

THE RECORDER



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June 22, 2023
Volume 54, No. 34
\$1.00

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

PonteVedraRecorder.com



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



Photo by Susan Griffin

Chemo Noir held its annual one-mile run/walk and wine tasting event June 17 at the Casa Marina and along Jacksonville Beach. The event is one of the marquee fundraisers traditionally for the nonprofit which strives to provide financial support for families battling cancer. See photos from the event on pages 22-23.

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Subscription Rates, Bulk Mail:

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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

Students' 5K to fight domestic violence

Nease High School's International Baccalaureate students will hold the End Your Summer Off Right 5K from 7:30 to 9 a.m. July 29 to benefit St. Johns County Legal Aid, the St. Augustine office of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid.

Sponsored by Nocatee, the event at 400 Nocatee Center Way in Ponte Vedra will raise funds and awareness for two of St. Johns County Legal Aid's key domestic violence prevention initiatives: injunctions for protection and immigration petitions for abused spouses and trafficking victims.

"We are so grateful to these students for supporting St. Johns County Legal Aid in this important work," said Megan Wall, the managing attorney for the office. "We hope to see a lot of participation from throughout the community."

JALA and St. Johns County Legal Aid represent domestic violence and abuse survivors in filing for injunctions for protection against domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence and related matters. With the special funding they receive, they can represent clients in these cases regardless of whether the clients meet their income eligibility criteria.

Domestic violence survivors who are immigrants can be particularly vulnerable to abuse by their sponsors. JALA and St. Johns County Legal Aid help them petition for immigration status without the help of their abuser under the Violence Against Women Act. They also help other immigrant victims or trafficking victims in petitioning for immigration status.

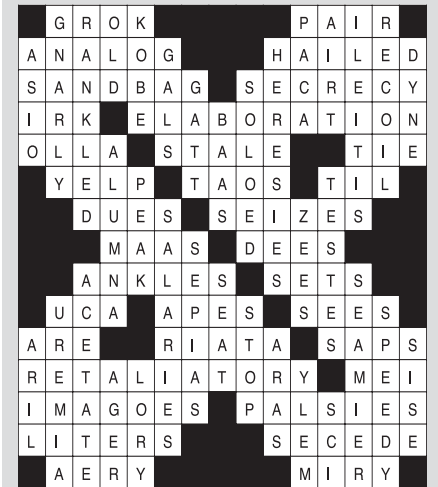
The Nease High School student organizers will be fulfilling a requirement for the Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) component of their IB curriculum and showcasing their commitment to community engagement through the event.

"As an alumnus of Nease High School and a member of the JALA board, I'm exceedingly proud of these students for recognizing the importance of the domestic violence

prevention work St. Johns County Legal Aid does and for stepping up to help in this way," said Stephen Holmgren, an attorney with Purcell, Flanagan, Hay & Greene, P.A., in Jacksonville.

Registration is \$25, plus a \$2.50 processing fee. Register or donate at: www.jaxleg-alaid.org/endyoursummer5k.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



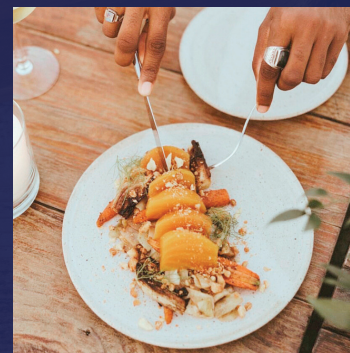
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2	9	6	4	5	7	8	1	3
8	7	4	3	6	1	5	9	2

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Seymour's to add art to its bookstore offerings

Hello, wonderful Ponte Vedra Beach Community!

As many of you may know, there is a used bookstore in the front lobby of the Ponte Vedra Beach Public library called Seymour's Bookstore. It was started by a group called "Friends Of The Library" (FOL) and it is run by a talented staff of devoted volunteers. It is supported by donations from the community and in turn gives significant financial and resource support to the library.

It is a treasure trove of a wide variety of books, puzzles, CDs, DVDs, E-books and vintage vinyl records — all of which have been donated from generous donors.

And now, Seymour's wants to expand our horizons by going in the world of visual art. Our vision is to create an event that showcases a diverse array of artwork while giving back to the community we care about. The art sale will be a platform for both established and emerging artists. All proceeds from the sale will be donated to support Friends of the Library, Ponte Vedra Beach, initiatives.



The date for the art sale will be announced later in 2023. However, in the meantime, Seymour's would welcome

donations of all forms of artwork, including paintings, sculptures, photography, mixed media and more. Your support will make this event a grand success that fosters a wonderful sense of community spirit and pride.

More information regarding a date and details will be forthcoming. In the meantime, please contact Seymour's Bookstore at 904-273-3990 to schedule a donation drop-off time or pick up.

Let's make art history together!

— Eileen Davenport

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OBITUARIES

William (Bill) Lewis Ely

William (Bill) Lewis Ely, 82, died on June 11, 2023 after a five-year journey with Alzheimer's disease. He was born September 13, 1940 in Rochester, NY.

Bill is predeceased by his parents, J. Wallace Ely and Edythe Farnham. Bill is survived by his loving wife, Kristen Coate Ely; children: Laura Bender (Bruce), Anne Reitz (Chip), Arin Bryan (Hogan), Emily Ely (Rubin Miller), Vanessa Guy, and Amadeus Guy (Colette Webb); grandchildren: John, Leslie, Will, Charlie, Rosemary and Olive; siblings: Jim Ely Jr. (Mick) and Sue McQuilkin (Bill).

Bill grew up in Brighton, NY, raised his family in Pittsford, NY, and retired in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL with his wife Kristen. He received his Bachelor's Degree in English literature at Syracuse University. Bill was the owner and president of Sloan & Company (Rochester, NY) and Metro Associates (Jacksonville, FL and West Palm Beach, FL). In addition to work and parenting his children, Bill was a long-term board member for Rochester-based organizations: Davenport-Hatch Foundation, Mary Cariola Children's Center, and Genesee Country Village & Museum. He enjoyed all types

of fishing, golfing with friends and grandchildren, SCUBA-diving, and sailing adventures in the Bahamas and Virgin Islands. His family will cherish many memories with him – sunrise walks and picnics at the beach, skiing in the winter, and unforgettable family vacations. Bill was humble and giving of his time and resources. His extroverted energy, playful sense of humor, and caring nature left an impression on so many people; he was most fulfilled spending time with family and friends.

A private memorial and graveside service will be held in the fall of 2023 in Pittsford, NY. In lieu of flowers, please consider that donations may be made in Bill's memory to Community Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeast Florida via <https://www.community-hospice.com/give/> or Syracuse University, College of Arts & Sciences via <http://givetothecollege.syr.edu>. Please visit his Tribute online at www.quinn-shalz.com.

Arrangements by



Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre
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Phone: 904.249.1100 Fax: 904.241.7554

DEATH NOTICES

Priscilla Leggett Boylan

Priscilla Leggett Boylan, 97, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died June 13, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Michael G. Charapp

Michael G. Charapp, 74, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died June 13, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalle.com

Robert Michael Ducey

Robert Michael Ducey, 96, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died June 16, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Bessie Viola Halter

Bessie Viola Halter, 79, of Jacksonville, Florida, died June 10, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Dolores Marie Holman

Dolores Marie Holman, 95, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died June 10, 2023.

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

Marjeta Mancellari

Marjeta Mancellari, 66, of Jacksonville, Florida, died June 12, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

James Mitchell McMurry

James Mitchell McMurry, 84, of Jacksonville, Florida, died June 15, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Alice Dorothea Murphy

Alice Dorothea Murphy, 81, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died June 18, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Frederick John Robbins

Frederick John Robbins, 89, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died June 12, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz

DEATH NOTICES continues on Page 5



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DEATH NOTICES

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Valerie Wilson Rozier

Valerie Wilson Rozier, 69, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died June 15, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

John Ostrander Stanton

John Ostrander Stanton, 63, of Jacksonville Beach Florida, died June 20, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Veronica Defee Wecker

Veronica Defee Wecker, 92, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died June 17, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

OBITUARIES

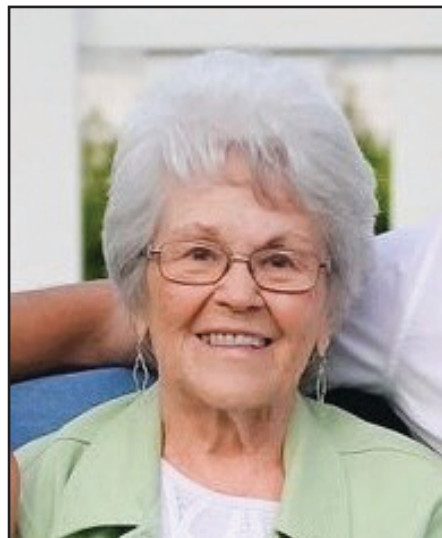
Betty J. (Noblitt, Box) Patterson

Betty J. (Noblitt, Box) Patterson, 93, of Jacksonville, FL, passed away June 6, 2023. She was born in Battle Creek, MI on June 24, 1929 and graduated from high school in Birmingham, AL.

She married Charles T. Patterson in 1982. Betty worked for the federal government in Birmingham, Atlanta and Washington DC.

She was a member of Palms Presbyterian Church where she served as a shepherd and volunteered at Mayo Clinic. She had a passion for flowers, golf, and enjoyed entertaining family and friends.

Betty was preceded in death by her husband Charles T. Patterson, sister Bobbie J. Reeder and is survived by her brother, Ed Noblitt and his two daughters Jennifer Harward (Jay) (Stewart, Travis,



Katie), and Cathy Hedrick (Kevin) (Cale, Garrett), and two stepdaughters, Mary Marbut (Earl) and Cheri Roper (Doug); grandchildren, Denise Corbin, Whit Mar-

but and daughter, Sophia, and Michelle Clark (Eric) and their children, Zach, DeLaney and Hallie.

Funeral service will be held Friday, June 23, 2023 at 1 p.m. at Palms Presbyterian Church, 3410 3rd Street South, Jacksonville Beach, Florida 32250.

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.hardagegiddensbeacheschapel.com for the Patterson family.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of HARDAGE-GIDDENS FUNERAL HOME In Jacksonville Beach, FL.

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Anderson Collier III, M.D., was recently named division chief of hematology/oncology, Department of Pediatrics for Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville.

Anderson Collier III

As told to Shaun Ryan

In your new position, you'll lead a team of physicians and staff at THE PLAYERS Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders. Tell me a little bit about that.

My responsibilities fall into three different categories. First is clinical. I will join a busy practice caring for children with cancer and blood disorders and will continue to provide the world-class care that is already being delivered here. Second is administrative. I will have primary oversight of all the areas of our program and that includes making sure we have the adequate staffing and resources in order to be successful. I will be responsible for not only making the budget but staying within it. And I will work to grow the program. That includes adding new and/or expanding existing programs to keep up with changing trends in delivery of care for childhood cancer and blood disorders, programs such as gene therapy for genetic disorders and immunotherapy for cancer. The third area is research. We have a long and successful history of participation in clinical trials that bring new and cutting-edge treatments to the children in this area. But I plan for us to be leaders in those efforts. We will leverage the resources of Nemours Children's Health both in Florida and Delaware to design innovative clinical research that will create new knowledge, understanding and treatment for children with cancer and blood disorders.

Tell me about your education and professional background. I know you are a national expert in the treatment of sarcomas in children.

