

**April 14, 2022** Volume 53, No. 24 75 cents

PonteVedraRecorder.com

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader



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**Sports** Page 20



File Photo

Sunday is Easter, and there are a lot of ways to celebrate. See a list of worship, dining and fun ideas on page 13.



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# Send us your news

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# 1000 Friends of Florida discusses latest legislative session

### **By Anthony Richards**

Jane West, policy and planning director with 1000 Friends of Florida, spoke to the Beaches Coalition during their recent meeting about some of the decisions that were made during the latest state legislative session.

She focused on passed or failed bills that dealt with an environmental impact in some form or fashion.

According to West, the final budget agreed upon for the improvement of Everglades water quality was \$1.6 billion, which West said is a lot of money toward one project, but it is good to see that a concerted effort is being made to find solutions.

The proposed final budget for land conservation was \$488 million, with \$300 million of it going toward the rural and family lands protection program, which delays the spending of the next agriculture commissioner to January 2023, and \$100 million going to Forever Florida and its initiatives.

However, none of the money will be for the Florida Communities Trust, which provides matching grants to help create parks.

Some of the highlights included a regulation on smoking public places, which will allow counties and municipalities the option to propose laws enforcing against such actions.

West stated that such enforcement would help decline the amount of cigarette buds littering local beaches.

Although 1000 Friends of Florida thought that certain things such as the beach smoking regulation were steps in the right direction, there were also areas that left more to be desired, especially when it came to having a plan in place to handle the population growth the state has encountered in recent years.

Instead, 1000 Friends of Florida considered the community planning portion of the 2022 legislative session to be on the "light" side

"If we do not deal with these issues at hand, this will not be a good quality of life," West said.

One of the bills that 1000 Friends of Florida opposed, but was passed was the "Local Business Protection Act." According to West, it creates a new cause of action for businesses that have been operating for at least three years to sue local governments for damages if an ordinance reduces profits by at least 15%.

She expects it to include certain ordinances that are in place for environmental reasons.

"I bet we will see another preemption bill this next legislative session as well," West said.

However, one bill that 1000 Friends of Florida supported but failed to pass was a bill stating that structures that are within any area that is deemed at risk of sea level rise would be required to conduct a SLIP study before commencing construction.

"It would have not just been our coast, but all bodies of water," West said. "That's why we testified in support of it."

"There's a complete disconnect between what's happening on the ground and what's being voted on."

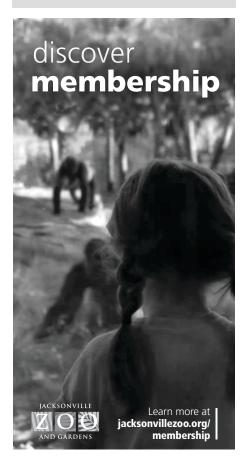
West worked in environmental litigation for years and has seen a new way of looking at issues since becoming a lobbyist a couple of years ago.

Since being founded in 1986, 1000 Friends of Florida has been a not-for-profit organization with the goal of finding the best ways to insure a sustainable future for the state.

# **PUZZLE SOLUTIONS**

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# **BRIEFS**

# St. Johns County plans second growth management workshop

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners is hosting a second growth management workshop to continue discussions on how to manage future growth and address infrastructure needs. Residents and stakeholders are invited to provide comments after county staff complete their presentations.

The topics that will be discussed include: accountability for development impacts and mechanisms to collect funding for future infrastructure.

The workshop will be held at 9 a.m. April 26 in the County Auditorium, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine.

The workshop will be broadcast live on GTV at www.sjcfl.us/GTV/Watch-GTV.aspx. Residents unable to attend the workshop may submit feedback by emailing sjcgrowth@sjcfl.us. The Board of County Commissioners will not make policy decisions at the workshop nor vote on any item brought forth.

# Mickler's Landing to be reopened to public in May

Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park

will no longer be used as a staging site for FEMA Dune Enhancement Project by mid-May. Full public use of the parking lot and beach access is anticipated to be reinstated by May 20.

St. Johns County's contractor, CHC, will continue to work on the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project with proposed completion by October. Beach visitors are encouraged to exercise caution near areas of construction.

For more information on the project, go to sjcfl.us/coastalprojects/FEMAd-unes.aspx.

## Blocker plans office hours in Ponte Vedra Beach

Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker will hold office hours by appointment on May 13, and June 10 to listen to residents' concerns. Office hours will be held at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. All residents who would like to meet with Blocker should call the Board of County Commissioners office at 904-209-0300 to schedule an appointment.

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# Local author pens book on overcoming adversity

# **By Shaun Ryan**

What if there were a way to effectively meet life's challenges and overcome them, ultimately discovering a greater sense of purpose?

It is possible, and a new book maps out steps toward that goal.

The author, Nocatee resident Rob Swymer, has enjoyed a successful career with various software companies. But life has not always been a cakewalk.

He has endured alcohol abuse, depres-

sion and, worst of all, the sudden death of his first wife due to a brain aneurysm

"It was horrific," he said. "That changed me."

He talked to people he knew from around the world, people who had faced their own severe adversities. What he found was that those who prevailed all had something in common.

"Ultimately, it took an act of surrender to be able to move forward," he said.

The idea resonated with him, but he wanted to better understand this idea of surrender, so he asked friends who were serving in the military.

"They said, 'We don't surrender. We push back, we re-evaluate, and we move forward," he recalled.

It proved to be a critical point: giving up vs. giving in.

"Giving up is one thing," Swymer said. "That's final. Giving in gives you the opportunity to step back, evaluate where you are and then move forward with new purpose and new perspective."

And move forward he did. In 2016, Swymer formed a blended family with his second wife, Melissa.

It was another "setback" that opened the door to Swymer's becoming an

In 2020, his company sent him to London, where he had hoped he and his wife might travel around Europe. But a month in, COVID-19 struck and the Swymers found themselves in lockdown. That's when Swymer

wrote "Surrender to Your Adversity." He'd long wanted to write such a book and now opportunity knocked.

He drew from his own experiences, but also those of others. He explored how one's internal voice influences every thought, belief and action. After five months, the book was finished.

Now, the Swymers are

back home, and the book has proceeded through its editing, publication and marketing stages.

"Surrender to Your Adversity" will be released April 25. It will be available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble and on

Swymer will offer a free author talk along with a book signing event from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 26, at the link, 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra.

NOTE: This is an abridged version of the article. Read the full story at pontevedrarecorder.com.



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# MSD discusses 'emergency' with beach access trash

# **By Anthony Richards**

The Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District discussed an "emergency situation" regarding the trash receptacle stations at five of the beach access points within the district at its April 11 meeting.

According to Trustee Brad Wester, the situation has risen due to the waste hauling company that usually handles all the beach access points in St. Johns County being given a termination with cause.

Wester stated that there had already been issues taking place with consistent garbage pick up at those spots even prior to the termination, but it could only get worse

"Some beach access points look like a third-world country," Wester said.

