and families through classes, exhibits, programs, services, activities and memberships open to the local community and beyond.

Key programs include Sound Connections Music Therapy Outreach Program, a musical program for children with special needs offered free of charge to students at six St. Johns County schools, including two Title 1 schools. Kick StART afterschool arts enrichment programs and services are also available.

Cultural Center hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, with after-hour appointments available.

For further information, contact Guzzo at (904) 280-0614 ext. 1201, or by email at dguzzo@ccpvb.org. The website can be found at firstcoastculturalcenter.org.



The Cold War Kids will perform on The Backyard Stage at The Amp on Friday, Aug. 6. Photo provided by the St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Anthemic indie rockers Cold War Kids to perform at The Amp on Aug. 6

The St. Augustine Amphitheatre, in partnership with Jax Live Presents, will welcome anthemic indie-rockers Cold War Kids to The Backyard Stage at The Amp on Friday, Aug 6.

For nearly 15 years, Nathan Willett and Cold War Kids have fielded the shifts in the music landscape's seismic activity as well as the ebbs and flows in their own camp, while simultaneously sticking to their game plan. Over the course of a dozen releases

on majors and indies alike, non-stop tours, the festival circuit's biggest stages, massive radio and streaming successes, as well as a few lineup changes, Cold War Kids have become a major part of the modern scene.

Coming off of the high-water marks of 2014's "Hold My Home" with its smash single, "First" and the Capitol Records-backed "LA Divine" in 2017 feeling mostly satiated, Willett began to hone in on what was most exciting and integral to him in both the Cold War Kids recipe as well as in the current music climate as he began to write new material. He obsessed over the seemingly never-ending stream of Kanye West-produced records released in the summer of 2018, enamored of their breezy compactness and fresh feeling, which excited him to explore a new working relationship with his own producer of favor, Lars Stalfors (St. Vincent, Foster the People).

Willett and Stalfors incorporated some pieces of the core CWK sound while stripping away the rafter-reaching production of their past records, aiming for leaner, tighter tunes. And, taking inspiration from a slogan on a T-shirt made by the band's bass player and resident visual artist Matt Maust, Willett had the project's title, lyrical themes and structure in mind even before any songs had been completed — three unique eight-song volumes called "New Age Norms."

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Christ Church Creative Academy to present 'A Wrinkle in Time'

Christ Church Creative Academy will present "A Wrinkle in Time" at 8 p.m. Aug. 5-7. in the courtyard at Christ Episcopal Church, located at 400 San Juan Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach.

"A Wrinkle in Time" tells the story of Meg Murry, a high school-aged girl who is transported on an adventure through time and space with her brother Charles and her friend Calvin to rescue her father, a gifted scientist, from the evil forces holding him prisoner.

The production is directed by Jason Collins and written by Morgan Gould, from the book by Madeleine L'Engle.

All performances are open to the public. Thursday's performance includes an opening night premier party. Tickets are \$40 for that event. RSVP to Barbielkroberts@gmail.com and pay at the door. Friday and Saturday performances are \$20, pay at the door (cash or credit).

For more information, go to christepiscopalchurch.org.

Rise Against bringing 'Nowhere Generation Tour' to Amphitheatre

On Saturday, Aug. 7, punk-rock group Rise Against will bring its "Nowhere Generation Tour" to The St. Augustine Amphitheatre.

On its new album, "Nowhere Generation," which was released June 4, the multi-gold and platinum band uses its blazing and aggressive punk rock and lyrics to shine a spotlight on the "social and economic deck that has been stacked against the younger generations' pursuit of The American Dream."

"There's this idea that we all are raised on, believing that your generation will be a continuance of your parents' generation — if not even a more fruitful era," said singer, guitarist and lyricist Tim McIlrath. "And it seems like the American Dream isn't turning out the way it's supposed to for a lot of people. Young people aren't quite climbing that ladder the way they were in the past. I feel for this generation and think it's something that should be recognized."

Lyricaly, much of the band's upcoming ninth studio album was inspired by listening to McIlrath's young daughters and a community of fans, seeing firsthand the generation gap growing quicker than ever before, while mired in chronic social, economic and political instability.

"Our hope on this record is to jostle people awake, even if it makes you uncomfortable," McIlrath said.

The band — McIlrath, Joe Principe (bass), Brandon Barnes (drums) and Zach Blair (lead guitar) — sounds those alarms on the new album's unabashedly outspoken songs that speak to a sea of disenfranchised youth about both the struggles and the



Photo provided by the St. Augustine Amphitheatre
Punk rockers Rise Against will perform Aug. 7, at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre.

solutions, while sonically continuing to blur the lines between astute punk rock and melodic-driven pop.