I did my undergraduate work and completed medical school at Vanderbilt University. Then I did my training in pediatrics and pediatric hematology-oncology at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. Since completing training, I have practiced at Vanderbilt Medical Center, Lehigh Valley Health Network in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi. My interest in bone sarcomas began during my fellowship training at UT Southwestern while working with my mentor Dr. Patrick Leavey, himself an international expert in bone sarcomas. Since then, I have participated in research in this area with the Children's Oncology Group (COG) and have had the opportunity to present research findings at national and international meetings as well as publish papers. I am currently the COG bone tumor lead on a Pfizer-sponsored study on a new medication for relapsed or refractory Ewing sarcoma.

What drew you to this particular field?

I have wanted to be a doctor since I was a young child. I was a "sickly" child and hospitalized frequently. Instead of turning me off, those experiences drew me to medicine. Then, when I was in high school, one of my cousins was diagnosed with a liver tumor. Despite years of treatment, she died during my freshman year in college. That experience drove me to pediatric oncology, a desire that only grew during medical school. I am one of the rare people who went to medical school to be a pediatric oncologist. Fortunately, one of my classmates who is still one of my close friends had the same desire. He is now the head of Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant at University of California San Francisco.



What do you like most about what you do?

That is a hard question to answer as I enjoy many things about my job. And the opportunity to do all the things we have already talked about keeps me engaged. But what I like most is the privilege of walking with kids and families through the worst time of their life. "Your child has cancer" might be the worst four words a parent can hear, and they are extremely hard words to say. But from that point, I get to develop a relationship with them. I get to know the mother, father, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, neighbors and pastors and be there for them in the hard times. Fortunately, most of the time the outcome is good; the survival rate for childhood cancer is over 70%. We receive wedding invitations, graduation announcements and birth announcements from former patients. Those always put a smile on everyone's face. But even when the outcome is not good, the responsibility to help the child and the family through those times is essential. I still have some very close relationships with families of children who I treated but did not survive.

You and your family are moving here to the First Coast. Where will you be coming from?

I was born and raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee. My wife is from Louisiana. We have lived in Ridgeland, Mississippi, a suburb of Jackson, for the past 10 years where I was the professor of pediatrics at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

What aspects of living on the First Coast do you look forward to?

The increased access to activities, which includes the beach, cultural activities, concerts, sporting events, etc. For my son, it is paintball. He is a competitive paintball player, and there are more teams and opportunities in this area than where we came from.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I like to cook, play guitar, eat at good restaurants (fancy or a dive does not matter if the food is good), spend time with my family, play TV detective and play paintball with my son.

The link celebrates members as it marks two years



By Shaun Ryan

The link was hopping Wednesday, June 14, as families gathered to celebrate the facility's second annual Membership Appreciation Night.

There were bounce houses for the little ones, tasty cuisine from the Fusion Food Truck, pizza for the kids and ice cream for all. After a brief presentation by link co-founder Raghu Misra relating the origins of the venue, as well as some of its newer programs, attendees participated in a digital poll, their responses instantly appearing on the large screen in the main lobby.

A membership award was presented to Todd Rovinelli and Erika Reinikainen-Rovinelli, who have been active at the link since April 2021. When asked what word he entered in the digital poll to describe the facility, Todd Rovinelli said,



Photo by Shaun Ryan

Link co-founder Raghu Misra, left, chats with a couple of guests during the facility's Membership Appreciation Night.

"Home."

"Because when we're not home, we're always at the link," he explained.

The couple and their son attend all the events at the facility, located at 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra, with their son

participating in jiu jitsu, kids' yoga, robotics, cooking, summer camp and more.

The family recently opened their CKO Kickboxing Ponte Vedra franchise in the plaza behind Nease High School.

Also on hand was Nitin Amin, sales

and leasing consultant with Mercedes-Benz of Orange Park, who parked four EVs outside the building for attendees to examine.

"We're ready to answer as many questions as we can to get you excited," he said.

Misra was pleased with the turnout.

"It's very, very humbling to see there are so many people in the community who actually embrace the vision of the link," he said.

He expressed a desire to attract more multiple generations of local families. Currently, the youngest member is 4, the oldest 91.

The link is a smart building at the forefront of embracing technology for smart workspaces, event spaces and experiences. One of its many missions is to serve as a business incubator. Recently, Danny Yakel launched PROTACTX Brazilian Jiu Jitsu after first teaching classes at the link.

"He is a classic example of why the link got built," said Misra. "We want to help an entrepreneur like Danny and others."



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Lack of defense of drainage system has created flooding issues

By Anthony Richards

Drainage issues among neighborhoods in the Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District was brought up by trustee Mickey White, who is in his first year as a trustee and helping oversee road and bridge-related issues.

According to White, St. Johns County manages and owns San Juan Drive, Pablo Road and Ponte Vedra Boulevard, which means to address any issue that arises on the roadways, the MSD has to work with the county to get the job done.

After doing research and looking into the flooding issues that seem to become more frequent of a problem, White informed the board that much of the area that makes up the MSD adopted a swale drainage system around the 1930s.

However, since the 1960s there have been many changes to homes and front yards over the years, and in some of the cases it included filling in the inlet initially put there as part of the necessary requirement that makes a swale system operate correctly.

“In an ideal world, they (homeowners) should have been told,” White said. “That’s why Ponte Vedra Boulevard and San Juan both flood. It’s because they have a system that has been chopped up and it has left it no longer in working order. Areas that don’t have curb are the focus because they are the worst.”

White let the board know that he has been calling county engineer Duane Kent once a month since joining the MSD in hopes of talking further about the issue at hand.

“The county is currently asking the state to be grandfathered in so that we can go in and maintain the pipes that we have that are failing and/or are rotten,” White said. “Can we do that without having to meet the current nutrient standards and sedimentation reduction standards? That



Photo by Anthony Richards

An example of the swale drainage system along Ponte Vedra Boulevard.

appeal is in, and if we want to have a dry sidewalk, we need them (state) to say yes to that.”

White stated that it’s going to have to get addressed because it will eventually create a saturated base and road failures will follow.

At the end of the day, White believes that the swale system is still a viable approach to drainage and water flow, and it is not too late to return back to a much more efficient system, but there are many steps that need to be taken first in the

process to make that happen.

“We need to come up with a way that we can put a Band-aid on this and make it better so that we’re not having water coming in people’s garages, that’s what I’m trying to accomplish in my time on the board here, and I hope I’m able to get it done,” White said. “It’s not simple, and we’re going to have to jump through an extreme amount of red tape to get it done. But if we can, I think we can educate people and come up with a solution and we may have to rip up a few front yards

and redo a lot of sidewalks, because those will have to be either yard drains or under drains.”

In the future, maybe there could be a scenario where the MSD has a steward in charge of watching over to make sure the swale system is remaining in place and not messed with, but at the moment he referred to the current situation as “gridlock,” and that it would be best to first have an idea how to solve the problem before they go about handling it more in-depth.



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Citizens Traffic Task Force survey results announced

Just released results from the 2023 Citizens Traffic Task Force Survey show strong support for design improvements to several key intersections along State Road A1A in Ponte Vedra Beach but mixed results for other proposed roadway changes.

The survey solicited responses through:

1. the email lists of the homeowners and community associations that are represented on the Task Force
2. a survey link that appeared in the Ponte Vedra Recorder
3. the email lists of the Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) at local schools.

In total, the Task Force received almost 2,100 responses to the survey.

A summary of the results from the 2023

survey shows:

- A clear majority (80%) favor the intersection improvements at Sawgrass Village Drive and S.R. A1A.
- A clear majority (80%) favor the intersection improvements at Tournament Players Boulevard and S.R. A1A.
- A slight majority (56%) favor the widening of S.R. A1A (two to four lanes) from Mickler Road to Fairfield at Ponte Vedra Beach.
- A majority (63%) oppose replacing the roundabout at County Road 210 and Mickler Road with a signalized intersection.
- A slight majority (56%) favor the widening of Palm Valley Road (from two

to four lanes) from the Palm Valley Bridge to the roundabout.

- A slight majority (54%) favor the widening of Mickler Road (from two to four lanes) from the roundabout to S.R. A1A.

Also last week, St. Johns County announced it will receive \$59 million in appropriations from the State of Florida after Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget into law. Included within that appropriation is \$6 million earmarked for the S.R. A1A intersection improvements highlighted in the survey, as well as for yet to be defined improvements at Solano Road and S.R. A1A.

Those funds are expected to cover all of the design and engineering costs associ-

ated with those projects. The Task Force expressed gratitude to the local legislative delegation and county staff for their support to obtain this funding and for bringing the community closer to improved traffic flow and road safety in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The Citizens Traffic Task Force Board consists of representatives from the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition, the Ponte Vedra Community Association, the Palm Valley Community Association, the Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District, the Ponte Vedra Lakes Owners Association and from the Sawgrass, Marsh Landing, Plantation and Sawgrass Player's Club homeowners' associations.



Contributed photos

OPE 5th-grade students enjoy graduation ceremonies, a foam party and outdoor games in their final week of elementary school.

Ocean Palms sends off 5th-grade class

Ocean Palms Elementary School bid farewell to the graduating 5th-grade class of 2022-23 with graduation ceremonies, a talent show, foam party fun, outside activities, a Chick-fil-A and Tikiz lunch and the traditional Ocean Palms schoolwide clap out.

It was an exciting week of goodbyes as this group of Ocean Palms Otters became Landrum Lions, starting with a graduation ceremony for the various

5th-grade classes. A student, nominated by their peers, spoke for each class.

Additionally, Principal Tiffany Cantwell gave a heartfelt tribute to the outgoing class.

Students also had an opportunity to share their many talents with peers in the 5th-grade talent show where the audience was entertained with gymnastics stunts and magic tricks, among other acts. Students also had an opportunity to

laugh among friends at the outdoor foam party.

Finally, students, teachers and staff of all grades lined the halls on their last

day to clap, high five and congratulate the 5th-grade class of 2022-23 as they walked the halls of Ocean Palms one last time.



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Fireworks over the Matanzas is produced by the City of St. Augustine with funding support from the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council. Visit www.FloridaHistoricCoast.com for St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and the Beaches visitor information.



Club raises funds for local charities



The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club has raised more than \$50,000 to give directly to five local charities. The club invites local women to join and have fun, meet new friends and be a part of something positively making a huge local contribution. The club will meet 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. July 18 at Refinery Jax Beach, 831 1st St. North, Jacksonville Beach. Learn more at pontevdrawomansclub.com.

Contributed photos



Grocer serves hungry seniors

Winn-Dixie is partnering with Pie in the Sky Community Alliance to surprise and delight St. Johns County seniors in need with fresh foods to fill their pantry shelves and with quality time to put smiles on their faces.

On Wednesday, June 14, Winn-Dixie associates visited residents of Southern Villas apartments in St. Augustine to deliver 100 cartons of SE Grocers eggs and fresh produce to food-insecure seniors who do not have access to nutritious foods and other resources. The needed essentials and quality time spent with residents had a direct impact on the health and well-being of St. Johns County seniors.

As part of the partnership, Winn-Dixie will continue to donate 100 cartons of eggs each month to Pie in the Sky Community Alliance to help fuel their ongoing food deliveries to more than 550 senior neighbors in need and fight hunger throughout St. Johns County.

