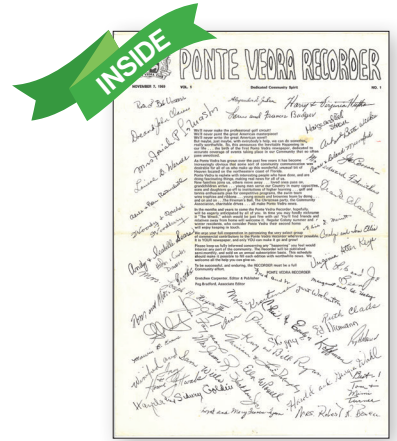


THE RECORDER



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

Cheers to 54 Years!
Page 8

Thursday, November 2, 2023

PonteVedraRecorder.com

VOLUME 55, NO. 1 \$1.00

288-unit rental community discussed

By Shaun Ryan

Representatives of a proposed workforce rental community met with members of the public Oct. 24 and 25 at Our Lady of Good Counsel, 5950 State Road 16, to provide details and answer questions.

A 288-unit rent-restricted community, Preserve at Wards Creek could be open for occupancy as early as January 2027 if all pieces fall into place quickly. Currently, the prospective owner, developer and manager of the property, Dominion, is seeking the necessary zoning changes to move forward. The 19.1-acre site at 6351 County Road 16A, is zoned rural, so a planned unit development would have to be established.

COMMUNITY continues on Page 24

Panthers capture 'unmatched' feeling with win over Sharks

Students storm field, hugs, tears of joy ensue

By Anthony Richards

The rivalry between the Nease Panthers and Ponte Vedra Sharks resulted in another epic football showdown between the two schools, and this year, it was the Panthers that edged out a 24-23 win in comeback fashion on Oct. 27.

The final minutes of the contest led to waves of emotion for both sides, as the lead changed hands following a touchdown run by Nease quarterback Bryce Frick and what turned out to be the game-winning extra point by Daniel Jones.

Both teams fought hard throughout, but when time ran out it was the Panthers who found themselves on top on the scoreboard and the Panthers' students in attendance stormed the field of the Shark Tank to celebrate with the players.

It was a crazy scene full of smiles, hugs and tears of joy by the Panthers' players and their fans.



Photo by Anthony Richards

It was an emotional celebration on the field after the Panthers defeated the rival Sharks 24-23 on Oct. 27.

For some, such as senior defensive back Careal Carter, he never quit believing even when the Panthers found themselves trailing late in the fourth quarter.

"We've fought all year, and I'm just

proud of my friend Bryce, because I've been with him for so long, and for him to help get the win like that is just crazy,"

PANTHERS continues on Page 37



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

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Hugh Osteen

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

Susan Griffin

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

Shaun Ryan

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

Anthony Richards

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

Don Coble

Contributor
don@claytodayonline.com

Amber Anderson

Page/Graphic Designer
amber@pontevedrarecorder.com

April Snyder

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

Kristin Flanagan

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

Adele McGraw

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

Chris Ratliff

Multimedia Specialist
chris@osteenmediagroup.com
(704) 640-8408

Joe Wilhelm

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

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



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

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

BRIEFS

Pork butt fundraiser under way

Mike Sobiecki and Kevin Sides are conducting their fourth annual Pork 4 Wishes Pork Butt Fundraiser, "Smokin' Critical Illnesses" Butt, to raise money for the Northeast Florida Make-A-Wish Foundation. All proceeds go to help fund wishes for children suffering from critical illness in Northeast Florida.

Each year, they have raised enough money to grant one "wish." The average cost of a "wish" is \$8,000, so that's a lot of pork!

To reserve your pork butt, email pork4wishes@gmail.com with the following information: name, phone number, email address, number of pork butts (purchased at \$75 each) and estimated pick-up time. Your order includes one bottle of Killer Hog BBQ Sauce.

You'll be able to pay by cash, check or Venmo at time of pick up.

Pick up: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Nov. 11

Location: 1244 Fish Hook Way, Ponte Vedra Beach

This is first come, first served, as they sell out every year.

If you have a local business and would like to sponsor this event, or to make a donation, contact Sobiecki at 904-337-8374 or pork4wishes@gmail.com.

GTM offers guided exploration hike

A guided exploration hike will be held 9-11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, at Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM). Learn about the Guana peninsula's natural biodiversity, expansive cultural history, vital estuarine resources and current efforts to protect these resources.

The hike departs from the GTM Research Reserve Trailhead Pavilion (west of Guana Dam), 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Register online at gtmnerr.org/visit/events.

The event is free, but parking is \$3 per vehicle. Wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended.

Democratic Club to meet

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will meet Tuesday, Nov. 7, at the Ponte Vedra Branch Library, 101 Library Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Chat and chew at 5:30 p.m. Meeting at 6 p.m.

The featured speaker will be Jim McCarthy,

past president, North Florida Land Trust, speaking on overdevelopment.

For more Information, email jkary@verizon.net.

Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

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

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



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


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County seeking applications for ARC, zoning and adjustment board

By Anthony Richards

Positions are currently vacant on several boards and committees throughout St. Johns County, including in the Ponte Vedra area with spots open on the Architectural Review Committee and Ponte Vedra Zoning and Adjustment Board.

These positions are volunteer, and the county is currently taking applications from residents who are looking to help their community by serving on one of the boards.

The purpose of the Architectural Review Committee is to ensure enhanced prop-

erty development, while maintaining and encouraging quality character of design of the structures in the Ponte Vedra and Ponte Vedra/Palm Valley overlay districts remain in line with the goals and objectives of the St. Johns County comprehensive plan.

Those applying for ARC are asked to be a registered architect in Florida or a retired architect formerly registered in the state and someone who resides in the Ponte Vedra zoning district or within district four, but outside the zoning district.

Regular members and alternates both serve four-year terms.

Anyone serving on the Ponte Vedra Zon-

ing and Adjustment Board is given the duty of regulating and restricting the height and size of buildings, the intensity of land use, the area of yards, courts and other space about buildings, as well as the ability to classify, regulate and restrict the location of commerce and industries and the location of buildings designed for specified industrial, commercial, residential and other uses within the Ponte Vedra Zoning District.

Qualifications for the board include being a registered voter in St. Johns County and residing in the Ponte Vedra Zoning District. Members must file financial disclosure.

General Qualifications: Must be a registered voter in St Johns County and reside in the Ponte Vedra Zoning District. Members must file financial disclosure.

Both boards have been focal points of late because they were among the list of board and committee process of hearing the PUD application request and renovation plans for the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club's property and buildings.

Applications can be found online by going to scjfl.us and searching the boards tab or a paper application can be picked up at the county administration building at 500 San Sebastian View in St. Augustine.



