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Volume 54, No. 17
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The Register
INSIDE



Will Tiger Play?
Page 9



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



Photo courtesy of SwimFun

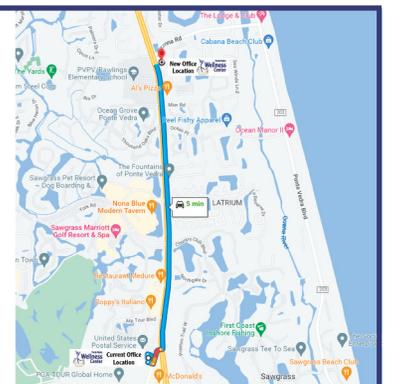
Children play a virtual reality game at SwimFun, which offers a unique approach of combining a modernized survival aquatics and swim academy with STEM-based activities. Read the full story in the Kids Springin' for Fun section starting on page 13.

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Send us your news

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



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

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

BRIEFS

'Gogh With Full Bellies' hosted by Van Gogh exhibit

Now through Sunday, Feb. 26, families or groups can receive free admission for one party member to "Beyond Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience" in an effort to fight hunger locally.

To qualify, bring a bag of groceries to donate. Accepted items include nonperishable food and canned goods. All donations will go directly to Feeding Northeast Florida, the local arm of Feeding America. Donations must be unexpired in new, unopened packages. Nonperishable foods only. Suggested value is \$20, but there is no minimum monetary value for donation.

"Beyond Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience," produced by Paquin Entertainment Group, is in Jacksonville through April 16. This immersive experience features more than 300 of Vincent Van Gogh's iconic artworks and takes the art lover into a three-dimensional world that exhilarates the senses.

The party's paid ticket(s) must be purchased online in advance. Any paid ticket qualifies (including children's tickets). The donation admits one guest (adult or child) for free.

The exhibit is at NoCo Center, 712 N. Hogan St., Jacksonville. For more information, go to VanGogh-Jacksonville.com

Free showings of Jan. 6 documentary announced

A free showing of the Epoch Times documentary "The Real Story of Jan. 6" has been scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at Harvest Time Church of God, 4502 Old Middleburg Road, Jacksonville. For tickets, go to <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/nefloridaelectionteam/858316>.

A second showing is set for 2 p.m. March 18 at First United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 225 East Duval St., Jacksonville. For tickets go to <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/nefloridaelectionteam/858396#>.

This film is inappropriate for children, as it contains scenes of murder and violence. For further information, email bethheath@reagan.com.

Conquer the Trails 5K set for Feb. 25

The 6th annual Conquer the Trails 5K has been rescheduled to Saturday, Feb. 25. The event is open to the public. The road race starts at 9 a.m. in the TrailMark community in St. Johns County.

The race is professionally chip timed by Florida Race Day 5K. All participants get a race shirt (while supplies and sizes last.) All finishers get a 5K finishers medal. Awards will be given out to fastest male and female runners in eight following categories.

The charity partner is Fur Sisters – Furever Urs Rescue, a nonprofit organization that saves dogs

from overcrowded shelters and other urgent situations.

Entry fees for the race are \$30 for the first 50 to register, \$35 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under.

To register for the 5K, go to runsignup.com/Race/FL/SaintAugustine/ConquertheTrails5kRace.

It will be held at 805 TrailMark Drive, St. Augustine. TrailMark is located five miles west of the I-95/International Golf Parkway exit 323 on Pacetti Road.

Visit Jacksonville earns certified autism center designation

Visit Jacksonville is Florida's first destination management organization to earn the Certified Autism Center designation. This designation, granted by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards, recognizes organizations that have undergone staff training to better understand and meet the needs of autistic visitors and their families.

Visit Jacksonville president and CEO Michael Corrigan welcomed the designation, saying, "We're proud to be the first destination marketing organization in the state of Florida to achieve the Certified Autism Center status, but we're most proud to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all who visit Jacksonville."

Visit Jacksonville operates three visitor centers: Jacksonville International Airport, Downtown Jacksonville at 100 N. Laura St., and the Beaches Museum in Jacksonville Beach, and also deploys a mobile visitor center that travels to various events statewide.

Equestrian Center welcomes Special Olympics Florida

The Jacksonville Equestrian Center, a multi-purpose facility managed by Northeast Florida Equestrian Society/ H.O.R.S.E. Therapies Inc., a nonprofit organization offering adaptive equine therapy programs with therapy horses, is hosting Special Olympics Florida for Equestrian Sports on March 5 for the first time since the pandemic. The qualifier will include equitation, working rail, pole bending and barrel racing events.

The Special Olympics Florida's mission is to provide year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people with intellectual disabilities who wish to participate, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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Comments about county office sought

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller's Office of Inspector General is undergoing an assessment to receive accreditation by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA). A team of assessors from the CFA will conduct an on-site assessment on March 16 to review the Inspector General's Office policies, procedures, management, operations, and support services.

As part of the assessment, staff members and the public are invited

to offer comments about the Inspector General's Office to the assessment team by contacting:

Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, P.O. Box 1489, Tallahassee, Florida 32302. Email: flaccreditation@fdle.state.fl.us

A copy of the standards manual by which the Inspector General's Office will be assessed is available on the CFA website at www.flaccreditation.org.

The accreditation program manager for the office is St. Johns

County Inspector General Nilsa Arissa. According to Arissa, the assessment team is composed of assessors from similar agencies and will review written materials, interview individuals and visit offices and other areas to observe compliance.

Upon completion of the review by CFA assessors, the assessment team will report back to the commission, which will make the determination on granting accreditation. If approved, the accreditation is valid for three years.

DEATH NOTICES

Ronald Everett Brugger

Ronald Everett Brugger, 76, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died Feb. 18, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalle.com

Morris Busbia

Morris Busbia, 85, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died Feb. 16, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalle.com

Donald "Donnie" Gray

Donald "Donnie" Gray, 81, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Feb. 15, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalle.com

Mary Norton Hall

Mary Norton Hall, 97, of Neptune Beach, Florida, died Feb. 15, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

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Marsh Landing Country Club

Elegantly appointed 1-story ranch home with water to preserve views. Sought-after Marsh Landing Country Club. Fully equipped with open floorplan, the flow of the home is comfortable and easy. Spacious screened porch off of formal living room provides nice space for casual entertaining and perfect spot to watch the wildlife in the backyard lagoon sanctuary.

5 Bedrooms, 4 Bathrooms \$1,500,000



SOLD

Oceanfront Home on Ponte Vedra Blvd.

This oceanfront home on Ponte Vedra Blvd. with 110 ft. of ocean frontage sold for lot value only at \$10,500,000.



SOLD

Amazing Vistas in Deercreek Country Club

Spacious living with pool/spa and lake-to-preserve views in Deercreek CC, making it ideal for easy commutes. Owner's suite is located on 1st floor along with living room, dining room, kitchen, butler's pantry, powder room, family room and office. Upstairs are 3 additional and spacious bedrooms, 2 full baths plus a flex space/theatre room. Sellers have many updates including fully renovated kitchen and bathrooms. Don't miss this one!!

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Atlantic Beach to hold Weed Wrangle Feb. 25

By Anthony Richards

The City of Atlantic Beach will take part in the statewide initiative called Weed Wrangle with an event at Howell Park Feb. 25 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Howell Park is located at 810 Seminole Road and will be one of seven various locations throughout the First Coast that will host a Weed Wrangle.

The events are put on in conjunction with National Invasive Species Awareness Week, which strives to help organize volunteer efforts to help rescue public parks and green

spaces from invasive species through a hands-on removal process.

The focus will be on removing trees, vines and flowering plants that are not native to the area and therefore could be harmful to the local ecosystem.

Volunteers are asked to bring their own bottle of water and gloves if they have a pair.

One of the focuses at Howell Park will be searching the land for air potato vines, which according to the Florida Museum at the University of Florida, is native to



Asia, Sahara Africa and northern Australia, but have found a home over the years in Florida.

City officials in Atlantic Beach and across Florida are worried about potato vines, because as a non-native species, there is nothing native that eats it, which can result in it spreading to uncontrollable heights in their “new world.”

According to the Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants at the University of Florida, air potatoes have been listed as one of the most invasive species of plants in Florida since 1993 due to its ability to displace native species and disrupting natural processes, such as fire and water flow.

Air potato vines can grow very quickly and grow more than 70 feet in length, typically climbing to the top of trees and enveloping and smothering them with its vines.

The University of Florida recommends preventive measures such as cutting air potato vines that are high in trees and removing the bulbils (potato-looking things growing from the vines), as research has

shown that even small bulbils are how new plants take hold.

Homeowners are encouraged to plant native alternatives to air potatoes, such as Carolina Jessamine, Florida yam, purple passionflower and American wisteria.

The initiative will also mark another opportunity for Atlantic Beach residents to clean up their homes by collecting any litter seen while they look for the next potato vine.

The advocacy group “Friends of Howell Park” will be on hand to inform and sign up any new members from the community interested in joining.

For more information about the Weed Wrangle initiative at Howell Park or the Friends of Howell Park group, email site captain Gretchen Deters-Murray at gretchends@bellsouth.net.

A Weed Wrangle in St. Johns County will be at the Mary Street beach access in St. Augustine located at 5780 Gloria Ave.

Will Pate is the St. Augustine site captain and can be contacted at wpate@sjcfl.us.

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Prescribed fires are a useful tool in Florida's fight against wildfires

By Anthony Richards

Prescribed fires recently took place along Palm Valley Road in Ponte Vedra Beach, which may have led some who saw the smoke to question what was going on, as smoke can easily be a sign that something is wrong.

However, in that case it was completely under control and it will not be the last time these such prescribed fires will be taking place around the area, as it is a practice rooted in tradition for the state of Florida.

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture, prescribed fires are one of the most versatile and cost-effective approaches that land managers can use.

The use of prescribed fires as a forest management tool differs from state to state, but the Florida Forest Service oversees one of the most active prescribed fire programs in the country.

Years of having such an active program has resulted in the state having a regimented and tested approach plan when it comes to properly and safely executing a prescribed fire.

The first step of a prescribed fire is that burn managers try their best to find a natural firebreak, such as a creek, from which they begin a downwind "backfire" near.

Spot "headfires" ignited successively will eventually join at the backfire, which will have created a back line of area already burned.

Several precautions are in place in order to make sure a prescribed fire does not get out of hand, including having a line of crew members with shovels ensuring the burn is contained by shoveling dirt to eventually smother the flames.

A brush truck equipped with foam will also be parked nearby as a last line of defense to ensure the fire does not spread beyond the designated region.

Having layers of precautions in place before every prescribed burn is key to making



Photo by Anthony Richards

Prescribed fires help reduce the amount of natural "fuel" that grows along the floor of a forest and can be spreaders of wildfire if not maintained routinely.

sure that the fire does its ultimate job, which is to help prevent wildfires from occurring.

Prescribed fires reduce the risk of wildfires, by reducing the naturally occurring "fuels" within forest areas, such as the thick brush and debris that can grow along the forest floor, which can make a wildfire spread and become uncontrollable at a faster rate.

The U.S. Forest Service surveyed wildlife statistics on federal land in the South during the 1985 fire season and found that fires that occurred in areas that had not had prescribed fires accounted for 77% of the total acreage destroyed.

On the other hand, only 17% of the wildfires larger than 300 acres occurred in prescribed burned areas.

Prescribed fires also produce benefits for animals living in the forest, because those creatures are affected in a negative way and endangered during wildfires just as people nearby are.

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture, unlike a wildfire, prescribed fires is rarely lethal to most forms of wildlife.

Increased benefits following a prescribed fire include an increased yield of herbs and legumes and an opening for feeding and travel of wildlife.

Traffic light coming to Palm Valley/South Roscoe intersection

The structures for a pair of traffic lights have been placed where Palm Valley Road and South Roscoe Boulevard intersect at the base of the bridge going over the Intracoastal Waterway. An exact date of when the traffic lights will be operational is not known at this point.

Photos by Anthony Richards



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Billy Ryan grew up a baseball fan at heart and after spending years working in Major League Baseball in both scouting and administration for the league, Arizona Diamondbacks and Atlanta Braves, he now calls Ponte Vedra home. His experience in professional baseball taught him a lot about the business world, and he has found it easily translatable at his current job with real estate technology company Avenue One.

Billy Ryan

As told to Anthony Richards

Can you please briefly tell us about your background and where you are from?

I grew up outside of Boston and was always an athlete. It really became a big part of who I was growing up. It was a part of my identity.