"Nowhere Generation" is Rise Against's first release under a new agreement with Loma Vista Recordings and comes three years after its 2017 blockbuster "Wolves," which became the band's fifth consecutive top 10 record on the Billboard 200 albums chart.

"Nowhere Generation" was recorded at The Blasting Room in Fort Collins, Colorado, under the tutelage of Jason Livermore, Andrew Berlin, Chris Beeble and long-time producer/engineer Bill Stevenson (Black Flag, The Descendents), who has worked with the band on nearly all of its acclaimed releases since its sophomore effort, 2003's "Revolutions Per Minute."

Tickets are on sale at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office and online at Ticketmaster.com. The box office is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays.

(Maust, David Quon, Matthew Schwartz and Joe Plummer).

Tickets for Cold War Kids are on sale at The St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office and online at Ticketmaster.com. The box office is now open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. The box office accepts credit and debit card payments only and all tickets are digital.

Cold War Kids

Continued from 34

The key, as the record exhibits, is in the approach. Two future "New Age Norms" volumes are set to be recorded soon, with the second part featuring production work by Shawn Everett (Alabama Shakes, The War on Drugs) and the rest of the band

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1. Sail support
5. *Percentage of alcohol, acr.
8. Cheesy sandwich
12. Oil, in Italy
13. What refugees do
14. Noble one
15. *Moscow ____
16. Wrinkly fruit
17. Cereal killer
18. *Non-alcoholic cocktail
20. Elementary particle
21. Old and feeble
22. American cuckoo
23. ____ tunnel
26. Create a misnomer
30. *Tap choice
31. Tooth cover
34. A wedge in golf, e.g.
35. Wesley Snipes' 1998 movie
37. Notable time

38. Fancy neckwear
39. Denim innovator
40. *Beer ____, or biergarten
42. Before, archaic
43. Particular marking on a butterfly
45. Neuter in language, e.g.
47. Red Cross bed
48. Île de la Cité river
50. Lump of stuff
52. *18th Amendment, a.k.a. ____ Act
55. Assemblage of members
56. D'Artagnan's weapon
57. Freight horse cart
59. "It's Always ____ in Philadelphia"
60. Wooden pegs
61. *Margarita garnish
62. Lend a hand
63. *Not sweet
64. Sun rising direction
11. *Half whiskey, half absinthe cocktail
13. Pointless
14. Chili con carne legumes
19. Between 10 and Queen
22. Breathing matter
23. C in CNN
24. Stray cat's home
25. Plunder
26. *Fermented honey and water
27. Formed a curve
28. "Fahrenheit 9/11" documentary director
29. Go in
32. *Straight from the bottle
33. Make a blunder
36. *One appeal of happy hour
38. About or concerning, archaic
40. "____ Milk?"
41. Knights' breastplates
44. Dorothy's sleeping aid
46. Conifer attribute
48. Deep sleep
49. Lament for the dead
50. ____hub food takeout service
51. Solitary
52. Hawk or peddle
53. Toreador Song from "Carmen," e.g.
54. River obstructions
55. Geological Society of America
58. Thus far

DOWN

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2. Homecoming guest
3. Farmer's storage type
4. Steel on a work boot
5. Relating to aquarium scum
6. Misrepresent
7. Bride screen
8. *Often served dirty, pl.
9. Cogito ____ sum
10. Rumpelstiltskin's weaver

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Sports

THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2021 • PAGE 36

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ABOVE: Beau Beech drives to the basket while playing for PAOK in Greece last season. He has signed to play his sixth professional basketball season in Poland.

RIGHT: Unlike previous seasons when he went to Europe by himself, this time Beech will have his wife Emma by his side.

Photos provided by Beau Beech



Playing the dream

PVHS alum Beau Beech prepares for 6th pro season

By Anthony Richards

Play basketball and see the world. That is what Beau Beech continues to do after recently signing to play his sixth professional season and fourth in Europe.

"It's a dream," Beech said. "I get to travel the world and play basketball. It's not a bad life."

This season he will play with Czarni Slupsk in the Polish Basketball League beginning in early September. It will be the third country he's played in after being on teams in Germany and Greece the past two years.

Something new when he makes the trip to Europe this time around is that he will not be going alone.

Instead, he will have the company of his wife Emma who is going with him, as the couple recently got married, which is something they wanted to do before they leave for Poland on Aug. 3.

