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PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

December 16, 2021

Volume 53, No. 7

75 cents

PonteVedraRecorder.com

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

Christmas tradition continues



The 26th Annual Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet was held Dec. 11 at the University of North Florida's Lazzara Performance Hall.

See inside for photos from the event. PAGE 27

Photo by Anthony Richards



INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

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



Gift of Giving

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Business Weekly

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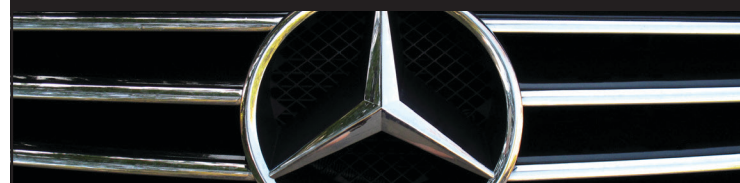
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INSIDE

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

Jazzy

Hi, I am Jazzy! I am a petite, sweet 2-year-old female medium haired domestic. I am gentle, trusting and loving. You can pick me up with ease, hold me and pet me. I like to explore and observe. I'm curious about my surroundings and enjoy looking out windows. But I'm always happy to be in your arms and get pets from you. I am a peaceful, well-behaved girl. I'd be good with other cats who are gentle and peaceful, too. Let me jazz up your heart!



India



Hi, I'm India. I'm a 2-year-old female Labrador mix breed. I was found as a stray and am now ready to find my new "forever" home. I am very friendly, a little goofy (in a good way) and very well behaved. 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

Try the Y for free on Fridays this month

Many decide to gear up for the New Year by signing up for a gym membership. For those who have trouble deciding which local gym to commit to, the First Coast YMCA is offering "Try the Y for FREE on Fridays" — and Sundays — throughout the month of December.

Guests can choose from any First Coast Y branch and access amenities such as group fitness classes, state-of-the-art gym equipment and the KidZone. All guests who visit will also be entered to win a six-month First Coast Y membership.

Free Fridays at the Y is a great way to end the year and enter a new one.

For information, go to fcymca.org.

Nease senior wins district Congressional App Challenge

U.S. Rep. John Rutherford recently announced that Thomas Olinger, a senior at Allen D. Nease High School, is the winner of the 2021 Congressional App Challenge for Florida's 4th Congressional District. This nationwide contest began in 2015 and takes place in each congressional district across the country. Its mission is to "inspire, include and innovate efforts around STEM, coding and computer science education."

"Congratulations to Thomas on winning the 2021 Congressional App Challenge," said Rutherford. "His outstanding app is a testament to his hard work and a reflection of the top-notch educators we have here in Northeast Florida."

Thomas' application, called Wordy, allows users to learn new words and remember previously learned words. A video displaying Wordy and its functionality can be found at youtube.com/watch?v=j5PxOFxjtL0.

For further information, go to congressionalappchallenge.us.

Distillery hosts sustainable tree-lighting ceremony in partnership with FPL

St. Augustine Distillery hosted a new holiday celebration in partnership with Florida Power & Light Co. on Thursday, Dec. 9: a sustainable tree-lighting ceremony.

Attendees enjoyed spirit samples, learned about solar energy, had photos taken by the 18-foot tree and took part in an exclusive after-hours holiday shopping experience.

The event was sponsored by FPL Solar-

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

Recorder
Not your average newspaper, not your average reader.

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OBITUARIES



Florie Adiutori

Florie Adiutori, 77, of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, passed away December 13, 2021. She was born April 8, 1944, in Brooklyn, NY, to Joseph and Elsie Scholnick.

Florie was married for 57 years to her best friend, Joseph Adiutori. They had two children, Erika Adiutori Rumsey and Marc Adiutori, and three grandchildren, Cameron, Harrison and Samantha Rumsey, who were the light of her life.

Florie was a devoted, loyal, loving, and caring wife, mother, grandmother, sister, friend, and advocate for those who had the great fortune to know her or have their

lives touched by her. Florie's servant's heart lived by the adage "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" (Mahatma Gandhi). Florie served as President of Cancer Care of Western Suffolk, NY. She was a board member of Betty Griffin House and was chair for many years of the Betty Griffin House fashion show. Florie was chair of the service auction at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville for numerous years and cofounded her Breast Friends For Life breast cancer support group 29 years ago, and it is still running today. Florie loved volunteering in both her children's and grandchildren's schools, and especially enjoyed being the garden lady/bug lady in Cheryl Charles's kindergarten class every other week for 17 years. The titles she enjoyed most were that of grandmother,

mother, wife, sister, and friend. She never met a stranger, and loved a good party and bringing others together, especially at her yearly Christmas open house. There was always an open space in their home for anyone alone for any of the holidays.

Florie was predeceased by her parents, Joe & Elsie Scholnick; and her sister, Sheila Barth. She is survived by her husband, Joseph Adiutori; sister, Wilma Brandt; daughter, Erika Rumsey (Cayce); son, Marc Adiutori; grandchildren, Cameron, Harrison and Samantha Rumsey; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

A small graveside service will be held

for close family and friends at Ponte Vedra Valley Cemetery on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 11 am. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Community Hospice of NE Florida or the Betty Griffin House. Please sign the online guestbook at www.pontevedravalley.com



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Briefs

Continued from 2

Now, a program that brings solar energy to local communities to educate and inspire future generations about clean energy.

To date, FPL has installed solar arrays at more than 70 SolarNow locations across 18 counties.

The St. Augustine Distillery's FPL SolarNow canopy is particularly unique because

the distillery's building was one of the first commercial ice plants built by FPL in the early 1900s. This partnership showcases the building's historic roots while also working toward a cleaner energy future for St. Augustine residents.

The tree will remain at St. Augustine Distillery through the Night of Lights holiday season as a festive reminder of FPL SolarNow's mission to provide sustainable energy to the state of Florida.

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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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OBITUARIES



Lysbeth Kelly Buckingham

Lysbeth Kelly Buckingham died peacefully on December 8th at home, surrounded by her family. Kelly was born in Jacksonville, Florida on May 13, 1961. In her youth she enjoyed good times on the St. Johns River, attending summer camp and family trips to the Bahamas. She traveled the world and held a particular fondness for Cashiers, Calistoga, Italy and her “special place” in the Florida Keys. Kelly attended The Bolles School and completed her secondary education at The Madeira School in McClean, Virginia. She attended the University of Georgia and completed her degree at Franklin College in Lugano, Switzerland.

After college Kelly began an accomplished career in politics extending from Tallahassee to Washington, D.C. She was particularly adept at fundraising, campaign support, having fun and forming lifelong friendships. On July 23, 1988 she and Bill Buckingham were re-introduced to one another by dear friends and on November 18, 1989 they married. They were promptly blessed with two beautiful children wherein Kelly left politics to raise

her family. She cared deeply for others and has been dubbed “my second mom” on more than a few occasions. Kelly became very active in social and philanthropic circles. She chaired fundraising events for The Cummer Museum and Jacksonville Museum of Contemporary Art, while also serving on the Beaches Community Fund and many other charitable campaigns. Kelly was a trusted colleague who demonstrated that any task could be achieved with excellence and good humor. Her lifelong friends speak of her as one who “lived life with generosity and joy while having the best kind of confidence and conviction.”

Kelly loved planning, hosting, and making people smile. Never the follower, she inspired the annual “W&L O-Line Dinner”, perfected the “FL-GA by Boat Party”, coached the “Superstars” to a Softball Championship and popped many corks courtesy of the Rutherford Dust Society. Kelly was strong and forthright in her desire to help, advise and provide for others in time of need. She never met a stranger, always encouraged others to be the best versions of themselves and never doubted or compromised her standards. Above all, Kelly cherished being surrounded by family and friends while celebrating all the blessings of this life. She was a wonderful wife, daughter, mother, sister, aunt, cousin, grandmother,

“team mom” and friend to so many. She remained proud, stoic, and upbeat throughout her illness; never wanting to call attention to her pain and discomfort lest her suffering might upset her friends and family.

Kelly is pre-deceased by her father Michael F. Davidson. She will be greatly missed and forever loved by her husband of 32 years, Bill, son Christopher Talbot Buckingham (Raquel Chrysson), daughter Catherine Buckingham Nichols (Blake), grandson William Kerry Nichols, mother Field Davidson Boatwright (John), brother Michael F. Davidson Jr. (Daisy Miller), nephews Trip and Gunnar Davidson, niece Elinor Davidson, mother-in-law Catherine Brooke Buckingham, sister-in-law Florence Dabney Buckingham, aunt Cindy Purcell, uncle Buddy Purcell, cousins Benham Bishop (Henry) and Field Copeland, the Boatwright Family (John, Barbara, Ross, Grace) and the Fields Family (Paul, Elizabeth, Pope, Susie) as well as many other cherished extended family members.

The family extends sincere appreciation for the Clinical Team and friends made at both Mayo Clinic of Jacksonville and Community Hospice and Palliative Care, and for the comfort Miss Shirley provided. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Community PedsCare or Christ Episcopal Church Ponte Vedra, where the funeral service will be held on Friday December 17 at 1:00 p.m. Reception to follow at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club.