According to the U.S. Census, more than 6,000 seniors are hungry in St. Johns County. Winn-Dixie said it wants to help fill that void and is passionate about serving and celebrating its community, especially older adults in need.

Founded in 1925, Winn-Dixie grocery stores, liquor stores and in-store pharmacies serve communities throughout five southeastern states – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. Winn-Dixie Stores, Inc. is a subsidiary of Southeastern Grocers, an omnichannel retailer and one of the largest conventional supermarket companies in the U.S., serving customers in brick-and-mortar grocery stores, liquor stores and in-store pharmacies as well as online with convenient grocery delivery and curbside pickup throughout the Southeast.

Ponte Vedra Library plans programs

Here's a look at the upcoming adult services department programming at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

• **Free Tech Help with David:** Drop in for tech assistance with your Android, Apple, and Reader devices – no RSVPs required. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. July 6. For more details, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch

• **Literary Movie Matinee:** "Death on the Nile" [2022] (PG-13), 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 14. Adults are invited to the summer movie fest of movies based on popular adult books. For more details, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch.

• **Free Tech Help with David:** Drop in for tech assistance with your Android, Apple, and Reader devices – no RSVPs required. 10:30 a.m. to

12:30 p.m. July 20. For more details, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch

• **Book Lovers Book Club:** 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. July 21. Join a discussion on "Wrong Place, Wrong Time" by Gillian McAllister. For more details, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch.

• **Conversations with Authors:** Gillian McAllister, "Wrong Place, Wrong Time," 3-4 p.m. July 27 via Zoom. To RSVP for a Zoom link and for more details, go to sjcpls.org/event/zoom-conversations-with-authors-gillian-mcallister-wrong-place-wrong-time.

• **Literary Movie Matinee:** "Where the Crawdads Sing" (PG-13), 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 4. For more details, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch.

• **Free Tech Help with David:** Drop in for tech assistance with your Android, Apple, and Reader devices – no RSVPs required. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Aug. 17. For more details, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch

• **Book Lovers Book Club:** Discuss "The Spectacular: by Fiona Davis. 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Aug. 18. For more details, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch.

• **Conversations with Authors:** Fiona Davis, "The Spectacular," 3-4 p.m. Aug. 24. An interview with author Gillian McAllister and her book, "The Spectacular." To RSVP for a Zoom link and for more details, please visit this link sjcpls.org/event/zoom-conversations-with-authors-fiona-davis-the-spectacular.

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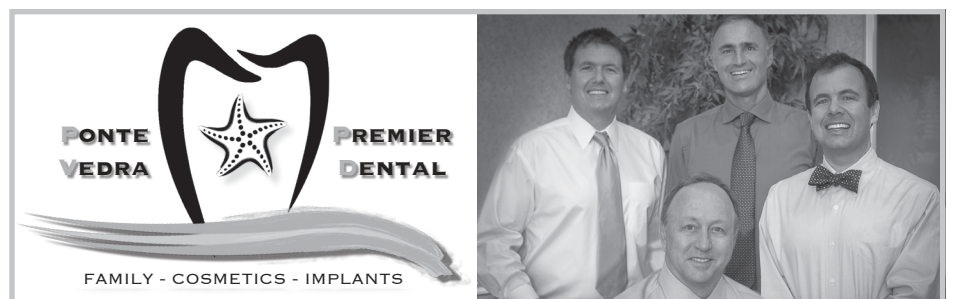
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County residents do part to help turtle nesting

The St. Johns County Solid Waste Division teamed up with various local nonprofits for the 20th Annual Turtletown USA Beach Cleanup in May to help remove litter and debris from the beaches to help turtles during their nesting season, which is from May 1 to Oct. 31.

Contributed photos



2023-24 Florida Forum Speaker Series schedule announced

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital has announced the 2023-24 Florida Forum Speaker Series schedule. The speakers and event dates are:

- Mike Krzyzewski, the passionate, dynamic and inspiring coach of Duke University men's basketball team, on Nov. 8.
- Steve Wozniak, Silicon Valley icon, technology entrepreneur and philanthropist, on Jan. 17, 2024.
- Adm. James Stavridis (Ret.), who received numerous U.S and international medals and decorations while serving for 37 years in the U.S. Navy, on Feb. 26, 2024.

The Florida Forum series events will take place at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts. Programs begin at 7 p.m.

The series is made possible by long-time partners and sponsors Wells Fargo, Landstar and Florida Blue. This year's Florida Forum Speaker Series co-chairs are Meg Folds, Drew Haramis and Robin Love.



Mike Krzyzewski

Presented by The Women's Board, the Florida Forum raises awareness and funds for Wolfson Children's Hospital, supporting its mission to provide the highest quality of advanced pediatric health care regardless of ability to pay. The Women's Board has committed to raise \$1.5 million for a new Kids Kare



Steve Wozniak

Mobile ICU, a neonatal and pediatric critical care transport vehicle, including equipment and services necessary for the operation of the ambulance by 2024.

Wolfson Children's Hospital is the only full-service hospital for children in the region. Kids Kare vehicles and helicopters safely transport more than 2,250 infants



Adm. James Stavridis (Ret.)

and children a year to Wolfson Children's Hospital for emergency critical care, trauma and specialty care. Of those transported, 15% are newborns in need of neonatal intensive care services.

For ticket information, go to thefloridaforum.com, call 904-202-2886, or email womensboard@bmcjax.com.



Photo by Shaun Ryan

Flagler Health+ President and CEO Carlton DeVooght addresses attendees at the recent St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Quarterly Breakfast as UF Health President David R. Nelson looks on.

Flagler Health+, UF Health presidents address partnership

By Shaun Ryan

With the completed integration of Flagler Health+ into UF Health still more than two months away, the first public discussion by their respective presidents was understandably general and limited in detail.

As Flagler Health+ President and CEO Carlton DeVooght put it: “We do have some competitors in the room, and we just don’t feel it’s appropriate to give them the playbook before the game starts.”

The “room” was a large meeting space at World Golf Village Renaissance St. Augustine Resort, every seat taken for the Friday, June 16, event, the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Quarterly Breakfast.

Sensitive details aside, DeVooght and UF Health President David R. Nelson did offer attendees a look at the arrangement’s process and some of the benefits it is expected to generate for the region, including what might be considered “game changers” for the local health care landscape.

“UF is excited to partner not only with Flagler Health+ but with St. Johns County,” Nelson told his audience, all Chamber members or their guests.

The plan was first announced in February and a definitive agreement was reached in May. But even before that, the two health care entities had announced plans in December 2021 to collaborate on an expansion of graduate medical education programs and clinical services, including new primary care sites in St. Johns and Flagler counties.

DeVooght, appointed president and CEO in March 2022, was just three months into his new job when he spoke with the Flagler Health+ Board of Directors about the need to join a like-minded health system to help enhance local health care services and expand access to care.

The executive team put together an RFP (request for proposal) setting forth several goals that included: growing to meet the needs of the community, enhancing quality and patient satisfaction, maintaining key community-focused services, strengthening recruitment and retention, gaining enhanced information technology resources and expertise, maintaining a strong financial position and enhancing access to capital.

Some of these goals were connected.

“In order to grow, we had to have access to capital markets,” said DeVooght. That meant having a partner with greater scale. In this regard, UF Health, a \$5 billion organization, would be an ideal partner.

Regarding the desire to strengthen retention, Flagler Health+ saw immediate results at a career fair in Gainesville following the announcement of the planned integration. Typically, the hospital system could expect three nursing students to express interest.

“After this announcement, we received 34 resumes from nurses that will be joining our team,” DeVooght said.

The arrangement will help “plug a hole” along the I-95 corridor in St. Johns County where access to a nearby, full-service hospital has not kept pace with the influx of new residents. This would include

Nocatee.

A key part of that strategy will be the completion of the Flagler Health+ Durbin Park campus, which will feature an acute-care hospital, an outpatient surgery center, medical offices and more on its 42.5-acre campus. Ground was broken for that project in June 2021, and it was initially expected to be completed in three phases over a six-year period.

“We’re still going to need a lot of input from the community,” Nelson said. “What are the services that you would want to see? That’s a conversation that’s coming soon.”

With the inclusion of the Flagler Health+ facilities, UF Health will have a contiguous hospital presence from Halifax Health | UF Health Medical Center of Deltona all the way north to UF Health Wildlight in Nassau County.

A benefit to Flagler Health+ will be investment by UF Health in existing hospital facilities and equipment and a commitment to complete projects currently under way.

“One of the things we promised when we came to the table is to invest, invest not only in the St. Augustine campus but the Flagler footprint,” said Nelson.

This also means the introduction of medical training programs, new electronic health records and full connectivity across the whole system.

But one thing the changes will not include is replacing local doctors with those from UF Health, according to Nelson.

An area of interest for the prospective partners is the creation of “neighborhood hospitals,” which can save patients money

and drive time when the needed care does not demand seeking it in a standard emergency department.

One service Nelson hopes to bring to St. Johns County is a mobile stroke treatment unit.

“We have made the commitment to put one in every one of our facilities,” Nelson said.

UF Health currently has one in Gainesville and is planning one each in Jacksonville and The Villages.

Basically, this neurologic ICU on wheels staffed with a team of experts in constant contact with a neurologist via telemedicine responds to a 911 call where stroke is suspected. The speedy response is critical; every minute a stroke is untreated, 2 million brain cells are lost.

“If you can get somebody this kind of treatment within one hour, the likelihood is they will walk out of the hospital with no function deficits,” said Nelson.

But these \$1.5 million mobile units don’t make money, which is the reason there are only 19 nationwide. So, UF Health seeks to partner with donors willing to help fund them.

Once the health systems’ arrangement is completed in early September, officials can begin working toward bringing a mobile stroke unit to St. Johns County.

Both DeVooght and Nelson expressed optimism for the new arrangement between their respective health systems and how it will benefit the area.

“This is a day where all the health care providers in this community are going to take a step up,” said DeVooght.

Conservation is main topic at eagle scout-led event

Eagle Scout Nicholas Storm led a community talk pertaining to conservation on June 3. It focused on methods that anyone can take part in with their home gardens. The event took place at the Lord of Life Lutheran Church's prayer garden, which Storm led the effort to create en route to his Eagle Scout honor.

Contributed photos



To kickstart conservation in their own gardens and communities, attendees constructed butterfly puddlers and pine cone bird feeders.



Nicholas Storm, Eagle Scout with Troop 277 gave a community talk on June 3 at the Lord of Life Lutheran Church's conservation prayer garden, which he created.



Storm explained how the garden exemplified conservation through its use of Florida native plants.

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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

Beat the heat plants for your landscape!

"Some of the best memories are made in flip-flops." — Kellie Elmore

By Kathy Esfahani



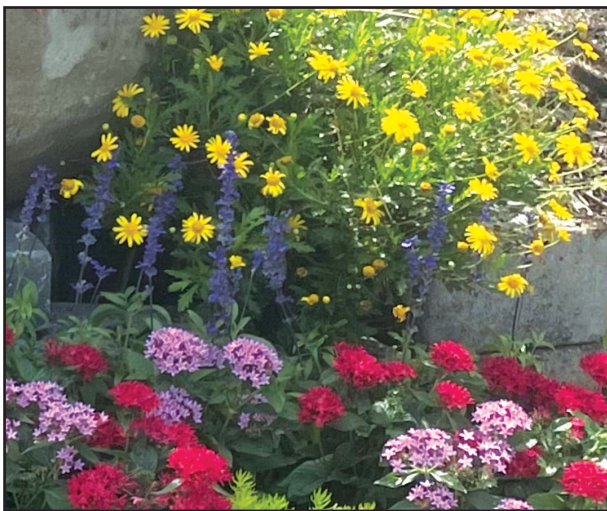
Kathy Esfahani

The summer months in Northeast Florida can be hot and humid! Plants must be hardy enough to withstand these sometimes-harsh conditions.

