

Your Community Voice for 50 Years

PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

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PonteVedraRecorder.com

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

'Tis the Season!



The most wonderful time of the year has arrived, and local residents are celebrating in numerous ways. Pictured here are: the Christmas tree at TPC Sawgrass, a Deck The Chairs display and images from St. Augustine's Nights of Lights and its annual Christmas Parade. Inside this issue, you will find an expert's Christmas tree tips and photos from the link's Holiday Open House and the St. Augustine parade.

Photos by Kristin Flanagan, Anthony Richards and Shaun Ryan



INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

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



Santa Paws Pet Section

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Business Weekly

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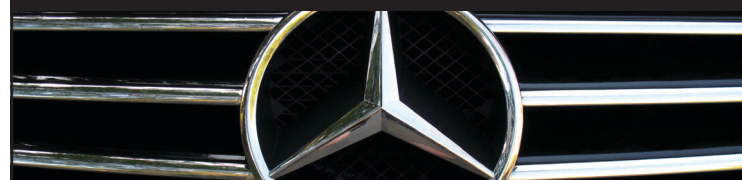
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One of Us

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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. If you have hard copies of photos you want us to feature, feel free to bring them to our office — we'll scan them and hand them right back. E-mail submissions to news@pontevedrarecorder.com or bring them by our office at **1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach.**



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

Plus, find the Recorder on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder

ADOPT A PET

Starlight

Hello. My name is Starlight. I am a 3-year-old Siamese female. I'm a little shy, but I warm up fast. I have beautiful blue eyes and love to beg for rubs, as you can see in the photo. I'm learning about toys. But one thing's for sure: I love to be petted and nudge up against you. I'm a quiet girl, but you can pick me up for just a small while because I feel safest back in my cage. But soon, I would feel more safe in the arms of my "forever" human. Let me bring some starlight into the long winter nights.



Julep



Hi, I'm Julep. I'm a 4-year-old female mix breed. I was found as a stray and am now ready to find my new "forever" home. I love to go on walks and play with toys, and I am super friendly. If you are looking to add a new pet to your family, stop by the Pet Center for a meet-and-greet with me.

St. Johns County Pet Center

Cat adoptions at the St. Johns County Pet Center 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 off U.S. 1 between County Road 210 and International Golf Parkway. Business hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. 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, call the **St. Johns County Pet Center at (904) 209-6190.**

BRIEFS

Public meeting set for South Ponte Vedra dune project

St. Johns County is hosting a town hall meeting to discuss the South Ponte Vedra One-Time Dune Restoration Project. Residents and property owners will have an opportunity to ask questions about the project and provide feedback to county staff.

The meeting will be at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 13, in the County Auditorium, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine.

For further information, go to sjcfl.us/coastalprojects/SPVBR.aspx.

Utility work to affect traffic at S.R. 16-I-95 Intersection

The state Department of Transportation is improving the intersection of State Road 16 and Interstate 95, which requires relocating existing utilities for the upcoming construction project.

Utility lines will be installed along the north side of the service road in front of Taco Bell and Discount Tire, which may impact traffic in this area.

Work began Monday, Dec. 6. Traffic is being shifted for 90 days to allow utility work adjacent to the road. Lane closures are not anticipated, but there may be temporary delays near the work area to unload materials for the construction project.

For further information, call 904-209-2700.

Community Hospice plans virtual programs

Community Hospice & Palliative Care is hosting free virtual support and educational sessions in December.

- Hope for The Holidays (virtual), noon to 1 p.m. Dec. 9 and 6-7 p.m. Dec. 14

The holiday season can be challenging for those grieving the death of a loved one.

Community Hospice & Palliative Care offers Hope for the Holidays, a workshop that helps attendees learn ways to cope with grief during the holiday season. Call 904-407-7001 to register.

- Advance Care Planning Winter Series (virtual), 9-10 a.m. Dec. 15

Participants will learn about advance directives, advance-care planning and what goes into creating a living will and health care surrogate. Email jbuller@community-hospice.com for more information.

Democratic Club plans holiday party

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club and the St. Johns County Democratic Party are planning a holiday party for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 17 in the dining room at Christ Episcopal Church; 400 San Juan Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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8	7	1	6	9	4	3	2	5
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THE PLAYERS Championship launches two fundraising programs

THE PLAYERS Championship has announced two charitable programs that will support the fundraising goals of non-profit organizations in the five-county area (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns).

Registration for charities interested in participating in the Chip In For Charity and Birdies for Charity programs began on Wednesday, Dec. 1, and both programs launch on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

“It’s embedded in our mission statement to serve and support the community where we host this championship, so we are excited to bring back both of these programs that will raise funds for local organizations committed to improving lives throughout Northeast Florida,” said Jared Rice, executive director of THE PLAYERS.

Chip In For Charity

THE PLAYERS has reformatted its Chip

In For Youth program by expanding the list of local charities eligible to participate to all those that fall within one of THE PLAYERS’ key charitable pillars – youth services, education, character development, health, wellness and sports and military support.

The new program, Chip In For Charity, will allow participating organizations to receive \$40 from every competition round ticket purchased in their name under the program, while supplies last.

How it works:

- Charities interested in participating can register at theplayerschipinforcharity.com.
- Charities approved to participate will receive a unique ticketing code to distribute to their supporters.
- Starting Dec. 15 and running through Feb. 25, each charity’s supporters can use

the unique code to purchase tickets to THE PLAYERS at THEPLAYERS.com/tickets in their name under the program. Each guest will be allowed to purchase up to four Stadium Passes per day, per account.

Birdies for Charity

The Birdies for Charity campaign is returning and will once again give local charities the chance to raise money by inviting fans to make a donation to the charity and guess how many birdies will be made during THE PLAYERS 2022.

Upon completion of the championship, the individual who successfully guesses the exact number of birdies (or closest thereto)

will be awarded a grand prize of \$10,000.

In addition, THE PLAYERS will provide a \$150,000 bonus pool, giving eligible charities the chance to receive additional funds.

More details are available at birdiesforcharity.playerschampionship.com.

Registration is open now, and charities approved to participate can collect donations from Dec. 15 to 5 p.m. March 9.

For charities that have additional questions about both programs, contact Marjorie Dennis, THE PLAYERS’ community relations manager, at marjoriedennis@pgatourhq.com.

Briefs

Continued from 2

Among the candidates expected to offer remarks are Donna Deegan, who is running for mayor of Jacksonville; Trish Becker, who is running for a Mosquito Control seat and others.