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2 Bedrooms, 3 Bathrooms, \$4,500,000



Lineup announced for EnterCircle Women's Day Program

EnterCircle 2023 presents the Third Annual Women's Day Program in celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week at the link on Nov. 17. The program aims to inform aspiring entrepreneurs, seasoned business owners, professionals and students on growth strategies and tips on how to "Thrive With Purpose."

You can expect a full schedule of

speakers from a variety of industries from tech to real estate who will share their stories on how they were able to excel in their professional and personal lives.

Topics include becoming bank loan ready, the experiences of women in tech, growth against all odds, finding meaning in your life as a leader and more.

The agenda is as follows:

- 8:30 to 9 a.m. Arrival and registration
- 9 to 9:03 a.m. Welcome and introduction by emcee Marithza Ross, meteorologist at Action News Jax
- 9 to 9:30 a.m. "It's Game Time! Leadership Lessons from a Former Female Football Player" — Jan Spence, CEO, CSP, Jan Spence and Associates
- 9:30 to 9:50 a.m. Neera Shetty, PGA Tour
- 10 to 10:20 a.m. "Biblical & Experiential Perspective on Purpose" — Father Rich Pagano, St. John Paul II
- 10:30 to Noon: Women in Tech Panel — Pauline Sivegny, Grace Aerospace; Representative from Northeast Florida Regional STEM2 Hub
- 10:30 to Noon: Women in Business — Sonya Morales-Marchisillo, Pinnacle Communications Group; Tillery Durbin, 121 Financial; Tina Bodnar, First Horizon Private Bank
- Noon to 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 12:30 to 1 p.m. Women in Business Panel — Jessica Funke Ho, Urban Youth Park;Carolynn Castillo, Absolute Top Dollar; Dr. Prasanthi Reddy, Rainbow



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- 1 to 1:50 p.m. Amy Dix, Authority Speakers Agency

Women business owners are invited to showcase their businesses at the Women's Day Program. Expo tables are \$150 and include admission to the program.

Attendees can book headshot sessions with award-winning photographer Gabriel Gianelli of First Coast Headshots.

Those interested in attending can register at www.entercircle.zone/womens-day. Registrations before Nov. 10 will receive 20% off tickets by using code RECORDER20 at checkout.


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- 24632 Harbour View Dr. - \$2,600,000
- 14402 Marina San Pablo #801 - \$2,425,000
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Margaret Meier is president of UltraShred Technologies, which provides high-security onsite shredding services to businesses, government offices, institutions and residents in Northern Florida and parts of Georgia. The business she founded with her husband 23 years ago offers secure paper shredding, non-paper media destruction and computer hard drive destruction.

Margaret Meier

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me about UltraShred Technologies.

UltraShred Technologies was started in 2000. It was an initiative coming out of a business that my husband, Walt Meier, was running: a commercial cleaning company that served large office complexes.

One of the facilities' managers was interested in getting shredding as a service. We looked into it and decided to go ahead and start that business.

Our main line of business is commercial onsite shredding. It can be scheduled service where we place certain kinds of containers in office buildings, medical clinics, hospitals, schools, courthouses — everywhere people need to have their information destroyed.

Our second line of business would be more like e-cycling or helping people with their outdated electronics. They need that information destroyed, also. We do that with the help of downstream partners. They will first remove all of the information that is on the device, destroy that and then refurbish the equipment so it stays out of the landfill.

How does this work?

If you need shredding, you would call the office. We can offer either a drop-off service or our trucks can come onsite. It's on camera. You get a certificate of destruction.

If you have devices that you needed taken care of, we also provide a certificate of destruction for your records.

For our scheduled service clients, we also provide a volume report. If you have a container, you'll know how full those containers are every time we come, and that helps you to understand: Is that the right size container? Do I need service monthly, weekly, bi-monthly?

We also provide environmental impact reporting, so you know how much water was saved, oil was saved, how much paper was recycled, all of that.

And we do shred events. Cities, municipalities and private business owners hire us to come, park our truck at a certain location. Then, they have these drive-through shredding events where our truck is there to shred for residents and customers.

I understand you do product destructions, too.

We've destroyed straw bags, plastic plants made to be sold but that had a flaw in them, magazines, books, clothing — some of the police departments want to destroy their uniforms so they don't get on the street.

We don't destroy tires, anything with wood, anything with metal. We do hard drive destruction, and that is metal, but the truck has to be completely clear of paper. We have a special mechanism on our truck that we can do shredding as long as the truck is empty.

Tell me about the need for these services. It seems you aren't quite a paperless society yet.

One of the needs for the service, in spite of the reduction of the use of paper, is compliance. Some very small organizations may be completely paperless, but almost everyone has some kind of paper. So, even though it's less paper, you still have to show compliance.

Also, if they do in-office shredding, everybody has access to wherever the paper was. And not all employees need to see everything you're shredding, so it provides privacy in the office.



In your role as president, what are some of your responsibilities?

Pretty much making sure that we make money. Because the whole purpose is to help the community, but my immediate community are all my employees. And I feel like that's one of my top responsibilities, taking care of them. They come first.

What do you like best about what you do?

My favorite thing about being a business owner is really and truly all of the connections that I make. I love people. It is fun to talk to people. It's fun to make friends everywhere.

I've stayed active in my industry. I serve on the board for our international trade association, i-SIGMA. Through those connections, I've been able to visit other shredding companies, storage companies, and really learn.

Have you lived in Northeast Florida long? What do you like best about living here?

I was a teacher in the '80s. At the time, it was not easy

to get jobs where I'm from, Long Island. So, I got a job here in Florida at a private school. A really nice school. Enjoyed it. Did that for two years. Worked at Hope Haven Children's Clinic doing a variety of things to grow my professional life in education and testing.

I was with St. Johns County Schools for several years. I did adjunct work at UNF, teaching teachers; I love to mentor people. Then, I was a stay-at-home mom with six kids.

I love Ponte Vedra. It's a great community.

How do you like to spend your free time?

We love to go to the scenic overlook on A1A and see both our beautiful estuary and the ocean. I love to ride my bike; it just makes me so happy.

And spend time with the family, of course. That's what it's all about.

How can people learn more about UltraShred Technologies?

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CHEERS TO 54 YEARS

The Ponte Vedra Recorder, 54 Years and Counting

By Scott A. Grant

The year 1969 was momentous. It saw our society reach the heights of our dreams and the depths of our nightmares. The "Miracle Mets" rose from mediocrity to win a magical World Series. Broadway Joe Namath led the NY Jets to a shocking win over the Colts in the AFL-NFL Championship Game and created the modern Super Bowl.