The county has told Wester that its plan was to try and use some of their staff to help pickup the trash in the meantime, while they search for a new company to create a contract with to take over the role.

However, Wester was not sure if the county had the staff to spare to provide the routine pickups needed to keep the garbage from getting out of hand in those areas.

As a result, he asked if the board wanted to explore getting a short-term contract in place with a company to handle the duties until the county works out its process.

Trustee Holly Kartsonis strongly felt that the county should be responsible for handling the situation and recommended that they send a bill to the county to help compensate for the requirement of the short-term contract.

"It's a health concern," Kartsonis said.

The board approved getting a tempoary contract in place for up to \$3,500.

rary contract in place for up to \$3,500 with pickups taking place twice a week for 30 days to supplement what the county is doing.

The concerns and temporary contract only involve trash pickup at the beach access points and not the regular yard and waste pickups, which are contracted through Republic Services.

The group agreed to discuss the possibility of billing the county at a future meeting.

Also discussed, was the possibility of lowering the posted speed limit along the roughly two-mile stretch along State Road A1A from Mickler's Landing to the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve.

The discussion was prompted after a fatal accident that occurred about a week ago involving a person crossing further south along that route.

"It seems like a good time for the

FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) to look back into it," Switkes said. "I'm all for the safety of our residents walking and cycling on that road, and 55 (mph) through that area with people going to the beach is just too fast."

The speed limit along that stretch was placed on the agenda to be discussed further at the May 9 meeting.

In the early portion of the meeting, Chair Al Hollan thanked Wester for his service as the board's chair for two years and presented him with a plaque. Wester was also informed that he will be named the Ponte Vedra Community Association's 2022 Person of the Year.



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Maria Nili spent years as a tennis official with the ATP and has been an umpire at each of the four grand slam tournaments. However, she has traded in years of traveling around the world for a job as the director of pickleball at The Yards, which is now about two minutes away from where she lives.

# Maria Nili

## **As told to Anthony Richards**

## Tell us a little about your background.

I was born and raised in Poland, and my dad was an athlete himself, so from an early age I was always watching him train. I think I was always inspired by him and the hard work he would put in.

When I was younger, I was doing rhythmic gymnastics, which I loved and was probably about 6 years old when I started. I'm short and was always very flexible, so I was great material to do very good.

In the meantime, I started tennis after one day seeing my friend going out with a racket to go hit against the wall. I remembered my dad had an old wooden racket at home, so I went and got it and I remember going back to hit every single day for weeks.

I played throughout all my junior years, and it became my biggest passion.

However, I knew at 18 that even though my dreams were to be a Wimbledon champion, at that point it was not going to happen unfortunately.

## How did you get involved as a tennis official?

I saw that one of my friends from the same tennis club did this certification to become a tennis umpire and suddenly she was in Qatar at this ATP event with all of the best players in the world. I thought to myself, "Why wouldn't I do that, just so I could stay connected to the tennis world?"

The first two years I was only working in Poland at small tournaments, but then I was super lucky to be selected in 2010 for the tournament in Qatar with the likes of Federer and Nadal.

It was an amazing tournament, and I was the first person to go and do the final in their first time.

# What are some of the challenges that you have faced?

There were a lot of people in Poland that were jealous and not happy that I was going somewhere for the first time, and they had been at it for 10 years.

Going to the grand slams was the hardest for me because you needed support from your federation and my federation believed that I was given everything. They just wouldn't understand that it was just me doing a good job, so for many years I was punished for doing great.

Eventually the grand slams decided that I was not being treated fairly by my federation and they decided to go without their support.

# How different was the experience of officiating the grand slam tournaments compared to others you had done?

It helped me in a financial way because the grand slams pay great money, and I was still a (college) student at the time.

I was getting the chance to travel the world working in tennis and make money doing it. That was just amazing!

I loved the tournament life and being behind the scenes seeing all the best players not only on court, but also off court when the cameras were off.



Photo courtesy of The Yards

Maria Nili began her role as director of pickleball at The Yards in December 2021.

# How difficult was it to be traveling around the world for your job and still studying in college?

I always picked pretty interesting and difficult studies, because I am a chemical engineer, and I did a masters in nano technology.

I knew when I started traveling for tennis that there was no way for me to do it without missing labs and other stuff, so I asked my dean to see if there was anything that I could do.

He was a huge tennis fan, and when he heard it, he said not to worry about anything and that I could have this lab there and take this exam here in order to make sure that its fair for everyone else but could still be done. I couldn't believe it!

# How did you get involved in your current role as director of pickleball at The Yards?

I worked as an umpire for 12 years but worked for ATP for probably eight years all together.

I was perfectly happy and loved it, but then I was also traveling 14-plus weeks all around the world.

We were playing tennis here and saw that they converted two of the tennis courts into pickleball courts.

From the first moment being on the pickleball courts with the funny paddles and the funny ball, I couldn't believe how much I like it.

I basically stopped playing tennis because I was so into pickleball, and I started here in December.

I went from traveling around the world to working two minutes from where I live, it's amazing how everything in your life happens for a reason.

# Nostalgic aviation-themed gala benefits underserved students



Two students look inside the backpacks given to them by CSI Gives Back.

Anyone who has wanted to relive the world of aviation as it existed in the 1950s will want to attend a special fundraising gala set for 6-11 p.m. April 30.

"Come Fly With Me" will be held at Generations In Aviation, located at Craig Airport, 724 Wright Brothers Drive, Jacksonville. The fun will include blackjack, a silent auction, live music, a full dinner and full bar and valet service.

"It's really just a great way to come together and to celebrate — but also to donate," said Becky Lowry, executive director of CSI Gives Back, the nonprofit affiliated with CSI Companies.

This is the foundation's third gala since its founding in 2019.

The purpose of the event is to raise money for the foundation's school-based support. The beneficiaries will be the students at Sadie T. Tillis Elementary School, Charger Academy middle school and the drama team and art students at Twin Lakes Academy, as well as the

Andrew Jackson Young Girls mentoring group.

The students do not enjoy the level of support available to their peers, so the efforts of CSI Gives Back are especially appreciated. The funds raised by the foundation help to buy school uniforms, backpacks, supplies and other items for students in need.

But one of the most important, and intangible, gifts the foundation gives is its unwavering support. CSI Gives Back regularly visits the schools and bring smiles to the children. This is not a "one and done" organization.

"Yesterday, when we were out there, I ordered a game truck," said secretary Deborah Valentine. "They thought that the game truck was only going to be there for maybe two hours, but I ordered it so this game truck would be there from 10 to 3. And they were just overcome with emotion. That meant so much to them."

"It's generally building trust and honesty with everything," said Lowry. "They know that we're going to stand by their side if they have a need that is unmet."

Tickets for the gala can be purchased at csigivesback.org or bidpal.net/csigivesbackgala. The foundation can also be found on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn

At this time, there are no rules regarding masks or vaccinations. The venue is large enough to allow for social distancing if desired.