Arrangements are under the care of Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home. Family and friends may share condolences and remembrances at www.quinn-shalz.com



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

DEATH NOTICES

Arliss Brigman

Arliss Brigman, 88, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Dec. 6, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Nicolae Copsan

Nicolae Copsan, 79, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Dec. 1, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Sally Louise Harper

Sally Louise Harper, 74, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died Dec. 6, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Frances Juchniewicz

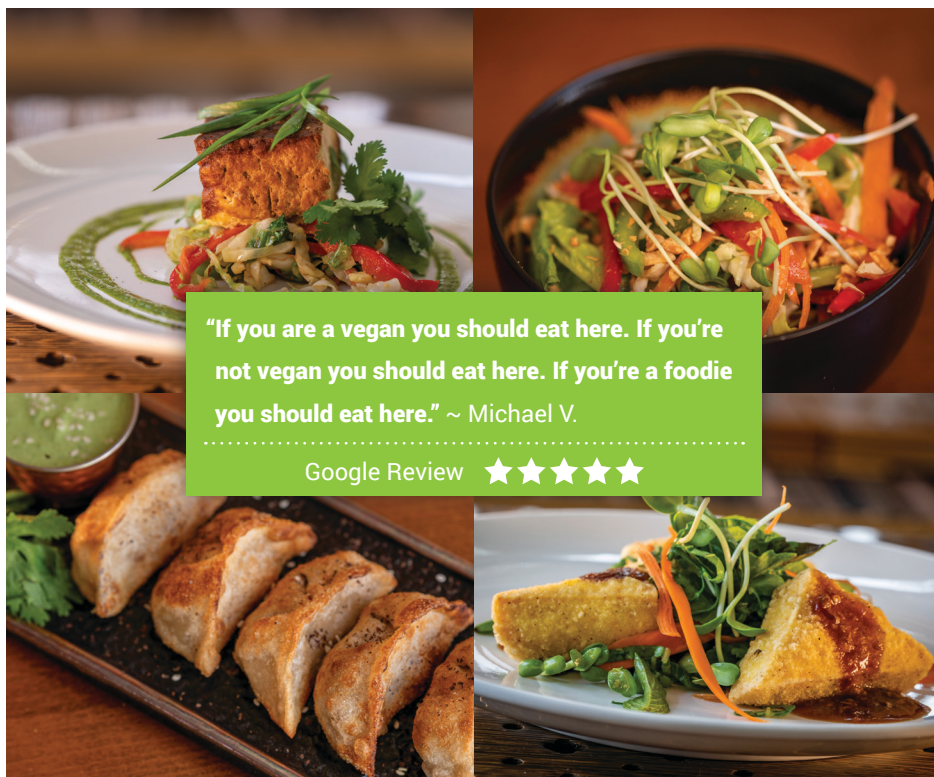
Frances Juchniewicz, 94, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Dec. 5, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Ruth Reid

Ruth Reid, 94, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Dec. 5, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Ralph B. Velard

Ralph B. Velard, 91, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Dec. 8, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 — www.quinn-shalz.com



“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.

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(Near San Pablo Blvd)



LoveHakkaKitchen.Com



*When the cares of my heart are many,
your consolations cheer my soul.*

Psalms 94:19

Beaches Coalition discusses Ponte Vedra area growth

Tourism, land development perspectives explored

By Anthony Richards

Growth of the local community was a recurring topic during the Beaches Coalition's final meeting of the year Dec. 6.

The guest speakers included Karen Everett, director of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Division, and Teresa Bishop, St. Johns County planning division manager.

Everett spoke about ways that the Chamber is looking into how to go about tourism engagement in Ponte Vedra.

According to Everett, 81% of visitors are at Ponte Vedra's "front door," but only 13% of those explore the Ponte Vedra area.

Most of those visitors come to see the sights in St. Augustine.

"How do we drive visitors to extend their stay by visiting Ponte Vedra Beach, Palm Valley and Nocatee?" Everett said. "If we can just get a percentage of them to come up the road and see Ponte Vedra while they're here."

Some of the advantages Everett presented by creating more tourism, would include bed tax increases and helping provide new customers to local businesses.

One of the things the visitors center located in Ponte Vedra Beach has strived to do is promote the natural resources the area has to offer by presenting options for biking, fishing, birding, hiking and kayaking.

Bishop also talked to those in attendance about local growth but did so with a focus on how it translates in the use and development of the land.

According to Bishop, land development regulations, including zoning, must be consistent with the county's compre-

hensive plan for the future.

Nine elements make up the details that go into determining what a county's comprehensive plan looks like.

These elements are land use, transportation, infrastructure, coastal conservation, property rights, housing, recreation/open space, capital improvement and intergovernmental coordination.

Ponte Vedra's zoning regulations were created in 1965 by Florida House Bill No. 85.

"Ponte Vedra had zoning about six years before the county did," Bishop said.

Recent land development approvals in the past year that have created conversation among Ponte Vedra residents have been the Gate construction plans (February), which has included clear-cutting the land, the construction of a 108,000 square-foot self-storage facility (July) and the approval of The Approach at Ponte Vedra (October), which will entail a 43,000-square-foot space designated for commercial, office and a 120-room hotel.

Bishop stated that 85% of the building permit requests they receive are for single family residential. However, requests for retail and commercial are increasing with some office and industrial interest as well.

According to Bishop, she has noticed a difference since the death of longtime Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District planning division advisor Jack Pope in 2015, and it has had an impact on some decisions that have been made.

Residents can go to www.sjcfll.us and click of the development tracker tab under the featured list to find a map where they can stay up to date with the progress and details of certain projects.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Karen Everett, director of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Division, was a guest speaker at the meeting.



Teresa Bishop, St. Johns County planning division manager, gave a presentation at the meeting.

Congratulations to Berry & Co. Real Estate, Best Real Estate in Ponte Vedra 3x Winner!



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Following an extensive career in the nation's capital, Bob Porter now serves as vice president of public policy for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. A native of Texas, he now makes his home here and is enjoying the many aspects of St. Johns County that enrich residents' lives.

Bob Porter

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me about your role and responsibilities as vice president of public policy for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

My primary role at the Chamber as VP, Public Policy is to act as the Chamber's lobbyist representing the views of our 1,000 members before state, federal and local governments.

Our Public Policy Committee was created in 2017 to engage our membership in governmental issues that directly affect their businesses. Recent issues we have been actively involved with include: the dramatic reduction in the Florida sales tax rate on the value of commercial leases from 6.5% to eventually 2%; COVID-19 business liability protections; the addition of a new county judge for St. Johns County to ease the caseload burden on civil court cases; and the increase and extension of funding for Visit Florida, the state agency that was so instrumental in helping get SJC tourism businesses back on their feet after hurricanes Matthew and Irma.

Locally, we also regularly engage county and municipal governments in issues ranging from affordable housing and land use to environmental regulations and quality-of-life issues.

What is your background, and how did you find your way into your current position?

I spent 35 years in Washington, D.C., first as a congressional staffer, then later as the head of government affairs for a major law firm; a VP in former Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen's firm doing international trade and defense work and finally jumping into the nonprofit arena as the first CEO of Paws for Purple Hearts, an organization training and placing mobility service dogs with wounded warriors.

When my wife Cynthia told me she was turning in her retirement papers after a 25-plus year public school teaching career, we decided to return to her hometown of St. Augustine where we have been since 2015.

I was lucky enough to land one of the few lobbying positions in St. Johns County at the Chamber and am thoroughly enjoying applying the skills I have learned over the years representing businesses of all sizes in their dealings with the state and local governments.

I enjoy the face-to-face interaction with our lawmakers and the opportunity to make the business community's "case" on local issues directly affecting them.

Looking back over your career, what have been some of the highlights?

At the very young age of 24, I can point to a bill that I wrote, which became law creating the Small Business Trade Remedy Assistance Center at the U.S. Department of Commerce, which helps small businesses navigate the maze of government rules and remedies when they are hurt by unfairly traded "read cheap" foreign imports.

As a Senate staffer, I was given the opportunity to travel internationally, mainly in the Far East, Australia and New Zealand, which gave me a firsthand view at a young age of many different people and cultures.

One of my proudest professional achievements was leading the team at The Cohen Group hired by the City of Jacksonville that protected Naval Station Mayport and the Jacksonville Naval Air Station from closing during



the 2005 round of the Defense Department Base Closing exercise (BRAC). Our team saved many thousands of jobs critical to the economy of Northeast Florida. I am proud to have played a role.

What are some of the causes that are important to you?

Animals, wounded veterans and affordable housing are very special to me.

Nothing better than seeing a 90-pound chocolate Lab you helped train be paired with a 6-foot 5-inch Army ranger who broke his back jumping out of an airplane during the Gulf War. In my mind, both lives were saved.

Affordable housing is another passion of mine. Not the stereotypical old Section 8 Chicago high-rise projects, but single-family housing that our police, school teachers, firefighters and medical professionals can afford. St. Johns County must be a haven for everyone, not just those fortunate few who can afford a \$500K starter home.

Are you from this area originally? What do you like about living here?

I'm actually a sixth generation Texan by birth, transplanted to D.C. for better than half my life. My wife is third generation St. Augustine from Anastasia Island, so

I get to see this beautiful county through the eyes of a native.

The pace is slower in many ways from D.C., but I like the fact that I can call a county commissioner, city commissioner or state representative and talk to them without going through layers of staff. These are real people who are our next-door neighbors, go to the same churches and shop at the same grocery stores, so they "get it."

Also, as we live on the island, walking the beach with Cynthia and our therapy dog Humphrey never gets old. Don't get me talking about the seafood ... I can't get enough fresh St. Augustine shrimp and fish!

How do you like to spend your free time?

As I mentioned, we walk the beaches a lot, but also enjoy exploring the "Old Florida" of Cynthia's youth. Love doing weekend road trips to little out-of-the-way places up and down the state. We also love heading downtown for the history and the food — we have quite a restaurant scene for a town of only 14,000 people.