That same year, our nation fulfilled a promise made by John F. Kennedy earlier in the decade and put a man on the moon. Some people think the moon landings were faked. That seems silly, but people believe what they want to believe. A shocking number of American's believe the Earth is flat. In fact, there are more people in the United States today who believe the Earth is flat than there were in Europe when Columbus sailed in 1492.

The year 1969 also saw one of our worst tragedies. Twenty days after Neil



Scott A. Grant

Armstrong first set foot on the moon, the nation was shocked by the brutal killing of Sharon Tate and six others, including coffee heiress Abigail Folger. Both of these events played out on flickering TV screens across the country along with footage from the war in Vietnam. In Jacksonville, the Jackson-

ville University Dolphins began their march toward their penultimate finish in the NCAA tournament.

That same year, two determined women founded The Ponte Vedra Recorder. There was no reason to imagine the paper would survive, let alone succeed. Ponte Vedra was a sleepy little burg. But Peggy Bradford and Gretchen Carpenter had a dream. The first issue the pair created looked more like a middle school newsletter than a paper and began with the words, "We'll never make the professional golf circuit." How wrong they were. Eight years later the Tournament Players Championship moved to Ponte Vedra. We may not have individually made it to the tour, but collectively we did and in a "fifth major" way!

Over the years, The Recorder has been there to document our successes, remember our tragedies and enrich our lives. In more recent times, two other women have taken up the mantle of the original founders. Grace Hayes and

Susan Griffin led The Recorder into a new century of reporting. It would not be a stretch to say that our paper would not be where it is today without the auspices of both of these community icons. It is impossible to attend any of the myriad events that make our town special without running into Susan. I wish I could bottle her energy and enthusiasm.

It has been my profound pleasure to write for both Grace and Susan and help tell the story of our wonderful little beach town. We can only imagine what the next 54 years will bring. However, we can rest assured that thanks to the efforts of four strong, determined women and countless others, that The Recorder will be there telling our story every step of the way.

Scott A. Grant is a local author, historian and investment adviser. It has been one of the great pleasures of his life to contribute to this iconic institution. scottg@standfastic.com

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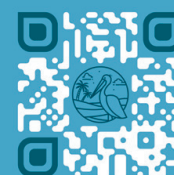


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Congratulations

to the Ponte Vedra Recorder's 54 years of covering Ponte Vedra happenings

I started working at The Recorder in 1979 as a reporter/advertising consultant/editor. After I left for media and real estate jobs, The Recorder followed our family's passions and accomplishments, some of which are shared here. It continues to be a fun ride in this fabulous place we call home. Thanks to The Recorder staff for being there for our community for all these years!



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CHEERS TO 54 YEARS

The Ponte Vedra Recorder keeps on keepin' on

By Clare Berry

When I was in my 20s, I landed back in Jacksonville Beach after moving away from Jacksonville for college, marriage and my husband Vance's law school years. Through friends from high school at Episcopal, I connected with Peggy Bradford, co-founder of The Recorder. She was looking for help. Her partner in the paper, Gretchen Carpenter, was too ill to continue to contribute. Peggy hired me.

What a wild ride that was! Peggy had just two employees, photographer Nancy Hickey and me. Nancy didn't miss a party; I tried not to as well, plus I did a lot of other things — attending PVCA, MSD and County Commission meetings, bringing in ads and gratefully coordinating our community assistants (who wrote restaurant reviews, golf and tennis team notes and so much more —

they were invaluable.). I drove Peggy to The St. Augustine Record office the Friday before each issue so we could proofread the galleys that The Record staff had assembled for us. Then it was off to the press. After printing, The Record would deliver our papers. We actually hand-stamped each of our subscribers' addresses on the papers! Next stop was the post office, which back in the day was on Ponte Vedra Boulevard across from the Surf Club.

The Ponte Vedra Recorder is thriving today under the leadership of Publisher Susan Griffin, a truly dedicated community supporter. Today, computers make trips to the printer unnecessary, but it still takes committed employees for this labor of love to continue and to succeed. I am grateful to the dedicated staff of The Ponte Vedra Recorder. Happy 54th anniversary!

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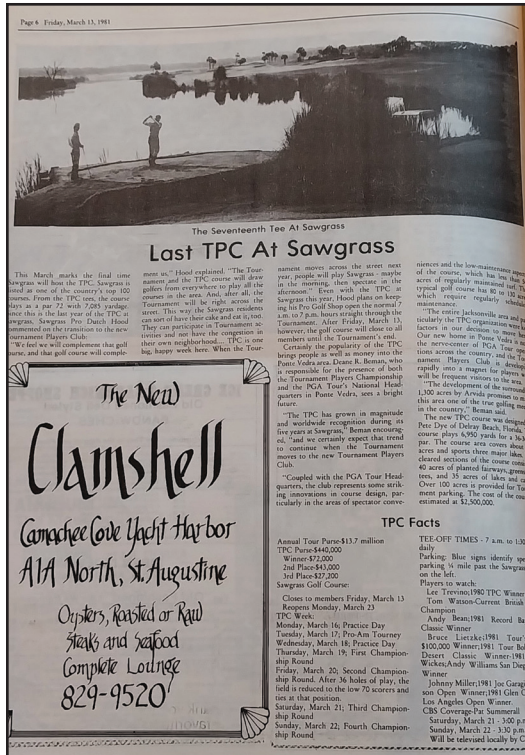
Here's a look back at the early 1980s according to The Ponte Vedra Recorder!



January 9, 1982



February 24, 1982



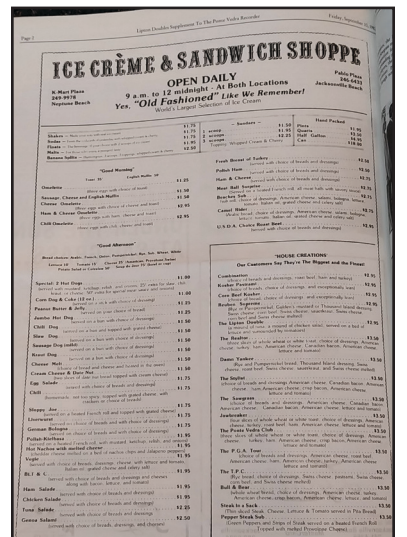
March 13, 1981



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Diocese plans 'Life Fest'

The Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine will hold its inaugural “Life Fest — Live Catholic” from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche at Mission Nombre de Dios, 27 Ocean Ave., St. Augustine.

Attendees will experience a day filled with faith, fun and family activities. The day starts with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Erik Pohlmeier at 9 a.m., followed by youth awards. Visitors can expect to be inspired by speakers Bob Perron and Dr. Jason Phillips and to enjoy uplifting music by the band Stella.

