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PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

February 24, 2022

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PonteVedraRecorder.com

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader



First Coast Register
INSIDE



Local Real Estate Spotlight
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In the Arts
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Photo by Anthony Richards

Nease's Cami Robinson jumps for joy as the final buzzer sounds and the Panthers clinch a spot in the final four with a 49-33 victory over rival St. Augustine. Nease will play Fort Lauderdale St. Thomas Aquinas in the Class 6A state semifinals at 6 p.m. tonight.



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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



Maize

Hi, I'm Maize. I'm an 8-month-old female American pit bull terrier. I love to go for walks, play in the yard with toys and do all kinds of fun puppy things. If you want to add a friendly, sweet, girl to your family, stop by the Pet Center to see if we're a match.



Bella

Hi, I'm Bella. I'm a 2-year-old female terrier mix. I'm sweet, friendly and happy. In my previous home I was raised outside, so I will need some help with housetraining and learning to live indoors. If you think we might be a match, please 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

Ocean Palms welcomes additional assistant principal

Dr. Bradley Johnson has been named the second assistant principal at Ocean Palms Elementary School. He previously served as the school's ESE support facilitation teacher.



Dr. Bradley Johnson

Originally from California, the U.S. Army veteran has traveled and lived in many places and accumulated 18 years of teaching experience, both in Exceptional Student Education and higher education.

Alyssa Shorstein, candidate for judge, plans event

Alyssa Shorstein, attorney at law and candidate for St. Johns County

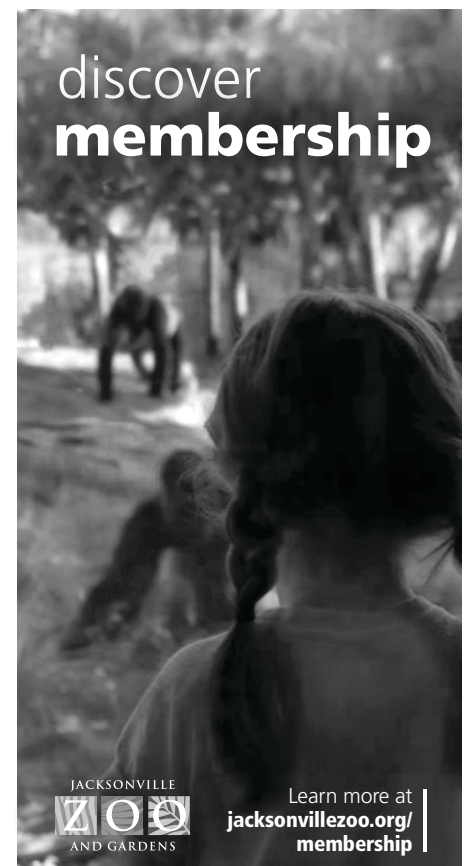
BRIEFS continues on Page 5

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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Flagler Hospital named to America's 50 Best Hospitals list for 2022



Contributed photo

Flagler Hospital has been named by Healthgrades to its list of America's 50 Best Hospitals.

Flagler Hospital recently announced that it has received the top achievement from Healthgrades — the 2022 America's 50 Best Hospitals Award.

This recognition places Flagler Hospital among the top 1% of all hospitals in the country for clinical care and patient outcomes for the most common conditions and procedures. Flagler Hospital has been among Healthgrades America's 250 Best Hospitals for nine years, among America's 100 Best for five consecutive years, and now one of America's 50 Best.

Flagler is the only hospital in Florida named as recipient of both the America's

50 Best Hospital Award and One of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Orthopedic Surgery for 2022.

"To be named among the best 50 hospitals in our nation reflects the unwavering commitment of every member of our team, from our community providers to our staff on the front lines and in support roles, to our volunteers and our community partners," said Flagler Hospital President and CEO, Jason Barrett. "Even in the most challenging times, our board continues to ensure we are investing in

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The Recorder's garden columnist Kathy Esfahani of Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery shares her tips for growing gorgeous gardens in Northeast Florida.

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE: ANNUALS VS. PERENNIALS

Photos provided by Kathy Esfahani

By Kathy Esfahani



"He who plants a garden plants happiness."

Kathy Esfahani

A great way to add color and variety to your landscaping is a combination of annuals and perennials. If you ask me, both are needed in your garden!

ANNUALS:

Annuals are temporary season to season.

They exert their energy unconditionally with consistent vibrant colors until their season ends and will not grow back.

Choose 2-3 places in your garden you would like to enjoy the beautiful array of constant color, and that can be changed out with each passing season.



Annuals often have vibrant colors.

Most popular areas for planting: front door, near street or mailbox, and back patio areas where you relax.

Creating "special" annual beds with good, soft No. 3 mix topsoil aids in manageable replacement once their season is over. (Annuals last 3-6 months, changing seasonally 2-3 times per year)

Annuals are most often used in planters, as well.

Annuals recommended to plant now: petunia, dusty miller, pansy, snapdragon.

PERENNIALS:

Perennials last indefinitely. Most of



Perennials last indefinitely.

them bloom in and out of color but do not give the constant vibrant color of annuals.

Many perennials die down in the winter and tend to look dead, but they are not! Wait until spring and they will just need pruning. Prune off dead stems and wait for them to re-appear.

Perennials should be about 90-95% of your landscaping as they grow back and bloom. However, this is why you need to incorporate both in landscaping to give extra color in those die down months.

Annuals should only be about 5-10% of your landscaping due to time, effort and repeat expense.



Geraniums

Perennials recommended to plant now: blue daze, foxtail fern, geranium, drift roses.

Flower of the Week: Geranium

Email Kathy at kcg.pvr@gmail.com for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future. For more information and ideas, visit Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. The phone number is 904-655-7373.

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First Coast Cultural Center

**Kids' Night Out
March 4, 6-9pm**



**Marisela Quiros
Drawing
Fundamentals 2
4 classes beginning
Feb 18th in Nocatee**

**Anna Miller
Abstract Painting
4 classes beginning
Feb 28th**






Contributed photo

Four area students have been recognized by the Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for their entries in the American History Essay Contest.

Essay contest winners named

The Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented a bronze medal, certificate and \$50 to each winner of the American History Essay Contest for grades five through eight at the chapter meeting on Feb. 1.

The outstanding essay writers were Nate Wolf, grade five, PVPV/Rawlings Elementary; Ethan Rozen, grade six, Landrum Middle School; Lincoln Rozen, grade seven, Landrum Middle School; and Evren Agar, grade eight, Landrum Middle School.

Lincoln has won three years in a row,

advancing to the state, regional and national level last year.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, contestants were instructed to imagine that they had a brother who died during World War I, and to write a first-person account of their story, including their attending the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, as well as the significance of the event.

Chapter winning essays are forwarded to the Florida State Society DAR American History Contest.

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The Ponte Vedra Recorder is currently hiring reliable and dedicated Independent Contractors to distribute newspapers throughout the Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee & Beaches areas one day a week (Thursdays).

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Briefs

Continued from 2

Court judge will be the featured guest at Mowrey Law from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 24. The address is 2801 N. Third St. in St. Augustine.

Admission to the fundraising event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served. For more information and to RSVP, contact shorsteinforjudge@gmail.com or call 904-544-2042.

Shorstein has been practicing law for more than 12 years in St. Johns County. After attending law school at the University of Florida, she started her own practice in 2009 where she built her firm for nine years. Then, in 2018, Alyssa and Sung Lee became law partners at The Law Office of Shorstein and Lee in St. Augustine.

Trash to Treasure fundraiser planned

The Ribault Garden Club is planning its Trash to Treasure fundraiser for 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 5, at 705 Second Ave. North, Jacksonville Beach. Admission is free.

A preview party will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, March 4. Tickets are \$10 and available at the door. Party shoppers will enjoy wine and appetizers.

The event will feature home goods, kitchenware, plants and planters, vases, clothing, jewelry, fishing gear, golf clubs, books, games, toys and more.

Chocolate And Beyond supports volunteers, teachers

Chocolate and Beyond, a celebration of chocolate, desserts and other delectable culinary treats, will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. March 5 at The Classic Car Museum of St. Augustine. Guests will enjoy tasty samples from some of the area's finest restaurants and specialty shops. A silent auction and contests will also be part of this fun and exciting afternoon.

This event is hosted by TASK — Teacher's Aid for Student Knowledge.

Proceeds from Chocolate and Beyond will support RSVP of St. Johns County. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$15 for children younger than 12 and can be purchased at <https://rb.gy/zbdbho>. Tickets will also be available at the door.