For tickets, go to eventbrite.com/e/ponte-vedra-democratic-club-holiday-party-tickets-207940675157.

‘St. Augustine Tonight Show’ announces fifth season

“St. Augustine Tonight Show” tickets are now available on the First Coast.TV website. The “St. Augustine Tonight Show” will roll out its fifth season, Jan. 11 through April 5, at the Lincolnville Museum & Cultural Center (second floor), 102 M.L. King Ave., St. Augustine. The show is presented live every Tuesday night at 7 p.m. There will be parking and a cash bar. Tickets are available online and, on a space-available basis, at the door.

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South Jax Beach Oceanfront

Classic elegance in highly desired South Jax Beach! One of the original cottages that has been completely restored with natural light in the main living space and a guest suite that opens onto the oceanfront lanai. Owners Suite has expansive views of the ocean from the balcony.

5 Bedrooms, 4 Bathrooms \$3,455,000



Stunning Riverfront Estate

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

5 Bedroom, 6 Bathrooms, 5 Half Bathrooms \$6,200,000



Luxury Marabella Condo

Don't miss the rare opportunity to live in the most exclusive luxury condominium in NE Florida. This 9th Floor oceanfront condo is unrivaled with its breathtaking water, sunrise, AND sunset views. \$1,460 sq. ft. of terraces on 3 sides, open floor plan, and too many upgrades to list. These don't come on the market very often and this one won't last long.

4 Bedrooms, 4 Full Baths, 1 Half Bath. \$3,300,000.



Ponte Vedra Boulevard

An idyllic home in Old Ponte Vedra just steps from the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club across from the ocean on the Boulevard. The 3,300 sq. ft. residence is one of the last originals and sits on .54 acres on hole #3 of The Ocean Course. Huge front and back yards, circular paved driveway, and a separate guest suite. The possibilities are endless!

Main House: 5 Bedrooms, 4 Bathrooms
Guest Suite: 1 Bedroom, 2 Baths. \$4,415,400



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“From Cottages to Castles”



Atlantic Beach Townhouse

Don't miss this chance to live in the highly-coveted Atlantic Beach community only 2 blocks from the ocean and 2 miles from Beaches Town Center! Tucked away in the lush, tropical, Florida foliage, this 1,489 sq ft townhome is like living in a moder tree house, and just a short walk or bike ride to the sparkling Atlantic! The seller recently completed a full makeover including new exterior and interior paint, rebuild of all decking, new carpet in bedrooms and new garage door.

2 Bedrooms, 2 Baths \$700,000.



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A look inside the world of LuxGiftsnGoods.com



Michael J. Mills

An interview with Michael J. Mills, CEO and Founder of LuxGiftsnGoods.com

Ponte Vedra Recorder: What makes LuxGiftsnGoods.com different from the competition?

LuxGiftsnGoods.com: We have over 5,000 unique gifts for women, men, pets, home goods, jewelry, wellness and gourmet food items that most of our vendors prohibit selling on third party websites such as Amazon and ebay. More unique products that are not so easily or readily available combined with stellar, customer service make for a more special, retail purchase experience. I want someone shopping on LuxGiftsnGoods.com to always find something that is a surprise for them in a unique product that they have not seen before.

PVR: What was your inspiration to start LuxGiftsnGoods.com?

LuxGiftsnGoods.com: I had been an ebay power seller, but I had also desired to do something above and beyond. I have been fortunate to travel to 44 countries and 35 states, and I wanted to bring the best of what I have seen at home and abroad to our online offerings. We feature a handmade, olive wood box with premium olive oil from Karvelas Farms on Evia Island, Greece. That is perhaps our most unique and luxurious item.

PVR: How do you find unique gifts and products for LuxGiftsnGoods.com?

LuxGiftsnGoods.com: I attended the larger trade shows in New York, Atlanta, Dallas and Las Vegas. Now, a number of wholesale vendors are seeking out LuxGiftsnGoods.com given that we now have a five-year history and a large social media presence on the major social media sites.

PVR: What has been your biggest challenge growing LuxGiftsnGoods.com?

LuxGiftsnGoods.com: Having potential e-commerce customers find LuxGiftsnGoods.com has taken some time, and we continue to work daily to get the word out about all we are doing and offering. Now, having vendors be able to ship the product timely given the interruptions in supply chains due to the pandemic has been our biggest challenge. Customer education and communication are key. Many people are willing to wait for something truly special, but they also need to know that you are working diligently to get what is desired for them.

PVR: What are your short- and long-term goals for LuxGiftsnGoods.com?

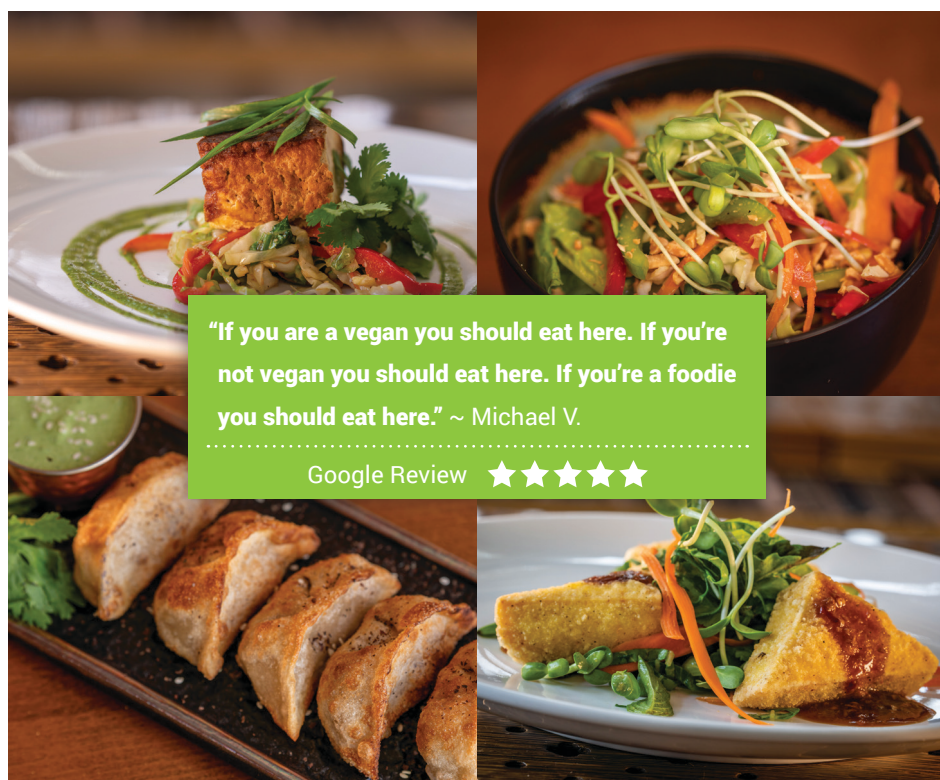
LuxGiftsnGoods.com: Obviously, we want to obtain as many new and loyal customers as we can over the next years. Eventually, I would like to relinquish the reins of LuxGiftsnGoods.com to a successor person or entity who can get it to the next level. I would also like to have an Asian and European version as what is considered luxurious can often be cultural or regional. It would be a lot of fun for me to also host a show on QVC or HSN that showcases the many unique LuxGiftsnGoods.com vendors who are accomplished in their own right. Many have great senses of humor and stories to share along with their wonderfully designed, high quality, unique products. Having a large cash infusion would assist in making this happen, but I am proud that LuxGiftsnGoods.com is debt-free. We have grown as we go where other companies would have borrowed a bunch of money and folded due to pandemic-related issues with supply chain shortages. This has unfortunately happened to a number of my vendors. The wholesalers that have survived this pandemic are stronger for having done so.