The couple plans to have a big ceremony next summer after they return.

Having her with him on the journey is something Beech is looking forward to and is a big difference from his experience a year ago, when he played in Greece and was in lock-

down for the entire nine months he was there, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Knowing I'll have her there, home will always be with me," Beech said. "We're going to have those memories together. These are stories we will be able to tell our kids one day."

He also believes Emma's presence will also help his play on the court by having that support by his side along the way.

Although the game of basketball remains the same, there are major factors that differentiate the style of play in Europe compared to the United States.

"It's a huge difference," Beech said. "It's kind of like what you would watch of the NBA in the '90s with a slower pace and much more physical."

Some of the things that promote that approach to play include the three-point line being closer, no defensive three-seconds rule and quarters being 10 minutes compared to 12 in the NBA.

"My first year in Germany, it (physical play) was a big change," Beech said. "Thinking you're getting fouled and doing the right things to create offensive production."

BEECH continues on Page 37

Ponte Vedra YMCA wins basketball world title

By Anthony Richards

Basketball at the Ponte Vedra YMCA is beginning to make a name for itself at the national level after the organization's sixth grade squad won the Amateur Athletic Union Division II world title July 18.

The team traveled to Hampton, Virginia, and compiled a 7-0 record en route to the tournament championship.

In the process, they finished ahead of teams from throughout the nation, including larger cities, such as Philadelphia and Washington D.C.

Ponte Vedra YMCA Sports Director Phil Tensley started the AAU basketball program five years ago with the hopes of one day seeing success.

Although he was not sure the success would come this quickly, it was also not a complete surprise because he could see that the pieces were in place.

"When we started the whole goal was to create a program and let's develop these kids," Tensley said. "There were so many kids out

here playing basketball, and after the first couple of years we kind of saw."

One of the challenges Tensley continues to face is that in the Ponte Vedra area there are so many sports that kids can play.

However, they have seen a growing interest and passion for the game of basketball in recent years, and Tensley expects the national title to only add to that.

"We (Tensley and head coach Antwoin Conerly) are basketball people and when we got kids that understood they were going to focus on basketball, that's where we started to find success and it has just snowballed from there."

According to Conerly, the blueprint for their success is largely due to the fact most of their team have played together for a while, including Tyler Kroog, Austin Bacus and Tyler Speace, who have been with the program since its inception.

"They are the foundation for our entire program," Conerly said.



Photos provided by Jordan DeLoach McEuen

The Ponte Vedra YMCA sixth grade basketball team won the AAU Division II World Championship on July 18.

YMCA continues on Page 37

Mike Smith captures elusive Jacksonville Amateur title

Ponte Vedra Beach resident birdies 15 and 16 for 1-stroke win at Marsh Landing Country Club

After several near misses in the past, Mike Smith of Ponte Vedra Beach got the monkey off his back and won his first Jacksonville Amateur Championship in his 11th try on Saturday, July 24, at Marsh Landing Country Club.

Smith's 209 total (68-69—72) was 7-under par for the three trips around the 6,800-yard Marsh Landing layout.

Coming up one stroke shy at 210 was Japan's Kotaro Murata, whose second- and third-round scores of 68-67 were five better than anyone else in the field. He opened with a 75.

Murata had a 25-foot eagle putt from just off the green on the final hole that came up two feet short.

Four players tied for third with a score of 212 (-4) — Michael Bradham, Charles Collings and first-round leader Osborn Theam, all of Jacksonville, and teenager Aaron Jarvis of Champions Gate.

Another shot back at 213 was the reigning JAGA Match Play champion Mark Spencer, who was one shot off the lead starting the final round.

The Amateur is conducted by the Jacksonville Area Golf Association (JAGA). This was the 60th edition of JAGA's showcase event.

Smith became only the third player in JAGA history to record wins in both the Jacksonville Amateur and Match Play championships, joining Travis Trace and Jordan Batchelor.



Photo provided by JAGA

Mike Smith of Ponte Vedra Beach poses with the trophy after winning the Jacksonville Amateur Championship on Saturday, July 24, at Marsh Landing Country Club.

"I've been chasing this title for 11 years now," the champion said. "I can't tell you how satisfying it is to finally come out on top. It feels really good to know my name will be added to the long list of great champions — many of them friends — who are already on the trophy."

