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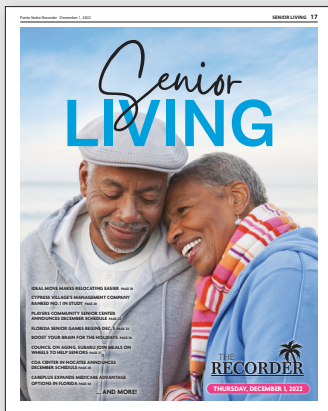


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December 1, 2022
Volume 54, No. 5
75 cents

Serving Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine, The Beaches and Greater St. Johns County

PonteVedraRecorder.com



Senior Living
Page 17



PV vs Nease Soccer
Page 43



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



MARCHING TO A DIFFERENT BEAT

Photo courtesy of NOC Rucks

NOC Rucks is a free club open to anyone in the Nocatee community looking to be active and social at the same time. It is regarded as the largest ruck club in the world and meets every Wednesday night and Sunday morning at the park in front of the link. *Read more on page 11.*

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One of Us

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Send us your news

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



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

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

BRIEFS

"White Christmas" to be staged at Ponte Vedra High School

Ponte Vedra High School drama students will present "Irving Berlin's White Christmas" at 7 p.m. Dec. 8, 9, 10 and 11; and 2 p.m. Dec. 10 and 11. The musical is based on the popular 1954 Paramount Pictures Film that starred Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at pvhsdab.com.

The show is being directed by Jason Nettle and choreographed by Maureen Straub Craig.

Holiday book sale at the library

The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library will have a special holiday book sale Dec. 5-23 in the library foyer. Proceeds go directly toward providing funding for special programming and new materials for the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

The sale will be held during regular operating hours: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

A wide variety of items at bargain prices will be available for purchase, including

books for all ages, movies, music and puzzles. Don't miss the special Gift Table of new and "gently used" treasures to peruse, too.

Only cash and checks will be accepted as payment at this sale.

For further information go to sjcpls.org or call 904-827-6950.

Pulte collecting donations for City Rescue Mission

The Northeast Florida Division of PulteGroup is collecting donations in support of City Rescue Mission's Shoeboxes of Love project. Through Dec. 15, Pulte is collecting shoeboxes filled with personal care and toiletry items at 10 Pulte Homes and Del Webb sales offices in Northeast Florida.

Participating sites in St. Johns County are: Del Webb Nocatee, 73 Glenhurst Ave., Ponte Vedra; Trails at Grand Oaks, 22 Myrtle Oak Court, St. Augustine; Summer Bay at Grand Oaks, 22 Myrtle Oak Court, St. Augustine; and Preserve at Bannon Lakes, 205 Cedar Preserve Lane, St. Augustine.

Donors are asked to wrap the box with a blanket and indicate on each box whether it is for a man, a woman or a child (boy or girl). Donations are also being accepted at City Rescue Mission, 426 S. McDuff Ave., Jacksonville.

For more information about PulteGroup in Northeast Florida, go to pulte.com/jacksonville.

Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

The Palm Valley Market is held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday inside the Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Road. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more.

Ponte Vedra Democratic Club plans party

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will host its annual holiday party at 6:30 p.m.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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Briefs

Continued from 2

Friday, Dec. 9, at Christ Episcopal Church's Westbury Hall; 400 San Juan Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach. Catering by Bono's Pit BBQ. Tickets are \$20.22 per person and available at bit.ly/3MsthQP.

Essential tremor meeting is Dec. 6

A "meet, greet and educate" gathering will be held at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6, for anyone interested

in essential tremor.

Essential tremor is a shaking of the head or limbs while performing a task, such as walking, reaching, eating, etc.). It's not Parkinson's disease, in which shaking occurs while limbs are at rest.

A Nocatee "ET" support group has been started and is meeting every other month. The Dec. 6 meeting will feature Lew Whiting, MSW, LCSW, speaking about clinical trials for ET. If you suspect you have ET, you and/or your loved ones are welcome to attend.

The gathering will be held at Council on Aging at Flagler Health+ Village

at Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., No. 205. Confirm attendance by emailing pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling 904.819-3234.

Holiday open house at the Waterworks building

The St. Johns County Main Public Library, the St. Johns Cultural Council and A Classic Theatre invite the public to a Holiday Open House at The Waterworks, 184 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine.

There will be light refreshments, and shoppers will enjoy the festive

atmosphere of this historic building from 5 to 7 p.m. Dec. 15.

There will be a short ceremony honoring this year's award-winning recipients of the St. Johns Cultural Council's State of the Arts grants followed by a program of holiday musical entertainment.

This program is free and open to the public. No reservations are required. For more information, call the Main Library at 904-827-6940.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan



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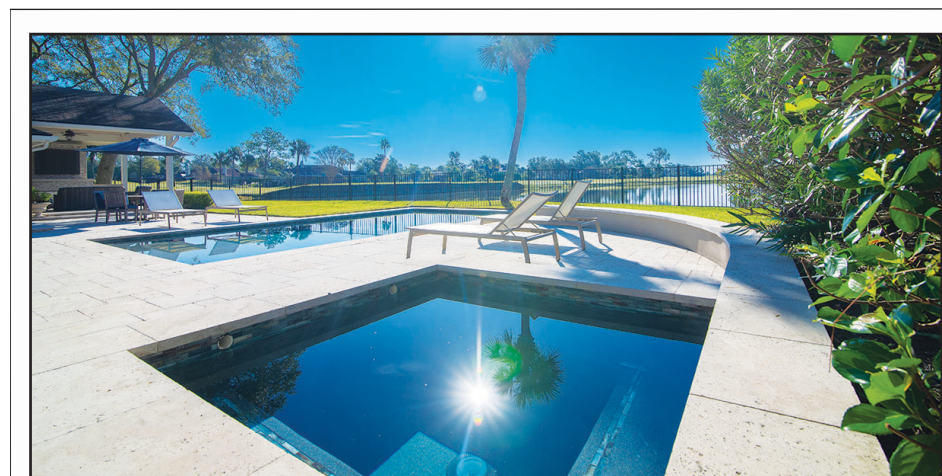
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KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

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

Holiday Gift Ideas for the Gardener

"Flowers are the gift to us from nature, our gift to nature is our love." — Debasish Mridha



By Kathy Esfahani

The holiday season is in full swing! As you think of your family, friends and others in your life, it is often challenging to find the perfect gift for everyone on your

list. The following ideas are suitable and thoughtful for the gardener you know!

- Birdhouses are a wonderful addition to a garden or landscape. They come in all shapes, sizes and colors to suit specific designs.

- Birds are a welcome addition to any garden because they help with pollination and pest control. Bird feeders attract birds into a landscape and make it easy to observe these garden visitors. Look for feeders that hold bird seed and/or hummingbird feeders, depending on the gardener's preference.



Photo provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery
Birdhouses come in all shapes, sizes and colors.

- A nursery gift certificate allows the gardener to choose the flower most needed in his/her landscape. Package the gift certificate with a small flower or plant for a thoughtful presentation.

- Fountains or water features add a soothing murmur to the garden.

- A butterfly house can help make a garden home for these fluttering creatures.

Not only are butterflies beneficial to the garden, but watching them can help reduce stress and promote positive mental health.

- A rainfall gauge helps the gardener know when to water versus when the landscape is satisfactorily moist. Gauges come in a variety of designs to suit the recipient's personality or preferences.

- A soil pH meter measures acidity in the soil so the gardener knows how best to treat and/or fertilize the garden.

- New garden tools are always useful. Tools are available in sets, decorative designs, various sizes and more.

- With the garden tools comes a need for a tool container/apron. This gift ensures that the gardener in your life always has the tool he/she needs anywhere in the garden.

- Look for kneeling cushions/stools to make gardening a more comfortable pastime. Some gardening seats even come with space to store tools!

- Watering cans come in various colors, designs and shapes. Decorative cans add a "splash" of color to this most necessary tool.

- Every landscape has a place for steppingstones, whether they are organized in a path or as a marker for the special spot in the garden. Stones range from simple pavers/bricks to more colorful, extravagant designs.

- Garden sculptures or windchimes add a unique touch to a landscape and help personalize the garden.

- A beautiful flowerpot/planter is a welcome gift for any gardener. Whether used to highlight an area of landscape or grow young plants before transplanting, planters are always helpful. Look for pots in any color, shape and size.

- A potting bench helps the gardener organize tools, plant small pots, or finish other tasks necessary for landscape maintenance.

Happy holidays!

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.



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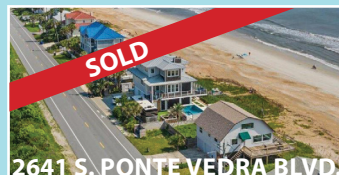


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Kim Odom is the new branch manager for the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library where she will oversee the day-to-day operations of what many call the heart of the community.

Kim Odom

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me a little about your background.

I grew up between Charleston, South Carolina, and Jacksonville, North Carolina. I attended North Carolina State University for my undergrad. And then I moved back to Charleston, having already started my library career in circulation services and children's services, and continued in Charleston working with teens.

I eventually got my master's in library and information science from the University of South Carolina in Columbia. I served as a branch manager of a rural library in Hollywood, South Carolina, for a while. And also as a branch manager of an urban, smaller library, the John L. Dart Library in Charleston.

I miss Charleston, but I've been in Florida for the past three years, during which time I have had the pleasure of serving at FSCJ as an adjunct librarian and serving at the Jacksonville Public Library as both a youth librarian and then as an assistant branch supervisor.

Do you have a favorite role you've enjoyed the most?

My career has been just over 20 years, and I think my very favorite thing is watching a child's eyes light up, just being amazed at what's here.

Also, their being able to take more than one book, more than two books, more than three books out and parents being able to share that experience with them.

I think second to seeing how children light up is seeing how a staff pulls together to make the whole thing work. Because we spend a lot of time together. ...

There are a lot of services that we provide. A lot of resources that we provide. A lot of programs, great events that are cultural or informative or educational that we provide.

But what we are best at is being resources. We are human resources that connect all those services and other things to the people that come in.

So, the development of the team.

Tell me your thoughts on the role of the library in a community.

I think the library is the sponge. We absorb the stories. We absorb the climate. We house opportunities for people to connect and engage, people that have similar interests — as in a book club or story time. And then people who have different perspectives — like in a book club or a story time!

So, libraries have that kind of impact. ...

How did you become interested in this particular career path?

I'm from a family of educators, clergy and veterans. So, they were all about education and order and personal responsibility, and that service is expected of you as a citizen. ... And we always visited the library.

But as a career, it was accidental. I was spending time in my local library doing applications for graduate school. They noticed that I had helped a couple of people find things. So, someone came up and said, "You know, we're actually looking for someone, and you've helped a couple of people already, so maybe you'd like to apply to work here."

I was like, "Yeah, I'm thinking about grad school. I don't know."



Photo by Shaun Ryan

Kim Odom stands in the children's section of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, where she is the new branch manager.

Then, they showed me the actual posting and it was like real money with real insurance.

... And I dove in right at the circulation desk for maybe three months. Then, I ended up in the children's department as a programmer, and it was absolutely awesome. I was hooked.

I kept going because I was encouraged that I could be of service to the community by being in the library. ... Nothing else really felt the same as helping people every day. That was an amazing gift.

What do you like to read?

I like to read widely. I'll dabble in anything.

I think if I picked my favorite things to read, they would be detective, mystery-type stories. Historical fiction. And I like cookbooks.

I love children's books, especially the picture books that show bright colors and rhyme, because I'm a kid at heart.

What do you like about living in the Jacksonville area?

The weather, for sure. I enjoy going to the beach, because I've always lived on the coast, and I appreciate waterways.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I have learned that it's really important to have multiple ways to unwind. Some ways can be five minutes long. Some ways can be 15 to 30 minutes long. Some have to take you out for a day. So, when I'm just kind of unwinding for less than 30 minutes, I can turn on some smooth jazz and pick up a coloring book.

If it's something longer, I like the beach. I like just kind of spending time and listening to the rhythm of it all.

NOTE: This is an abridged version of the article. To read more, plus a special sidebar, go to pontevedrarecorder.com.

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OBITUARIES

**Benedicte Sylvie Vigoureux**

Benedicte Sylvie Vigoureux passed away at home peacefully on Sunday, November 20, 2022, surrounded by her loving family. She was born July 16, 1960, in Bellenaves, France. She graduated from Culinary and Management School in Bordeaux, France and moved to the USA in August of 1985.

Benedicte helped her husband open and run JJ's Bistros in both Ponte Vedra Beach and Jacksonville. She was a very active member of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church. She will be

remembered for her intelligence, humor, kindness, love of family, humility, forgiveness, and her cooking.

Benedicte is survived by: her husband, JJ Vigoureux of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL; sons, Matthieu Vigoureux (Sara) of Jacksonville, Alexander Vigoureux (Taylor) of Jacksonville, and Augustin Vigoureux of New York; granddaughter, Margot Vigoureux; mother, Renee Alloin; brother, Luc Alloin (Isabelle); sisters, Claire Pratt, Martine Berthon (George) and Sophie Dugue (Emmanuelle). She was predeceased by her father, Michel Alloin.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m., Monday, December 5, 2022, in Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL with Reverend Matt King as Celebrant. The Rosary will be recited prior to the service starting at 11:00 a.m. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in memory of Benedicte to The Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation at <https://tcjayfund.org/ways-to-give/give/> Please visit her online Tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com.

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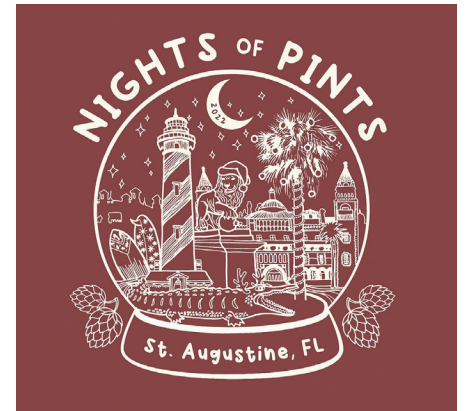
The sixth annual Nights of Pints runs now through Jan. 1 at three St. Augustine breweries — Dog Rose Brewing Company, Ancient City Brewing and The Brewery at Jack's BBQ.

Coinciding with the City of St. Augustine's Nights of Lights, the event was started in 2017 by the breweries as a way to give back to nonprofit organizations in the area while enjoying the festivities during the Nights of Lights.

"We love giving back to the community with this event," said Courtney Murr, who co-owns Dog Rose Brewery Company with her husband, Doug Murr. "Nights of Pints is a fun way for friends and families to enjoy time together over a couple of St. Augustine craft beers."

The 2022 shirts feature a snow globe filled with iconic St. Augustine architecture, surf culture, palm trees and the famous Florida alligator, designed by The Skinny Lizard T-Shirt Printers. Past shirts have featured the St. Augustine Lighthouse, the Bridge of Lions, the City Gate, historic ships and the Castillo de San Marcos — all symbols of the Nation's Oldest City.

Shirts are \$35, available at any of the three breweries, and each shirt comes with



a punch card good for one free pint at each of the breweries through Jan. 1.

A portion of the proceeds will go to three area charities: Matanzas Riverkeeper, a nonprofit organization that works to protect the health of the Matanzas River and its water; Investing in Kids — INK, which provides innovative programs and classroom resources to promote the academic success of all public school students in St. Johns County; and The Sea Turtle Hospital at UF Whitney Laboratory, the only sea turtle rehabilitation facility located in Northeast Florida.

For more details, follow on Facebook at facebook.com/nightsofpints and on Instagram at [@nightsofpints](https://instagram.com/nightsofpints).



Lending seniors a helping hand

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- Serving as a hospital volunteer

To learn more about available volunteer opportunities, visit baptistjax.com/help4seniors.



Young starts foundation, tournament after accident

By Anthony Richards

Former Florida Gators basketball player and Jacksonville native Patric Young always knew that he wanted to use his platform as an athlete to make an impact on people's lives.

"I did a lot of things back at UF while I was a student-athlete with hospital visits or mentoring, and I knew it was something I wanted to do," Young said.