For heat tolerant plants in areas of full sun, look for black-eyed susan, blue daze, bush daisy, coleus, dune sunflower, gaillardia, gazania, lantana, melampodium, milkweed, ornamental peppers, pentas, portulaca, purslane, Texas sage, vinca, zinnia and all types of sedums and succulents.

Carolina jessamine, otherwise known as yellow jessamine, grows as a vine, so it is a great choice for climbing up a landscape feature such as a trellis, arbor or pergola.

These yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers release a sweet fragrance and are very heat tolerant. Blue daze is salt tolerant and grows beautifully in eastern exposure. Once established, it requires little care other than extra water during dry weather. The plants are covered with small



Heat loving plants

blue flowers that close during the afternoon heat. No deadheading is required!

Vinca is a great annual flower that comes in a variety of colors for hot, dry weather. Their needs are minimal: low water and fertilizer.

Other beautiful plants for the summer heat are bulbine, bush daisy, butterfly bush, firebush, firespike, hydrangea, Mexican heather, plumbago, salvia and shrimp plant.

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Flower of the Week



Gaillardia

Heat-tolerant plants for shady areas include begonias and impatiens, both annuals.

Also consider agapanthus, alternanthera, alocasia, arbuticola, caladiums, foxtail fern, Hawaiian ti, ornamental sweet potato and stromanthe.

Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Gaillardia

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 and ideas, visit Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. The phone number is 904-655-7373.

Ground broken for Jacksonville University's St. Johns County location

Cross Regions Group, a multifaceted company specializing in commercial real estate services, has announced the ground-breaking for the building that will become Jacksonville University's newest location at The Fountains at St. Johns in St. Johns County.

The Fountains at St. Johns will be the university's second location beyond the Jacksonville area. The first floor of the two-story, 12,000-square-foot building will be used as an educational facility for the university's health care sciences programs.

"Jacksonville University is thrilled to continue expanding our regional footprint by bringing our in-demand health care sciences programs to a new learning site at The Fountains development in St. Johns County," said Christine Sapienza, executive vice president of partnership and development, Jacksonville University. "We are particularly excited to explore and develop unique learning opportunities at this strategically located site, which sits right in the heart of a rapidly-growing area and next door to the outstanding Ascension St. Vincent's Health Center — St. Johns."

Jacksonville University's Brooks Rehabilitation College of Healthcare Sciences is a provider of health care science and applied health science education, offering immersive, hands-on learning experiences



Contributed photo

Pictured from left: Edmundo Gonzalez, Cross Regions Group; Mike Cox, Dana B. Kenyon; Doug Smith, Cross Regions Group; Wally Barrs, SouthState Bank; David Ergisi, Cross Regions Group; Dr. Christine Sapienza, Jacksonville University; Joe Bajalia, Dana B. Kenyon; and Chris Chapman, Dana B. Kenyon.

from highly qualified faculty and staff, and through hundreds of industry partnerships.

To address the growing gap in primary care services and dire workforce shortages across critical health care disciplines, Brooks Rehabilitation College aims to prepare health care professionals for

careers defined by excellence in practice, community service and lifelong professional development.

Construction on the new facility will begin in May 2023, with completion anticipated in Summer 2024.

Cross Regions Group's The Fountains at St. Johns is a mixed-use medical and re-

tail development that includes Ascension St. Vincent's Health Center — St. Johns.

In process or under construction are a 160-room Home 2 Suites by Hilton hotel, 174 upscale apartments with 30,000 square feet of retail on first floor, 276 apartments from Madison Capital, a 13,000-square-foot facility for Chappell Schools and a Town Square with 35,000 square feet of retail and restaurants.

Future plans include an assisted living facility and wellness center. The development is located on nearly 100 acres at the northeastern intersection of County Road 210 West and Interstate 95 in northern St. Johns County.

"Jacksonville has become a globally recognized health care hub and Jacksonville University is advancing its position and expanding its reach as a leader in cutting-edge health care education," said Cross Regions Group President and CEO David Ergisi. "Our vision is to provide an ideal site in a convenient location, and we are honored to have Jacksonville University coming soon to The Fountains at St. Johns."

Cross Regions Group also is developing Duval Station, a medical and retail center in North Jacksonville, and Tyler Plaza West and Coastal Callahan, medical and retail centers in Nassau County.

For more information, go to crossregions.com.

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FEATURING

Horses play impactful role for those with autism **PAGE 16**

Food pantry donations doubled **PAGE 16**

Roll the dice to help the homeless **PAGE 19**

Active senior going places with Dial-a-Ride **PAGE 20**

Be proactive with first responder peer support **PAGE 21**

Chemo Noir 1 Mile and Wine Tasting approaches \$40k raised **PAGE 22**

Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary celebrates half-century of service **PAGE 24**

THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2023

Horses play impactful role for those with autism

Bit of Faith Ranch has offered unique approach since 2020

By Anthony Richards

Tammy Romanczuk had been around and working with horses since she was 10 years old and has always understood that horses can have a special impact on people's lives.

However, it was not until 2020 that she truly saw the difference horses can have on those dealing with non-verbal autism and she created Bit of Faith Ranch in Ponte Vedra Beach shortly after.

"My son, now 19, has been severely impacted by autism and had only said a handful of words his whole life," Romanczuk said. "I always took him on rides with me walking alongside the horse and I would always say 'up, up, up,' and 'down, down, down,' every time we went on a hill, it's just something I did. But one day I don't know why, but I forgot to say it and the next thing I heard was my son saying 'up, up, up.' It was an amazing moment."

After sharing that precious moment with her son, she knew there was something special taking place and that horses were at the center of it.

"I knew how difficult it can be to find a place that can properly accommodate those with the more severe forms of autism," she said. "We have riders from 5 years old to 45 years old."

Starting the nonprofit up during a pandemic was not ideal, but she found that it actually created a unique avenue for the organization to help because it offered people a form of assistance that could be performed outside in a time when everyone was looking for ways like that.

"In a way it actually helped get our name out there," Romanczuk said.

In the two years since starting the operation, she continues to discover the various benefits that can come from horses on those with autism.

According to Romanczuk, the nonprofit is more than just a riding program, as about a year ago it established its "mustang volunteers" initiative, where those with autism can help the staff tend to the horses.

The initiative was created because Romanczuk realized that horses could have



Photo courtesy of Bit of Faith Ranch

The "mustang volunteers" program started a year ago and gives those with autism the opportunity to work with the staff to tend to the horses at Bit of Faith Ranch.

an effect beyond just riding them.

"There's just something about brushing them and just being around the horses that can be so calming," she said.

Romanczuk believes horses have a knack for understanding the situation and

RANCH continues on Page 17

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Food pantry donations doubled

The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services (JFCS) Max Block Food Pantry Matching Challenge is in full swing now through July 31, which means any gift you give toward hunger relief will be automatically doubled. And the need is especially great right now. With free or reduced lunches unavailable over summer break, local students who relied on school for regular, healthy meals no longer have that support. This is in addition to hundreds of working families simply struggling to make ends meet with grocery prices still running high.

"We are grateful to the Block family for their enduring generosity and commitment to helping hungry families in need," said Colleen Rodriguez, CEO of JFCS. "Doubling each donation will have a significant impact on our food pantry, enabling us to help food-insecure people this summer and beyond."

JFCS and the Max Block Food Pantry serve people of all ages, races, religions and backgrounds. Last year, JFCS served more than 15,000 clients with more than 135,000 meals. Learn more and have your donation doubled at JFCSjax.org.

Photos courtesy of Bit of Faith Ranch



Bit of Faith Ranch was created in Ponte Vedra Beach in 2020.

Ranch

Continued from 16

reading the moment.

“It also takes some really special horses to do this as well, which is what we have here at Bit of Faith Ranch,” Romanczuk said.

Horses have to have a sense of patience and calmness in their approach to the situation, just as people do.

The nonprofit has three horses current-

ly and because they offer their services free of charge for all families, they rely heavily on donations and volunteers.

Donations can be made by clicking on the donations tab at bitoffaithranch.org and for more information about how to get involved with the nonprofit call 904-373-0195 or email contact@bitoffaithranch.org.

“We try to serve the whole family, because it impacts the whole family,” she said.



Three horses are currently part of the stable at Bit of Faith Ranch.

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Roll the dice to help the homeless

Port in the Storm hosts Casino Royale July 22

By Anthony Richards

Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center is preparing to host its Fourth Annual Casino Royale celebration to benefit the nonprofit's efforts in the community.

The event will take place July 22 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Art 'N Motion located at 283 San Marco Ave., in St. Augustine.

Event tickets are \$100 and VIP tickets are \$175, both prices are per person, and the tickets include \$250 game vouchers per person so that they can fully immerse themselves like they are on the casino floor in Monte Carlo.

There are 150 regular tickets available for the event and 75 VIP tickets available for the public to purchase.

Heavy hors d'oeuvres, two drink tickets, a variety of gaming tables, live entertainment and raffle prizes will all be part of the night's agenda and are

included with each ticket.

VIP tickets will allow guests entrance into the VIP lounge upstairs at the facility which will include an open bar and other amenities such as additional private game tables.

However, tickets are not the only way to get involved with the fundraising effort, as sponsorships are also very much appreciated.

There are several categories in which event sponsors can be included and is the case for the celebration, with portions of the proceeds will go toward benefiting both Port in the Storm and St. Francis House, which serves as the adult homeless center for those in need in the area.

Tickets and sponsorships can both be purchased by going to bidpal.net/casinoroyale23 and filling out the application process available on the website or registration can also be sent via mail by sending payment and sponsorship form to Port in the Storm, 1375 Arapaho Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32084.

The deadline for sponsorships to be



Photo courtesy of St. Francis House/Port in the Storm

There will be plenty of games for patrons to have fun with during the night.

CASINO ROYALE continues on Page 25

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Contributed photos

Eva Harnik uses Dial-a-Ride to get where she's going.

Active senior going places with Dial-a-Ride

By Rick Mehaffey

Dial-a-Ride transports people around the Beaches, but one of its most interesting riders is an energetic 94-year-old named Eva Harnik.

Harnik stopped driving three years ago after her depth perception changed.

“A neighbor told me about Dial-a-Ride, and as soon as I decided not to drive, I called them up,” she said. “It’s been a blessing for me.”

A retired anesthesiologist, Harnik began swimming when she was 3 years old in her native Hungary. She has always maintained an active lifestyle, which was just as important to her as she aged. She currently walks three days a week and swims regularly at the local YMCA.

Born in the capitol city of Budapest, Harnik earned her medical degree from the Budapest University of Medical Science. At age 28, she moved to a former mining village in the Midlands of England to practice medicine. After 17 years in England, she earned a fellowship at the famed Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Next came a position at Georgetown University Hospital, where she

practiced until her retirement.

Her independence and passion for active living led to two “post-retirement” careers as a landscaping designer and then as a travel writer and photographer. She published more than 20 travel articles in the Washington Times on locales around the globe. She has traveled to northern Africa, Nepal and Bhutan for trekking expeditions.