I was fortunate to play college baseball at Davidson before starting a career in scouting.

I worked for the commissioner's office as an administrator in New York City where I got a unique balance of baseball and the business side of things.

I worked for the Diamondbacks and then moved to Atlanta to be part of the Braves organization right before our first child was going to be born. It was a great family move because my wife is from Atlanta.

What brought you to Ponte Vedra?

We got married in Ponte Vedra years ago and my wife came down here on vacation growing up.

After I got out of baseball, the lightbulb went off that we can pick where we live for the first time.

That's when I got the job at Avenue One, which is a real estate technology company that works with local small businesses in dozens of cities across the country.

Did your time in baseball help with your role at Avenue One?

As a kid you play sports because you love it, but it's the culture and values that keep you in it.

I didn't realize how much the leadership skills and teamwork from my days in baseball would so easily translate to the business world.

That teamwork and comradery is the type of culture and atmosphere we've instilled at Avenue One, and it is a really successful business model.

I always like to give the benefit of the doubt to former athletes during the hiring process because you can learn so much from playing sports. It teaches you how to be a teammate and have empathy for others.

I try not to lean on the sports analogies too much, but it's important to know when to shoot the ball and when to pass it.



Contributed photo

After years in professional baseball organizations, Billy Ryan calls Ponte Vedra home and has transformed that into his current job with Avenue One.

What are the most rewarding parts from working with Avenue One?

We've definitely grown a lot since we started.

There are a lot of parallels to startup companies and rebuilds that sports teams endure. The foundation of a company or team is what establishes success in the future, and I place a lot of value in that.

It takes a lot of people to form the continuity a company needs, and there's nothing like watching that take shape.

I remember watching the Braves win the World Series a couple of years ago

and knowing that I had a hand in helping that path to a title get started, and knowing that there talented roster was the result of years of planning and hard work.

I'm hoping to see the same for Avenue One, and I believe we have the pieces in place to make that happen. Our future is very bright.

What are some of your hobbies you enjoy?

I started a blog at nooneiswatching.com, which focuses on telling interesting

stories about how to go about living life to the best of our abilities and cultivating one's talent by understanding its all about the way we approach our lives in the moments when no one is watching.

I'm also a beach guy, so being near the water is like therapy for me. It's funny how when you grow up in Boston, it's the same ocean but it feels like it's totally different once you get down here and experience it.

My wife and I also recently had our third child, so that is something else that we have been really focused on.

PGA TOUR champion enjoys something greater than winning THE PLAYERS

Ponte Vedra Beach resident now spreading word of God

Clay Today

THE PLAYERS Championship, held each year at TPC Sawgrass' Stadium Course, has been won by some of the most recognized names in the golf world — Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and Ponte Vedra resident Mark McCumber.

This year, the 2023 PLAYERS Championship runs from March 7-12, and you may see McCumber — but he won't have a golf club in his hands. McCumber volunteers to share encouraging Bible messages when he is not designing golf courses or working as a sports commentator on SiriusXM.

"Winning THE PLAYERS Championship was extremely rewarding," said McCumber, "but nothing compares with the joy I feel when getting the opportunity

to share with others, as Jesus described it, the 'Good News of God's Kingdom.'"

McCumber won the prestigious tournament in 1988.

Suppose you dine at one of the many fine restaurants before or after the tournament. In that case, McCumber and other volunteer Jehovah's Witnesses may offer free Bible literature at portable carts around Sawgrass.

"I truly love the opportunity to share with others what I've learned from the Bible and how it has helped me in my life," said McCumber.

So, what does he do when someone recognizes him?

"I usually just smile and say, 'I guess you are a golfer, too!' It really just allows me to start a discussion with someone with whom I share a mutual interest," he said.

Jehovah's Witnesses, including McCumber, have recently resumed their public ministry due to the coronavirus pandemic and their concern for keeping everyone safe.

"We believe that the early decision to shut down all in-person activities for more



Contributed photo

These days, former PLAYERS winner Mark McCumber is spreading the Gospel.

than two years has saved many lives," said Robert Hendriks, U.S. spokesperson for Jehovah's Witnesses. "We're now ready and eager to reconnect with our neighbors once again — person-to-person, face-to-face. It's not the only way we preach, but it has historically been the most effective way to deliver our message of comfort and hope."

McCumber said the principles he learned from the Bible helped him in his personal life and playing golf.

"The Bible lists patience as a fruitage of God's spirit," he said. "To succeed as a professional golfer, you must exercise patience, take one shot at a time and handle the challenges presented. That is also true in our ministry."

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Nocatee Rotary heroes receive honor medals

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra (Nocatee) presented medals of honor for service during the past year to St. Johns County 2022 Firefighter of the Year Lt. Mike Pepper from Station 18 in Nocatee, and to St. Johns County Sheriff's Office 2022 Deputy of the Year Senior Deputy Nate Datsko.

The Second Annual Rotary Heroes Awards event was also presented by the Ponte Vedra Rotary Foundation, the club's charitable arm.

The awards were given in recognition of excellence in vocational service, which is Rotary's theme for January. In addition to the many Rotarians, family and friends of the honorees who attended the event at the Coastal Oaks Club House in Nocatee, Sheriff Robert Hardwick and his wife Kendell were in attendance, as was St. Johns County Fire Interim Chief R. Scott Bullard.

Members from the command staff of both agencies, fellow co-workers, and the 2021 Rotary Heroes also attended the celebration.

Pepper is a 20-year veteran of SJCFR. He has been a mentor to numerous firefighters throughout his stellar career.

When asked what inspired him to be a firefighter, he said: "To serve the community, and to foster long-term relationships with like-minded individuals."

Captain Shawn Vitori, who nominated him for the award, said, "Lt. Pepper puts absolutely 100% into everything that he does, and he does so to the highest standard."

Husband, father and soon-to-be grandfather, Pepper enjoys being with his family and going fishing in his free time.

Datsko has been a deputy with the St. Johns Sheriff's Office since 2000, but he has been in law enforcement for 32 years. He has received numerous awards for excellence throughout his career.

When asked what inspired him to go into law enforcement, he said, "Law enforcement chose me; I didn't choose it."

Datsko is a DUI enforcement deputy and a homicide reconstructionist, which



Contributed photo

Senior Deputy Nate Datsko, left, and Lt. Mike Pepper have received the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra's Rotary Heroes Awards.

is a highly specialized area of traffic homicide investigation.

SJSO Sergeant Scott Yeoman, who nominated Datsko for the award said, "He has always gone above and beyond the call of duty, and he has a genuine passion for protecting the citizens in St. Johns County."

When not on duty, Datsko can be found on a golf course or playing his drums. He is a husband, father and grandfather and mentor to many people.

Kelly Altosino-Sastre, Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra charter president and chair of the Rotary Heroes Awards committee, said, "These men who are exceptional first responders have demonstrated ser-

vice above self throughout their careers, and since this is Rotary's motto, it is fitting that they receive the Rotary Heroes Awards. These heroes demonstrate their dedication to the protection and the safety of the citizens of Nocatee and St. Johns County every day."

In addition to the Rotary International-sanctioned medals presented to them, a donation was made to Mastiff Rescue of Florida in honor of Pepper, and a donation was made to St. Jude Children's Hospital in honor of Datsko. These are charities close to their hearts.

Sponsors for the event included Nocatee businesses Publix Charities, Starbucks in Nocatee Town Center and Alex

Quijano, photographer of Art and Alex.

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra, chartered in April of 2018, is one of 67 Rotary Clubs in North Florida that comprise Rotary District 6970. The club meets on Tuesday mornings at 7:15 a.m. at Treylor Park Restaurant in Nocatee Town Center. The Ponte Vedra Rotary Foundation Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is the charitable arm of the club.

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbors, friends, leaders and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in communities, and in ourselves. For information, go to pontevedrarotary@gmail.com.

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File Photo

Will Tiger Woods play in this year's PLAYERS Championship?

Will Tiger Woods enter THE PLAYERS — If he does, how will we know?

By Kathy Bissell

How will any of us know if Tiger Woods decides to even think about entering THE PLAYERS? All we have to go on is last year, when he decided to play a practice round at Augusta National to see if he could manage that course for the Masters. It was a Tuesday, the week before the 2022 event.

Augusta National is very beautiful, but it is also a very hilly walk, and if he couldn't walk it, he couldn't play it. That, of course, is why he went.

Well, Tiger's arrival caused a social media blowout, a Golf Channel frenzy

as well as many Tiger headlines, to say the least. The way we found out about his practice round was fairly comical, really, a combination of tweets from Tiger Followers, Eureka Earth and people who know how to follow airplanes when they take off from an airport. Plus, there was someone at the airport in Augusta, where his plane landed, who provided video. You can't hide a plane, at least not easily.

Honestly, I don't know how people track planes. I can hardly find my car on Google maps between my house and Publix. And when I need it most, my Android Auto fails. Always happens. It will fail to load. It won't recognize my phone. It asks

for stuff I don't understand or can't do while I'm driving. Sorry, Google, but it's true. However, you have to trust me about people getting their planes tracked. There are specialists in this.

Now should I have an Apple phone? Well, I would have if there had been any available the last time I changed wireless companies. But there weren't and my existing phone was damaged. Enter Android

and now Android Auto. Enough of that. Back to tracking Tiger.

So, what happened first when Tiger went to Augusta was that Twitter nearly broke itself into a million pieces. Some enterprising person found that his plane had taken off from South Florida and landed in Augusta, Georgia, and tweeted

TIGER continues on Page 28

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Volunteers make teddy bears, blankets for children fighting cancer



Lap blankets made by volunteer Margie Clyma let children know that they are loved.

Over the past year, Jacqueline Reimann and her nine volunteers have been busy knitting and crocheting 24 teddy bears and seven lap blankets for the young cancer patients at Wolfson Children's Hospital.

The teddy bears average 18 inches in height and are very soft. Many have adorable designs on them. The young patients receive them while undergoing treatment and like to hug them. The teddy bears are a comfort to the children at a difficult and challenging time.

As a four-time cancer survivor, Reimann has a good idea what these children are going through.

This year's volunteers are: Teddy bear makers — Maria Hendricks, Kathleen Tuggle, Jean Watson, Jackie Harris, Deb Varley, Stephanie Benson, Laura Burke and



A local group of kind-hearted volunteers have made 24 teddy bears to be given to children at Wolfson Children's Hospital.

Janice Rogers. Margie Clyma made lap blankets.

"This might be a small donation, but every teddy bear makes a difference in a child's life," Reimann said. She encourages other people to also give, regardless of



Photos provided by Jacqueline Reimann

A teddy bear given to a child at a difficult time can be a great comfort.

the size of their donations.

"Giving is a wonderful thing," she said. "It makes you feel good and puts a smile on your face."

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Community Hospice Foundation names new board members

New members were recently elected to the Community Hospice Foundation Board of Directors.

The Community Hospice Foundation, which is governed by a separate board, generates philanthropic and community support for patient care services, family needs and community programs. The foundation is also the main source of funding for Community PedsCare, a nationally recognized pediatric palliative and hospice program that provides life-changing services to more than 235 patients and their families each day.

Community Hospice Foundation is dedicated to advancing philanthropy to enable Community Hospice & Palliative Care to fulfill its mission and vision.



Photo provided by the Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution

Pictured from left are: front row, Zack Hanburry, Liam Puzey, Kate Hurford, Ella Spencer-Gardner and Natalie Gavarrette; back row, Erika Carpenter, Lisa LaMonica, PVPV Rawlings Principal Jesse Gates, Regent Phyllis Baehrend, American History Chair Brandy Hibbard, Landrum Middle School Principal Guy Harris, Greg Arcuri.

American History Essay Contest winners named

The Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) named the winners of this year's American History Essay Contest at the Feb. 7 meeting.

Each winner was presented with a certificate and \$50 dollars. Students from grades five through eight were challenged to learn and write about the Second Continental Congress, which was instrumental in the founding of the United States. They were to imagine they were a delegate representing their colony, and to explain what they needed to accomplish for their colony and for the future of our country.

One essay from each grade was selected as the outstanding essay by the Ponte Vedra Chapter DAR and forwarded to the Florida State Society DAR for state level competition.

Zack Hanburry, fifth grader from PVPV Rawlings Elementary School, wrote as a delegate from North Carolina. From Landrum Middle School, Liam Puzey, sixth grade, represented Rhode Island; Kate Hurford, seventh grade, represented Pennsylvania; and Ella Spencer-Gardner, eighth grade, wrote her essay on behalf of the colony of Virginia.