Newcomers Alumnae plan fashion show

Newcomers Alumnae will hold its annual fashion show from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, at Marsh Landing Country Club. This year's theme is "A Twist of Lemon." Clothes will be provided by Lemon Twist Boutique of Sawgrass Village in Ponte Vedra Beach. This upscale boutique, established in 1977, offers an array of women's and children's clothing that are perfect for the beach and country-club living.

Eight Newcomers Alumnae members will model two outfits each from Lemon Twist Boutique while attendees enjoy sunburst salad with grilled chicken and dessert. Additionally, each luncheon attendee will receive a bag filled with goodies. A few \$50 gift cards to Lemon Twist will be raffled off to the group, among other prizes.

Marsh Landing Country Club is located at 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. The cost to attend the luncheon is \$23. For reservations, email bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible to reserve a seat. The deadline to sign up is Friday morning, Feb. 25.

St. Johns County seeks community input for branding process

St. Johns County has partnered with North Star Place Branding + Marketing to launch a research process to develop a community "brand." This effort will ultimately define how the county communicates with its audiences in the future.

According to North Star CEO Will Ketchum, at the heart of St. Johns County's brand will be what makes the community unique. Toward this

end, North Star developed an online survey. The questionnaire has been crafted to determine St. Johns County's strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities. All who live or work in St. Johns County are invited and encouraged to participate.

Surveys can be completed online and submitted electronically on www.BrandingSJC.com. Printed surveys will also be available at all St. Johns County Public Library branches and Council on Aging senior centers.

Surveys must be completed and submitted before March 6.

Cypress Village's management company wins top ranking

Cypress Village, managed by Life Care Services, An LCS Company, announced that its management company ranked highest in customer satisfaction with independent senior living communities for the third consecutive year in the J.D. Power 2021 Senior Living Satisfaction Study. The company also achieved the highest score in all six factors of satisfaction: resident activities, community staff, price paid for services received, resident apartment/living unit, community building and grounds, and dining.

The study examines industry-level performance metrics of senior living providers and highlights the best practices that are critical to customer satisfaction, advocacy and loyalty. Cypress Village serves more than 900 residents and 300 team members.

Life Care Services ranked highest in independent living resident overall satisfaction with a score of 817 in the study. The study is based on responses from residents living in an independent senior living community within the previous three years.

Rutherford, Mooney introduce Readable Legislation Act

U.S. Reps. John Rutherford and Alex X. Mooney (West Virginia, 02) have introduced the Readable Legislation Act. The goal of this bill is to help the

public and Congress more accurately understand legislation introduced in Congress. A similar policy already exists in the Florida State Legislature.

"The text of bills introduced in Congress often includes confusing references to federal law and U.S. Code that make them difficult to understand," said Rutherford. "The Readable Legislation Act requires every bill that amends current law to show all changes in full, rather than use technical language to refer to omissions and insertions. This small change would help members of Congress and their constituents more easily read and understand the purpose of each bill and the effect it would have on the public."

The Readable Legislation Act would prevent any current law from being revised or amended by mere reference to it. Every bill or joint resolution that amends an existing section of current law would be required to include the entire section being changed, showing the omissions and insertions proposed.

Woman's Club to meet

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will hold its March general meeting from 6 to 7:30 p.m. March 16 at the Southern Kitchen & Bar, 831 1st St. North, Jacksonville Beach.

The speaker will be Linda M. Forte, certified financial planner practitioner, who will talk about managing finances, preparing for the unexpected and leaving a legacy.

To register, go to "events" at pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php.

In addition, golfer registration is under way for the Women's Care/Peace At Home Pro-Am Tournament, sponsored by the club, and is first-come, first-serve.

The tournament will be held Oct. 23 and 24 at The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach, 101 Plantation Drive. The fundraiser for the Betty Griffin Center will include 80 players in addition to 20 professionals.

To register, go to bettygriffin.org.

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Edwards & Ragatz, P.A.

Sarah Ferrer-Bruker is the owner of Bold City Dermatology in St. Augustine, where she gets to feed her passion for helping others to look and feel better while getting to the root of their skin issues. She was part of a military family that moved around a lot when she was growing up until they finally settled in Northeast Florida when she was in high school, and the area has felt like home ever since.

Sarah Ferrer-Bruker

As told to Anthony Richards

Can you please tell us a little about your background?

I have three kids, I am a Jacksonville native, and a first-generation Filipino American born to a mom who was the best registered nurse on the planet and a dad who was in the Navy.

I moved every four years of my life, so I went to a lot of different schools. I've lived in California, Texas, Florida and Guam. I feel so lucky to have landed in Jacksonville.

During my freshman and sophomore year of high school my parents decided for my dad's last station to be in Jacksonville, so I started sophomore year at Bishop Kenny (High School) and graduated from there and then went to Florida State (University) where I did four years before going to Nova Southeastern for med school. I stayed in South Florida for my residency and did my training at a hospital in West Palm Beach County, so after med school I did six years straight of training.

What made it the right time to start Bold City Dermatology?

I came out of my dermatology residency and took a job with Park Avenue dermatology and was there up until very recently.

I have no professional regrets and am still super friendly with everybody at my last practice. I believe that each part of your life is meant to teach you something and we are always changing.

You've got to know yourself and know what you love to do. It was the right time for me to go out on my own and start this venture.

When did you realize that dermatology was the ideal field for you?

I always knew I wanted to be doctor because I just love medicine in general. Dermatology is unique because it is one of the specialties where you collaborate with so many other specialties.

Whenever you have something wrong with your skin, many times it can be from an internal problem, and you must be aware and awake to all the potential problems that could be manifesting on the outside but really be brewing on the inside.

It married all my interests because I get to do procedures as well as a creative and precise portion with cosmetics.

What are the most rewarding parts of the job?

It's all very fascinating and it humbles me every day. I just love my job, and how many people can say that? I think that comes through to the patients.

People are scared when they come in knowing that a procedure might be needed, but myself and the team around me project a calmness that the patients pick up on.

Everyone leaves here happy, and sometimes even laughing after their biopsies.

What are some of the challenges that you face with your job?

I think that there is too much information out there that is not 100% applicable to them. A good example is



Photo by Anthony Richards

Sarah Ferrer-Bruker recently took a leap of faith and opened her own practice when she started Bold City Dermatology.

acne, because sometimes it is not related to products or the food you're eating but it is just truly a combination of genetics, inflammation and bacteria and can be just a little bit unlucky sometimes.

Although there are things you could fix by going on the internet, someone who has very serious acne is not the same as someone who has mild acne.

You see someone struggle for so long because of the misinformation or misdiagnosis.

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

I think we live in the best place because for me South Florida was a little too busy. I feel like the area has a lot

to offer and I find it diverse and with lots of offerings.

One of my favorite things to do is going out to eat and we have plenty to choose from.

There are only a few places in the country where you can pretty much eat outdoors all year long if you wanted.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I like to play tennis. I'm not good at it, but you can play all year.

I have three kids, so they keep me pretty busy, and I want to be an involved mom.

My husband Zac owns a local business himself called Prime Carwash, which he partners with one of his best friends that he grew up with.

Church in Nocatee plans 5K, 10K, fun run

Runners have a new race option that will take them through the scenic neighborhood streets and Nocatee greenway trails in April and at the same time help First Baptist Church Jacksonville at Nocatee to serve the community in expanded ways.

The First 5K Race will be held at 7:30 a.m. April 23 at the church, 1770 Valley Ridge Blvd., Ponte Vedra. There will be a 5K, 10K and 1-mile fun run as part of the race with professional timing results for the 5K/10K provided by Second Wind Race Timing. Overall awards will be presented to the top three winners in the male and female categories and also to the best finishers in specific age groups at five-year intervals.

Since coming to the Nocatee community in 2009, the focus of FBC Jax at Nocatee has been to share the hope of Jesus Christ through “reaching all of Jacksonville with all of Jesus for all of life.” The church opened its permanent facility on Valley Ridge Boulevard in 2019 and has been committed to using its building to serve members and the community.

“We are a community church and, as such, our focus will always be to serve

the community,” said campus Pastor Spencer Harmon. “So far, we have had more than 12 community groups use our facility and fields. In addition, regular sports leagues, co-ops and workout groups use our facilities on a weekly basis. We are growing as a church as is the Nocatee community, and we are eager to serve the community in new ways.”

Last month, the church launched “The Grow Campaign” — a plan to grow its facility footprint to accommodate growing ministry in the community and create more space for the community. All proceeds from The First 5K Race will go directly to the effort to create more space to love and serve Nocatee in Jesus’ name.

