

THE RECORDER



Not your average newspaper, not your average reader.

July 7, 2022
Volume 53, No. 36
75 cents

Covering Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine, and Greater St. Johns County

PonteVedraRecorder.com



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



Photo by Susan Griffin

Washington crosses Nocatee Station Field on Saturday, July 2, as part of the community's Fourth of July weekend celebration. For more photos, turn to page 5.

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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.**



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Hugh Osteen
COO/VP
hugh@osteenmediagroup.com
(904) 285-8831

Susan Griffin
Publisher
susan@pontevedrarecorder.com
(904) 686-3938

Shaun Ryan
Editor
shaun@pontevedrarecorder.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1202

Anthony Richards
Reporter
anthony@pontevedrarecorder.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1207

Don Coble
Contributor
don@claytodayonline.com

Amber Anderson
Page/Graphic Designer
amber@pontevedrarecorder.com

April Snyder
Sales Assistant
april@pontevedrarecorder.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1204

Kristin Flanagan
Account Executive
kristin@pontevedrarecorder.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1206

Adele McGraw
Account Executive
adele@pontevedrarecorder.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 1208

Debbie Apple
Account Executive
debbie@osteenmediagroup.com
(904) 285-8831

Joe Wilhelm
Circulation Manager
joe@osteenmediagroup.com
(904) 300-5374

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St. Johns County students perform well on 2022 assessments

By Shaun Ryan

Students across the state demonstrated performance gains in the final year of the Florida Standards Assessment, with the St. Johns County School District leading the way.

Commissioner of Education Manny Diaz Jr. announced the results Thursday, June 30.

“Every single Florida teacher, student and parent should be proud of the progress we’ve made over the last year,” he said. “As a department, we’re looking forward to building on this great work through the many learning initiatives and improvements on the horizon.”

Any of that progress going forward will be measured differently, as legislation signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis in March replaces the assessments with progress monitoring.

Educators have long lamented the volume of time devoted to preparing for the assessments, time subtracted from classroom instruction.

“Florida’s education focus should be students’ growth and how we restore the conversation between parents and teachers in support of students’ growth,” DeSantis said in 2021 in proposing the change. “In this final step to eradicate Common Core from our assessments, our administration is implementing the lessons learned from progress monitoring both during the state’s recovery and from our districts and schools that were already showing how we can better support students reaching their own unique growth goals.”

This year, achievement gaps between African-American and White students narrowed on all social studies and science assessments.

African-American students’ performance increased by 8% in civics, 4% in U.S. history, 3% in fifth-grade science, 2% in eighth-grade science and 1% in biology 1.

Hispanic students’ performance increased by 6% in civics, 3% in U.S. history and 3% in fifth-grade science.

Overall, compared with 2021 results, Florida students’ performance increased by 5% in the civics end-of-course exam, 2% in the U.S. history end-of-course exam and 1% in fifth-grade science. Performance remained unchanged for eighth-grade science and decreased by 1% in the biology 1 end-of-course exam.

Here are the results for the St. Johns County School District:

- English Language Arts (grades 3-10): 73% received a passing score. Unchanged from 2021. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.
- Mathematics (grades 3-8): 78% received a passing score, a 1% increase from 2021. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.
- Algebra 1 (grades 6-12): 77% received a passing score, 23% higher than the state average. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.
- Algebra 1 end-of-course exam (grade 12 and lower): 75% received a passing score, a 4% increase from 2021. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.
- Geometry (grades 6-12): 77% received a passing score, 27% higher than the state average. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.
- Science (grade 5): 69% received a passing score, 1% lower than in 2021. Only Nassau County scored higher, with 70%.
- Science and biology 1 end-of-course exam (grade 8): 72% received a passing score, 2% higher than in 2021. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.
- Biology 1 end-of-course exam: 84% received a passing score, 1% lower than in 2021. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.
- Civics end-of-course exam: 90% received

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Assessments

Continued from 2

a passing score, 2% higher than in 2021. Only Lafayette County scored higher, with 96%.

- U.S. history end-of-course exam: 85% received a passing score. Unchanged from 2021. This is the highest percentage among all Florida school districts.

Individual schools

For the spring Algebra 1 assessment, 100% of students at Landrum Middle School, Pine Island Academy and Freedom Crossing Academy received a pass-

ing grade. At Landrum, 79% achieved the highest level — equivalent to an A in traditional grading. At Pine Island, 75% achieved the highest level.

At Nease High School, 72% received a passing score. At Ponte Vedra High School, it was 84%. Valley Ridge Academy and Palm Valley Academy both had 98%.

For the spring geometry assessment, 100% of students at a dozen schools received a passing score. They were: Landrum Middle School, Valley Ridge Academy, Freedom Crossing Academy, Palm Valley Academy, Sebastian Middle School, Switzerland Point Middle School, Mill Creek Academy, Gamble Rogers

Middle School, Patriot Oaks Academy, Liberty Pines Academy, Pacetti Bay Middle School and Fruit Cove Middle School.

As a new school, Pine Island Academy did not have any data for this year.

Once again, Landrum led the way, with 95% achieving the highest level. Freedom Crossing Academy was second with 92%.

At both Nease and Ponte Vedra high schools, 85% received a passing score.

For the spring biology 1 end-of-course exam, 100% of students at three schools received a passing score. There were: Sebastian, Switzerland Point and Gamble Rogers middle schools.

At Nease High School, 91% received a passing score. At Ponte Vedra High School, it was 92%.

For the spring civics end-of-course exam, 93% of students at Landrum Middle School received a passing grade. At Valley Ridge Academy, it was 94%. Palm Valley Academy: 91%. Pine Island Academy: 93%.

For the spring U.S. history end-of-course assessment, 90% of students at Nease High School received a passing score. At Ponte Vedra High School, it was 94%. In this category, PVHS led the county with 48% achieving the highest level.

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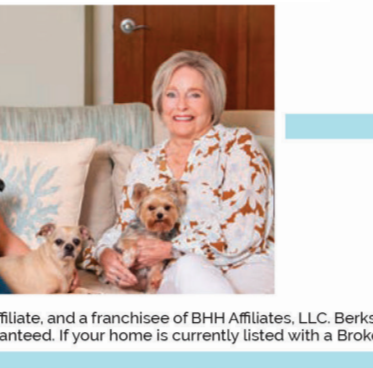


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Photos by Susan Griffin

A ribbon cutting and community celebration was held at the site of the new Ascension St. Vincent's Health Center on County Road 210 in St. Johns July 1.

Grand opening for a grand facility

Ascension opens new hospital in St. Johns

By Anthony Richards

Ascension St. Vincent's Health Center's new hospital opened in St. Johns County and did so in the grandest way, as the facility hosted the public for a community event and ribbon cutting on site July 1.



Virginia Hall with Ascension St. Vincent's speaks during the ceremony.

The free event was a chance for the public to get acquainted with their new hospital as well as share in some fun family activities while they were there, as games, vendors and mascots from local sports teams were present.

According to Sean McAfee, vice president of nursing with Ascension St. Vincent's, pride was the No. 1 emotion he and the staff at the facility were feeling.

"As a member of St. Johns County, myself, I can't be prouder of this facility," McAfee said.

The hospital hopes to fill a need for the residents in the northwestern region of the county by providing them with another necessary option when medical issues arise.

"This county is the fastest growing county in the United States, so the access was very much needed," McAfee said.

Even prior to the hospital taking its first patient, McAfee had already heard positive feedback from the community, the county's emergency medical services and the police departments that they are partnering with.

The hospital's construction began in December 2020 and that idea was made a reality during the ribbon cutting ceremony July 1.

The structure is 150,000 square feet with 56 in-patient beds, 15 emergency room beds and six operating rooms.

"It really is a state-of-the-art facility, not only in a high-tech perspective,



The facility has six operating rooms.

but when it comes to low tech as well," McAfee said.

An example of the efficiency of even the low-tech aspect of the hospital is with its "medical mall," which greets anyone who first walks in through the main entrance of the building.

This is done by cleaning up the sight lines and helping a person find where they need to go to help speed up their process and make the situation as seamless as possible.

"When you walk in, you can see everywhere you need to go," McAfee



The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office color guard presents the colors for the National Anthem.



A bounce house was one of the fun things the ceremony featured.

JULY 4TH GOLF CART PARADE

The annual 4th of July Golf Cart Parade at Nocatee Station Field featured several area residents in creatively decorated golf carts. The event was held Saturday morning, July 2.

Photos by Susan Griffin



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Emily Bellock is the new director of community outreach for THE PLAYERS Championship. She has been affiliated with the PGA TOUR in various capacities over the years.

Emily Bellock

As told to Shaun Ryan

In your new position with THE PLAYERS, what kinds of things will you be doing?

As THE PLAYERS' director of community outreach, I oversee the Championship's year-round charitable, community and military outreach initiatives and relationships. Right now, I'm spending a lot of time in the community meeting with organizations to best understand needs and opportunities that THE PLAYERS can support.

Additionally, I oversee our storytelling and PR plans to drive awareness around THE PLAYERS and our community partners. It's really important to us that THE PLAYERS is accessible to all, and it's my job to make sure that nonprofits in this community feel that way.

What are you looking forward to as you assume this new role?

I'm really looking forward to meeting the great people and organizations in the greater Jacksonville area that do so much for this community. In my short time in this role, I've been so impressed with the strength and scope of the nonprofit network here.

I'm also excited to continue to work with the many community organizations that THE PLAYERS has a rich history with as well as expose new organizations to the event and the support that it can provide.

You've been affiliated with the PGA TOUR for several years. Tell us about your career and the responsibilities you've had.

I hit my 15-year mark with the TOUR this February. My first role was an entry-level position with the PGA TOUR Tournament Business Affairs team. I had various roles in that department and the fortune to work with nearly every PGA TOUR event during my time there. We supported our co-sanctioned tournaments across the country with sales, marketing, operational and community outreach support.

I later transitioned to the TOUR's Corporate Partnerships department where I managed a portfolio of Official Marketing Partners and Title Sponsors by developing and executing their season-long sponsorships and marketing programs. Some that you may have seen at THE PLAYERS include Tito's, Maestro Dobel, Anheuser Busch, NetJets and TruGreen. Every two years, I support the U.S. Presidents Cup team as a team liaison. My colleague and I work closely with the team members, their families and support staff and oversee planning and team operations. With the 2022 Presidents Cup just around in the corner (Sept. 22-25 at Quail Hollow in Charlotte, North Carolina), this has turned into a very busy summer!

It's always interesting to discover how people find themselves in their present careers. Can you tell us how you got started and about your education?

I went to Boston College for undergrad and completed my MBA at the University of Florida. I started my career in golf with an internship at the Bank of America Championship, a former PGA TOUR Champions event in Concord, Massachusetts. I served as the tournament's pro-am coordinator and was tasked with overseeing registration and communication with all pro-am guests,



Photo provided by Emily Bellock

Emily Bellock is THE PLAYERS' new director of community outreach.

gift fulfillment and operations.

I truly loved the experience and was able to meet a number of TOUR staff members during that time that ultimately led me to an opportunity at HQ in Ponte Vedra.

How long have you lived here on the First Coast?

I've lived on the First Coast for just over 15 years, with time spent at the beach and "over the ditch." I currently live in Riverside.

What do you like most about it?

As a New England native, I love the climate and how

we're able to enjoy outdoor activities year-round. I also love that Jacksonville has turned into a melting pot, with people from all over moving here to call the First Coast home.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I love to explore the neighborhoods, restaurants, markets and beaches in this community. I also really love to travel (especially to see my family who is spread out across the U.S.), spend time with friends, cook and play golf. For those that know me well, I'm never bored!

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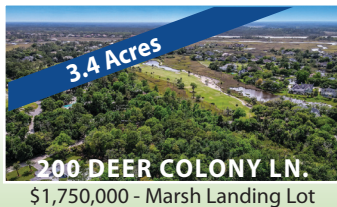


CICI ANDERSON
904.537.0457
FOUNDING REALTOR
MLCC REALTY
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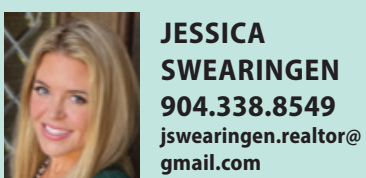
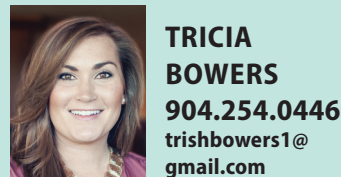
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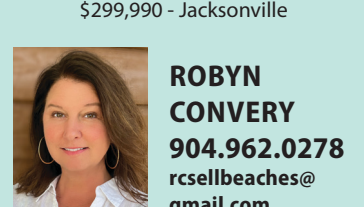
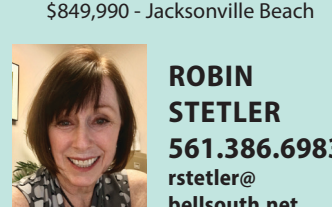


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Chamber hosts after hours at the Link

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division held an “after hours” event in the concourse of the Link in Nocatee June 29.