However, he was not sure what direction to take it or what that impact would entail.

That all changed after he was involved in a one-car accident in June that injured his vertebrae and left his lower body paralyzed.

At first the result of his injuries was hard to grasp as he began to face his new reality. But as he pondered his situation, he also decided the time was right to begin the Patric Young Foundation to help anyone encountering similar hardships in their life.

"The initial phase of it was obviously the hardest, because you have all these plans for things in life," Young said. "It was on my heart to do something like this, and this (his accident) was a catalyst for me," Young said. "I think my situation can relate to a lot of able-bodied people as well."

The foundation's motto is "Illuminating the path to wholeness," and it will hold its inaugural charity golf



Photo courtesy of the Patric Young Foundation

Jacksonville native and former Florida Gator basketball player Patric Young's foundation will hold its Inaugural charity golf tournament Dec. 12 at The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach.

tournament at The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach Dec. 12. With tournament registration at 9 a.m. and a shotgun start scheduled for 10 a.m.

Lunch will be included along with an awards event and reception following the tournament, as well as a silent auction.

All the funds raised will go toward helping local people dealing with any type of traumatic or life-changing injury by providing financial support to get access to

the proper adaptive equipment and therapy, as well as the emotional support and education that goes along with the physical nature of the recovery process.

"We're not only going to be geared toward people with spinal cord injuries," Young said. "There could be a kid out there that lost a limb and is in need of a prosthetic. We're all about helping people feel whole again by filling in those financial gaps."

Those gaps can include helping in the purchase of a new wheelchair or finding the right treatment to help those dealing with the injuries and their loved ones who are there with them every step of the way.

"It's all about realizing that you still have control over your life," Young said. "I could not imagine going through this without my parents, wife and child by my side."

According to Young, the tournament came together within the past six weeks thanks to fellow former Gators basketball player Dan Cross, who he reached out to help get things started in the event's first year.

Despite everything coming together in a short period of time, word spread quickly, and Young has experienced a bevy of excitement for the tournament from the community, including all the playing slots being sold out.

However, donations can still be made, and tickets are available for the lunch and the rest of the event's festivities by going to py4foundation.org.

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Gift wrapping service raises funds for those impacted by MS

Beaches area holiday shoppers are getting their wish again this year.

Multiple sclerosis volunteers will return to Jacksonville Beach — and expand to St. Johns — to offer gift-wrapping services for the eighth consecutive holiday season. One hundred percent of donations support programs and services for thousands of North Floridians impacted by MS.

The wrapping service, located between Five Below and Hallmark in the South Beach Regional shopping mall in Jacksonville Beach begins Dec. 10 and 11. It continues from Dec. 16 through Christmas Eve. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

“Elves” wrap presents from any store, including online purchases. A concierge service — pick up, wrapping and delivery — is also available by texting 904-982-6510 or e-mailing LBR0730@gmail.com.

The Durbin Creek area services will be outside the Five Below store, located at 675 Durbin Pavilion Drive in St. Johns. Wrapping hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 11-12 and Dec. 17-24.



The annual gift-wrapping service helps those impacted by multiple sclerosis.



Two “elves” await some gifts to wrap.

Contributed photos

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NOC Rucks embraces title as world's largest ruck club

By Anthony Richards

NOC Rucks began in May 2020 and in just a couple of years it quickly expanded from a group of people who went to the same CrossFit gym to the world's largest organized ruck club in the world, among the more than 500 that exist.

That title was officially backed by the organization GORUCK, which is another local organization based out of Jacksonville Beach and has ties within the rucking community throughout the world.

"We all would go for a workout at 5 a.m. and then just go for a walk together afterwards to get your heart rate down and just cool off a little bit," NOC Rucks founder Mike Schroder said. "A bunch of us had weighted vests, because it's standard fare for CrossFit, but one day one of the guys, who worked for a company called GORUCK, asked why we were wearing vests and not ruck sacks."

From there, the idea blossomed, and a ruck club was created within the gym community with about eight to 14 people taking part in the early going.

However, as more people began to find out about it and want to be a part at the gym, Schroder and the group turned its attention to outside the gym walls and that is where the club really took off.

"We started popping up at different locations throughout Nocatee, at Cypress Trails or over by the Spray Park," Schroder said. "Then one fateful morning as we were walking down Valley Ridge Road, some guy started honking his horn feverishly and asked if we were rucking."

That guy was Tom Simon, who wound up joining the organization and is deeply involved with the group's publicity and logistics.

For Simon, he began rucking during the COVID-19 pandemic as a way to stay in shape and the group offered a much better alternative to rucking alone.

"At one point Mike and I had a conversation about we can grow the club into something bigger," Simon said.

Simon is now the one that decides the routes taken for each walk, which starts at the same designated spot each time, at the field in front of the link, but the path

taken around Nocatee varies.

According to Simon, picking one place to meet regularly was something that really allowed the club's popularity to take off, and after that it was all about visibility and getting people to give it a try.

"We've gone ahead and self-proclaimed it to be 'NOC Rucks Park,'" Simon chuckled.

They had an ice cream ruck last summer that alone brought out roughly 200 people for the occasion. The club has also begun to expand by doing charity events at times to raise money for local causes, including members raising more than 4,000 pounds of animal food for a local shelter.

"One thing we've always prided ourselves in, is that the club is 100% free," Kelly Schroder, Mike's wife and the person in charge of charitable affairs with the club. "It always has been and always will be, and that's not going to change."

At last check, NOC Rucks has 980 followers on Facebook and 800 people who are members.

"I think what people like about it, is that Mike has built up a large inventory of bags and weights, so that people can actually come out and try it and see if they like it before spending \$200 on a fancy backpack," Simon said. "Having a club like this has been really nice because you really get to know your neighbors when you walk together for three miles."

The most popular question asked by those considering joining is about the weight carried in the backpack.

According to Schroder, the beauty about the club is that it does not require a weight limit, which means a person can carry 1 pound to 40 pounds depending on their situation.

"What's so awesome about our club, is that we'll have 5-year-old kids walking and then we've got 75-year-old retirees both walking together with weight in their backpack," Mike Schroder said. "It is truly inclusive to all fitness levels and ages."

NOC Rucks meets twice weekly on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 8:30 a.m.



Photos courtesy of NOC Rucks

NOC Rucks has nearly 1,000 followers on Facebook and 800 people who are members.



NOC Rucks founder Mike Schroder (sunglasses) leads a group of ruckers.

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Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida President & CEO Paul Martinez poses with club members from McKenzie's Beaches Boys & Girls Club after they completed the 5K at the 13th Annual McKenzie's Run.



Contributed photos

More than 100 golfers enjoyed the exclusive experience of playing THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass during the 2nd Annual Great Futures Golf Classic on Nov. 18.

Great Futures Weekend raises \$400K for Boys & Girls Clubs

Local kids and teens across Northeast Florida will benefit year-round from funds raised through the Great Futures Weekend. Proceeds from these events help create opportunities by providing a safe, free place to go after school and during the summer.

Through the events, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida raised more

than \$400,000 and welcomed more than 1,100 runners and walkers for the 13th Annual McKenzie's Run on Saturday, Nov. 19, and more than 100 golfers for the 2nd Annual Great Futures Golf Classic on Friday, Nov. 18. Both events were held at THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass.

"Our Great Futures Weekend serves as a message of hope for our kids and teens in the community," said Paul Martinez, president and CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida. "When they see how many people come out to support them and their dreams, they are encouraged to reach their full potential through the support and resources we give them every single day at the club."

The Great Futures Weekend helps Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida continue their 60-year mission to help create great futures for young people like longtime Boys & Girls Club member Darius B. who has attended McKenzie's Beaches Boys & Girls Club since he was in first grade.

When asked about his club experience, Darius said, "I think the Boys & Girls Club is important for other teens in the community to learn how to be a great person. I really want to see more people join the Boys & Girls Club. I love everything about it, ever since I was a little kid. I love the staff members. I love the friends that I've made. I've had mentors at the club who have helped me throughout my life. When I talked to the staff members about applying to college, they helped me out and encouraged me to get accepted to some schools."

Darius is a graduating senior at Fletcher High School who will attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in January to study mechanical engineering. He credits his 12-year experience at McKenzie's Beaches Boys & Girls Club with helping him become the man he is today.

Darius and the 4,800 other kids and teens who attend 48 Boys & Girls Clubs across Northeast Florida depend on

support from the community to continue receiving free after-school and summer programs.

Every young person who attends Boys & Girls Clubs enjoys a year of after-school and summer care that includes STEM and art enrichment, daily homework help, healthy meals and snacks, leadership development, a sense of belonging and more.

McKenzie's Run celebrates the life of McKenzie Noelle Wilson. Through its partnership with The McKenzie Noelle Wilson Foundation, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida continues McKenzie's legacy by providing local young people, ages 6-18, with a safe place to go after school and during the summer at McKenzie's Beaches Boys & Girls Club and McKenzie's Camp Deep Pond.

The Great Futures Weekend is made possible through the support of The McKenzie Noelle Wilson Foundation, The Church of Eleven22 and THE PLAYERS.

29th Annual Nights of Lights

Free Park & Ride Shuttle
1pm - 11pm, Parking Locations:

St. Johns County Health Department
200 San Sebastian View
(Saturdays Only)

Broudy's Lot
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198 & 212 W. King St.
(all days of operation)

Pick up/Drop off:
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Days of Operation:
First three Saturdays in December*
Dec. 3 service begins at 8:00am for the Christmas Parade
Monday - Friday, December 26-30

www.CityStAug.com
Visitor info @ www.NightsofLights.com

The Nights of Lights and the park and ride shuttle are produced by the City of St. Augustine with funding assistance from the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council.



Club kids from McKenzie's Beaches Boys & Girls Club join the 1,100 other runners and walkers for the 13th Annual McKenzie's Run 5K and 1-mile fun run on Nov. 19 at TPC Sawgrass.



More than 1,100 runners and walkers gathered Nov. 19 at TPC Sawgrass for the 13th Annual McKenzie's Run to help Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida raise \$400,000 through the Great Futures Weekend.



Darius B., a graduating senior and 12-year Boys & Girls Club member, speaks with media about his club experience during the 13th Annual McKenzie's Run.

Clerk of Courts warns against mailer charging for official records

Dozens of St. Johns County residents have contacted the Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's office with concerns about a recent mailer from a company charging steep fees for a copy of their official recorded deed.

St. Johns County Clerk Brandon J. Patty said the misleading mailer is from County Records Office, LLC, a Tampa-based company not affiliated with the government.

Per the recent letter sent to residents, the company charges \$89 to obtain an official copy of a recorded deed. If you have received the letter, note the name of St. Johns County is misspelled (St John), and the disclaimer on the front of the letter that reads, "This is a solicitation for the order of goods or services and not a bill. You are under no obligation to make payments on account of this offer unless you accept this offer."

"These types of sketchy solicitations prey on property owners who aren't aware that they can access many county official record documents, such as recorded deeds and other land documents, directly through their Clerk of Courts and County Comptroller's office," Patty said. "Don't be deceived into paying exorbitant fees for official records that are available for a few dollars or for free through our office."

Through the clerk's office, a certified copy of a recorded deed comes with a small fee, while non-certified

records are generally free of charge and often available on the clerk's website.

When customers need certified copies of documents to prove authenticity — such as wills, divorce decrees, marriage licenses or satisfaction of mortgage documents



— they can obtain them securely 24-hours-a-day through the clerk's E-Certify webpage, stjohnsclerk.com/ecertify, for a nominal fee. The fee includes statutorily required per-page fees, a \$2 certification fee, \$6-per-document vendor fees and credit card fees. However, by downloading and saving the document, it can be printed and reprinted as many times as desired.

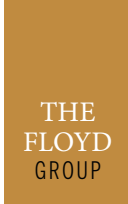
To avoid paying the online vendor and credit card fees, customers can visit the courthouse to obtain certified records and simply pay the per-page cost and a \$2 certification fee.

Also through the clerk's office, non-certified copies of court documents and official records are available online for free. Go to stjohnsclerk.com/online-research/ to access official records, Board of County Commissioner records, court records and more.

Patty said unscrupulous practices making the rounds in St. Johns County and Florida include jury duty scams and traffic or court payment scams. Learn more about protecting yourself from scams at stjohnsclerk.com/alerts/.

Property owners also are urged to sign up for free property fraud alerts through their county clerk of courts, which provides an early warning for subscribers if a fraudulent deed or lien is recorded against their property in clerk official records. Details can be found at stjohnsclerk.com/recording-activity/.

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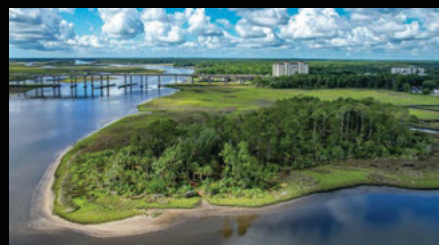
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Drug Take Back collects nearly 1,000 pounds of medication

Nearly 1,000 pounds of expired, unused and/or unwanted medication is being destroyed after a successful Drug Take Back in four Northeast Florida Counties on Oct. 29. Multiple local nonprofits, including Florida Poison Information Center — Jacksonville, Drug Free Duval and Project Opioid, partnered with local law enforcement, the National Guard and the DEA to collect medication.

“I want to say thank you to all the people in Duval, Clay, St. Johns and Nassau counties who cleaned out their

medicine cabinets,” Florida Poison Information Center — Jacksonville Director Dawn Sollee said. “Too many children are getting poisoned with prescription and nonprescription medicine because it is readily available in the home. Getting rid of medication that is no longer needed takes the threat out of the home.”

This was the second medication take-back event of the year. This year’s fall event netted:

- Duval – 443 pounds
- St. Johns – 360 pounds
- Clay – 15.7 pounds

• Nassau – 84.5 pounds
 “The bottom line is getting rid of unneeded medications can help prevent drugs from being misused,” said TJ Ward the director of the JAX Chamber’s Project Opioid initiative, funded by a grant from the Florida Blue Foundation.

Nearly 109,000 people died from opioid overdoses in 2021, according to the Center for Disease Control. Research has shown that as many of 50% of the people who became addicted to opioids got the first pill from a friend or family member.

“Drug Take Back events are the chance

for us all to work together to reduce the availability of unused meds, promote a mindset change around holding onto meds after they’ve served their purpose, and prevent accidental poisonings and overdoses in our community,” Susan Pitman, founder/project and strategy director for Drug Free Duval said.

Drug Takebacks are held on the last Saturday of April and October each year. Between events, you can find a location near you to drop off medication for safe disposal by going to floridapoisoncontrol.org.

Donations to help fund Young Marines’ WWII trip

A new and challenging educational opportunity exists to help the Atlantic Coast Young Marines learn the history of World War II. It will provide valuable history lessons they otherwise might never learn.

A supervised tour is planned for the Young Marines to attend the 2023 D-Day Remembrance in Normandy and tour historic World War II sites in France and Germany. They will experience a moving and unforgettable time standing at the sites of the climactic D-Day invasion and

meeting some remaining World War II veterans.

“The goal with this great undertaking is to teach the Atlantic Coast Young Marines in the most direct way possible the great sacrifices that have been made and the need for us to never become passive in our pursuit of justice and freedom,” said Atlantic Coast Young Marines Unit Commander Rosanne Vernon.

The We Can Be Heroes Foundation charity has sponsored the Atlantic Coast

Young Marines since 2017. Donations from the community will help We Can Be Heroes sponsor as many Young Marines as possible to be a part of this World War II history tour.

Go to “Ways to Donate” at WeCanBeHeroesFoundation.org to enter a donation. Mail checks to: We Can Be Heroes Foundation, 14286-19 Beach Blvd., #120, Jacksonville, FL 32250.



Contributed photo

Atlantic Coast Young Marines unit

Tickets on sale now! Call 904.202.2886 or visit thefloridaforum.com

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Photos courtesy of Patrick Price, Brew Media

Aerial of holes (foreground, to back left) 18, 10 and 9 and the clubhouse, practice facility and short-game area.