Post-race food and refreshments will be available for participants in the race, which will begin and end at the church’s campus. The 5K and 10K runners will receive a technical race T-shirt, custom finisher medal and a free race photo.

To register or for more information, go to: <https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/PonteVedra/TheFirst5KRace> or email nocatee@fbcjax.com.

Farmers Market celebrates Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras was celebrated Saturday, Feb. 19, at the Nocatee Farmers Market in Nocatee Station Field. Sponsored by Baptist Health, the event featured live music by Let’s Ride Brass Band, a stilt walker, beer and wine at the bar and more than 60 local vendors.

Photos by Susan Griffin



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The link to offer fun options for spring break camps

By Anthony Richards

This will be the first spring break the link in Nocatee will be open and they have a list of options for local students to take part in while they are out of school.

Three spring break camp options are being offered to choose from. There will be a camp focusing on Olympic-style fencing and another pertaining to CodeSpark coding and video game design.

However, there will also be one that will include a buffet of activities, including Esports, LEGO robotics, a variation of indoor tennis and arts and crafts.

"We wanted to offer one camp that presents a lot of avenues to explore, that way you're not doing the same thing every day," said Jeff Tawney, director of operations at the link.

Professional instructors will be overseeing the camps' activities. Esports and coding are two areas that are newer to the link.

The camps will be held March 14-18, which coincides with the week that St. Johns County Public Schools has

scheduled for this year's spring break holiday. Children ages 6 and older are welcome to attend.

The tennis portion will be played indoors using Nerf balls, while the arts and crafts will be taught in conjunction with the Sapna Academy on site, which seeks to teach children through play.

Each of the activities offered at the camps are offered as a larger extent through clubs or afterschool programs at the link.

The link opened July 14, 2021, and one of the facility's goals was to become a center for the entire community to share in.

Events like the spring break camps only help establish its place within the framework of the community.

"There's been a buzz," Tawney said. "Especially for folks who live in Nocatee, kids have started just riding their bikes or golf carts here to take part in the things we're doing."

The Olympic-style fencing camp is \$150, while the coding and video game design camp and the camp offering a variety are both \$299.

The variety camp will last from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the fencing and coding camps will both last a half-day from 9 a.m. to noon. Breaks and lunch will be provided at all the camps.

Registration is required to take part in either of the camps. Booking a spot can be done by going to thelink.zone or by using the app.



Flagler

Continued from 3

our people, technology, education and in training to achieve the very best clinical outcome for every patient, every time. Our community should be proud of this tremendous accomplishment, just as I am proud to work among such passionate people who truly care about our mission and maintain a commitment to caring for our community year after year."

America's 50 Best Hospitals award recipients are making an impact. From 2018-2020, patients treated in hospitals achieving the Healthgrades top 50 hospitals recognition on average had a 21.7 percent lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive this award, as measured across 17 rated conditions and procedures where mortality is the outcome. In fact, statistical analysis shows that, if all hospitals as a group performed similarly to hospitals achieving the Healthgrades America's 50 Best Hospitals Award, 157,292 lives could potentially have been saved from 2018 to 2020.

"Being among America's 50 Best Hospitals is the top achievement from Healthgrades," said Brad Bowman MD, chief medical officer and head of data science at Healthgrades. "Hospitals like Flagler Hospital are truly leading the nation and setting the standard for care delivery. We commend Flagler Hospital for their dedication to patient care and committing themselves to keeping their communities safe."

With tools like hospital ratings and awards, Healthgrades helps consumers make confident health care decisions by enabling the evaluation and comparison of hospital performance to find the highest quality care.

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Photos by Anthony Richards

County Clerk of Circuit Court and County Comptroller Brandon Patty was the guest speaker at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division luncheon at Ruth's Chris Steak House Feb. 16.



Brandon Patty believes the guide to county finances can be a useful tool for local businesses.



Jackie Smith and Trudy Toche attended the Feb. 16 Chamber luncheon.

Patty dives into county finance guide at Chamber luncheon

By Anthony Richards

Since Brandon Patty was elected as St. Johns county clerk of the circuit court and county comptroller and appointed in Dec. 2019, he has been thinking about how to better inform the public regarding tax dollars.

The result was the creation of the "Tracking Your Tax Dollars," which serves as a guide to St. Johns County's finances.

Patty expanded on the venture and his goals behind it as the guest speaker at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division luncheon at Ruth's Chris Steak House Feb. 16.

"In many ways our office is the backbone of the county, because we're involved in so many things," Patty said. "The clerk's office works as the checks and balances and ensures that trust of a community and its government is maintained."

The county finance guide is one of the ways he seeks to preserve that trust and rekindle it for others.

It is the first year such a guide has been created and Patty already has plans to have an annual edition come out each fiscal year.

The guide consists of 18 pages of information designed to break down and sum up where the taxes that residents pay are going, which is information that does not always come across clearly to the public.

"We tried to make sense of it all," Patty said.

Several forms of economic research are part of the guide, including statistics pertaining to local businesses, the housing

market, property taxes and the county's budget trends over the past four years.

Patty explained that not only does the information come in handy for residents, but it can also be used as a tool for businesses when trying to promote the area.

"We want it to be a tool that stakeholders in the community can use and it's an avenue to use when you speak with your commissioner," Patty said.

Public safety is the highest expenditure year in and year out by the county government, with roughly \$180 million spent toward the category in 2020.

On the other end of the spectrum, property taxes continue to trend higher each year with roughly \$200 million of revenue brought in during 2020.


According to Patty another role of his office is to make sure that the county's standards are being met and constantly evaluated to match the changing times.

"It's important to stay at the forefront of change, which would also help prevent the risks of fraud," Patty said.

He believes that part of the maintaining of standards should include a greater emphasis on the infrastructure of the county's government buildings, many of which he considers to be outdated.

According to Patty, the county jail was built in the 1980s; the Sheriff's Office building was built in the 1960s and the supervisor of elections is housed in an old potato chip factory.

He also stated that they are exploring the options of opening more clerk offices throughout the county to keep pace with the county's growth and be more convenient for residents.



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Family members achieve Master status together

Training is passed down through generations starting with the Grand Master who passes information to the Master instructors, who in turn, pass the training on to the black belts and junior ranked students. This is a time-honored tradition that remains alive in the United Tang Soo Do Federation from Grandmaster Song Ki Pak to Master Bill DeGrafft and recently promoted Master Clarissa DeGrafft and Master Leila DeGrafft.

It's not often when parents and children promote together at this level. Master Bill DeGrafft, school owner, applied his past five years of training to achieve his fifth-degree black belt.

"Continuing to earn rank at 62 years old was very important to me, personally," he said. "It shows adults that you are never too old to start, and it shows younger students that you never quit, despite the challenges you face."

DeGrafft knows perseverance, having opening Ponte Vedra Martial Arts Academy more than eight years ago and navigating the relocation of the school at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak.

"It was a challenging time for the community as a whole, and we knew many families that were adversely affected by the virus," he said. "Surviving the challenges required creativity and focusing on what was important for our members, providing a first-class training experience. We learned a lot of lessons; the most important was to not give up."

Master Clarissa and Master Leila earned their fourth-degree black belts and were also promoted with him. Third-degree black belts prepare for a minimum of four years to take the promotional test, which is a combination of physical, mental and spiritual challenges that demonstrate their understanding of the style as well as their understanding of instructional trends and how to get the best results from each student.

Master Clarissa has been the academy's director of instruction for the last two years. She uses her experience as a Florida certified teacher combined with her background of more than 20 years of martial arts training and instruction delivering innovative training sessions and afterschool camps.

Master Leila returned to the dojang last year to help deliver training to the black belts. She was instrumental in the teen program prior to taking a break for college.

Pak, president of the United Tang Soo Do Federation, expressed his pleasure seeing the DeGraffts promote together.

"I am so happy to see this family advance to Master ranks," he said. "The quality of the school is witnessed in the students that joined in the promotion today."

He is "looking forward to seeing big things from this school."

In attendance for the event were, Grandmaster Philip Williams, Grand-



Contributed photo

Bill, Clarissa and Leila DeGrafft have all promoted to Master level. Here, they are pictured with Grandmaster Song Ki Pak.

master Ronnie Fergusson, Grandmaster Mitch Kramer, Senior Master Rick Sixkiller, Senior Master Russ Carter, Master Tammy Carter, Master Aaron Curtis and Master Chris Peacock.