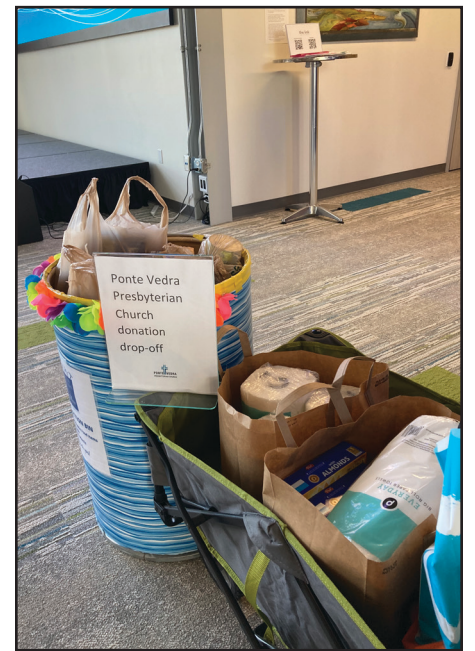
Photos by Susan Griffin



Jennifer Servello, Ericha Gove, Elaine Raby and Karen Everett.



Sean Rotolo and Mark Ryan.



Attendees dropped off items to be donated to Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church.



Matt Price speaks on stage during the event.



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Ponte Vedra Library closed after fire damage

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Public Library is closed until further notice due to a maintenance issue caused by the building catching on fire Friday, July 1.

The fire was appeared to be started during a point when severe weather came through the area, but it is unclear how the weather system led to the building eventually catching on fire.

St. Johns County fire and rescue crews were able to extinguish the fire once arriving on scene, and no injuries were reported. An investigation into the incident is underway.

However, the damage occurred has forced the library to be closed until further notice as the situation gets worked out.

According to the St. Johns County Public Library System, all items currently checked out will not be due or accrue fines during the closure period and all holds will be delayed.

All scheduled events and meet-



Photo by Shaun Ryan

ings are also cancelled or will need to find a new location in the meantime as a result.

The entire facility is closed to the public, including the book drop.

Unfortunately, for children and parents, the closure comes during the summertime when so many activities were planned for the coming weeks.

There are five other libraries within the county system. They include the Southeast Branch

(6620 U.S. 1 S. in St. Augustine), main branch (1960 North Ponce De Leon Blvd. in St. Augustine), Bartram Trail Branch (60 Davis Pond Blvd. in Fruit Cove), Anastasia Island Branch (124 Seagrove Main Street in St. Augustine Beach) and Hasting Branch (6195 S. Main Street in Hastings).

The bookmobile also makes stops throughout the county. A list of those upcoming stops and hours of each branch can be found by going to sjcpls.org.

Leadership Jacksonville announces directors

Leadership Jacksonville, an organization that educates, connects and inspires diverse leaders to build and strengthen their communities, has announced its 2022-23 officers and new members added to its board of directors.

The Leadership Jacksonville Board of Directors is led by President Michael Howland, president and chief executive officer, Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center.

The following officers have been elected to the board:

- President-Elect: Linda Lindenmoyer, vice president, relocation, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

- Secretary/Treasurer: Cynthia Griffin, vice president, Medicare pharmacy programs, Florida Blue

- Immediate Past President: Kathy Miller, senior vice president, tax, Regency Centers Corporation

Elected to the Leadership Jacksonville Board of Directors for a three-year term are:

- Jep Barbour, shareholder/attorney, Marks Gray, P.A.

- Ashleigh Brooks, associate, Taylor, Day, Grimm & Boyd

- Lynne Elliott, director, Medtronic, Inc.

- Ravi Raheja, medical director and CTOM, TriangeLogic Group

- Will Smith, chief strategy and growth officer, One Call Care Management

- Bryan Taylor, middle market/CRE team leader, Truist

- Cleve Warren, executive director, Florida State College Foundation/chief investment officer, Florida State College at Jacksonville

Elected to the Leadership Jacksonville Board of Directors for a one-year term is Jon Cooper, regional president, Ascension St. Vincent's.

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KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

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

Be a cactus in a world full of delicate flowers

By Kathy Esfahani



Kathy Esfahani

Summer is here, and it's hot! What plants love hot weather? Succulents!

What better way to spend some time around your home than creat-

ing a succulent garden or planter that needs minimal attention?

Succulents love dry heat and very little water. Sounds like the perfect plants, right? These plants have evolved in climates that are almost unbearable, with rocky terrain and desert landscapes. They retain water in their leaves and stems, thus needing to be watered only occasionally. Due to their unique nature, they also can survive in winter single digit temperatures — amazing!

You can create a succulent garden in the ground, in a planter, or even in a



Succulents like heat and require little watering.

rock garden.

Some of the most popular varieties are cactus, sedum, purslane, agave, aloe, echeveria and crassula.

Tips on creating a succulent planter:

- Choose a shallow, wide planter

with a drainage system. These plants do not like sitting water.

- Look for a potting soil designated for succulents.
 - When purchasing succulents, remember that some varieties need more sun than others. Try to group similar plants together for appropriate care.
 - Space succulents 1-2 inches apart in the planter; they don't need much room to grow!
 - Add finishing touches such as marbles, sea glass or rocks around the succulent planter.
- Stay cool and happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Sedum

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

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Flower of the Week



Sedum

Voting Now Open!



The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 53 years of community news excellence, will launch our fourth annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32081 and 32082.**

Readers have nominated their favorite businesses, organizations, professionals and more in over 250 categories online.

Vote now through July 25th. Readers can vote for their favorite business in each category once per day.

Help your favorites win and VOTE!

www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2022



'Politics in St. Johns' events connect voters with candidates

Candidates urged to reserve tables

Voters are invited to meet candidates for elected office at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce "Politics in St. Johns" town halls planned for July 27 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall and Aug. 11 at the Solomon Calhoun Center in St. Augustine. Both events are 5-7 p.m.

"We are so proud to be able to bring these events to the residents of St. Johns County," said Isabelle Renault, president/CEO of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. "The record turnout from the residents who live throughout the county for these events reinforces our belief that we provide a platform for important discussions and decisions to be made."

According to Bob Porter, the Chamber's vice president, public policy, "The elected officials at every level of government make decisions that affect our lives, and I am happy to see so many people taking advantage of an opportunity that

will help them make an informed decision when entering the voting booth."

In 2020, the Chamber hosted virtual candidate expos due to the pandemic and estimated more than 500 people and more than 40 candidates attended the in-person events in Ponte Vedra Beach and St. Augustine in 2018.

Sponsorships are available for the Politics in Johns events. Online candidate registration is open at <https://www.sjcchamber.com/events/details/politics-st-johns-ponte-vedra-7-27-22-8476?calendarMonth=2022-07-01> and candidates can contact the Chamber of Commerce office at 904-829-5681.

To find out more about the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce or to become a member, go to www.sjcchamber.com, call 904-829-5681 or find them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sjcchamber.

Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach installs president, presents awards



Lori Anderson presents Tom Veltri with the Rookie of the Year Award.



Jennifer Logue receives the Service Above Self Award from Lori Anderson



Lori Anderson presents Julie Kurtz with the Rotary Rock Star Award.

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach installed new President Dr. Ronald “Doc” Renuart on Thursday, June 30, at the club’s final meeting of the 2021-22 year, held at Marsh Landing Country Club.

Renuart succeeds Lori Anderson, who offered a review of the club’s many activities and accomplishments achieved during the past Rotary year.

In addition to donating nearly \$100,000 to local charities and nonprofit organizations from the club’s Mineral City Celebration, she noted, club members personally donated more than \$30,000 to Rotary International’s efforts to eradicate polio and more than \$20,000 to aid the people of Ukraine.

Ponte Vedra Beach Rotarians also participated in a dozen local service projects — from conducting regular cleanups of AIA and volunteering for Habitat to Humanity to donating Thanksgiving food baskets and participating in Rise Against Hunger.

The club also held the 30th anniversary of its Local Heroes Awards, honoring the “unsung heroes” in the community.

“One of my goals,” Anderson said, “was to make service the centerpiece of everything we do.”

In addition to thanking her board of directors for their support, Anderson presented awards to several Rotarians for going above and beyond in their commitment to serving the community.

The Rotarian of the Year Award was presented to Dr. Wayne Gordon for his leadership of the Rotary Club’s “EarlyAct” program for children at the PVPV/Rawlings Elementary School.

Rob Stursberg received the Don Blackburn Award for his efforts to support the Rotary International Foundation, while Jennifer Logue received the Service Above Self Award.

The Rookie of the Year Award was presented to Tom Veltri, while Julie Kurtz received the Rotary Rock Star Award.



Contributed photos

New Rotary Club President Doc Renuart presents a plaque to outgoing President Lori Anderson.



Dr. Wayne Gordon receives the Rotarian of the Year Award from Lori Anderson.

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Photos by Anthony Richards

Sean McAfee, vice president of nursing with Ascension St. Vincent's, leads a tour of a hospital room.

Ascension

Continued from 4

said. “The elevators to the patient floors, the cafeteria, a personalized help desk, surgery check-in and even kiosks along the wall if you can register yourself. That is a highly unusual approach in your traditional hospital.”

Some of the little things the hospital is doing that they hope goes a long way in

adding to a patient’s experience include a “living wall,” which is featured as part of the “medical mall” and has live greenery on it that can be touched, and towel art that is a common sight in many of the rooms.

Many of the usual specialties that have become expected from most hospitals will also be offered at the facility, such as orthopedics, neurology and general surgery.

“Really any service line you can imag-

ine, we’ve got,” McAfee said. “From a staffing perspective we really do have strong care teams, but from a personal and Ascension perspective, we really want compassionate people and I think we’ve been successful and getting that.”

Being part of the Ascension outfit of facilities can not only be a helpful tool when sharing resources, but it also played a large role during the developmental phase of the hospital, as they figured out what ideas they could borrow from other

hospitals while making it the best fit for St. Johns County.

“We were really fortunate here to have already had built a facility in Clay County not too many years ago and we were really able to learn from that to improve here,” McAfee said. “We have some really highly-skilled leaders at the other Ascension facilities here in the Jacksonville market, and it’s been a real blessing to have.”



One of several nursing stations in the hospital.



The main desk in the emergency room.

Senior LIVING

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...AND MORE!

THE
RECORDER

Thursday, July 7, 2022



Pickleball has certain advantages for seniors



Photo courtesy of The Yards

Pickleball is a popular sport among senior citizens.

By Anthony Richards

Pickleball is considered the “fastest growing sport in the United States,” and there are plenty of reasons why that is the case.

According to Maria Nili, pickleball director at The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach, one of the main reasons the sport has caught on in recent years is the ability for anyone to play together.

She believes a competitive and fun game of pickleball can be played by a group of people regardless of their ages or experience level.

That separates it from other sports that are perhaps more well-known and is why it has become a popular game among senior citizens.

“The majority of pickleball is played as doubles,” Nili said. “You think it’s not going to be the workout and require the same fitness as tennis, but when we checked to see how many calories we were burning, it was easily comparable to tennis. It’s really crazy when you think about it, because you run a lot less, but it’s just a constant movement.”

This is what makes it so unique and perfect for seniors. The fact that they can get an excellent workout while not having the same wear and tear on one’s body.

Although it looks and feels like tennis, the play is different due to the equipment used.

“They (tennis and pickleball) are very similar, but at the same time they are so different,” Nili said. “The ball bounces completely different, and it will need a little bit of adjustment, but I promise you that every single tennis player is ready for the intermediate play right from the start.”


Nili speaks from experience, having played tennis all her life and even been around it at the college and professional levels.

Because the ball does not bounce as high and a smaller court and paddles are used, it does not require as much running, but still requires a lot of constant side to side movement, which although still plentiful can be easier on a person’s joints and muscles as they age.