Larsen-designed St. Johns Golf Club reopens

Golf course architect Erik Larsen and St. Johns County reopened the St. Johns Golf Club in southern St. Johns County on Tuesday, Nov. 29.

A brief ceremony with remarks, a ribbon cutting and a nine-hole, shotgun start were scheduled to offer a first glimpse at the course, with full public play beginning on Wednesday, Nov. 30.

Larsen, a Ponte Vedra Beach resident and former executive vice president of Arnold Palmer Golf Design Company, has been working on the St. Johns Golf Club project for seven years – from feasibility study to planning and finalization.

Larsen worked in concert with General Manager/Director of Golf Wes Tucker and his staff, St. Johns County, its Board of County Commissioners and Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. of Plainfield, Illinois. The St. Johns Golf Club work follows Larsen’s successful 2015 reinvention of the Atlantic Beach Country Club course and its infrastructure east of Jacksonville.

The St. Johns Golf Club is in Elkton amid the 550-home Cypress Lakes subdivision two miles west of Interstate 95



Erik Larsen

at State Road 207 and approximately 10 miles west of downtown St. Augustine.

St. Johns Golf Club was established as a county-owned facility in 1989. After weighing whether to sell the land for housing, the county opted in 2021 to approve funding on an \$8 million renovation to develop an 18-hole course.

The county will use the excess 80 acres to build new fire and sheriff’s stations and establish to-be-determined amenities.

Larsen and Tucker decided to use “traditional throwback” design principles. Features include wide fairways, Biarritz, Punchbowl and Redan green designs and square, low maintenance “coffin” bunkers throughout, tributes to architects C.B. Macdonald and Seth Raynor from the early 1900s.

An expansive short-game area and finishing and beginning holes and the practice area situated much closer to the clubhouse are also part of a completely new complex.

St. Johns County-established greens fee rates range from \$25 for afternoon walkers to \$59.50 for out-of-state visitors.

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Baptist Health gets top grades for patient safety

All four adult Baptist Health hospitals have once again been rated top of the class for patient safety according to a national organization's latest rating.

Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville, Baptist Medical Center South, Baptist Medical Center Beaches and Baptist Medical Center Nassau each received an "A" Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade for fall 2022, which recognizes the hospitals for providing the highest level of safety in patient care.

"Safety and quality are top priorities in every interaction with our patients," said Matthew A. Zuino, executive vice president and chief operating officer at Baptist Health. "We know patients have a choice when it comes to health care and we use many measures, like Leapfrog, to ensure we are continuously evaluating and improving the care we offer."

The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit watchdog organization, assigns letter grades A, B, C, D or F to hospitals across the country based on more than 30 national performance measures and their record of patient safety.

The rating takes into consideration:

- Process measures (how a hospital gives treatment including responsiveness of hospital staff)
- Structural measures (the environment where patients receive care)
- Outcomes measures (what happens to a patient while receiving care)

Results are peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public.

In addition to this recognition for Baptist Health's adult hospitals, in December 2021, Wolfson Children's Hospital was named a Top Children's Hospital nationally by The Leapfrog Group.

Shredfest food collection

On Nov. 5, Shredfest volunteers collected 275 pounds of food for BEAM's food bank. Pictured from left are Kristina Callahan, Brian James, Tammy Sammons, Primast Stafford, Eric Burke, Beth Caudell, McLain Johnson and Francie Peters.

Contributed photo



Tree of Life, Candlelight Service of Remembrance are Dec. 8

The annual Tree of Life and Candlelight Services of Remembrance, hosted by Community Hospice & Palliative

Care, honors the memory of loved ones in a program of music and reflection.

This free event is open to the public and will be held 5:45 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Stephen R. Chapman Family Community Campus in St. Augustine. Attendees are invited to bring a photo of their loved ones to display on the memory table. The campus will be adorned with lights and evergreen trees decorated in ivory ribbons personalized with the names of loved ones.

Anyone in the community who has experienced a loss, regardless of if they received care from Community Hospice, can honor their loved one.

"During the holidays, we know that the memory of our loved ones, and the

grief and sadness we feel because they are not with us, can make feelings about our loss especially strong or difficult to deal with," said Susan Ponder-Stansel, president and CEO of Alivia Care Inc.

"The Tree of Life and the memorial service that goes along with it, began as a way for us to invite all those in the community who want to remember a loved one to come together for an evening of thankfulness for the lives of those we loved, comfort and support. The ribbons and ornaments, as well as the family pictures many of those who attend bring with them, are visible reminders that our loved ones were with us and that their memory will never be forgotten. This year, with all that we have lived through

during the pandemic, we especially want to invite anyone in our community, no matter when their loved one passed, to join us on the beautiful campus of the Chapman Center."

Ribbons and ornaments to honor the memory of loved ones are available for purchase, but no purchase is required to attend the service. If you would like to purchase a ribbon or ornament to be displayed on the trees for the service, call 904-886-3883 or go to TOL.CommunityHospice.com by Nov. 28. Funds raised through the purchase of ornaments and ribbons for the Tree of Life support the programs and services provided by Community Hospice.

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Senior LIVING



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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022

Ideal Move makes relocating easier

By Shaun Ryan

Moving to a new residence has consistently polled as the third most stressful event in life, just behind the death of a loved one and divorce. And it's easy to see why.

Boxing up one's many possessions, hiring a moving company and scheduling pickup and drop-off, living out of boxes while unpacking over a period of days and weeks, and then trying to figure out where to put everything — it's enough to make a person stay put.

But that's not an option for most people. And for seniors looking to downsize or transition into assisted living, the task may seem overwhelming.

That's why so many retirees — as well as their sons and daughters — are relieved to discover certified senior move management companies like Ideal Move.

Company President Miguel Coles said senior moves are among the most difficult. That's because the customer has often established a strong emotional connection to his or her possessions, and not everything from one home is going to fit into the new, smaller space. Tough choices must be made.

Ideal Move staff members train specifically for these situations.

"With our expertise and our resources, you have people there who can plan it all out for you and solve any issues that come up pretty quickly," Coles said.

They take the time to visit their customers' homes, listen and get to know them, understand what they want to achieve and how they see their new home.

"We start by helping them understand how they should lay out their new homes," Coles said. "Let them understand what they should take."

For possessions the customer chooses not to take along, Ideal Move offers solutions, some of which the customer may not have previously considered.

The company partners with experienced movers that it trusts and remains involved in the move to ensure everything is done right, especially if there is any degree of complexity.

"At [the customer's] new home, we're going to unpack everything and put it back the way it was in their original homes," Coles said. "We'll pay attention to where on a bookcase things were set up, and we're going to set it up the same way. We make their beds, get their closets ready. Our goal is that, right away, when they move in, they could have a dinner



Contributed photo

The Ideal Move team makes relocating to a new home much easier.

party. We take all the packing materials away. We really want people to enjoy their current home as long as possible and then enjoy their new home as soon as possible."

Ideal Move is part of the National As-

sociation of Senior Move Managers, an important factor when selecting a move management company.

"They have a code of ethics that we ad-

IDEAL MOVE continues on Page 31

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THE PLAYERS tap dance class to perform at COA Winter Wonderland



Photo courtesy of THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center

Members of THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center tap dance class practice their routine that they will perform at the COA Winter Wonderland Show Dec. 21.

By Anthony Richards

There are many different ways for senior citizens to stay active, and THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center's latest way is the introduction of a tap dance class for its members.

Ginny Wirzbicki teaches the class, which began in August and is soon to have 10 students, as they continue to find people who are interested in taking part.

According to Wirzbicki, the class just looks fun, which helps catch people's attention, and then once they get involved they realize how much fun it truly is.

The class varies in age, with the oldest member being 93 years old.

She along with seven other members are currently practicing in anticipation of performing as an act at the St. Johns County Council on Aging's Winter Wonderland Dance Show at the River House location in St. Augustine Dec. 21 at 10:30 a.m.

The theme of the group's performance will be "Rockin' around the Christmas

TAP DANCE continues on Page 31



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Cypress Village's management company ranked No. 1 in study

Cypress Village has announced that its management company ranked highest in customer satisfaction with independent senior living communities for the fourth consecutive year in the J.D. Power 2022 — Senior Living Satisfaction Study.

Cypress Village is managed by Life Care Services, An LCS Company, which also achieved the highest score in all six factors of satisfaction: resident activities, community staff, price paid for services received, resident apartment/living unit, community building and grounds, and dining.

The J.D. Power 2022 U.S. Senior Living Study examines industry-level performance metrics of senior living providers and highlights the best

practices that are critical to customer satisfaction, advocacy and loyalty.

Cypress Village serves more than 800 residents and 300 team members.

“Life Care Services is honored to again be chosen as the best in customer satisfaction among independent senior living communities,” said Joel Nelson, CEO of LCS. “Receiving this award for a fourth consecutive year is a significant accomplishment, especially considering our teams serve nearly 40,000 residents in over 30 states. This award recognition is the result of our team’s focus on providing the best senior living experience for our residents.”

Life Care Services ranked highest in independent living resident overall satisfaction with a score of 841 in the



J.D. Power 2022 U.S. Senior Living Satisfaction Study, 24 points higher than the prior year. The study is based on responses from residents living in an independent senior living community within the previous three years.

For more information about Cypress Village, go to cypressvillageretirement.com or call 904-223-6100.

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

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Cypress Village raises \$16K with Walk To End Alzheimer's

Cypress Village residents and employees recently organized a modified version of the Walk to End Alzheimer's on the senior living community's campus, complete with matching shirts, signs and flower pinwheels.

While the Alzheimer's Association's official walk was held at the University of North Florida this past weekend, Cypress Village offered its own walk around the community in order to offer a small-scale alternative for residents from all levels of care to participate in the cause. Alzheimer's is a progressive brain disease that impacts thinking, memory and behavior. There is no cure or effective treatment — yet. The goal of the walk is to change that.

In October, the community took donations and did fundraising for the Alzheimer's Association, and the Cypress Village team donation total was \$16,700, well over their projected goal of \$10,000. Other fundraising efforts included a bingo for Alzheimer's event, a "kiss the cow" booth at the community fall festival, a silent auction in the main lobby and weekly community updates on the fundraising progress throughout the month of October.

More than 100 residents and employees gathered at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 5, and walked the 1.2 miles around



Participants walk around the circle.

Middleton Park Circle, and all participants enjoyed breakfast in Egret Hall afterward.

Cypress Village is one of many teams in the Jacksonville area that organized a walk, and the official Walk to End Alzheimer's raised nearly \$300,000 to help find a cure and provide support services to those impacted by the disease. This is Cypress Village's second walk on campus. Participants are passionate about raising awareness and look forward to next year's walk.

For more information about Cypress Village, call 904-223-6100.



More than 100 residents and employees of Cypress Village gather for the Walk To End Alzheimer's.

Contributed photos



The walk consisted of a 1.2-mile circle around Middleton Park Circle.



Cypress Village employees and residents walk to end Alzheimer's.

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PLAYERS Community Senior Center announces December schedule

The following programs will be held at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach, beginning in December. Most classes are four or five weeks long and begin the first week of the month. The center will be closed for Christmas on Dec. 23.

Anyone having questions or wishing to register may call Suzanne Duvall at 904-209-3659.

Lunch – Thursdays:

Five weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 1. Noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance and \$5 fee required per meal.

Lunch – Tuesdays:

Four weeks starting Tuesday, Dec. 6. Noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance and \$5 fee required per meal.

Duplicate Bridge:

Four weeks starting Friday, Dec. 2. Noon to 3 p.m. Fee required: \$2 per person, per Friday.

Line Dancing Class:

Instructor Will Oglesby teaches many different line dances with a good selection of music. Open to all adults and experience levels. Four weeks starting Wednesday, Dec. 7. From 4 to 5:30 p.m. Registration and \$30 monthly fee required.

Tap Dance Class:

Instructor is Ginny Wirzbicki. All levels of dance encouraged. Classes will be held on Fridays, Dec. 2, 9 and 16 from

10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Registration and \$30 monthly fee required. Watch this tap dance class perform at COA's River House Winter Wonderland Dance Show at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 21.

Acrylic Painting:

Three weeks starting Wednesday, Dec. 7. From 9 a.m. to noon. Fee required on the second Wednesday of each month when instructor conducts class.

Bus Trip to COA's River House:

Registration is closed. Participants will visit COA's River House for the Winter Wonderland Dance Show at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 21. This is a round trip from THE PLAYERS Community Center; the COA bus will leave THE PLAYERS Community Center at 9 a.m. and return by 3 p.m. Lunch provided.

Holiday Market:

Browse crafts, jewelry, quilts, art and more. All proceeds benefit THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center. Saturday, Dec. 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rain or Shine.

Hisshin Sumi-E Painting Class:

Traditional East Asian brush painting. Thursday, Dec. 8, at 11:30 a.m. This class meets once a month on the second Thursday of each month. Fee required: \$3 per person.

Caregiver Support Group (free program):

Wednesday, Dec. 7, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Open to all adult caregivers. Meets on the first Wednesday of each month. Register with Alzheimer's

Association at 800-272-3900.

Tai Chi:

Five weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 1. From 10 to 11 a.m.

Chair Exercise – Thursdays:

Five weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 1. From 9:30 to 10 a.m.

Chair Exercise – Tuesdays:

Four weeks starting Tuesday, Dec. 6. From 9:30 to 10 a.m.

Chair Exercise:

Three weeks starting Wednesday, Dec. 7. From 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Canasta – Tuesdays:

Four weeks starting Tuesday, Dec. 6. From 10 a.m. to noon.

Canasta – Thursdays:

Five weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 1. From 10 a.m. to noon.

Mexican Train Dominoes:

Four weeks starting Tuesday, Dec. 6. From 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Ask a Nurse:

Four weeks starting Tuesday, Dec. 6. From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Bingo – Tuesdays:

Four weeks starting Tuesday, Dec. 6. From 1 to 2:00 p.m.

Bingo — Thursdays:

Five weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 1. From 1 to 2:00 p.m.

NEW! Jeopardy Style Trivia:

Three weeks starting Wednesday, Dec. 7. From 11 a.m. to noon.

Social Bridge:

Three weeks starting Wednesday, Dec. 7. From 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Board Game Playing:

Three weeks starting Wednesday, Dec. 7. From 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Wii Bowling:

Five weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 1. From 10 to 11 a.m.

Tech Help:

Five weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 1. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Reservation required.

Dominoes Fun:

Four weeks starting Friday, Dec. 2. From 10 a.m. to noon.

Bocce Ball:

Four weeks starting Friday, Dec. 2. From 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

NEW! Brain Games:

Enjoy games and other activities for seniors from never2old4games. Four weeks starting Friday, Dec. 2. From 11 a.m. to noon.

Make a craft for the Holiday Market:

11 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 1. Materials provided.

Ameris Bank Presentation:

Gain information on the rising rate market and the impact, both good and bad, for those who have long-term savings. 11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6.

Artwalk!

Meet local artists as they display their works at the center's first annual Artwalk! 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 8.

The Sawgrass Singers Perform:

Enjoy your holiday favorites as the Sawgrass Singers perform from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, Dec. 8.

ADT Presentation:

Learn about ADT's alert systems that can help you to continue living independently, while comfortable and content in your own home. 11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 13.

Live Music by Harmony:

Listen to the vocal stylings of Harmony, a mother-daughter duo, from 11 a.m. to noon Dec. 15.

Christmas Carols Karaoke:

Enjoy singing holiday classics with friends. Lyrics provided. 11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 20.

Christmas Party and Cookie Decorating:

Wear your most festive outfit, celebrate the holidays and decorate freshly baked cookies. 11 a.m. Dec. 22.

Nutrition Presentation:

Adding nuts, grains, beans and peas to your diet. It's never too late to start undoing the damage caused by a poor diet. Learn how to improve eating habits and save money. 11 a.m. Dec. 27.

2023 Vision Board:

What's your hope for the new year? Join friends old and new to talk about resolutions and intentions for the new year. Each participant will decorate a paper "vision board" with things they want to see, do or be in 2023. 11 a.m. Dec. 29.