Several black belts attended to assist with the event, including Caleb Hobbs, Kayla Shreve, Morgan Shreve, Jocelyn Eagan, Anya Sanghvi, John Hamilton, Manu Nair and Sophie Eagan.

Ponte Vedra Martial Arts Academy is located in a large warehouse behind the Cronin ACE Hardware on U.S. 1, just south of Valley Ridge Parkway. They specialize in traditional tang soo do martial arts, COBRA self-defense, camps and afterschool enrichment.

For further information, go to pvmaa.com or call 904-829-8087.

Newcomers Alumnae host motivational speaker

Newcomers Alumnae held its monthly luncheon on Feb. 2 at Marsh Landing Country Club. Members were entertained by the featured speaker, Trudy Toche.

A resident of Ponte Vedra Beach, Toche is a motivational speaker and success coach. She owns a motivational speaking and success-coaching business called Positively Profiling. With more than 20 years' experience in motivating others, she is a natural.

In her program, she delivered humor while sharing the importance of having a positive mindset. In addition to running her own business, Toche serves on the board of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division as chair of the Ambassadors and is a Lifework Leadership First Coast alumna.

For more information on how to book Toche as a speaker, she can be contacted at trudytoche@icloud.com.

Newcomers Alumnae, a social club formed in 1998, is a women's group that encompasses Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville, St. Augustine and the surrounding area.

For further information, go to www.newcomersalumnae.fl.wildapricot.org.

Newcomers Alumnae will hold their next monthly luncheon and a fashion show from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 2

at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. Lemon Twist Boutique of Sawgrass Village will provide the apparel for the fashion show. The cost to attend the luncheon is \$23. For reservations, email bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible to reserve a seat. The deadline to sign up is Friday morning, Feb. 25.

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Changing the luxury real estate landscape

Martin-Fisher, Martin Faulkner make impact with Douglas Elliman

By Anthony Richards

Kim Martin-Fisher and Jennifer Martin Faulkner have done their part to change the landscape of luxury real estate in Ponte Vedra Beach.

They have been able to do it thanks to the resources and support of Douglas Elliman, which is an international real estate company the two decided to join in 2020.

“We called Douglas Elliman and talked to them for nine months, asking ‘Why aren’t you here?’ because they are huge in South Florida, New York and California,” Martin-Fisher said. “They came to Ponte Vedra and fell in love and wanted to open an office.”

Douglas Elliman has an affiliation with Knight Frank, which is a global real estate consultant firm based in London.

“They provide marketing and also do studies on wealth and how the wealthy spend their money,” Martin-Fisher said.

According to Martin-Fisher, just being part of Douglas Elliman does not guarantee use of the Knight Frank services, and instead there was a vetting process that they had to go through before eventually being accepted.

“They are very selective, and we are honored that they chose us,” Martin-Fisher said.

Kim and Jennifer are mother and daughter, which makes real estate the family business, but it goes even deeper than that, as Kim’s husband Jan shoots the video and takes photos of the properties up for sale and Jennifer’s husband is a real estate attorney.

“We tell everyone that if we don’t sell

real estate, we don’t eat,” Martin-Fisher chuckled.

Martin-Fisher got her start as a realtor in 1996 when the family moved to Ponte Vedra Beach.

Martin Faulkner followed in her mom’s footsteps and dove into real estate as well, after graduating from the University of Central Florida.

Throughout their years selling real estate locally, they always had a feeling that the Ponte Vedra Beach area was not properly being evaluated.

“We’ve always felt that Ponte Vedra was really underpriced,” Martin-Fisher said. “If you travel anywhere in Florida and you see what we have to offer with the lifestyle, it makes you wonder why Ponte Vedra is so affordable.”

However, that is changing, and it has begun to take place in a roughly short period of time.

“When Douglas Elliman moves in, things start to change,” Martin-Fisher said.

Although they are not a franchise and instead are part of the larger corporation of Douglas Elliman, it is something that is a positive in their eyes, because having been a part of a franchise in the past they saw where the franchises do not share information with each other, and it can feel like you’re on an island by yourself at times.

They have found that not to be the case at Douglas Elliman, where they have an abundance of resources from across the world at their fingertips.

“If you look at the national rankings, as far as volume and units sold, Douglas Elliman is always at the top,” Martin Faulkner said. “That tells us that they have a well-oiled machine with people who are dedicated to real estate. The network will blow you away.”

As a result, they made the highest sale in St. Johns County last year with their sale of a \$10 million house on Ponte Vedra Boulevard.

“It was on the market for a little while, but once the Douglas Elliman marketing campaign began, it was like the skies opened,” Martin-Fisher said.

One of the major challenges they are faced with in the current market is working with potential buyers who are looking at homes in the area without ever having been to Northeast Florida.

However, Martin Faulkner has also noticed that many of the buyers from other states are knowledgeable and have done their homework ahead of time.

“By the time people call us, they’ve already pretty much narrowed it down, which shows you how much information is out there,” Martin Faulkner said.

Anyone interested in buying or selling a house can go to www.kmfandjmf.com or by calling Kim at 904-699-9993 or Jennifer at 904-524-6000 to get started.



Photo by Anthony Richards

Kim Martin-Fisher and Jennifer Martin Faulkner are a mother-daughter tandem that teamed up with Douglas Elliman in 2020.

Kim and Jennifer have been named the No. 1 real estate team by Jacksonville Business Journal in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Their sales volume in 2021 was \$119 million.

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Related Group breaks ground for luxury condos in Jacksonville Beach

Related Group hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Wednesday, Feb. 16, for Azure, the firm's first boutique condominium in Jacksonville Beach.

Offering 26 residences, Azure is the first oceanfront community to be developed in Jacksonville Beach in more than a decade.

"The groundbreaking of Azure marks a monumental moment for Jacksonville Beach, as it is unlike anything that can be found in the area," said Jon Paul Pérez, president at Related. "Our residents will soon be able to enjoy the best in elegant waterfront living with unrivaled panoramic ocean views and world-class design and architecture."

Vertical construction of the exclusive collection of residences is set to begin in the summer. The address is 1401 1st St. South, Jacksonville Beach.

With contemporary architecture by the award-winning Arquitectonica and interiors by designer CallisonRTKL, the nine-story building is expected to be seen as a work of art, with its cube-shaped structure and glistening glass façade drawing inspiration from master artist Piet Mondrian's iconic geometric paintings.

The art motif continues throughout the property, with a museum-quality modern art collection hand-curated by Related's team of art experts gracing nearly every room and surface, including several situated outdoors where they can be enjoyed by residents and the community alike.

Each of the 26 residences — which range from 2,400-square-foot two-bedrooms to spacious 6,500-square-foot, five-bedroom homes — are outfitted with opulent finishes, grand floor-to-ceiling windows and countless other luxurious touches.

The experience begins when residents set foot in their private elevators, which open directly into their foyers. The living and dining areas are the heart of each unit, with chef's kitchens coming standard with Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances, quartz countertops and Italian cabinetry custom-designed by Italkraft. The master suites include spa-inspired bathrooms equipped with a double vanity and free-standing tub.

Residents can reach their fitness goals at the property's state-of-the-art fitness center, designed to accommodate a range of activities, from yoga to personal train-



Contributed photo

Among those participating in the groundbreaking ceremony for Azure were Jorge Perez, chairman and CEO of Related; Jon Paul Perez, president of Related; Nick Perez, vice president of Related; Michael Hammon, senior vice president of Related's Condo Division; City of Jacksonville Chief Administrative Officer Brian Hughes; and Jacksonville Beach City Council members Georgette E. Dumont and Chet Stokes.

ing, in an open, welcoming environment. Additional wellness-minded amenities include a steam room and a sauna, as well as a massage room for on-demand services.

Al fresco living is made easy with a lavishly landscaped oceanfront pool deck

just steps from the sand. Designed as a serene setting for rest and relaxation, this outdoor area offers a glistening infinity edge pool, resort-style private cabanas, summer kitchens and more.

For further information on Related, go to Relatedgroup.com.



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Contributed photos



Anita Vining



Bonne Jones



The Osteen Group



The Gilman Group



The Campanaro Group



Brad Henry

Berkshire Hathaway achieves record \$1.87B sales volume

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty achieved \$1.87 billion sales volume in 2021, a 30% increase from its sales volume in 2020 and exceeding all previous sales records.

The company handles brokerage transactions of all sizes and also offers mortgage, title, property management and relocation services. It is a leader in luxury properties throughout Northeast Florida.