These days, Harnik uses Dial-a-Ride for less exotic treks but ones that keep her self-sufficient and independent: the grocery store, shopping, doctor’s appointments and more. What she most enjoys are the trips to the Ponte Vedra YMCA. Remaining active is key to her physical and emotional well-being. Dial-a-Ride plays a vital role in that.

“My quality of life would be different without Dial-a-Ride,” she said. “I depend on them a great deal. They are all pleasant, lovely people. Always friendly.”

Dial-a-Ride makes connections to improve the quality of life for homebound seniors and disabled adults in Jacksonville’s beaches communities. To support its mission or for more information, go to beachescoa.org or call 904-246-1477.



Eva Harnik with Dial-a-Ride representative Mark.

Be proactive with first responder peer support

LSF Health Systems' First Responder Peer Support Program is available to firefighters, police officers, EMTs, dispatchers and other first responders across 20 counties in Northern, Central and Northeast Florida, including Duval County.

Statistics show nearly 30% of first responders will develop a behavioral health condition, including but not limited to depression and PTSD, during the course of their career. The program hopes to change those numbers by offering free, confidential mental health support from someone who has been there and gets it.

"We know many law enforcement and fire departments have their own internal support programs; this is ideal for first responders who may not want to speak with someone directly in their department," said Dr. Christine Cauffield, CEO of LSF Health Systems. "What also makes this program special is that it's also catered toward family members because they too may need help navigating the mental health effects of the profession."

All someone has to do is call 211 and identify themselves as a first responder or a family member of a first responder. They will be privately connected with a peer specialist immediately or within 24 hours. First responders can go to StayFit-forDuty.org for more information.



Contributed photo

Brian Smith, left, and Scott Surrency with the Putnam County Sheriff's Office are advocates for mental health in their own departments and have been instrumental in speaking on behalf of LSF's First Responder Peer Support Program.



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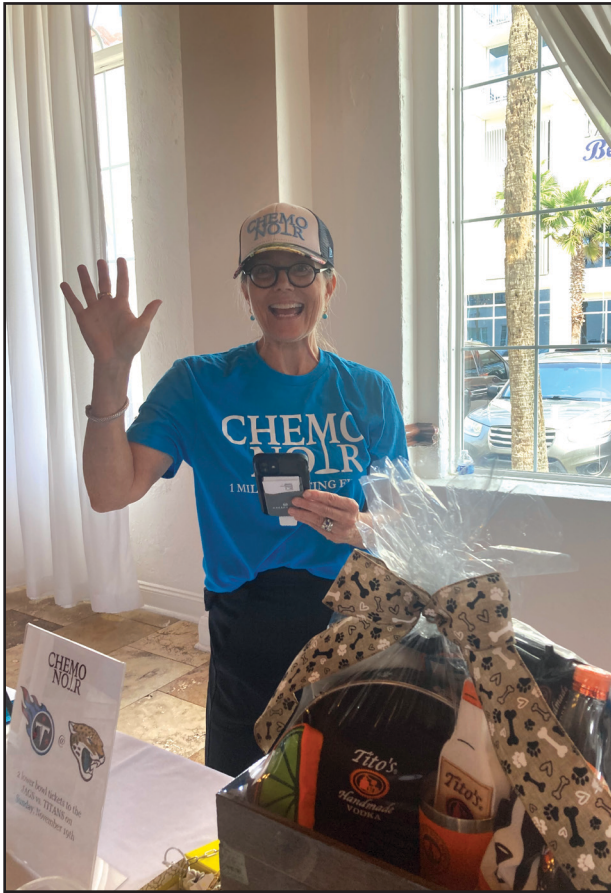


Kate Amato Foundation is dedicated to finding safer, smarter and more effective treatments for children with cancer by supporting innovative research that accelerates the pace of progress and saves young lives. To donate, sponsor or get involved with any of our signature events, please contact us.

KateAmatoFoundation.org

Chemo Noir 1 Mile and Wine Tasting approaches \$40k raised

Photos by Susan Griffin



The Seventh Annual Chemo Noir 1 Mile and Wine Tasting was held June 17, as 750 registered runners and walkers took to Jacksonville Beach for the nonprofit's mission of helping provide financial relief for families dealing with a loved one who has cancer. Exact figures were not yet known, but according to Chemo Noir founder Katrin Casey an estimated \$35-40K was raised toward the cause during the event.

See more **CHEMO NOIR** photos on **Page 23**



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Chemo Noir

Continued from 22

Photos by Susan Griffin



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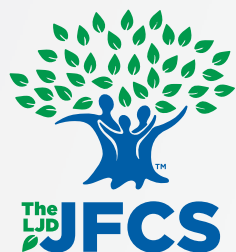
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Donate to Support Local Hunger While Your Gift Doubles

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The Block family is once again generously matching every donation, so if you give now, or any time before July 31, your gift will help twice as much!

Help us continue to fulfill our mission of helping people help themselves.

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Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary celebrates half-century of service

Exactly 50 years after a group of people with a shared vision of bringing comfort and cheer to hospitalized children and families met for the first time, current Wolfson Children's Hospital leadership and team members gathered to celebrate their enduring legacy.

On Tuesday, June 13, the Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary marked a half century of volunteer service to patients, families, visitors and team members.

Since its founding by Eunice Gooding on June 13, 1973, the Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary has grown from five services to 17, ranging from pet therapy to providing comfort amenities to patients and families.

Since its inception, members of the Auxiliary have volunteered more than a million hours. In the last decade alone, Auxiliary volunteers have devoted nearly 200,000 hours of service to Wolfson Children's, a value of more than \$4.5 million.

The Auxiliary has also donated more than \$1 million and funded a \$500,000

Baptist Foundation endowment to provide critical care equipment, advanced technology, amenities for patient rooms, wheelchairs to transport patients and more.

"The vision the founding members of the Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary had half a century ago still rings true today," said Allegra Jaros, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital. "Auxiliary volunteers have touched the lives of countless patients and team members, and we're grateful for their friendly and compassionate service."

Though volunteers are traditionally thought of as helping patients, families and visitors to Wolfson Children's, Auxiliary members also assist and support team members. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Auxiliary wrote cards to front-line caregivers, hung banners of support in the hospital and supplied refreshments for those working long hours in vaccination clinics.

"The Wolfson Children's Hospital

WOLFSON continues on Page 25

A Community of Healing Offering a Place of Compassion and Camaraderie

William is an Air Force Veteran who spent time at The Gabriel House of Care while healing from a heart transplant with his wife and caretaker, Terri. "We are so happy to be here and thankful that a facility like Gabriel House exists," explains William. "Without it, a lot of people would not be able to get this kind of care."



William & Terri



Everett & Renata

Everett was a guest at the Gabriel House of Care with his wife Renata while he recovered from a kidney and heart transplant. "Staying at Gabriel House has been such a blessing to us," explains Renata. "They have different activities like the art class and mindfulness exercises - things you can do to keep your mind off your problems."



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A Community of Healing™

Casino Royale

Continued from 19

mailed in July 7.

Any questions regarding the event can be emailed to joy.burton@stfrancisshelter.org.

Port in the Storm is the youth program associated with St. Francis House, which is the center focused on homeless adults.

Thanks to the generosity of the community and fundraisers such as Casino Royale, both Port in the Storm and St. Francis House can continue to offer the much-needed services they provide with the hope making a lasting difference in someone's life.

If the event is not able to be attended, there are always plenty of ways for the

community to get involved and show their love for their fellow residents who have encountered tough times.

One of the ways is a recurring wish list of goods that the centers need, and the list adapts depending on the time of year and what's going on in the world.

In the midst of summer, which means high temperatures and rain showers, St. Francis House is asking for rain ponchos, sunscreen, baseball caps, bug spray, canned vegetables and fruit, sandwich bags, bottled water and socks, just to name a few of the items on the wish list currently.

For more questions on the wish list, development/volunteer coordinator Sarah Del Cid can be contacted at sarah.delcid@stfrancisshelter.org.



Photo courtesy of St. Francis House/Port in the Storm

Port in the Storm will host its Fourth Annual Casino Royale fundraiser July 22.

Wolfson

Continued from 24

Auxiliary was created 50 years ago to assist the hospital with meeting the needs of the patients, families and staff," said Jeannie Poon, director of volunteer services for Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville and Wolfson Children's Hospital. "They are a huge blessing in that they stand in the gap and help with hours and resources that are needed for

our team members to provide care for the patients we serve. I'm so thrilled that we have this special day to celebrate all that the Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary means to our organization and all that our Auxilians mean to us and those they encounter within our four walls. It takes special people to share their hearts with others, our volunteers and their impact truly are timeless!"

Auxiliary services at Wolfson Children's Hospital include, in part:

- Greeting patients and families arriv-

ing at Wolfson Children's and escorting them to their room or destination.

- Participating in bedside activities with patients like crafts, puzzles and games.
- Responding to basic requests from patients for blankets, ice or water.
- Hosting and giving tours to community groups.
- Providing patients with pet therapy.
- Entertaining children and families with Goofiatrics, a troop of clowns and magicians.

• Selling Wolfson Children's-branded items, with proceeds benefiting the hospital.

- Assisting team members throughout Wolfson Children's.
- Dressing as Wolfson Children's mascot, Wolfie, visiting patients and attending community events.
- Providing patients with gifts, snacks and other needs.

Currently, there are more than 100 volunteers in the Wolfson Children's Auxiliary.

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www.ChampionsForChildSafety.org





Contributed photos

OPE students and families recently celebrated Spring Family Fun Night.

Family fun in bloom at Ocean Palms

Students, families and staff members at Ocean Palms Elementary School recently celebrated their community at the school's Spring Family Fun Night. Laughter filled the air as students raced in hamster balls, played human foosball, faced off in the game truck, challenged themselves in the bungee run and had their faces painted.

And anyone up to the challenge was able to attempt to water-balloon teachers and administration. Families also took dinner breaks to enjoy Chick-fil-A and visit with friends. It was a fun-filled night that bloomed with community.

Lazzara Orthodontics sponsored the event.



Business Weekly

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THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2023



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GUEST COLUMN

Leverage habits that help women investors succeed

Written by/for Wells Fargo
Advisors

Intuition. Patience. Discipline. A desire to learn. These are traits many women naturally possess and can lead to confident decision-making and courageous accomplishments.

They're also the foundation that can help build a sound investing strategy. Perhaps you bootstrapped your own business, broke through the glass ceiling, managed the home front, or benefited from an inheritance. However you got to this point, your collective experience provides the wisdom to help you boldly move forward. But that doesn't mean doing it alone.

Working with a financial advisor who complements your investing style and listens more than talks can help you continue making those confident decisions and keep your investment plan on track.

Holistic wealth planning that helps prepare you for the unexpected

When highly emotional life events happen, like divorce, death of a spouse, or even an inheritance, it can be challenging to factor in the financial implications. If one (or more) of these scenarios



becomes your reality, it can be a huge relief to have your team already in place. An experienced financial advisor can help you navigate difficult decisions that could have an impact on you and your family for years to come.

Just in case, it's best to be prepared and proactive:

- Be aware of your family's assets, debts, retirement accounts, insurance policies and other financial information.
- Gather important financial documents and safe deposit box keys and keep them accessible.

- Make sure you and your spouse or partner have up-to-date estate planning documents and that you discuss potential tax implications with your CPA and financial team.