You may also see me scooting around the island in my 20-year-old BMW Z3 with the license plate SPDYCAR. It may have taken a while, but we have found our special place in the world, and we'll never leave.



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MSD approves traffic calming, sidewalk studies

By Anthony Richards

Traffic on local roadways is continuing to increase and the Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District Board acknowledged the issue by inviting Ben Bright and Rodney Cooper with the St. Johns County public works department to speak at its Dec. 13 meeting.

They spoke primarily about traffic calming and what goes into determining the degree of assistance a road needs with its traffic.

“It is a very data-driven process,” Cooper said.

Several factors are considered when collecting traffic data on a roadway, such as the speeds of its travelers and pedestrian traffic.

Each data figure is awarded points that are totaled up and used to determine how much calming a road needs.

Cooper acknowledged that speed bumps are one of the first solutions people come up with but stated that there are advantages and disadvantages to that route.

An example he gave as a possible solution would be to put striping down the center of San Juan Drive.

The board of trustees voted to make a formal request to the county to have traffic calming studies done on San Juan, So-

lana, Le Master Drive and Rutile Drive.

Trustees Holly Kartsonis and Mack MuCuller pushed to see action also taken to have studies done to see about adding sidewalks in the future.

As a result, the board approved to spend up to \$10,000 to hire an engineer to begin an assessment of what it would entail, including estimated costs of a sidewalk project.

Chairman Brad Wester provided an update to the MSD that off-duty Sheriff’s deputies have begun selecting certain dates and times that suite them to give an added police presence in the MSD.

Trustee John Cellucci stated that he had not seen an increased presence south of Corona Road and said he would be interested to see a list of patrol data.

Wester said that feedback like Cellucci’s can be used moving forward to make sure certain areas are getting their proper presence. He will forward the patrol data once it is sent to him.

According to Wester, there is currently a rotation of about 14 officers that are consistently putting in to work off-duty in the MSD.

In other business, board attorney Wayne Flowers informed the board that he was asked to look into a matter in which Wester sent a letter to the county



that inferred the MSD had approved dual driveways on Ponte Vedra Boulevard.

Wester admitted that the “error I made was the verbiage” within the letter that he sent. He said that he would update and correct the letter for the county.

“The letter was sent without authorization from the board,” Trustee Gary Jurenovich said. “That’s the issue.”

According to Jurenovich, it was not a good look because it made the MSD look like it was in partnership with Steven

Diebenow, an attorney who recently proposed changes regarding area zoning regulations but dismissed his proposals following push back from residents.

Trustee Kitty Switkes defended Wester, stating that she was at the Ponte Vedra Zoning and Adjustment Board meeting in question and that the matters pertaining Wester and Diebenow were presented separately.

“I don’t see any conflict of interest,” Switkes said.

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Dantiel is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize, a MacDowell Fellowship, the Alice Hoffman Prize for Fiction, and has been named a “Writer to Watch” by Publishers Weekly and Apple Books. Her debut collection, *Milk Blood Heat*, is an Indie Next Pick, an inaugural Roxane Gay Audacious Book Club pick, and has been hailed as “must-read” by *TIME*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Buzzfeed*, *Elle*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*, among others. Her work has appeared in the *Paris Review*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Tin House*, *One Story*, *American Short Fiction*, *Ploughshares*, *The Yale Review*, *McSweeney’s Quarterly Concern* and elsewhere. Moniz is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Jacob Skiles Class of 2016, Instrumental



Since graduating from DA, Jacob has studied piano under 1997 Van Cliburn silver medalist, Yakov Kasman at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). In 2018, Jacob made his orchestral debut performing with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and gave a recital in the historic house of Romanian composer George Enescu. During college, Jacob participated in and won numerous solo and Concerto competitions in Alabama. In addition to his piano studies, he conducted research on mathematical analyses of rhythm in Baroque dance forms while in the Science and Technology Honors Program at UAB. Since graduating in spring of 2020, Jacob will be continuing his studies at Florida State University, pursuing a Masters in Piano Performance with a graduate assistantship in teaching.

For more information visit DA-arts.org • 2445 San Diego Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32207

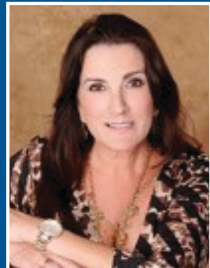


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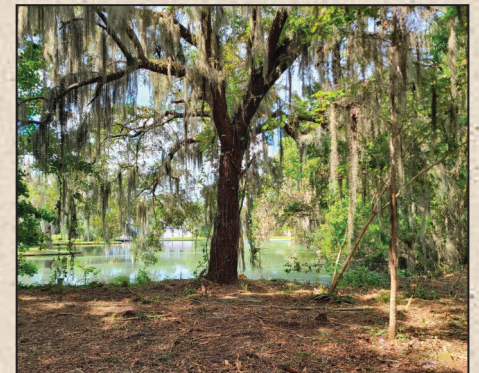
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New districts drawn up for St. Johns County

By Shaun Ryan

Both the St. Johns County Commission and School Board voted unanimously Thursday, Dec. 9, to adopt a new redistricting plan.

The boards began the process in August and had several versions of the map to choose from. In the end, everyone backed the plan that School Board member Kelly Barrera said keeps District 4 together. District 4 is where Ponte Vedra is located.

County Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker also supported that plan, saying it maintained community cohesiveness.

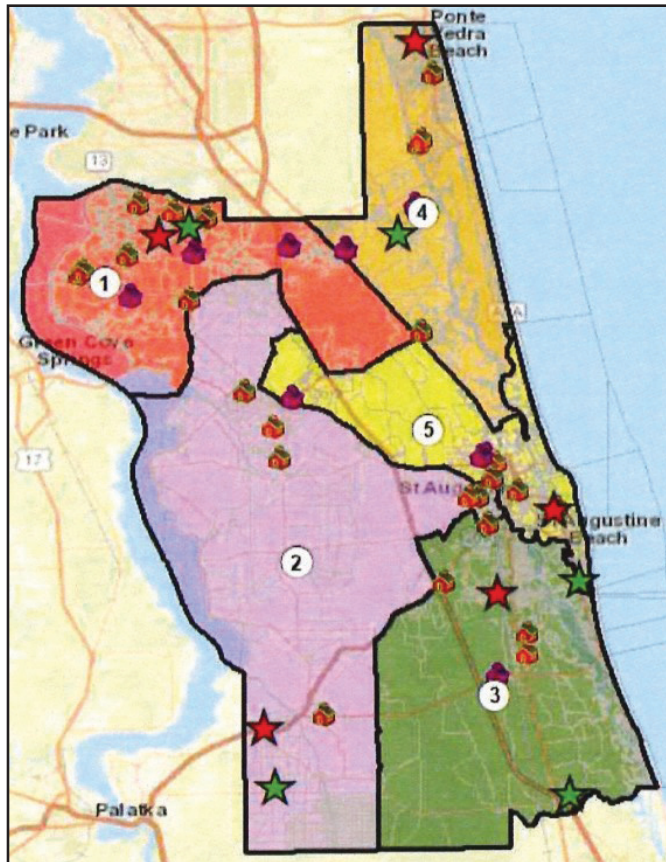
Every 10 years, every state, county, city, town and special district must redraw districts to reflect the results of the most recent census. State law mandates that districts contain equal populations — or as near to that as possible.

The boards work together because, traditionally, the School Board and County Commission maintain the same district boundaries.

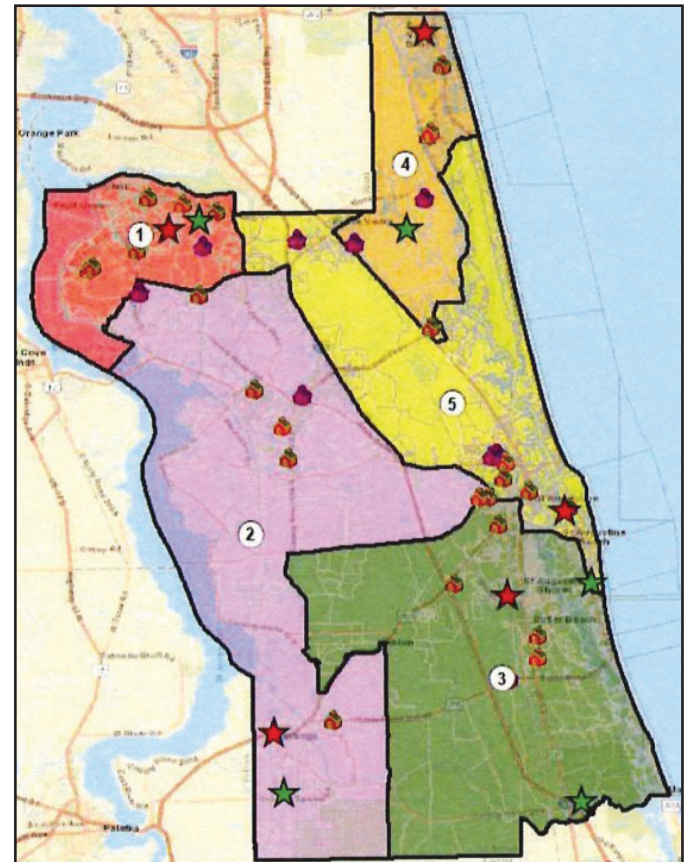
In the new plan District 4 has decreased geographically, yielding areas to District 5 (St. Augustine). Among those areas are the Guana reserve and a portion south of Palencia Elementary School.