Most of the play during a pickleball play takes place within a box in front of the net known as “the kitchen” that is 7 feet in length and 20 feet wide.

However, Nili warns not to let the shorter playing surface ease you into thinking that it is any less of a sport, as the action still comes quick and intense.

PICKLEBALL continues on **Page 27**


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Social Security and Medicare financial outlooks improve slightly due to rebounding economy

By Dan Armstrong,
Attorney, Jacksonville Beach

An economy that is recovering from the pandemic faster than expected means that the Social Security and Medicare trustees are predicting that both programs' trust funds will remain solvent longer than they forecast last year. While this is a short-term improvement, major difficulties loom unless Congress acts.

Social Security retirement benefits and Medicare Part A benefits are financed primarily through dedicated payroll taxes paid by workers and their employers, with employees and employers splitting the tax equally. Employers pay 6.2% of an employee's income into the Social Security system, and the employee kicks in the same. For Medicare, the amount is 1.45%. Self-employed individuals pay the entire payroll tax. This money is put into trust funds that are used to pay benefits.

The trustees of the Social Security trust fund now predict that if Con-

gress doesn't take action, the fund's balance will reach zero in 2034 — one year later than predicted last year. The main reason for the improved outlook is a "stronger-than-expected recovery from the pandemic-induced recession," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Labor Secretary Matt Walsh explained in a statement. The report also stated that the disability insurance trust fund, which pays disability benefits, will not be depleted for 75 years. If disability and Social Security benefits are combined, then the programs would be able to pay full benefits until 2035.

Once the Social Security fund runs out of money, it does not mean that benefits stop altogether. Instead, retirees' benefits would be cut. According to the trustees' projections, the fund's income from payroll taxes would be sufficient to pay retirees 77 percent of their total benefit (or 80 percent if the disability insurance fund is included).

The Medicare trust fund's outlook has also improved slightly. Medicare's Part A hospital insurance fund,

which pays for inpatient hospital services, will be partially depleted in 2028 — two years later than predicted last year. After 2028, the fund will only be able to cover 90 percent of total benefits.

The trustees emphasized that their estimates are very uncertain due to potential changes in the economy. If the country slips into a recession, both programs will suffer.

The trustees recommend that Congress take immediate action to address the problem. Steps lawmakers could take to shore up Social Security include eliminating the cap on income subject to tax. Right now, workers pay Social Security tax only on the first \$147,000 of income (in 2022). That amount can be increased, so that higher-earning workers pay more in taxes. The Social Security tax or the retirement age could also be increased. Fixing Medicare is more complicated, but some possibilities include lowering drug costs and increasing payroll taxes.

River Garden offers community gatherings

River Garden Hebrew Home, located at 11401 Old St. Augustine Road, just off I-295, is planning two community gatherings that will be open to the public. Register for them online at www.rivergarden.org/events.

Alzheimer support

An Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Support Group meets the second Wednesday of each month at 3:30 p.m. The goal is to provide emotional, educational and social support for family and friends of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias.

Meetings are in person and will be held at the River Garden Parker Chapel. Dates are: July 13, Aug. 10, Sept. 14 and Oct. 12.

For further information, call 904-288-7851 or email jglassman@rivergarden.org.

Saving Claire

"Saving Claire" is a feature-length documentary film that has practical information for audiences.

At "Saving Claire – Behind the Scenes Documentary & Discussion," attendees will learn about the production of this engaging show and discuss with live experts ways to reduce the risk of falls and threatening injuries.

This in-person event will be held at 10 a.m. Aug. 18 at River Garden Cohen Auditorium.

For further information, call (904) 288-7855 or email kbell@rivergarden.org.

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Virtual reality helps connect residents with dementia

By Anthony Richards

Ponte Vedra Gardens Alzheimer’s Special Care Center is always looking for ways to further open up the streams of communication with their residents and they are now using virtual reality to do so.

Thanks to a partnership with Viva Vita: Live Life, an organization that specializes in delivering virtual reality to senior communities across the country, they have implemented the program for the past six months.

Since it got started, Ponte Vedra Gardens Program Director Jennifer McCormick has seen a difference being made in the people’s response to it.

“It’s certainly the way of the future,” McCormick said. “Especially during COVID, we began trying to find ways to help seniors feel more connected.”

According to McCormick, everyone at the facility has some form of dimension, but they can all take part in the virtual reality exercises if they choose to.

The program offers many different types of trips to various locations around the world. Destinations, such as, trips to Cairo, Paris and Ireland, and locales around the U.S.

Not only are these and many other trips available, but new virtual realities are be-

ing added to the selection each month.

“We can specialize the experience based on what the resident’s specific personality and cater to what their interests are,” McCormick said. “We even have trips to the Louvre and the Mona Lisa for those interested in the arts.”

McCormick has seen the virtual reality tend to create an opportunity for residents to connect with those around them that may not have existed before.

She attributes this to the avenues of conversation that it opens up, such as perhaps sparking a memory of a time when they visited the place they just saw in virtual reality, and it gets them wanting to talk about it.

“With dementia, it can be hard for them to express thoughts, but this gives them an outlet,” McCormick said. “We’ve had a lot of success with men. They really seem to enjoy it.”

When it comes down to it, virtual reality is just something so fascinating to so many people, even to the point where staff wants to take part in it and they are allowed to, because it allows for the experience to be further shared.

The facility only has two headsets, which each have a screen that goes over the eyes of its user. Having it in a headset



Azella is looking at London through the virtual reality program at Ponte Vedra Gardens Alzheimer’s Special Care Center.

VIRTUAL continues on Page 27

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Over 100 items were hand made and donated by residents for the auction.



Sue Michalson with her painting.

Cypress Village residents raise \$10K for Ukraine relief efforts

For two days in June, the “Art from the Heart” silent auction brought Cypress Village residents together to interact, socialize and support a common cause: relief for victims of the war in Ukraine.

The action, inspired by the Cypress Village Visual Arts Group, raised more than \$10,000 for Doctors Without Borders, a leading organization providing aid in Ukraine. On June 15 and 16, more than 100 donated items were displayed in the lobby of the community where residents, employees and visitors were able to place bids and donate to the cause.

“I have always felt that Cypress Vil-

lage residents were very special people,” said Sue Michalson, co-chair of the Visual Arts Group, “and it was clear from the conversations I was overhearing that people were extremely upset and wanted to do something to help the people of Ukraine. I asked the members of the Visual Arts Group if they could think of a way, we, with our special talents, could raise money to support the Ukrainian people and we all agreed that yes, we could create something special. Thus, was born Art from The Heart.”

More than 100 items were handmade and donated for the auction. Donations

included artwork, photography, needlework and quilts that were all made by Cypress Village residents. Members of the Visual Arts Group were present in the lobby to answer questions, direct guests and collect donations for the duration of the auction. A “Wine and Winners” celebration was held at the closing of the auction while the winners were announced. Residents gathered in the lobby, eager to hear if their bid was the winning bid. After the show, members of the Visual Arts Group announced that more than \$10,000 had been raised and would be donated to Doctors Without

Borders.

“It has been exciting as well as challenging,” said Michalson. “But so many have pitched in that the incredible teamwork turned work into joy, it has been deeply satisfying for me and for all involved.”

Cypress Village is a continuing care retirement care community in Jacksonville. Located adjacent to the Mayo Clinic, Cypress Village has beautifully appointed homes and apartments on a 120-acre campus.

For more information, call 904-223-6100.



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Residents had a fun time during Doughnut Day.

A doughnut kind of day

Residents at the Ponte Vedra Garden's Alzheimer's Special Care Center enjoyed an array of doughnuts as the facility celebrated Doughnut Day June 27 with decorations to fit the theme as well.

Photos courtesy of Ponte Vedra Gardens Alzheimer's Special Care Center



A variety of doughnuts were available to try.

COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee announces July programs

The following programs will be held at the COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra. Registration is required and space is limited. Register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling 904-819-3234. Classes are open to ages 18-plus. For more information, go to coasjc.org/center-at-nocatee.

Let's Talk About Grief:

A place for anyone who has experienced grief of any kind to come and learn about grief and receive empathy and encouragement from others. This group meets the first and second Tuesday of each month. There will be a group facilitator present at each meeting. The next meeting is 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. July 12.

Caregiver Support Group:

All caregivers are welcome. Meets 1-2 p.m. every Tuesday except holidays. There is a trained facilitator present at every meeting to guide the group.

Widows and Widowers:

Social group meeting from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. The next meetings are July 12 and July 26.

Caregiver Café – Arts & Crafts:

Bring your art or craft project and work on it while making new friends. This is a chance for family caregivers to bring their loved one with them. Register in advance and an easier craft or activity will be provided for anyone not able to do more difficult activities. This group meets from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays. The next meeting is July 20.

Intergenerational Tie Dye Party:

Here is your chance to try your hands at tie-dyeing your wearable work of art. Grandparents may bring a grandchild. Family caregivers may bring your loved one. Space is limited to 20 people, so sign up early. July 27 from 10 a.m. to noon.



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STAY HEALTHY WHILE TRAVELING

By Dr. Erika Hamer

Traveling to a different state or country is an amazing experience and gives you a different perspective on the area you are going to. Staying healthy while traveling can make a huge difference in your enjoyment of the experience. However, traveling is not easy on the body. Regardless of how you travel or where you decide to go, it is in your best interest to practice good habits to alleviate any pain or aches that you may develop during your trip. Below are a few easy tips for staying healthy and avoiding those aches and pains.

Minimize the effects of jet lag

Jet lag is a common source of daytime fatigue and general discomfort for many travelers, and it may cause gastrointestinal problems, reduced alertness, disturbed sleep and muscle soreness among other symptoms. Jet lag affects almost everyone who skips time zones while traveling but there are several things you can do to help combat the undesirable symptoms of this common travel health complaint.

- Choose a flight that arrives at your destination in the early evening.
- Change your watch to the destination time zone once you board your flight.
- Get up and walk the aisle during long flights and stretch as much as you can.
- Use earplugs and blindfolds to help eliminate any external stimuli that might keep you awake during an overnight flight. Good advice also when you get to where you are staying to get into a regular sleep pattern.
- Spend as much time as possible in the daylight once you reach your destination as this helps reset your biological clock.

Maintain healthy dietary and hydration practices

It is almost inevitable that you will try

new foods and dishes while traveling, but staying true to certain general dietary principles can keep your immune system strong and healthy and you from getting sick.

- Consume a diet rich in nutrient-dense foods.
- Avoid junk foods, processed foods, sugar and other foods that can tax your immune system.
- Take a high-quality probiotic supplement to help prevent constipation.
- In areas where the local water is questionable, avoid eating anything not thoroughly cooked or veggies washed with tap water as well as ice and foods made with local water (drinks/soups/stews, etc).
- Stay hydrated — this is key while traveling but consume only filtered, bottled, boiled or chemically treated water in countries where the water supply may be contaminated with amoebas and other parasites.

Take care of your feet

Foot blisters are a common problem for trekkers, shoppers and sightseers. These blisters can turn the trip of a lifetime into a miserable experience. Blisters are caused by friction from your shoes or clothing rubbing repeatedly against your skin, causing friction burns. Using tape, moleskin, blister block, topical antiperspirants, baby powder and a shoe and boot dryer can all help prevent foot blisters. Having your feet professionally fitted for shoes or boots of proper length, width and volume can also help eliminate possible friction points.

Stretch often

Stretching prevents muscles from tightening and helps keep them flexible and strong while helping to keep back pain at



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Area of Vicar's Landing library honors former resident

A dedicated area of Vicar's Landing library now honors late resident Cynthia Prince, who was a major voice on the community's library committee. As a member of the committee, Prince undertook and saw the completion of the project of acquiring "the 100 novels every library should carry" for the library. Her memory will now live on with the dedication.

Photo courtesy of Vicar's Landing



PLAYERS Senior Center announces events schedule

The following programs will be held at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach, beginning in July. Most classes are four weeks long and begin the first week of July.

For further information or to register, call Amanda Jones at 904-280-3233.

Lunch on Tuesdays: Noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance. Fee required: \$5 per meal.

Lunch on Thursdays: Four weeks starting July 7, noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance. Fee required: \$5 per meal.

Tai Chi: Four weeks starting July 7, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Fee required: \$30 for four weeks.