Attendees are encouraged to dress up as their favorite saints, participate in face painting, play games and visit the petting zoo, food trucks, vendors and more. For older children, there will be “Rise Up” games that include a 360-degree photo booth and a painting tent. There are three workshops for high school and college-age students to attend, including two “Theology of the Body” sessions in English and Spanish or a speaker panel.

The day concludes with a Eucharistic procession, the Rosary and the Divine Mercy chaplet. “Life Fest — Live Catholic” Day is sponsored by the offices of Youth & Young Adult Ministry and the Human Life & Dignity.

For more details, email hld@dosaf.com. The event is weather permitting.

Lecture topic: Molecular anatomy of animal body plans

The Evenings at Whitney Lecture Series hosted by the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, continues at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 9, with the program titled “The Molecular Anatomy of Animal Body Plans.” Chris Lowe Ph.D., associate professor, Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University, will be the speaker.



Dr. Chris Lowe

This free lecture will be presented in person at the UF Whitney Laboratory Lohman Auditorium, 9505 Ocean Shore Blvd., St. Augustine. Those interested also have the option of registering to watch via Zoom live the night of the lecture.

Register to watch online: ufl.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_N-zN9c09R0-qaWK4ygqiBxQ.

The lecture will introduce the history of our understanding of animal body plans and the role that molecular developmental biology has played in shaping our understanding the origin of the major phyla. Lowe will further focus on work from the lab on both hemichordate and echinoderm patterning and how these data help them understand chordate origins, but also more generally in how nervous systems evolve over time.

Lowe is from the UK and completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Sussex in biology. His interests in evolution and developmental biology led him to work with Greg Wray at SUNY Stony Brook on the evolution

of the echinoderm body plan. His thesis work led him to become interested in addressing classical questions on chordate origins and the evolution of our own body plan, and this led him to hemichordates, which as the name suggests is a group of animals closely related to our own phylum.

As a Miller Fellow at UC Berkeley working with John Gerhart and with Marc Kirschner from Harvard, Lowe developed a species of hemichordate for developmental studies to address hypotheses of chordate origins. He began his independent career at the University of Chicago and moved to Stanford, based at Hopkins Marine Station in 2010, and is now a professor of biology.

Upcoming Whitney Lecture

Dec. 14: “Fish Ecology in a Rapidly Changing World,” Dr. Robert Lamb, research assistant professor, UF/IFAS

Nature Coast Biological Station

About Whitney Laboratory

Whitney Laboratory is a biomedical marine research institute of the University of Florida. It is composed of 11 faculty-led laboratories that use marine organisms for basic biological research that can be applied to human health, understanding of local natural resources and insight into our dynamic local environment.

Whitney Laboratory provides training for future experimental scientists, education programs for kindergarten through university-level students and monthly lectures for the general public to bring lifelong learning to the community.

Whitney Laboratory also features a Sea Turtle Hospital, which promotes ocean awareness and conservation through sea turtle rehabilitation, research and education.

Whitney Laboratory is located at 9505 Ocean Shore Blvd., St. Augustine, on the border of Flagler and St. Johns counties. For more information, go to whitney.ufl.edu or call 904-461-4000.



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Students, families brighten hospice with birdhouses

In a heartwarming display of community spirit, the students and families of Jacksonville Country Day School (JCDS) recently came together to paint and hang birdhouses outside the inpatient rooms of Community Hospice of Northeast Florida. The collaborative effort brought joy to patients and their families, offering a colorful touch outside their windows during challenging times.

On a bright and sunny day, JCDS volunteers gathered to lend their artistic talents to a collection of 16 birdhouses. These blank canvases transformed into vibrant, eye-catching pieces of art over the weekend, thanks to the dedication and creativity of the children and their families. Each birdhouse became a unique piece of art, reflecting the personalities and styles of those who painted them.

“It makes me really happy because it’s good to do things for others and not just yourself,” said JCDS first grader Hendrick Ciuraru. “I hope they (the people at Community Hospice of Northeast Florida) see lots of birds!”

Ashley Howell, manager of volunteer services at Community Hospice, was present to witness the enthusiasm and goodwill of the JCDS families the day the birdhouses were delivered to the center. She expressed her excitement at having these colorful birdhouses placed outside the patient rooms, knowing they would bring comfort and smiles to those undergoing treatment and their loved ones. The birdhouses serve as a symbol of hope and



Contributed photos

the beauty of life.

This heartwarming project is not a one-time effort for JCDS. In fact, it marks the school’s third year of collaboration with Community Hospice. Each year, they replace the birdhouses from the previous year to ensure that the area maintains its vibrant and welcoming appearance. This commitment to bringing color and cheer to the lives of hospice patients has been called a testament to JCDS’ dedication to community service and the well-being of others.

The JCDS students and their families look forward to continuing this annual tradition as they spread warmth and positivity in the years to come.



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Joy Andrews selected as St. Johns County administrator



Joy Andrews

On Tuesday, Oct. 31, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners selected Joy Andrews as county administrator after conducting interviews with the four

finalists during a special meeting. A contract is pending the board's approval.

This concludes a public engagement process of recruitment and interviews managed by the county's Human Resources Department, which featured public meetings, live video broadcasts of the meetings, and a "Get the Scoop on County Administrator Finalists" ice cream social for the St. Johns County community.

Andrews has served as interim county administrator for St. Johns County since July. She has been with the county for the past 17 years, including the previous seven years specifically as the deputy/assistant county administrator. She has led a wide range of departments, such as Growth Management, Economic Development, Tourism Development, Health and Human Services, Fire Rescue, Arts and Culture, Grants and Legislative Affairs, Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery, Coastal Management, Public Library System, Parks and Recreation and Community Redevelopment.

Her education includes a Master of Public Administration (public financing) from Kansas State University and an LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws) in international commerce and trade law from Nanjing University, School of Law.

The four top-tier candidates that were interviewed included:

- Andrews
- Sarah Campbell, town manager for Orange Park, Florida
- James Doar, county administrator for Gallatin County, Montana
- James Harriott, director of engineering — transportation for Causeaux, Hewitt and Walpole, Inc. Professional Consultants

The interviews were broadcast live on the county's GTV channel. The recorded version will be available upon completion of closed-captioning services within the next few days.

The board contracted with GovHR USA, a government recruitment and management consultant, to ensure a thorough, strategic national search for the next county administrator was completed, which provided a pool of 105 applicants.

GovHR USA narrowed the pool to 12 potential candidates for the selection

committee to review. In a public meeting on Oct. 6, the selection committee designated five applicants as top-tier candidates and held Zoom interviews with each on Oct. 9, which was recorded and provided to the public afterward.