District 4 does include Neck Road and Ponte Vedra Boulevard north of the Guana reserve.

St. Johns County is the 10th fastest-growing county in the nation. Between 2010 and 2020, the total population in St. Johns County grew to an estimated 265,512, a 40% increase. By 2025, the county's population is expected to hit 307,688.



The districts as they currently exist.



The new districts.

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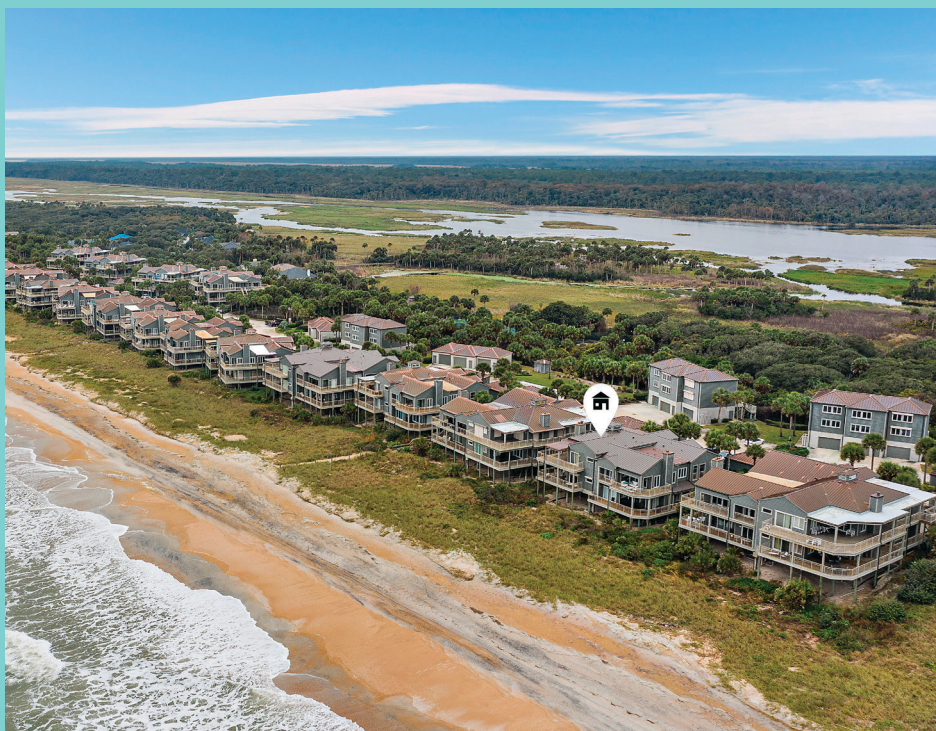
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Chamber event in Ponte Vedra collects gifts for foster kids

By Shaun Ryan

On Tuesday, Dec. 7, the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce held its annual holiday party, Jingle and Mingle.

Donations were taken from attendees to benefit Fostering Connections, a nonprofit organization founded in 2019 that provides support for children in foster care and foster parents through fundraising, volunteerism and advocacy.

Karen Everett, division director, said dozens of items and gift cards were donated at the event.

“The gifting was coordinated by the Chamber’s Ambassadors, and staff and board members of Fostering Connections were pleased at the generosity shown by Chamber members,” Everett said, “and know that the gifts will make a difference in a young person’s life.”

“I was so excited to see the full boxes and to see the overwhelming support for our organization this holiday season,” said Aubrie Simpson-Gotham, founder and CEO of Fostering Connections St. Johns. “I’m thankful for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division Ambassadors



Contributed photo

Aubrie Simpson-Gotham, founder and CEO of Fostering Connections St. Johns, stands next to a box of toys donated at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division’s Jingle and Mingle party.

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Online donations made by Dec. 31, 2021 are doubled by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund!

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Photos by Susan Griffin

Trudy Toche, Ambassador of the Year for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division at the Jingle and Mingle party.

Chamber

Continued from 11

and all of the members who attended the event and are supporting our local kids impacted by foster care this holiday season.”

Fostering Connections is based in St. Augustine but serves all of St. Johns County. It has recently expanded services to Putnam, Flagler and Volusia counties. So far this year, it has served more than 150 children and youth. The organization provides children and youth with needed

essentials, educational programs and community connections.

Anyone who wants to donate to Fostering Connections, may go to fosteringconnectionsstjohns.org. Volunteer opportunities are frequently posted there, as well.

On Sunday, Jan. 2, the organization will conduct its Foster Friends 5K and Fun Run in Nocatee. It will start at 8 a.m. For more information go to runsignup.com/Race/FL/PonteVedra/Fostering-Friends5K.

“We hope many of our supporters can join us,” said Simpson-Gotham. “It will be a great way to start the new year.”



Karen Everett, Aimee Stafford, Ericha Gore and Isabelle Renault at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division's Jingle and Mingle party.



Jackie Smith at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division's Jingle and Mingle party.



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United Way of St. Johns County continues work through December and into New Year

The holiday season, seen as a time of joy and coming together, is difficult for many in St. Johns County.

With the continuing challenges of the pandemic, this year more than ever, families and seniors are making hard choices between food, shelter or medical costs. They worry about making ends meet and where their next paycheck will come from and are overwhelmed by the thought of the holidays approaching.

The Empty Stocking Fund, a valued community tradition supported by donations since the 1980s, assists these vulnerable families and seniors with funds for food, clothing or toys to unwrap. In 2020, United Way-SJC and partners assisted nearly 600 families and seniors.

“Individually, we can’t do it all, but we can all do something,” said Melissa Nelson, United Way of St. Johns County president and CEO. “Your donation – no matter how big or small – will make a difference this holiday season. By working with our partners, the Empty Stocking Fund enhances existing local holiday programs allowing them to be more robust and reach more families.”



Barbara, a local resident, is just one of those helped by the initiative.

When she found out she was pregnant with twins, she also learned that a medical condition would cause her to be on bedrest throughout her entire pregnancy.

She used all her sick time, vacation days and Family and Medical Leave Act time and was eventually separated from her job.

Her twin boys arrived a few weeks early and, although healthy, remain in the newborn intensive care unit until they learn to eat without a feeding tube.

The Empty Stocking Fund is the blessing Barbara needed for her new babies and two older children. This resource will help restore some normalcy during the holidays.

Tax-deductible donations are fully distributed to qualified applicants and should be made directly to United Way-SJC by mail, by dropping off at the Bridge Street office or electronically.

By mail, make checks payable to United Way-SJC (noting the Empty Stocking Fund), PO Box 1007, St. Augustine, FL 32085

In person, drop off donations at United Way of St. Johns County, 117 Bridge St., St. Augustine.

Online, go to unitedway-sjc.org/emptystocking.



5th Annual Givers Gala

Residents are invited to celebrate the generous heart of philanthropy and legacy of giving at the 5th Annual Givers Gala on Jan. 28 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton St. Augustine Oceanfront Resort.

The evening will showcase the performance band Bold City Classics and celebrity auctioneer, Sen. Aaron Bean, who presides over the lively auction of unique and sought-after items.

Tickets are on sale now and sponsorship opportunities are still available. Go to unitedway-sjc.org/2022giversgala for more information.

United Way of St. Johns invites you to the

5th Annual Givers Gala

Celebrate the generous heart of philanthropy and legacy of giving in our community. Presented in a way that only United Way of St. Johns can do, this event brings together philanthropists from all walks of life and passions for a festive night of fun, inspiration, and opportunity.

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St. Gerard campus continues to serve teen moms

The St. Gerard campus in St. Augustine continues to carry out its mission more than 40 years after it was founded by Al and Caroline Wolff.

A fully accredited pro-life interfaith Christian high school, St. Gerard campus caters to the needs of unwed pregnant teenagers. There is an on-site dormitory, pregnancy center, day care center for the babies, community outreach and food pantry, and abortion-recovering counseling.

Many pregnant teenage girls drop out of school due to embarrassment and find themselves ostracized by other students and even their own families, forcing them not to complete their education.

The facility believes in empowering them through education and preparing them to enter society, breaking the cycle of abuse, poverty, hunger and homelessness. St. Gerard's motto is, "We Heal, We Rise, We Overcome."

The staff at St. Gerard campus say their hearts are touched daily by the Holy Spirit, guiding them and giving them the strength needed to help, encourage and support the girls.

Students start the school day with

a prayer and reading a verse from the Bible.

"Many of our girls are just now being introduced to our Lord and Savior, and we never give up on them," according to the St. Gerard management. "We have qualified teachers who strive to help them get their diplomas. We have staff available for each girl if they need to talk. We have staff who help them learn how to be a good mom and just to listen to them. We have volunteers who sit with the babies in the classrooms until they are two months old, and when the babies need to be fed or have their diapers changed, their moms do that right in the classroom as we have changing tables readily available for them."

Once the babies are two months old, they stay in the fully accredited day-care nursery where they receive care from the professional staff.

Thanks to the Knights of Columbus, St. Gerard campus has a new ultrasound machine in its pregnancy center.

The on-site dormitory houses two house moms and several students. Each room has a crib in it, a personal bathroom and a comfortable bed. The dormi-



tory also has a recreational room where the girls can just sit and chat with one another, watch television or read a book. A washer and dryer are also provided. House moms cook breakfast for the girls and teach them how to prepare a nutritional dinner.

The St. Gerard campus' new executive director is Brittany Glisson, a former stu-

dent at the campus who had her baby at 17. The campus also has a new assistant director, a new high school dean, a new pregnancy center director and a volunteer coordinator.

The St. Gerard campus extends its gratitude to donors, churches and organizations who help support its mission.