Duplicate Bridge: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fridays beginning July 15. Fee required: \$2.

Duplicate Bridge: Three weeks starting July 15, noon to 3 p.m. Fee required: \$2 per Friday.

Caregiver Support Group: Free program. From 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. Register with Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900.

Chair Exercise: 10-10:30 a.m. Tuesdays.

Chair Exercise: Four weeks starting July 7, 9:30-10 a.m. Thursdays.

Canasta: 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays.

Canasta: Four weeks starting July 7, 10 a.m. to noon Thursdays.

Mexican Train Dominoes: 10-11:30 a.m. Tuesdays.

Ask a Nurse: 10-11 a.m. Tuesdays.

Bingo: 1-2 p.m. Tuesdays.

Bingo: Four weeks starting July 7, 1-2 p.m. Thursdays.

Board Game Playing: 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesdays.

Wii Bowling: Four weeks starting July 7, 10-11 a.m. Thursdays.

Euchre Club: Three weeks starting July 15, 10 to noon Fridays.

Trivial Pursuit: Three weeks starting July 15, 10:30 a.m. to noon Fridays.

Encompass Health Rehab Hospital of St. Augustine presentation: Learn about this new facility and services they offer at 11 a.m. July 7.

Live Music by The Coconuts: Enjoy, dance, sing and mingle, 11 a.m. July 12.

Senior Scams: 11 a.m. July 14. Educational presentation by St. Johns County Sheriff's Office. Learn about the current scams that target seniors and how to prevent fraud.

July Birthday Bash: 11 a.m. July 19. Celebrate July birthdays and enjoy birthday goodies and games, hosted by Concierge Care.

Luuu Party with Hula Dance Competition: 11 a.m. July 26. Time to get your grass skirt, Hawaiian lei and other festive dress ready for this fun party! Enjoy dancing and games with new and old friends.

"Medicare 101" Educational Presentation by Humana: Do you have Medicare questions or need some guidance about this topic? This presentation begins at 11 a.m. July 28.

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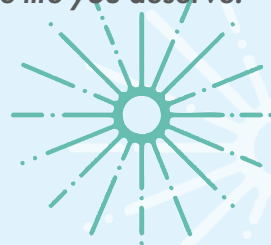
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Photos provided by Community Hospice & Palliative Care



Sewing volunteer Audrey Harrell of St. Augustine.



Liaison volunteer Lori Peters of Jacksonville.



Sewing volunteer Sue Diedzic of Fernandina Beach.

Pillow program creates lasting memories for grieving families

Community Hospice & Palliative Care’s “Forever in our Hearts” Memory Pillow program reached its first anniversary this June with more than 100 pillow requests from family members.

Memory pillows are special keepsakes created by volunteers that are made from an article of clothing owned by a patient. This complimentary pillow is a one-of-a-kind treasure and a loving memento.

The program is comprised of 13 sewing volunteers and two liaison volunteers

who speak directly with the families and help take orders.

The volunteer team consistently receives heartwarming feedback from recipients.

“It is so thoughtful of your group to do something like this,” said one caregiver. “I miss my husband so badly. We were together for 26 years and this pillow will be greatly treasured. Thank you from my heart and God bless you all.”

In addition to the many kind comments

from family members, the volunteers equally share the same sentiment and are thankful to be a part of the meaningful opportunity.

“The memory pillow program was initiated a year ago this month,” said Dan Batty, volunteer manager. “Betsy Miller, volunteer coordinator, has done a phenomenal job of organizing sewing volunteers and creating a program structure to process the requests from families for a pillow. We greatly appreciate the

effectiveness with which Betsy has been able to accomplish so much in just the first year of this program. This program is a testimony to turning every critical touchpoint into an intentional encounter to create meaningful experiences and memorable moments for the families of our patients.”

For information on becoming a Community Hospice & Palliative Care volunteer, go to Volunteer.CommunityHospice.com.

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Del Webb Ponte Vedra residents live full lives

There's always something to do

Del Webb Ponte Vedra residents have lots of ways to get involved and have fun.

There are 37 active clubs and 11 interest groups, all run by residents. The focus of these clubs ranges from ceramics to pickleball. Some of the larger clubs like Men's Club, Woman's Club and Poker Club raise thousands of dollars for local charities each year, such as K9s for Warriors, Alpha Omega women's shelter and Toys for Tots.

Residents at Del Webb Ponte Vedra can live their best lives with so much to do at their fingertips. Lifestyle Director Jacqui Naumann tries to have as many events as possible within a month that will pique the interest of the various age groups and interests.

Recently, Del Webb Ponte Vedra has collaborated with some talented residents to put on a coffee-house-type program called "The Beat" on a quarterly basis. It has everything from acoustic guitar to comedians. The show lasts about 90 minutes and is kept very casual with time for socializing between performances. This is a great way for talented residents to show and share their special gifts.

The community hosts many shows throughout the year, such as the St. Augustine Orchestra, the St. Augustine Concert Band, Crescendo Amelia (pops) along with some other individualized local bands and entertainers.

Larger community events are held around holidays while others are planned quarterly. In April, Del Webb Ponte Vedra hosted an "Adventure Challenge." Resident teams competed against each other in challenges like can shooting, cup flip and more while

solving riddles and puzzles to find their next challenge around the community. This was an action-packed, multifaceted event that received many wonderful reviews.

Other annual events include the Holiday Shopping Extravaganza with more than 40 vendors, the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony with live entertainment and the New Year's Eve Gala.

Residents are enjoying their best lives in the 30,000-square-foot clubhouse, larger outdoor pool area, party pavilion, fitness center, movement studio, indoor lap pool, library, billiards, café, arts-and-crafts room, meeting rooms and the Royal Palm Ballroom with a fully operational kitchen available to residents and clubs.

Del Webb Ponte Vedra has almost 2,000 homes with more than 3,500 residents.

Free public events planned in July

July is Parks and Recreation Month, and this year it coincides with a special milestone for the St. Johns County Parks & Recreation Department. Monday, July 11, marks 50 years since the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners passed an ordinance resulting in the creation of the department.

To celebrate five decades of service, St. Johns County has planned a month full of fun, family-friendly activities.

Here's a look at the schedule:

- **July 9:** Birthday Splash Bash, Calhoun Pool, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Pre-registration required. See below.
- **July 13:** Family Wedge Clinic, Treaty Park, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Pre-registration required. See below.
- **July 14:** 50th Anniversary Beach Walk. Mussallem Beachfront Park. 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Pre-registration required. See below.
- **July 16:** Porch Talks, Alpine Groves, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- **July 16:** Beginner Disc Golf Clinic, SJC Fairgrounds, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Pre-registration required. See below.
- **July 23:** Catch and Release Fishing Tournament for ages 4-12, St. Johns County Ocean & Fishing Pier, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Pre-registration required. See below.
- **July 30:** Movie in the Park – "Space Jam 2," Nocatee Community Park, 8:30 p.m.

All events are free of charge.
<https://sjcfl.us/recreation/>

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Red Snapper Fishing Tournament is July 8-9

Oh Snap! Fishing has announced its second annual Red Snapper Fishing Tournament will be held on July 8-9, coinciding with the NOAA Fisheries recreational Atlantic red snapper season.

The two-day competition encourages anglers of all ages and skill levels to gather together with their friends and family to explore Northeast Florida's waterways and reel in the largest red snapper, all while raising funds for local nonprofit organizations.

The tournament debuted last year in alignment with the limited recreational Atlantic red snapper fishing season. Anglers came together to support a local worthy cause while adding an element of competition for those already participating in the season. Last year's winning red snapper weighed in at 25.36 pounds.

Participants can fish either or both competition days and submit one fish for weighing in each category per boat, per day. The fish with the highest weight will be entered into the competition.

Boat captains must attend a mandatory meeting on Thursday, July 7, at Mavi Waterfront Bar & Grill, located at 2309 Beach Blvd. This will be the last chance to register for the event.

Anglers can take off from any area of Northeast Florida's coast between Fer-

nandina Beach to St. Augustine. Weigh-ins will take place from 1 to 5 p.m. both days at Joe Carlucci Sisters Creek Boat Ramp, 8414 Heritage River Road in Jacksonville. The award ceremony will take place Sunday, July 10, at Mavi Waterfront Bar & Grill.

This year, net proceeds from the tournament will benefit Dreams Come True Jacksonville and the Jacksonville School for Autism.

"We are excited to welcome anglers back to take advantage of the recreational Atlantic red snapper season at our 2022 red snapper fishing tournament this year," said Dave Berg, Oh Snap! Fishing Tournament director. "This event is all about enjoying time with friends and family, and we can't think of a better place to do that than on the beautiful waters in Jacksonville and beyond. We are so pleased to be celebrating with everyone again, as we support two great causes while engaging in some friendly competition."

"Fulfilling the dreams of local children battling life-threatening illnesses would not be possible without the generous support of community partners like Oh Snap! Fishing," said Andrea Siracusa, director of community relations with Dreams Come True. "We are honored to have been chosen as a recipient of this



amazing organization's commitment to giving back to First Coast children and families in need. With more than 600 local children currently deciding on the perfect dream, we look forward to applying 100% of their generous donation toward the dreams of children in Northeast Florida."

Ten main tournament prizes will be awarded, with a top prize of \$5,000, a large trophy and bragging rights; three lady angler prizes will be awarded, with a top prize of \$500 and a trophy; three junior angler prizes will be awarded, with a top prize of a \$250 gift card to Strike-Zone Fishing and a trophy; and a \$500 winner-take-all award will be awarded

to the winner of the mystery fish weight competition.

Winners must be present at the award ceremony to claim prizes. All prizes and payouts are subject to change.

Late registration on Thursday, July 7, will be \$400, and must be received by 8 p.m. (the end of the mandatory, pre-tournament captains meeting). All registrations include one main contest entry (including one boat and up to eight anglers), one lady angler entry, one junior angler entry and one mystery weight contest entry. A full list of rules can be found at ohsnapfishing.com/rules.

For further information, or to register, go to ohsnapfishing.com.

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The importance of screening

By **Jaymeson Stroud M.D.**,
Ackerman Cancer Center

As one might expect, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of screenings that we saw exponentially in the local Jacksonville area. With many patients and staff worried about the spread of the virus, patients were staying home and skipping their annual check-ups and other medical appointments. On top of this, elective medical procedures were postponed or halted to prioritize the pandemic's urgent care demands and to limit its exposure and spread to everyone.

We have found that the delay in cancer screenings has caused many cancers to go undetected. My colleagues and I are now diagnosing a higher than average amount of patients with advanced-stage cancers. According to the National Cancer Institute, in 2020 approximately 9.4 million screening tests that would have normally taken place in the United States did not occur. Because of the pandemic, we saw a decrease in screenings and therefore many of our patients are now being diagnosed with cancers that could have been caught and treated earlier if they had come in for their screening. Routine cancer screenings are important for detecting

cancers in their early stages, which can improve treatment success and lead to a higher survival rate.

With the COVID-19 pandemic nearing its end, my colleagues and I are beating the drum for a return to routine screenings in order to reduce the diagnosis of advanced-stage cancers. At ACC, we emphasize the importance of regular screenings so that cancers can be detected early and treated successfully. Breast, colorectal and prostate cancer screenings are among the most successful methods to help detect cancer in its early stages.

Regarding breast cancer screening, traditional mammography is still considered the gold standard for screening.

Traditional mammograms can be performed in combination with breast ultrasound, 3D mammogram, and biopsy if needed.

Contrast-Enhanced Mammography, a cutting-edge technology that permits the evaluation of breast tissue for signs of early breast cancer with a high degree of sensitivity, is also offered at ACC and is an excellent diagnostic option for high-risk patients.

Breast cancer is frequently asymptomatic and undetectable on a physical exam until the cancer is more advanced. Mam-

mographic screening allows us to detect breast cancer before symptoms arise.

Colorectal cancer screening is another crucial cancer screening that can help detect colorectal cancer in its early stages.

Screening for colorectal cancer often involves a colonoscopy, which can also detect precancerous polyps.

Following a successful colonoscopy, patients may not need a subsequent procedure for up to 10 years.

Other forms of colorectal screening include a fecal occult blood test, sigmoidoscopy, virtual colonoscopy and DNA stool test.

Prostate cancer screening is one of the quickest and easiest cancer screenings.

Prostate cancer affects one in eight men at some point in their lifetime.