PVR: Why did you move yourself and your company to Florida?

LuxGiftsnGoods.com: I moved myself to Florida from Nashville, Tennessee because Florida is a great state for entrepreneurs with tremendous opportunity for growth. I also like the business climate and actual climate in northeast Florida. What is not to love about the whole strand of sand from Fernandina Beach to St. Augustine? I never get tired of exploring! As for my company, we are everywhere as we are pure e-commerce shipping our offerings from manufacturer direct to our individual and corporate customers within the U.S.

PVR: What is your hope for 2022?

LuxGiftsnGoods.com: I wish all to normalize in pricing, shipping and currency exchange. I am always on the lookout for unique, reliable, well-crafted and innovative products and hope to continue to find them as technology advances and supply chains normalize. As for myself and my company LuxGiftsnGoods.com, we want to make it through the next years and beyond with greater sales while winning many new friends and customers and raving fans along the way.



"If you are a vegan you should eat here. If you're not vegan you should eat here. If you're a foodie you should eat here." ~ Michael V.

Google Review ★★★★★

Hakka Kitchen, a new gourmet restaurant from The House of Leaf and Bean, offers Plant-based Chinese countryside cuisine made from fresh, organic ingredients paired with hand-picked teas and fine wines. Dining experience curated by Chef Marshall Ziehm.

904-379-1291
14474 Beach Blvd
Jacksonville, FL 32250
(Near San Pablo Blvd)



LoveHakkaKitchen.Com

Tips for picking the perfect Christmas tree



Feeling the branches of a Christmas tree will offer an idea of a tree's health. Needles coming off in your hand is not a good sign.



Photos by Anthony Richards
Jennifer Sacks and Adelyn Sacks browse a local Christmas tree lot looking for the perfect tree.

By Anthony Richards

What makes the perfect Christmas tree?

In fact, there are several things to consider before making a final decision.

According to Pam Johnson of Johnson Holler Trees, one of the first things to do is to feel a tree's branches.

"If the needles are falling out in your hand, it's not a good sign," Johnson said.

Another thing to look for when showing up at a Christmas tree lot is to see if the base of the trees displayed have been placed in water.

Johnson said this is important because water helps the tree from drying out and prevents it from dying as quick as it would out of the water.

"If you keep it in water, it will last a couple of months," Johnson said.

Although most people do not keep their Christmas tree past the early part of January, Johnson's statement proves the impact water can have on the life of a tree.

Putting the tree in water once it gets set up at home is also a valuable step in making sure the tree looks the part through the Christmas holiday.

"Many people will put water in at first, but then forget to keep adding more as time goes," Johnson said.

In many ways, it is just like watering any other plants around the house and should be ideally watered daily.

Johnson had an array of tree sizes from tall ones to the shorter variety perfect for a tabletop arrangement.

However, she stressed the importance of knowing where the tree will go once it gets home. Having a plan before even going to the tree lot includes measuring the room and the space where the tree will sit.

Then, once you arrive at the lot make sure to measure the height and width of the tree to make sure it will match the designated area.

Johnson has heard of many instances where a family brings a tree home only to find out that it is too tall or too tight of a fit in the chosen space.

Doing the proper homework ahead of time can eliminate such unwanted surprises.

"Measure before you buy," Johnson said.

Another question Johnson is often asked pertains to the use of preservatives added to the tree's water and whether it is a necessary step.

According to Johnson, a study done by North Carolina State University found that there was no benefit from adding preservatives, and in some cases proved to be harmful to the tree.

She is a past president of the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association and is part of a fourth generation of Christmas tree farmers in the mountains of North Carolina.

The family has been bringing North Carolina Fraser firs down to Ponte Vedra for the past five years but has also been in Jacksonville Beach for about 15 years.



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Lorena Inclan took over as St. Johns County's director of public affairs in the summer. She has brought a unique perspective to the position after spending 11 years as a news anchor and reporter. Informing people is still something she strives to do in her current role, but now she is telling the county's story and helping inform the residents of its vision and the steps being taken to achieve it.

Lorena Inclan

As told to Anthony Richards

Tell us a little about yourself and your background?

I'm originally from Miami and I'm a first-generation American in my family as the daughter of Cuban immigrants. I've called Northeast Florida home since 2012.

Before joining St. Johns County government, you may have seen me on your TV.

For more than eight years, I worked as a news anchor and reporter for CBS47 and FOX30 Action News Jax, and before that, I worked in Spanish-language news in Orlando and the Texas panhandle.

What is your role with the county, and how long have you been in that position?

I'm the director of public affairs for St. Johns County and have been serving in this role since June.

How has the transition been since stepping into your current role?

It's been exciting! I believe that change is good. When I decided to step away from my successful journalism career, I knew I was ready for something different and challenging yet rewarding.

It was a blessing to be selected to lead the Office of Public Affairs for St. Johns County. Our county is growing, and our communications strategy is adapting along with it.

I spent 11 years telling stories; this time, I have the unique opportunity to tell the county's story.

While my new role is outside of the newsroom, I still use the skills I learned as a journalist to gather accurate information to help the public understand how their local government works.

What do you enjoy most about the job?