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stfrancisshelter.org

Your gift will give Emmy and her mom a chance at a new life. Please make Christmas bright for Emmy and other families caught in homelessness today!

Emmy and her mom are counting on you. Please visit stfrancisshelter.org and help Emmy today.



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Clays for a Cause raises \$225K for local nonprofits

The 9th Annual Clays for a Cause event, presented by St. Johns County homebuilder MasterCraft Builder Group, was held on Thursday, Dec. 9, at Saltwaters Shooting Club in St. Augustine.

The event brought together members of the local construction community as well as the general public for a day of clay shooting and raising money for area nonprofits.

The largest to date, the 9th Annual Clays for a Cause raised \$225,000 for multiple North Florida charities including Seamark Ranch, St. Augustine Youth Services, Alpha-Omega Miracle Home, Rethreaded, Catholic Charities, Horse-Play Therapy Center, Investing in Kids (INK!), Jacksonville Arts and Music School, The Jimmy Jam BBQ Slam, Port in the Storm, St. Johns Police Athletic League and Top Shots.

“It’s a privilege to come together each year and spend the day raising awareness for some of my favorite causes here in Northeast Florida,” said MasterCraft Builder Group CEO and founder Chris Shee. “As a home builder, to have 12 of my competitors out here supporting this event is incredibly touching. This event gives back to our community, and the generosity of our sponsors blows me away time and time again.”

Since its conception, Clays for a Cause has raised more than \$850,000 for chari-



One of the charities benefitting from Clays for a Cause is Investing in Kids (INK!). Here, MasterCraft Builder Group CEO and founder Chris Shee presents a \$10,000 check.

ties throughout Northeast Florida. For example, Investing in Kids (INK!) is a local nonprofit that helps fund projects for students and teachers throughout St. Johns County.

In addition, Alpha-Omega Miracle Home provides housing, counseling and education for single mothers, their children and senior women. And HorsePlay Therapy Center offers equine therapy for children with disabilities and will be using this year’s donation to fund their new program, Rise Up for Veterans.

“What Chris Shee does for our community is incredible; he is the fuel to the engine of the nonprofit world,” said Lisa Franklin, CEO and founder of Alpha-Omega Miracle Home. “His heart for

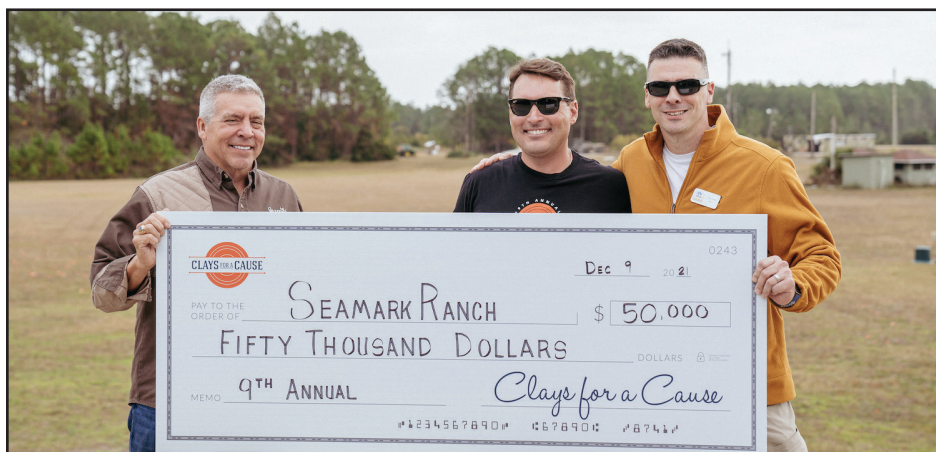


Photos by Greg Olech

The 9th Annual Clays for a Cause raised \$225,000 for several North Florida charities.

this community and nonprofits is like no other. This is our second year participating in Clays for a Cause, and we’ve also been beneficiaries of his fundraiser,

Concerts for a Cause. The donation from this year’s event will go toward our new campus to provide greater housing opportunities to women in need.”



One of the charities benefitting from Clays for a Cause is Seamark Ranch. Here, MasterCraft Builder Group CEO and founder Chris Shee presents a \$50,000 check.

Jim Moran Foundation awards grant to Beaches Habitat for Humanity

Beaches Habitat for Humanity was recently awarded a grant of \$30,000 from The Jim Moran Foundation to support its Senior Home Repair Program. For seniors who meet eligibility and income guidelines, the program provides repairs that address safety, security, accessibility and code violations with a focus on homeowners in the Jacksonville Beaches communities.

“Our goal is to help our older neighbors remain safely in the homes where they may have lived for decades,” said Curtis Ford, president and CEO of Beaches Habitat.

The Senior Home Repair Program specifically focuses on repairs that prevent homeowners from suffering injury and falls or having to move out of their homes and into assisted living. Repairs may include door replacement, sidewalk repairs and roof replacement, as well as plumbing, HVAC and electrical work. Beaches Habitat staff, volunteers and subcontractors complete the repair work.

AARP surveys consistently find that the majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for

GRANT continues on Page 16

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Northwestern Mutual – Jacksonville donates \$15K to fight childhood cancer

Through its foundation, Northwestern Mutual is recognizing seven of its offices for their notable support in fighting childhood cancer. Northwestern Mutual – Jacksonville has been recognized as one of the company’s 2021 Childhood Cancer Impact Award recipients, receiving a \$15,000 grant on behalf of the Kate Amato Foundation to fund childhood cancer research and find innovative treatment options.

“Nationwide, our advisors and staff continue to demonstrate that their offices are more than just a place to work, but a place where they can make a difference in their community and in the lives of others,” said Eric Christophersen, Northwestern Mutual Foundation president. “We’re honored to recognize our passionate and dedicated advisors as they continue to go above and beyond in their efforts to help create better outcomes for children with cancer.”

The Northwestern Mutual – Jacksonville office has seen firsthand the effects of childhood cancer with the disease impacting clients and office members.

The office has worked to raise awareness of childhood cancer and advocate for additional research funding to be provided to the cause. Through the creation of their philanthropic committee, the office has supported numerous nonprofits, includ-

ing Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation, Ronald McDonald house, Make-A-Wish, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the Kate Amato Foundation and more, through volunteering, fundraising and sponsoring events.

Even amidst the pandemic in 2020, the office was able to continue raising funds for childhood cancer research that totaled more than \$100,000.

“Pediatric cancer is something that not only hits close to home for me, but many of those in our Jacksonville office,” said Jessica Salazar, managing partner, Northwestern Mutual – Jacksonville. “We’re incredibly proud of our team for coming together in support of this important cause, and we’re honored to donate this grant to the Kate Amato Foundation as it strives to find a cure for childhood cancer.”

Since 2012, the Northwestern Mutual Childhood Cancer Program has contributed more than \$35 million in funding to find better treatments and cures, providing family and patient support and aiding those who continue to struggle with long-term effects of cancer treatment.

Since 2014, the company’s Childhood Cancer Impact Awards has donated \$2,295,000 in grants on behalf of the winning offices to childhood cancer nonprofits nationwide.

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Grant

Continued from 15

as long as possible. The Senior Repair Program makes aging in place possible by completing work that the homeowners would not otherwise have the financial or physical ability to undertake themselves. While the repairs are not free, Beaches Habitat works with each homeowner to create a repayment plan that is affordable.

“There is a significant need for this program in our Beaches community,” said Ford. “Many seniors simply cannot afford the high costs that we are currently seeing in home repair.”

The Senior Home Repair Program, initiated in 2020, is accepting applications from homeowners at the beach who are 60 and older. For more information, call 904-595-5806.

TABLE TALK

Hot sauce kit features spicy flavors from around the world



Leigh Cort

By Leigh Cort

Datilgator Seasonings, a local company focused on innovation in the food industry, recently introduced its Delightfully Hot Do-It-Yourself Hot Sauce Kit.

Zack and Lauren Glenn's company was recognized in November with a Scovie Award for Advertising and Marketing — Gift Basket/Box category. The couple launched Datilgator Seasonings, which

offers all-natural spices/blends for home cooks and professional chefs, in 2020 to meteoric success. Delightfully Hot is their second spicy food brand. The company is headquartered near St. Augustine.

"Our Delightfully Hot appeals to a demographic that enjoys spicy foods," said Zack Glenn. "It's important to create a product that develops into an experience-based gift that can be enjoyed alone or with friends. It's a great do-it-yourself culinary gift for men — \$50-\$100."

"Life got a lot spicier when we decided to branch out from dry seasonings into a high-quality hot sauce kit," said Lauren Glenn. "There isn't anything else like Delightfully Hot on the market. We focus on attention to detail that I expect in a tasty date-night gift."

Delightfully Hot

"Made in the USA" is the Glenns' mantra and holding to that took months to orchestrate. Their dedication to excellence makes it easy for a buyer to follow instructions, know the ingredients and end up with a fabulous hot sauce of their own.

Delightfully Hot features an "around-

the-world" theme so that people can create and taste flavors of delicious globally sourced peppers. There's also a "bonus" Ghost Pepper to thrill the fieriest of spice lovers who crave hot sauces that tilt the scale to wildly hot.

Kit Details and Contents

Makes six unique hot sauces with globally sourced peppers. Styles are Louisiana (hot), Smoky Southwest (mild), Caribbean (fire), Urfa Biber (medium), Thai Chili (hot) and Peri Peri (medium).

And there is a Ghost Pepper for hot sauce lovers who like it extra spicy.