The right fit can make all the difference

Life hums along and then ... something changes. Perhaps you initiated the change or maybe you had to react to it. Either way, having resources to help you navigate decision-making can help mean smoother sailing.

Considering all the aspects of life that have a financial implication is like a wave that keeps expanding.

From investing for a home, college costs, or retirement to exploring lending and insurance options, an experienced financial advisor can help you manage risk while keeping you on track toward your investment goals.

This article was written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Jamie Seim, CFP, Senior Vice President – Investment Officer in Ponte Vedra Beach at 904-273-7917.

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United Way president is event speaker

Photos by Susan Griffin



Holly Nieves, Kelly Roberts, Nicole Briggs, Kathleen Floryan, and Marty McEachan

United Way of St. Johns County President Mark LeMaire was the speaker on Wednesday, June 14, for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division's Chamber at Noon event.

LeMaire joined the United Way of St. Johns County in October 2022. For more than 20 years, he has dedicated himself to the nonprofit sector, focusing on the communities in which he lives and works.

Prior to joining United Way of St. Johns County, he worked with the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida for 10 years. And, he has been fortunate to serve with two other United Ways, located in Jacksonville and Lakeland, Florida.

LeMaire lives in St. Augustine with his wife and three children.



Mark LeMaire

Contributed photos



The home at 262 Pioneer Way Drive.



A look inside the home at 262 Pioneer Way Drive.

Coastal Traditional farmhouse close to everything

By Janet Westling

Step inside 262 Pioneer Way Drive and experience a coastal traditional farmhouse in Pioneer Village in Crosswater at Nocatee.

This charming community of 138 homes is the perfect location to call home. Residents enjoy all of Nocatee's resort-style amenities — including the Spray Waterpark, The Nocatee Landing and Crosswater Park just minutes from home.

Navigating the Nocatee experience is made easy with electric vehicle paths connecting Crosswater neighborhoods to Nocatee's vibrant Town Center and additional amenity centers.

Walk down the picturesque tree-lined streets of Pioneer Village Drive with attractive coastal farmhouse homes with an old town America flair. Stop in at 262 and enjoy this spacious four-bedroom, three-bathroom home with a guest suite conveniently designed on the first floor.

Take the stairs to the second floor where the ample owners' ensuite bedroom overlooks the back garden, creating an ideal sanctuary. Two guest bedrooms and a loft complete the perfect sojourn for rest and relaxation.

This very popular open floor plan features almost 2,300 square feet of living space and a chef's kitchen equipped



The Spray Waterpark in Nocatee.



There are lots of amenities nearby.

with upscale finishes, abundant storage and a generous amount of counter space with a large island that opens to a light-filled family room.

This inviting home opens to a covered patio a very large backyard on a preserve lot with room for a pool and outdoor entertaining.

The Nocatee lifestyle was designed by St. John's County developers, the PARC Group, who broke ground in 2005 with construction of the Nocatee Parkway. It got its name from former owners, the Nocatee-Manatee Crate Co., who used it for timber production until 1984 when J.E. Davis bought it. The Davis family envisioned a master-planned community that was sustainable and addressed community needs.

Today, more than 20,000 residents call Nocatee home. Just minutes to the Atlantic Ocean, Nocatee, a coastal community, offers residents a variety of neighborhoods, parks and recreation that includes a kayak launch, shopping, restaurants and a school district that is ranked number 1 in the state.

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I am grateful for your support again this year!



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Ability Housing to bring new affordable housing to St. Augustine

Ability Housing has announced plans for the Villages of New Augustine: the nonprofit affordable housing developer's first multifamily community in St. Johns County.

Villages of New Augustine will be a 92-unit, new construction apartment community located on three parcels totaling approximately 6.5 acres at the intersection of North Volusia Street and Chapin Street in the West Augustine neighborhood.

In addition to four apartment buildings, the site plan includes a community center with on-site leasing offices, a computer lab, a library and flexible spaces for workshops, training and events; outdoor recreational features like a playground, pavilion and dedicated walking trail; and 149 parking spaces.

The development is anticipated to break ground in summer 2023.

"Housing affordability has been a real challenge for working residents of St. Johns County for many years, but the problem has grown exponentially in the last few years," said Shannon Nazworth, president and CEO of Ability Housing. "This development will keep working families in St. Augustine, where they can contribute to the area's unique culture without having to worry about being driven out due to exorbitant increases in rent."

Funding for the \$25 million project has been secured through various state, local and private sources. Florida Housing Finance Corp. awarded \$1.625 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits for the development, which will result in a

\$14,867,263 equity investment from a nonprofit syndicator, National Equity Fund, with Bank of America providing the equity investment.

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners approved a \$460,000 Affordable Housing Grant and a \$1,207,134 award of American Rescue Plan Act funds at their June 6 meeting. Additionally, in 2022 the board passed an ordinance making it possible to defer impact fees.

"We have seen Ability Housing's success in bringing affordable multifamily housing to Jacksonville for several years and welcome them as partners and neighbors to St. Johns County," said Sarah S. Arnold, vice chair and District 2 representative of the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners. "Through our collaboration on the Villages of New Augustine development, hundreds of St. Johns County residents will benefit from the opportunity to move into a brand-new, high-quality apartment in the growing West Augustine area."

The community will include 20 one-bedroom apartments, 36 two-bedroom apartments and 36 three-bedroom apart-

ments. Rental prices will be determined by each household's income. Nearly 80% of the apartments available for residents earning 60% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI), as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); an additional 10% of the units will be set aside for households earning up to 50% AMI, and the remaining 10% of units will be reserved for households earning up to 33% AMI.

Construction is expected to begin in the third quarter of 2023. For more information about Ability Housing's other properties throughout Florida, go to AbilityHousing.org/portfolio.

Ability Housing is a Florida nonprofit organization that develops housing, setting a standard of excellence in the field of affordable and supportive housing. The focus is on meeting the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and adults with a disability.

This housing is linked with wrap-around services, so all residents have a network of support.

For more information, go to AbilityHousing.org

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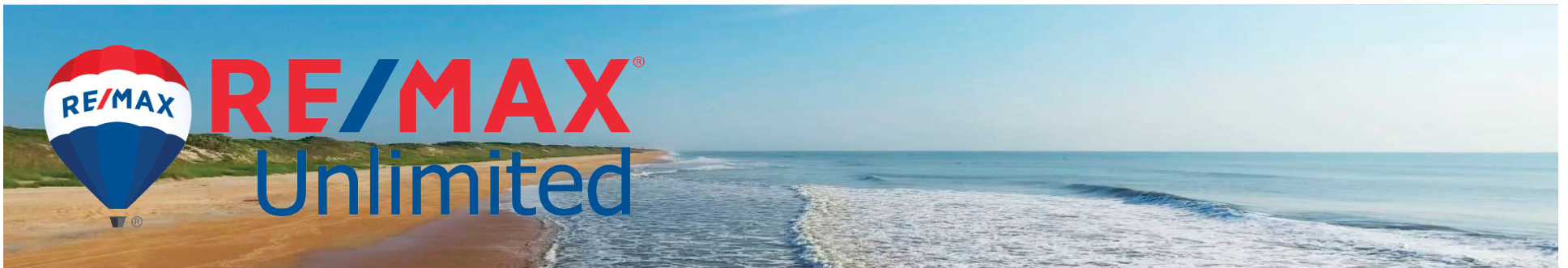
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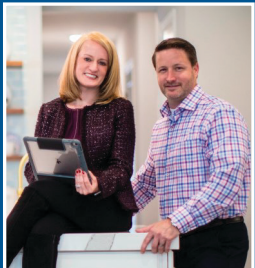
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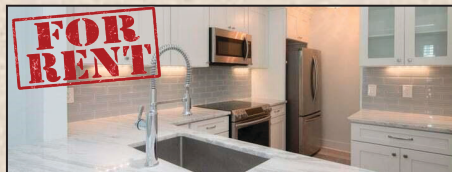


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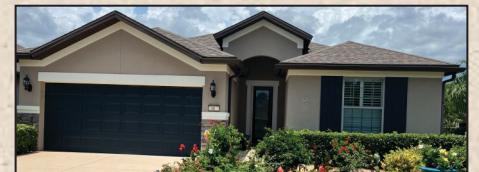
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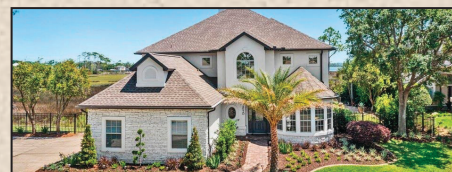
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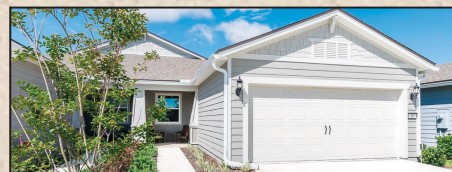
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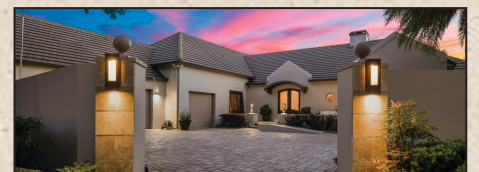
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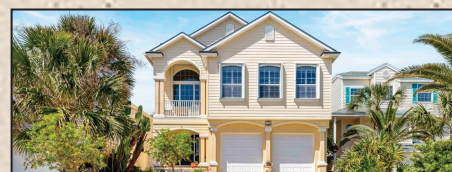
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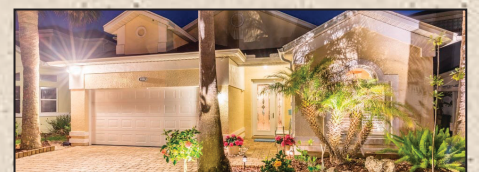
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Housing prices climb as buying season grows busy

The busy selling season has arrived with prices and closed sales climbing up much as expected.

In May for single-family homes, the median price rose 4.6% to \$386,990 in the six-county region. Mirroring higher prices, closed sales climbed 11.9% to 2,049, pending sales inched up 2% to 2,169 and new listings rose 8.2% to 2,990. Homes were readily snapped up with the median days on the market resting at 33 days and the months' supply of inventory dropping to 2.2 months.

"It seemed that April's showers

brought May flowers for sellers," said 2023 NEFAR President Diana Galavis. "The median sales price had an upward swing similar to closed sales during the past month."

"Homes are selling quickly with an 8% decrease for the median days on market settling at 33 days. Over 15% of closed homes sold over the list price," Galavis continued. "Months' supply of inventory decreased to 2.2 months. This is a direct reflection of buyers entering the market and not enough inventory to meet the demand. Factors such

as summer break, more availability of supplies for upgrades and repairs, and interest-rate stabilization are affecting inventory."

But as mortgage rates continue to climb and affordability continues to drop, the percentage-of-list price received is going down. In many cases, it seems that buyers are no longer willing or able to pay over-inflated prices for homes.

In May, with rising prices and not enough inventory to meet demand, the Home Affordability Index for single family homes in Northeast Florida dropped to 69, a 5.5% decrease from the 73 it had registered in April.

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.

In these challenging times, both sellers and buyers need to understand that it is important to have a real estate expert by their side when they navigate the housing market, said Galavis.

"Realtors have ethics, expertise and insight into the market, particularly in specific neighborhoods," she said. "It is important to use a professional to navigate the process of buying, selling, or investing in real estate. Realtors provide resources and support, whatever the transaction."