I'm a people person, so I enjoy interacting with the community and understanding their needs, which helps us develop ways to enhance our message in a rapidly changing media and technology landscape.

I also really enjoy the creative side of my job. As a communications professional, it's my job to figure out the best way to reach our intended audience.

Nowadays, there are so many ways to do that, but it all starts with understanding your audience and meeting them where they are.

A solid public affairs approach is crucial to local governments. I get a lot of satisfaction when someone tells me that the information I shared helped them make a decision or helped them understand a complex issue.

My goal was to inform when I was a journalist, and it remains my goal now as a public affairs director.

How is St. Johns County unique from other places you've been?

St. Johns County is so diverse. We have a robust agricultural community, a thriving tourism industry, 42 miles of coastline and 200 years of history as a county.

In fact, on July 21, St. Johns County celebrated the 200th anniversary of its founding. It was the first county,



Photo courtesy of Lorena Inclan

Lorena Inclan began her role as Director of Public Affairs for St. Johns County in June.

along with Escambia, established in Florida in 1821. You can't get more unique than that!

What do you enjoy most about living in the North Florida area?

Of course, the weather but, more importantly, the sense of community we have here. We have some extraordinary people doing amazing things for our community. I've been blessed to witness and document some of the inspir-

ing work happening in our area over the years.

What do you like to do in your free time?

There are so many fun things to do in Northeast Florida. I love exploring the local arts scene, going to festivals, shows and concerts in my free time.

My husband and I also love exploring new places, so whenever we have the opportunity, we like to travel to a place we've never been.



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OBITUARIES



Emery H. Clance

Emery H Clance, 72, devoted husband, father, son, brother, friend, colleague, avid golfer, and cyclist transitioned from his earthly life into the arms of Jesus at home surrounded by loved ones on November 19, 2021, after a valiant fight against pancreatic cancer.

Emery H. Clance

Emery is survived by his wife, Jean, of 51 years; his brother, Dr. Keith Clance of Greensboro, NC; daughter and son-in-law Allison and Kevin Volpe of Garland, TX; son, Kenneth Clance of Jacksonville Beach, FL; sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law Kaye and Stan Stephens, Beth and Reggie Touchton, Jim Royal and Jan Clance; his aunt Judith Clance Lynch of Yulee, FL; his uncle, Ben Clance of Jacksonville, FL; many nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was predeceased by his mother, Elizabeth Johnson, and father Ernest Edward Clance, Jr.

Emery was a wonderful human with a caring, loving spirit. He was born in Jacksonville, FL and graduated in 1967 from Ribault High School. Emery began his career in the industrial distribution industry in Jacksonville, FL in 1971. His career took him and his family to New Orleans, LA; Dallas, TX; Savannah, GA and back to Jacksonville, FL where he retired in 2014 after 42 years with Motion Industries. He and Jean opened Tim's Wine Market in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL where he shared his love for wine.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, December 18, 2021, at 11:00 am at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, 700 San Juan Avenue, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to the Lustgarten Foundation, Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, Mayo Clinic, Christ Episcopal Church, or Community Hospice and Palliative Care. Please visit the online Tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com.

Arrangements by



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Holiday open house at the link

The link held its holiday open house on Dec. 1 to coincide with its Wine Down Wednesday event. Members of the public had an opportunity to learn more about the facility, which opened last summer, and meet the team while enjoying a glass of wine and live music.

The link, located at 425 Town Plaza Ave. in Nocatee, is a co-working space and community asset that frequently hosts public events. Upcoming holiday fun includes a gingerbread house competition on Saturday, Dec. 11, and a holiday party on Dec. 18.

For further information, go to thelink.zone.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Cheri Watterson and Kim Cuyler attend the link's holiday open house.



Dr. Dan Kuckel performs live music during the link's holiday open house on Dec. 1.



A whimsical holiday tree at the link.

Raise your hand if you've ever had shoulder pain.

5 symptoms you shouldn't ignore

If you have shoulder pain, even raising your hand can hurt. How do you know when it's time to see a doctor?

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, you could be making your shoulder worse by waiting:

1. Clicking or popping in the shoulder joint
2. Persistent pain that intensifies with use
3. Pain that keeps you from sleeping or awakens you
4. Stiffness and inability to lift your arm over your head
5. Numbness, tingling or burning sensation

Jacksonville Orthopaedic Institute physicians are shoulder pain specialists, offering pain management, physical therapy, non-invasive and minimally invasive procedures.

If more advanced treatment is needed, we offer innovative new options that could speed your recovery and help you get back to doing the things you love.

Why live with shoulder pain?

Orthopedic surgeons are conveniently located here at Baptist Beaches, 1350 13th Avenue South, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250.

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Record crowd attends Nocatee Chanukah celebration

A record crowd of more than 1,200 joined in the holiday spirit and gathered for a community-wide Chanukah celebration at Nocatee Spray Park Nov. 30.

The event was held on the third night of the eight days that make up the Chanukah holiday.

The gathering, organized by Chabad of St. Johns County, featured a glowing menorah lighting ceremony and a dramatic helicopter “gelt” drop, in which thousands of chocolate Chanukah coins, known in Yiddish as gelt, rained down from a helicopter, taking the festivities to new heights.

Participants sang and danced to Chanukah-themed music and enjoyed traditional Chanukah foods, including latkes and sufganiyot. Gili’s Kosher Food Truck joined to complete the festivities as well, so families could order a Kosher dinner.

After the thousands of chocolate coins rained down in a spectacular shimmering shower, the entire crowd of children rushed to collect their chocolate treasures.

The evening commenced with an adorable sing-along performance by children from GROW, a local Jewish afterschool program that takes place in St. Johns County and Nocatee.

The evening was addressed by Mendel Sharfstein, Rabbi at Chabad of St. Johns County, as well as St. Johns County Clerk



Rabbi Mendel Sharfstein, co-director of Chabad of St. Johns County, lights the menorah during the Chanukah celebration.

Brandon Patty and Commander Scott Beaver from the Sheriff’s Office, who brought holiday greetings on behalf of the county.

The distribution of gelt is a more than 2,000-year-old custom, designed to reward children for exemplary behavior as well as educate them to give charity. A more contemporary version of giving gelt evolved into chocolate coins in foil wrapping.

“This was the perfect way to bring the well-known Jewish holiday of Chanukah to a whole new level and get the entire family involved,” said Dini Sharfstein,

youth director at Chabad of St. Johns County. “The St. Johns community Chanukah celebration at Nocatee Spray Park is a fun and entertaining family-oriented event where everyone can come and celebrate Chanukah.”