You could say it was Smith's turn to win the Jacksonville Amateur having come so close on several occasions. Two years ago, the James Madison University graduate was runner-up by two shots to Jordan Batchelor at Sawgrass Country Club. Other close calls came in 2015 at San Jose Country Club, 2014 at Marsh Landing and 2011 at Ponte Vedra Inn and Club. In the end, perseverance paved the way in 2021 for the former Nease High School state champion team member.

With three early birdies, the 31-year-old reached 9 under and had a three-shot lead. Playing three groups ahead of the leader, Murata raced out in 32 and caught everyone's attention. History was looking like it might repeat itself when Smith bogeyed Nos. 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14. Smith's spirit was buoyed, however, when he managed to salvage a 6 on the par-5 14th after hitting his tee shot out-of-bounds.

He bounced back with birdies on 15 and 16 and made routine pars on 17 and 18 to become the 60th name engraved on the JAGA Jacksonville Amateur silver trophy.

The championship featured 80 players, with 15 entries accepted from outside JAGA's Northeast Florida footprint. Those 15 hailed from all over Florida, plus Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Ontario, Canada, Argentina and Japan.

Complete Jacksonville Amateur results may be found at jax.bluegolf.com or via www.jaxareagolf.org.

Some details that appeared in Garry Smits' Florida Times-Union recap are used in this press release.

Beech

Continued from 36

According to Beech, at 6-feet-9-inches he is taller than he was coming up through high school and college, which means he is relied upon more to provide a post presence to go with his potent three-point shooting.

The style of play also changes from country to country, like that of conferences in college basketball in the United States.

However, one thing that remains constant is the dependence on all players to knock down shots, even the big men. This is an aspect of play that suits Beech's game perfectly.

"They (coaches) look for all five guys to be shooters on the court," Beech said. "If you can't, you won't be playing."

Although the differences in play were something to adjust to, it was the off-the-court situations that have taken some getting used to, such as dealing with the language barrier daily.

However, life in a foreign country is something Beech has gotten more comfortable with over the years.

"My first year in Germany, I was just winging it," Beech said. "It's such a culture shock."

Now his German has gotten pretty decent and although he may not be able to carry on an entire conversation, he can designate certain words and understand what those around him are saying.

He has been using an app to practice speaking Polish prior to making this year's trip.

Beech remembers being 8 years old and watching his dad, Bud Beech, coach Chet Stachitas at Nease and then following Stachitas as he played college ball at St. Joseph's University and then went over to Europe to play professionally.



Photo provided by Beau Beech

Beau Beech first made the trip over to Europe to play basketball for the Hamburg Towers in Germany in 2018.

"I always wanted to be like Chet, and I've wound up following a similar path," Beech said.

That path will now include playing in Poland, which is also a stop Stachitas made in his pro career.

"For anybody that wants to play basketball at the next level, all it is is work," Beech said. "I've known what I wanted to do since I was 8 years old. If it's something you really love, go after it."

YMCA

Continued from 36

Kroog was injured but made the trip with the team and was able to get on the floor in the last 13 seconds of the championship contest.

"He was ecstatic," Conerly said. "We have a tight nit family going here, and these players love each other."

Others on the teams were Kru McEuen, Nolan Nelson, Brenton James, Isreal Hayward and Na'Vanti Soule.

"A lot of our guys are high I.Q. guys, so they understand the game and we can easily implement what we're trying to teach them," Tinsley said.

One of the most impressive things about the Ponte Vedra YMCA's run to a world title is that they are often smaller than their opponent.

However, they were able to overcome the height disadvantage by playing a team game that specializes in involving all five players on the court by using a motion offense approach that relies on players moving without the ball to help setup scoring opportunities.

"We definitely have a great system in place," Conerly said. "Pretty much after every game, the opposing coach is like 'you guys move the ball so well and they are so unselfish.' That's exactly what we're trying to teach. We want unselfish basketball because anybody can have a great game any game."

Although some AAU teams recruit and reach out for players from outside their area, every player on the Ponte Vedra squad was from St. Johns County.

The team played 11 tournaments over a three-to-four-month span during the regular season.

"That's an insane amount, and we're actually second guessing doing that again next year," Conerly said.

However, one of the advantages of playing that many games is that the group had experienced just about every scenario.

"We were battle tested," Conerly said. "We had lost on a buzzer beater and won on a buzzer beater. We played just about every team in Florida and were perfectly prepared."

The YMCA's third grade AAU team, who Tinsley coached, won their respective state title in May.

According to Tinsley, that third grade success is key to making sure the program maintains moving forward.

"We're trying to get our foundation strong, so that we can build that next group coming up," Tinsley said.

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