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Florida Senior Games begins Dec. 3

From Saturday, Dec. 3, through Sunday, Dec. 11, more than 2,000 athletes age 50 and older will gather in Pasco, Broward, Hillsborough and Polk counties to compete in the 2022 Florida Senior Games.

This year, at least 15 athletes age 90 and older have registered. The eldest is 96.

A program of the Florida Sports Foundation, the Olympics-style competition is in its 31st year. It is being presented by Humana. The foundation is the state's lead organization in promoting and developing the Sunshine State's sports industry and related tourism opportunities.

In previous years, athletes from more than 200 Florida cities, 40 states, Canada and the Caribbean islands have competed.

Registration for this year's event closed Nov. 21. To compete in certain events, Florida residents must first have qualified at one of 21 Florida Senior Games series qualifiers, which were held January through April and September through November. Those residing in Florida must finish in the

top five of their age group in their sport. Out-of-state athletes are not required to qualify.

Some sports and events, however, have no qualifying standards and are open to all senior athletes wishing to participate.

The Florida games is itself a qualifier for the 2023 National Senior Games, to be held in Pittsburgh on July 7-18.

More than 56,000 athletes have participated since 1992. That first year, 712 athletes competed. Since then, the number of participants has grown. The largest number of competitors was 3,012 in 2016.

This year's opening ceremony and ribbon-cutting will be held Friday, Dec. 2, at the Wiregrass Ranch Sports Campus of Pasco County.

Since the 1999 Sunshine State Games and the Florida Senior Games State Competitions made the transition to the Florida Sports Foundation, amateur sports opportunities have been provided for more than 500,000 athletes of all ages through the annual sports festivals. The in-state amateur sports programs provide almost \$10

million annually in economic impact to more than 25 communities.

Each year, Outstanding Male and Female Athletes of the Year are named – one of each. In 2007, Larry Wallen of Jacksonville and, in 2020, Gabriel Wong of Ponte Vedra Beach were awarded this recognition. Wong is registered again this year.

Pickleball is setting record numbers of competitors this year, with 428 players and 242 doubles teams. Volleyball, too, has taken off. There will be at least 181 players in 24 teams, an all-time high.

Sports that require qualifying include: basketball shooting, bowling, cycling, golf, pickleball, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, tennis and track & field. Competitions not requiring qualifying include: archery, badminton, basketball (three on three), dominos, foot golf, horseshoes, padel, powerlifting, power walk, race walk, racquetball, 5K road race and volleyball.

For more information, go to floridaseniorgames.com.

Alzheimer support groups to meet

The Alzheimer Association's in-person Caregiver Support Group will meet from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the first Monday of every month from Jan. 4 to Dec. 6, 2023. The location will be THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach.

In addition, the Alzheimer Association's virtual Caregiver Support Group will meet online from 2 to 3 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of every month from Dec. 28 to Nov. 22, 2023.

The support groups create a safe, confidential, supportive environment or community and a chance for participants to develop informal mutual support and social relationships. They also educate and inform participants about dementia and help participants develop methods and skills to solve problems.

To register, call the Alzheimer Association's 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.



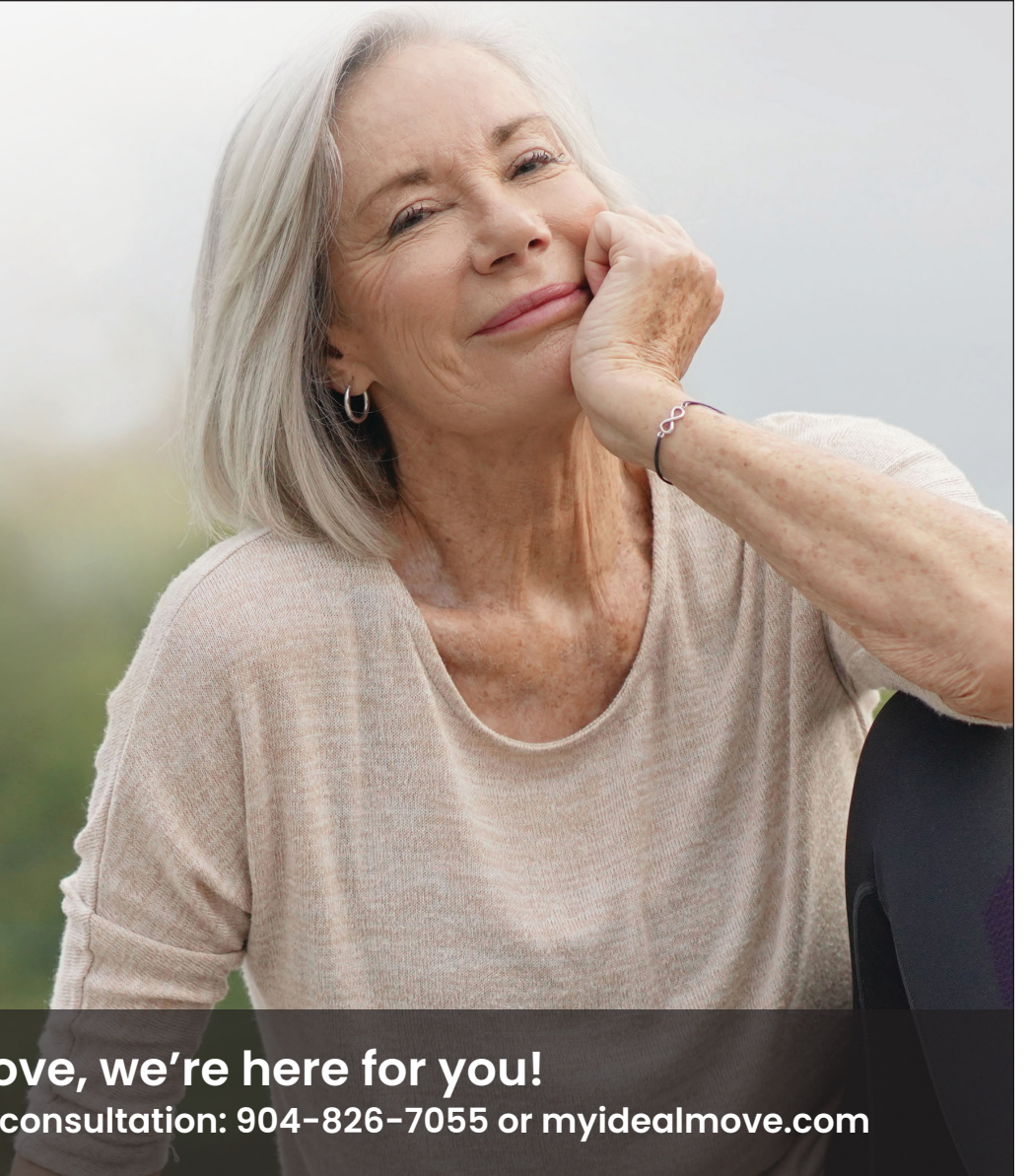
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Caring for seniors at heart of Silver Treasures

By Shaun Ryan

The new owners of Silver Treasures at Ponte Vedra are not new to the world of assisted living. In fact, Jennifer and Freddie Arguilla are not even new to Silver Treasures. They actually launched the brand in 2016.

A few years ago, they sold a franchise of the business to Jim and Jennifer Fischer, and it opened on Jan. 17, 2020, at 119 Da Vinci Blvd., Ponte Vedra. It is licensed for 16 residents.

This year, the Fischers sold the franchise back to the Arguillas, who also own Silver Treasures at St. Augustine, which offers independent and assisted living, as well as memory care. That facility serves as the company headquarters. In all there are four facilities bearing the Silver Treasures name, two of which are franchises.

Jennifer Arguilla worked as a nurse for 30 years — including periods in the ER and ICU. At Flagler Hospital, where she worked for seven years, she ran some of the departments. For the past decade, she has been a nurse practitioner.

Her husband, meanwhile, has a background in engineering.

The Arguillas are very involved in their church, and that's where their association with senior facilities got started.

"My husband and I have always taken

care of seniors at the church," Jennifer Arguilla explained.

In 2001, a visitor to their church approached them, wanting to sell her small, six-bed assisted living facility. She made them an offer that Jennifer Arguilla said they could not turn down.

The couple eventually expanded their business, opening their first large facility in 2007.

Now, the Arguillas are looking forward to further expanding the number of their franchises.

"We're nationally registered and trademarked," Jennifer Arguilla said. "In fact, in spring of next year, we're opening our first out-of-state — in Texas. So, it's exciting."

The couple remains actively involved with their franchisees. The Arguillas prepare them for inspections, provide resources and updates and conduct audits.

In fact, the Arguillas are very selective when it comes to who gets a franchise.

"Silver Treasures is originally designed to start off somebody that has the acumen and the heart to take care of seniors," Jennifer Arguilla said. "We wanted people that are really engaged in giving excellent senior care — not because they'll make money out of it. You will never succeed if you go into something thinking you're



just going to make money out of it."

Because Silver Treasures at Ponte Vedra is an assisted living facility, clinicians and doctors visit regularly. That includes a podiatrist, an internist and a psychiatrist, who can help seniors who are dealing with a common condition: depression.

In fact, life at a good assisted living facility can help seniors overcome depression, which is often brought on by the kinds of things that necessitate the

transition from their own home, such as the death of a spouse.

"The friendships and the relationships that actually get created in a community are part of the wellbeing of that senior," Jennifer Arguilla said.

In addition, Silver Treasures offers activities and welcomes entertainers for its residents.


To learn more about Silver Treasures at Ponte Vedra, go to silvertreasuresatpontevedra.com.

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'Downton Abbey'-inspired program a success

Contributed photos



Cathy Snyder and Marilyn Smith



Flower arrangements for the raffle.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Plants – comprised of Garden Club of St. Augustine members Cathy Snyder and Marilyn Smith – returned to the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on Nov. 19 for their first in-person show since February 2020 to an enthusiastic crowd.

It was two-and-a-half years since the library last hosted this popular program, but that didn't impact the enthusiasm of the new and longtime fans of the Sisterhood. More than 60 attendees came to the library to enjoy and learn about flower arranging inspired by the hit television show "Downton Abbey," which debuted a second movie this year.

During the two-hour presentation, sponsored by the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, patrons enjoyed light refreshments, opportunities to purchase raffle tickets to win one or more of the 20 flower arrangements created by the Sisterhood, laughter and learning, and an afternoon of fun with friends and fellow flower and/or "Downton Abbey" enthusiasts.

The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library's raffle ticket sales at each Sisterhood show go toward sponsoring current and future library programming. Thanks to volunteer Marianne Stein, ticket sales hit an all-time high:



Sisterhood of the Traveling Plants raffle winners.

the show's flowers and containers for 20 arrangements cost \$400, and the raffle tickets to win the flower arrangements raised \$580.

Volunteers Jan Crewson and Alice Wilson provided lemonade, tea and a variety of cookies.

The library will host additional "Downton Abbey" events in the near future. Both require RSVPs. Those needing assistance may stop by the adult reference desk or call 904-827-6950. For further information, go to sjcpls.org.

- "A Date with Downton" – 11 a.m.

Friday, Dec. 9. (Rescheduled from September due to Hurricane Ian). RSVP at sjcpls.org/events/in-person-a-date-with-downton-rescheduled-from-sept-2022.

- Sisterhood of the Traveling Plants presents "Flavor and Flair: Incorporating Edibles into Regional Arrangements" – noon Jan. 21. (This event celebrates the 2023 St. Johns Reads selection, "Buttermilk Graffiti" by Edward Lee.) RSVP at sjcpls.org/events/st-johns-reads-sisterhood-of-the-traveling-plants-presents-flavor-and-flair-incorporating-edibles-into-regional-arrangements-in-person-event.



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Boost your brain for the holidays

Serious mental decline is not an inevitable part of aging. Seniors can boost their short- and long-term brain health and significantly lower the risk of dementia if they take the right steps right now.

Keeping the brain young and healthy takes more than crossword puzzles, brain games and Sudoku. The keys lie in lifestyle factors and often have a greater impact on our health than genetics.

"The Age-Proof Brain," a virtual presentation will provide information at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 7. To register, go to bit.ly/3GQMvi6.

In this discussion, based on insights from his just-released published book, "The Age-Proof Brain," Dr. Marc Milstein will teach the little things that can positively impact day-to-day mental health and protect the brain for years down the road.

Attendees will learn:

- The importance of combatting feelings of isolation and how to stay connected, especially over the holiday season.

- The impact of being social on brain health and what types of social activity are best for the brain.

- Surprising science-based solutions for a happiness boost.

- How to keep your memory sharp. Simple but powerful wellness tips to lower the risk of anxiety, depression, and dementia.

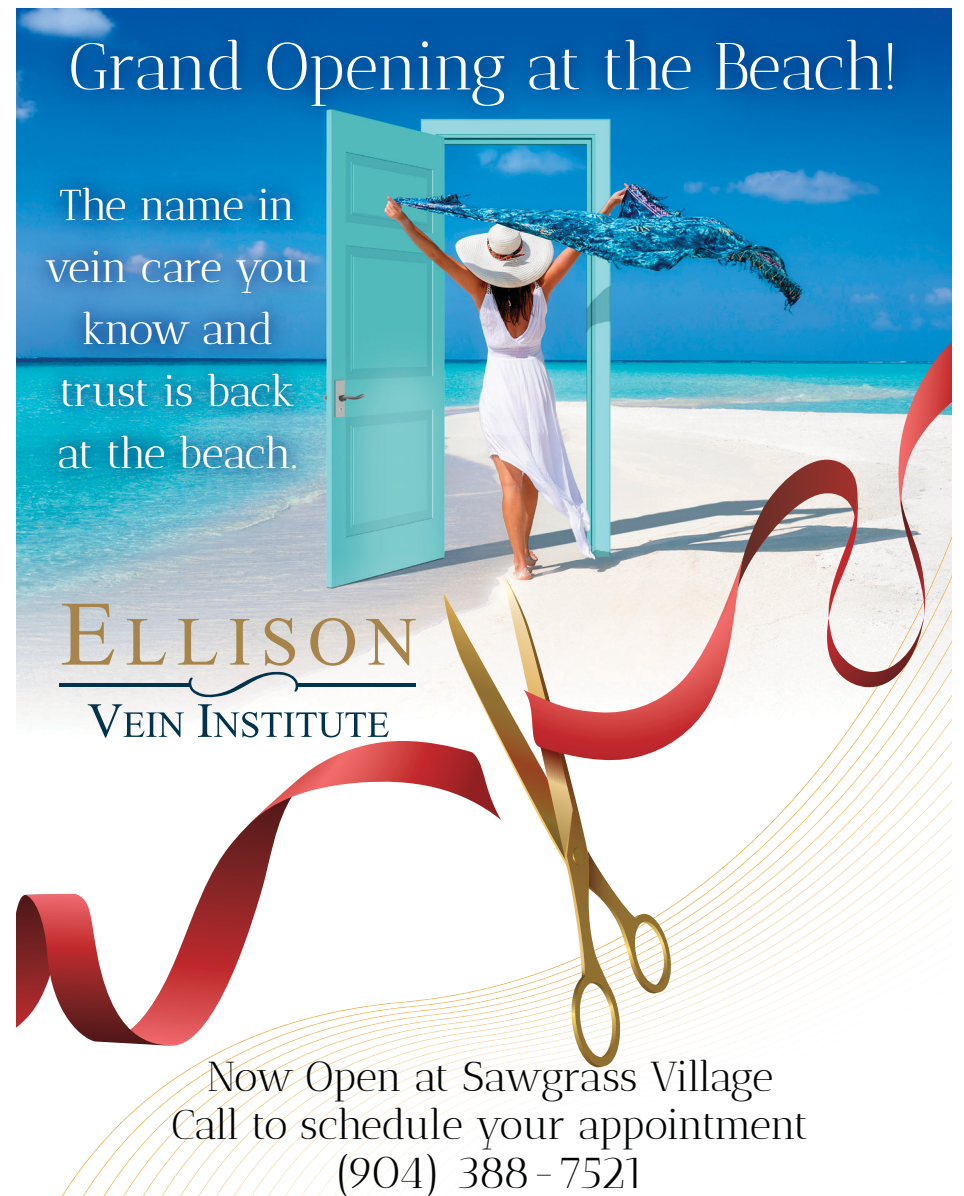
Milstein is an internationally recognized speaker on optimizing brain health, lowering risk of dementia and boosting happiness and productivity. He engages audiences with breakthrough research and valuable take-home tips while entertaining his audience with humor and stories and empowering them with usable strategies. Attendees leave with immediate tools, key solutions and motivation to transform and maximize productivity, energy and longevity.