The menorah lighting and Chanukah festivities were part of the worldwide Chanukah campaign, an annual initiative launched by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory.

The campaign highlights and encourages the central theme of the holiday by publicizing the Chanukah miracle.

“The message of Chanukah is the

message of light; a small amount of light dispels a lot of darkness,” said Rabbi Mendel Sharfstein, co-director of Chabad of St. Johns County. “Our job is to be lamplighters. We must all add in our spreading of light and warmth to our families, communities and the world at large through doing more acts of goodness and kindness.”

For more information about Chabad the programs they have in place go to JewishSJohsCounty.com or [facebook.com/JewishStJohnsCounty](https://www.facebook.com/JewishStJohnsCounty) or call the center at 904-701-4422 or email info@JewishSJohsCounty.com.



Photos courtesy of Chabad of St. Johns County

Children from GROW, a local Jewish afterschool program, sing on stage.



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Nease NJROTC sweeps 3 straight Georgia drill championships

In the world of NJROTC drill competitions, most schools compete in two to four per season, typically spaced a month or two apart in order to fully prepare. However, with COVID impacts affecting drill meet schedules across both Georgia and Florida, 2021 proved to be an atypical year.

As a result, Nease Navy JROTC's varsity drill team competed in three sanctioned drill meets in 22 days, bringing home top honors each time.

Nease's drill team captured three Georgia-sanctioned drill meet championships in Marietta, Leesburg and Lithonia on Oct. 23 and 30 and Nov. 13, topping 37 schools along the way.

Of the 39 first place trophies at the combined three competitions, Nease took home top honors in 31 categories.

"Three major drill meets in four weeks was an incredible challenge for the team," said unarmed basic drill commander Kaitlyn Boggs. "These championships reflect a total team effort."

In addition to the team event trophies, 24 cadets took home individual medals for exceptional performance in academics or athletics, including noteworthy stand-outs Emmelie Neff, first place sit-ups; Ben Prohofsky, first place academics; Caden Byas and Brodie Mongon, four medals; Kaitlyn Boggs, Danielle Cama-

cho, Nicholas Gallego, Isabella Rivera, Neff and Prohofsky, three medals.

"We've got several areas where we need to focus and improve if we hope to win the state championship again this year," said cadet Daniel Mahoney, commander of the armed exhibition team. "But our team chemistry is better right now than it's ever been."

Nease next competes at the Mandarin Drill Meet on Jan. 8.

Nease's drill team finished third at the Navy National Academic, Athletic and Drill Championships in 2021.



Photos provided by Nease NJROTC

Nease NJROTC celebrates winning the Lee County drill meet on Oct. 30 in Leesburg, Georgia.



The armed exhibition drill team performs during the Sprayberry drill meet on Oct. 23 in Marietta, Georgia.



Cadet Ensign Ben Prohofsky accepts the first-place team academics trophy at the Lee County drill meet on Oct. 30. Prohofsky claimed top academic honors at two of the three competitions.

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St. Augustine Christmas Parade

The main thoroughfares through the Nation's Oldest City were jammed with spectators Saturday, Dec. 4, for the annual Christmas parade. Where else can you see the Grinch, Santa, Darth Vader, pirates and a stilt-walker all in once place? Here are a few images from the parade. For more, go to pontevedrarecorder.com.

Photos by Shaun Ryan




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Photos provided by Bonnie Hayflick and Pawsitive Healing Veterinary Rehabilitation and Acupuncture



Dr. Carla Rodrigues, left, and Ingravity Art vendors at the Artisans Market fundraiser for Celestial Farms.



Dr. Carla Rodrigues, left, and Old Colony Woodwork vendors at the Artisans Market fundraiser for Celestial Farms.



Dr. Carla Rodrigues, second from left, and vendors at the Artisans Market fundraiser for Celestial Farms.

Pawsitive Healing event raises \$1,000 for Celestial Farms

Carla Rodrigues, veterinarian and owner of Pawsitive Healing, Veterinary Rehabilitation and Acupuncture in Jacksonville, hosted the second annual local Artisan Market fundraiser with local artists who displayed and sold a variety of handmade, creative and locally produced merchandise to benefit Celestial Farms, a not-for-profit farm animal rescue and educational center located in Jacksonville.

Rodrigues, patrons and artists contributed to the \$1,000 donation, including Eleanor Crosby, artist and owner of Field

Edge Farm Art Gallery; Melissa Elphick, owner of Petite Pedestals with home décor; David Priest, woodworker and owner of Old Colony Woodworks; Jade Paws canine massage and animal reiki; Piedad Camacho, plant fiber artist and owner of The Art of Handmade Figue; Milena Carolina Centeno de Samon, baker and owner of Universal Flavors, Hawk and the Hare Woodworks and Ingravity Art photography portraits.

The event was held Sunday, Nov. 14, at the veterinary practice at 1617 Thacker Ave. in the San Marco neighborhood of

Jacksonville. The event was open to the public and free of charge and attracted pets and pet owners along with local residents and visitors.

Rodrigues regularly holds events and activities as her philanthropy to benefit pets and people in need throughout Northeast Florida. Last year, Rodrigues hosted her first artisan market and donated \$800 to benefit the Jacksonville Humane Society.

“Our philanthropic programs are just some of the activities we have in place and examples of the service culture

throughout the history of the veterinary practice,” said Rodrigues. “Our mission is to serve and give back to pets, pet owners and local communities through providing extraordinary care. I believe in service through actions and charitable deeds, and where we all can touch and improve the lives of many who are not so fortunate. In our social purpose efforts, what we do and who we are, will always be joined together.”

For further information, go to pawsitivehealingvet.com.

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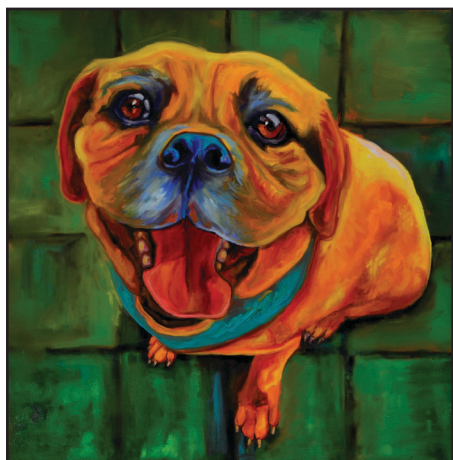
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Beloved pets among successful artist's subjects

Gazing upon the works of artist Mary Joan Hinson, one wants to ask: How did she develop her talent? How did she learn to do this?