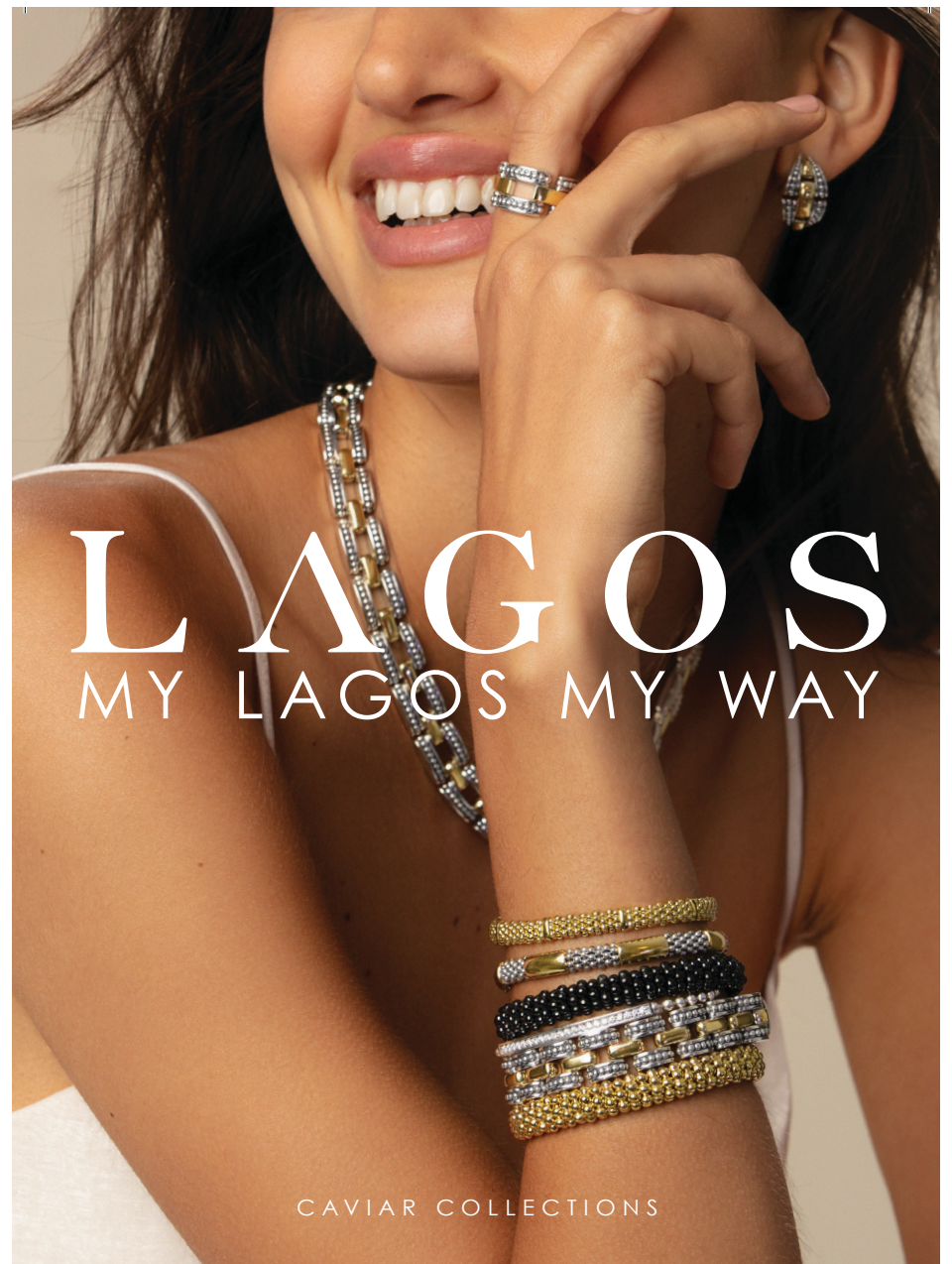
The kit includes a stainless steel funnel, mesh strainer, six hot sauce bottles, customizable labels, African Bird's Eye peppers, Chili de Arbol peppers, Scotch Bonnet peppers, Chipotle Morita peppers, bonus Ghost Pepper, Thai Chili seasoning, Urfa Biber seasoning, additional seasoning packets, gloves, distilled white vinegar, a recipe booklet and fun facts.

For further information contact Lauren Glenn at hello@GlennFoodCo.com or go to datilgator.com.



Contributed photo

Zack and Lauren Glenn have introduced a kit that allows spicy pepper fans to make their own hot sauce.



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SpaLiday Party a relaxing evening escape

On Friday, Dec. 10, the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa offered people an opportunity to turn off the holiday stress during its SpaLiday Party, a reception-style celebration.

Guests enjoyed seasonal offerings, giveaways, raffles and sales on specialty retail items from local vendors, as well as the Sawgrass Spa's gift card promotion.

The resort's restaurants provided light bites.

The Sawgrass Spa is located at 1000 TPC Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach.



Photos by Susan Griffin

Todd Hickey, general manager of Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, and his wife, Anne Hickey, at the SpaLiday Party.



Becky Beall with Farmhouse Fresh shows some of the company's products during the SpaLiday Party.



Samual Sanders provided music at the SpaLiday Party.



Jeff Papa with Rombauer Vineyards offered guests a taste of the Napa Valley wines during the SpaLiday Party.

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Last-Minute Holiday Gift Guide

In need of some last-minute gifts for friends and loved ones? Do not hit the panic button yet, check out these awesome gift ideas and get your holiday cheer back in full swing.

ArtBox

This St. Augustine art gallery recently unveiled a line of unique jewelry featuring the iconic lions of the Nation's Oldest City. Three resident artists worked together to create the bracelet and pendant that depict the Bridge of Lions sentinels in sterling silver. These pieces are meant to communicate the wearer's connection to St. Augustine and are only available at ArtBox.



Phone: 904-704-1121

Coastal Wine Market

Now that Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room has unveiled its first exclusive label, Stone to Crystal, wine lovers will want to give it a taste. Of course, the 2016 Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon is but one of the available selections at this local establishment, which offers a variety of wines, beers and more.



Phone: 904-395-3520

Espling Jewelers

Espling Jewelers, an authorized dealer of Seiko watches, is offering them at 30% off those in stock, with some exceptions. In addition, the business sells diamonds, bridal jewelry, coins and more. The shop also offers jewelry repair, watch repair and appraisals. Espling Jewelers has two locations, one in Mandarin and the other in Jacksonville Beach.



Phone: 904-280-7700

LuxGiftsnGoods.com

Solar cell phone chargers are available from LuxGiftsnGoods.com for \$29.99 plus shipping and handling. But that's just a sample of the many, many gift items that can be found on the website. There are gifts for the home, for women, men, pets and more. The site has featured jewelry and food and wellness selections, as well. Free shipping is offered for all orders over \$149, excluding furniture.



The Spa at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club

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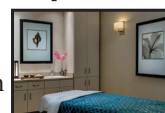
Looking to purchase a group of toys with a related theme? Safari Ltd has put together easy-to-shop, discounted bundles for the holiday season. Find something for the Farm Baby, Dinosaur lover, "Mermazing" Mermaid and more at SafariLtd.com. For example: The "A Zoo Of Fun" bundle is \$50 with free shipping. Of course, the Jacksonville-based toy store also offers individual items.



Phone: 800-554-5414

Sawgrass Marriott Spa

The Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa is offering a special promotion for those purchasing spa gift cards. Those who spend \$75-\$150 may be eligible to receive a \$15 voucher. The voucher increases to \$25 for spending



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Business Weekly

For MORE business news, go to [facebook.com/ThePVRecorder](https://www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder)

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

UrgentVet ‘bridges the gap’ for pet owners

By Anthony Richards

The recent UrgentVet location that opened on County Road 210 in St. Johns has already been leaving its mark on the pet owners in the area.

The business opened its doors with a “soft opening” on October 21 and followed it up by joining the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house Dec. 8.

According to clinic manager Cassie Jones, the soft opening worked great because it allowed the staff to understand the UrgentVet model by easing into the new venture and not being too overwhelmed at any one point.

“It took us about a week, so that we could figure out how to flow efficiently as a team,” Jones said.

One of the reasons the soft opening worked so well in this situation is because the UrgentVet approach is so unique in many ways.

“UrgentVet is really designed to bridge the gap between your general practice or primary veterinarian and your emergency facilities,” clinic manager Cassie Jones said. “It’s designed to see those acute sick and injured.”

According to Jones, that means things that may not be life threatening, but also something that can’t wait the week or two when their primary veterinarian

can schedule an appointment to see the animal.

Their method means that developing a strong relationship with the primary vets in the area is key.

“We send all of their records over and encourage that they go back to their primary care for a follow-up,” Jones said.

Jones has found that sometimes the best thing UrgentVet provides an animal, and their owners is a sense of ease knowing that the facility and its staff has a situation under control.

“Probably about 90% of patients that leave here end up being able to go home,” Jones said. “We do not need to refer to the emergency facility all that

much.”

Another unique aspect that UrgentVet offers are its “fear free” tools, which are designed to make the animals as comfortable as possible by limiting the stress of

URGENTVET continues on Page 24



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B Social Boutique curates unique styling

By Anthony Richards

Brittney Patty opened B Social Boutique with the goal of offering local women the opportunity to shop from a unique selection of clothing and gifts all under one roof located at 2220 County Road 210 West, Suite 101 in St. Johns.

Taking on such a venture was nothing new to Patty, who had been in the boutique industry for 10 years, including living and owning a store in Ocala for eight years, as well as having one in Gainesville.