The students read their essays to the Ponte Vedra Chapter DAR members, guests, families, teachers and principals at the meeting.

The National Society DAR selects the topic each year and the program is open to all students in grades five through eight, from all public, private, parochial and home schools. All essays must be received by a local chapter before being forwarded for state consideration.

Ponte Vedra Chapter received 288 essays this year. Florida has 112 active chapters. If your student or school would like to learn more about the American History Essay Program, contact the Chapter Regent at regent.darpontevedra@gmail.com for additional information.

The DAR is a non-political lineage service organization whose purpose is to promote historic preservation, education and patriotism. The Ponte Vedra Chapter is very active in the community, supporting numerous projects. It has a monthly social and a book club. The social is the third Tuesday each month at Pussers in Ponte Vedra Beach at 5:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

For more information about DAR and the Ponte Vedra Chapter, go to DAR.org or contact the Ponte Vedra Chapter Regent at regent.darpontevedra@gmail.com

History presentation delights crowd in Nocatee

More than 300 people crowded into the Nocatee Crosswater Hall on Feb. 2 to hear local historian and author Scott A. Grant deliver a presentation on the history of "Ponte Vedra, Palm Valley and Nocatee." The throng of residents and curious locals were ecstatic as they listened to the well-crafted presentation, even those forced to stand in the back and along the sides. They laughed, they exclaimed, and they smiled as Grant took them on a journey through 400-plus years of the unique history and culture in this area, from Ponce De Leon to Ernest Matthew Mickler.



Photo provided by Scott A. Grant

Local historian Scott A. Grant is seen at Nocatee Crosswater Hall where he entertained about 300 people with his presentation.



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

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Azaleas

"Flowers always make people better, happier and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul." — Luther Burbank

By Kathy Esfahani



The blooming of Azaleas marks the beginning of spring in the southern United States! These evergreen shrubs show off seasonal blossoms in reds, purples, pinks, and whites. Azaleas are widely recognized for the bountiful color lining the Augusta National golf course during The Masters tournament in April, but, in our north Florida home, we are lucky to enjoy these bright blooms beginning in February!

Azaleas are low maintenance shrubs that look beautiful planted individually or in groups. When planning azaleas for your landscape, look for areas with loose, well drained soil and a mix of sunlight and shade. Most Azaleas prefer morning sun and afternoon shade. Too much full sun can burn the plant's leaves, but too much shade can reduce the shrub's ability to grow and bloom. Azaleas are often found planted in wooded areas



Fashion Azalea

where they receive filtered sunlight, but they are also a great choice for foundational plants around a home or borders along a garden bed. Additionally, these shrubs are useful as a backdrop in a landscape because they are evergreen plants that produce early spring color!

Related to the larger Rhododendron, Azaleas are available in many varieties and sizes. They range from dwarf types that remain under 3 feet tall to larger plants that can grow to 20 feet in height. Here in northeast

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Flower of the Week



Azaleas

Florida's planting zone 9A, the most popular types of Azaleas are Encore, Fashion, Formosa, George Tanler, Gerbing, Red Ruffle, and Southern Charm.

Although some prefer Azaleas to be allowed to grow informally, light pruning after the blooming season can encourage more full development as the plant grows. If you choose to prune your Azaleas, be sure to do so quickly after the spring blooming ends.

Azaleas use the warm summer months to begin developing the buds that will be next year's blooms. Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Azalea

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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Photo by Anthony Richards

The pool at SwimFun is indoors and heated so that it is always at 90 degrees which according to Panfli is a comfortable temperature for babies.

SwimFun combines survival aquatics, STEM for game-changing model

By Anthony Richards

Bobby and Nicki Panfli opened SwimFun in November 2022 and in just a short amount of time they have begun to adapt the mindset surrounding swim safety.

Survival aquatics is the term coined by SwimFun to describe the type of approach they use when teaching infants and young children the life-saving techniques that could help save their lives when around water.

In almost about four months, SwimFun

is already up to 170 members and that number only continues to climb, especially as the warmer weather and “swim season” is just around the corner.

Panfili attributes the rapid growth and interest to the fact that they have a unique model that not only includes the swim academy and survival aquatics, but also an array of STEM-related activities outside of the pool.

“We really did this to give something back to the community, because my wife and I just felt that there was something

missing,” Bobby Panfli said. “A lot of people see this as a very unique swim school, but I set out from the beginning to reimagine the business and build my own brand. That is what I am passionate about.”

By involving gaming and STEM aspects to accompany the swimming, Panfli has been able to do just what he sought out to do by changing the way the world views swimming academies.

“I know that seems like kind of a quirky idea, but somebody just has to go

and originally do it,” Panfli said. “The original idea was to build a state-of-the-art swim school with gaming aspects so that kids had something to do while they were waiting for their siblings to finish their swim lessons before and after.”

As they looked into gaming, they realized the potential was there to do something very different and continue to add to the revolutionary model they had already created on the swim side of things.

“We felt that there was a very unique

SWIMFUN continues on Page 14



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Photo courtesy of SwimFun

SwimFun director of aquatics Paige Kirshner works with an infant as part of the survival aquatics program.

SwimFun

Continued from 13

way to socialize gaming without it just becoming a lot of screen time,” Panfili said. “We built a full-fledged gaming arena with over 20 TVs all with Xbox and Nintendo Switch consoles, as well as virtual reality rides. Taking something that would generally be construed as very introverted and making it more extroverted is something I’m very passionate about. It’s so great to see these kids come out of their shell.”

SwimFun’s mission is to end all child drownings through swimming education and doing so at an early age, especially with the amount of water the state of Florida has within its borders and surrounding it.

However, helping to make a safer world does not have to be at the expense of fun and that is the vibe the Panfili family has been able to successfully create at SwimFun.

“There are so many layers pertaining to what we set out to do,” Panfili said. “From a swim school perspective, we’ve really tried to reimagine and regulate the idea of survival aquatics for infants and then give them a progression model where they can continue to hone their skills beyond just surviving in the water,

instead of just having a six-week program and then being done.”

Babies can take part in a bridge program that takes them from survival aquatics to the swim academy instruction, which can be started as early as two years old and can go until they are 12 years old.

“We will be there for them every step of the way on their journey,” Panfili said.

The pool at SwimFun is indoors and heated so that it is always at 90 degrees which according to Panfili is a comfortable temperature for babies.

One of the great things that Panfili believes his model has is the ability to be replicated and is open to the possibility of franchising SwimFun not just throughout the area but even one day throughout the country.

He knew that was the way he could really create something that could be shared with the masses, and he considered that when he designed the concept, including making the pool above ground to save on cost and make it easier for franchise owners to get started.

“This is a model that has infinite possibilities,” Panfili said. “We’ve already had inquiries from South Korea, Australia, and states like California and New York. It is insane what we’ve been able to do and how we’ve taken everything to the next level.”



Photo courtesy of SwimFun

Children take part in the STEM gaming portion of the SwimFun experience.

A visit to the Chocolate Factory

The creative Academy at Christ Church, 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra, will stage Roald Dahl's "Willy Wonka" this weekend. Tickets are available at CecWilly-wonka@ticketleap.com. The cast of 30 includes performers between the ages of 8 and 77. Showtimes are: 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, and Friday, Feb. 24; and at 2 and 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 25. For further information, email Barbara Roberts at barbiekroberts@gmail.com.

Contributed photo



Healthy and fun rainy day activities for kids to do this spring break

Living in Florida, the weather can be unpredictable. When inclement weather threatens, some creative thinking may be necessary to keep kids happy and occupied. Here are a few ideas for getting started.

Plan a scavenger hunt

Parents or caregivers can hide an item and set children on the course toward finding the treasure by providing clues that incrementally lead to the final hiding place.

Visit the library

Libraries have a host of activities ideal for rainy days. Apart from various genres of reading materials, there are movies to

rent, informational classes, rooms for club meetings, and even arts and crafts events. Check to see if your local library requires masks to participate indoors.

Establish an indoor campsite

Camping is a popular outdoor activity that can go on rain or shine. Those who are averse to camping in the rain can recreate the magic of camping indoors. Set up a tent or make a lean-to from blankets and sheets. Use a fireplace or stove to roast marshmallows and make indoor s'mores.

Make homemade playdough

Invite a few of the children's friends over and mix up a batch of homemade playdough. A handy recipe can be found

at www.iheartnaptime.net/play-dough-recipe/. Children can spend hours molding the playdough into imaginative creations.

Visit a museum

Communities across the country are home to various museums, some showcasing ancient artifacts and others touting novelties. For those concerned about indoor crowds, try visiting shortly after doors open or an hour or two before doors close. Foot traffic tends to be lower at these times.

Host an outdoor movie viewing

Homeowners with covered awnings or outside porches can project a movie onto a screen and have movie-goers watch from

their sheltered locations. Serve plenty of healthy snacks and a few sweet treats to munch on during the film.

Play in the rain

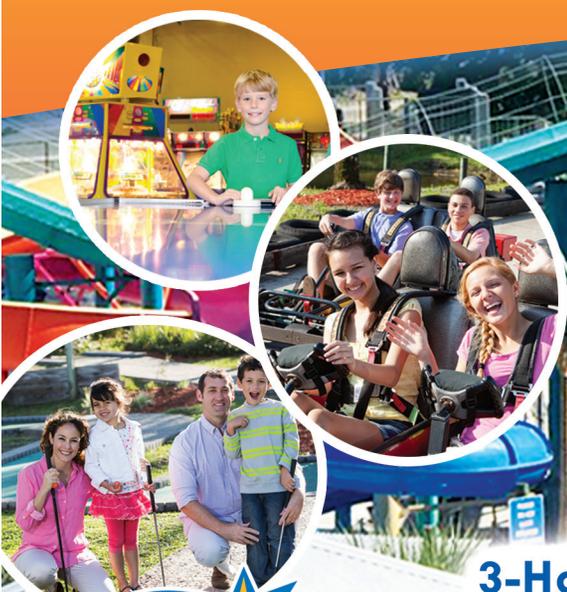
Just because it's raining doesn't mean outdoor fun needs to be entirely curtailed. Children can gather in a garage with the door left open. Then they can take turns dashing out to stomp in puddles or dance in the rain showers. Just have plenty of towels on hand and choose a warm rainy day so kids won't catch a chill.

Poor weather necessitates having indoor activities ready for kids. Thankfully, there's plenty of entertaining ideas to keep them occupied.

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GUEST COLUMN

The power to improve mental health

By Patti Greenough

Near the end of “The Wizard of Oz,” Glinda the Good Witch informs Dorothy that she always possessed the power to return home. Eighty-three years after the beloved children’s classic hit the screen, that little bit of dialogue is still generating encouraging memes and anecdotes.

Why? Because people want the power to help shape their own stories and make a difference in the world around them. In an era of nonstop news, much of it bad, it is all too easy to feel powerless, especially when confronting a situation such as our nation’s escalating mental health crisis. That is unfortunate, because mental illness is something that touches all of us — and also because it is something we have the power to improve.

Here in Northeast Florida, we have created the Talkable Communities (TC) initiative to exercise that power. Founded by five local behavioral health CEOs, TC seeks to promote social connectedness, reduce or eliminate the stigma associated with seeking mental health care, and teach our families, friends and neighbors how to recognize the signs of mental ill-



Patti Greenough

ness and respond appropriately.

Now preparing to enter its third year, the initiative helps to stem the tide of anxiety, depression, addiction and suicide in our region by providing information and resources to community members and encouraging them to share. With grant support from Florida Blue Founda-

tion, TC seeks to make mental health an ongoing topic of conversation among Northeast Florida residents of every age, ethnicity and background, and to equip them with information they can use to help others in need of support or intervention.

Talkable Communities provides three free mental health trainings.

“Youth Mental Health First Aid” teaches participants how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health issues and substance use among children and adolescents ages 6-18.

“It’s Time to Talk About It!” teaches family members, caregivers and others who interact with young people how to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of youth suicide.

Finally, “Question. Persuade. Refer.” trains people in “QPR” — how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and then question, persuade and refer someone to help.