Hinson took painting lessons as a small child, developing a love of oils and the unique pigments they offered. Her early teachers gave her an appreciation of art, often asking her to create class presentations.

"Ms. Breslin gave me countless sheets of colored construction paper, which I used into my high school years!" Hinson



"Odie" uses vibrant colors and active paint strokes to depict a beloved rescue dog. This piece won an award in a national pet portrait competition.

said, speaking of her fifth-grade teacher, Alma Breslin.

Hinson continued her studies into adulthood in the United States, Europe and the Far East, immersing herself in the cultures and the stimulation they provided.

Studying in Europe, with the work of masters such as Botticelli and Michelangelo in close gaze, opened her eyes to the importance of technique and craftsmanship.

After returning to the United States, she became a professor of fine arts and humanities at Florida State College at Jacksonville, where the same learned qualities of technique and craftsmanship were taught.

In 2005, she received her Ph.D. and continued to teach and exhibit throughout the eastern United States. 2020 brought a change, however, when she decided to focus solely on her artistic endeavors, and since has produced large-scale murals on the NAS Navy base and in the neighborhood of St. Nicholas. She also had a solo exhibition at the Goodyear Cottage of the Jekyll Island Resort, the Beaches Fine Arts Series and the Jacksonville International Airport Haskell Gallery.

Her love of animals began as a small child, as she always raised a hand to



Artist Mary Joan Hinson painted this portrait of Bentley, a client's beloved pet.



Photos provided by Mary Joan Hinson

This portrait portrays a cherished gelding, Bismarck, which artist Mary Joan Hinson rode to many championships. Graphite on paper. 22-by-30 inches

volunteer to take care of the classroom hamster! With that said, drawing and painting animals was a natural outpouring of a caring established early on.

Every work is approached as engaging with something very precious; emotions and memories become introspective reflections of a time passed. The drawings are slow and labored, approached with a delicate touch in the knowledge that she is dealing with a cherished pet. The paintings are a bit freer, and she allows the

paint to tell the story of inner strength, loyalty and love.

Hinson accepts commissions for studio work and murals. She may be contacted at 904-315-2777 or brushandoil@gmail.com.

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St. Johns County Announces First-Ever Community Branding Initiative

St. Johns County officials have announced an upcoming branding effort to reflect the diverse and growing county.

This research-driven, countywide initiative will provide an opportunity for local residents to give their input through focus groups and online participation to ensure the new brand represents St. Johns County's unique history, diversity and experiences. The branding initiative will help St. Johns County promote itself as a premier location to live, work and visit.

Focus groups have limited seating, and advance registration is required to participate. Those interested in participating should register by contacting Tera Meeks at tmeeks@sjctdc.com or 904-209-4428.

Registration will be first-come, first-

served. Due to limited capacity, each person will only be registered to attend one focus group meeting. Registration requests will be accepted until 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 15. The following focus group opportunities are available:

• **Tourism-Based Business Focus Group**

Who: Accommodations, attractions, restaurants and other tourism-based businesses

When: 9-10:30 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 16

Where: St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine

• **SJC Resident Focus Group**

Who: Interested St. Johns County residents

When: 3-4 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 16
Where: St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine

• **Local Business Focus Group**

Who: Professional, industrial, retail and other non-tourism based businesses

When: 9-10:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 17

Where: St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine

To be part of this venture, go to brandingsjc.com and share your favorite story or memory of St. Johns County. If you prefer to let pictures tell your story, post one (or a few) of you, your family and friends at a favorite St. Johns County location. Post both stories and pictures on Instagram using #ShareYourSJC. Your photos might even be used in a social media campaign associated with the roll-out of the new brand.

Catullo's Italian Restaurant coming soon to Nocatee

Catullo's Italian Restaurant has announced the anticipated opening in late 2022 of its second location, which will be in the Nocatee Town Center.

This full-service restaurant is known for its fresh pasta and authentic Italian dishes. It will be located between Luxury Nail Spa and Palm Leaf Dental, in the shopping center anchored by Northeast Florida's largest Publix Supermarket.

The first Catullo's location was opened in February 2019 in Jacksonville's San Pablo area by brothers Carl and Dave Catullo. Menu offerings include gourmet pasta dishes, fresh seafood and Italian classics in addition to desserts such as limoncello mascarpone cake and pistachio ricotta cake. Fresh, made-from-scratch ingredients are used for authenticity and quality.

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'A first for Nocatee'

Coastal Wine Market hosts red-carpet gala to mark wine label launch

By Jennifer Logue

A taste of Hollywood glamor came to Nocatee last week, when Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room hosted a red-carpet gala to celebrate the launch of its first exclusive wine label.

Held Dec. 4, the black tie-optional event was attended by more than 50 guests – many of them devoted Coastal Wine customers – who came to congratulate

late owners Steve and Shaun Lourie on the launch of Stone to Crystal, a 2016 Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon. As guests walked the red carpet in tuxedos and evening gowns, many expressed their happiness for the Louries and the success they have achieved with Coastal Wine Market.

"I want to tell Steve and Shaun 'I knew you when,'" said Kelly Hofelt, who at-

tended the gala with her husband, Dan.

Kim Tokarz and Amber Roach said they have been coming to Coastal Wine Market since the shop opened. "We're 'the regulars,'" Roach quipped. "We're really happy for them!"

Stewart Moore, meanwhile, joked, "Steve, you're the only man I would wear a suit for!"

That type of customer loyalty and support, Steve Lourie said, made the gala event possible.

"The people here (in Nocatee) have been so supportive of us," he said. "It's such a great crowd."

Clad in a tuxedo, Lourie said the idea for the wine label began about a year ago when Bryan Page of Napa-based Page Wine Cellars suggested it.

"The idea of creating a wine just really fit in with our vision," he said.

The name of the wine, Lourie said, refers to the focal piece of Coastal Wine's

COASTAL continues on Page 18



Photos by Jennifer Logue

Coastal Wine Market owners Shaun and Steve Lourie celebrate the launch of their Stone to Crystal cabernet sauvignon at the red-carpet gala.