"The best part about being at the airplane hangar is that it's very large," said Lowry. "It's not a tight, confined banquet room"



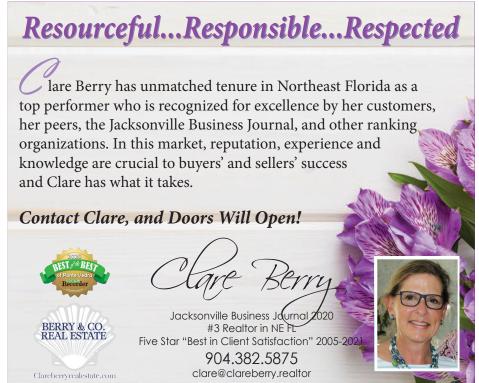
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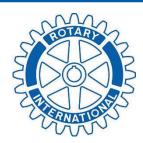
Pictured from right are Deborah Valentine, Becky Lowry, Charger Academy Principal Andrea Y. Talley and a member of the principal's staff.



The Twin Lakes Drama team is supported by CSI Gives Back.







# The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach

in cooperation with The Ponte Vedra Recorder

# **2022 Local Heroes Awards Nomination Form**

The Local Heroes Awards recognize individuals who give back to the community and reflect the spirit of the Rotary Club's motto, "Service Above Self." From volunteering with local charities to giving back through the arts, education, environmental protection activities or doing your job in an exemplary way, we seek to recognize the "unsung heroes" who make Ponte Vedra such a special place to live, work and raise a family.

Please complete this nomination form and return it to the address below by April 15, 2022. For more information or any questions, contact Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club member Steve Crosby at stevecrosby101@gmail.com.



# Nomination Deadline: April 15, 2022

Email entries to: stevecrosby101@gmail.com

or mail to:
Local Heroes Awards Committee
Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach
P.O. Box 70
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32004

Or submit your nomination online at: pvbrotary.org

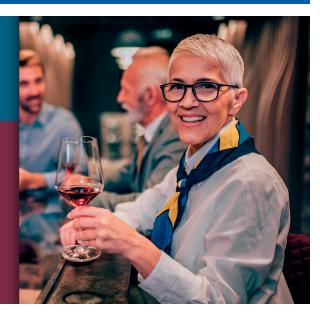
Nomination Submitted By:	Nominee's activities and/or contributions to the community:					
Name:	every consideration! Feel free to attach additional pages as well as a resume, articles or					
Address:	other supporting materials (optional).					
City, State, Zip:						
Email Address:						
Telephone:						
Nominee Information:						
Name:						
Address:						
City, State, Zip:						
Email Address:						
Telephone:						
Title/Organization (if applicable):						

Thank you for your nomination!

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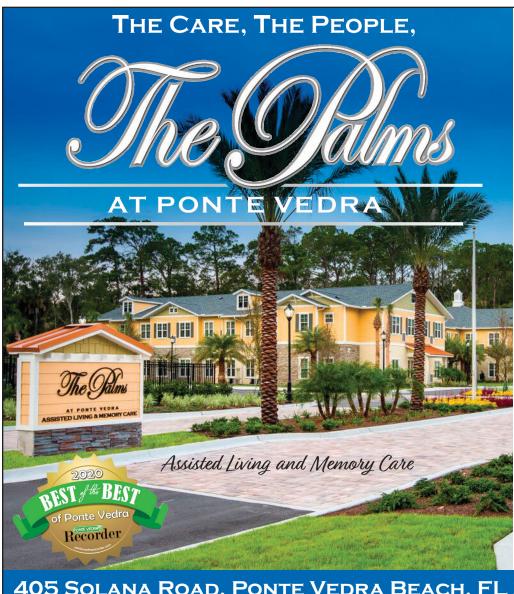


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**10** FIRST COAST LEGAL EAGLES

Ponte Vedra Recorder · April 14, 2022



# Five questions that every parent should be able to answer

Ask any parent and they will agree that they want nothing more than to make sure their kids are safe, protected and cared for, especially in the event of an emergency or an unexpected event that prevents a parent (or both) from being there to comfort them. While we don't like to think that something bad might happen to us that would jeopardize our children's safety, the fact of the matter is we have no guarantees, and it's for this very reason we insure our cars, homes—even our own lives.

Have you ever taken a moment to logically walk through what would happen to your children if an emergency, crisis or tragedy took you, the parent(s), away from your children? To be honest, I never had, but then I did, and I did not like what my answers were.

As I began to think about my own children's safety and protection, I came up with the five crucial questions you can read below. I realized that if I didn't have an answer for each of these questions, then my children were not protected if crisis, emergency or even tragedy should hit our home. With that in mind, consider the following:

- 1. In an emergency if neither you nor your spouse (if you have one) are available, who specifically will take your kids into their care?
- 2. Can your Trusted Person make it to your children in under 45 minutes?
- 3. Does your Trusted Person have legal authority to take your kids into their care and custody in your absence?
- 4. Who would act as a "back up" if your Trusted Person was not available —

and is that person also legally authorized?

5. Do your kids have any special needs (medical or other) that your Trusted Person must know about to ensure their well-being?

Not too long ago, when I first started thinking about what I needed to do to keep my family safe and protected, I couldn't answer any of these five questions in a way that I was comfortable with. As a result, I set out to fix the problem, first for my family, and then to help other parents do the same.

After considerable thought and research, I identified the seven foundational legal documents necessary so that I, as a parent, can answer each of these five questions in way that gives me peace of mind knowing that in emergency or should the unexpected occur, my kids

will be safe and protected. In fact, I took these documents and complied them into what I have called a "Kids Protection Plan" that I now help other families complete for themselves.

If you don't like any of your answers to these questions — it's OK, know you're not alone. The good news is you can change it. You can create a plan on your own or with the guidance of a professional. Just remember whatever you do, any plan is better than no plan. If you would like help planning for your family, well that's exactly what I do.

Submitted by Reid Mann Reid is the founding attorney of Compass Estate Law. He is married and the father of five young children.

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# Carolyn Zisser honored by Florida Bar for 50 years of membership

Jacksonville attorney and Zisser Family Law senior counsel Carolyn Zisser is being recognized by The Florida Bar on the 50th anniversary of her membership in the state organization.

"While the practice of law has undergone many changes over her professional career, Carolyn has remained committed to the high ideals of service to Floridians and the protection of their rights," said Florida Bar President Michael G. Tanner.

Zisser will be among attorneys honored for their years of service at The Florida Bar's Senior Lawyers Committee Luncheon that takes place at the Signia by Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek & Waldorf Astoria on June 24, which



Carolyn Zisser

# Zisser

Continued from 10

coincides with the organization's annual convention.

"Being part of The Florida Bar has been an important part of my life and being a member certainly helped me in my professional career and in solidifying our firm's legal strength in Northeast Florida." Zisser said. "Even after all these years in the law profession, it's always an honor and privilege to be recognized by your peers."