After the Zoom interviews, the selection committee unanimously voted to recommend all five candidates for consideration by the board.

One candidate withdrew from the process, leaving four top-tier candidates for the board to consider. At the Oct. 17 County Commission regular meeting, the board unanimously accepted the recommendation of the St. Johns County administrator selection committee to interview the four top-tier candidates.

The county administrator selection committee is comprised of the follow-

ing individuals:

- Henry Dean, St. Johns County District 5 commissioner
- Brandon Patty, St. John County clerk of the circuit court and comptroller
- Lilian Hutchinson, St. Johns County director of human resources
- Jerry Wilson, community/business representative

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WITCHES RIDE THROUGH NOCATEE

The 2023 Witches Ride rode through the streets of the 20 Mile neighborhood in Nocatee on Oct. 28. Riders consisted of women 18 years and older who dressed up in their festive witch attire and rode their bicycles tossing candy to children lined up along the route. The event was put on by Smart Soiree and proceeds from the ride will go to the Children's Cancer Therapy Development Institute.

Photos by Susan Griffin





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Students engineer pumpkin drop capsules

Bolles grade one students from the Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus and Lower School Whitehurst Campus gathered for the annual grade-level Pumpkin Drop on Oct. 25.

Ahead of the event, students worked in mixed-campus teams to design and build protective capsules around pumpkins, with the goal of keeping them intact after a three-story drop. The first graders could only choose two of the following materials to engineer their cardboard capsules: packing peanuts, air pillows, foam wrap and bubble wrap.

Each team's box was tossed from the balcony of the library on the Ponte Vedra Beach Campus while the group gathered to watch from a safe distance. Excited pre-K students also attended the drop event on the heels of a collaborative lesson between science and library, where they learned why pumpkin is a fruit and why it floats and reviewed feelings to carve faces on pumpkins.

While some of the teams successfully kept their pumpkins from breaking, all learned how to work together and cheer on their classmates during this hands-on, seasonal activity.

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Neptune Beach kids attend story time party

Winn-Dixie partnered with Jacksonville Public Library on Oct. 28 to host the first of six story time events for invited Beaches-area preschool children at the Neptune Beach Winn-Dixie.

The event featured a special read-aloud of “Rainbow Soup” and “Sherry & Terry Go to the Library,” two of the eight all-new books included in this year’s JaxKids Book Club backpack.

The first 50 families in attendance received a complimentary reusable tote from Winn-Dixie containing all the fresh ingredients to make “Rainbow Soup” at home. Children also received a special tour of the store, played games, did crafts

and received giveaways. JaxKids Book Club backpacks were also given to any 4-year-old who did not receive one at their voluntary pre-K center in September or October.

The grocer will host its second event from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, Nov. 4, at Regency Square Branch Library, with additional events held after the holiday season during the second half of the school year. The Winn-Dixie Gives Foundation and Harveys Gives Foundation are sponsors of the JaxKids Book Club Storytime events, in collaboration with the Library Foundation of Jacksonville and Jacksonville Public Library.

The Winn-Dixie Gives and Harveys Gives Foundations recently provided the Library Foundation of Jacksonville with a grant of \$50,000 to refresh the JaxKids Book Club collection and commission new books from diverse authors and illustrators with a focus on reflecting the diverse Jacksonville community. The story time events are an extension of the grocer’s commitment to supporting early literacy and education in the communities it serves.

The JaxKids Book Club provides access to books to promote early literacy and a love of reading for all children throughout Duval County.



Contributed photo

Preschool children recently attended a special story time at the Neptune Beach Winn-Dixie.

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St. Johns County marks completion of Victoria Crossing apartments

On Oct. 25, St. Johns County, in partnership with Turnstone Development Corp., held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of an affordable housing development project named Victoria Crossing, located at 75 Stephanie Lane, St. Augustine.

The ceremony began with remarks from Turnstone Development Corp. representatives, including Board Secretary/Director Maze Jackson, Interim Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer Sue Wiemer, and Development Consultant Alison Culvard. St. Johns County District 3 Commissioner Roy Alaimo also spoke at the event.

“Victoria Crossing is about building a better quality of life for those in need of a safe, affordable and reliable place to call home,” Alaimo said. “As the demand for affordable housing continues to grow here in St. Johns County, this project is another example of how the Board of County Commissioners is working with smart-growth-focused developers to create attainable housing opportunities. Today, we celebrate another project to help bridge the gap on the issue of affordable housing.

Last year, we celebrated the completion of San Marco Heights, with 132 apartments, and today we celebrate the completion of Victoria Crossing, with 96 units.”

A ceremonial ribbon-cutting was performed, which included Alaimo, St. Johns County Housing and Community Development Division representatives and Turnstone Development Corp. representatives, including Jackson, Wiemer and Culvard.

Funding for the project includes a \$15 million, 40-year forgivable loan from St. Johns County funded by a Community Development Block Grant — Disaster Recovery Grant from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department through the Florida Department of Commerce. In addition, \$14 million was funded through a mix of tax-exempt funds from the St. Johns County Housing Finance Authority and private equity funding.

Based on income, the current monthly rental rates at Victoria Crossing range from \$375 to \$873 per month for a one-bedroom unit, \$440 to \$1,038 for a two-bedroom unit, and \$490 to \$1,180 for



Contributed photos

Ceremonial ribbon-cutting for Victoria Crossing featuring St. Johns County District 3 Commissioner Roy Alaimo, St. Johns County Housing and Community Development Division representatives and Turnstone Development Corp. representatives, including Maze Jackson, Sue Wiemer and Alison Culvard.

a three-bedroom unit. The current rental rates at Victoria Crossing are less than half of the rental market rate in the same area.

In addition to providing needed housing, the development of the property preserved four acres of wetlands. The community is gated and fenced, and buffered from State Road 207 by a traffic circle that includes a public bus stop.

There are a total of 96 affordable housing units located at Victoria Crossing. The property is located near services that will be beneficial to the residents, including schools, churches, pharmacies, a veterinary hospital, car repair shops and stores, including Publix, Target, Winn-Dixie, PetSmart, Lowe's and CVS.

Victoria Crossing has 24 one-bedroom/one-bath units, 42 two-bedroom/two-bath units, and 30 three-bedroom/two-bath units. All of the units include an open balcony or patio with private storage. The

unit amenities include walk-in closets in all master bedrooms, washer/dryer hook-ups, a large kitchen pantry, appliances, low-flow water fixtures in all bathrooms, and 15 SEER HVAC systems with programmable thermostats.

The entire community meets the Florida Green Building Coalition construction and energy efficiency standards.