Kim Tokarz and Amber Roach, Nocatee



Coastal Wine Market General Manager John Maiocco and Tony Tirello of Aspect Wines

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Lisa Barton Team hosts annual party

The Lisa Barton Team hosted their annual Customer Appreciation Party in November to celebrate a record-breaking year. This event was hosted at Fantasy Farms, a fun, eclectic event space full of old Florida charm and a variety of animals such as lemurs, cockatoos and a horse. John Austill was on hand, playing a variety of favorites on the guitar. Those who attended say it was such a lovely evening, filled with great friends, delicious food, and thankful hearts for an extraordinary year.



The party was held at Fantasy Farms, a fun, eclectic event space. The team included Tonya O'Quinn, Lisa Barton, Marsha Keller and Sean Muserallo.



Photo by Rebecca Olson
Coastal Wine owners Shaun and Steve Lourie celebrate their new brand.

Coastal

Continued from 17

recently expanded space: a 2,000-crystal chandelier representing intertwining grapevines custom-designed by Oregon artist Jonquil LeMaster, who traveled to Ponte Vedra to attend the gala.

“The name not only refers to the chandelier and to our space – which features exposed brick and stone – but also to the growth of our business,” Lourie said.

In addition to a tasting of Stone to Crystal, guests enjoyed complimentary pours of numerous other wines presented by certified sommeliers from some of Coastal Wine’s partners. Coastal Wine chefs James Wargo and Tim Smith, meanwhile, presented a menu of gourmet hors d’oeuvres that included filet and lobster skewers, veal-stuffed mushrooms with ricotta, tuna tartare, goat cheese and fig crostini, crab cakes with caviar and more.

As guests sampled the wines and culinary delights beneath the sparkling chandelier, Lourie once again thanked the Nocatee community for the support that enabled Coastal Wine to host such an event.

“We feel like this is a first for Nocatee: to have an exclusive wine based here,” he said. “As small business owners and local residents, we are just thrilled.”

Contributed photos



Dylan Hewlett and Joey Stewart stand by to serve beverages to those attending the party.



A colorful peacock wanted to get into the fun at the Lisa Barton Team’s annual Customer Appreciation Party.



John Austill entertained, playing a variety of favorites on the guitar.

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In the Arts



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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Artists create jewelry based on Bridge of Lions

By Shaun Ryan

The next time you're traveling, keep an eye out for people wearing distinctive pendants or bracelets bearing silver lions' heads. Seeing one, you'll know that person has been to St. Augustine.

That's because the Nation's Oldest City has a unique brand of jewelry, which was unveiled Friday, Dec. 3, at ArtBox gallery in downtown St. Augustine. The pieces are fashioned after the iconic guardians at the base of the Bridge of Lions and are the result of a collaboration between three of the gallery's artists.

Lisa Myers came up with the idea two years ago after visiting the U.S. Virgin Islands. She noticed that people who visit there often purchase and wear special hook bracelets unique to the Caribbean.

"I said, 'We need something that says St. Augustine to people,'" she recalled. She realized that the lions were just the thing.

She shared her idea with Laura O'Neal, and both took resident jewelry maker Donna Moody Gray into their confidence.

"The jewelry that Donna makes is just so quality and so beautiful," said O'Neal. "We knew that our vision of a quality art piece would be safe with Donna."

But they soon got busy with exhibit openings and keeping ArtBox viable through the worst of the pandemic, and it took a while before they were able to act on the idea.

Finally, it was time to get serious. O'Neal took some photos of the Bridge of Lions, from which she did some sketches. After that, Gray searched for just the right people to create the lion portions of the jewelry based on the sketches. The lion heads are made of 925 sterling silver.

There followed a period of testing to see if the jewelry is comfortable to wear, how heavy it is and whether it would fall off.

Once Gray receives the finished lions, she puts the bracelets together with braided leather and the necklaces with sterling silver chains. The lions on the bracelets link together by magnet, interlocking nodes and a small clasp.

"I'm so excited because it's like a dream that I had when we first opened," said Myers. "I thought this would bring something to St. Augustine that it doesn't have."

"We really wanted to have a piece of jewelry that would connect all the people of St. Augustine," said O'Neal. "Everybody that loves St. Augustine should have one of these."

The lions at the bridge are named "Firm" and "Faithful," and these names appear on the jewelry as well. And the artistic trio are having some fun with that.

"We discovered this very, very old St. Augustine legend," Gray said seriously before breaking into a laugh. "Actually,

we just made it up."

She said if the bracelet is worn with "Firm" facing up, the wearer is looking for love. If it's "Faithful," however, the wearer is in a committed relationship.

This legend mirrors a similar one associated with the Caribbean hook bracelets.

The jewelry can only be purchased at ArtBox, 137 King St. Unit C, St. Augustine. Bracelets run \$250. Larger pendants are \$175, and smaller ones are \$150. The jewelry can be customized, as well.



Photo by Shaun Ryan

The names "Firm" and "Faithful" are clearly visible on the bracelet based on St. Augustine's iconic lions.

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Sports



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Passionate about speed

Mariz wows fellow drivers with street-legal IndyCar

By Anthony Richards

What would you do if a race car drove by you on the street?

Antonio Mariz Jr. has seen firsthand how people respond to such a situation; except he was the one behind the wheel of the race car.

“People brake like they’ve seen a UFO,” Mariz Jr. said. “It’s like they’re thinking, ‘Am I in a video game?’”

Mariz, who lives in St. Augustine drove a CART IndyCar that he owns to the Ponte Vedra Auto Show Nov. 14, and it instantly became a popular attraction.

People from all age groups huddled around to get a glimpse of the car, which was driven by Brazilian Roberto Moreno for Patrick Racing during the 2001 CART season.

At the time, CART was the top form of open-wheel racing in North America. It was a precursor to what is now called the NTT IndyCar Series.

He decided to make an appearance at the show because he is friends with Justin Felker, the event’s promoter.

“This is the coolest thing,” Mariz said. “It’s like a kid’s dream.”

He has only had this race car for about two months, but since Mariz was a child, he was always fascinated by auto racing and the speed of the cars taking part.

His passion has led him to becoming heavily involved with the computing and engineering of race cars and performance vehicles, such as Lamborghinis and Ferraris.

“I’m a self-taught engineer,” Mariz said. “People say usually mechanics have to change parts, but I go way further than that by dialing numbers, computers and all that kind of stuff. It’s a gift and I like it a lot.”

Being around high-performance cars allows him to mix both his passion and his God-given ability to tinker.

“My whole life, I’ve always done this stuff for myself and never for the public, but two years ago I started doing it for my friends,” Mariz said. “I was just continuing to show what I had always done.”