However, she took some time away after having her second child, but then she and her husband Brandon saw that the time was right to get back in once again.

“I realized that there was no place to just pop in and grab a quick gift along (County Road) 210,” Patty said.

The business opened Oct. 12 and a ribbon cutting was held Dec. 2 to christen its joining of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

In just the past few months since the store opened its doors, Patty has been reassured that she made the right decision by the amount of positive feedback she has received.

“It has been a great response so far,” Patty said. “We’re on to something here.”

One of the ways that Patty seeks to pro-

vide a unique experience to her customers is by offering “hand-picked practical pieces” of clothing to choose from.

In most cases, Patty goes to metropolitan areas such as Atlanta and chooses the assortment of fashion and looks she then sells in her store.

“We hand-pick everything,” Patty said. “Nothing in the shop comes from a big box store.”

Patty’s process allows her to select merchandise that fits the local community and the tastes of her clientele.

In only a couple of months she already has built relationships with her regular customers and has a much better idea of what they do and don’t like when it comes to products, such as clothing, shoes and jewelry.

“Each demographic is unique,” Patty said. “We’re able to really buy for our customers. We’re already to the point where we’re on a first name basis with many of them.”

Another goal of Patty’s is to make sure the products sold are also done within a reasonable price range, so that every customer can find a style that fits them without breaking the bank.

A variety of items from clothing, shoes, jewelry, candles and other gifts are sold.

“We carry a little bit of everything,”



B Social Boutique hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony Dec. 2 to celebrate its joining of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.



Photos by Susan Griffin

A variety of items, such as clothing, shoes, jewelry, candles and other gift items are sold at B Social Boutique.

Patty said.

She believes that the boutique atmosphere will do great in the growing area around County Road 210 and thinks that people are starting to trend more toward the boutique shopping experience compared to the historically popular department stores.

“I think people miss that interaction that customer service that you don’t

always get at some of the bigger stores,” Patty said. “People want to be able to ask, ‘How does this look on me?’ and are looking for an opinion.”

The store is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Customers can also search the store’s selection by going to shopbsocial.com.



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Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation hires director of foundation development

Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation recently hired Mary Anne Thomas as director of foundation development. In her new position, Thomas will oversee multi-leveled support for the foundation by identifying and stewarding donors primarily in St. Johns County.

Thomas joins Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation after a tenure as regional philanthropy officer for the American Red Cross. In this role, she supported philanthropy efforts for disaster relief and biomedical services, while also aiding the armed forces.

Thomas previously served as the

executive director of the Ponte Vedra YMCA for 14 years. There, she worked to uplift the community by bolstering health and wellness programs – work that instilled in her the passion of ensuring all children have access to a safe and healthy environment where they are able to thrive.

Virginia Hall, president and chief development officer at Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation, said



Mary Anne Thomas

Thomas's breadth of holistic experience in nonprofit management and genuine care for her community made her a natural fit for the role.

"Mary Anne has unmatched dedication and compassion for our community and has the professional experience to back it up," Hall said. "Our entire team is thrilled to have her on board, and we're ready to see how Mary Anne will

help extend our positive impact within the First Coast community."

Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation operates several key community outreach programs in Northeast Florida, all of which are designed to support the advanced medical treatment offered in Ascension St. Vincent's health care facilities and to help care for individuals and families who are impoverished and underinsured.

For further information, go to GiveSt-Vincents.org.

Seaside Bank welcomes Davis as North Florida president

Seaside Bank and Trust has announced the addition of David Davis as the North Florida market president. In this role, Davis is responsible for overseeing delivery of commercial banking, wealth management and retail banking services within the North Florida region and looking to grow the bank's presence in the community.



David Davis

Davis is based in the company's Ponte Vedra Beach area office.

"We are thrilled to develop our Florida team with the addition of someone who has such a strong network within the North Florida community," said Gideon Haymaker, state president for Florida for Seaside Bank and Trust and its parent company, United Community Bank. "David is a proven leader, and we are confident he and his team will further develop Seaside's reputation of providing

exceptional service."

Davis has more than 30 years of experience in banking and financial services. Most recently, he served as the executive vice president of commercial banking at BBVA.

"I am thrilled to join the team at Seaside Bank and Trust," said Davis. "I look forward to contributing to Seaside's commitment to

service and forming meaningful relationships to help our community flourish."

Davis graduated from Stetson University with a bachelor's degree in business administration and from Jacksonville University with a master's degree in business administration. He is currently an active member of the Gator Bowl and the First Coast Manufacturing Association and serves on the board for Lifework Leadership First Coast.

UrgentVet

Continued from 22

the environment.

This is done thanks to calming pheromones and dimmable lighting in the rooms, as well as rooms designed specifically for dogs or cats.

The latest technology is also used to help when diagnosing an animal, including digital x-ray system where the image can be obtained immediately and fast-scan ultrasounds that allow for a quick diagnostic check of internal organs.

The facility is only equipped to service dogs and cats.

UrgentVet is open weekdays 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. and weekends 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The facility is also open holidays from noon to 8 p.m.



Photo by Susan Griffin

UrgentVet held a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house Dec. 8 at its St. Johns location.

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Eye surgeon sees record number of patients despite pandemic

Gulani emphasizes positivity in face of COVID-19

By Shaun Ryan

Even as COVID-19 forced many physicians to rethink the way they managed the flow of patients at their offices, Dr. Arun C. Gulani didn't have to change much at all.

That's because his eye surgery practice has always emphasized a one-on-one approach.

In fact, while some medical offices have had to reduce the number of patients since March 2000, Gulani actually treated what he calls a "world record": patients flying in from 40 states and 25 countries.

To be sure, Gulani did have to take measures to protect his patients and staff. Masks were worn and surfaces sanitized.

Also, before flying into the area, patients had to be tested in their state or country of origin, and they – as well as Gulani's staff – had to be vaccinated. In fact, Gulani conducted telephone interviews with his patients before they even boarded their planes.

The precautions paid off. None of his patients got infected with COVID-19.

But why did so many patients take the trouble to fly to the First Coast when they

could have simply made appointments with doctors in their own neighborhoods?

Gulani has a theory, which he explained during recent teaching sessions in the Far East: Forced to stay home during the pandemic, patients had more time to investigate their options and make informed choices.

"People had more time to research," Gulani said. "They're not going to just any doctor because he was available on that day."

Patients who did their homework discovered that Gulani has been a pioneer in Lasik surgery since the beginning and has trademarked new procedures, such as LaZr-Plastique, an improvement over Lasik that can be completed in minutes with no cuts, no blades and no flaps, which can correct nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism and the need for reading glasses.

Another one of Gulani's trademark procedures is LenzoPlastique, which he says raises cataract surgery "to an artistic level."

In addition, Gulani operates in a one-of-a-kind cataract spa where patients can relax with music and a light show while he repairs their vision. In fact, he recently did work on a well-known baritone who



Contributed photo

Dr. Arun Gulani (center, front in blue) celebrates with some of his patients.

has sung for six presidents, and the patient was awake, lucid and "enjoying the light show," Gulani said.

So relaxed was the man that he sang during the surgery.

"I was in his eye, doing his cataract, and he sang 'Amazing Grace,'" Gulani said. "Can you believe it?"

The owner of Gulani Vision Institute in Jacksonville calls such accounts his "COVID-positives" to counter the negativity many feel in the wake of the pandemic.

Another such COVID-positive story involves a plastic surgeon from Germany, who first read Gulani's textbook before reaching out. The man had LaZrPlastique performed, as well as another procedure that Gulani has written a book about – "The Sparkle Technique," whereby red eyes are made bright white.

In November, a woman traveled from Italy for that same procedure as well as Gulani's trademark M.O.I.S.T. therapy, which corrects dry eye.

Yet another patient had undergone 19 surgeries before finally coming to Gulani. "He's 20/20 today," Gulani said.

Gulani has certainly not been idle during the pandemic, as evidenced not only by the record number of patients but also by the many patents and trademarks he has continued to acquire.

And through it all, he has emphasized the importance of remaining positive, particularly at a time of year when people take note of the blessings they have.

"I feel even though situations outside, like COVID, can be negative, stay positive," he said. "There's so much to be thankful for."

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In the Arts



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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Village Arts celebrates 46th year during holiday open house

By Shaun Ryan

Village Arts Framing and Gallery in Sawgrass Village held its holiday open house Saturday, Dec. 11, inviting the public to see the 150 works on display there and offering discounts on purchases. It marked a return to the annual event after a hiatus in 2020 due to the pandemic.

The business is celebrating its 46th year. It's been owned the last 14 years by Pamela Keegan. The general manager is Lisa Cederberg.

"It's a lot of work, but it's also a lot of fun," Keegan said. "It keeps me busy."

Both women are artists, Keegan preferring oils and acrylic and Cederberg painting in watercolor. Their creative sense and eye for color benefit customers seeking the right matting and frames. Village Arts offers about 5,000 different frame styles supplied by an estimated 15 companies. Though the frames are

built offsite, Keegan and Cederberg cut the glass and mats and put it all together locally.

Framing is both an art and a science, and expert framers must be good with tools and math. Experience is important, and it's something both Keegan and Cederberg have. Their combined framing experience is about 50 years.

The art displayed at the gallery is an eclectic collection of works by local and regional artists, several who are award-winners. Browsers encounter plein air pieces, still lifes, abstracts and portraits.

Outside the gallery Saturday under the canopy, Ponte Vedra artist Eve Albrecht demonstrated her own painting technique.