The common amenities include:

- 5,120-square-foot community center with a spacious multi-purpose room that can serve as a temporary emergency shelter
- Community kitchen
- Business center with computers, printers, internet service
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St. Johns County leadership meets with legislative delegation

On Oct. 17 and 18, representatives of St. Johns County's leadership visited with the St. Johns County legislative delegation, which includes Sen. Travis Hutson, Rep. Cyndi Stevenson, Speaker Paul Renner, and Rep. Bobby Payne, to advocate for the County's 2024 Legislative Action Plan. This follows the annual St. Johns County Legislative Delegation meeting held on Oct. 13.

The county's leadership group included Board of County Commissioners Chairman Christian Whitehurst and Vice Chair Sarah Arnold, as well as Interim County Administrator Joy Andrews, Deputy County Administrator Brad Bradley and Legislative Development Manager Adam Tecler.

"While we are very early in the legislative process, St. Johns County is encouraged by the support we received for important projects that will strengthen law enforcement, fire and EMS infrastructure, reduce daily commute times of our residents and provide emergency responders with the technical training needed to protect the many historic structures in our area that are treasures to this state and the nation," Tecler said.

Whitehurst echoed the success of those legislative delegation meetings at the Oct. 26 Board of County Commissioners and St. Johns County School Board special joint meeting, and it included Hutson offering input on St. Johns County's focus on policy changes to address school capacity.

Arnold thanked Florida House Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Leek and Rep. Patt Maney for their warm welcome at the State Capitol.

Arnold and Leek discussed in detail the county's most critical initiatives, including the opportunity to bring the State Museum of Black History to St. Johns County.

Whitehurst also had the opportunity to meet with Florida Senate President-designate Ben Albritton to discuss the Hastings community, including meaningful pathways

to conserve working farmlands and facilitate a better quality of life for the historic agriculture community. During the meeting, Albritton expressed this meeting was the start of a lasting friendship, while Whitehurst appreciated Albritton's hospitality and his support for local growers.

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the 2024 Legislative Action Plan at the Sept. 19 regular meeting. The plan requests more than \$84 million in State appropriations for the following local projects:

- State Road 16: to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety.
 - County Road 2209: to complete the central segment of this critical road corridor.
 - Central Public Safety Station: to provide additional emergency response capacity.
 - Regional Fire Training Facility: to address the emergency responder workforce shortage.
 - Porpoise Point Stabilization: to reduce persistent flooding and protect a federal navigation channel.
 - South Ponte Vedra Beach: to protect property and infrastructure from further erosion.
 - Genovar Park: to design and construct recreation enhancements, including a regional boat ramp.
- The 2024 Legislative Action Plan also requests the Legislature address critical statewide or regional priorities, including:
- Removing outdated requirements that raise the cost of school construction or inhibit investment in new school construction.
 - Identifying historic farming communities and providing pathways to conserve working lands and encourage public infrastructure investment.
 - Facilitating the restoration of the Matanzas River Estuary in St. Johns and Flagler counties.

On June 15, St. Johns County announced it received \$59 million in appropriations from the State of Florida after Gov. Ron



Contributed photo

Pictured from left to right, St. Johns County Legislative Development Manager Adam Tecler, Interim County Administrator Joy Andrews, St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners Vice Chair Sarah Arnold, state Sen. Travis Hutson, Board of County Commissioners Chair Christian Whitehurst and Deputy County Administrator Brad Bradley.

DeSantis signed the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget into law. It was the largest amount of state appropriations the St. Johns County

government had ever received and surpassed the \$12.4 million appropriated the previous year.



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Melvin Luciano and his boat won "best in show" at last year's event.



Curtis Lang's boat was the "over 30-foot" winner.

Palm Valley Boat Parade set for Dec. 2

By Anthony Richards

For more than two decades, the Palm Valley Boat Parade has been a holiday tradition and the perfect way for many to start one of the most joyous and festive times of the year.

Held on the first Saturday in December, which this year is Dec. 2, the parade route will go down the Intracoastal Waterway starting at 6 p.m. just south of the Palm Valley Bridge on County Road 210 and traveling north about seven miles before wrapping up at the end of Marsh Landing around 8 p.m.

According to Wendy Patton, with the parade, the lights on all the boats reflecting off the water as they cruise down the waterway is quite a spectacle and something the entire family, no matter what age, can appreciate and enjoy.

Although there are other boat parades around, which can be common with Florida having so many waterways, what makes the Palm Valley Boat Parade so unique is how naturally narrow the Palm Valley portion of the Intracoastal Waterway is, which in turn creates a closer view for residents lining the shores trying to catch a glimpse of all the displays.

The public is invited to view and take part in the pa-



Photos courtesy of Palm Valley Boat Parade

Darby Miller's boat was named "most spirited boat," in last year's competition.

rade, as the registration to get involved in the event either as a boater or as an owner of a dock along the route.

Both boats and docks are encouraged to decorate and enter the contest and the most festive boats and docks will be voted on at the conclusion of the parade.

Registration as either a boat or a dock participant can be found by going to palmvalleyboatparade.com and clicking

on the "boat registration" tab.

Those viewing from the shore will vote on the best decorated boats, while the boat captains will be the ones voting on their favorite docks.

Residents and families living along the waterway are known for planning big parties around watching the boats float by their homes, but there are also several public options to view the parade route from, including many restaurants located along the Intracoastal Waterway, such as LULU's, Barbara Jeans on the Water, Palm Valley Fish Camp, Palm Valley Outdoors and Valley Smoke.

Parking at the viewing area sites can become crowded closer to the start of the parade, so spectators are encouraged to arrive early to eliminate the extra stress of traffic.

Parade participants must attend the mandatory captain's safety meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion in Palm Valley located at 560 N. Wilderness Trail in Ponte Vedra Beach.

For the dock competition, judging will be limited to the lights and decorations on the dock itself, so decorated homes or any other structures not over the water are not to be factored into the judge's final decision.

All kinds of boats are allowed to take part in the parade, from power boats to sail boats and all different sizes, with boats less than and more than 30 feet welcome.



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St. Johns County OKs \$58K for Vilano Beach programs

Contributed photo

During the Oct. 17 regular meeting, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners convened as the St. Johns County Community Redevelopment Agency to approve an agreement with Vilano Beach Main Street Inc. for \$58,000 to continue support of the nonprofit organization's dedication to enhancing, promoting and preserving the historic character of the Vilano Beach Town Center and surrounding areas.