It will be presented in association with The Windsor at San Pablo, 4000 San Pablo Parkway, Jacksonville.

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Council on Aging, Subaru join Meals on Wheels to help seniors

Council on Aging has announced its participation in the 2022 Subaru Share the Love Event, which began Nov. 17. Through Jan. 3, as part of a national partnership with Meals on Wheels America, Subaru of America Inc. will donate \$250 for every new vehicle purchased or leased to the purchaser's choice of participating charities – one of which is Meals on Wheels.

“This annual event allows us to help more homebound elders receive the Meals on Wheels they need,” said COA Executive Director Becky Yanni. “We are very excited to get the word out to members of our community about this opportunity to help local seniors in a very meaningful way.”

Since the Subaru Share the Love Event began in 2008, Subaru and its participating retailers have donated nearly 4 million meals and helped provide friendly visits to seniors served by local Meals on Wheels programs across the country, including Council on Aging in St. Johns County.

Council on Aging is partnering once



Mark Ogden from Subaru of Jacksonville delivers for Meals on Wheels.

again with Subaru of Jacksonville in spreading the word about the program. Subaru of Jacksonville is located at 10800 Atlantic Blvd. in Jacksonville. To contact them, call 904-544-6516 or go to subaruofjacksonville.com.

“Causes like Meals on Wheels rely on corporate partners to keep our wheels turning,” said Ellie Hollander,



Contributed photos

A COA volunteer delivers for Meals on Wheels.

president and CEO, Meals on Wheels America. “That’s why we are beyond grateful to Subaru of America and their retailers for their astonishing 15 years of partnership and nearly 4 million

meals and friendly visits delivered to our aging neighbors.”

For more information, go to www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethe-love.



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COA Center in Nocatee announces December schedule

The following programs will be held at COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, at 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra. Registration is required, and space is limited. Unless specified otherwise, register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling 904-819-3234. Classes are open to adults age 18 and up.

TUESDAYS

Mosaic Art Class: 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Dec. 6. Create a beautiful and unique mosaic ornament with the help of Alice Lindholm. Advance registration is required. Space is limited. Pay \$12 per ornament the day of class to cover the cost of materials.

Essential Tremor Meet, Greet & Educate: 10:30 a.m. to noon Tuesday,



Contributed photo

The COA Center is located at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee.

Dec. 6. Discussions will include current treatment options for ET focusing on clinical research exploring novel interventions for the condition. Guest speaker is Lew Whiting, MSW, LCSW.

Caregiver Support Group: All care-

givers are welcome. Meets every Tuesday from 1 to 2 p.m. There is a trained facilitator present at every meeting to guide the group.

Holiday Herbal Class: 3-4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6. Herb-infused oils, vinegars, ciders and spirits are easy to make and give as gifts or keep for your own use. Cost: \$10 for a one-hour session. Advance registration is required, and space is limited. To register, go to coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee.

Grief Support Group: 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Dec. 13 and 17. This group is for anyone dealing with grief from any kind of loss and offers support and validation by being with people who have experienced loss.

Widows and Widowers: Social group meets the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Christmas party on Dec. 13. Regular meeting on Dec. 27. Register in advance for one or both Tuesdays.

Foods That Fight Inflammation: 2-3 p.m. Dec. 13. Carla Defuria, registered dietitian and health coach at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, will explain how an anti-inflammatory diet can support healing and protect you from future diseases.

Holiday Bingo: 2-3 p.m. Dec. 20. Free bingo and special prizes. Register in advance.

WEDNESDAYS

Open Art: Bring your art or craft project to work on while socializing with friends. Meets 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. every Wednesday.

Hope for the Holidays: 10 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 7. Holidays can be a difficult time for people who are grieving. Community Hospice grief and bereavement counselors will lead a discus-

sion and offer suggestions. Discussion will follow.

Mah Jongg Meet-up: Experienced players meet to play. 1-3 p.m. Dec. 7, 14 and 28 and 3-5 p.m. Dec. 21.

Tai Chi: Improve mood, increase energy and stamina, improve flexibility, balance and muscle strength with instructor Dennis Sheils. Class may be done standing or seated. Wednesdays, starting Dec. 7, for four weeks; class time 1:30 p.m. Cost is \$30. To register, go to coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee.

Parkinson's Meet, Greet & Learn with Dr. Tipton: 3-4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 7. A special meeting for people living with Parkinson's disease and/or their loved ones. Guest speaker will be Dr. Philip Tipton, Mayo physician and researcher of Parkinsonian neurodegenerative diseases.

Canasta Open Play: Join others to play canasta. Wednesday, Dec. 14, at 10 a.m.

Genealogy Group: 1-2:30 p.m. Dec. 21. A genealogy expert will guide you in discovering your roots on the third Wednesday of each month.

Ask the Pharmacist: Do you have questions or concerns about the prescription medications you take? Retired pharmacist Ray Lowe is here to help. Call to schedule a one-on-one appointment. Wednesday, Dec. 28, morning appointments available.

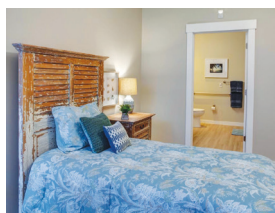
Caregiver Needs Assessment: Make an appointment with a qualified dementia care specialist who will: set up a time to discuss your situation, one-on-one; develop an individualized education and needs assessment; support and guide; empower you to find solutions for those needs. Call 904-814-9407 to schedule an appointment.

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Mary McGee to be Riding into History 2023 grand marshal

Competition motorcycles will be featured at the Riding into History Concours D'Elegance to be held on April 15 at the World Golf Village.

In keeping with that theme, organizers have announced that Mary McGee will be the grand marshal.

McGee is an AMA Hall of Fame inductee, Off Road Motor-sports Hall of Fame inductee, Trailblazer, FIM Legend and has been called "one of the greatest women competitors in motorcycling history."

At the Grand Marshal Banquet on April 14, attendees can hear McGee's very funny stories about how the male-dominated racing fraternity tried to keep her from racing, and how her friendship with Steve McQueen kept her in racing and inspired her to never give up.

Riding into History is the premier all-motorcycle Concours D'Elegance in the United States. Riding into History is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization with its primary charity, K9s for Warriors, which provides service dogs for disabled veterans. Riding into History has donated more than \$600,000 to local charities since its founding in 1999.

For more information, go to ridingintohistory.org.



Contributed photo

Mary McGee is seen somewhere along the 540 miles of 1975 Baja 500.

Travel perks and discounts for seniors

Having made it to their golden years, seniors enjoy not only the privilege of earned wisdom, but also a few perks that come with aging. Many adults who have reached a certain age are entitled to an array of discounts, which take into consideration seniors' fixed retirement incomes. Discounts are available on various services, including many travel options.

Seniors have a lot of time to devote to recreational pursuits. This list of available travel discounts can help seniors get the most bang for their vacation bucks.

Airline tickets

Before booking a flight, it is worth investigating if a particular airline carrier offers senior discounts. The global pandemic has changed how some airlines do business, and many have faced significant adversity since early 2020. Airlines may offer more affordable flights to drum up business. In the past, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, British Airlines, and United Airlines have offered various discounts for people ages 65 and older.

Ground travel

Flying isn't the only mode of travel available. AARP partners with various car rental companies to offer senior discounts. Seniors also may be entitled to discounts of 5 percent or more on tickets from Greyhound, Amtrak, and Trailways. Seniors who live in metropolitan areas also may get reduced fares on public



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River House will host special holiday programs this month.

Holiday arts events planned at COA's River House

The following holiday arts events will be held in December at COA's River House, 179 Marine St., St. Augustine. For further information, call 904-209-3655 or contact tharris@stjohnscoa.com. There is no charge for these programs. Donations are gratefully accepted.

- Gift of Stories: The Tale Tellers of St. Augustine will share stories and songs of the holiday season at 10 a.m. Dec. 20.
- Winter Wonderland Dance Show: Enjoy

a dance performance presented by the River House belly dance and tap dance dancers at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 21.

- Music and Dancing at River House with Reminiscence: Reminiscence will provide music for dancing at River House from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Dec. 22.
- Acrylic Art Show: Paintings by students in the River House acrylic painting classes will be on display from 10 a.m. to noon Dec. 22.

CarePlus expands Medicare Advantage options in Florida

CarePlus Health Plans Inc., which has been offering Medicare Advantage health plans in Florida for more than 22 years, has announced that the company is expanding both its footprint in Florida as well as the variety of plan offerings that will be available to Medicare beneficiaries in the state enrolling in 2023 plans.

"We are thrilled to be able to reach additional Floridians by offering our CarePlus Medicare Advantage plans, designed to provide robust coverage for high quality health care, in a total of 21 counties across the state for coverage starting in 2023," said Bruno Piquin, CarePlus president. "People with Medicare throughout Florida have responded overwhelmingly positive to the value and quality of health care our plans afford our members. We're also excited to introduce new plan offerings and features, which we believe will add value and lower costs for members, many of whom are being

impacted by the challenging economic times."

This year, residents of three additional Florida counties – St. Johns, Flagler and Hernando – can select a CarePlus Medicare Advantage plan during Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period, or AEP. The AEP runs through Dec. 7 for plan coverage taking effect Jan. 1, 2023.

In St. Johns, Flagler and Hernando counties, CarePlus is offering up to nine Medicare Advantage plans to help meet different health and budget needs for area residents.

In all the counties CarePlus will now serve, options include special plans for people living with certain chronic conditions and for people who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare, as well as plans broadly available to all Medicare beneficiaries.

For more information, go to CarePlusHealthPlans.com.

'Christmas on the River' returns to River House in support of seniors



Contributed photo

River House hosted "Christmas on the River" on Nov. 20.

The Council on Aging rang in the holiday season Nov. 20 at River House with "Christmas on the River." The annual fundraising event supports COA's Care Connection program, which provides St. Johns County seniors with many services they need in order to continue to enjoy independence and quality of life at home.

Attendees enjoyed a wine tasting,

heavy hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine, live music and holiday shopping in the waterfront setting of River House in downtown St. Augustine.

This year marked the first time the event was held in person since pandemic-related closures began in 2020.

"The Christmas on the River event evokes the holiday spirit so well," said Becky Yanni, COA's executive director. "It is so festive and fun – and it is driven by a sincere wish to give back to our community's elders and bring them comfort and joy during the holidays and all year long."

COA's Care Connection program is financed entirely through donations and fueled by the labor of COA volunteers from the community. Services provided include minor home repairs, lawn maintenance, wheelchair ramp construction, as well as assistance obtaining low or no-cost prescriptions, utility assistance, pet food, wheelchairs and other assistive devices.

Care Connection supports seniors in remaining in their homes where they are most comfortable, rather than being forced by circumstances to enter assisted living. The program provides crucial services for which no other funding sources exist.

River House is located at 179 Marine St., St. Augustine.

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Ideal Move

Continued from 18

here to,” said Coles, “and they have lots of standards that people need to meet.”

According to Coles, NASMM has awarded the Ideal Move team an A+ rating and inducted them into the Diamond Society, which is reserved for those with the highest level of service for more than 10 years.

One benefit of the affiliation is the company’s access to other members across the nation. This facilitates moves over greater geographic areas that, for

customers, is fairly seamless.

“We help lots of people come here from other states and lots of people from here go to other states,” Coles said.

Ideal Move has been in business for 13 years, the last three under Coles. It has 11 employees. In addition to helping people relocate, it offers estate clean-outs and clearing out homes in preparation for new owners.

Coles said the best way to contact Ideal Move and discuss a move is to call 904-826-7055. The email address is info@myidealmove.com. For further information, go to myidealmove.com. The company can also be found on Facebook.

Tap dance

Continued from 19

Tree” and each performer will be wearing shirts that read “It’s not what’s under the tree, but what’s around it.”

Wirzbicki has hopes that the class will become a mainstay at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, as after the Christmas show, they will take some time off before transitioning to their routine for the “Spring Fling” show.

“Most of the class has never really danced before, but there are some that have a little bit of experience when they were growing up,” Wirzbicki said.

Because of that, she has slowly added new steps along the way over the past months and the routine is to the point where it is really starting to take shape with the Winter Wonderland Show on the horizon.

“The goal is to get to the point where the steps are muscle memory,” Wirzbicki said.

According to Wirzbicki, tap dancing in general is a little more complicated than other forms of dancing, because it presents a perfect mixture of both physical and mental aspects.

“You’re using your brain to learn the steps and then to make sure you get it right,” Wirzbicki said. “It’s visual and auditory, because your feet are making the sounds and you have to make them at the right moment. There’s a lot that goes into it.”

She has found that dancing in general is a great way that people enjoy exercising because it is more fun than just the typical lifting weights and cardio routines.

“Exercising to music in general is something that makes a huge difference to people,” Wirzbicki said.

There is a combination of excitement and nervousness amongst the group about performing on stage and in front of a crowd, as performing for each other is one thing, but performing for others is the next level.

However, this is nothing new and something that Wirzbicki says every performer encounters.

“I don’t care who the performers are, they still get a little nervous before a show,” Wirzbicki said. “If you don’t feel that way, there’s a good chance you won’t do as well. It shows that you have passion for what you are doing.”

Travel

Continued from 29

buses and trains through providers like New York City’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Accommodations

Getting there is one thing, but seniors also can receive discounts on hotel stays or cruise cabins. AARP reports that many major hotel and motel chains offer senior discounts between 5 and 15 percent. Royal Caribbean has offered senior discounts on select sailings and stateroom categories. Smarter Travel notes that most chains require travelers to book directly rather than through an online booking agency/deal site to be eligible for discounts.

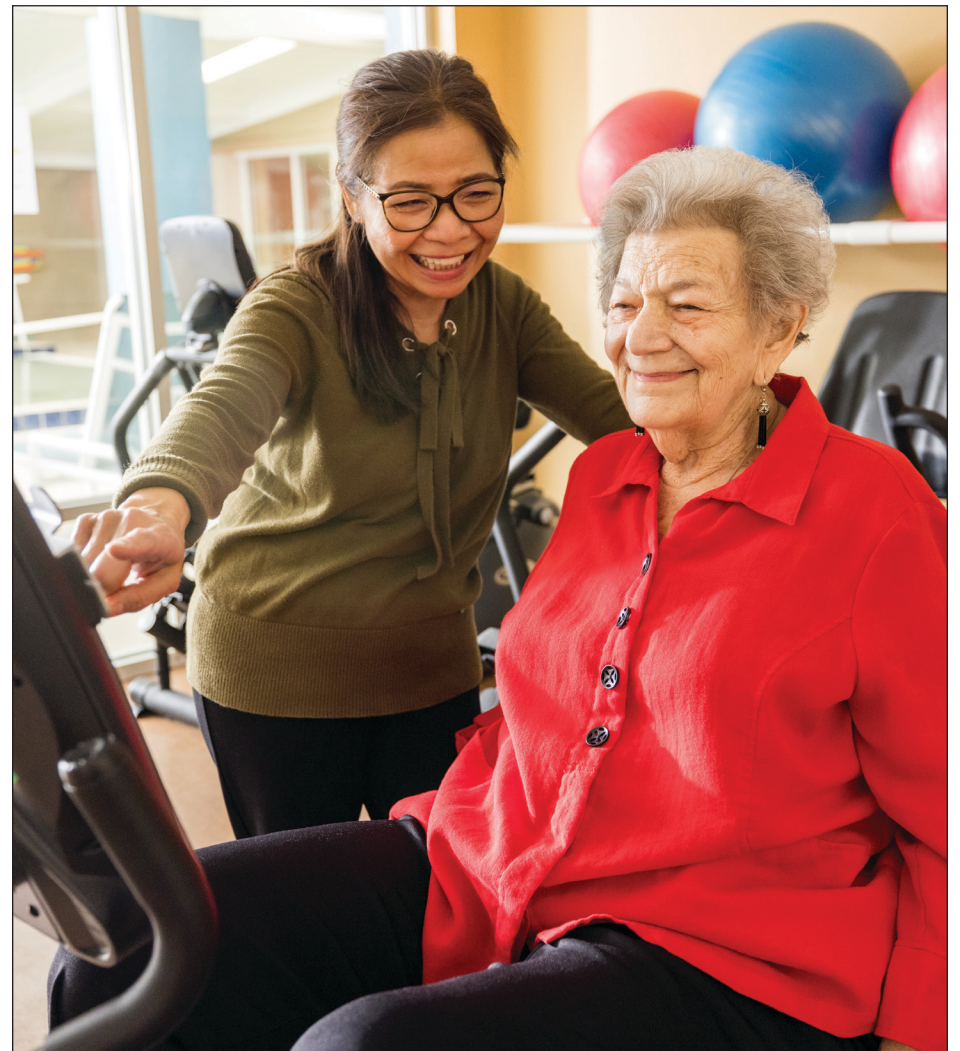
Dining out

Many restaurants, and national chains in particular, offer senior discounts with or without AARP membership. Applebee’s offers 10 to 15 percent off to those age 60 or older. Brick House Tap & Tavern, Carrabba’s Italian Grill, Denny’s, IHOP, Outback Steakhouse, and many others provide discounts or special senior pricing.