In 1975, Zisser established the first woman-owned family law practice in Jacksonville, Carolyn S. Zisser, P.A. / Zisser Family Law, in Neptune Beach. In January 2020, she merged her firm with Zisser Law, founded in downtown Jacksonville in 1971 by her husband Elliot and his brother Barry Zisser. It now operates under the name Zisser Family Law with offices downtown and at the beaches.

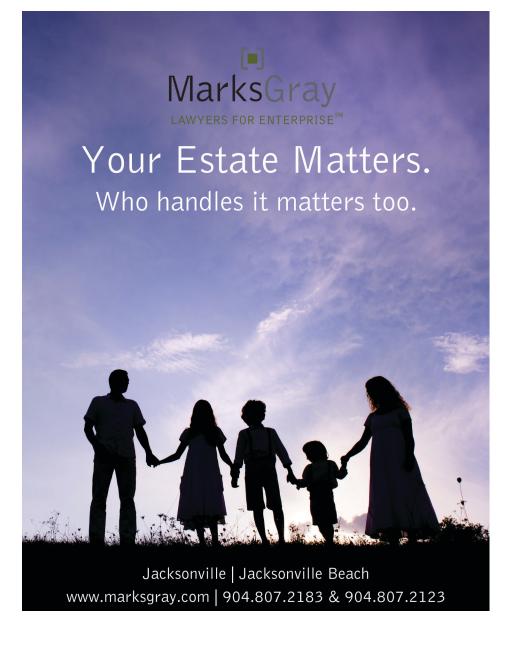
"While forming and managing a successful family law practice over the past four decades, I'm especially proud that my husband of 50 years, Elliot, and I raised two happy and successful children along the way ... and over the last eight years we've enjoyed and nurtured three grandchildren," she said.

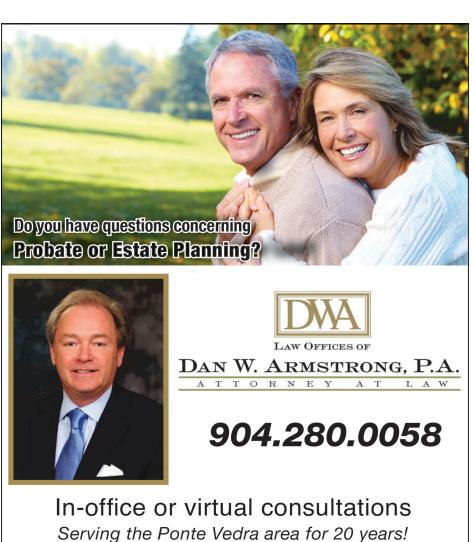
Their son Jonathan Zisser is now Zisser Family Law's managing director and their daughter Dr. Alison Zisser Nathenson is a clinical child psychologist.

the distribution of their daughter Dr. Alison Zisser Naenson is a clinical child psychologist. The distribution of their daughter Dr. Alison Zisser Naenson is a clinical child psychologist. The distribution of their daughter Dr. Alison Zisser Nasenson is a clinical child psychologist. The distribution of the distributi

and family matters including cases involving divorce, alimony and child support, timesharing, valuation and distribution of assets and complex valuations of businesses. With managing attorney Jonathan Zisser, it also takes on criminal issues that arise in the context of family litigation, such as domestic violence and domestic battery, DUI offenses, child abuse and other cases.







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Here's a look at just a few of the Easter worship services and holiday events taking place this week throughout the area.

# **EVENTS**

## Easter fun at Flagler Health+

This year's Easter at Nocatee will have activities for the whole family. With an appearance from the Easter Bunny himself, get ready for some Easter fun.

There will be an Easter egg hunt starting at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, April 14, at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee and photos from 4 to 6 p.m. Kona Ice Truck will also be on site at no cost to attend-



Go to facebook.com/ events/495077611990825 for more infor-

A photo release is requested for attendees under 18. Go to form.jotform. com/212436249926158 to complete the form prior to your arrival to help expedite the registration process.

Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee is located at 351 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra Beach.

### St. Augustine 63rd Annual Easter **Parade**

9-10:30 a.m. April 16 oldestcityeaster.org

This second-oldest Easter Parade in the United States, also known as Parada de los Caballos y Coches (Parade of Horses and Carriages), features marching bands, floats, drill teams, the Easter Bunny, clowns, the Royal Family, Imperial Storm Troopers and the city's carriage horses wearing their Easter hats.

# **Easter Promenade**

1-3 p.m. April 17 170 St. George St. St. Augustine

Join the St. Augustine Easter Festival Committee and St. Augustine Royal Family for the Easter Promenade at 1 p.m. in the Plaza de la Constitución gazebo in downtown St. Augustine. At the event, awards will be presented in fun catego-

Join Us For HOLY WEEK & EASTER

Palm Sunday, April 10 • 8:30 & 11 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 14 • 7 p.m.

Good Friday, April 15 • Open from 4 - 8 p.m. Walk of contemplation in the Oasis Garden

Brunch with the bunny and egg hunt, April 16 • 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 17 • 6:30, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

All Are Welcome
Palms Presbyterian Church

ries, including best-dressed couple, best hat, etc. The event is free and open to the public.

## **Hello Spring**

11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Saturday, April 16. In The Courtyard between REI and West

The Markets At Town Center 4865 Town Center Pkwy. Jacksonville

Enjoy a fun-filled day that includes visits with Easter Bunny, Twist of Fun! Balloons, face painting, cookies from DnP Cupcakery, cool treats from Kona

Ice, music and fun, and a sidewalk sale at participating stores.

## **BRUNCHES**

## **Easter Brunch at Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa**

A buffet will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at Vernon's First Coast Kitchen & Bar farm-to-table restaurant at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa (parking complimentary), featuring seafood, steak, pasta, a carving station

**EASTER** continues on **Page 14** 



# **Easter**

Continued from 13

and more.

Buffet highlights include lobster bisque with sherry crema, snow crab claws, pepper-crusted ribeye with caramelized mushroom and onion jus and early spring chimichurri, seared Atlantic grouper with blistered tomatoes and artichoke relish, and more, including soups, salads, carving station, omelets to order, pasta, seafood and desserts.

There will also be live music.

Reservations required. Go to opentable. com/vernons-restaurant

Facebook event: facebook.com/ events/489989972820909

## The Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island

4750 Amelia Island Parkway Amelia Island

- Saturday, April 16, 8 a.m. Easter Bunny Breakfast. Children will delight in breakfast with the Easter Bunny with a buffet including a pancake station, scrambled eggs, bacon, pastries and more. Parents will get a keepsake photo.
- Saturday, April 16, 11:30 a.m. Cottontail Tea Party. The Cottontail Tea Party presents the Easter Bunny and Springtime Fairy with a magical afternoon tea; petite sandwiches and sweets including scones, crème brulee, cheesecake and a mousse.
- Sunday, April 17, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Easter Garden Brunch. Savor Easter Brunch in the ballroom atrium viewing the ocean. Brunch offerings include salad, seafood and an egg station. In the afternoon, there will be live music, cookie decorating and an Easter Bunny visit.