Among properties priced \$750,000 and above in Duval, Clay and St. Johns counties, the company ranked No. 1 in closed sales with a 13.1% market share, No. 1 in new listings with an 11.4% market share and No. 1 in pending sales with a 12.5% market share. It has the highest average sales price in all price categories among major real estate brands in Duval, Clay and St. Johns counties.

In 2021, the company's Realtor team grew by 7.4%.

CEO Kevin Waugaman addressed the Realtors and employees at the company's annual awards ceremony.

"When you look at volume, sales rate, average price per transaction and other key metrics, it is clear that, thanks to all of you, we are the best real estate company in Northeast Florida," he said. "Our company is known for its integrity, reputation and success, but also for its heart for the community. Profitability and market share are important, but collectively we operate with a greater purpose. Not only are we the best real estate company in Northeast Florida, our goal is to be the best real estate company for our community."

The top company award winners

include:

- Realtor Anita Vining of the San Marco office led the company as the top producer with \$51.5 million in closed sales. Also, Vining is the company's top listing agent with 36.5 listings and the top transaction agent with 154.66 transactions.
- Realtor Bonne Jones of the St. Augustine/MuraBella at World Golf Village office was the top sales agent with 64 sales.
- The O'Steen Group of the Avondale office was recognized as the top producing team (volume) with \$27.2 million in closed sales.
- The Gilman Group of the Avondale office was named the top producing team (GCI) with \$23.2 million in sales. The Gilman Group also was the top sales team with 60.2 sales.

• The Campanaro Group of the Mandarin office was honored as the top listing team with 28.9 listings and as the top transactions team with 140.2 transactions.

• Realtor Brad Henry of the Beaches office was named Rookie of the Year with 11 closed units and \$3.6 million in closed volume.

The Top Office/Chairman's Cup Award and other honors will be presented during an in-person celebration at the University of North Florida on Feb. 28.

"I am incredibly proud to work with the best Realtors and team in the business," company President Ann King said. "Our Forever Agents are dedicated industry leaders with a commitment to their clients and the community, and I am so appreciative of their loyalty and contributions to our success."



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MasterCraft Builder Group named 'Builder of Year'

MasterCraft Builder Group has been named the 2022 "Builder of the Year" by Northeast Florida Builders Association (NEFBA), Florida's largest builders association (and 10th largest in the nation) focused on networking, community outreach and industry development.

The association held its annual installation of officers on Jan. 20 at Timuquana Country Club, where the MasterCraft Builder Group team took home the evening's top recognition.

"We award a 'Builder of the Year' each and every year to recognize the builder member who has gone above and beyond within our industry, our association and the community," explained Jessie Spradley Jr., the association's executive officer. "Not only was MasterCraft Builder Group named 'Builder of the Year' this year, they were also a finalist last year and took home the recognition in 2012. It's extremely rare that the same builder is named more than once. It's a testament to their charitable giving and other philanthropic endeavors in the area."

In addition, MasterCraft Builder Group founder and CEO Chris Shee was named the 2022 Chairmanship of Builders Care, the association's nonprofit arm with a mission to provide affordable to no cost construction services to the elderly, disabled and other nonprofits in Northeast Florida.

MasterCraft's Vice President of Purchasing Seth Kelley has been named chair of the association's St. Johns Builders Council, and Victoria Downing, MasterCraft's vice president of sales and marketing, contributes her time to the association's Sales and Marketing Council as head of the Realtor Builder Tradeshow and Parade of Homes.

"From the work Chris does outside of NEFBA, like his annual Clays for a Cause event and his new Concerts for a Cause series, to spearheading the 2020 Home From The Heart, which brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars for Builders Care, the MasterCraft team is incredibly deserved of the 'Builder of the Year' recognition," said Spradley. "If I had to boil it down to one thing, it's Chris' giving heart and the positive image he gives to builders in the community as well as the volume in which he gives back."



Contributed photo

Chris Shee and Brad Shee are celebrating the recognition of MasterCraft Builder Group's being named 'Builder of the Year.'

Northeast Florida housing market shows signs of moderation

Although sellers are still firmly in the driver's seat, the housing market in Northeast Florida has begun to show "signs of moderation" at the start of the new year.

For single-family homes, the median sales price in Northeast Florida registered \$345,000 in January, a 1.4% drop from December 2021, but still 24% higher than it was a year ago. Condominium prices

continued to climb to a median price of \$220,000, a 4.8% jump from December and a 27.9% increase from January 2021. Townhouse prices performed similarly, posting a median price of \$256,000, which is 2.4% more than a month ago and 21.9% more than last year.

"The Northeast Florida real estate market continues to show signs of moderating, although, as we expected, still is

firmly entrenched as a sellers' market," said Mark Rosener, president of the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors. "The concern of rapidly escalating median prices, which impacts the home affordability index, is also moderating with the median price of single-family homes hovering between \$345,000 and \$350,000 since November. Slight movement from month to month is normal and indicates a more normalized rate of appreciation. Northeast Florida's home affordability index has remained at or near 100 for the better part of the last four months."

Meanwhile, during January, new single-family listings increased 11.1% from December to 2,100 but remain significantly lower than January 2021's mark of 3,641. Northeast Florida's active inventory also dropped 14.7% since December 2021 to 2,389 homes for sale, and this is a 34.4% decline from a year ago.

"While new listings were more than in December, we still fell 13.7% short of the new listings that hit the market last January," Rosener said. "The increase from December to January is in line with the more historical seasonality of the business. Northeast Florida is still low at just 1.4 months of supply of inventory but shows a slight improvement from the mark of 1.1 months' supply at the end of December."

Further signs of moderation are seen in the fact that the number of days on

market has remained stable over the past two months at a very brisk 22 days from when a single-family home hits the market to contract, according to Rosener.

"Most sellers are still receiving list price with 99.5% of listings selling at asking price," he said. "The frenzied pace of demand seems to be returning to normal season levels with closed sales down 9.4% and pending sales down 6.3% from last year. We recall that December 2020 and January 2021 had inflated post-COVID lockdown demand that did not return to a more normalized seasonal level. Now, there is still strong demand, but it is not as frenzied as was apparent last year."

In St. Johns County, the median sales price for single-family homes was \$479,606, a 2.6% drop from December 2021. Active inventory of single-family homes has dropped 14.3% since December to 539 homes, a 1.4-month supply. Homes spent a median of 22 days on the market, and sellers received 100.2% of their asking price.

In Duval County, the median sales price for single-family homes was \$300,500, a 5.2% drop from December 2021. Active inventory of single-family homes has dropped 13.9% since December to 1,236, a 1.4-month supply. Homes spent a median of 21 days on the market and 99.4% of all sellers received their asking price.

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Local resident creates space-themed board game

Local entrepreneur and creative Stephen DiMare, owner and founder of popular brands such as The Hyppo Gourmet Ice Pops, Mayday Ice Cream, Cousteau's Waffle and Milkshake Bar, and Mustache Merchant of Man-Crafts, has created and released a luxury, collectible board game called "Black Hole Rainbows," produced under new brand June Dune Games.

The space-themed board game officially launched Feb. 2 at a kickstarter launch party at The Fountain of Youth in St. Augustine.

"I've been working on this board game for just over two years," DiMare said. "I started it right before the pandemic began and it became a creative outlet during some pretty unprecedented times. In all my projects, the quality of the products and branding is incredibly important to me. I want people to be able to feel that each time they pick up a game piece or experience a high point in the game. This is an heirloom board game that people will hopefully keep for generations."

Described as "an energy-packed strategy game of cosmic proportions," "Black Hole Rainbows" is suitable for ages 8 and up, ideal for 2-6 players and takes between 20 and 40 minutes to play one game.

The game retails for \$60 and will be



'Black Hole Rainbows' designer Tommy Davis, left, and creator Stephen DiMare at the launch party.



A group of people try out 'Black Hole Rainbows' at the Feb. 2 launch party.



Photos by Justin Snavely

'Black Hole Rainbows' is suitable for ages 8 and up, ideal for 2-6 players and takes between 20 and 40 minutes to play one game.

sold on Amazon. DiMare worked with local illustrator and graphic designer, Tommy Davis, to create all of the artwork and design.

"Each player is an intergalactic being that is trying to save the universe from being slowly crushed into nothingness by

supermassive black holes," DiMare said. "Players will go around the board collecting gems, trying to win supernova coins the fastest, and even engaging in some friendly sabotage to get ahead. I think with the age of space exploration we are entering right now, 'Black Hole Rain-

bows' will resonate with and bring a lot of joy to players. And, if nothing else, it's a great occasion to bring friends together to learn a new game."