Tours and more

Seniors also can speak with travel agents or booking services about discounts on sightseeing tours and other vacation excursions.

One of the perks of getting older is the chance to save money on travel-related services.



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Junior Service League to host New Year's Eve Gala

Goodbye 2022. Hello 2023. Ring in the new year at an event hosted by the Junior Service League of St. Augustine. A New Year's Eve Gala — Party with a Purpose will be held from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Dec. 31 at the Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park, 11 Magnolia Ave., St. Augustine. VIP tickets allow early entry at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at jsgala2022.givesmart.com

Dance to the live music of Chillula. Guests will enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres, with a carving station by World Plate Caterer, and an open bar. Count down to the New Year with a champagne toast.

Other gala activities include a photo booth, charitable gambling and a silent auction.

Tickets are \$175 per guest and all

proceeds go to help area nonprofits supported by the Junior Service League of St. Augustine.

Each year, JSL provides funding for local nonprofit organizations. Last year's gala raised \$40,000.

In addition to the New Year's Eve event, the JSL has created a 2023 Heroes and Pups Photo Calendar featuring local law enforcement alongside precious pups. Photographer and real estate agent Suzanne Henry donated hours to shooting and editing these photos. Dennis Lockwood donated his time to format the calendar and prepare it for print.

The calendar is available for purchase at jslofstaugustine.org/about/events/2023-hero-calendar.

Learn more at jslofstaugustine.org.



Service offers youth a safe place to land, a safe place to launch

It is no secret: children need and deserve a safe place to land when they fall, and they need and deserve a safe and stable platform from which to launch into the world of adulthood when the time comes. Especially kids who suffer the effect of trauma and who face significant challenges.

It is these children who can benefit from the services offered by the St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS) Pre-Independent Living Program (PIL).

Foster care and other forms of out-of-home care are often traumatic on their own, but compound those experiences with failed parental reunification plans and one can only imagine how the affected children feel. These stressors compound when children are nearing the age of 18 years, where adulthood looms large. How will they prepare? Who will teach them the skills they need to simply get by in life? Who will support them? Who will they call for support when things go wrong? Where will they spend holidays?

It is these questions and more that haunt the sleep of children in this situation.

Fortunately, there is a provider in our community who can meet the need for youth who find themselves in this precarious position. That provider is SAYS, a long-time leader in St. John's County's provision of high-quality children's mental health services.

The SAYS Pre-Independent Living home offers not only a safe landing zone for youth who have endured traumas that many of us can only imagine, but also offers the safe platform from which to launch into adult life.

The PIL home provides the most consistent, stable, structured environment that many of the youth have ever known. The positive changes and development that children often demonstrate after entering the PIL home are profound.

While living in the PIL home, youth learn everyday life skills such as meal planning, prepping, cooking and cleaning. They learn personal hygiene skills, receive schooling support and learn to live and work with others in a common space. All in an environment where the children receive therapy, medication management and behavioral supports as

needed in a home that has house parents who live on-site.

This model helps to ensure that the care provided is consistent and delivered in a nurturing manner from individuals who are as much like family as possible.

Soon, SAYS will launch a campaign to raise funds for new independent living

residences for young adults who are 18 years old or older and require additional supports as they learn to support themselves.

If you would like more information about St. Augustine Youth Services or would like to schedule a tour, contact Tim Decker at timothyd@sayskids.org.

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Southeastern Grocers donates \$100K to the USO.

Grocer launches hunger relief program, makes \$100K donation to USO

Southeastern Grocers Inc. (SEG), parent company and home of Fresco y Más, Harveys Supermarket and Winn-Dixie grocery stores, is celebrating the season of giving with donations to dedicated nonprofit partners and encouraging customers and associates to embrace the holiday spirit.

SEG is activating a community donation program to help raise funds and awareness for food insecurity in support of its longstanding partner Feeding America. The grocer's holiday hunger relief program will aid the nonprofit in its efforts to help food insecure communities during the holidays and every day.

Now through Dec. 27, customers can help their neighbors in need by donating \$1, \$5 or rounding up their grocery bill. Every cent raised will support Feeding America and Feeding America network food banks throughout the Southeast.

"As a grocer committed to feeding our local communities, we believe everyone should have the opportunity to celebrate the holidays and enjoy a meal with their loved ones," said Raymond Rhee, chief people officer of



Contributed photos

Volunteers distribute food for the holidays.

Southeastern Grocers.

To commence the season of giving and help those in need celebrate Thanksgiving, SEG, together with the SEG Gives Foundation, hosted 13 food distribution events throughout its communities to give away more than 7,000 frozen turkeys as well as holiday meal staples.

Additionally, SEG donated \$100,000 to the USO in support of the organization's mission to strengthen America's military members by keeping them connected to family, home and country throughout their service. The donation was made possible by Fresco y Más, Harveys Supermarket and Winn-Dixie customers and associates during the grocer's two-week community donation program in recognition of Veterans Day.

SEG Gives Foundation is the charitable arm of Southeastern Grocers Inc. The foundation aligns giving with causes that are priorities to the communities SEG serves, including the fight against hunger, support for military service members and their families, relief to those affected by extreme weather and natural disasters and championing belonging, inclusion and diversity.

Feeding America is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of more than 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and more than 60,000 partner agencies, food pantries and meal programs, it helps provide 6.6 billion meals to tens of millions of people in need last year.



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St. Augustine photographer produces 2023 calendar

St. Augustine photographer Jackie Hird has been creating calendars featuring stunning St. Augustine scenery since 2015. Her 2023 calendar is now available, with 12 new photographs and local event details on all 12 months, and there's even a bonus month with updated events for December 2022.

In addition, she has photo notecard packs, with sand snowmen and mixed packs of Nights of Lights in downtown locations.

"Over the years friends have asked what's happening in St. Augustine; they know that I am involved in our community, and this seemed a great way to keep them informed year round," explained Hird, a St. Augustine resident since 1988 and a professional photographer since 2004.

"I live, eat and breathe St. Augustine, and I wanted to share the beauty of our city and help encourage family and friends to reconnect and visit," she said. "The calendar helps them plan their trip with the events listed. My photos reflect a mix of history, architecture and the beautiful natural surroundings of the Nation's



The cover of Jackie Hird's 2023 calendar.

Oldest City."

Hird explained that local groups, people and organizations are definitely back to planning their events for 2023.

She has confirmed all events that are listed on her 2023 calendar; however, they are always subject to change.

Calendars can be purchased at

jackiehird.com/calendar or at Flagler College, Flagler's Legacy, Flower Works, Grower's Alliance Cafe & Gift Shop, High Tide Gallery, Cindy's Gift Shop/Love Ya Mean it Oddities, Ocean Breeze Interiors, Old Town Trolleys Welcome Center, Pena Peck House, Perky Pelican Christmas Shoppe, St. Augustine & St. Johns County Visitor Information Center, St. Augustine Beach Art Studio & Gallery, St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum, St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier Gift Shop, Spanish Military Hospital & Museum, Sweetwater Coffee Bar & Gallery and Sebastian Hotel.

As a way of giving back to her community, Hird offers fundraising options for local nonprofits without any upfront costs. The organizations can offer her calendars to their supporters, and Hird gives back 50% to the nonprofit. For more details, email photography@jackiehird.com or call 904-553-8614.

To view 2023 calendar images and place an online order, go to jackiehird.com/calendar. Past year calendars also are available.

Signature coffee supports Riverkeeper

Bold Bean Coffee Roasters and St. Johns Riverkeeper invite river and coffee lovers alike to enjoy their morning jolt with a side of charity in support of one of the region's most important assets — the St. Johns River. Bold Bean has created a signature St. Johns Blend, available now for a limited period of time.

Bold Bean is donating 15% of the proceeds from the sale of St. Johns Blend coffee to St. Johns Riverkeeper to support the nonprofit organization's advocacy and education programs for the river. The coffee will sell for \$17 per bag and there are 500 bags available. The coffee is a blend from Central America and has flavor notes of chocolate, caramel and vanilla.

Patrons can also pick up a co-branded coffee mug, featuring a historic map of the St. Johns River and surrounding areas in Jacksonville. The mugs will sell for \$15 with \$5 from the sale of each mug going to support St. Johns Riverkeeper. Both the coffee and the mugs can be purchased at any Bold Bean location or online at boldbeancoffee.com.

"As a local Jacksonville company, Bold Bean is excited to support St. Johns Riverkeeper through this partnership," said Zack Burnett, Owner of Bold Bean. "We understand how important a healthy river is to the

health of our city and quality of life. As a lifelong surfer and avid fisherman, I am personally happy to be supporting an organization that is focused on fighting to preserve our river and its connected waterways. Riverkeeper's work not only helps ensure healthier local waterways but also that future generations will continue to enjoy this unique and fragile resource that makes Jacksonville special and that so many of us already love."

"We are so grateful for our ongoing partnership with Bold Bean and their generous support of our organization," exclaims Jimmy Orth, executive director for St. Johns Riverkeeper. "This is just another example of their longstanding commitment to our community and the St. Johns River."

St. Johns Riverkeeper Inc. is a

member-supported, nonprofit advocacy organization for the St. Johns River and its watershed. Its mission is to defend

the St. Johns River and advocate for its protection. Go to stjohsriverkeeper.org for more information.



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Nease NJROTC continues successful history

After being recognized as the top program in the nation last year, beating out more than 600 units, Nease's NJROTC program had high expectations coming into this year.

The senior naval science instructor, Capt. LaRoche, retired and 63 seniors graduated, but the cadets were up for the challenge that comes with change.

Nease NJROTC started this year off with a sweeping victory at its first major drill competition of the 2022-23 school year at the annual South Effingham High School drill meet in Guyton, Georgia, on Nov. 5.

In addition to claiming the overall trophy, Nease earned first place trophies in nine of 12 events for personnel inspection, academics, unarmed exhibition drill, armed basic drill, armed exhibition drill, athletics overall, pushups, curlups and the 16 x 100; second place in drill overall and unarmed basic drill. A highlight was Cadet NS3 (junior) Caden Byas competing in the curlup event and completing 437 curlups, earning him the medal for first place in that event.

Nease placed second and third out of 26 teams in South Effingham's air rifle meet on Oct. 22, qualifying for regionals



Nease air rifle team members perform the standing shooting portion of the competition.

in shoulder to shoulder. Cadets Hailey Pitches, Danielle Reynolds and Kamrayn Schultz all shot their personal best and team high scores.

Nease's orienteering team also qualified for regionals in October by placing sixth and seventh in Brunswick, Georgia's hosted sanctioned meet. Cadet NS3 Diann Taylor completed the hardest course finishing second place, which

was a personal best for her on that level course.

This year is shaping up to be another prolific year for Nease's NJROTC team with lots of exciting meets and events coming up throughout this school year. Nease also welcomed their newest member of the team with CWO3 Michael Donato joining as the new senior naval science instructor in October.



Contributed photos

Cadet Mathew Sletto holds his third-place trophy for orange during the orienteering meet.

Nease is hosting a sanctioned drill meet Saturday, Dec. 17, at Nease High School; it is open to the general public. For more details, e-mail CWO3 Donato at michael.donato@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

DEATH NOTICES

Donald Hart

Donald Hart, 84, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 21, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Edward Kurkjian, Jr.

Edward Kurkjian, Jr., 84, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 20, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Raymond McKibben

Raymond McKibben, 55, of St. Augustine, Florida, died Nov. 25, 2022. Ponte

Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Mariana Moya

Mariana Moya, 73, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Nov. 20, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Francis Pavao

Francis Pavao, 92, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 15, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Thomas Peterson

Thomas Peterson, 79, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Nov. 23, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Myra Schwebel

Myra Schwebel, 77, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Nov. 22, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Vincent Paul Sinaly

Vincent Paul Sinaly, 69, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 26, 2022. Ar-

rangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Richard Studer

Richard Studer, 74, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 17, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Gail D. Worth

Gail D. Worth, 86, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 26, 2022. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Sophisticated new restaurant debuts in historic Avondale

Josh Floyd, a restaurant industry veteran with more than 15 years' experience in the business, opened Josephine, his first restaurant concept in the heart of historic Avondale on Wednesday, Nov. 30.

Named after his paternal grandmother, Josephine is a vision born from fond family memories, inspiring travels and countless conversations. Floyd will bring big, bold new life into the former space of Barrique Kitchen & Wine Bar, located in The Shoppes of Avondale at 3563 St. Johns Ave.

For this project, Floyd took a hands-on approach and designed the restaurant himself along with his partner, Nicole

Prieto.

The duo consulted with Fitz Pullins, a local interior designer and owner of The Inventory Room, to cultivate a special ambiance for each dining room through unique color palettes and one-of-a-kind pieces that are featured throughout the space.

The Opus Group, a Jacksonville-based design build contractor, shared their expertise by managing the restaurant buildout and overseeing the project from start to finish.

The 5,200-square-foot venue will offer seating for 100 guests, including



Contributed photo

The inspiration for the new restaurant is Josh Floyd's grandmother, named Josephine.

RESTAURANT continues on Page 46

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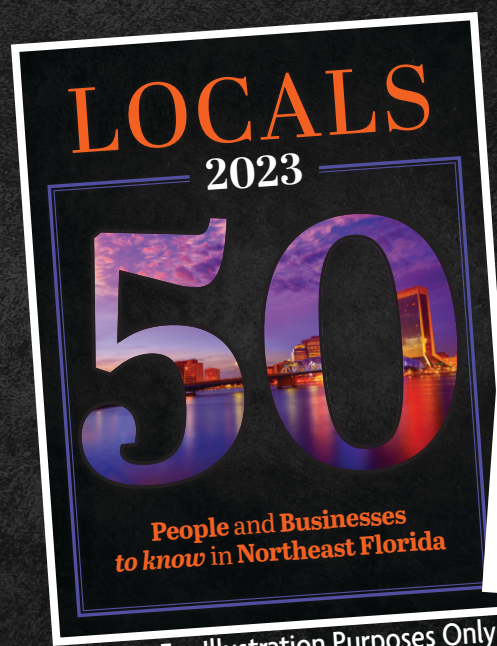
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Sample Page

91% of people buy or use services from people they know and have heard of. Let people get to know you and your business.

Benchmarks of Success

A look at major career changes in the area



Michael A. Mayo

Mayo named one of the most influential Florida business leaders

Florida Trend's fifth annual edition of Florida 500 has named Michael A. Mayo, president and chief executive officer of Baptist Health, one of Florida's most influential business leaders across major industries.

Mayo, one of only 25 professionals in the "Life Sciences" category to receive the honor in 2022, was selected based on multiple interviews and months of research.