For reservations, go to ritzcarlton.com/ en/hotels/florida/amelia-island/hoteloverview/calendar

#### **TPC Sawgrass**

Enjoy brunch at TPC Sawgrass from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 17. 110 Championship Way, Ponte Vedra Beach 904-543-5105. To make a reservation, go to tpc.com/sawgrass/dining

#### **Costa Brava**

Costa Brava at Casa Monica Resort & Spa offers a curated five-course meal and a guest appearance from the Easter Bunny. The Easter buffet on Sunday. April 17, will be socially distanced. Book your spot via OpenTable at opentable. com/costa-brava. Seating times are 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

# **SPECIAL SERVICES**

#### **Good Friday Service presented by Colonial Church**

St. Augustine Amphitheatre 1340 A1A South St. Augustine

All are welcome to join this community worship on Good Friday, April 15, at The Amp. Presented by Colonial Church, gates open at 5 p.m., service begins at 6 p.m. Food trucks and concessions will be available. Featuring Colonial Worship and Paul & Hannah McClure of Bethel Music.

Good Friday is centered around the sacrifice and grace of Jesus. It's a night to gather together as a community to worship and stand in reverence at what He has done for all of us. This event is free.

#### **Mission Nombre de Dios**

101 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine

- At 7:30 p.m. Good Friday, April 15, Comunita Cenacolo will present a live Stations of the Cross and Passion Play at the Great Cross.
- On Holy Saturday, April 16, at 11 a.m. there will be the Seven Sorrows of Mary at the outdoor grottos on the Sacred Acre.

• Easter Sunday Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Estevez at 10 a.m. at the Great Cross.

#### St. Francis in-the-Field

Holy Week and Easter Sunday Services for St. Francis in-the-Field:

- April 14, Maundy Thursday Service at 6:30 p.m.
- April 25, Good Friday Services. Traditional Good Friday Service at noon in the Sanctuary. Stations of the Cross at 6:30 p.m. — walk the rustic grounds of St. Francis in -the-Field following Jesus' progression from the Garden to Pilate and to his crucifixion.

#### Easter Sunday, April 17

- Sunrise Service at 6 a.m. Bring a blanket to spread out or bring a lawn chair; come as you are and experience something entirely different on the grounds of St. Francis in-the-Field.
- 8 a.m. Rite I Easter Worship followed by Biscuit Bar Breakfast in parish hall at 9 a.m.
- 10 a.m. Rite II Easter Worship followed by children's egg hunt at 11 a.m. Children 18 months to 5th grade. Bring your baskets for an "eggtastic" time.

### St. Francis in-the-Field Episcopal Church

895 Palm Valley Road Ponte Vedra 904-615-2130

#### **Crescent Beach Easter Sunrise Service**

7-8 a.m. Sunday, April 17 45 Cubbedge Road St. Augustine Phone: 904-794-7777

Greet the Easter sunrise at Crescent Beach. The program, presented by Crescent Beach Baptist Church, begins with the sunrise at 7 a.m. on the beach with special music and an inspiring message. crescentbeachbaptist.com

### **Christ Episcopal Church**

400 San Juan Drive Ponte Vedra Beach Phone: 904-285-6127

Schedule for Easter Sunday, April 17:

• 6:30 a.m. Sunrise Eucharist on the Beach

Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, 200 Ponte Vedra Blvd.

Worship as you watch the sun rise on the beach. Come as you are – all are welcome. Plan to arrive early.

• Easter Brunch

7:30-10:45 a.m.

Brunch after worship will be held in the Westbury Hall Dining Room at Christ Church.

• 7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I Christ Church Main Sanctuary

Traditional Rite I language service with Easter music and hymns.

Nursery Care is available during the 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services with advance registration.

• 9 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II Christ Church Main Sanctuary and livestreamed

A mixture of old and new in a familyfriendly atmosphere.

• 9 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II The Cooper Chapel

A slightly shorter and quieter said service. Note: Chapel seating is limited.

• 11:15 a.m. Festal Eucharist, Rite II Christ Church Main Sanctuary Chancel Choir and musicians help wel-

come the Risen Christ in grand style. • 11:15 a.m. Jordan Easter Service

Contemporary Worship Space and livestreamed A casual and contemporary Easter

celebration.

• 12:45 p.m. Misa en Español Contemporary Worship Space and livestreamed

After the service there will be fellowship time sharing an Easter potluck.







Ponte Vedra Recorder · April 14, 2022 COMMUNITY NEWS 15

# **GUEST COLUMN**

# Planning ahead for college admissions

## By Banks Vadeboncoeur

High school is a place of freedom, a time in a person's life in which they can envision their future and become equipped for the real world through errors and successes. School is not simply the thousands of bricks mortared in place, rather the hundreds of hearts who have more dreams than there are stars in the sky.

A common goal of driven high school students is to get into college, whether it be a local community college or a prestigious Ivy League school. The landscape of college admissions has unquestionably evolved, and as this change takes place, so do high school students' approach to building a strong application.

To begin with, grade point average (GPA) has become heavily inflated in the past 10 years. According to a study by Inside Higher Ed, the average high school GPA in 2017 was 3.38, while in 2009 the average GPA was 3.0. In our current weighted grading system, an A in an advanced or college course (such as AP, IB and AICE) is equal to a 5.0, an A in an honors course is a 4.5, and an A in a standard course is a 4.0. As a result, the

most driven students pack their schedules with advanced classes. Students also dual enroll in local college courses, such as those offered at the St. Johns River Community College, to take advantage of the 5.0 scale.

Furthermore, the virtual school course alternative has become a popular way to strengthen college applications. Unique courses such as meteorology, fitness lifestyle design, Hebrew and agriscience are offered on the Florida Virtual School website and can make students' skill sets stand out against fellow applicants. Some also use these courses to increase their GPA by taking extra classes in addition to the required curriculum. Most high schools now have a virtual lab solely dedicated to students taking online courses.

Finally, extracurriculars have become increasingly important for college admissions. Students are encouraged to volunteer and participate in community service. The Bright Futures Scholarship, which offers Florida residents funding for a public program of study, requires students to have at least 100 service hours. This scholarship program motivates high school students to volunteer through participation in clothing drives, conservation

efforts, tutoring and more. Also, having a leadership position in a club demonstrates responsibility and community involvement. Ponte Vedra High School has around 50 student-led clubs, adding more each year as students work to get involved.

Ultimately, the college admissions process has evolved to become more competitive over the last decade. In response, students have created a variety of new methods to become stronger applicants and get into their dream schools.

Banks Vadeboncoeur is a freshman at Ponte Vedra High School. She loves to write and hopes to have a future career in journalism.