For further information, go to blackholerainbows.com.



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McCann joins Baptist Health as senior VP chief HR officer

Kathleen “Kate” McCann has joined Baptist Health as its new senior vice president and chief human resources officer effective Feb. 7.

In her role, McCann will be responsible for all aspects of human resources across Baptist Health, the largest private employer in Jacksonville, including strategies for attracting, developing, engaging and retaining talent; supporting diversity and inclusion; and strengthening employee engagement.

She will be an integral member of the Baptist Health leadership team and help promote Baptist Health’s mission

to provide quality care for patients in the communities served. She will report to Michael A. Mayo, president and chief executive officer of Baptist Health.

“We are pleased to welcome Kate to the Baptist Health team,” said Mayo. “She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the team, particularly in creating a workplace dynamic that attracts and retains the best people and empowers them to deliver excellent care and service.”



Kathleen McCann

“Team members are the key to success for every organization, particularly in health care, where each interaction has an impact on patients and their families,” said McCann. “I look forward to working with the team members at Baptist Health to continue building an inclusive and diverse workforce.”

McCann joins Baptist Health from the University of Maryland Medical System, an integrated health system provider in Maryland consisting of 13 hospitals with nearly 30,000 employees, where she served as the senior vice president

and chief human resource officer. Prior to this role, she was the vice president of System Human Resource Services.

Before joining University of Maryland Medical System, McCann held various leadership positions at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire, the Rochester Regional Health System in New York and Catholic Medical Center in New Hampshire.

She earned a bachelor of science degree in business and HR management from Southern New Hampshire University and a master of science degree in HR development from Towson University.

Board and Brush hosts Chamber before hours



Photo courtesy of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Division

Board and Brush Creative Studio hosted a St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Division before hours event Feb. 9 at its location at 840 A1A N., Suite 150 in Ponte Vedra Beach. The event was an opportunity for Chamber members to network and get acquainted with other local businesses.



Flagler Health+ names two to leadership posts

Flagler Health+ has announced that Todd Batenhorst MD has been promoted to chief medical officer, ambulatory enterprise and that Richard Townsend MD will join Flagler Health+ as chief medical information officer, ambulatory enterprise.

“Dr. Batenhorst has been an integral part of the ambulatory enterprise since the beginning, and the addition of Dr. Townsend, who brings extensive experience in the field of medical informatics, will only serve to strengthen the team at Flagler Health+,” said David Rice MD, EVP and chief physician executive of Flagler Health+.

In addition to their leadership roles, Batenhorst and Townsend are practicing primary care physicians who will continue to serve patients in the community.

Batenhorst, a founding member of the Flagler Health+ Ambulatory Enterprise, has been elevated to serve as the physician leader for all ambulatory service lines while working closely with administrators and practice managers regarding clinical quality, patient safety and performance improvement. He will lead all providers in medical affairs for the enterprise and will continue to serve as an active primary care physician at Flagler Health+ Primary Care at St. Augustine.

Batenhorst has been caring for the residents of St. Johns County since 2001. He is a graduate of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and he completed his residency at the Medical College of Virginia. His specialties and areas of interest include adult primary care, general wellness, preventative care and chronic disease management.

Townsend will lead the enterprise-wide medical informatics to improve office efficiency and to provide information regarding patient population and projected growth across all service lines. He will work to optimize the electronic medical record system through collaborative



Dr. Todd Batenhorst



Dr. Richard Townsend

communication with the team by leading an EMR-focused workgroup aimed at identifying opportunities to improve and streamline EMR and interfaces. He will begin seeing primary care patients, age 4 and older, on March 3 at the Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee.

Townsend received his Bachelor of Arts degree in chemistry from Wake Forest University before earning his medical degree from the University of South Florida. After graduation, he was commissioned into the U.S. Navy, where after interning in the Family Medicine Department at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, he completed flight surgery school at the Naval Operational Medical Institute at NAS Pensacola.

He was assigned to Patrol Squadron 45 at NAS Jacksonville as a naval flight surgeon, where he was named WING-SLANT Navy Flight Surgeon of the Year in 2000. During this time, he was a NASA team member for shuttle launches in 2000-01.

After leaving the Navy, he stayed in Jacksonville to complete his residency in the Family Medicine Department at the Mayo School of Medicine. He moved to Baptist Primary Care in 2003 until joining Flagler Health+ in March 2022.

Active in the community, Townsend directed relief efforts when Hurricane Dorian ravaged the Bahamas in 2019 delivering more than \$100,000 in medical supplies and raising more than \$250,000 for medical relief.

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Cypress Village art show reveals talents of residents

Contributed photos

By Sue Michalson

Love was in the air at the Feb. 12 Visual Arts Show at Cypress Village.

Egret Hall, the community's auditorium, was buzzing as residents cheerfully greeted one another amid "ooh's" and "aah's" as they walked around looking at the works on display.

Among Cypress Village's talented residents, some are longtime artists, having created from childhood, while others have just found their talent after arriving at Cypress Village.

The art show featured 24 artists and 53 works of art. It included beautiful photography created by two new residents, Liz Rourke and Ernie Mistr. Rourke's work focuses on birds, flowers and other creatures that inhabit the community's surroundings, while Mistr's pictures represent his travels abroad and here in the United States. Very different subjects, but both were award-winning examples of a sensitive eye able to cap-

ture the essence of their subjects.

Fred Collins, a native Jacksonville resident, now part of Cypress Village, shared his love of wood carving with a few choice pieces and an engaging introductory talk. Tom Reid, also relatively new to the community, showed off an attractive cutglass/leaded lampshade and a small lighted dragonfly that was snatched up and purchased on the spot.

Margrid Krueger had her originally designed quilts on display, and Virginia Ratliff shared two small quilts of her own. New also to the group was a cross-stitch piece by Linda Berner and three counted-cross-stitch-embroidery pieces by Barbara Poniatowski.

Most of the artworks were oil, water-color and acrylic paintings that stretched from one end of Egret Hall to the other. They depicted a myriad of subjects. Colors soft and tranquil to bright exciting splashes. Some funny, some social justice statements, some charming and just outright beautiful in their combination of technique and color and design.

All was accompanied by the music of community pianists Bess Turk and John Oberheu.

The show will be available for viewing through May for Cypress Village residents and guests to enjoy.

Cypress Village is a continuing care retirement care community that offers residents a variety of services, amenities and multiple levels of care. Located adjacent to the Mayo Clinic, the community has many homes and apartments on a 120-acre campus.

For further information, call 904-223-6100.



Tom Reid's colored-glass lampshade and dragonfly were popular with visitors to Cypress Village's Visual Arts Show.



All artwork in Cypress Village's Visual Arts Show was created by residents.



Bess Turk performs music on the piano for the Cypress Village Visual Arts Show.



Visitors enjoy the paintings on display at the Cypress Village Visual Arts Show.



Artist Katy Evans stands next to some of her paintings at the Cypress Village Visual Arts Show.



Margrid Krueger shows off her quilts at the Cypress Village Visual Arts Show.

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Gallery features 'wizard of wood'

Butterfield Garage Gallery's featured artist for March is Jim Rivers, a "wizard of wood," and the gallery is exhibiting his handcrafted furniture and sculptures. An artist talk at 6 p.m. during St. Augustine's First Friday Art Walk — March 4 — will give members of the public an opportunity to learn about Rivers' creativity and his often curious, always charming pieces of furniture.

Rivers has been practicing woodcraft since he was a child. He began by helping his uncle, a woodcarver, search for the right pieces of wood. Wood searching has been an important part of Rivers' life ever since.

Over a lifetime, he has developed an eye for seeing potential in unusual pieces of wood.

"Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to walk through the countryside and find a piece of the Almighty's creation that I can take home, cut and polish, and turn into something that people will like," he said.

His impressive wood collection includes cedar, sweet-gum, oak and pine.

Lately, Rivers has been focusing on sculptures.

"A lot of times I'll bring a piece of wood home, and I know there is something in there, but I can't quite see it," he said.

He studies a piece of wood to work out what's already in there. He often discovers mythical creatures and shapes the sculpture to bring out those elements.

What an untrained eye might see as an imperfection, Rivers sees as an opportunity. Crude logs are sawed, shaped and sanded, coaxed by his touch and sense

of the wood's potential. Edges are not precise. Surprises are embraced. The final finished piece is a work of art, and no two pieces are alike.

Rivers works in his wood shop every day and is continually collecting new wood and experimenting with new techniques.