Screening for prostate cancer should begin at age 50 for men who are at average risk, age 45 for men who are at high risk, and age 40 for men at an even higher risk.

The most common prostate cancer screening method is a PSA test, which measures the prostate-specific antigen in your blood.

PSA screening can detect prostate cancer at an early stage when it is still very curable.



Jaymeson Stroud M.D.

Screening may seem like an inconvenient task, but studies show that routine screenings improve survival by detecting cancer before it reaches advanced stages. Don't let the hassle of screening stop you from detecting cancer at an early stage and taking the next step toward living a longer, healthier life. If you are interested in meeting with one of our physicians or have additional questions, call us at 904-880-5522 or go to ackermancancercenter.com.



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Hart Felt Ministries enables local seniors to live independently

Like many of our own parents, grandparents, relatives or friends, more than 38,000 seniors in the Jacksonville-area community live alone.

Hart Felt Ministries, a local non-profit organization, is dedicated to helping seniors live independently. It's the little things — like taking a senior to a doctor's appointment or calling to check on them — that can make life better for them.

Every Christmas, Hart Felt Ministries delivers gifts to Jacksonville seniors. For some, especially those who live alone, this is the only Christmas gift they receive. But gifts like the quilt can provide seniors who live alone with year-round comfort.

When seniors are unable to drive or lack transportation, they can't enjoy the small freedoms of everyday life like grocery shopping, and they struggle to access the medical care they need. Hart Felt Ministries' goal is to change that. The nonprofit's annual fundraiser, Soiree at Sawgrass, is taking place at TPC Sawgrass on Oct. 4, and sponsorship opportunities are open now. Interested sponsors can find



more information at hartfelt.org.

Serving more than 670 seniors who live with a chronic illness or disability, Hart Felt Ministries has a network of more than 200 volunteers and a coalition of partners that provide friendly visits, companionship, grocery shopping, meal preparation, transportation

to appointments, light housekeeping and wheelchair ramp construction for local seniors.

If you are interested in helping Jacksonville-area seniors live independently, or if you know a local senior who needs assistance, go to hartfelt.org or email info@hartfelt.org.

Author to speak on using real life experiences in fiction

An award-winning author of eight novels, Judith Erwin is a retired attorney, former freelance writer and devotee of the arts, especially dance.

She draws on her multi-faceted experience in the legal system and the arts community to craft the plots and characters populating her work. During her 22 years in law, she came into contact with a diverse population that included criminals of all categories and kinds. These real-life people inspire the characters that make up her novels.

Erwin is proof that it's never too late to change careers or achieve a dream. She obtained a law degree from the University of Florida at the age of 55 and released her first novel, "Shadow of Silence," on her 75th birthday.

She will be the guest speaker Saturday, July 9, at the next meeting of Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime. It will be held at 10 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Library, 101 Library Blvd.

For further information, email floridasistersincrime@gmail.com.

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What's new at THE PLAYERS senior center

Beginning July 15, THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center will add Fridays to its schedule. So, seniors will now be able to visit the center four days a week. Coming soon, the center is looking to add classes in tap dancing. To see the center calendar, go to coasjc.org, click on "Programs & Services" and follow the drop-down menus to "CENTERS" and then "Ponte Vedra Center."

Line Dancing

COA will present a line dancing class on Wednesdays beginning July 13 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The classes will be led by Instructor Will Oglesby, a highly respected and experienced line-dance leader. The cost for the three-week session in July (July 13, 20 and 27) is \$26.25. Registration is required, and space is limited.

Going forward, the price per month will be adjusted according to the number of weeks offered each month.

To register or for further information, contact COA's Amanda Jones at 904-280-3233 or via email at ajones@stjohnscoa.com.

THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center is located at 175 Landrum Lane.



Caregiver Support

Monthly caregiver support group meetings are planned for 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the first Wednesdays of each month. A certified facilitator from the Alzheimer's Association will be at

the meetings. Call the center for further information.

Become Scam Savvy

Representatives of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office will give a presentation on scams that seniors need to watch out for. It begins at 11 a.m. on July 14.

THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center is located at 175 Landrum Lane. Contact the front desk at 904-280-3233. Hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and soon, Friday.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

Traveling

Continued from 19

Uncomfortable sleeping positions on planes and trains, constant lugging of backpacks or suitcases and participation in new and strenuous physical activities can all place significant demands on your spine.

Rest when you can, know your limits

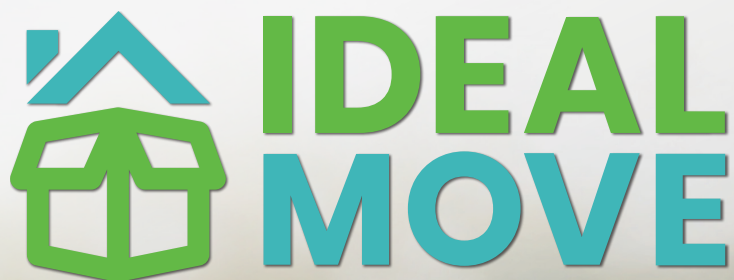
Exploring new sights and foods

is a wonderful experience for the whole family, but down time is important in order to maximize the enjoyment of your time away. Rest as much as you can, so you're taking care of your body and giving it a chance to heal and reenergize. Overdoing it during your trip not only can dampen the whole traveling experience but can also leave you chronic pain or aches that may linger after the trip.

Enjoy your time away but always use good judgement — don't bite

off more than you can chew. Following these basic tips, getting enough rest, staying hydrated and not pushing past your comfort zone will go a long way to ensuring maximum enjoyment and health throughout your travels.

Contributed by Dr. Erika Hamer, DC, DIBCN, DIBE, Board Certified Chiropractic Neurologist and owner of Ponte Vedra Wellness Center with offices in Ponte Vedra Beach and Nocatee Town Center.



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Virtual

Continued from 16

form makes the process much more portable than if it was attached to a larger monitor.

“It is so nice, because I can take it right to their room and they can enjoy it,” McCormick said. “It is much more convenient.”

Each virtual reality session lasts about 15 to 20 minutes.

However, due to the increasing interest in the program, McCormick says there are plans to get more accessories in the future, including an additional headset and the possibility of adding a large screen where the virtual reality projections the user is seeing can also be viewed by those without a headset.

“I’ve been here for six years, and they introduced something similar years ago, but it didn’t have many options,” McCormick said. “I think it will only continue to grow. It’s only the beginning.”



Carl enjoys a trip to France. The program has been a big hit among men.



Photo courtesy of The Yards

The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach has dedicated its resources to “America’s fastest growing sport” in recent months.

Pickleball

Continued from 14

Just as with tennis, having good communication with your partner during doubles competition is the best way to find success and have fun as a result.

The Yards recently went all in when it comes to embracing the wave that is

pickleball currently in America by opening a new pickleball facility earlier this summer.

Not only has The Yards welcomed pickleball to the Ponte Vedra community, but they are also determined to do everything they can to help grow the sport by offering beginners classes designed to teach the proper techniques and intricacies of the sport.



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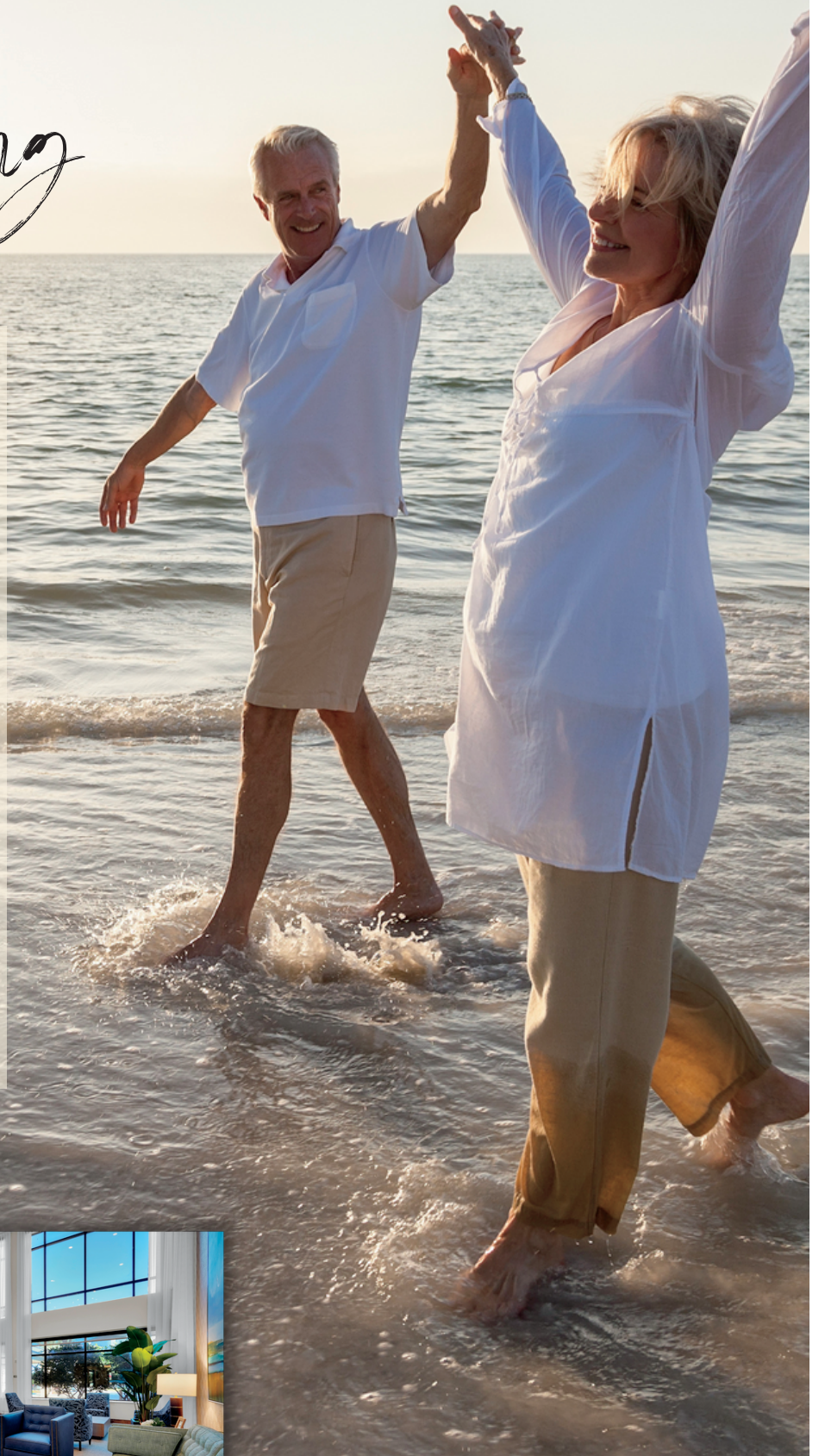
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The Iconography of the Rolex Watch



Scott A. Grant

By Scott A. Grant

I wear a Rolex. My Dad wore one. So did my grandfather. My grandfather wore two, one on each wrist. I think, originally, they were set to two different time zones, probably Philadelphia and London. As he got older, neither was set properly most of the time. I think he just liked wearing them.

I don't wear the watch to tell the time. If I want to know what time it is, I look at my phone. Although, I frankly have a pretty good internal clock. I usually just sort of know what time it is. Reading that last sentence, I think it has deeper meaning. Maybe it does. Anyway, I wear the watch because it makes me feel good.

In 1952, Elizabeth II became Queen of England, beginning her incredibly long reign. Her coronation more than a year later provided a breath of inspiration to a dying Empire. It certainly inspired a group of determined climbers. They

called themselves the 1953 British Mount Everest Expedition. This was the ninth expedition to attempt to summit Mount Everest. The first eight had failed, some disastrously.

The Rolex corporation sent the expedition seven Rolex watches. Later, they would send 13 more. Each member of the party had one. Rolex wanted its watch to be the first at the top of the world. Two Englishmen made the first attempt for the party. They ran out of oxygen 300 feet from the top. The second group was a New Zealander named Edmund Hillary and a Nepalese Sherpa named Tenzing Norgay.

Each man wore a Rolex Oyster Perpetual. Tenzing Norgay now owned two Rolex watches. He had been given a gold one the year before for being part of a Swiss Expedition that came tantalizing close to the summit. The pair reached the summit at 11:30 a.m. on May 29, 1953.

News of their success reached Britain on June 1, the day of Queen Elizabeth's coronation. The press dubbed the news a coronation gift. Elizabeth presented each of the 37 members with a special Coronation Medal with the words "Mount Everest Expedition" engraved along the rim.