In addition to Florida Trend's executive editorial team, a variety of outside sources were used to produce the highly selective list of individuals who are moving Florida forward. According to Florida Trend, the publication looks for individuals "whom others in their communities or industry sectors turn to for leadership. A lengthy track record matters."

Mayo, who has more than 33 years of health care executive experience, leads a team of more than 13,000 team members and more than 2,000 medical staff members in the delivery of high-quality, coordinated care for every stage of life.



Chris Howard

Swisher promotes Chris Howard to executive vice president post

Swisher has announced the promotion of Chris Howard to executive vice president, external affairs and new product compliance. Howard succeeds Joe Augustus, who recently announced his retirement after more than 33 years with the company.

Howard previously held the role of senior vice president, general counsel and chief compliance officer at E-Alternative Solutions (EAS), a Swisher

company. Over the past six years, he has played a leading role in advancing several EAS and Swisher initiatives and regulatory compliance programs, including for Leap and Rogue tobacco products as well as novel CBD products.

In his new role on the executive leadership team, Howard will accelerate Swisher's external affairs strategic objectives and mold a new section providing regulatory approval and compliance support for new product development.

Howard has a long history in external and regulatory affairs, having previously served as general counsel for Fontem Ventures (blu), associate general counsel for Lorillard Tobacco Company and several in-house counsel positions with Syngenta.



Kim Reid

Reid joins real estate branch office

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty has welcomed Kim Reid to the Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office.

Reid worked for three different branches within the Department of Defense over 28 years. She has lived all over the world and has extensive

experience buying and selling her personal homes, giving her a unique insight into the world of real estate.

She has two Master's degrees and is looking forward to using her leadership, finance, organization and communication skills to assist her clients in their real estate journey.

For more information, she can be reached at 703-678-5106, Kim.Reid@FloridaNetworkRealty.com and KReid.FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

Pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon joins Wolfson Children's staff

Wolfson Children's Hospital and the C. Herman and Mary Virginia Terry Heart Institute continue to expand children's heart services following the opening Wolfson Children's ninth outpatient cardiology location earlier this year with the addition of pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon M. "Ali" Mumtaz, MD.

Mumtaz, who also serves as an associate professor

of cardiac surgery at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, specializes in pediatric and congenital surgery. He is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and double board-certified in adult and congenital heart surgery by the American Board of Thoracic Surgery.



M. "Ali" Mumtaz MD

Prior to joining the Terry Heart Institute and the Wolfson Children's Hospital medical staff in June 2022, Mumtaz served as head of cardiac surgery at the Tahir Heart Institute in Rabwah, Pakistan, from 2018 to 2021. He previously served as associate surgeon-in-chief and as section chief of Pediatric Cardiac Surgery/Rowena C. Gorman Endowed Chair in Pediatric Cardiac Surgery at Children's Hospital of San Antonio in Texas.

He served as an associate professor for Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, as well.

Prior to joining Children's Hospital of San Antonio, he was surgical director of the Pediatric Heart Transplant Program at Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital.

Mumtaz received medical degree from King Edward Medical University in Lahore, Pakistan. He completed general surgery residency at University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, Connecticut, and the cardiothoracic surgery residency at St. Luke's Hospital Mid America Heart Institute in Kansas City, Missouri. He received training in congenital heart surgery under Dr. Roger Mee at Cleveland Clinic.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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New pediatric cardiac technology, procedure at Wolfson helps smallest patients

Born 17 weeks premature on March 29, Jaden Stewart has spent the first five months of his life in neonatal intensive care. Thanks to a tiny new technology and procedure recently introduced at Wolfson Children's Hospital, Jaden is now home with his family.

Soon after birth, Jaden, who weighed less than two pounds, was diagnosed with patent ductus arteriosus (or PDA), a potentially life-threatening opening between the two major blood vessels leading from the heart.

"The lungs tend to be fairly fragile in premature babies and that extra blood flow that goes into the lungs through that PDA can cause a lot of issues," said Robert English MD, a pediatric interventional cardiologist who practices at the C. Herman and Mary Virginia Terry Heart Institute at Wolfson Children's Hospital. "They require support to be able to ventilate and oxygenate, and that extra blood flow may cause prolongation of the need for support. That support can be damaging to the lungs over time."

While required in fetal life, the vessel opening typically closes on its own within a few days after birth, but that's



not always the case, especially in premature babies.

"The opening was always of moderate size, but it never got any smaller," said Jaden's mom, Tiffany Stewart.

In mid-June, Jaden was transferred to the Wolfson Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Center from another area hospital. Two weeks later, he underwent a non-surgical procedure to close the PDA using the Amplatzer Piccolo Occluder, which is so small it fits on the

face of a dime.

Wolfson Children's is the only hospital in Northeast Florida to offer this procedure.

"For a long time, we have been able to close these vessels in older and bigger infants and children because the devices used to close them are of a certain size, but they're too big for the premature babies," said English, who performed the procedure. "This tiny device is the first technology that allows us to close a PDA

in premature infants."

English is specially trained to implant this technology in babies weighing as little as two pounds through a cardiac catheterization procedure in which the wire mesh device is guided through the vessels to close the opening.

Previously, the only other option to close a PDA in infants was surgery.

"Heart surgery is more invasive and involves an incision between the ribs," said English. "The children usually recover well following the surgical procedure, but there are some risks associated so we prefer a non-surgical procedure to close the PDA when possible."

The smallest child to date to have a PDA closed at Wolfson Children's, Jaden was less than five pounds at the time of the procedure. Stewart said she noticed a positive change in Jaden just hours after the procedure was completed.

Within a couple of days, Jaden was taken off the ventilator and put on low-flow oxygen support.

In late August, Jaden was removed from all oxygen support, breathing on his own and ready to join his dad Justin and sisters at home.

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In the Arts

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EMMA holiday pops concert is Dec. 14

EMMA Concert Association will present the annual holiday pops concert with The Gainesville Orchestra at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 14 in Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., downtown St. Augustine. Tickets are available at emmaconcerts.com.

The Gainesville Orchestra, celebrating 40 years as one of the region's leading orchestras, will brighten the holiday season with orchestral fireworks, spread good cheer with special guest artists and warm hearts with Maestro Evans Haile at the piano in some romantic keyboard favorites.

In addition to holiday favorites, the orchestra will perform music from "Beauty and the Beast," "Sleeping Beauty," Johann Strauss, George Gershwin and more.

Tickets include free parking at the St. Johns County Council on Aging, with a complimentary shuttle to and from the venue during Nights of Lights.



Contributed photo

The Gainesville Orchestra will perform Dec. 14 for the EMMA Concert Association's annual holiday pops concert.

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A roundup of musical acts appearing before Jan. 2 at local venues

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For further information about each act, go to pvconcerthall.com/events.

- **Rome & Duddy** — The Winter Moon Tour — 7 p.m. Dec. 1
- **The Wood Brothers** — With special guest Rainbow Girls. 8 p.m. Dec. 6
- **Ana Popovic** — 7 p.m. Dec. 7
- **UNF Choral Ensembles: Carols and Messiah Favorites** — 7 p.m. Dec. 9
- **The Fab Four** — The Ultimate Tribute — 8 p.m. Dec. 10

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Tickets may also be purchased at ticketmaster.com.
For further information about each act, go to theamp.com/events.

- **The Outlaws — Greengrass and Yuletide Jam** — With Pat Travers. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 11
- **Mindi Abair "I Can't Wait for Christmas"** — With special guests Vincent Ingala, Adam Hawley and Lindsey Webster. 8 p.m. Dec. 14
- **Apex Theatre Studios Presents "Eb Scrooge: A Southern Fried Carol"** — Dec. 16-18



Image from The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall
Apex Theatre Studios will present "Eb Scrooge: A Southern Fried Carol" on Dec. 16-18 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

Cultural Council announces art grant recipients

The St. Johns Cultural Council has awarded this year's recipients of the Fall 2022 State of the Arts (SOTA) Grants. The grants, presented annually, are available through funds raised by the sale of "State of the Arts" specialty license plates, which have provided more than \$140,000 of support to arts organizations and individual artists in St. Johns County.

Awardees include Compassionate St. Augustine with SOTA funds to provide a stipend for instructors providing "Drumming Away Sound and Sensory Sensitivity" for exceptional students at

four Title 1 elementary schools in St. Johns County.

The Lincolnville Historical Preservation and Restoration Society grant will fund performance artists fees and other costs for the Lincolnville Festival.

Funding was also presented to Rubi-Music which will present a Christmas concert with musical arrangements by composers Handel, Bach, Rutter and other traditional holiday carols performed by young soloists.

Sebastian Middle School received SOTA grant funds to purchase materials for a roving wool soft sculpture

project to be produced by art students.

Additionally, The Dance Company funding will provide instructor fees for dance and movement therapy classes at assisted living facilities and centers for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

And Timberlin Creek Elementary School received a grant to cover material costs including clay, tool kits for students, and glaze materials to reintroduce ceramics into art classrooms.

"St. Johns Cultural Council congratulates all of the fall 2022 grantees," said Christina Parrish Stone, the

Cultural Council's executive director. "We are thankful for the hard-working SOTA grant panel, and for every individual who purchases a State of the Arts license plate to support this important initiative. The grant process is competitive and not every application received funding. Recipients are truly deserving of the funds to enhance and continue programs and services offered by local nonprofit organizations."

Grantees will be recognized at a public holiday open house from 5 to 7 p.m. Dec. 15 at The Waterworks, 184 San Marco Ave. in St. Augustine.

'Holiday Hallelujah' represents decades of SAHS choir performances

In partnership with Limelight Theatre, musical director Jeff Dodd has assembled a chorus of approximately 100 singers who performed in his choirs during his 35-year tenure as a performing arts educator at St. Augustine High School.

Dodd will lead his past students, who are returning from near and far, in an inspiring concert of traditional, nostalgic and festive music that is sure to be a highlight of the holiday season.

Staged in the Flagler College Lewis Auditorium in downtown St. Augustine, a large holiday-themed concert is a first for St. Augustine's premier community theater, said Limelight Theatre Executive Director Sherrie Provence.

"This is a new venture for Limelight," said Provence, "to host a concert as part of our 31st season, but it may very well become a holiday tradition."

Dodd recently stepped into the role of musical director at Limelight Theatre, an alliance which Provence calls "a match made in heaven."

Dodd distinguished himself in the St. Augustine community as the director of St. Augustine High School's chorus program in 1986 and the director of St. Johns County Center for the Arts at SAHS, a program for performing and visual arts.

"It was actually Beth Lambert who initially proposed the idea of offering a choral concert for the holiday season," Dodd explains.

Lambert, who recently retired as Lime-

light Theatre's executive director, was a SJCCA parent, and she recalled how powerful and moving Dodd's choral concerts were at the high school and thought that a program for the holidays would be a great fit for Limelight's season.

Joining Dodd as assistant musical director of the concert is Elizabeth Beaton, a veteran choral conductor and private voice instructor. The SAHS Singers, as they are now known, rehearse on Monday nights at Limelight Theater and virtually through a live private Facebook group for members who study and work out of town.

"Holiday Hallelujah" will feature music from Dodd's 35-year career at SAHS, including two songs from Walt Disney World's Candlelight Processional — a popular invitational event featuring a mass choir, 50-piece orchestra and celebrity narrator, which Dodd's student singers participated in every holiday season.

On Nov. 14, the singers had a pleasant surprise as Derric Johnson, founder and 30-year director of the Voices of Liberty at Epcot Center and creator of Disney's Candlelight Processional, showed up to lead the rehearsal.

"It was such a treat to reconnect with you after all these years," he said to the singers. "The choir is truly wonderful, and the musical energy they produce is magnificent!"

Johnson regaled the group with his recounting of the history of the Candle-

light Processional, including memories of Walt Disney himself and of his role working with the creative team who helped bring the event to fruition and a tradition that continues to this day.

Chorus member Leslie Banta remarked, "This was such an awesome experience again after so many years!"

Kathleen Doll said, "Such a special experience to join in the livestream tonight!"

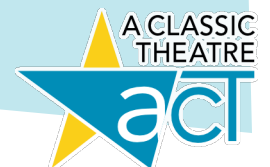
After the "Holiday Hallelujah" pre-

miere, the SAHS Singers will continue making magic together, as they have been invited to perform at the Vatican in June 2023.

"Holiday Hallelujah" is on stage at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4, at the Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College. Tickets are \$28 and available through Limelight Theatre's website and box office: limelight-theatre.org or call 904-825-1164.



The Waterworks is available through the generous support of the City of St. Augustine and the St. Johns Cultural Council



Registration opens for First Coast Cultural Center winter art camps, classes

Photos courtesy of First Coast Cultural Center



First Coast Cultural Center is launching its winter camp season with new programs to support the nonprofit. For more information and to register, contact Toni Thomas, programs manager at 904-280-0614 ext. 1206 or email tthomas@firstcoastculturalcenter.org. The website is firstcoastculturalcenter.org.

In addition to the Jacksonville Beach location at 3972 3rd St. South, the Cultur-

al Center will hold classes at in Nocatee at Care Connect+, located inside the Flagler Health+ Village at 351 Town Center Plaza, Suite 205 in Ponte Vedra.

The following activities will be held at the Jacksonville Beach location including winter break camps. Activities held at Care Connect+ include youth drama and improv classes.

Winter camps are available for children

in grades kindergarten through fifth grade and are designed to keep children active and having fun during the school break. Each week of camp will explore different artistic mediums including watercolors, acrylic paint and pastels, plus energy-burning games, musical activities and stories.

• On Dec. 22-23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., classes will include Polar Express camp

for kindergarten through fifth grade artists.

• On Dec. 26-30, Winter Wonderland camp will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for kindergarten through fifth grade students.

• The Winter Ice camp will be held Jan. 2-4 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to include daily themed activities and movement for young artists.

Late animator's work to be featured at gallery

The Beatles, Scooby Doo, Smurfs, Rugrats, Jetsons, Flintstones and more are featured in artwork on display at Gallery 725 from Dec. 2 to 10. The works are all based on the 50-year career of the late animator Ron Campbell.

Ron Campbell literally animated the childhood of many. Beginning in 1958 in his native Australia with cartoons like Popeye, Beetle Bailey and Krazy Kat, Campbell's career spanned the entire golden age of Saturday morning cartoons.

He died in January 2021 at the age of 81, but he left behind dozens of paintings that he created during his retirement. These paintings were inspired by many of the cartoons he was involved with.

Campbell's animation paintings will be on display and available for purchase at a special pop-up art exhibit for one week only.

Gallery 725 is located at 13475 Atlantic Blvd, Ste 6, Jacksonville.

In 1964, while still in Australia, Campbell was awakened by a phone call from King Features' producer Al Brodax who said that they had just sold a new show and he would like him to direct it. When Campbell asked the name of the show, Brodax responded, "The Beatles."

Campbell responded, "That's great, but insects make terrible characters for kids cartoons."