In St. Johns County, May 2023 median prices climbed slightly higher to \$561,981 for single-family homes. The median days on the market were 36, a



2.7% decrease from the month before. Month-to-month, closed sales rose 16.7% to 516, pending sales dropped 0.4% to 539, and new listings jumped 11.2% to 814. Active inventory rose to 1,346 homes, an increase of 8.5% from March 2023, and 3.2-month supply.

The affordability index slid to 48, demonstrating that St. Johns County continues to be the most expensive area to live in the region.

In Duval County, the May 2023 median price of single-family housing was \$330,000, a slight 1.5% increase from April 2023 when it registered \$325,000. The median days on the market in May was 30, a 3.2% drop over April. Month-to-month, closed sales rose 8.4% to 1,014, pending sales increased 6.6% to 1,098, and new listings increased 14.6% to 1,499. Active inventory for the county rose 4.3% to 1,984 homes, a two-month supply and a 122.7% hike from the year before.

In May, the home affordability index showed housing was becoming less affordable by registering at 81, a 2.4% drop from the month before.

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The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 54 years of community news excellence, launched our fifth annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32081 & 32082.**

Readers have nominated their favorite businesses, organizations, professionals and more in over 250 categories online. **Online voting begins June 12.** Readers can vote for their favorite business in each category once per day. **Help your favorites win and VOTE!**

[www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2023/index.html#//](http://www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2023/index.html#/)

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As your home increases in value, are you sufficiently insured?

By Wayne Terry



I think everyone will agree that inflation has not discriminated. Everything you can think of has gone up in price. However, no one is thinking about their homeowner policy limits. Let me explain.

Suppose you bought a home for \$300,000 10 years ago. It may now be worth \$600,000. Something horrible happens and you have a fire. Your limits may now be lower than are needed to put your home back together. Ten years ago it may have been \$240,000 to put the home back together. Now, that same figure could be \$350,000, but you are only covered for \$240,000, so where does the extra money come from? Some have had to mortgage or second mortgage their home, others have pulled from an investment account. Don't get caught

not having enough insurance. Schedule an appointment to go over your policy today.

I have had two customers in the last 90 days that had a fire in their home. Both had to come out of pocket to cover the rebuilding of their home.

My company does not do the build back; however, we are involved in the demolition and the clean up of fire scenes, so we see this firsthand. You may have enough coverage, but it will not hurt to call your insurance agent and double check.

Wayne Terry is the owner of PuroClean Emergency Services in Jacksonville. They handle buildings that have had floods, mold, fire or biohazard (crime scene) situations. For more information about his restoration company, go to www.PuroCleanES.com or call 904-573-3566. This company is available for emergencies or questions 24 hours a day.

Lennar opens single-family homes, models for Shearwater

Lennar recently opened models and new floor plans for 80 single-family homes and 190 townhomes at Shearwater, a master-planned community in St. Johns County. Regularly priced homesites will start in the mid-to-high \$300,000s.

Lennar is the first builder in Shearwater to offer homes through St. Johns County's affordable housing program. Homesites will start in the low \$300,000s, with price increases limited based on metrics determined by the county. These homes must be owner-occupied.

"This expansion of Lennar at Shearwater brings a new level of affordability for homebuyers looking to purchase in one of the most desirable new communities in St. Johns County," said Melanie Raub, Lennar Jacksonville Division president. "We are proud to help make the dream of homeownership a reality for our customers by offering quality homes at an incredible value, with all the features and finishes homeowners want and need already included."

The Northeast Florida townhomes feature five floor plans for homebuyers to choose from, ranging from 1,494 to 2,005 square feet of living space. They include three bedrooms and two and a half

bathrooms, along with a one- or two-car garage.

Just released are new single-family homes for sale, in four floor plans ranging from 2,028 to 2,358 square feet. They feature four to five bedrooms and two to three bathrooms, along with a two-car garage. Executives at Lennar expect that the spacious layouts, available on approximately 80 50-foot homesites, will sell out fast.

Residents at Shearwater will enjoy world-class community amenities, including a resort-style lagoon and lap pool with a clubhouse, a fitness center, tennis courts and access to Trout Creek. Located at 27 Appleton Court off of Old County Road 210, the community offers convenient access to area beaches, A-rated schools and popular outdoor shopping plazas.

Every new Lennar home comes with high-end features and upgrades at no additional cost thanks to the homebuilder's signature Everything's Included program. At Shearwater, homebuyers enjoy features such as quartz countertops, designer cabinets, wood tile-inspired flooring, paver driveways, screened-in patios and more.

For more information or to be added to the VIP interest list, go to Lennar.com.

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In the Arts

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

PASStA Fine Art Gallery welcomes acrylic painter



Tracy Lavelly

The Professional Artists of St. Augustine (PASStA) Fine Art Gallery, of 214 Charlotte St., St. Augustine, welcomes new acrylic painter Tracy Lavelly to its co-operative art gallery.

Hailing from Indianapolis, Lavelly credits her hometown as the source for her early love of art, and the town where she met her husband of 41 years during high school.

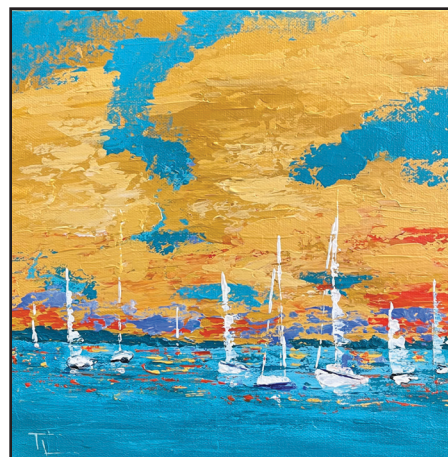
Her mother, an artist, inspired her love for painting, and young Lavelly spent many hours absorbing her mother's lessons. Her sister also became an artist, but Lavelly took a different life path. She graduated from Indiana University with a

degree in criminal justice, got married and moved, eventually settling in Northern Virginia.

After working various jobs in law firms, she found her career job with the Virginia Department of Corrections as a probation and parole officer. She was the chief probation and parole officer for Fairfax County, Virginia, managing a large office and staff, implementing creative programming, and collaborating with other community stakeholders to help people be better and to keep the community safe.

She participated and presented in many correctional trainings, seminars and conferences around the state of Virginia on leadership development for executives. In 2018, she was awarded the national Outstanding Probation Executive of the Year.

Lavelly has been painting regularly for the past five years. As a self-taught artist, she found using the palette knife as her



Tracy Lavelly uses the palette knife to create texture.

primary tool in laying color allowed her to create texture in her beach- and coastal-themed paintings. As a new resident of St. Augustine, Lavelly continues to expand her artistic vision and looks forward to meeting customers at the PASStA Fine Art Gallery.

The Professional Artists of St. Augustine Fine Art Gallery was founded in 1982 by Jean Wagner Troemel, a cham-



Contributed photos

A painting by Tracy Lavelly

panion of the arts and founder of the Winter Haven Ridge Art Association who served on the Florida Arts Group Board and spearheaded St. Augustine's First Friday Art Walks.

The gallery has served an international clientele a wealth of local talent and award-winning artists. The gallery's mission is to showcase local and regional art and to educate and encourage area artists.

Symphony receives grant to further DEI efforts

The Jacksonville Symphony has received a two-year, \$200,000 competitive grant award from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund in support of its efforts to increase racial diversity within the orchestra.

"We applaud the Jacksonville Symphony for undertaking this important work to provide opportunities for Black and Latinx musicians, lowering the barrier to entry for new voices to join the incredibly high caliber group of musicians we're fortunate to have in Jacksonville," said Mari Kuraishi, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. "We're proud to support this work to make our symphony more reflective of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all of Jacksonville."

In support of this initiative, the Jacksonville Symphony has partnered with the Sphinx Organization, a national non-profit organization in Detroit dedicated to transforming the lives of young Black and Latinx musicians through the power of diversity in the arts. Founded in

1997, Sphinx is working to change the landscape of classical music by offering musicians a customized combination of mentoring, audition preparation, financial support and audition previews.

As part of the partnership, the Jacksonville Symphony participates in the Sphinx Orchestral Partners Auditions program (SOPA), which provides Sphinx musicians the opportunity to audition for a panel of orchestra representatives who seek to identify musicians for placement on substitute/contract player lists.

The Symphony hosted six Sphinx musicians in the 2022-23 season. Two musicians were part of the orchestra for the entire season, and four substitute musicians were brought on for four different classical concert weeks. Two full-season contract musicians have been hired for the upcoming 2023-24 season with plans to hire 10 substitute musicians for open positions week to week once they become known.



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During the war Joe Keller and Steve Deever ran a machine shop which made airplane parts. Deever was sent to prison because the firm turned out defective parts, causing the deaths of many men. Keller went free and made a lot of money. The twin shadows of this catastrophe and the fact that the young Keller son was reported missing during the war dominate the action. The love affair of Chris Keller and Ann Deever, the bitterness of George Deever returned from the war to find his father in prison and his father's partner free, are all set in a structure of almost unbearable power. The climax showing the reaction of a son to his guilty father is fitting conclusion to a play electrifying in its intensity.



WRITTEN BY ARTHUR MILLER

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ON STAGE

A roundup of musical acts appearing before July 17 at local venues

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

• **APEX Theatre Studio Presents: 'Disney's Frozen (Kids Version)**

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• **Andrew McMahon In The Wilderness** — 7:30 p.m. July 18

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Tickets may also be purchased at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

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

• **Straight No Chaser "The Yacht Rock Tour"** — with special guest Ambrosia. 7 p.m. June 25.

• **An Evening with Peter Frampton** — 7:30 p.m. June 28



Image from The St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Straight No Chaser

- **Parker McCollum** — with special guests Kameron Marlowe and Ella Langley. 6:30 p.m. p.m. June 29.
- **The Smile** — with special guest Robert Stillman. 7:30 p.m. June 30.
- **Riley Green** — with special guests Corey Smith and Channing Wilson. 6:30 p.m. July 6.
- **Louis Tomlinson** — Faith In The Future World Tour 2023 with special guests The Snuts and Andrew Cushin. 7 p.m. July 11.
- **Barenaked Ladies** — with special guests Five for Fighting and Del Amitri. 6 p.m. July 16.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

'Newsies Jr.' and 'Beautiful: The Carole King Musical' on stage through the weekend

Apex Theatre Studio is presenting its 10th annual summer theatre series with two contemporary Broadway hits — “Beautiful: The Carole King Musical” and “Disney’s Newsies Jr.,” on stage now through Sunday, June 25, at Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College.

Tickets are available at apextheatrejax.com/events.

“After an exciting winter of thoughtful work, we are ready to open the windows and let the summer sunshine in with these stories full of hope, triumph and great music,” said Managing Director Ian Mairs.

“We are presenting two shows in rotating repertory format to give visitors to St. Augustine more than one chance to enjoy an evening in the theatre.”

“Beautiful” is the inspiring true story of Carole King’s journey from teenage songwriter to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Before she was hit-maker Carole King, she was Carole Klein, a spunky, young songwriter from Brooklyn with a unique voice. From the chart-topping hits she wrote for the biggest acts in music to her own life-changing, trailblazing success with her 1971 hit album “Tapestry,” “Beautiful” takes audiences back to where it all began and on the ride of a lifetime, featuring such unforgettable classics as “You’ve Got a Friend,” “One Fine Day,” “So Far Away,” “Take Good Care of My Baby,” “Up on the Roof,” “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling,” “Will You Love Me Tomorrow” and “Natural Woman.”