Today, it is extremely difficult to buy a Rolex. Like so many other goods, people have been hoarding them. Michael Dudley of Underwood Jewelers, the leading Rolex expert in our area, told me that speculators buy all the Rolexes they can get their hands on in hopes they can sell them later for more. There is speculation in other luxury watches, he explained, but it is not as robust as in the Rolex market. No one knows why. Perhaps it is because Rolexes are iconic, like the people who wore one.

On October 14, 1947, Capt. Charles

Time to Celebrate Rolex

Standfast Asset Management will host a social July 21 at Underwood Jewelers celebrating Rolex. Michael Dudley, certified Rolex repair technician, will be there along with other Underwood staff. Reach out to either Underwood's or Standfast for an invitation. Bring your Rolex heirlooms for show and tell.

Underwood Jewelers is located at 330 A1A N., Unit 204, Ponte Vedra Beach. The phone number is 904-280-1202.

Standfast can be reached at 904-285-2130, or by email at scottg@standfastic.com.

"Chuck" Yeager climbed into the cockpit of the Bell X-1 high above the lonely Mojave Desert. The X-1 was a rocket with wings designed to go super-fast. The plane weighed 5,000 pounds but carried 8,000 pounds of rocket fuel that would burn off in two and a half minutes. Yeager climbed into the plane gingerly. Two days earlier he had fallen from a horse and broken two ribs. He did not want anyone to know. On his wrist he wore a Rolex Oyster.

They dropped the X-1 out of the belly of a B-29 bomber at 30,000 feet. Yeager, who shot down 11 Nazi planes in a P-51 Mustang during World War II, then lit the switch for his assault on the sound barrier. Tom Wolfe says that when some people on the ground heard the sonic boom, they thought Yeager was dead. He wasn't. He was hurtling across the heavens at 699 miles per hour, faster than sound, faster than anyone ever.

Scott A. Grant is a local historian and author. By day he is president of fiduciary asset manager, Standfast Asset Management. He welcomes your comments at scottg@standfastic.com.

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Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District changes meeting location

The Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District's July 11 meeting location will be held at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church, 545 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach. The meeting will be held in Room 1 in the Browning Center and will begin at 5:30 p.m.

An agenda for the meeting can be obtained at www.pvmsd.org or by contact-

ing Ann Jurenovich at pvmsd@comcast.net.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in any of these meetings is asked to advise the district at least five days before the meeting by contacting Jurenovich.

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\$5.4M OK'd for Ponte Vedra Concert Hall 'Balcony Project'



Contributed photo

Work is expected to begin in 2023 on the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall's 'Balcony Project.'

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners recently approved \$5.4 million for Ponte Vedra Concert Hall's "Balcony Project" with a unanimous vote of 5-0.

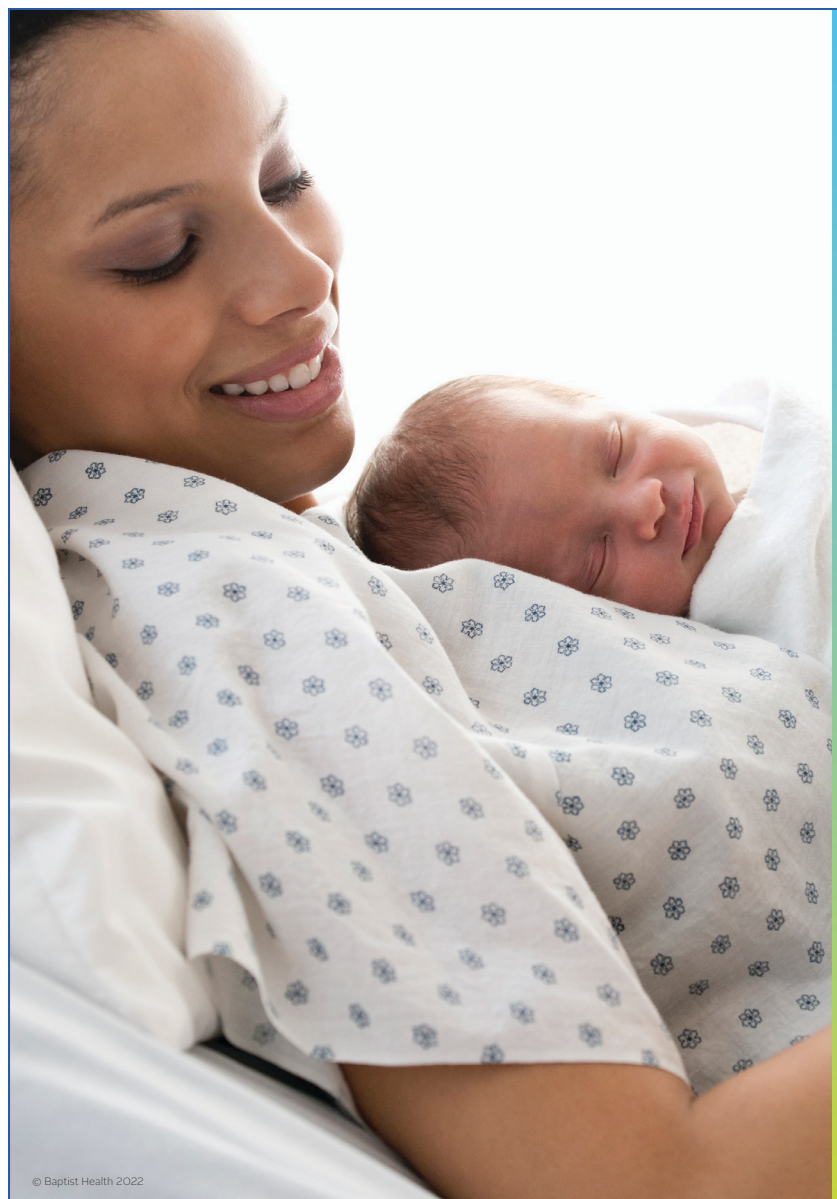
This approval comes at a monumental moment for the St. Johns County Cultural Events Division, which operates Ponte Vedra Concert Hall and The St. Augustine Amphitheatre. The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, a non-profit advocacy group, was instrumental in representing the community support for this "Balcony Project" alongside the Cultural Events Division.

During the June 21 commissioner meeting, Commissioner Henry Dean moved to "get this transfer done immediately" in order for Ponte Vedra Concert Hall to get started on construction. Shortly after, Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker said he was "happy to make a motion."

The approval of the "Balcony Project" and overall expansion of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall come at a time of extreme competitiveness within the entertainment industry as artists are eager to tour.

"We were ecstatic when we received the news," said Gabriel Pellicer, general manager of the St. Johns County Cultural Events Division. "We look for-

PROJECT continues on **Page 31**



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Project

Continued from 30

ward to elevating the venue experience for patrons and artists, and ultimately continuing to build upon the success of these past 10 years.”

The County Commission approved the “Balcony Project,” in part, due to the Cultural Events Division obtaining \$8.9 million in grants from the SBA Shuttered Venues Operators Grant. The grant was established to support the live entertainment industry during uncertain economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is owned by the county, the “Balcony Project” will have no effect on St. Johns County residents’ ad valorem tax dollars. However, the direct economic impact of this project to the county is expected to be positive for years to come.

“I am very excited that the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall expansion has received the full support of the Board of County Commissioners for an incredible expansion opportunity,” said Blocker. “Combining federal, state and local funding, our community will be the centerpiece of art and entertainment for Northeast Florida. This is an opportunity to enhance the quality of life for residents that we could not miss. Every resident



Contributed photo

The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall’s ‘Balcony Project’ will increase the seating capacity of the local venue.

of St. Johns County will have the opportunity to enjoy a world-class experience at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall with the leading entertainers on a global stage.”

Constructed from the foundation of a Baptist church in 2011, Ponte Vedra Concert Hall has solidified itself as a must-play venue amongst a vast array of artists and hosts up to 140 concerts and events each year.

Ponte Vedra Concert Hall’s diverse programming has brought some of the biggest names in live entertainment, including rock-and-roll legends like Graham Nash, Art Garfunkel and Lindsay Buckingham, emerging artists such as

country-blues singer Charley Crockett and soulful bass-guitarist Thundercat, as well as renowned comedians like Kathleen Madigan and Rob Schneider.

“The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is a treasure that improves the quality of life for all Northeast Florida residents and visitors,” said Steve Gard, former president of the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall. “The completion of this project will fulfill a dream that began more than 10 years ago when the concert hall first opened its doors.”

The current plans for Ponte Vedra Concert Hall’s balcony include 190 stationary seats, with two rows on each

side of the venue, and four rows in the rear. With this expansion, concert hall’s seating capacity will increase by 25% from 486 seats to 608.

Additional updates to the venue include enhanced food and beverage points of sale, updated restrooms, staircase, elevator as well as additional gathering spaces for patrons.

The “Balcony Project” will reimagine the existing building to optimize its current structure. Construction of “The Balcony Project” could begin as soon as late 2023. While under construction, Ponte Vedra Concert Hall will pause all programming and events.

The Primary Election is August 23. The General Election is Nov. 8.

Do you know who you're voting for?

Meet the candidates running for local and state office.

Politics in St. Johns
Ponte Vedra
July 27, 2022
Ponte Vedra Concert Hall
 1050 A1A N
 Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Politics in St. Johns
St. Augustine
August 11, 2022
Solomon Calhoun Center
 1300 Duval St.
 St. Augustine, FL 32084
 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

This free event is open to the public.
 For more information, please visit www.sjcchamber.com



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Nemours CEO named to '50 Most Influential Clinical Executives'

Modern Health-care has named Dr. R. Lawrence Moss, president and CEO of Nemours Children's Health, one of the nation's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives for 2022, the second consecutive year he has been recognized.

This recognition acknowledges clinicians in the health care industry who are deemed by their peers and an expert panel to be the most influential in terms of demonstrating leadership and impact.

"Clinician leaders have shouldered a heavy load for health care organizations and the country at large throughout the past few years," said Fawn Lopez, publisher of Modern Healthcare. "We are proud to recognize those leaders who have risen to the occasion and then some. These 50 honorees have demonstrated leadership and innovation in a time of crisis and made a vital impact on the success of their organizations, the well-being of the health care workforce and the health of their patients and communities. We congratulate and thank them for their dedication to the advancement of health care."

Under Moss's leadership, Nemours Children's has increased its focus on the health of populations, beginning with children. This direction attracted a major gift in early 2022 that established the Alan H. Ginsburg Institute for Health Equity at Nemours Children's Health.

Part think-tank, part health-pilot incubator, the Ginsburg Institute will spur discovery and innovation to address the underlying social determinants of health, work toward health equity for all children and ultimately



Dr. R. Lawrence Moss

change children's health for good.

Moss has continuously advocated for urgency in changing health care reimbursement and care models to focus on paying for health and wellness rather than the volume and complexity of procedures. He continues to lead and expand Nemours' work to negotiate

with payers to reimburse for prevention, social determinants of health and care coordination that improves outcomes.

"Recognition among this distinguished group of clinical leaders is truly an honor," said Moss. "It is likewise an honor to lead an organization and an outstanding group of associates willing to think boldly and act quickly to achieve our vision of creating the healthiest generation of children."

A renowned pediatric surgeon, biomedical researcher, educator and health-system executive, Moss realized that his impact on the future of children's health would be enhanced if he could contribute to broadly address the underlying determinants of children's health.

Despite the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Moss led Nemours to create a five-year strategic plan that reimagines Nemours' role in children's health to focus on health rather than medical care, as well as value and equity.

This fundamental shift from reactive care to proactive wellness is the cornerstone of his vision of going "well beyond medicine." For further information about this vision, go to nemours.org/well-beyond-medicine.html.

Foxtail Coffee Co. opens cafe in Ponte Vedra

Foxtail Coffee Co. has expanded into the Jacksonville market, adding a café in Ponte Vedra Beach to its rapidly growing list of locations.

The expansion into the Sunshine State's northeastern region follows recent openings in Newnan, Georgia, and Lady Lake, Florida, and is Foxtail's 38th store.

The café, located at 260 Front St., Suite 260 in Sawgrass Village, is officially open. In addition to serving Foxtail's full-coffee menu, the new spot offers Foxtail Coffee breakfast products, light lunch offerings and Foxtail merchandise.