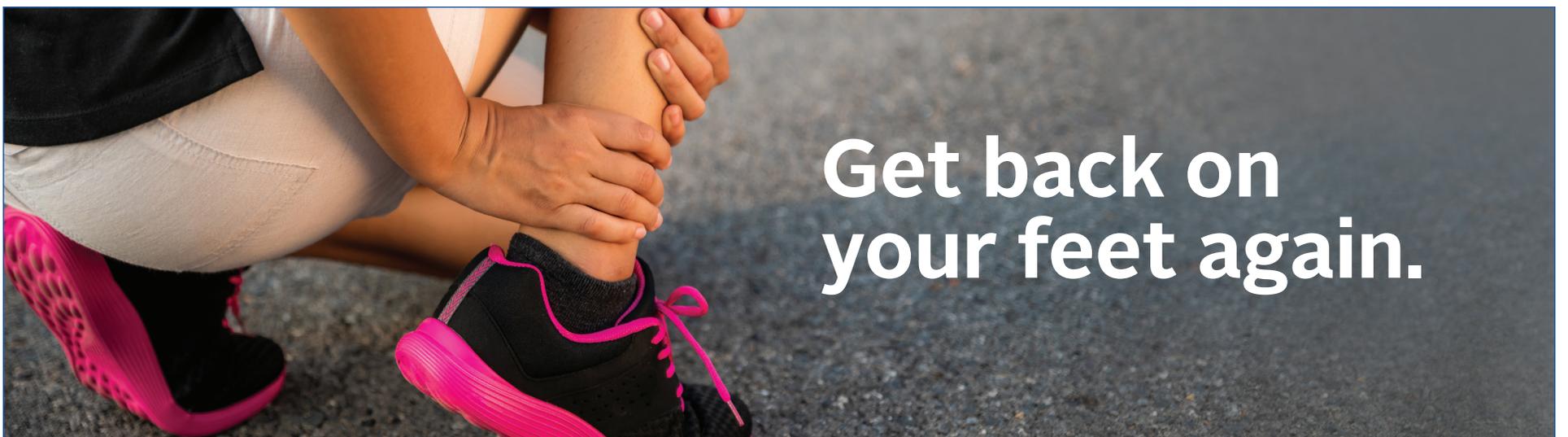
The TC trainings are available online and in person, the time commitment is minimal and the process is all about empowering individuals to nurture and serve their communities.

TC was founded on a vision of communities where people know about mental health and substance abuse disorders, freely talk about their own mental health and encourage others to do so, and where the skills to respond to mental health emergencies such as substance use and suicidal thoughts are commonplace.

To paraphrase Glinda, you have the power to help realize that vision right now. By devoting a day or less of your time to a mental health training, you can make a positive difference for the people around you. And by sharing what you learn, you can help shape the story of Northeast Florida into one in which elevated wellness, decreased suicide and ongoing community engagement result in a much happier ending for us all.

To learn more, go to TalkableCommunities.org

Patti Greenough, M.Ed., C.P.P., has more than 40 years’ experience in the field of mental health prevention and treatment. She is CEO of EPIC Behavioral Healthcare in Flagler and St. Johns Counties and a founder of the Talkable Communities initiative.



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Baptist Health, Jaguars promote sleep safety for newborns

Baptist Health, including Wolfson Children’s Hospital, and the Jacksonville Jaguars are teaming up to help reduce the infant injury and death rates associated with unsafe sleep practices. For the next year, babies born at a Baptist Health hospital will be sent home with a safe sleep kit as part of the newborn’s first postnatal well-baby visit.

The safe sleep kit will include:

- A tip sheet with instructions for creating a safe sleep environment
- A Jacksonville Jaguars-themed sleep sack, which is designed to help remind parents how to clothe and position their baby for safe sleep
- A book, “Sleep Baby Safe and Snug,” which was created by Charlie’s Kids Foundation to share safe sleep recommendations in an easily understandable and memorable way

“Our goal is to provide safe sleep education to new parents or caregivers taking their precious family members home. We want to increase positive birth outcomes by helping new parents and caregivers provide the safest sleep environment for their child,” said C.C. Brooks, MSN, RN, vice president of patient care services and nurse executive for Wolfson Children’s Hospital.

This effort is just one part of the ongoing collaboration between the Jaguars and



Baptist Health to benefit the local community by supporting youth development, neighborhood revitalization and caring for Jacksonville’s next generation.

“The Jaguars’ relationship with Baptist Health began during the team’s own infancy in 1995 and continues to this day,” said Jaguars President Mark Lamping.

“Our new sleep safety program reflects that longstanding partnership and the Jag-

uars Foundation’s commitment to youth development, beginning at birth and continuing until these smallest fans grow into our community’s future leaders.”

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), nearly 3,500 infants die of sleep-related infant deaths in the United States each year. Locally, the Community Health Needs Assessment for the Jacksonville area revealed a higher-

than-state-average infant mortality rate in the Jacksonville region. In Duval County, there is an average of 17 sleep-related deaths each year. Unsafe sleeping practices can contribute to that rate.

The AAP recommends the following to create a safe sleep space for newborn babies:

- Place infants on their backs to sleep in their own sleep space without other people.
- Use a crib, bassinet, or portable play yard with a firm, flat mattress and a fitted sheet.
- Do not allow baby to sleep on a couch, armchair, or in a seating device, such as a swing or car safety seat (except while riding in the car).
- Keep loose blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, bumpers and other soft items out of the sleep space. A sleep sack is a suitable alternative to blankets to keep baby warm.

The safe sleep kit is part of Baptist Health and Wolfson Children’s ongoing Safe Sleep Initiative, which promotes infant health and development by using safe sleep practices within the organization’s hospitals, providing training for team members, offering education for new parents/caregivers, and community outreach efforts.

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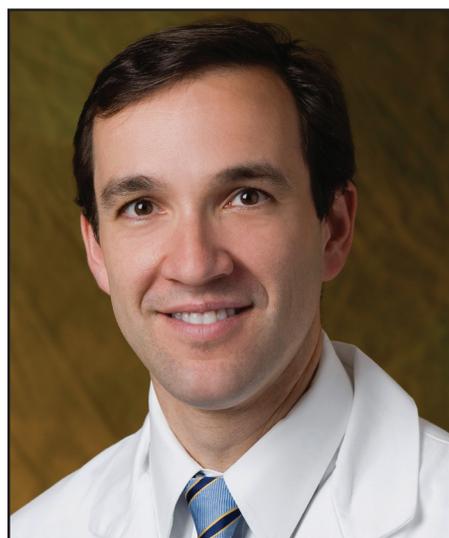
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GUEST COLUMN

What does a heart attack feel like?



Anthony Magnano MD

By Anthony Magnano MD,
Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside

According to the CDC, someone in the United States has a heart attack every 40 seconds. Unfortunately, many of us are not aware of the signs and symptoms. The longer you wait to seek treatment after symptoms begin, the

greater your risk of significant damage to the heart muscle, which can lead to heart failure, dangerous arrhythmias or even death. February is American Heart Month, which makes now the perfect time to review the symptoms of a heart attack.

What is a heart attack?

About 800,000 Americans have a heart attack (or myocardial infarction) every year, according to the American Heart Association. When fat and cholesterol deposit in the wall of the coronary artery, plaque forms, which can eventually limit blood flow to the heart muscle. While a mild narrowing typically produces no symptoms, even a moderate narrowing can cause chest pressure during exertion (called "angina"). This is because the reduced blood flow cannot meet the heart muscle's oxygen needs.

When the cap of a plaque in the artery ruptures, it can become an ulcer, form a blood clot and cut off blood flow completely. Even smaller plaques can rupture and are often the culprit in a heart attack. The region of the heart served by the blocked artery is then deprived

of oxygen and causes that segment of the heart to die. During a heart attack, the affected part of the heart fails to contract, causing the pump to weaken, a state referred to as "heart failure." The damaged heart tissue can also trigger abnormal and dangerous heart rhythms.

Who is at risk for a heart attack?

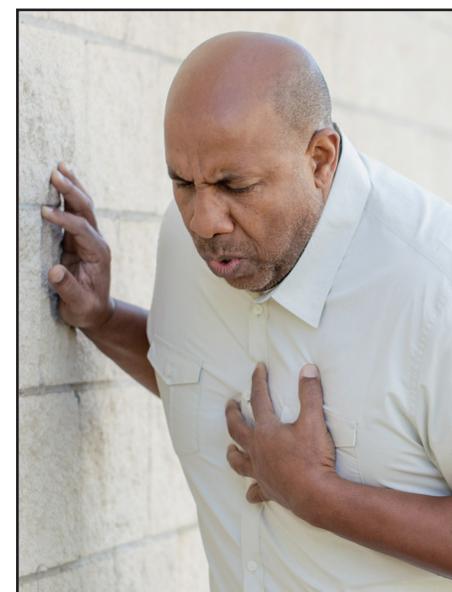
It's crucial to be aware of risk factors that make you more likely to have a heart attack. Some cardiac risk results from items out of our control, such as genetics, age and gender. The good news is that we can modify other factors, like smoking, body weight, diet, exercise, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose to decrease our chances of a heart attack substantially. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that up to 90% of heart disease may be preventable with meticulous attention to these seven risk factors.

What are the symptoms of a heart attack?

Chest discomfort is the primary sign of heart attack, though it often presents as more of a dull, heavy pressure that may spread to the arms, neck, jaw, back or upper abdomen. Shortness of breath, nausea, cold sweats, lightheadedness and an uncomfortable sense of danger may also be present. It is important to remember that some heart attacks can present without chest pain as the main symptom, especially in women or the elderly.

If you notice heart attack symptoms, call 9-1-1.

Don't take any chances. Call 911 when you first suspect a heart attack, stroke or any other heart emergency. Acting fast could save your life or a loved one's. Don't assume it's "nothing" — some heart attacks can happen suddenly, but do not ignore a more gradual onset of mild discomfort. Listen



to your body and call 911 if you feel any discomfort in the chest or upper body, experience shortness of breath, break out in cold sweats or have nausea or lightheadedness.

How do you recover from a heart attack?

Depending on the severity, your heart may not function as well following a heart attack. That's why it is important to make the lifestyle changes necessary to help your heart heal and prevent other health problems from occurring. Commit to a healthier diet, find ways to manage your stress and cut smoking out entirely. You might also consider exercising more frequently if your heart strength permits. Be sure to talk with your doctor to determine the right recovery program for you.

Dr. Anthony Magnano is a Ponte Vedra resident and chief of cardiology at Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside in Jacksonville. For more information on Magnano and his specialty in treating atrial fibrillation, go to Healthcare.ascension.org or call 904-388-1820.

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St. Jude Miracle on the Bayfront Gala gives local residents an opportunity to help defeat childhood cancer.

Gala raising funds to fight childhood cancer

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is leading the way the world understands, treats and defeats childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases. In its ninth year, on April 5, St. Jude Miracle on the Bayfront Gala will raise funds through ticket sales, silent auction and donations. Guests will enjoy a pre-event cocktail hour, dinner, live and silent auctions and live rooftop entertainment and dancing with music by The Life Atlantic.

“We’re so honored to provide support to such an important organization,” said Tammy Harrow, co-host of St. Jude Miracle on the Bayfront Gala. “All of the proceeds raised go straight to St. Jude. As a parent myself, being able to offer support to a family going through the unimaginable, to help ease even one worry

— it’s why we do it.”

St. Jude Miracle on the Bayfront Gala will be held 6-10 p.m. April 5 at the White Room, 1 King St., St. Augustine. Attendees can purchase tickets by choosing from different levels of sponsorship. Packages begin at \$2,500, include from eight to 16 tickets, and offer unique ways to recognize your critical support.

For smaller parties, individual tickets are a new addition and may be purchased for \$200 per person.

For those who cannot attend, but would still like to show their support, donations are accepted. To purchase tickets or make a donation, go to stjude.org/get-involved/find-an-event/dinners-and-galas/miracle-on-the-bayfront-gala.html.

When St. Jude Children’s Research

Hospital opened in 1962, childhood cancer was considered incurable. Since then, St. Jude has helped push the overall survival rate from 20% to more than 80%. In many developing countries, however, only one out of five children diagnosed with cancer will survive.

St. Jude cares for children regardless of race, ethnicity, beliefs or ability to pay. Families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food — so they can focus on helping their child live. St. Jude can provide children with cutting-edge treatments not

covered by insurance, at no cost to families through generous donor support.

“When you look at the costs of some of these life-sustaining procedures,” said Harrow, “\$750 for just three days of oxygen, \$5,000 for only a day in the Intensive Care Unit — it’s overwhelming. At a time when the family just needs to focus on caring for their child, we can be working in the background, raising the funds to help cover those costs. When you attend the Miracle on the Bayfront Gala, you’re providing that support.”



Experts in autism spectrum disorder to speak March 8

The 13th Annual Autism Symposium: Current Medical Evidence and Interventions Regarding Autism will feature three speakers with expertise in the field of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The symposium is presented by Wolfson Children’s Hospital, Baptist Health, the University of Florida College of Medicine — Jacksonville, Nemours Children’s Health, Jacksonville and ConnectABLE.