The production is under the direction of Atlanta director Justin Anderson and features Jacksonville native Mallorie Sievert in the title role. The company is comprised of professional teaching artists and upper-division students from Apex Theatre Studio.

“Beautiful” show times are 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, June 23-24. Tickets

are available at apextheatrejax.com/events.

“Disney’s Newsies Jr.” is a shorter version of the 2012 Broadway musical, based on the 1992 film.

Inspired by the rousing true story of newsboys in turn-of-the-century New York City, “Newsies Jr.” features a Tony Award-winning score by Alan Menken and Jack Feldman and a book by Tony Award winner Harvey Fierstein.

When powerful newspaper publishers raise prices at the newsboys’ expense, the charismatic Jack Kelly rallies newsies from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions. Together, the newsies learn that they are stronger united and create a movement to fight for what’s right.

Including the now-classic songs “Carrying the Banner,” “Seize the Day” and “Santa Fe,” “Newsies Jr.” is a timeless

story full of spirit and heart.

The production features teaching artists, guest artists and students from the upper and lower division of Apex Theatre Studio.

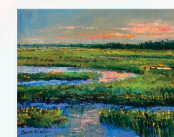
With a running time of 70 minutes, it is a perfect night out for the whole family.

A special kids’ matinee is planned for 11 a.m. Friday, June 23, with student tickets at a special rate of \$15.

Other show dates are 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 22; and 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, June 24-25. Tickets are available at apextheatrejax.com/events.

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Sports



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Nearly half of the Nease High 2023 football schedule will feature fellow St. Johns County schools as opponents.



Ponte Vedra High will host rival Nease on Oct. 27.

Photos by Anthony Richards

A NEVER TOO EARLY GLANCE AT THE UPCOMING FOOTBALL SEASON

Schedules provide measuring sticks for Panthers, Sharks

By Anthony Richards

Do not look now, but football season will be upon us soon, as it is less than two months away before pre-season jamboree games will be taking place.

Ponte Vedra will play in what has become quite the tradition over the years as they will face Mandarin on the road in a preseason classic Aug. 18 at 6:30 p.m.

The Sharks schedule will include four contests against St. Johns County opponents, which feature hosting Bartram Trail to open the season Aug. 25. Other county games are against Menendez on Sept. 22, at home against Nease on Oct. 27 and wrapping up the regular season with Creekside on the road.

The annual rivalry between the Sharks and Panthers will take place late in the season for the second-straight year after being such a hit among fans and players a season ago.

With both teams once again sharing the same district as members of District 4-4S, that game will serve as the final district contest of the season and there could be plenty of title and playoff implications on the line when the two meet, especially since they are part of a three-team district that also includes Flagler Palm Coast.

District games always carry more weight, but three-team districts really create even more of a must-win atmosphere and can create some interesting scenarios at season's end as the champion is sorted out.



Nease will open its 2023 season with a preseason test at home against Menendez Aug. 18.

The Sharks will have a couple of lengthy trips during the season with the farthest one being the three-hour trek west along Interstate 10 to face Florida State University High School in Tallahassee, which is returning the favor of the Seminoles coming to the Shark Tank last season.

After visiting Ocala Trinity Catholic a year ago, this time around the Sharks will host Celtics, a traditionally successful program with a late season game on Oct. 13.

The Panthers will open up play with a preseason showdown against Menendez at home followed by a continued stretch where they will play their first two regular season games at home against Jackson and Creekside.

They will end the season with three of their last four games at home, as they hope the confines of the Panther Den will make all the difference as they make a march toward the postseason.

As it gets later in the season, that is also when the Pan-



One of the lengthy road trips for Ponte Vedra this year is going to Tallahassee to take on Florida State University High on Sept. 1.

thers' rivals will arise on the schedule with St. Augustine High and the Sharks within a three week-span, with Flagler Palm Coast sandwiched in between.

If the Panthers can get through this late season gauntlet it will likely be just what they need, not only from a record point of view but also from a preparation standpoint as they hope to achieve their ultimate goal of making the playoffs and making a deep run toward a state title.

Nearly half of the Panthers schedule will come against fellow St. Johns County schools, with four of them taking place during the regular season and one in the preseason.

Although fall practice has not yet begun for the teams and the players and fans are still in summer vacation mode, there is no doubt that football season is always on the back burner just waiting for us to blink enough for it to be another fall and another fresh season.

Contributed photos



Elite Pickleball will host its Inaugural Battle at the Beaches Tournament at The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 30.



Elite Pickleball was created with the goal of becoming the ultimate association and go-to outfit for junior pickleball enthusiasts.

Inaugural tournament offers opportunity for young pickleballers

Elite Pickleball seeks to be at forefront of sport's growth

By Anthony Richards

Pickleball is regarded as the one of the fastest growing sports in the United States, and that is due to its growing popularity among any age group.

Elite Pickleball is one of the first in the area to realize the potential it has among the youth in the area and is hosting its inaugural Battle at the Beaches Tournament at The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 30.

The tournament is for pickleball players ages 12-18 looking to have fun and compete on the court against others their age.

Elite Pickleball was started by Matt

Masto and Kyle Firth, who were friends prior to the creation of the organization and have the goal of becoming the ultimate association and go-to outfit for junior pickleball enthusiasts.

"We got into pickleball a few years ago and as we got into it we started to hear about how high schools and colleges have started to have intramural club teams," Masto said. "Everyone says that it's just a matter of time before there are teams in high schools and scholarships offered to play in college."

"We noticed no organizations helping to connect these young athletes with college and MLP (Major League Pickleball) recruiters and we wanted to help initiate that," Masto said.

According to Masto, there have been MLP tournaments that have reached \$5 million in purse money.

"It's getting to the point where these kids could even make a living doing this," Masto said.

Masto and Firth have been working out what it would take to start the initiative and the June 30 tournament is just the beginning of the venture, which Masto hopes for one day in the future to have tournaments in every state.

The inaugural event has not even taken place yet and they are already in talks with Pictona, which is a pickleball club and 49-court facility in Daytona Beach for a possible second event in late July.

DUPR is a rating algorithm used to rank pickleball players and their various skill levels, and the Battle at the Beaches tournament will be rating all players who play in the event so that they can have a better feel for their ability and to give them an idea of where they stand.

"They (DUPR) love what we're doing here," Masto said. "It seems like we're a little early on still in this process, but that's not going to be the case for much longer. It's only a matter of time before it really catches on."

Tournaments will not be the only way in which Elite Pickleball will seek to help connect young athletes with scouts, but they also have plans to host coaching seminars where players can further learn how to improve their technique to master the game.

Masto has seen firsthand the impact and benefits pickleball can have on athletes who play other sports as well.

"My boys play baseball and some trainers we work, which also work with major league players, and they tell them to play pickleball during the offseason because it really helps with hand-eye coordination," Masto said.

The tournament will be divided into two divisions with 12- to 14-year-olds competing against each other in one division and 15- to 18-year-olds facing off in the other.

For more information about the tournament and the organization's mission go to usaelitepickleball.com.

New baseball coach hired at Episcopal School

Nick James has been hired as the Episcopal School of Jacksonville Eagles' next baseball program director and varsity head coach. James' extensive background in teaching and coaching includes 18 years in the dugout at the high school level, nine of which were at Westminster Academy in Fort Lauderdale.

During his time at Westminster, he was a three-time district coach of the year and National Christian Coach of the Year while also teaching English at the school. Most recently, James served as the co-director of Cannons Baseball United (commonly known as CBU) since 2019. Under his leadership, CBU has established itself as one of the top col-

lege placement and player development programs in the United States, putting 52 players into college baseball and four players selected by the MLB draft in 2022 alone.

James also serves as the Florida Director for The National Team Identification Series in the Southeast for USA baseball.

James received his bachelor of arts degree in English from James Madison University where he was a three-time all-conference scholar-athlete for their baseball team. He went on to earn his master's degree from Jacksonville University.

"Coach James' experience as an educator and coach made him the ideal choice

to serve as Episcopal's next head coach," said Andy Kidd, Episcopal's director of athletics. "He truly embodies everything we look for in a coach for our student-athletes. We are pleased that Coach James' education background will allow him to be on campus full-time as a member of our English Department faculty."

James takes over from Coach Mike Jones, who after 20 years of leading the Episcopal baseball program, has decided to step down as ESJ's Baseball Program Director. Jones, the longest tenured head coach in the baseball program's history, will finish his career with 322 wins. His teams advanced to the FHSAA regional playoffs 14 times, won six district cham-

pionships, won one regional championship and won the state championship in 2006.

Additionally, under Jones' leadership, 50 of his student-athletes went on to play at the collegiate level, and five went on to sign professional contracts.

"Coach Jones has had a profound impact on the Episcopal baseball program," said Kidd. "From the first day he stepped foot on campus, he was committed to making our baseball program one of the top programs in the state. While Coach Jones will no longer be leading the baseball program, we are pleased that he will stay on the coaching staff as a pitching coach with the Eagles."

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CROSSWORD

	1	2	3	4				5	6	7	8	
9					10			11				12
13					14			15				
16				17			18					
19			20		21						22	
	23			24		25					26	
		27			28		29			30		
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	38				39			40		41		42
43					44			45		46		47
48			49	50					51		52	
53								54			55	
56									57			
	58									59		

ACROSS

- Understand intuitively
- Two of something
- Not involving computer tech
- Lakers legend
- Nocturnal S. American rodent
- Direction (Scottish)
- Intestinal inflammation
- Spring back in fear
- Owl genus
- Girls
- Unbeliefs
- Force unit
- Expired trade agreement
- Went alone
- Animal noises
- Woman who graduated from a specific school
- The very top
- Organs in males
- Earnings
- Z Z Z
- The condition of being concealed or hidden
- Irritate
- The process of developing a theory
- Ceramic jar
- Not fresh
- Dad's fashion accessory
- Popular review site
- New Mexico county
- '__ death do us part
- Fees
- Takes with force
- One-time Yankees rookie sensation
- Gordon and Snider are two
- Body parts
- Arranges
- Fiddler crabs
- Mimics
- Witnesses
- They __
- Lasso
- Runs down
- In response to
- Bird-like dinosaur
- Metamorphic stages
- Conditions of incapacity
- Sodas are sold in these units
- Break away from
- Ethereal
- Boggy
- Reddish browns
- A salt or ester of acetic acid
- A place to get off your feet
- More disreputable
- Kidney condition
- Cease moving
- Quick
- Extra seed covering
- "Survivor: Panama" winner
- Six
- One who inspects lamps
- Small parrot
- Primordial matter of the universe
- __ fi (slang)

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

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

DOWN

- Mangled
- Ruffled some feathers
- Not young



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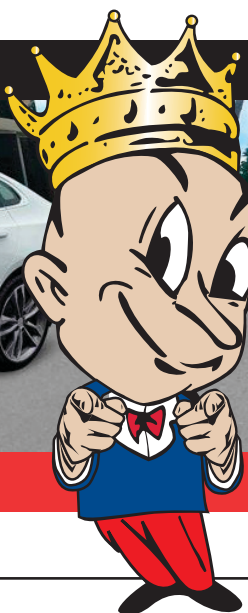
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