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# **Habitat homes dedicated March 26**

Jim & Tabitha Furyk
Foundation, PGA TOUR,
Sleiman Enterprises join
Beaches Habitat for
Humanity to celebrate
homes' completion

Four families celebrated the completion of construction on their affordable homes in Haywood Estates II, a 12-home community near Mayport Road on Saturday, March 26.

Along with the families and Beaches Habitat for Humanity, representatives from the home sponsors, The Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation, the PGA TOUR and THE PLAYERS Championship, and Sleiman Enterprises, spoke during a short program.

Each of the four families has qualified for a mortgage and completed at least 300 hours of "sweat equity," building their home and the homes of other families. They have also completed a series of workshops to prepare them for homeownership. The dedication ceremony is the last milestone before the families close on their mortgages.

Construction of the homes at an affordable price is only possible through the support of local volunteers and donors. Each of the home sponsors has made a significant financial contribution to help offset the cost of construction.

"We are so grateful for the commitment of the PGA TOUR, the Furyk Foundation, and Sleiman Enterprises. They are making a huge difference in our communities by improving access to affordable housing," said Curtis Ford, president and CEO of Beaches Habitat for Humanity. "Thanks to their support, these families have the opportunity to purchase a home that meets their needs at a price they can afford."

These particular homes are unique due to the customizations included to help





Photos provided by PGA TOUR

PGA TOUR employees help with the construction of a home for a family partnering with Beaches Habitat for Humanity.

each of the families. Two of the homes are a one-story design to accommodate homeowners with physical limitations that make it difficult to navigate stairs. The other two homes are accessible to accommodate children with cerebral palsy who use wheelchairs. In addition to a ramp and other accessible features, each house has a Sure Hands lift system thanks to financial contributions from several

donors, including the Scheidel Foundation and Wells Fargo. The lift system will provide more flexibility for the children to move throughout their homes.

For more information about Beaches Habitat for Humanity and how to get involved, go to beacheshabitat.org or contact Mary Anne Christensen, development director, at 904-595-5794.







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FEATURING -

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# **Baptist Health first in** Southeast to implant new Afib treatment device

Baptist Health recently broke new ground in the treatment of atrial fibrillation (Afib) as it became the first health system in the Southeast United States to use a new device following its approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Ruby Satpathy, MD, internationally recognized interventional cardiologist with Baptist Heart Specialists and medical director of the Baptist Structural Heart Program, performed the procedure.

The device, Amplatzer Amulet Left Atrial Appendage Occluder, is designed to treat patients with Afib (irregular heartbeats) who are unable to tolerate blood thinners to reduce risk of stroke.

The left atrial appendage (LAA) is a small pouch connected to the upper left chamber of the heart. For people with Afib, it is an area where blood clots can form. If those blood clots reach the bloodstream, they can travel to the brain and cause a stroke.

Following the successful completion of clinical trials in the U.S., the FDA approved the device, which seals the LAA so clots cannot form in this area.

Satpathy implanted the device in Douglas Dixon, 75, from Green Cove Springs. During routine monitoring of his pacemaker, Aaditya Vora, MD, clinical cardiac electrophysiologist, Baptist Heart Specialists, discovered Dixon had experienced an Afib event, though he did not know it.

Having had a brain bleed two years prior, dependence on blood thinners was not a good solution for Dixon. Hence, the referral of Dixon to Satpathy.

"Mr. Dixon was a good candidate for this new device because of his prior brain bleed," said Satpathy. "The treatment option opens the door for many more patients who cannot be on blood thinners for even a short period. It also allows the LAA closure for different shapes and



Dr. Ruby Satpathy (implanter), front center, and Dr. Alejandro Pena (echogrardiographer) with the Baptist Heart Hospital team after the region's first implant of a newly FDA-approved LAA closure device.



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# Company's food drive collects 960 pounds of nonperishable food

The Northeast Florida Division of PulteGroup recently completed a successful food drive to benefit Feeding Northeast Florida.

PulteGroup collected 960 pounds in donations of non-perishable food items at eight of its Northeast Florida communities, providing an estimated 1,152 meals to Northeast Florida families.

"Our company cares deeply about our neighbors and the communities in which we live and work," said Tony Nason, division president of PulteGroup's Northeast Florida Division. "No one should ever go hungry, and we are grateful to support Feeding Northeast Florida and its efforts to make a difference in our communities."



Pictured from left are Eric Pledger, Nicole Pare, Mandy Wicker and Taulant Marra prepare to donate 960 pounds of food to those

Feeding Northeast Florida is one of the largest food banks in Northeast Florida. It works to provide meals and access to healthy food to members of the community who are food insecure and live in underserved parts of the community.

With more than 250 service agencies and programs, they serve millions of meals each year throughout eight different counties in the Northeast Florida region.

To learn more, go to feedingnefl.org.

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# **GUEST COLUMN**

# Agency connected to families, community

## By Jonathan Gibbs,

State Farm insurance agent

The job of an insurance agent is multifaceted, to say the least. One of the greatest highlights for me is that I genuinely enjoy the opportunity, provided daily, to help people. Each day I get to interact with my team in a collaborative effort to manage any given client's insurance or financial concerns. Insurance agents have a rich history of giving back to the community, especially where we live and work. It is truly our milk and butter. I aspire to be the first and best option for my community and surrounding area's insurance and/or financial service needs. My mission is to help people manage the risks of everyday life, recover from the unexpected and realize their dreams.

As agents, our values include supporting and building safer, stronger and better educated communities. We often serve as risk advisors meant to educate families on services available, keeping them and their possessions safe and secure. Some advice I can offer is to always remember that an insurance policy is a contract. Whether the policy is insuring homes, cars, providing solutions for retirement, life insurance or even banking needs, contracts are in fact legally binding agreements between the insurer and the insured. One size does not necessarily fit all situations.

I am a second-generation State Farm agent, with my dad being an agent for well over 30 years. Growing up, agency was

always the career path that I had in mind when I considered life after high school. I grew up in Ponte Vedra Beach, attended all the local schools and finished high school as a Nease Panther. I worked in my dad's office, Bob Gibbs State Farm, after attaining my BS degree in business administration, for seven years. I opened my office in Nocatee in December of 2016, and I relocated, still in Nocatee, in December of

I really enjoy the sense of community here in Ponte Vedra. I know most of the families, they know my parents, we went to school together, we played sports together, it's home. The beach aspect of this city and the leisure of it all, is my favorite. In my free-time I enjoy going to the beach and relaxing from the daily routine of the work week. I make a point to spend time with family and indulge in all that Ponte Vedra and the surrounding areas have to

I could be described as incredibly focused in the office, but those who know me best would say that I am a kid at heart. I'm always looking for a way to laugh and ease the mood when dealing with tense conversations, to make everyone feel comfortable. I enjoy what I do and sincerely enjoy laughing. It is super cliché to say, but laughter really is the greatest way to endure the angsts of everyday life.

State Farm has always been a familyand community-driven business. My mom, Shirley, dad and older brother Robert have always been my biggest supporters in and out of the office. We are so blessed to be a part of such an amazing community with countless opportunities to help our clients build and recover from the unexpected. I look forward to being able to provide remarkable service for years to come.