The symposium is open to anyone with an interest in ASD. Speakers include John

N. Constantino MD, Emily Hotez PhD and Nathan Call PhD.

It will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at University of North Florida, University Center, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville.

Ticket price of \$75 includes continental breakfast and lunch. For general information, email Jacqueline.Bargas@bmcjax.com. Online registration is required and is available at autismsymposium13.eventbrite.com until March 6.

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PulteGroup announces final homesites at The Trails at Grand Oaks

PulteGroup has announced final new-home opportunities at The Trails at Grand Oaks. As of Feb. 1, there were only four homesite opportunities available at the master-planned community, which is located 2.5 miles west of I-95 in St. Johns County.

“Our success at The Trails at Grand Oaks, where we’ve sold nearly 130 new homes in a short time, is a result of the community’s appealing location, desirability and the incredible value that Pulte offers,” said Tony Nason, division president, PulteGroup Northeast Florida Division. “Homeowners at The Trails at Grand Oaks enjoy consumer-inspired, single-family homes designs, family-friendly amenities and easy access to shopping and business centers.”

The open-concept home designs remaining at The Trails at Grand Oaks offer Craftsman, Coastal or Traditional exteriors. Homes designs range in size from 1,775 square feet to 2,082 square feet with three or four bedrooms. The Trails features water and preserve homesites. Single-family homes at The Trails at Grand Oaks by Pulte Homes are priced from the low-\$400s. The Trails at Grand Oaks is a natural gas community.

Residents will enjoy a variety of amenities including a resort-style pool, fitness center, sports courts, tree house and more. Retail, dining, grocery and medical facilities are all within four miles of the community.

The Trails at Grand Oaks is located at 22 Myrtle Oak Court in St. Augustine. For more information, call 904-644-1920 or go to pulte.com/jacksonville.



Contributed photo

PulteGroup has announced its final new-home opportunities at The Trails at Grand Oaks.

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New phase at the Preserve at Bannon Lakes opened

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The Preserve at Bannon Lakes | Site Map

Bannon Lakes
Phase 2A, 2B and 2C

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- 144 - 40' wide lots
- 224 - 50' wide lots
- 82 - 60' wide lots

Total: 450

Map not to scale. Locations included are subject to change without notice. This material shall not constitute a valid offer in any state where prior registration is required or if void by law. Photographs are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be an actual representation of a specific community, neighborhood, or any completed improvements being offered. Please see a sales associate for details. ©2020 Pulte Home Company, LLC. All rights reserved. CGC1519936 12-4-20

PulteGroup released this map of a new phase of homesites at The Preserve at Bannon Lakes.

PulteGroup has announced a new phase of homesites at The Preserve at Bannon Lakes, a new construction community offering single-family homes from the \$300,000s within the Bannon Lakes master-planned community in northern St. Johns County.

“The Preserve at Bannon Lakes has become a sought-after location for homebuyers,” said Tony Nason, president of PulteGroup’s Northeast Florida Division. “The community offers a prime location that’s close to nature, shopping, golf and beaches, and residents of all ages enjoy recreational amenities and single-family homes on preserve and water view home sites.”

The Preserve offers 40-, 50- and 60-foot homesites and 16 beautiful single-family floor plans, ranging in size from 1,720 square feet to more than 4,100 square feet. Pulte’s wide range of home designs include three to six bedrooms and two to six bathrooms with stunning thoughtfully-designed spaces, sophisticated upgrades and spacious modern living.

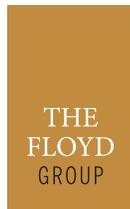
Three decorated model homes are currently open at the Preserve at Bannon Lakes. Pulte has announced plans for a new model home coming later this year for a total of four models.

Bordered by 20,000 acres of pristine preserve land, yet only half a mile from Interstate 95, Bannon Lakes offers a variety of amenities including a resort-style pool, clubhouse, fitness center, pickleball and sport courts, a dog park and more.

Lakes is a natural gas community and features a Fiber network with fast, reliable internet.

Bannon Lakes is located at International Golf Parkway and Bannon Lakes Boulevard. For more information, call 904-604-7254 or go to [Pulte.com/PreserveBannon](https://www.pulte.com/PreserveBannon).

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Housing market warms up for buyers, sellers

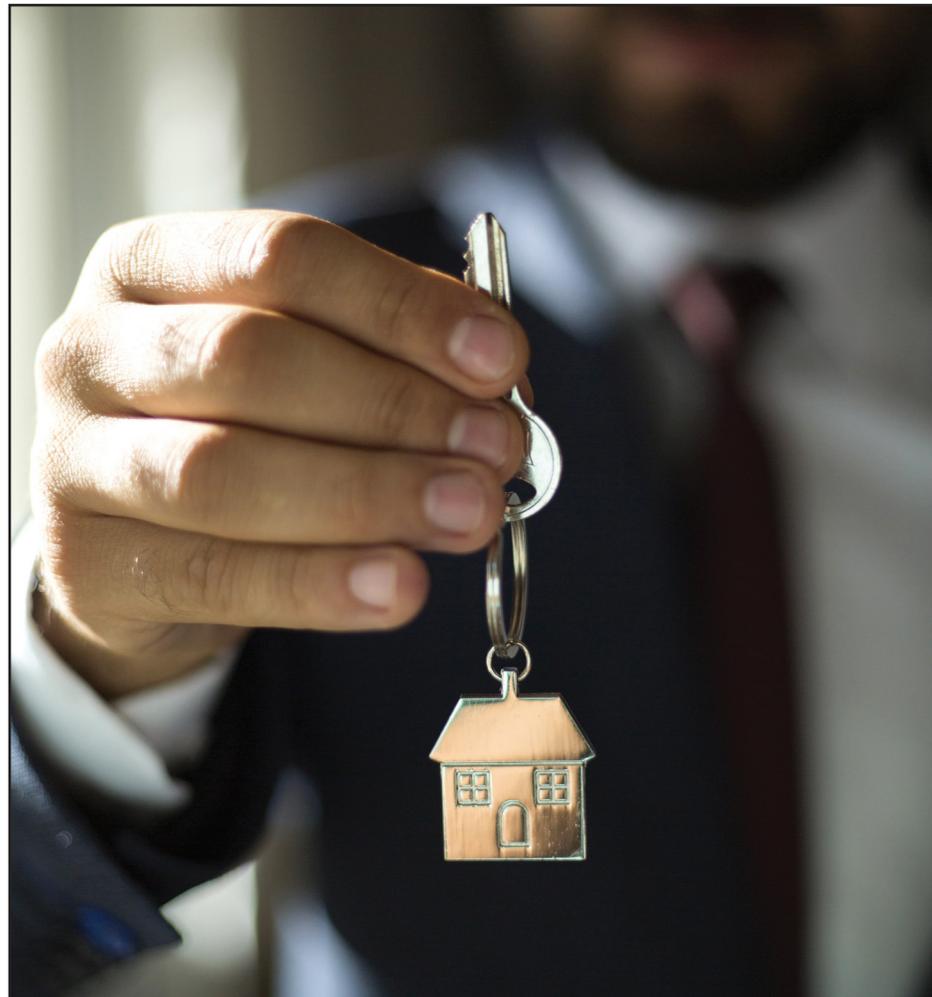
It may only be February, but when it comes to buying and selling homes in Northeast Florida, it seems that spring is already here.

“The weather is warming up and so is the market,” said Northeast Florida Association of Realtors 2023 President Diana Galavis, noting that it seems like the spring selling season has already landed in Jacksonville.

Active inventory gradually rose in January 2.6% to 5,011 units in the six-county region, and the month’s supply of homes has risen 57.5% since December 2022. This demonstrates a further stabilization of the housing market, which is something both buyers and sellers can cheer about.

“The spring selling season is off to an early start with more available inventory for buyers,” Galavis said. “Sellers are confident and ready to move, which is reflective of the number of new listings on the market. The affordability index has increased to 76 which gives more opportunity to buyers looking to afford a home. More days on the market are a breath of fresh air for some buyers. This allows buyers to feel less pressured and enjoy more breathing room as they shop for a property. Buyers seem to be more comfortable with interest rates and are ready to take advantage of the much-anticipated spring market.”

At 76, Northeast Florida’s Home Affordability Index reflected a 4.1% increase in January from December’s mark of 73, and a considerable improvement from 2022’s low of 67 in October. The Housing Affordability Index measures housing affordability for the region. In other words, it measures whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income, and



median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability. An index value of 100 means that the average family has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage.

“Northeast Florida’s Home Affordability Index rose to 76 in January, giving buyers who are entering the market a better opportunity to afford a home,” Galavis said.

In January, the median sales price of single-family homes in Northeast Florida was \$360,000, a mild 2.7% drop from the

previous month. Pending sales in January rose 29% to 1,698, while new listings jumped 34% to 2,650. The median number of days on the market in January was 55, a 14.6% leap from the prior month. Meanwhile, closed sales dropped to 1,074, which is a 34.9% decrease from December 2022 and indicative of the housing market as it says goodbye to the holiday season.

“The January market reflects a significant increase in months of supply, moving Northeast Florida closer to a stable market,” Galavis said. “Closed sales were down for January, but this is a typical slow up for the time of year. Factors such as interest rates, loan processing times, and inventory play a role in the lower closed sales in January,” she said.

As the housing market begins to heat up this spring, Galavis reminds both buyers and sellers of the importance of enlisting a Realtor to assist them as they embark on what may be the most important transaction of their lives.

“In a fast-paced, shifting market such as what we have been experiencing the past couple of years, it is important to have a Realtor as your trusted advisor to help navigate the process of buying, selling and investing in real estate,” she said. “There are many downpayment and financing options that Realtors understand, which can help both buyers and sellers reach their real estate goals.”

In St. Johns County, January 2023 median prices fell slightly by 2.7% to a median price of \$526,500 for single-family homes. The median days on the market were 49, a 25.8% drop from the month before.

Month-to-month, closed sales plummeted 38.5% to 259, pending sales climbed 32.2% to 390, and new listings shot up 42% to 612. Active inventory rose to 1,240 homes, an increase of 4.1% from December 2022, and 4.8-month supply.

The affordability index inched up 4% to 52, demonstrating that St. Johns County became just slightly more affordable as it continues to remain the most expensive area to live in the region.

In Duval County, the January 2023 median price of single-family housing was \$308,000, a slight decrease from December 2022 when it registered \$319,945. The median days on the market in January was 50, a 28.2% increase over December.

Month-to-month, closed sales dropped 36.2% to 547, pending sales rose 24% to 857, and new listings rose 34.8% to 1,357. Active inventory for the county was 2,381 homes, an increase of 2% from December and a 4.4-month supply. In January, the home affordability index showed housing was becoming slightly more affordable by registering at 88, an increase of 4.8% from the month before.

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Real estate firm reveals new global brand identity

Ahead of its global brand's 10-year anniversary, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty unveils a refreshed look. The modern design paired with sophisticated and vibrant colors bring a fresh identity to the brand.

"Our new look brings a magnificent new identity to our brand," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty President Ann King. "Our refreshed look pays respect to our past and our core foundations of who we are as a brand and perfectly positions us for the exciting future ahead."

The Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices style evolution is centered on the needs of real estate professionals working within a business that is driven both digitally and with an emphasis on personal connections and relationships. A refreshed brand logo, refreshed color palette and modern typography will be showcased throughout the world

and via the millions of marketing pieces, digital impressions and brand awareness campaigns generated each year and proudly displayed on company and agent websites, yard signs, marketing collateral and more.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty will incorporate the refreshed look and feel in a phased approach with the environment and economics being important considerations of a project of this scale.

The Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Luxury Collection also reveals a refreshed look. Luxury Collection specialists comprise an exclusive group of real estate professionals and an unparalleled portfolio of the most magnificent properties around the globe.

To view the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices refreshed look and for more information, go to bhhs.com/refresh.

St. Johns Housing Partnership unveils 25th Anniversary logo

The St. Johns Housing Partnership (SJHP), creating safe, clean, affordable housing in North Florida since 1998, has unveiled its 25th Anniversary commemorative logo.

"I have a deep appreciation for and pride in our agency and what we have accomplished," said SJHP Executive Director Bill Lazar. "I want to extend my sincere gratitude and thanks to the extraordinary staff members, volunteers, donors and partners who have contributed significantly to SJHP's mission over the last 25 years."

SJHP works with public and private sectors to enhance and provide affordable housing programs. Services include a nationally recognized weatherization program, new construction, energy audits, repairs for the elderly, disabled or low-income families and rental and purchase programs.