The store's Kelly's Homemade Ice Cream counter features handcrafted ice cream and sorbet, all made from scratch in Central Florida. Beer and wine are also available. A second location in San Marco is scheduled to open in November.

Foxtail Coffee Co. opened its first location in 2016 and has grown to 38 locations. Starting with its first café and roasting facility in Central Florida, Foxtail has extended to both Florida coasts and into the South Florida area, with stores in St. Petersburg, Melbourne, Boca Raton and now Northeast Florida.

In 2021, the Florida-based company also

opened its first café outside the Sunshine State in Georgia. More stores will open in the Atlanta market later this year.

"The Jacksonville market is eager to welcome Foxtail Coffee Co. to the community," said Ty Claggett, Foxtail Coffee Co. franchisee. "In the Foxtail tradition, we have created a warm and welcoming spot, and we encourage our friends and neighbors to stop by for their favorite Foxtail coffee, ice cream or affogato and linger. Whether you're meeting friends, catching up on work, or just indulging in some quiet time, we look forward to serving you, our community, Florida's best coffee."



Contributed photo

A Foxtail Coffee Co. franchise has opened in Ponte Vedra Beach.

St. Johns County Clerk of Court recognized in Best Practices Excellence Program

St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty and his team has been recognized by Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers (FCCC) for completing the association's Best Practices Excellence Program and receiving Recognition of Excellence certificates in all categories.

Florida's clerks and comptrollers have collaborated on best practices for more than 14 years. The Best Practices Excellence Program was established last year as an opportunity for clerks to receive recognition for completing assessments that evaluate acceptance of certain best practices.

"Best practices are helping clerks across

the state achieve more efficient ways to complete our vast, complex mission," said Patty. "I congratulate my team of dedicated and committed public servants here at the St. Johns County Clerk's office for being relentless in completing our mission as efficiently and effectively as possible and achieving this notable distinction."

Of the 68 clerks and comptrollers statewide, 55 offices participated in the Best Practices Excellence Program.

Patty was among 30 clerks and comptrollers receiving Recognition of Excellence certificates in every category that applied to their designated office.

Real estate company honors top producers

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty recently hosted its top producers party, celebrating the company's award-winning Realtors on their accomplishments in 2021.

The event was held at the Sawgrass Country Club, and the company rolled out the red carpet for more than 165 Realtors and their guests.

The company's "exclusive Hollywood glam" event provided gourmet fare, libations and lively entertainment.

"We congratulate our team on their outstanding achievements," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty CEO Kevin Waugaman. "Our tremendously talented, passionate and dedicated Realtors have made our company the leading real estate firm in Northeast Florida. We are so grateful and appreciate their character and their contributions to elevating the industry."

For further information about Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, go to FloridaNetworkRealty.com.



The Leadership Team: Ann King, Kevin Waugaman and Linda Sherrer.



Photos provided by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

The Metro offices team.



The Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office team.

What is a HELOC?

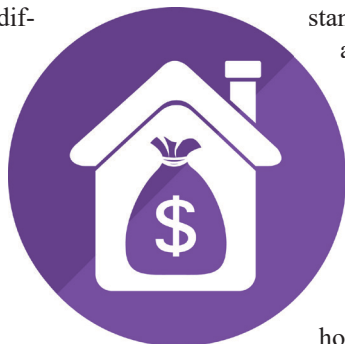
Homes symbolize many different things, including an investment in one's future.

Bank of America says a home equity line of credit, often referred to as a HELOC, is a line of credit secured by your home. It is a revolving credit line that can be used for various expenses.

The Credit Union of Southern California reports that a HELOC credit line is issued by a lender and has a limit and variable interest rate that is secured by the equity in your home.

A HELOC is similar to a credit card in that they both provide revolving credit. Investopedia says revolving credit is an agreement that permits an account holder to borrow money repeatedly up to a set dollar limit while also repaying a portion of the current balance due in regular payments over time. But unlike credit cards that may have high interest rates, the interest rates of HELOCs often are lower - a significant advantage when paying off large amounts of borrowed money.

Home equity accessed through a HELOC can be a great source of value for future renovations, large purchases such as cars, educational expenses, and alternative debt repayment. The credit limit of a HELOC depends on your credit



standing and unpaid debts. It also is determined by the market value of the home and how much you owe on your mortgage. According to Credit Karma, banks tend to limit the amount borrowed to no more than 85 percent of the appraised value of the home, minus what is owed on the mortgage. HELOC terms also vary, but they can run for as long as 30 years.

Even though there are many benefits to HELOCs, there is a downside to using a home as collateral. Investopedia says home equity lenders place a second lien on the home (in addition to the first mortgage lien). Defaulting on HELOC payments can result in legal action and a home being repossessed. Another potential pitfall is a lender may reduce or freeze your credit line after missed payments. Even though banks attempt to limit how much can be borrowed through HELOCs to help avoid potentially negative situations, they are not without risk.

Borrowers considering a HELOC have other options, including home equity loans. Homeowners can speak with financial advisors to learn more about their options for maximizing equity in their homes.



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In the Arts

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Leaving a lasting impression



Photos by Anthony Richards

Jim Cox of Ponte Vedra Beach will have his art on display throughout the month beginning July 9 at the Adele Grage Cultural Center in Atlantic Beach.



Jim Cox gets the ideas for his paintings from his own life and everyday experiences.

Cox featured as Adele Grage artist for July

By Anthony Richards

To have one's artwork on display is a feeling of accomplishment and amazement, and it is something that never gets old for local artist Jim Cox anytime he gets the opportunity to do so.

The Ponte Vedra Beach resident's most recent showing begins July 9 at the Adele Grage Cultural Center located at 716 Ocean Blvd and Seventh Street in Atlantic Beach and will remain on display throughout the rest of the month.

"My art really falls into more of an impressionism type of art," Cox said. "It's not photorealism, but you can look at my art and see what it is."

His impressionist nature can be discovered by looking and taking the time to study his paintings.

"There are elements in my art that are not really abstract, but based on some of the techniques I use, I can take some chaotic-looking things and turn them into something that gives you the impression or ice or snowflakes."

The ideas for his paintings usually come from his past experiences or details he notices in everyday life, including an array of seafood themes.

"All the seafood stuff comes because that was my summer job out of high school and in college," Cox said. "I don't know what it is about food and still lives, but just something that intrigues me about it."

Cox grew up in Baltimore and first discovered his talent and love for art when he was in high school.

"I was very fortunate to be involved in a high school with a very serious art program," Cox said. "My professor ran it like a college studio, which meant we weren't allowed to paint anything

less than 4-foot-by-4-foot. There was nothing on a sketch pad."

To this day, Cox's early training is reflective in his work, because almost all the things he paints are a large scale that are made to hang proudly on a wall.

He pursued his passion for art and as a result got accepted into the arts program at Jacksonville University in August 1974.

Although he would love to paint even more than he has, there has been times when he has gotten away from it due to life situations and getting involved with a career in sales.

However, he has rediscovered his creative juices in recent years, and he's loving every minute of it.

"This is just an incredible outlet for my peace or mind, wellbeing, whatever you want to call it," Cox said. "It's been real fun."

He spent several years in Orlando in the past and took part in some art shows down there and has done about a dozen shows in his lifetime.

Cox is also a regular at North Beaches Art Walk in Neptune Beach, but because it is an outdoor setting, he only takes his prints there to show on site. As a result, he is really looking forward to presenting his original work during the upcoming exhibit.

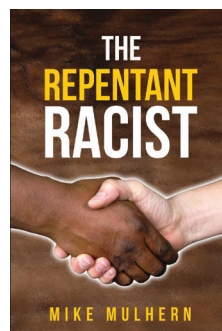
Interacting with the viewers of his artwork is one of the aspects that he enjoys the most.

"I love to have conversations with people one on one, because most people take a look at a piece of art and say whether they like it or not, but there is normally so much more within it," Cox said. "When I have the opportunity to point out some of the things in there, hopefully they'll walk away with a more discerning eye the next time they look at somebody's art and see beyond the initial impression."

He will be holding a reception from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. the opening night and will be there in person to answer any questions.

Local author's volume cited by International Book Awards

Ponte Vedra resident Mike Mulhern was recently named a finalist by the International Book Awards for his volume, "The Repentant Racist" (Best Seller Publishing; \$4.95 e-book; \$9.95 paperback; \$19.95 hardback; available from Amazon.com).



The book recounts his evolving racial attitudes as a child growing up in New York and New Jersey in the late '40s and early '50s until the present day.

As a boy, he believed that being white made him superior to Black people. "It was the way things were, so they must have been that way for a reason," he adds. "I was the beneficiary and not the victim of this, so why should it have been any concern of mine?"

All that changed when he went to college in the South in Louisiana and Mississippi.

"There, I learned the region specialized in two cottage industries," he said, laughing, "racism and football."

As his contact with Black people grew exponentially compared to what it had been in the North, he was able to witness overt racism firsthand. He characterizes himself as "a New Jersey Yankee in King Cotton's Court," living in the 1960s where racism was the norm, and he was expected to accept it if he wished to be accepted himself.

His interest in history caused him to develop an unusual hobby: driving around – tape recorder in hand – interviewing the reported last-surviving slaves who had been liberated from involuntary servitude by the Civil War.

"None of them escaped a lifestyle of poverty, but they were survivors, hangers-on, making the most of the lives that Southern society at large forced them to lead," he said.

Some of his slave interviews are recounted in the book.

While in Louisiana, he lived in an integrated neighborhood where there was a lot of racial tension. This helped him get over the last vestiges of racism he still had in him.

"I learned that if I wanted to hold all Blacks responsible for the actions of the worst of them, then I had to be willing to own the deeds of people like Adolf Hitler and Vladimir Putin, who, like me, were white," Mulhern said.

In addition to his own personal recollections, Mulhern follows the course of unfolding racial tensions in America starting from colonial times in an effort to show how we got to where we are today.

"With regard to race, America has

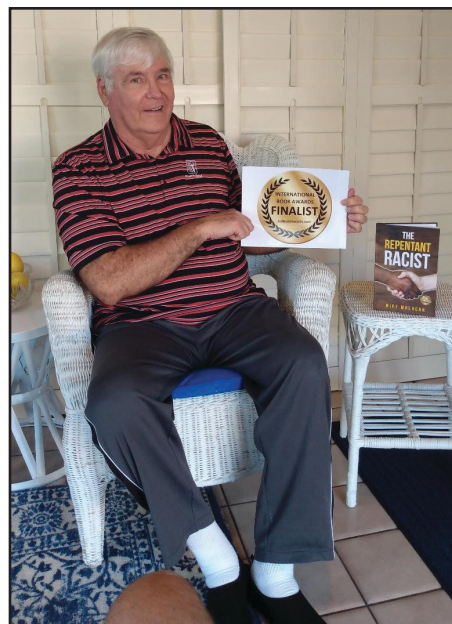


Photo by Daren Mulhern

Mike Mulhern of Ponte Vedra, author of the nonfiction volume "The Repentant Racist," was recently named a 2022 finalist by the International Book Awards. Previously, the volume had been an Amazon international best-seller in multiple categories.

been plodding on a course of two steps forward, one step backward during the 157 years that have elapsed since the end of the Civil War," Mulhern said. "Lots of anti-racist measures have been enacted on paper, but these have done little to create change in the human heart. Don't despair! The prospects of hope are as brilliant as the rising sun, and the change that is needed will appear when both Whites and Blacks decide enough is enough and work together to allow that new day to dawn."

Mulhern wrote for The Ponte Vedra Recorder in 1997 and during his tenure at the paper, he won an award from the Florida Press Club for "General Excellence in Sports Writing."



AUGUST 11 - SEPTEMBER 18

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ON STAGE

A roundup of musical acts appearing before Aug. 8 at local venues

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- **Matt Maeson** — 8 p.m. July 9. With special guest 1-800-brennan-collect

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1340C A1A South, St. Augustine
Box office hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets sold at the box office are available via credit- and debit-card only. A valid ID is required for all box office transactions and ticket purchases must be made in person.
Tickets may also be purchased at ticketmaster.com.
For further information about each act, go to theamp.com/events.

- **Blackberry Smoke — Rasslin' Is Real Tour** — 6:45 p.m. July 7. With special guest The Steel Woods.
- **"The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged"** — 7:30 p.m. July 15-16. Presented by APEX.
- **Whiskey Myers** — With special guests

Shane Smith & The Saints and 49 Winchester. 6 p.m. July 17.