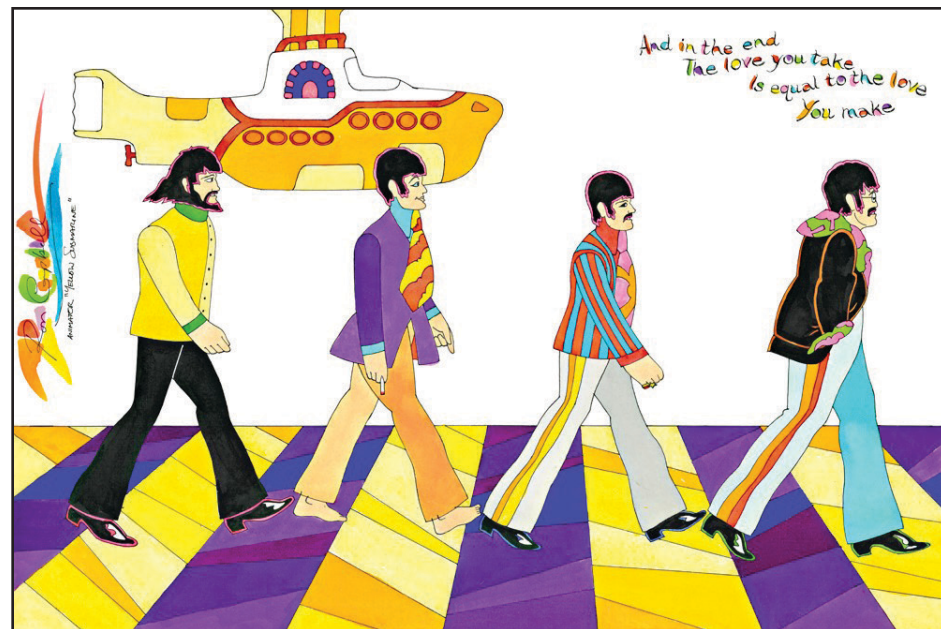
Campbell soon learned a lot about



Ron Campbell's depiction of the Jetsons' "car."

the Fab Four, directing over half of the episodes that debuted on ABC-TV on Sept. 25, 1965. It continually fueled new music to the young kids of America as they followed the bouncing drumstick to each Beatles tune. The Saturday Morning Beatles Cartoon series received monstrous ratings in its time slot. Campbell also wrote the forward to the definitive book on the Beatles cartoon series, "Beatletoons."

After moving to America, Campbell was once again approached by Brodax to help in the animating of the Beatles feature length animated film "Yellow Submarine." Campbell went on to animate many scenes including the Sea of Time sequence, and much of the action between the Chief Blue Meanie and his sidekick Max as well as the Nowhere Man character.



Ron Campbell's art showing the Beatles.

Through his studio, Ron Campbell Films Inc., Campbell was also involved with some of the most beloved cartoons spanning three generations, including Scooby Doo, Winnie the Pooh, Krazy Kat, George of the Jungle, The Jetsons, The Flintstones, the Smurfs, Goof Troop, Sesame Street, Captain Caveman, Rugrats, Ed, Edd n' Eddy, Yogi Bear and dozens more.

His show "The Big Blue Marble" won many awards, including a Peabody for

Excellence in Broadcasting and an Emmy for Best Children's Show of the Year.

After retiring from a 50-year career, Campbell began painting subjects based on the animated cartoons he helped bring to the screen. With emphasis on The Beatles, his cartoon pop art has been featured in galleries worldwide.

More information on Ron Campbell can be found at www.BeatlesCartoon-ArtShow.com.

Contributed photos

Sports



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Sharks prepare for boys soccer battle against Panthers Dec. 7

By Anthony Richards

Ponte Vedra and Nease High Schools will face-off in their annual boys soccer tilt Dec. 7 at 7:20 p.m. with the Sharks hosting the contest.

The Sharks will enter the game with the advantage in games played, as it will be their seventh matchup of the season, compared to the fourth for the Panthers.

Those three extra games could help the Sharks as coaches usually learn a lot about their present squads during the opening phase of the season, as players settle into new roles and increased playing time from the year before.

There are a pair of seniors who have been quick to lead the way for the Sharks in the early going, in the form of seniors Will Sheehan and Mark Romano.

Sheehan is averaging five saves per game and has returned for his senior year to give the Sharks a steady presence in goal.

Romano on the other hand, leads the team with a pair of goals per game.

He has teamed up with fellow senior Andres Villasana and junior Robert



File photo

SOCCER continues on Page 45

Senior Will Sheehan will be the starting goalkeeper for Ponte Vedra High School when it hosts Nease High in the rivalry showdown Dec. 7.

Thanksgiving high school basketball recap

By Anthony Richards

There are many Thanksgiving traditions people took part in during the holiday this year, including the playing of holiday basketball tournaments.

The Nease boys basketball team earned a convincing 54-38 victory over Ed White High School during the annual Thanksgiving Classic hosted by Jackson High School Nov. 25.

The Panthers were able to maintain that momentum and defeat Bishop Kenny 47-42 to win its home opener and improve to a record of 3-0.

For both the Ponte Vedra and Nease High girls basketball teams, they took part and found success in the Insider Exposure Thanksgiving Classic Tournament at Bolles and San Jose Prep.

It turned out to be close, back and forth contests with both teams showing what it takes to make the plays down the stretch and secure the win.

The Sharks defeated a pair of teams that made the trip from Georgia, standing tall with a late defensive stand to defeat Valor Christian out of Alpharetta, Georgia, 52-50 in overtime, and then follow-

ing it up the next day with a 49-36 win over Valdosta to improve to 3-1.

The tournament marked the start of the season for the Panthers, who picked up where they left off with last year's run to the state semifinals by narrowly defeating Lakeland Lake Gibson 46-44 and Apalachee High of Winder, Georgia in consecutive days.

Starting the season on the right foot is big for any team, because the early going usually involves its share of growing pains along the way, so if you can win while developing as a team, it is the best

of both worlds.

The Ponte Vedra boys basketball squad was the only local team to not take part in a Thanksgiving tournament of some kind, but they still managed to follow suit with the other teams and open up the season on a hot streak, winning their first two contests out of the gate.

The Sharks earned an impressive 65-61 win on the road against what is expected to be a quality Paxon team Nov. 22 and then demonstrated their skill in front of the home fans with an 87-63 win against Menendez Nov. 29.



Photos by Anthony Richards

The link in Nocatee was packed with soccer fans from throughout the community during JAXUSL's U.S. vs. Wales watch party Nov. 21.

JAXUSL watch parties offer connection with community

By Anthony Richards

Even though JAXUSL does not have a scheduled start date to playing games until 2025, they are already doing their part to create buzz within the local community.

The organization which will bring both professional men's and women's soccer back to the area hosted an initiative where they partnered with local businesses to host a watch party for each of

the three group stage games the United States played in the World Cup.

The first of these was held at the link in Nocatee and was the only of the three to be held in St. Johns County.

Not only was it the opening event of the initiative, but it was also different in other ways, starting with the space, which presented more of a theater style atmosphere when watching the game, as opposed to the other two events that were held at traditional restaurants and bars.

According to Livingstone, the first watch party was also geared more with the local business community in mind, leading to a special event at a special place to watch the U.S. opener at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"The timing of everything has been great," founding owner and managing director Steve Livingstone said. "Obviously, we announced the franchise back in August, and then one of the nice things about it being a World Cup year is that

you can do nice events like this."

Not only is JAXUSL doing its part to be present among the community, but it is also encouraging feedback from residents when it comes to ideas for a team name and team colors.

Fans can give their suggestions by going to jaxusl.com.

Talks are also underway to find a site and work out and agreement for a sta-

JAXUSL continues on Page 45



Grag and Katie Rider.



Vito Rinaldi and Garrett Gainer.

Soccer

Continued from 43

Hitchcock as a dangerous trio that opponents must account for.

The Panthers will look to counter that veteran presence with some of its own in the form of senior midfielder and

captain Brogan Donnelly.

Donnelly patrols the midfield along with junior Ryan Chacon, who together present opportunities for maintained possession and scoring chances.

Junior Evan Miriello starts at goalkeeper for the Panthers, and just like Sheehan, has a shutout to his name already this season.

The Panthers lost at home to the Sharks, 3-1 a year ago, and the players that were around for that loss will be looking to get some revenge with a win of their own this time around.

One of those will be junior Austin Mills, who scored the Panthers' goal in last season's match against the Sharks.

The soccer field is just the lasting

meeting between the two rival schools.

With a win, the Sharks would secure sweeping the soccer series in 2022, as the girls soccer team defeated the Panthers 3-1 to open the season Nov. 8.

The boys' squad will look to do their part as well on the same field one month later.



Nate and Scott Pekarchik.

JAXUSL

Continued from 44

dium the team can call home. St. Johns County is part of those stadium discussions.

“As we continue the development and morph into where we’re going to have a stadium, we thought it was important to have one of the events down here in St. Johns County,” Livingstone said. “We’ve been talking to St. Johns County for years now, and they’ve been very supportive of what we’re trying to do, and that’s really exciting. We want to be representative of everyone on the First Coast.”

The other watch party sites included Culhane’s Irish Pub and Intuition Ale Works Bier Hall, both in Jacksonville.

“We’re trying to really introduce ourselves and get to know the community,” Livingstone said. “It’s all about building that supporter base and earning the trust of the community. For this thing to work and for it to be sustainable, it’s going to take a village.”

Even though it has only been months since the plan was announced and made official, it had been something that had been discussed as an idea for years, so for it to come even this far has been quite the journey and Livingstone is excited for what lies ahead.

“As we continue, we’ll be making a whole series of announcements, and next up will likely be the stadium and the facility and then hopefully sometime early next year (2024) we can reveal the brand,” Livingstone said. “From there, we’ll be off to the races.”



Tony Allegretti, founding owner and managing director of JAXUSL speaks on stage during the watch party at the link at halftime of the U.S. vs. Wales matchup.



Joe, Alayna and Ray Lutes.



Michael and Danny Jimenez.

CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1. Single Lens Reflex
4. People of southern Benin
7. One who is learned (abbr.)
10. Neckwear
11. Solid water
12. A way to work the soil
13. Inspiring
15. Pick up
16. It wakes you up
19. Parcel
21. Popular dog breed
23. Lets out a sigh
24. Embedded into the surface
25. Hard liquors
26. One from Scotland
27. Satisfy
30. Used to introduce a contrasting statement
34. Antidepressant drug type (abbr.)
35. Similar
36. Winged horse
41. Soft drink maker
45. One who doesn't live up to expectations
46. Nursemaid
47. Inheritor
50. Hot, often dusty wind
54. Serves as an introduction
55. Earned top billing
56. Mansion
57. A partner to a carrot
59. War-horse
60. Midway between northeast and east
61. It checks the heartbeat
62. Aquatic salamander
63. CNN's founder
64. Being precisely suitable and right
65. Strongly alkaline solution

2. A system of connections
3. Emblems of royalty
4. Work with a soft hand
5. Plant cultivated in Peru
6. A timid man
7. Lacking intellectual depth
8. A way to order
9. Intoxicating
13. Mimic
14. Surfers use it
17. Small Eurasian deer
18. Popular Miller beer
20. Finds out about
22. Unusual
27. Small European viper
28. Indicates before
29. Birth swine
31. 7
32. Useful keyboard key
33. Letter of the Greek alphabet
37. Edible mollusk
38. Stitched up
39. Utilized
40. ___ in tradition
41. A way to get through
42. Let off
43. Fashionable source of shade
44. In due time
47. Printing speed
48. A major division of geological time
49. Nocturnal, cat-like mammal
51. ___ de la ___
52. After B
53. Unusual
58. Former money of the EU

SUDOKU

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	5		4			6		
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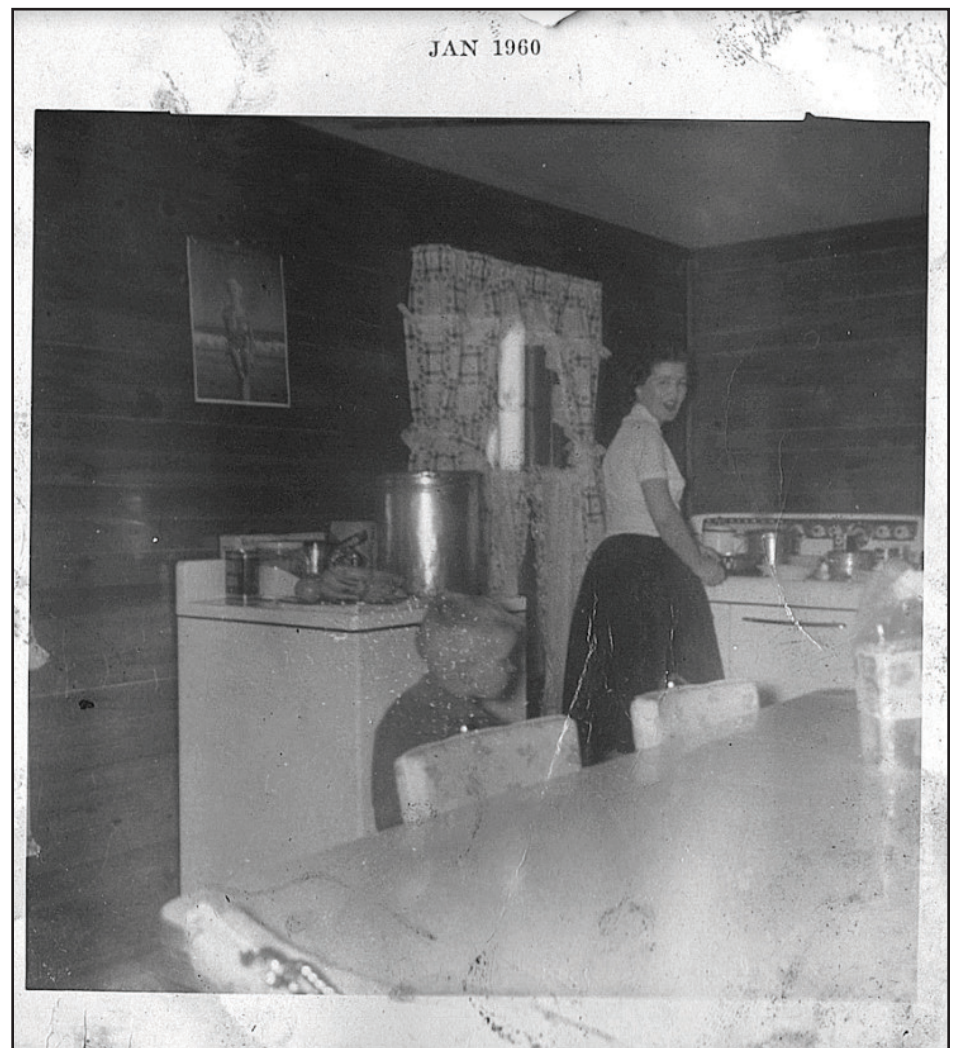
Level: Intermediate

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!

DOWN

1. Pinochle trick



Contributed photo

The inspiration for the new restaurant is Josh Floyd's grandmother, named Josephine.

Restaurant

Continued from 37

four different spaces: the main dining room, bar, lounge and private dining room.

The art and design elements showcased throughout Josephine are created by local artists and makers that lend to Josephine's polished, yet hand-finished feel and natural femininity. Statement pieces such as bespoke Italian Murano glass chandeliers and vintage Parisian streetlamps, can be seen throughout the restaurant, lending to the elevated aesthetic and warm atmosphere.

Through a deliberate and collaborative process, Natalie Soud Studio, created Josephine's brand identity, including the logo and other visual elements, like an illustration of Floyd's grandmother that you see digitally on Josephine's website and social media channels, as well as in person through printed marketing collateral.

"I've been fortunate to travel to some incredible places and have always been inspired by my culinary experiences along the way," said Floyd. "When I decided to pursue my dream of opening a restaurant, my main goal was to bring elevated hospitality in a space that piques all five senses. I think we've accomplished this with Josephine, and it's an honor to be able to share our vision and first-ever restaurant concept with the Jacksonville community."

At Josephine, customers can expect

best-in-class dining, with the front of house and back of house working in tandem to welcome guests and provide impeccable food, drinks and service.

Executive Chef Zach Preece and Chef de Cuisine John Magsino have created an Italian-American menu centered around handmade pastas and seasonal, local ingredients with a zero-waste approach to cooking.

The dessert and bread program will be executed with the assistance of Nickey Boyd, Josephine's pastry chef. To complement the food menu, beverage director Shannon Michelle has created a cocktail menu dedicated to the Italian art of drinking, including a spritz and negroni section.

Josephine will also offer a curated assortment of Old and New World wines, craft beer and inventive zero-proof options.

Emily Scott brings her talent to the Josephine team, serving as general manager, and spearheading the restaurant's events and catering program.

As with any neighborhood restaurant, Josephine will be open seven days a week, offering dinner from 5 to 10 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 5 to 9 p.m. Sunday, daily Aperitivo Hour from 3 to 6 p.m. and late night menu offerings on Friday and Saturday from 10 p.m. to midnight.

Private dining and catering will be a focus for Josephine's team and in the weeks to come, weekend brunch and lunch will be launched.



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