"Affordable housing is housing that a household can pay for, while still having money left over for other essentials like food, clothing transportation and health care," said



Lazar. "That means that what's considered 'affordable' depends on a household's income."

The St. Johns Housing Partnership is committed to creating, maintaining and preserving high-quality affordable housing and providing supportive services for residents of low and moderate incomes as well as an emerging, struggling segment that includes

first responders, teachers, health care workers, hospitality and restaurant employees.

They do this by creating links between the public and private sectors on projects that create low- and moderate-income housing, rebuild neglected homes and neighborhoods, thus benefiting disadvantaged areas and enhancing community economic and social development.

"Our goals have remained consistent for 25 years, but the economy, pandemic and soaring prices have presented unprecedented challenges that we face every day," Lazar noted.

To help, call 904-824-0902 or email info@sjhp.org for more information.



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St. Johns County Reentry Center cuts ribbon

Operation New Hope has announced that it will now be offering its nationally-recognized Ready4Work reentry training and support program to people prior to release from the St. Johns County Jail.

This new partnership with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office is made possible because of a generous ARPA grant from the United Way of St. Johns County. This community partnership was celebrated recently at the St. Johns County Reentry Center ribbon cutting, presented in conjunction with the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

More than 100 community stakeholders gathered to celebrate this first of its kind partnership. Sgt. Mike Clark stressed the importance of providing support and training people in preparation for release.

"This is an exciting day," said St. Johns County Sheriff Robert Hardwick. "The people who serve time behind these walls are human beings, and we're going to make them something better than what they came in as."

He continued by adding, "And it's working, by the way. We have reduced recidivism in St. Johns County by almost 10%. We went from 26% to 17%, when the national average is over 40%. We are doing this together as a society."

"After listening to the Sheriff, I'm ready to run through a brick wall! I'm like, 'Yeah! Let's Go!'" said Operation New Hope's President and CEO Reggie Fullwood.

In a more serious tone, he added, "It really starts with leadership, and I can tell you, Sheriff Hardwick, that your commitment makes all the difference. The impact and the commitment of this team is just tremendous. I want to thank the United Way and St. Johns County for believing in us and supporting this pilot project that will allow us to provide



Contributed photo

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce recently hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the St. Johns County Reentry Center. Operation New Hope helps people find their place following release from incarceration.

training before people get out. So that when folks do get out, the transition time is shorter."

Ready4Work graduates then took the podium to share how the reentry support they received at the St. Johns County Jail and Operation New Hope has set them up for success.

"I thought I was on my own and that there was nobody there for me," said Traci Dielmann. "People who come in

here are broken. But what Operation New Hope has done for me is rebuild my confidence and allow me to go out and say, 'I'm just a normal human being. I made a mistake, and I'm here to make up for it.' I have a huge team behind me now."

"This is huge," added Weston Rochford. "This is amazing. In a short amount of time, I went to Operation New Hope, and they changed my life."

"I honestly don't know where I would be today," said Billy Case. "A few short months ago, I was a guest at this gated community, and now I have a nice place to live. I've got a nice car. I've got a very good job, money in the pocket, money in the bank. And each day this gets better and better and better. Thank you."

Lt. Melton closed out the event and thanked everyone for making this community partnership a great success.

Members

Continued from 10

Funds raised through the foundation enhance the quality of life for patients and families and support unfunded and underfunded patient care, outreach programs and services for those facing advanced illness and grief. Its donors make it possible to continue to provide community programs and compassionate care to all who need it, regardless of their ability to pay.

Members of the board of directors serve a three-year term and can be re-elected for two additional three-year terms.

The Community Hospice Foundation's new Board Members include:

- Jennifer Cleek is a project manager at MMI Inc., a robotics company dedicated

to improving clinical outcomes for patients undergoing microsurgery. She and her husband Brian live in Ponte Vedra Beach with their three boys, Wyatt, Hudson and Theodore. She is president of the PTO at Ponte Vedra Rawlings Elementary School, volunteer basketball coach at the Ponte Vedra YMCA and assistant girls' basketball coach at Bolles.

- Lou Caldropski recently retired from Swisher International where he worked for more than 27 years. At Swisher, he held numerous positions, including his last role as chief operations officer. He is a member of the St. Johns County Police Athletic League Board and the Finance Council of the Diocese of St. Augustine. He and his wife, Lina, have four children and four grandchildren.

- Neill Lasher is a Realtor at Berkshire Hathaway Florida Network Realty and a lifelong resident of Jacksonville and

Ponte Vedra Beach. She is a mother to Wyatt, and twins Lawton and Harbor. She is involved in the community as a member of the Development Council at Wolfson Children's Hospital and Baptist Foundation, as well as a committee member and former chair for the Wolfson Children's Challenge and co-chair for Halloween Doors & More.

- Pamela Steitz, who moved to Ponte Vedra Beach in 2000, is married to Bill with their three children Nicholas, Kevin and Alexa. She has worked in a multitude of volunteer capacities, including Community Hospice in 2005 during the inaugural year of Halloween Doors & More, Women's Leadership Council and Community PedsCare Respite Center Feasibility Study. She recently hosted an event where she raised more than \$75,000 for the Community Hospice music therapy program.

- Bret Catto is the vice president and general sales manager for Tom Nehl Truck Co. and oversees the new and used truck sales and the leasing division. He lives in Jacksonville with his wife, Susie, and their sons, Thomas and Matthew.

- Nancy Latinberg, a Jacksonville native, has raised her four children with her husband Richard. She volunteers with several local nonprofits using her expertise in public relations and event planning from her past career. She became active with Community Hospice during the inaugural Halloween Doors & More, joining the Community Advisory Board shortly thereafter. She developed the Teen Advisory Board, where members act as ambassadors to raise awareness and funds for the Community PedsCare program. She has also served as grant chair and president of the Women's Leadership council.

Business Weekly

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Junior Achievement names award winners for annual Hall of Fame



Andy Kaufmann

Junior Achievement of North Florida has scheduled its Hall of Fame Luncheon for May 25 at the University of North Florida's Adam W. Herbert University Center.

The nonprofit's largest annual fundraiser and awards presentation supports its mission to inspire and prepare young people for success. The community can get involved by becoming a sponsor of the event, and 100% of the funds raised will provide financial literacy programs to North Florida's students.

Sponsorship levels range from the top \$15,000 presenting levels to the \$2,500 chairman level. Those interested should contact JANFL President Shannon Italia at shannon@janfl.org or call 904-398-9944, ext. 228.

"Businesses, organizations and individuals can help us make a difference in a student's life by supporting us so we can give them the tools they need for economic success," said Italia. "Our programs help shape the next generation and prepare them for the future by providing important lessons in financial literacy, entrepreneurship and workplace readiness. We need the community's support to help us

continue this mission."

In addition to serving as a fundraiser, JA of North Florida's Hall of Fame is also a chance to honor outstanding individuals and businesses within the community. The awards presented at the event include the Thompson S. Baker Award, the Educator of the Year Award, the Volunteer of the Year Award and the Company of the Year Award.

The most prestigious award is the Thompson S. Baker "Solid as a Rock" Award, which will be given to Andy Kaufmann, owner and CEO of Zawyer Sports. Kaufmann is the 24th recipient of the award, which is given to an individual dedicated to bettering the community through leadership, hands-on involvement and philanthropic deeds. It was named after Thompson Baker, the founder of Florida Rock Industries and the award's first winner, who unselfishly contributed to the community.

Kaufmann is an entrepreneur who was exposed to business as a child by his father, his real-life hero and role model.

He got his start helping in the family business as a young child by assembling emergency kits for his father who paid him in baseball cards. He went on to earn his degree in marketing from Emerson University and helped develop and support teams in the marine and outdoor industries before entering

the world of sports entertainment.

He currently serves as CEO/owner of the Jacksonville Icemen, Community First Igloo and Savannah Ghost Pirates and is a minority owner of the Fort Myers Mighty Mussels.

Kaufmann was chosen for the Thompson S. Baker Award because of his commitment to the city and the community. His values align with those of JA, and he is a real-life example of what JA is trying to realize. He believes in the boundless potential of young people and is an advocate for the programs that can help build a more sustainable world.

Kaufmann, his wife Farah, and their two sons, Sawyer and Zachary, are active in the Jacksonville community. He is committed to raising his family here and to making Jacksonville a great place to live and thrive.

Three other awards will be presented at the Hall of Fame Luncheon. The Educator of the Year Award will be given to Deidre McNair-Pickney, a teacher at Duncan U. Fletcher High School. The Volunteer of the Year Award will go to Jason Miller from Johnson & Johnson Vision and the Company of the Year award will be presented to TIAA Bank.

Registration for the event is now underway. Guests can visit <https://northflorida.ja.org/events/ja-of-north-florida-hall-of-fame> to reserve their spot for the luncheon.

Leadership St. Johns 2023 Class selected

The members of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership St. Johns (LSJ) Class of 2023 have started the one-year program and completed a planning retreat at Guy Harvey Resort in St. Augustine Beach.

Participants are from a myriad of sectors in industry, professional services and nonprofits throughout Northeast Florida. The leadership development program was started in 2000 to educate, connect and encourage experienced and emerging businesspeople as they make a positive impact on the local economy and community.

According to Bob Porter, the Chamber's vice president of public policy and LSJ program director, the class of 2023 joins more than 450 alumni who are committed to meeting on specific days and benefit from an in-depth overview of local challenges and opportunities.

"This year's class includes 24 men and women who will visit and learn about St. Johns County businesses, nonprofits and government agencies, among others," he said. "They will have classroom and field time to identify and work on a worthy project for individuals and families in need."

Class members who successfully graduate from the program are accepted into the ranks of leadership alumni in St. Johns County and across Florida. Many graduates have been accepted into the statewide Leadership Florida program.

For additional information and to register for the 2024 program, contact Bob Porter at 904-687-2049

LEADERSHIP continues on Page 26

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Cutie Pies opens

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce cut the ribbon on Feb. 10 to celebrate the opening of Cutie Pies Bake Shop located at 62 Cuna St., St. Augustine. Cutie Pies focuses on making made-from-scratch mini pies and other treats with the goal of satisfying anyone's sweet tooth.

Photo provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Coastal Compass hosts Chamber before hours

Coastal Compass Executive Office Suites hosted a before hours event for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division and its members Feb. 8.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Erin Kelly and Kari Zerrahn.



Several Chamber members attended the before hours at Coastal Compass's location at 4210 Valley Ridge Blvd. in Ponte Vedra.

Leadership

Continued from 25

or email bob.porter@sjcchamber.com. The website is sjcchamber.com/leadership-st-johns.

The members of the Leadership St. Johns Class of 2023 include Alexandra Barr, St. Johns County Public Library System, assistant branch manager and youth services librarian; Lauren Blocker, St. Johns County judge; Kevin Briscoe, JEA, communications specialist; Mike Castaing, St. Augustine Police Department, commander; Frank Cervasio, St. Johns County School District, director for facilities and construction; Sidney Clark, Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra, center direc-

tor; Orville Dothage, Northrop Grumman Corp.; Reuben Franklin, City of St. Augustine, public works director; Danielle Fraser, Danielle Fraser, P.A., owner; Greg Johnson, City of St. Augustine, deputy director of finance; Sean McAfee, Ascension St. Vincent's; Cathy Newman, Investing in Kids (INK!), St. Johns County Education Foundation Inc., community and district relations achievement director; Misty North, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, captain and corrections captain; Nancy Palmer, Firehouse Subs, manager development and outreach; Abby Pedigo, City of St. Augustine, fire marshal; Robert Peek, Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT), director of marketing and general manager of business development; Lauren Peterson, St. Augustine Youth Services,



Contributed photo

The members of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership St. Johns Class of 2023.

director donor relations; Chris Pokrivnak, VyStar Credit Union — Jacksonville, regional vice president; Jeremy Russell, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, captain; Aimee Stafford, St. Johns County Cham-

ber of Commerce, VP of operations; Bruce Vorsanger, Vicar's Landing, chief development officer; Donna Wagner, Flagler Health+, chief nursing officer; Cathy Weber, St. Johns County School District, director for budget and chief negotiator; and Geoff West, Florida Power & Light Co., director of development.

"LSJ provides distinguished support for participants who are seeking involvement in for-profit business, nonprofit and volunteer government advisory boards, elected office and advancing their careers," said Isabelle Renault, the Chamber's president, CEO and a graduate of Leadership St. Johns and Leadership Florida. "We want our class members to utilize their LSJ skills to engage in the community while helping to improve the many aspects of St. Johns County."