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# Aristimuño named **Greenpointe human** resources director

GreenPointe Developers has announced the promotion of Carolina Aristimuño to the position of human resources director. In her new role, she will direct the recruitment of top talent and lead initiatives to support the achievement of business goals.

"Carolina will continue to promote and further develop our company's values and culture of employee engagement and retention to create a best-in-class work environment," said GreenPointe Developers President Grady Miars. "We are grateful for her dedication to the company and excited to see her succeed in her new

Since joining GreenPointe in 2015 as human resources manager – payroll specialist, Aristimuño has continually worked to develop and improve the company's human resources operation. Her responsibilities include managing personnel, recruitment and retention, staff development, compliance and benefits administration. Additionally, she has served as a resource leader and mentor for junior employees and new team members.

Aristimuño came to GreenPointe with more than 10 years of extensive and diverse human resources experience. She is bilingual in English and Spanish, and her experience extends to international business practices and protocols, including managing international clients.

GreenPointe is developing communities throughout Florida. For more information, go to GreenPointeLLC.com.

# Send your arts news to news@pontevedrarecorder.com

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

# Therapeutic art organization plans fundraiser

Art with a Heart in Healthcare will host a fundraising event called "A Fine HeART Experience" from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. April 22. This event, held at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach, will feature a live performance by musical artists Them Vibes, local cuisine from TacoLu Baja Mexicana, a cash bar and more.

Guests attending the event will have the opportunity to bid on exclusive items including group getaway trips, a chance to win raffle prizes such as gift certificates to Jacksonville businesses and a chance to hear stories from patients and families who have worked with the organization while in the hospital.

"A Fine HeART Experience" is open

to the public with tickets available for purchase on the organization's website, awahih.org/event and biddingforgood/ artwithaheart.

Proceeds from this event benefit the organization's mission of enhancing the healing process through art.

Since its founding in 2001, the organization has served more than 100,000

patients and their families in several locations in Jacksonville.

The organization's team of staff artists, community volunteers and interns from the University of North Florida provide fine art sessions individualized to meet the needs of patients at their bedside or in groups six days a week.

# Alhambra to present 'Rock of Ages' through May 2

When "Rock of Ages" opened on Broadway in 2009, it was honored with five Tony Award nominations and went on to run for more than six years and 2,300 performances.

Fueled by and built around classic rock songs from the 1980s by bands like Styx, Journey, Bon Jovi, Pat Benatar, Twisted Sister and Poison among other well-known rock bands, "Rock of Ages" became the 29th longest running show in Broadway history.

In 2012, "Rock of Ages" opened as a feature film with Tom Cruise, Julianne Hough, Russell Brand and Catherine Zeta-Jones. On March 24, this flashback to the '80s opened at the iconic Alhambra Theatre and Dining in Jacksonville.

The songs underscore a tale of big Hollywood dreams. Soon after hopping off a bus from the Midwest, aspiring singer Sherrie Christian immediately finds herself in trouble. Coming to her rescue is Drew, a bar-back at the legendary club the Bourbon Room. With stars in their eyes, the young lovers chase their dreams, but a misunderstanding involving rock icon Stacee Jaxx threatens to tear them apart.

The Bourbon Room is owned by former rock star Dennis Dupree, played by actual local rock-and-roller Ron Perry.

Originally from Detroit, Perry played in a punk band right out of high school. While playing in a small club in Detroit, he had a chance meeting with Molly Hatchet's John Galvin, who recruited Perry to replace then-departing singer, Danny Joe Brown, and Perry moved to Jacksonville.

Danny Joe returned to the band, displacing Perry, but not before his song "Take Miss Lucy Home" was included on Hatchet's 1989 Capitol Records album, "Lightning Strikes Twice." Hatchet's management team helped Perry form the band China Sky, which was quickly

signed by CBS Records and had two minor hits.

In the late '90s, Perry began touring with his own band, The Ron Perry Connection, and opened his own recording studio, Jacksonville's American Media Sound & Video.

For the last 10 years, Perry has been filming all of Alhambra's shows to create and produce the theater's TV commercials. It was during a shoot for the Alhambra's 2022 lineup that casting director Shain Stroff saw Perry through a different lens, that of trying to find the right Dennis Dupree.

Perry had the right look. A trained musician and bona fide rock-and-roll front man with natural stage presence, Perry had, however, never acted, and was cast with a little "roll of the dice," as Alhambra owner Craig Smith put it.

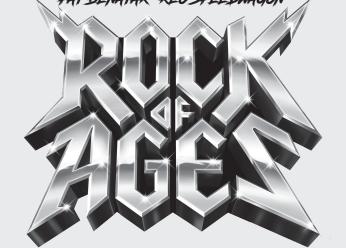
Perry quickly came under the tutelage of long-time director and former Alhambra owner, Todd Booth Sr., and in one week Perry was playing a rock and roller as opposed to being one.

"Rock of Ages" will run through May 2. The Alhambra Theatre & Dining is

located at 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville. Tickets start at \$48 and include a three-course meal that changes for each show, a Broadway-style performance and complimentary parking. Tickets can be purchases online at alhambrajax.com or by calling 904-641-1212.







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# Panthers weigh-in as champs

# Nease wins team district title, Ponte Vedra places third

# **By Anthony Richards**

Consistency was key in Nease High's path to a district team snatch champion-ship, as several boys weightlifters were in contention for individual titles.

Samuel Lewis had a memorable district meet for the Nease Panthers by winning the district 3-3A snatch championship in the 119-pound class with a 125 lift, as well as finishing third in the traditional competition with a 365 total (190 bench and 175 clean-and-jerk).

Chris Dunn gave the Panthers another district title in the snatch portion of the competition by winning the 199-pound class. He lifted a class best of 190 pounds, which put him 25 pounds clear of second place and was so impressive that he did not even have to complete a third attempt because none of his competitors could approach his mark.

The Ponte Vedra Sharks earned a district title in the 219-pound class with Drew Molinari edging out the Panthers' Evan Higgins.

Both Molinari and Higgins finished with a best lift of 155 pounds, but it was Molinari who won the tiebreaker because his body weight was about six pounds less than Higgins.

The Panthers won the team snatch district championship by compiling 59

points, which was three more than Bartram Trail High School in second place and 26 points ahead of the Sharks, who finished in third with 33 points.

A string of consistent results allowed the Panthers to rack up the points they did.

Those results were highlighted by second place finishes by Higgins, Julio Dervishi in the 238-pound class and Nate Fagen, who was just five pounds shy of the top mark in the 183-pound class.

Jon Hughes came up with a clutch runner-up performance in the 129-pound class for the Sharks with a snatch of 95 pounds.

Liam Monroe hung around the top of the leaderboard throughout the day for the Panthers, coming home in third in the 139-pound class in both the traditional and the snatch segments of the event.