"We have gained the community's trust and have fostered goodwill within the public with our monthly community meetings and our monthly Vilano Road Artisan Market," President of Vilano Beach Main Street Linda LaCerva said. "Our fundraising efforts continue with a variety of special events and festivals. For example, our organization of volunteers will again be the charity partner for the Whiskey, Wine & Wildlife event that helps fund coastal wildlife protection and education programs. We are grateful for the support we've received from St. Johns County since we first became a designated Florida Main Street community in 2019. We look forward to more progress in 2024."

On Oct. 24, St. Johns County held a public event to celebrate the groundbreaking of the \$1.8 million Vilano Beach Oceanfront Park Renovation Project. It will feature improvements to the beach walkovers, a new covered performance stage with terraced seating, a new outdoor climbing play structure and recreation features, and numerous enhancements to public facilities and the parking lot area.

Earlier in October, Hyatt Place St. Augustine/Vilano Beach opened its new 120-room hotel that has more features than a typical Hyatt Place location. Located at 117 Vilano Road, St. Augustine, the property includes a ballroom with more than 7,000 square feet of space. It also



has an indoor/outdoor flex space of 20,000 square feet. The Art Deco-inspired Hyatt Place features Pesca Vilano, the new restaurant and rooftop bar from Chef Michael Lugo, with sweeping views of Vilano Beach.

"There is a lot of economic synergy happening in Vilano Beach," LaCerva said. "The excitement and energy are exceeding expectations."

Vilano Beach is located only 10 minutes away from

historic downtown St. Augustine on Florida's scenic A1A Byway. Vilano offers a variety of amenities, from oceanfront and oceanside opportunities for beach lovers to a wide array of restaurants, hotels and activities — including fishing, surfing, boating and more. The Vilano Beach Pier is located on the river side of the Matanzas inlet, and it's one of the best vantage points to watch the sunset over downtown St. Augustine.

The Rotary Club of Palm Valley Presents a Fundraising Event

BENEFITTING:

- Peace of Heart - A residential group home for young people with autism.
- Blessings in a Backpack - Whose mission is to provide food on weekends for school aged children.
- The Charities of The Foundation of the Rotary Club of Palm Valley Inc.

Grand Prize

Dinner for 6 on Friday, January 19, 2024, at 7:00pm in The Wine Room at the Lodge with Executive Chef Cameron Walton. Entertainment provided by the St. Augustine Symphony's Bella Costa String Quartet.

Raffle Information

Raffle Ticket Donation: \$100
Maximum Number of Tickets: 250
Last Date to Purchase Tickets: Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023
Live Drawing: Wed, Nov, 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Zoom Meeting Name: Caring for Kids Raffle Drawing
Zoom ID: 82901390021

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<https://PalmValleyRotaryClub.org/page/CaringFor-KidsRaffle/>

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- 3 Peace of Heart Garden Certificates (\$350@) \$\$\$
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- 2 Jacksonville Symphony Tickets \$\$
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Give your favorite business the recognition they deserve, and nominate them as the Best of the Best in their category!

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This artist's rendering shows what Preserve at Wards Creek would look like.

Community

Continued from 1

The units would be designed for two, three and four bedrooms and be located in three-story structures.

About 40% of the funding for the \$100 million project would be subsidized through the sale of credits to Community Reinvestment Act banks that are required by the federal government to invest in affordable housing. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will cap rental rates, which means they will remain lower than most market-rate alternatives for at least 30 years.

At 2023 figures, a two-bedroom unit would rent for \$1,069 a month, a three-bedroom unit would rent for \$1,227 and a four-bedroom unit would rent for \$1,362. Those rents will likely increase slightly by the time the units open.

What will also increase is the renters' maximum earnings. In 2023 terms, that's \$42,480 for a two-person household, \$47,820 for a three-person household and \$53,100 for a four-person household.

One of the concerns most mentioned by meeting attendees was the potential impact on traffic.

"We are working on multiple solutions to traffic that are going to be paired with our project," said Katessa Archer, senior development associate, who led the presentation. "I can't formally speak on those yet because they haven't been fully negotiated with the county, but we're very aware of that issue."

She added that road improvements would have to be made prior to the property being occupied.

Preserve at Wards Creek would have only one main access, on State Road 16A.

Land-use attorney Thomas Ingram described a number of road improvements already planned for the area surrounding the project:

- County Road 2209, also known as the St. Johns Parkway, will be extended from its terminus at Silverleaf Parkway south, crossing International Golf Parkway (IGP) and connecting to S.R. 16. This would



This map offers a bird's-eye view of Preserve at Wards Creek.

provide a parallel route to C.R. 16A and reduce the traffic there. The state Legislature has appropriated \$15 million toward that project.

- The county is planning intersection improvements at IGP and S.R. 16.
- The state Department of Transportation is designing a widening of S.R. 16 from IGP to the outlet malls, a projected \$100 million project.

- The First Coast Expressway will replace the Shands Bridge between St. Johns and Clay counties. That \$595 million project is expected to be complete in 2030.

Preserve at Wards Creek would have several amenities, including a clubhouse with a pool, a fully furnished fitness center, a room for residents to rent out for events and a playground and a walking path. Pets would be allowed.

Dominium owns, develops and manages affordable rental communities in 18 states, including 25 such properties representing more than 5,700 homes in Florida.

The only other property it owns in St. Johns County is The Oaks at St. Johns near Nease High School. It recently purchased that property from a previous owner and is in the process of renovating it. The demand for units at The Oaks is so great there is a 1,000-person waiting list.

The Preserve at Wards Creek project will come before the Planning & Zoning Commission on Dec. 21. Requested zoning changes will then come before the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners on Feb. 6.

Boy Scout Cooper Alfiero serves St. Johns County seniors

As a young child, Cooper Alfiero accompanied his mom, Toni, to volunteer at Council on Aging's Coastal Community Senior Center in St. Augustine. As he grew, he returned with members of his St. Augustine Boy Scout Troop 345 to volunteer at COA. These experiences left a lasting impression, and when the time came for Cooper to pursue his Eagle Scout designation with the Boy Scouts, he decided his goal would be to make a positive difference in the lives of our community's seniors.

"A few years back, my troop and I spent the day doing outdoor clean-up work at COA," he explained. "We ate lunch on the deck in the south parking lot, and I noticed it was in need of repair. I decided to keep it in mind for a future project."

Fast forward to this year, when Cooper, now a student at St. Augustine High School, became eligible to pursue his Eagle Scout designation. He returned to COA and began creating a plan to repair and renovate the outdoor deck. He consulted with his Boy Scout advisers and met with COA facilities manager Ray Franklin for help selecting the color for the finished project. He solicited material support from the community and received donations from White's Lumber & Supply and discounts at Lowe's to help with

the project costs.