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit business membership organization and among the top professional networking organizations in Northeast Florida.

For more information about the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce and Leadership St. Johns, call 904-829-5681 or go to sjcchamber.com.

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In the Arts



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Chanticleer to perform March 5

The Grammy Award-winning vocal ensemble Chanticleer will perform at 4 p.m. March 5 at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 465 12th Ave. N., Jacksonville Beach. The doors open at 3:15 p.m. Admission is free.

A reception will follow. The visual artist for this event is Vanessa Withun.

The performance is part of the Beaches Fine Arts Series.

Chanticleer has appeared in the series five times, beginning in 2004. In 2008, elementary school students painted canvases while listening to their recordings. The canvases were pieced together as quilts and hung in Jacoby Hall during their performance.

Chanticleer has been hailed as “the world’s reigning male chorus” by The New Yorker and is known around the world as “an orchestra of voices” for its wide-ranging repertoire and dazzling virtuosity.

Founded in San Francisco in 1978 by singer and musicologist Louis Botto, Chan-

ticleer quickly took its place as one of the most prolific recording and touring ensembles in the world, selling over one million recordings and performing thousands of live concerts to audiences around the world.

Chanticleer’s repertoire is rooted in the renaissance and has continued to expand to include a wide range of classical, gospel, jazz, popular music and a deep commitment to the commissioning of new compositions and arrangements. The ensemble has committed much of its vast recording catalogue to these commissions, garnering Grammy Awards for its recording of Sir John Tavener’s “Lamentations & Praises” and the ambitious collection of commissioned works titled “Colors of Love.”

Chanticleer is the recipient of the Dale Warland/Chorus America Commissioning Award and the ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming, and its music director emeritus, Joseph H. Jennings, received the Brazeal Wayne Dennard

Award for his contribution to the African-American choral tradition during his tenure with Chanticleer.

Named for the “clear-singing” rooster in Geoffrey Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales,” Chanticleer continues to maintain ambitious programming in its hometown of San Francisco, including a large education and outreach program that recently reached more than 8,000 people, and an annual concert series that includes its legendary holiday tradition “A Chanticleer Christmas.”

Vanessa Withun is a contemporary representational artist of Puerto Rican and Dominican heritage originally from Bronx, New York. Coming from an artistic family, she was always drawn to the arts. After serving in the military and moving to the Southeast, she developed an interest in landscapes and nature. She was inspired by the wetlands and marshes that surrounded the coastal area and decided to pursue a degree in environmental science. Although her work



Contributed photo

Members of Chanticleer prepare to perform from their much-hailed repertoire.

is representational, she heavily relies on an intuitive process, which gives her paintings a sentimental and romantic quality. Her style is a combination of Expressionism and Realism, and she believes that both forms of art are necessary in order to achieve an aesthetic balance. She enjoys painting from life and using color and heavy textures to show the intricacies of form and the behavior of light. Although she focuses on coastal landscapes, she enjoys painting portraits and still life, as well. Her work has been exhibited across the United States including with Oil Painters of America. She is also a recent recipient of the Art Ventures Grant in Jacksonville.

CANVAS, STAGE AND MORE

A look at what’s happening in the arts locally.



Award-winning author to explore ‘True Fiction’ at Feb. 25 meeting

Sohrab Homi Fracis, winner of the prestigious Iowa Short Fiction Award

for his first book, “Ticket to Minto: Stories of India and America,” will read from his newest collection of short stories, “True Fiction,” and lead a discussion on the nature of fiction at the FWA Ponte Vedra Writers 11 a.m. meeting Saturday, Feb. 25, at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

“True Fiction” has been described as

“a darkly beguiling magic carpet ride.” The eight stories in his collection cross genres and combine realism with a touch of magic.

A native of India, Fracis emigrated to America on a scholarship from the University of Delaware, Newark, where he earned a master’s degree in civil engineering.

He spent years as a systems analyst at Fortune 500 companies. Later, he attended the University of North Florida for an M.A. in English, with a concentration on creative writing. He taught literature and creative writing at UNF for 10 years while writing and publishing short stories.

The Ponte Vedra Writers group is part of the Florida Writers Association. The

CANVAS continues on Page 28

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Tiger

Continued from 9

it. People went berserk.

As a tweeter named Adam Stanley wrote in a tweet featuring a map of the plane's route, "No other golfer is having their plane (or boat, if I recall correctly) tracked like this. Regardless of the outcome here, the fact that Tiger Woods is up, walking, playing golf, and this close to playing the Masters after what happened last year is amazing."

Even Golf Digest got into the act with a tweet and a picture of Tiger's plane.

Sir Nick Faldo tweeted: "See Tiger has arrived at Augusta. If he plays, it will be off the charts and another one of the greatest moments at The Masters."

One report said Woods' name was listed among the participants, although who had that information is not known.

Todd Lewis of Golf Channel said Woods was going to "exhaust every effort" to play the Masters.

Eureka Earth, which provides occasional aerials of Augusta National's renovations and modifications, as they did with the new 13th tee, also jumped on the bandwagon with a plane tweet. They also had video from someone at the airport. Sure enough, the three claw marks for Woods' logo were on the tail. Growwl!

As it happens, Eureka Earth is located in Augusta.

Tweeters or twitterers, take your pick, were quick to find goat (G.O.A.T.) emojis. So, should the topic ever come up again, or if Woods does decide to play in THE PLAYERS, there's a vast assortment of available goats for social media from Emojipedia. And who even knew there was one of those. I can't decide which is best, although I'm partial to the Apple goat and the Facebook goat. The HTC goat looks a bit like it was found on the wall of a cave.

What all this means is if Tiger Woods were to decide to play a practice round at TPC Sawgrass, there's no earthly way he would go unnoticed. Even if he shows up at 6 a.m., someone will spill the beans or

tweet a G.O.A.T. sighting.

All our local radio and television stations will have it as breaking news. Count on it. ESPN and Golf Channel would be all over it. News people will be seen standing in front of the Marriott sign for TPC Sawgrass reporting on it. You'll have to chase them away to get into or out of the Sawgrass Shopping Center, the Marriott or your house if you live on the PLAYERS side of Sawgrass.

The main question is does he really need to play a practice round here? I mean, he knows it's a hard course. He knows it's primarily flat. He knows where the bunkers and water hazards are, except for the new one dividing 6 and 7. Also, he hasn't seen the new 12th hole and that hazard. He's aware of the alligator, which is still in the lake at the 17th, and the herons, egrets, seagulls and cormorants that hang around the water.

If he wants to study at home, there are apps that do flyovers of golf courses, and they will surely have TPC Sawgrass. Golf Digest has one that is narrated by Ron Whitten, senior editor of Architecture. It's about 12 minutes long and describes every hole. Whitten calls the course a "Southern version of Pine Valley," which is a world famous, top 100 golf course in the pine barrens of New Jersey. It used to rotate with Cypress Point and Augusta National as the top course in the country.

The Golf Digest flyover starts with the drive up to the clubhouse, has just a smidgen of course history and then goes hole-by-hole complete with stunning photography.

If that's not enough, Tiger could use Google Earth. It will even measure yardages. He could look at it while watching NCAA pre-tournament basketball and texting with Fred Couples and Woods' caddie (who is also Couples former caddie), Joe LaCava.

If he wants expert eyes on the course, he could send LaCava on a mission to see where the back tee boxes really are located now and compare notes from the last time Woods won THE PLAYERS, which was 2013. So, he doesn't really have to set foot on the property to know

it. But will he?

The most important thing about this year is that, according to the PGA TOUR, from the looks of things, this is his last year of an exemption for winning the 2018 Masters. Here's who will be invited to THE PLAYERS:

- Winners of PGA TOUR cosponsored or approved tournaments, whose victories are considered official, since the last played PLAYERS Championship
- The top 125 players from the 2021-22 FedExCup Playoffs and Eligibility Points List
- Winners of Masters Tournament from the years 2018-2022
- Winners of THE PLAYERS Championship and The Open Championship from the years 2017-2022
- Winners of the U.S. Open and PGA Championship from the years 2017-2022
- Winner of the FedExCup from the 2018/19–2021/22 seasons. (Note: This became a five-year exemption starting with the 2018/19 season.)
- Winners of WGC-Mexico Championship from 2021
- Winners of WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play from the years 2019-2022
- Winners of WGC-FedEx St. Jude Invitational from the years 2019–2021
- Winners of WGC-HSBC Champions from 2019
- Winners of The Genesis Invitational from the years 2020-2023
- Winners of the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard from the years 2020-2023
- Winners of the Memorial Tournament from the years 2019–2022
- Current Men's Golf Olympic Gold Medalist (one-year only)
- The top 50 players from the Official World Golf Ranking through the Honda Classic (Monday, February 20, 2023)
- The top 10 players from the 2022–23 FedExCup Points List through the Honda Classic
- The winner of the previous year's Kaulig Companies Championship (formerly Senior Players Championship)
- The leading points winner from the 2022 Top 25 Korn Ferry Tour Regular

Season players using combined points earned on the Official Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season Points List and points earned in the Korn Ferry Tour Finals and the leading points winner from the 2022 Korn Ferry Tour Finals

• If necessary to complete a field of 144 players, PGA TOUR members from the 2022–23 FedExCup Points List below 10th position through the Honda Classic, in order of their positions on such list

Unfortunately, despite winning 82 tournaments on the PGA TOUR, Woods doesn't even have a World Golf Ranking any more. It's just dashes. The tournaments he played in last year, the Masters, the PGA Championship and the British Open, allow past champions to play up to the age of 60 or 65, depending on the event. So right now, he plays in those because he can.

Now, as a quadruple lifetime member, meaning he has won four times the number of tournaments a PGA TOUR player needs for a lifetime exemption, he could play in any PGA TOUR event that would have him. Name one that wouldn't send a limo to the airport to pick him up!

But that doesn't get him into THE PLAYERS. What does get him into THE PLAYERS is his victory in the 2018 Masters. Woods' last two victories after that were the 2019 TOUR Championship and the 2019 ZOZO, but neither of them count toward an invitation to THE PLAYERS. It's his 2018 Masters victory that does the trick. And this is the last year of his exemption to THE PLAYERS with that Masters win as the golden ticket.

So, if there was ever a time when he might return to play in THE PLAYERS, this is it, unless he wins another tournament. Just when it looked like he wouldn't play until April, Woods surprised everyone by announcing he intended to play in his tournament, the Genesis Invitational. So, who knows if he'll come to Ponte Vedra? One thing is sure, it's an easier walk everywhere here than it is to go up the hill to the clubhouse after the 9th or 18th holes at Riviera. He may need a sky hook for that.

Canvas

Continued from 27

Feb. 25 meeting is free and open to members and nonmembers alike. For information on FWA go to floridawriters.org.

Cathedral Arts Project to receive \$50,000 grant

The Cathedral Arts Project has been approved for a \$50,000 Grants for Arts Projects award from the National Endowment for the Arts to continue its work on the Landscape of Education in the Arts in Duval and introduce a new Arts in Schools Certification system allowing for more transparency in supporting equitable access to arts education.

Along with partners from Duval County Public Schools and Florida Data Science for Social Good at the University of North Florida, CAP will create the Arts in Schools Certification system for Northeast Florida, which will produce a roadmap for expanding quality and access in the arts. This will be a shared system for measuring and understanding equity in access and a tool to support principals' decisions to grow arts instruction in their schools.

This grant is one of 1,251 Grants for Arts Projects awards totaling nearly \$28.8 million that were announced by the NEA as part of its first round of fiscal year 2023 grants. CAP is one of 44 arts organizations in Florida to receive a Grants for Arts Projects award, and one

of only three organizations in the state to be awarded \$50,000 or more.

Cultural Council accepting letters of intent for grant program

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville is now accepting letters of intent for the 2023-24 Cultural Service Grant Program. Letters must be submitted through the Cultural Council's online application platform by Wednesday, March 1, at 11:59 p.m.

The grant program provides public support to organizations that contribute to the cultural quality of life of Jacksonville's residents. Submitting a letter of intent is a mandatory prerequisite to completing the full application for the 2023-24 funding program.

During the 2022-23 fiscal year, the grant program awarded more than \$4.4 million in support to 30 Duval County arts and cultural organizations. This total includes \$3,993,342 in general operating support through the grant program and \$500,000 through a capital grant program for the renovation, construction and acquisition of cultural facilities.