Butterfield has shown off his mirrors, tables and benches for years, and they have become enthusiastically collected. The gallery will be freshly stocked with new pieces, placed throughout the gallery during the month of March.

Butterfield Garage Gallery is located at 137 King St., St. Augustine.



Jim Rivers designs with electricity.



Contributed photos

Jim Rivers works on a piece of wood.



Jim Rivers sets up a sculpture in the rotunda of the St. Johns County Administration Building.

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Groovy pops concert to be presented in March

From a time of miniskirts, moon landings, war, civil rights, Woodstock, the British invasion, Motown, Camelot and more ... St. Augustine Community Chorus will present its next pops concert, "Retro 60s."

The 1960s was an eventful decade full of important political, social and cultural changes in our country. The St. Augustine Community Chorus will travel back in time with some of the rich and fun music of this unforgettable decade.

The concert will cover pop and Broadway music. A wide range of influential artists of the time will be represented.

Michael Sanfilippo is the director. Special guests will be from Flagler College Vocal Ensembles.

Performances are at 7 p.m. March 12 and 3 p.m. March 13 at Ancient City Baptist Church, 27 Sevilla St., St. Augustine.

For tickets, go to staugustinecommunitychorus.org.

PoetFest planned for April 9

This year, for National Poetry Month (April), Ancient City Poets have partnered with the English Department of Flagler College and the St. Johns Cultural Council to present a day-long celebration of creative writing and reciting.

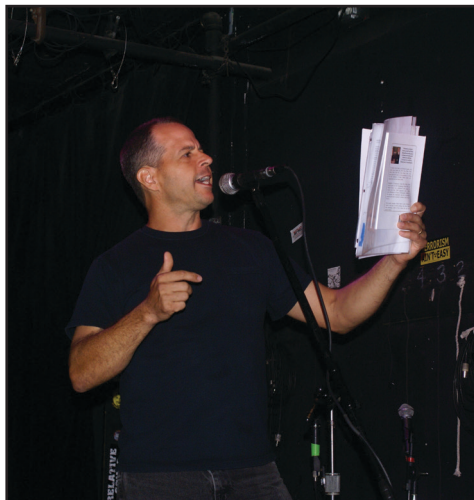
The inaugural St. Augustine Poet-Fest will be on April 9, the day after the Henry Rollins spoken-word tour stop at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

The weekend of events on the campus of Flagler College, in addition to a monthlong haiku contest and an April 24 open mic reading, will comprise the local recognition of National Poetry Month.

Michael Rothenberg, founder of 100 Thousand Poets for Change, will travel from Tallahassee to the campus of Flagler College to be the keynote speaker. He will lead a panel discussion on “Changing the World With Words” on the morning of April 9. In the afternoon, he will present his poetry with musical support from his avant-garde jazz group, the EcoSound Ensemble.

There will be book talks, panel discussions, author spotlights, an open mic marathon, a book sale table and a Friday night open mic.

All April 9 events are free of charge and open to all.



Local poet Chris Bodor reads some of his work.



Contributed photos

Michael Rothenberg, founder of 100 Thousand Poets for Change, will be the keynote speaker at the inaugural St. Augustine PoetFest.

Apex Theatre seeking young artists, mentors for life-changing program

The Apex Theatre Studio Inc. has announced its inaugural production of the North Florida chapter of The Penguin Project. Performances of “Aladdin Jr.” will take place July 23-24 in Lewis Auditorium on the campus of Flagler College.

Every year, groups of young artists across the country take to the stage to perform a modified version of a well-known Broadway musical. These productions are unique, however, because all of the roles are filled by young artists with developmental disabilities including Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairment and other neurological disorders.

They are joined on stage by a dedicated group of “peer mentors,” children the same age without disabilities who have volunteered to work side-by-side with them through four months of rehearsals and through the final performance. By

providing access to community theater, The Penguin Project demonstrates that the special challenges of a disability should not handicap a child’s ability to participate in life’s experiences.

“We were lucky enough to witness this powerful experience at one of our partnering organizations — the historic Ritz Theatre in downtown Brunswick, Georgia,” said Ian Mairs, managing director for Apex Theatre Studio. “The effect the Penguin Project has on young artists, their families and mentors is life-changing.”

The project is holding informational sessions for interested young artists with developmental disabilities and their fami-

lies from 10 a.m. to noon March 26 and 4 to 5:30 p.m. March 29 at Apex Theatre Studio, 425 West Town Place, unit 112, St. Augustine.

The project is also seeking peer mentors to work on the spring/summer project. The first company meeting is at 7 p.m. April 7, with a mandatory mentor training from 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. April 9. Registration for all informational sessions can be found at hisawyer.com/apex-theatre-studio/schedules.

Rehearsals will begin April 5 and continue through performance dates. The average commitment is four hours per week for artists and mentors. There will be no rehearsals the week of major

holidays (Memorial Day and July 4) and the week of June 20.

There is no cost to participants or mentors. For more information or questions, email apextheatrejax@gmail.com or call 904-834-1351.

Since 2013, Apex Theatre Studio has produced more than 40 productions in Northeast Florida. In June 2015, an ongoing partnership with the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall allowed it to present a series of plays and musicals to audiences in the Ponte Vedra and Nocatee area.

For further information, go to apextheatrejax.com and follow on social media at facebook.com/apextheatrejax and on Instagram @apextheatrejax.

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Panthers continue as road warriors with blowout of Yellow Jackets



Nease's Cami Robinson jumps for joy as the Panthers punched their ticket to the Class 6A final four with a 49-33 win over rival St. Augustine Feb. 18.

By Anthony Richards

Making the final four is a difficult task, but continually doing it as the visiting team is even tougher.

However, that is exactly what the Nease girls basketball team accomplished after defeating rival St. Augustine 49-33 in the Class 6A Region 1 final Feb. 18.

This will be the third final four team Sherri Anthony has coached during her 37 years at Nease, which makes the squad a special group and one she will never forget.

The Panthers have developed a reputation as road warriors as all three of their wins in the state tournament have come on the road.

"It shows it doesn't matter where you put us," senior Alli Fifield said. "We can drive six hours or play in our hometown, but we still win."

After a couple of close battles with Ponte Vedra and Navarre, the Panthers took control of the game early and never looked back en route to the 16-point victory over the Yellow Jackets.

"The momentum just keeps picking up, and we're not stopping here," senior Savannah Gomes said.

Superb team defense and rebounding fueled the effort for the Panthers, who opened a 25-14 lead at halftime.

The Panthers were active with their feet and hands, which made it difficult for St. Augustine to get into a rhythm offensively.

Anthony credited the bench players for helping make the win possible with their dedication to playing the role of the Yellow Jackets' and their top scorers all week in practice, so that the starters knew what to expect come game time.

"I was so proud of how they all bought in, because that can be difficult especially for those that don't play as much," Anthony said.

That was coupled with the fact that the Panthers were relentless on the offensive boards and created a bevy of second-chance opportunities for themselves when they had the ball.

"Our coaches drilled rebounding in our minds throughout the week, because we knew we were probably going to be un-



Photos by Anthony Richards

Alli Fifield handles the ball against the Yellow Jackets.

dersized," Robinson said. "It is all about having the mindset to be aggressive and go get the ball."

Cami Robinson made the most of those opportunities, as she flipped the switch to beast mode and was on fire all game long from beyond the arc and driving to the basket. She had a game-high 18 points, including four three-pointers.

The scoring tandem of Robinson and Sydney Gomes, who had 14 points, was too much for the Yellow Jackets to overcome.

"As a team we did not play our best the last time we played them, so we knew we really had to step it up and it felt like the whole team was feeling that energy," Robinson said.

Heading into the game Fifield was tasked with going up against the Yellow Jackets' star post player Janiyah Jackson, who averages a double-double in points and rebounds.

She was able to limit Jackson's chances as she finished well below her season average with just eight points on the night, including none in the fourth quarter.

"Credit to Sav (Savannah Gomes) for locking down No. 10 (Veronica Hannah of St. Augustine), because she averages nine points a game but didn't get a shot off tonight," Anthony said.

The Panthers will play Fort Lauderdale St. Thomas Aquinas in the Class 6A state semifinal at 6 p.m. Feb. 24.

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Sharks end memorable season in final four

By Anthony Richards

Going undefeated is not an easy thing to do, and the Ponte Vedra boys soccer team was able to carry that standing all the way to the final four.

The squad finally suffered a loss, falling 4-2 to Doral Academy in the Class 6A state semifinal Feb. 19.

Time after time this season the Sharks proved not to be fazed by the pressure and instead embraced the situation they were in and the magical season they were having.