After about three weeks of 18-hour days working away at the car, the process was completed Nov. 12, just two days before the auto show.

“You have to eventually get in and



Photo by Anthony Richards

Antonio Mariz Jr. stands next to of his IndyCar at the 2021 Ponte Vedra Auto Show. He recently made the car street-legal.

drive it, and you just pray to God that everything is good,” Mariz said. “Putting it together is one thing but making it all work is another.”

According to Mariz, in the end, all the hours of hard work that was put into the project was worth it.

“It worked perfectly, and I could not be happier with how it turned out,” Mariz said. “We’re here to be happy, that’s what life is all about.”

Of all the conversations Mariz had with people about the car during the car show, the most common sentiment shared was one of disbelief.

“They don’t believe their eyes,” Mariz said. “They think it got trailered in and people get the most concerned with how I was able to get it street-legal.”

INDYCAR continues on **Page 21**

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IndyCar

Continued from 20

The IndyCar has a General Motors LS1 engine in it, and has had various other features installed, such as lights in the front and the rear that make it able to be driven on public streets.

“People have to understand that it’s not that hard, because like anything in life, if you persist on it, you are going to get it,” Mariz said. “It may not be on your time, but you’re going to get it.”



Photo by Dylan Lane

Antonio Mariz Jr. sits behind the wheel of his open-wheel race car. The car raced during the 2001 CART season.

To keep up with Mariz’s adventures with his IndyCar, visit his Instagram account @antonio.m.j.r to follow what he has planned next.



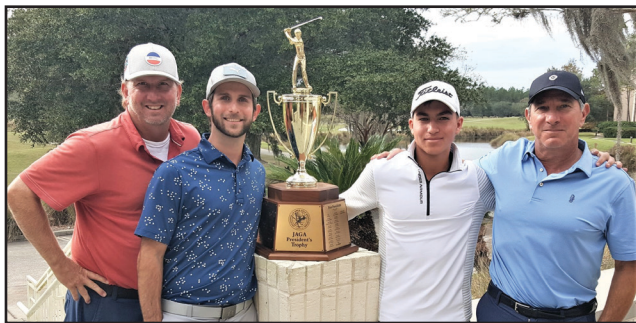
Contributed photos

JAGA presents a plaque to Hyde Park and the family of Billy Maxwell. Pictured from left are former PGA TOUR commissioner Deane Beman, Hyde Park owners Melanie and Tommy Beville, and JAGA president Jeff Adams.

Tournament honors Billy Maxwell

Jacksonville Beach team wins club team championship

On Nov. 18, 80 golfers and guests gathered to honor the late Billy Maxwell at his home club, Hyde Park Golf Club. On Nov. 22, Jacksonville Area Golf Association and the Northern PGA Chapter conducted the 24th Club Team Championship at World Golf Village-Slammer & Squire with 25 teams competing. Here’s a look at the tournaments:



The 24th Club Team Championship winning team featured Thomas Gelsomino, Brent Dietz, Keanu Evans and Michael Lupi.

Billy Maxwell Memorial Tournament

Festivities kicked off with World Golf Hall of Fame inductee Dennis Walters entertaining the crowd with his inspiring mix of trick shots, humor and message of never being afraid to dream big.

Former PGA TOUR commissioner Deane Beman then shared a few funny recollections of his playing days with Maxwell. JAGA closed the proceedings by presenting a plaque in honor of Maxwell for all he did for golf locally and nationally throughout his career. It was presented to his daughter and son-in-law, Melanie and Tommy Beville, who now run the Hyde Park golf facility.

24th Club Team Championship

Jax Beach Golf Club topped 24 other teams from Northeast Florida to claim the 24th Club Team Championship at World Golf Village-Slammer & Squire when they fired a 17-under-par team score of 127.

The winning team featured Northern Chapter PGA professional Thomas Gelsomino and amateur partners Brent Dietz, Keanu Evans and Michael Lupi.

The format was two net best balls of the foursome. JAGA and the Northern Chapter of the North Florida PGA co-hosted the event.

For results of all 25 teams and pro purse breakdown, go to golfgenius.com/pages/3255002 and click the Results tab.

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THEME: Year in Review

ACROSS

1. Coalition of countries
5. King trump-er, sometimes
8. Cuckoo bird
11. ___ weevil
12. Smelting waste
13. Kitchen-wear
15. Coke or Pepsi
16. Check-in via text, email, etc.
17. Settler transport
18. *2021 Super Bowl winner, two words
20. Before long, to Shakespeare
21. Jeopardy
22. Auction action
23. Puts down
26. Coroner’s performance
30. Band booking
31. Snicket of “A Series of Unfortunate Events”
34. Stravinsky’s “The ___ of Spring”
35. Mine passages
37. *Build Back Better ___
38. Eucharist plate
39. Table hill
40. Good review
42. “Tit for ___”
43. Buck feature, pl.
45. *First female VP
47. Evergreen creeper
48. It goes with gin, according to Snoop Dogg
50. Mongolian desert
52. *COVID-19, e.g.
55. Poison ivy or Poison oak
56. International Civil Aviation Org.
57. Distinctive smell
59. House coat
60. Asian cuisine food thickener
61. Pelvic parts
62. Gallery display
63. Self-proclaimed greatest boxer
64. Count on

DOWN

1. “Monty Python” broadcaster
2. Rioter’s take
3. Cantina pot
4. Fasteners or holders
5. Cover story
6. *Suez ____, too tight for Ever Given
7. Like custard
8. Mythological ship
9. “High” time
10. Wayside stop
12. Thinly spread
13. Look forward to
14. *___ Papers, leaked offshore account information
19. Banana refuse, pl.
22. Exchange for money
23. Old World lizard
24. *January 20th honoree
25. Anti-elderly one
26. Those not in favor
27. Pita, alt. sp.
28. Take without asking
29. Gossip, Yiddish
32. *Perseverance landing spot
33. Edible tuber
36. *Kabul’s organization in power
38. *The Nobel ___ Prize was awarded to Ressa and Muratov
40. Snoop around
41. Snowmobile brand
44. Give the boot
46. *Stronger” by Cindy McCain, e.g.
48. Southwestern hut
49. Sushi restaurant staple
50. ___ gum, food additive
51. Leave out
52. Home to the Leaning Tower
53. Not in use
54. One in mattress
55. Spot for a facial
58. *Actor Liotta, star in “The Many Saints of Newark”

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