These awards were made possible by a \$5.25 million allocation to the Cultural Council within the City of Jacksonville's 2022-23 budget, representing a 33.98% year-over-year increase and the largest public investment in the organization's history.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

Sports

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PLAYOFF BASKETBALL RECAP: Sharks cruise through regional quarters

By Anthony Richards & Jim Moyes

The postseason could not have started much better for the Ponte Vedra Sharks boys basketball team.

They wasted little time in disposing of host Wiregrass Ranch in their 84-59

regional quarterfinal victory.

The Sharks made the road trip to Wesley Chapel and used their suffocating defense to hold the hosts to but five first quarter points while scoring 18 themselves en route to the commanding victory.

That monster of a first quarter proved too much for the Bulls to overcome and the Sharks did an excellent job of steadily growing the lead until it finally reached its final 25-point margin.

The win was the Sharks' 20th on the season which was also their 3rd straight

season with 20 or more wins.

Israel Nuhu was too much to handle for the host Bulls as he scored a career-high 29 points, and it could not have come at a better time.

BASKETBALL continues on Page 30

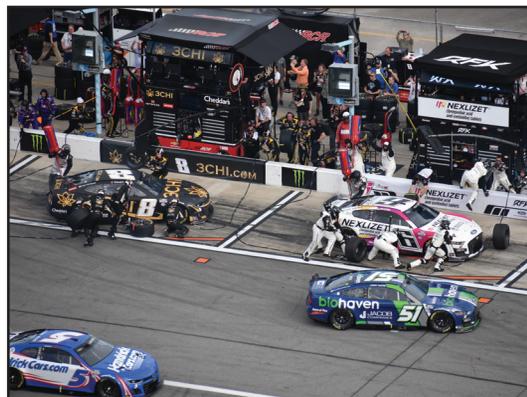
The Great American Race lives up to moniker

The following are photos from the 65th running of the Daytona 500, where people from across the country and the world converged on Daytona International Speedway for the combination of thrilling speed and lasting memories.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Travis Pastrana has some fun with his daughter on pit road prior to the race.



The pit area was a busy place at times during the race.



Floridian Aric Almirola (No. 10) battles Brad Keselowski (No. 6) at the front of the field.



Ronald McDonald shares a moment with a young fan.



NASCAR is celebrating its 75th anniversary this season.



The United States Air Force Thunderbirds performed an air show for fans as part of the pre-race festivities.



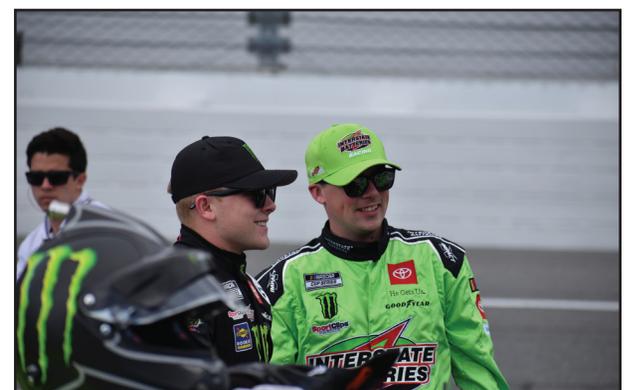
Young fans of Alex Bowman take a photo in front of a replica of his No. 48 Ally Chevrolet.



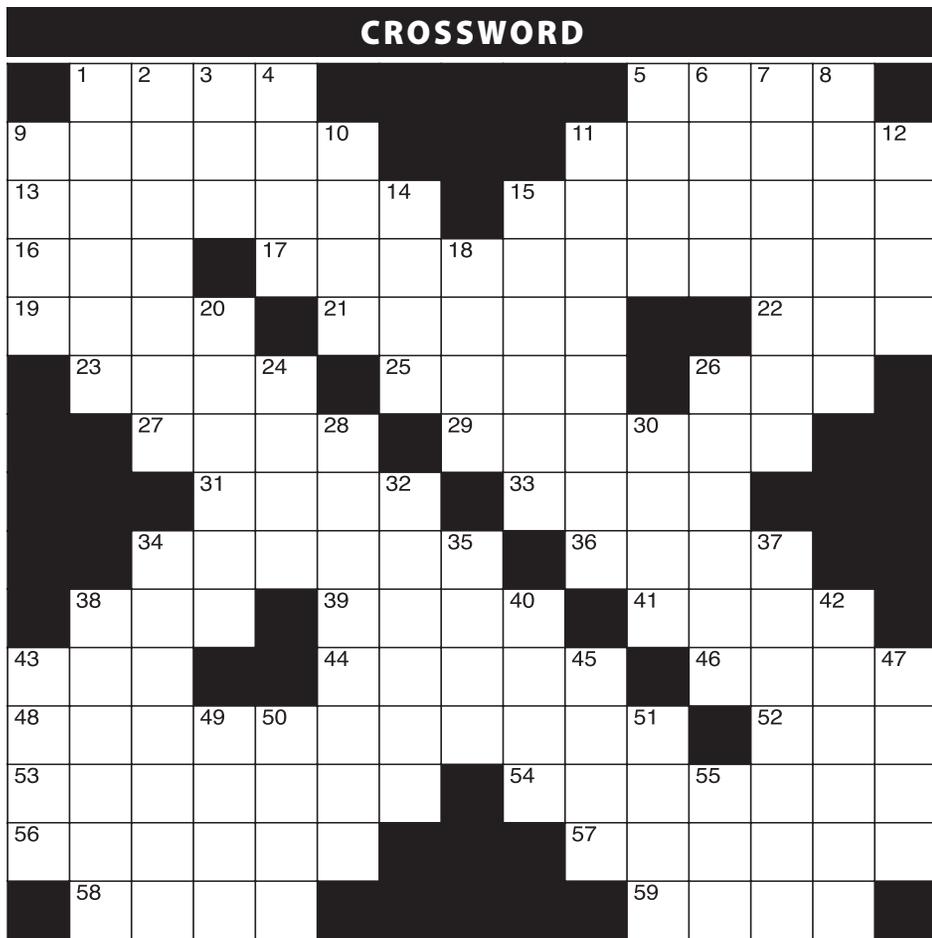
Some fans invite Kyle Busch to visit their camper in the infield.



Members of Jimmie Johnson's crew wish him good luck as he drives off pit road. The seven-time NASCAR champion returned to race the Daytona 500 as part of a part-time schedule he will run.



Ty Gibbs (black fire suit) shares a laugh with a crew member.



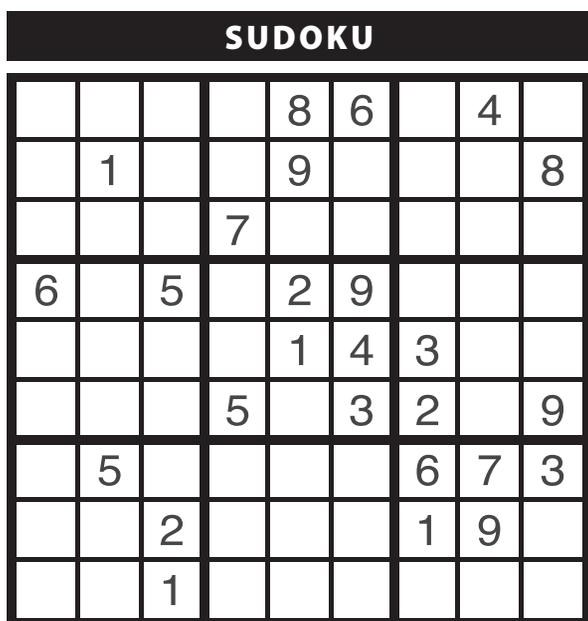
ACROSS

- 1. Sea grape
- 5. European public health group (abbr.)
- 9. A way to delight
- 11. Appetizers
- 13. Ancient heralds' wands
- 15. Make a booking
- 16. '___ death do us part
- 17. Pearl Jam frontman
- 19. Spider genus
- 21. Fill with high spirits
- 22. A major division of geological time
- 23. Catch
- 25. An independent ruler or chieftain
- 26. Electronic music style (abbr.)
- 27. Influential Spanish cubist painter
- 29. Illegally persuades
- 31. A way to derive
- 33. British School
- 34. Appear alongside
- 36. Surely (archaic)
- 38. Harsh cry of a crow
- 39. A day in the middle
- 41. Kansas hoops coach Bill
- 43. The longest division of geological time
- 44. The first sign of the zodiac
- 46. Appetizer
- 48. Link together in a chain
- 52. A bacterium
- 53. In a way, forces apart
- 54. Cheese dish
- 56. Combines
- 57. In an inferior way
- 58. Colors clothes
- 59. Dried-up

- 3. Romanian monetary unit
- 4. The rate at which something proceeds
- 5. A prosperous state of well-being
- 6. Asked for forgiveness
- 7. Makes less soft
- 8. Part of speech
- 9. Outside
- 10. Advice or counsel
- 11. Badness
- 12. Protein-rich liquids
- 14. Not moving
- 15. Call it a career
- 18. Poetry term
- 20. Not wide
- 24. Pastries
- 26. Turns away
- 28. Satisfies
- 30. Gift adornments
- 32. San Diego ballplayers
- 34. Manufacturing plant
- 35. Check or guide
- 37. Dogs do it
- 38. Chilled
- 40. Scorch
- 42. Unproductive of success
- 43. Electronic counter-countermeasures
- 45. Attack with a knife
- 47. Feel bad for
- 49. Enclosure
- 50. Assert
- 51. Geological times
- 55. Midway between east and southeast

DOWN

- 1. Gastropods
- 2. Confusing



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!

THE PLAYERS Profiles: Justin Thomas, Xander Schauffele, Tony Finau

With about two weeks to go until the strongest field in golf reconvenes at TPC Sawgrass, THE PLAYERS Championship will profile three players each week to highlight the biggest storylines and set the stage for the 2023 championship. Justin Thomas, the 2021 champion, will be joined by Xander Schauffele and Tony Finau, with the American trio combining for six victories during the 2021-22 PGA TOUR Season.

Justin Thomas

The 2021 PLAYERS Champion will look to become the seventh multiple winner of THE PLAYERS and first since Tiger Woods won his second in 2013. Thomas overcame a seven-stroke deficit after 36 holes with weekend rounds of 64-68, tying the championship record for the closing 36-hole score. His win at TPC Sawgrass came in his sixth career start and marked his second top-10 in the event (T3/2016). Thomas won once during the 2021-22 season — the PGA Championship — for his 15th career victory, which served as the seventh consecutive season on TOUR with at least one victory.

Xander Schauffele

With three victories during the 2021-

22 season, including back-to-back starts at the Travelers Championship and Genesis Scottish Open, Xander Schauffele seeks to add an eighth career victory to his resume at THE PLAYERS in 2023. In five starts this season, the native Californian has four top-15 finishes, including a T3 finish at The American Express. The 2017 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year returns to TPC Sawgrass for the fifth consecutive year with hopes to recapture what led to a T2 finish in his championship debut in 2018 — his only top-10 finish at the event.

Tony Finau

Tony Finau returned to the winner's circle twice during the 2021-22 season with back-to-back victories at the 3M Open and Rocket Mortgage Classic and went on to finish ninth in the final FedExCup standings. In the 2022-23 season, Finau continued his winning ways with a victory at the Cadence Bank Houston Open in November for his fifth career TOUR title. In five starts since his victory in Houston, Finau has not finished outside the top 20. The Utah native is set to make his seventh appearance at THE PLAYERS as he looks to improve upon his career-best finish of T22 in 2019.

Basketball

Continued from 29

His performance also made him only the fifth Shark in the program's history to score 29 or more points in a game.

Not only did Nuhu make his presence known with his scoring, but he was also a force on the boards and defensively, as he pulled down 11 rebounds while blocking three shots.

Nate Bunkosky had another great floor game as he was credited with 10 assists while also pulling down seven rebounds on the evening.

Ben Ritchie had 17 points while his brother Sam Ritchie also finished in double figures with 12, as the Sharks' winning total of 84 points was just two points shy of their all-time best total of 86.

Fourth quarter scoring ends Panthers' run

The Nease Panthers also had to make a lengthy road trip as they traveled out to the Panhandle of Florida and faced Gulf Breeze.

However, the Panthers lost a tight 54-

49 battle, and their season came to an end in the regional quarterfinals.

It was the fourth quarter that did the Panthers in, as they led 25-20 at the halftime break and 41-39 heading into the final frame.

They saw that lead slip away after being outscored 15-8 by the Dolphins in the fourth quarter.

Despite the loss, the Panthers can hold their heads up high following a memorable season that saw them finish with a record of 18-9.

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