Albrecht, whose work can be seen at the gallery and at an exhibit at Christ Episcopal Church, paints portraits, figures and landscapes. She is a member of CoRK Arts District in downtown Jacksonville.



Lisa Cederberg, left, and Pamela Keegan welcomed the public to their business, Village Arts Framing and Gallery, during a holiday open house on Saturday, Dec. 11.

"That's a fun place, because Jacksonville has got some great artists, and a lot of them are downtown," she said.

Albrecht's paintings exhibited at Vil-



Photos by Shaun Ryan

Artist Eve Albrecht conducts a painting demonstration outside Village Arts Framing and Gallery, during a holiday open house on Saturday, Dec. 11.

lage Arts mostly focus on her travels, especially visits to Colorado and California.

For further information on the gallery, go to villageartspvb.com.

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The following photos are from the 26th Annual Christ Church Nutcracker Dec. 11. More than 200 local performers, many from Ponte Vedra and the Beaches areas, took part in the play that was created years ago by Felicia Rhoden is a product of the dance ministry at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Photos by Anthony Richards



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Panthers reach Fortegra Tournament final



Photos by Anthony Richards

Logan Ryan shoots a jumper against Fleming Island in the championship of the Fortegra Tournament Dec. 11.

Sharks fall for first time this season

By Anthony Richards

The Nease boys basketball team had a memorable showing in the Fortegra Tournament by making it all the way to the championship game.

Although the Panthers (5-3) lost in final, 59-31 to Fleming Island Dec. 11, they still came out of the tournament riding a wave of momentum after a pair of victories over Dublin (Georgia) and Fletcher.

According to Nease head coach Josh Bailen, he was happy with how the Panthers were able to establish their style of play in the two wins and it all started with disruptive play on the defensive end.

“Our guys are finding their roles and doing what it takes to carry them out,” Bailen said.

On the offensive end, senior point guard Matthew Guzie had a huge game for the Panthers in the semifinals against Fletcher, as he scored two clutch baskets in the waning moments to send his team give his team a shot at the title.

Guzie finished the contest with a team-high 17 points, including hitting a beautiful floater in the lane with about a minute to play and then coming down with an offensive rebound between two Fletcher players under the basket and going up and under for a layup to give Nease a one-point lead with 20 seconds remaining.

He has more heart than anybody out there,” Bailen said. “Just a hard worker and a great kid.”

The victory was even sweeter, because the Senators had beaten the Panthers by 38 points to open the season Nov. 23.

Bailen is happy with the heart that his

team showed to bounce back and change the script in the second matchup between the squads.

“It was a great life lesson of how to handle adversity,” Bailen said.

Also finishing in double figures for the Panthers against the Senators was Jake Larson with 12 and Logan Ryan with 11.

Ryan scored 21 points, including five three-pointers in the first-round win over Dublin.

Ryan and Guzie were both named as members on the all-tournament team.

Ponte Vedra also played during the three-day tournament and were able to win one of the two games they played.

The two losses suffered were the first for the Sharks (5-2) this season.

The Sharks opened the competition with a tough matchup against a very athletic Riverside squad and lost in a close one, 57-56 in overtime.

Nate Bunkosky led the Sharks with 17 points, while J.T. Kelly tallied 15, including a trio from beyond the arc, and Luke Pirris had 11.

However, after the hard-fought game against Riverside the Sharks came out flat, especially on the offensive end and lost 51-38 to Episcopal.

The Sharks went from having three players in double figures against Riverside to none against Episcopal.

“We needed to move the ball around a lot more (on offense),” Ponte Vedra head coach Kevin Whirity said. “You can’t take away everything on defense, but with 21 points at the half I thought we were on track.”

The Sharks responded with a commanding 55-30 win over Jacksonville Impact Christian Academy to put a halt to the two-game slide.

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Matthew Guzie drives to the basket in the semifinals against Fletcher Dec. 10. He hit two clutch shots down the stretch to secure the win for the Panthers.



Photos by Anthony Richards

A new exhibit at the World Golf Hall of Fame features displays on each of this year's class of 2022 inductees.

Tiger highlights new golf hall of fame class exhibit

By Anthony Richards

The class of 2022 inductees into the World Golf Hall of Fame will include competitors Tiger Woods and Susie Maxwell Berning and contributors Tim Finchem and Marion Hollins.

However, before they are officially announced prior to THE PLAYERS in March 2022, fans will be able to bask in the glory and accomplishments that made all four worthy of selection with an exhibit currently on display at the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Woods is the most well-known name of the bunch, as he remains an active player on the PGA Tour and has done a lot over the years to develop a following beyond fans of golf.

However, Berning is a three-time U.S. Women's Open champion, including winning back-to-back victories in 1972 and 1973.

Finchem served as PGA Tour commissioner from 1994 to 2016 and became the face of golf from a leadership point of view during his two-plus decades in the role.

After winning the 1921 U.S. Women's Amateur, Hollins went on to be a pioneer for women's golf.

The inductee exhibit is open to the public and will remain that way in the

months leading up to the ceremony.

Memorabilia from each inductee is featured as part of the showcase, including trophies, golf clubs used and unique things, such as Finchem's cap and gown he received as part of his honorary degree from University College Dublin in Ireland.

According to Caryn Wiggins, senior manager of programs and events with the World Golf Hall of Fame, telling the stories of who the four inductees are was a major focus when creating the exhibit.

"We want to get to know them as people and not just golfers," Wiggins said. "We try to highlight that."

Some of the other unique things are hand-written notes that Berning wrote during her playing days in the 1970s and the shirt Woods wore during the final round of his first Masters victory in 1997.

A lot of time went into gathering the items on display and many times it came down to choosing certain items over others.

"We always contact our new inductees and one of the first things we talk about is what they want to have on display here at the hall of fame," Wiggins said. "We kind of put together a wish list of items we would love to have if they are willing to lend us those items. Generally, people are very gracious."



Tiger Woods has won 15 career majors, including the career grand slam. Trophies from his victories in the Masters, U.S. Open, British Open and PGA Championship are all on display.



Susie Maxwell Berning was a three-time U.S. Women's Open Champion during her career.

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ACROSS

1. Rope fiber
5. Mai ____
8. Russia's Terrible one, e.g.
12. "What ____ Happened to Baby Jane?"
13. Tattled
14. Actress Reed
15. Internet share-able
16. Inwardly
17. Black tropical hardwood
18. *Winged impression in winter
20. Home of the Hawkeyes
21. Investigative report
22. Chicken or this?
23. Not dense
26. Early-day supercontinent
30. Afternoon shut-eye
31. Even though
34. Picture on a coat
35. Anti-seniors sentiment
37. Jean of Dadaism
38. Crewneck alternative
39. Half-man, half-goat
40. Arm cover
42. Victoria Beckham ____ Adams
43. Lacking sense of moral standards
45. Flying high
47. Often part of disguise
48. Queen-like
50. Wood file
52. * ____ Plunge
56. Secret stash
57. Damien's prediction
58. Not at work
59. Opposite of cation
60. Abbreviated seconds
61. Precedes stated rank
62. Moon pull
63. *Like toddy or cocoa
64. Trans-Siberian Railroad city

DOWN

1. Shortens pants
2. Like fair share
3. Short for memorandum
4. Antebellum
5. Polynesian kingdom
6. Ten-pin establishment
7. Bucolic poem
8. *Ride on runners
9. *Winter building material
10. Tolstoy's Karenina
11. R&B Charles
13. *Glittery decor
14. Condescend
19. Indian black tea
22. Nibble
23. Big mess
24. Like a Druid, e.g.
25. Celery, technically
26. *Snowman's corn cob accessory
27. Are not
28. Wedding singer, e.g.
29. Questioned
32. *Snow ____, ammunition
33. **But I heard him exclaim, ____ he drove out of sight..."
36. *Winter walking aid
38. Type of consonant
40. Actors' grp.
41. a.k.a. strict vegetarians
44. Mature, as in fruit
46. Like Silas of "The Da Vinci Code"
48. Young Montague
49. Decide at the polls
50. Jasmine of "Aladdin"
51. Turns blue litmus red
52. #42 Across, once
53. Cheese from Netherlands
54. Contributions to the poor
55. Stink to high heaven
56. *Arctic ____, snowmobile brand

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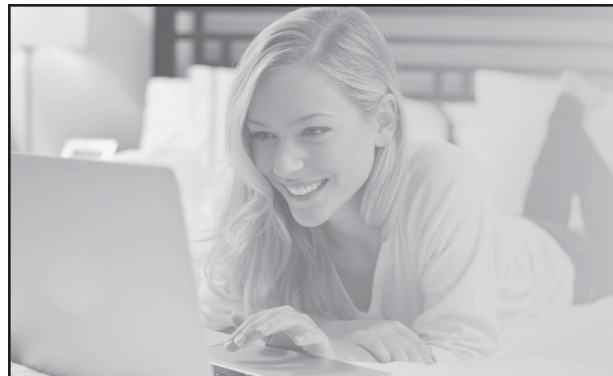
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Flagler Health+ is Coming Soon to Durbin Park



Flagler Health+ is bringing a breakthrough health and wellness experience to residents of Northeast Florida. The 42-acre campus will feature the state-of-the-art Flagler Health+ Durbin Park Hospital, an outpatient surgery center, as well as family medicine, specialty care, urgent care, imaging, laboratory services, one of the largest YMCAs in Northeast Florida, community engagement space and more. Flagler Health+ is bringing you next-level care, right next door.

Visit [FlaglerHealth.org/DurbinPark](https://www.FlaglerHealth.org/DurbinPark) for more information.