- **Iration and Atmosphere** — 5 p.m. July 21.
- **Shine A Light Concert & 5K for Ukraine** — With Bold City Classics on the Backyard Stage. 4 p.m. July 24.
- **Slightly Stoopid** — With special guests Pepper, Common Kings, Fortunate Youth. 5 p.m. Aug. 4.
- **Rick Springfield and Men At Work** — With special guest John Waite. 7 p.m. Aug. 5.
- **Buddy Guy and John Hiatt & The Goners featuring Sonny Landreth** — 7:30 p.m. Aug. 6.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

MEN AT WORK

Image from The Amp

Rick Springfield will join Men at Work at the amphitheater on Aug. 5.

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Sports



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The camp gives high schoolers the opportunity to teach and be mentors to younger players.



Boys and girls of all ages take part in the camp.



Putting dribbling skills to the test.

Bailen basketball camp comes 'full circle' to grow the game

By Anthony Richards

For the past decade Nease High School boys basketball coach Josh Bailen has done his part to grow the sport within the local community through his summer basketball camp.

He started it after arriving at Nease in 2013 and has watched it grow over the years into a summer tradition.

"It's an honor to help pass it along to the next generation," Bailen said. "There's nothing more valuable than making other people better."

That tradition is evident in the fact that many of the camp's counselors, who are now students at Nease and members of the basketball program, attended the camp when they were younger.

Nease junior Kemp Howell returned

for his second year helping at the camp.

"The little kids really seem to enjoy it," Howell said. "I went to the same exact camp, so it's cool now to see it from the other side."

There are three goals that Bailen wants each participant to take away from his camps.

"Our goals each week are to have fun, get better by learning new skills and to be a great teammate," Bailen said. "We want the kids to learn skills that are going to translate to their next level of play, whether that would be middle school, JV or varsity."

The camp's fun vibe includes participants getting Pop-Ice during breaks and



Campers huddle up around Nease High basketball coach Josh Bailen at the end of the day.

BAILEN continues on Page 37

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Bailen

Continued from 36

recognition for the group that gets hyped up the most while switching stations.

“If they have fun, they’re going to learn, so that’s a major part of it,” said Nease senior Ty Gebauer, who has been a counselor for the past four years.

He remembers attending the camp himself while in elementary school.

“It’s nice when you see it come full circle,” Bailen said.

According to Gebauer, it is the camp’s longevity that contributes to the unique family atmosphere it has developed over the years.

For the younger participants it gives them the opportunity to imagine what it would be like to play on that court one day as a member of the high school

squad.

“It is really important not only for the campers, but it also allows our boys and girls basketball players at the high school to be mentors,” Bailen said. “It can be really powerful experience for them as well.”

This summer, five camp sessions were planned, with each lasting one week and having a new group of campers each time.

Three sessions are in the books with two more remaining, scheduled July 11 to 15 and July 25 to 29.

Spots are still available for the two remaining sessions. Parents can register their child by going to joshbailenbasketball.com or by sending a Venmo to @josh-bailenbasketball with \$150 and their child’s name and intended session included.



Campers take part in a shooting drill.



Going one-on-one.

Softball team finishes 4th at state tournament

The Ponte Vedra Lightning 8U softball team finished fourth at the State of Florida Babe Ruth Softball Tournament, held June 23-26 in Lake City. Despite temperatures being more than 100 degrees every day and the team having only 10 players, they won all three games in their bracket.

In game 1, pitcher Lily Graybeal led the way, going 3-3 with three runs scored and two RBIs. First baseman Margaret Worrell led the team with 5 RBIs. Second baseman Helene Eichhammer had two inside-the-park homeruns in the 16-0 win over Umatilla. Third baseman Annie Dreckman finished the game with a double and a triple.

In game 2, shortstop Riley Stratton finished going 3-4 while right fielder Makenzie Larsen scored three runs in the 9-4 win over The Argyle Lady Aces. The team jumped out to a big lead in this

game.

In game 3, the Lightning jumped out to a 9-1 lead on Alachua Santa Fe behind outstanding offensive performances by Graybeal and outfielders Addie Beauregard and Sydney Knecht. Santa Fe closed the gap in the fifth inning and center fielder Landry Wilson made a throw to second to cut down the Santa Fe runner ending the inning and the rally.

The Lightning went on to win, 12-8, and advance to the State Semi-Finals in their bracket. Charlie Perry, a first-year player who made the All Star team, played catcher every game.

“It was hot out there but we knew we could depend on her,” said Head Coach Eugene Wilson.

“We are proud of these girls and their hard work,” said Wilson. “They never gave up, and it was very exciting for our league to have a team place so high at



Contributed photo

The Ponte Vedra Lightning 8U softball team finished fourth at the State of Florida Babe Ruth Softball Tournament, held June 23-26 in Lake City.

a tournament that had over 100 softball teams of all ages.”

Ponte Vedra girls’ fall softball sign-ups

will be released this for anyone interested. Learn more at pontevedragirlssoftball.sportssignup.com/site.



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CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10			
11					12						13	14	15
16					17				18				
19				20	21			22	23				24
25						26					27		
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39					40	41	42						
43				44						45	46	47	48
49				50					51	52			
53			54					55					
56		57				58					59		
60					61	62					63		
			64								65		

- ACROSS**
1. Ancient Greek sophist
 5. Genus of insects
 11. Culinary herb
 12. Neutralizing antibody
 16. Plan
 17. PaO's partner
 18. A city in S Louisiana
 19. TNT sportscaster
 24. Atomic #25 (abbr.)
 25. Well-known bug
 26. Body parts
 27. Monetary unit of Albania
 28. Kids' play things
 29. Coastal city in Malaysia
 30. Famed French physician
 31. Flourishing
 33. Excessively overweight
 34. Pampered
 38. Emerged
 39. Order of tailless amphibians
 40. Indian term of respect
 43. Shift sails (Brit.)
 44. Beloved Mexican dish
 45. Scottish tax
 49. Health insurance
 50. Monetary unit of Samoa
 51. Move about
 53. Execute or perform
 54. Taste property
 56. Unit of dry measure
 58. Blood group
 59. Something you can up
 60. In great need
 63. Breezes through
 64. Spoke
 65. Become acquainted with

7. Part of the Bible (abbr.)
8. Atomic #22 (abbr.)
9. The distinctive spirit of a people or an era
10. In a moment
13. Monetary unit of Vietnam
14. Submerge in a liquid
15. Yellowish cotton cloth
20. - __, denotes past
21. Hoopster Morant
22. Not
23. Indian title of respect
27. Horsley and Marvin are two
29. One thousandth of a liter (abbr.)
30. Hoover's organization
31. Round globular seed
32. University official
33. Spherical body
34. Iraq's capital

35. To any further extent
36. Swollen lymph node
37. Anger
38. Technological marvel
40. Peruvian district
41. Salt of acetic acid
42. What Santa says
44. Israeli city __ Aviv
45. Late Heisman winner
46. Reveal the presence of
47. Long upholstered seat
48. Most wily
50. Sword
51. Respiratory disease
52. The Ocean State
54. Fleshy watery fruit
55. Lying down
57. Superheavy metal
61. The ancient Egyptian sun god
62. Indicates position

SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



File photo

The dates and format have been made official for the second annual PXG Women's Match Play Championship at World Golf Village in November.

PXG Women's Match Play sets 2022 date, format

The major of women's developmental professional golf is returning to World Golf Village, as the 2022 PXG Women's Match Play Championship is slated for Nov. 1 – 6 at the Slammer & Squire Course at World Golf Village in St. Augustine.

The championship will feature more than 80 ascending stars pursuing their dream of playing on the LPGA Tour, battling over a weeklong endurance test that will combine a stroke play and match play tournament culminating in the shadow of the World Golf Hall of Fame.

All of the players will compete in a 36-hole stroke play qualifying tournament Nov. 1 and 2, with the top 64 players moving on to the match play championship.

This year's match play will have a unique format that will feature Battle Round Pods, where each of the 64 advancing players will be split into 16 pods of four and will play each other once in a nine-hole round robin match play scenario on November 4.

Each Battle Round Pod match hole will be worth one point and will be won, lost or "halved." The winner of a match receives a bonus point, effectively making each "Battle" worth 10 points.

The top player from each 16 pods will advance to the final knockout rounds. The players with the most points will advance, not necessarily the player with the best won-loss record.

Each segment of the tournament will have its own prize purse, a guarantee of \$50,000 shared between the Stroke Play, Battle Rounds, and the overall Match Play.

"PXG has made it our mission to help advance the game of golf by encouraging more women to pursue the sport at every level," said, Renee Parsons, PXG President and Executive Creative Director. "From tour professional to aspiring player, every person deserves to feel

welcomed and supported. That is why we have sought out progressive partnerships like the Women's Match Play Championship to help build an onramp for women to be inspired and grow."

Jessica Porvasnick, last year's PXG Women's Match Play Champion, who also won the stroke play tournament, is scheduled to be in this year's field. She currently plays full-time on the Epson Tour on the Official Road to the LPGA.

The championship will once again host the Generation W Links to Leadership Summit presented by Circle K and Baptist Health Jacksonville. The summit adds depth to the women's initiatives mission of the event by providing leadership programming focused on offering growth opportunities for all the players in the tournament, as well as selected area college players.

The INK! Charity Pro-am is scheduled for October 31 and will feature teams of one professional player linked with three amateurs. Last year's INK! Charity Pro-am raised more than \$50,000 for Investing in Kids and was the largest single day fundraiser in its history.

Tickets for the PXG Women's Match Play Championship are just \$10 per day and are on sale now on the event website at www.pxgwmpc.com.

The PXG Women's Match Play Championship is one of fifteen official events on the East Coast Women's Professional Golf Tour

Seven of the tour's players qualified for the 2022 US Women's Open Championship, including two who competed in the 2021 PXG Women's Match Play Championship.

"It is very intentional that we are hosting this level's biggest event here in St Johns County, our home and where we already have a very supportive golf community," said Mark Berman, owner and operator of the East Coast Women's Professional Golf Tour.

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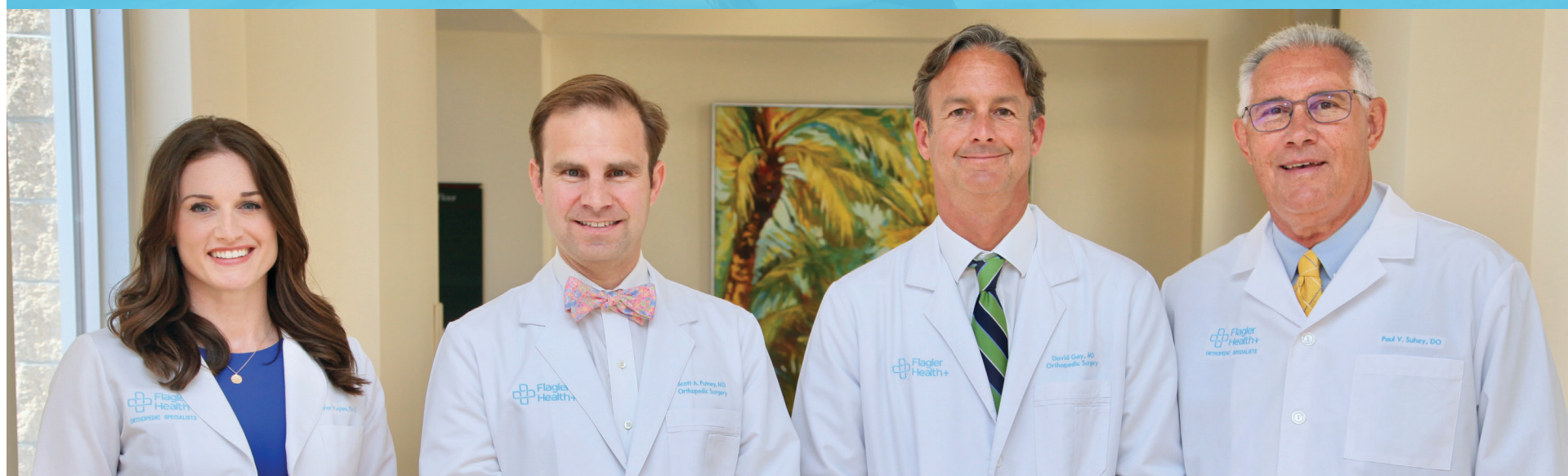
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