The Panthers held their own and finished seventh in the Region 1-3A snatch competition with 12 points, thanks to a pair of podium performances for Lewis and Fagen.

Lewis duplicated his district lift of 125 pounds at the region meet, but instead of winning it, this time it put him in a three-way tie for second in the 119-pound class.

However, when it all sorted out, he was awarded third place because his body weight was 0.3 pounds heavier than the lifter who was granted second.

Fagen repeated his 195-pound district mark at regionals and found himself on the unfavorable end of a tiebreak as well, coming home in third in the 183-pound class.





Ponte Vedra Recorder · April 14, 2022

# Sharks hire two head coaches

# **By Anthony Richards**

Ponte Vedra High School recently hired a pair of new head coaches to its athletic program with the additions of Jessica Spencer-Gardner and Angi Boselli.

Spencer-Gardner will take over the reins of the girls varsity basketball team heading into next season.

She presents an array of experience, having played Division 1 basketball at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Spencer-Gardner is familiar with the area, as she is currently the head coach of an AAU squad at Blue Heat Basketball Academy in Ponte Vedra.

She will have a lot of talent to work with, as the Sharks are expected to return the majority of a young group that molded as the year went along and finished as district champions.

"We couldn't ask for a more caring and compassionate leader to guide our girls basketball program," Ponte Vedra athletic director Michael Harrison said.

Joining Spencer-Gardner as a new coach next year will be Boselli, who has been named the Sharks' next cheer head coach.

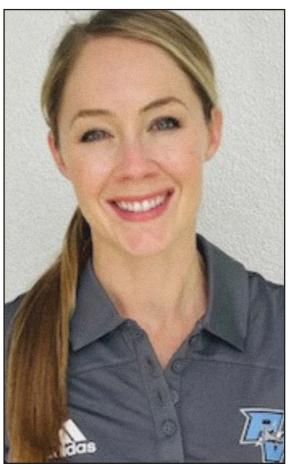
Boselli has quite the resume, with more than 15 years



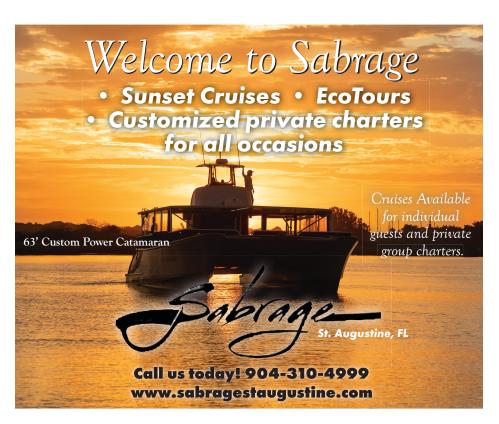
of coaching cheer at the highest levels of competition, including winning a state title while at Providence School in Jacksonville.

That is not the last of the moves the Sharks will make from now until the start of the next school year in the fall.

One of the current vacancies they will need to fill will also be the head coach of the varsity girls lacrosse team, after former head coach Jennifer Conway and the school parted ways.



Jessica Spencer-Gardner



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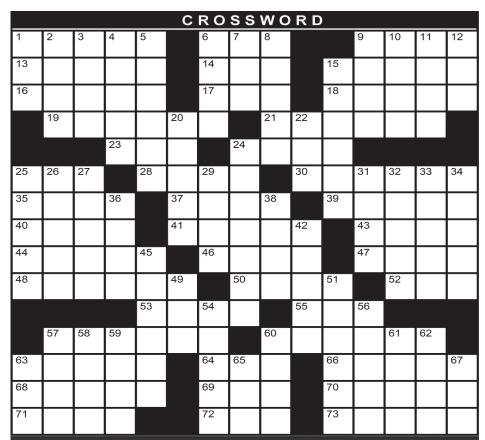


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#### THEME: BEATLEMANIA

#### ACROSS

- 1. In the Queen of Hearts' oven?
- 6. Indiana Jones' quest
- 9. Dance with leis
- 13. Sheikh, alt. sp.
- 14. Opposite of paleo 15. Hedgehog of movies and
- video games
- 16. Toilet, to a toddler
- 17. Pilot's estimate acronym
- 18. One deserving of respect?
- 19. \*Like submarine 21. \*Abbey Road location
- 23. Lobe location
- 24. Per person
- 25. To the \_\_\_\_ degree
- 28. \*"Twist and Shout" endearment
- 30. English confection
- 35. Wraths
- 37. Swarm like bees
- 39. Not taken and taken
- 40. Skiing helmet manufacturer
- 41. Homework assignment 43. Kamakawiwo'ole's strings, pl.
- 44. Thermonuclear weapon
- 46. Type of list
- 47. Frost residue
- 48. "God, We Praise You" (2 words)
- 50. Redecorate, e.g.
- 52. What Carl Lewis did
- 53. Doctor's order
- 55. December 31st, e.g.
- 57. \*"Whisper words of 60. \*"Please Me." 1st album
- 63. Amusement
- 64. Rage 66. Scary movie consequence
- \_\_\_\_ del Carmen, Mexico
- 69. Corn spot
- 70. Reach a goal (2 words)
- 71. Unit of heredity
- 72. Cry of alarm
- 73. Wipe out

#### DOWN

- 1. Cough syrup amt.
- 2. Greeting at sea
- 3. Blood vessel network
- 4. Ownership document 5. NASA's first space station
- 6. All over again
- 7. Retired, abbr.
- 8. Aussie bear
- 9. \*"I want to \_\_\_\_\_ your hand"
- 10. Editing arrow
- 11. Bank holding
- 12. Acronym, abbr.
- 15. Mister in Brazil
- 20. Speak from a podium
- 22. Month X
- 24. Hideous sight
- 25 \*"It's been a hard day's
- 26. Social group
- 27. Roman king of Judea
- 29. \*Starr's predecessor
- 31. \*Fabulous number

# 36. Not all

33. Swelling

32. Faquir, alt.sp.

- 34. Ruhr's industrial center
- 38. Like a full-fledged Mafia man
- 42. Cry of the Alps
- 45. The enlightened one 49. Barn sound
- 51. Nervous (2 words)
- 54. Inflict a blow
- 56. Truth or Dare player?
- 57. E. Coyote
- 58. Persian Gulf country
- 59. Eye infection
- 60. Peephole glance
- \_ good example
- 62. Chows down
- 63. Frugal driver's acronym

#### 65. Fish eggs 67. Unidentified Jane SUDOKU



Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every

row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9

# Stokes commits to Penn State



Photo by Anthony Richards

Nease High School junior quarterback Marcus Stokes verbally committed to play football at Pennsylvania State University. He announced the news on his Twitter page. The Nittany Lions are one of several FBS schools interested in the highly touted recruit.

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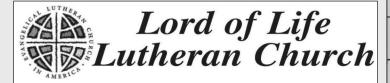
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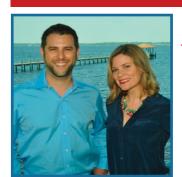
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