In the matchup, the Sharks found themselves in a 3-0 hole to the Firebirds before Liam Burchell put the Sharks on the scoreboard with a goal in the 53rd minute.

The Sharks never quit fighting as Johnny Luce cut the Sharks' deficit to 4-2 in the 78th minute, but they could not come back like they did to secure its spot in the final four following a 2-1 victory over Clermont East Ridge Feb. 16.

"I've never been this far before (in playoffs)," Ponte Vedra captain Cade Greenwald said. "I'm so lucky and fortunate to have such a great team to play with."

The Sharks fought back to win the regional championship after falling behind 1-0 early in the second half.

However, the team kept pushing forward and began to create more golden scoring opportunities.

"We knew we had opportunities earlier, but we just had to focus on putting them away," Ponte Vedra goalie Will Sheehan said. "We knew that wasn't the way our season was going to end and just didn't give up."

Andres Villasana made a nice run toward the goal and

drew a foul and a free kick just outside the penalty box.

Villasana finished the job by sailing the free kick over the wall of defenders and curving the ball into the top left corner of the goal to tie the game at 1-1 right before the water break that designates the midway point of second half.

"A lot of times last year when we went down, we kind of lost focus, but this year we always keep that drive going and just keep moving the ball around as much as we can," Greenwald said.

Sheehan came up with some big saves for the Sharks throughout the contest, none more clutch than the leaping save he made on a free kick by the Knights with about five minutes to play.

"It's not just me, we've really grown as a team and a defense," Sheehan said. "We do it together."

The save proved even more crucial because shortly after, the Sharks were awarded a penalty kick following a hand ball in the box by a Knight defender.

Villasana took the penalty kick and following a deep breath beat the goalie to give the Sharks a 2-1 lead with 4:19 remaining.



Will Sheehan makes one of several big saves on the night for the Sharks.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Andres Villasana (No. 13) celebrates with teammate Liam Burchell (No. 11) after tying the regional final with a goal. Villasana would also score the game-winner.

There was a lot of pressure on Villasana walking up to the penalty kick, but he knew he had to block it out and visualize putting the ball in the back of the net.

"I was super nervous, but in the end, I knew I was going to score," Villasana said. "We train for that and in practice, I always make every single one."

From there the Sharks were able to tighten up their defense and punch their ticket to the next round.

Sheehan established a rhythm early on in goal and that included a pair of consecutive saves during a sequence of pressure applied by the Knights right before halftime.

Thomas, Cantlay, Hovland commit to the 2022 PLAYERS

With two weeks to go until the strongest field in golf reconvenes at THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass, Justin Thomas, Patrick Cantlay and Viktor Hovland are the latest to add their names to the championship commitment list.

Justin Thomas

The defending champion returns to TPC Sawgrass following his historic seven-stroke comeback after 36 holes to win his first PLAYERS title. His weekend rounds of 64-68 tied the tournament record for closing 36-hole score (132) as he edged out England's Lee Westwood by one shot for a 14th career PGA TOUR title.

Since his win at THE PLAYERS, Thomas has yet to return to the winner's circle despite advancing to the season-ending TOUR Championship and finishing fourth in the FedExCup. Through six starts this season, Thomas has recorded four top-10s, including a solo sixth on Sunday at The Genesis Invitational.

Patrick Cantlay

It was a summer to remember for Patrick Cantlay, who closed the 2020-21 PGA TOUR season in style with a dramatic victory in the second leg of the FedExCup Playoffs at the BMW Championship and followed it up by claiming the TOUR Championship to become the FedExCup champion.

Cantlay's season concluded with four total victories, and the native Californian was voted PGA TOUR Player of the Year by his peers.

With four appearances at THE PLAYERS under his belt, Cantlay has yet to find his stride at TPC Sawgrass, having missed his previous two cuts and recording a T22 in 2017 for his best finish. The 29-year-old is picking up where he left off last season, having already notched four top-10s in five starts in 2021-22.

Viktor Hovland

Arguably one of the brightest rising stars in the game, Viktor Hovland has ascended to as high as No. 3 in the world following his third career PGA TOUR title at the World Wide Technology Championship at Mayakoba in November to go along with a win overseas on the DP World Tour in early 2022.

The native Norwegian missed the cut in his first official start at THE PLAYERS in 2021 but recorded seven top-5s in what was his second full season on the PGA TOUR. Hovland nabbed his first top-10 on TOUR of the calendar year on Sunday at The Genesis Invitational, where he overcame an opening-round 71 to finish T4.

Players have until 5 p.m. Friday, March 4 to commit to the championship.

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Photos by Anthony Richards

Nate Bunkosky sizes up a defender on his way to the basket.

Sharks open playoffs with 33-point rout of Wildcats

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra boys basketball team continues to ride its wave of momentum in the Class 6A state tournament following a 68-35 victory over Pensacola Booker T. Washington Feb. 17.

The Sharks frustrated the Wildcats from the opening tipoff thanks to a smothering pressure defense.

“We had a good battle rhythm going on out of the gate and good focus,” Ponte Vedra head coach Kevin Whirity said.

Not only did the defense speed up the Wildcats’ rhythm and result in turnovers, but even more importantly it appeared to take the Wildcats out of their game mentally.

“We win games on the defensive side,” Ponte Vedra senior Gus Jordheim said. “It’s an attitude.”

As a result, the Sharks led 34-15 at halftime after senior Ross Candelino buried a three-pointer in the waning seconds to put an exclamation point on the first half.

The Ponte Vedra student section stood the entire time in both quarters and the Sharks early success fed the section’s excitement and created a raucous playoff atmosphere, that the Sharks will look to capitalize on moving forward as the top seed in region 1-6A.

Jordheim shined in the playoff opener

with one of his best performances this season, as he scored 11 points and joined fellow seniors Candelino (19) and Luke Pirris (10) in double figures.

“He was fearless,” Whirity said. “He moved the ball but also took advantage of things that he saw. I’m so proud of Gus and just to watch him grow. He was our MVP tonight.”

Ben Ritchie came off the bench and gave the Sharks valuable and productive minutes, as he finished with seven points, scoring in the paint and from beyond the arc.

“Ben Ritchie has been a tank that can shoot it,” Whirity said. “He gets us loose balls, rebounds and charges and can also stroke it from 22 feet to five feet. When guys like Ben and Gus start stepping up, we’re a scary team.”

Six different players scored at least five points on the night for the Sharks, which demonstrates the offensive talent and scoring depth that they have at their disposal.

“We were just really prepared and ready to go,” Ritchie said.

The game got off to an unusual start after Booker T. Washington received a technical foul during warmups, which allowed Candelino to knock down a pair of free throws and give the Sharks the lead before the game even got started.



Ross Candelino launches a three-pointer over a Booker T. Washington defender as the Sharks’ student section intensely watches behind him.



Gus Jordheim had one of his best games of the season with 11 points on the night.

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 19. *"1984" author George
 21. *Best-selling pop artist Bing
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 24. Genghis or Kubla
 25. Cranberry habitat
 28. Not nice
 30. Saddle holders
 35. *Boris Karloff's movie "The ____," pl.
 37. Actress Barrymore
 39. Asian goat antelope
 40. Supernatural life force
 41. Seethes
 43. South African antelope
 44. Cook from above
 46. Rotisserie part
 47. Not odd
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 50. What snob puts on
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 63. Another word for nutria
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 70. Will alternative
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 3. Copycat
 4. Chicken feet
 5. Christian hymn (2 words)
 6. Graveside sound
 7. Gone by
 8. TV's Yellowstone, e.g.
 9. Uses a Singer
 10. Underwater hermit
 11. Ethereal
 12. Gridiron official, for short
 15. Apollo Creed's son
 20. City in northern England
 22. Old towel, e.g.
 24. Rollerskater's protector (2 words)
 25. *Disney's 1942 orphan
 26. Abstractionism using optical illusion
 27. Kind of salami
 29. Crafts' companion
 31. Network of nerves
 32. Treasure collection
 33. Dreamer?
 34. *Popular music style
 36. Ship canvas
 38. *1939-1945
 42. Parallel grooves
 45. Acid turns it red
 49. "Bingo!"
 51. Daryl Hannah's 1984 movie
 54. Open up
 56. In spite of the fact, arch.
 57. Church sound
 58. Swedish shag rugs
 59. Plotting
 60. Velum, pl.
 61. Zeal
 62. New Haven University
 63. IRS employee?
 65. Yang's opposite
 67. Canny

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