Finally, Cooper assembled a multi-generational team to help him with the project. His team included his girlfriend, Emma, friends from school and fellow Boy Scouts and advisers. They were joined by Cooper's grandfather, Brian Alfiero, who taught them how to repair the deck boards, and Cooper's great-grandfather, Joe Alfiero, who helped transport supplies. Together, they replaced all of the rotten boards on the ramp and the deck, cleaned and repainted, and power-washed the surrounding concrete slab.

As a final touch, they cleaned out the surrounding brush and installed new landscaping and flowers to beautify the area.

"I'm really thankful for all the help I received from the community to take on this renovation project," Cooper said. "I hope it will bring happiness to the seniors and staff at Council on Aging."

Now that the project is complete, Cooper looks forward to submitting his Eagle Scout application. After high school, he plans to attend college to study musical theater and political science.

Cooper's mom, Toni Alfiero, served as an intern at COA during her senior year at Flagler College. It inspired her to share the experience of serving seniors with Cooper when he was young.



Contributed photo

Cooper Alfiero is seen with some of his team members.

"I'm super proud of him," she said. "He's been doing Scouts for so long. I was really glad he chose COA."

COA Executive Director Becky Yanni commended Cooper on his service.

"It is so heartwarming to see young people in our community give of their time and energy to improve the lives of older adults," she said. "Every day,

ALFIERO continues on Page 26

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The finished deck

Alfiero

Continued from 25

Council on Aging relies on the caring of people like Cooper and his friends. The deck is beautiful and comfortable now, thanks to Cooper's vision and his team's hard work. We are so grateful and proud of their contribution!"

To learn more about the many programs and services Council on Aging offers for older adults in St. Johns County, go to coasjc.org or call 904-209-3700. For information on how you can support COA's work in the community, go to coasjc.org/get-involved.



Cooper Alfiero



Contributed photos

Community Hospice & Palliative Care recognized

Community Hospice & Palliative Care was recently named a 2023 Hospice Honors Award recipient by HEALTHCAREfirst, a leading provider of revenue cycle management services, Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) and bereavement surveys, and advanced analytics for hospice organizations. This prestigious annual review recognizes agencies that continuously provide a positive patient experience and high-quality care as measured from the patient and caregiver point of view. It acknowledges the highest-performing agencies by analyzing the performance of the Hospice Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey satisfaction measures.

More than 300 Community Hospice & Palliative Care staff members came together to celebrate the honor, includ-

ing being the only hospice provider in the Northeast and North Central Florida to receive this distinction of extraordinary care by the entire interdisciplinary team that includes physicians or APRNs, nurses, hospice care aides, specialty therapists, bereavement counselors, social workers, chaplains and volunteers.

HCAHPS Honors acknowledges the highest performing agencies by analyzing performance on the willingness to recommend question as a qualifier and then analyzing performance on 18 other questions that comprise the publicly reported measures. HCAHPS Honors recipients include agencies scoring above the HEALTHCAREfirst National Average on at least 85% of the evaluated questions.

For more information on hospice and palliative services, go to communityhospice.com.



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PAGE 27 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2023

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GUEST COLUMN

Giving well: How can philanthropy be more focused and fulfilling?

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

How much thought do you give your charitable giving? Do you simply write some checks or, more likely, visit organizations' websites, make donations and then get on with your day? If so, you're not alone. But is that really the most fulfilling way to do it? Here are some insights from Kia Sullivan, lead family dynamics specialist with Wells Fargo Wealth & Investment Management:

Having supported the philanthropic efforts of many clients over the years, I have found there are a number of benefits and obstacles that need to be overcome to get the most out of the experience. First the benefits: I have seen first-hand how giving one's time, money and energy on behalf of others can enrich personal and cultural relationships, enhance well-being and build stronger, more vibrant communities.

Now the obstacles: Making meaningful decisions about how, when and how much to give is not always easy. With over 1 million charities in the U.S. and social, environmental and economic uncertainty, the choices can be overwhelming, even stressful. As a result, I have seen some individuals restrain



their charitable activity despite their strong desire to give back. Others I encounter worry that their giving is scattered, often reactive, and only moderately satisfying.

Fortunately, there are ways to enhance the process of giving so that it's a more rewarding and joyful experience on behalf of the greater good. When my clients ask how to make the most of their charitable giving, I tell them it starts with meaning (not money). Together, we explore their values, passions and objectives to help bring focus and intention to their philanthropy.

How can you transform your giving into a more meaningful, fulfilling endeavor? Whether giving of time or treasure, a little planning goes a long way. Here are some guidelines to help get you started:

1. Reflect: The first thing I encourage clients to do is take a look at past and current practices of generosity. Understanding your past behaviors will help guide your direction forward. As you reflect, consider how much of your giving decisions are based on feelings of obligation, gratitude, impulse or even guilt. What's the most meaningful gift

you've ever given and why?

2. Identify your values: Values are the core motivating principles that guide our behavior and shape how we show up in the world. Knowing the principles and characteristics that motivate you is at the heart of meaningful giving. For example, if your core values are creativity, opportunity and independence, you may approach giving differently than one motivated by tradition, effectiveness and collaboration. Understanding that philanthropy is as unique as your fingerprint allows authenticity and meaning to penetrate the choices you make.

3. Find a focus and write it down: Intentional philanthropy requires exploring your interests and passions and determining what issues matter most. I suggest choosing two or three areas on which to focus the bulk of your giving. Then write a philanthropic mission statement as a way to clearly express the intent of your generosity. A mission statement answers the questions "What do I stand for and what do I want to do about it?" This focus will help you prioritize opportunities, make meaningful decisions, and even help you say "no"

GIVING WELL continues on Page 31

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Don't leave your IRA to the IRS

If you've invested in an IRA for many decades, it may well turn into a key source of income for your retirement. Still, you might not deplete your IRA in your lifetime, especially if you also have a pension or a 401(k) and other investment income. So, if your IRA still has sizable assets after your passing, it would likely end up in your estate plan. If you leave your IRA to grown children or other family members, could they be hit with a big tax bill?

Here's a little background: Up until the Secure Act of 2019, those who inherited traditional IRAs could extend their required withdrawals over their lifetimes, which stretched out the annual taxes due on these withdrawals. But the Secure Act changed the provisions for non-spouse beneficiaries who inherited an IRA after 2019, meaning that beneficiaries of inherited IRAs had only 10 years (beginning the year after death) to withdraw the entire balance. For some beneficiaries, this could potentially create a tax burden. (Inheritors of Roth IRAs are also required to fol-

low the 10-year distribution rule but are not subject to income taxes on account earnings if the Roth IRA's five-year holding period has been met).

However, not all beneficiaries were affected by the new rules. Spouses can stretch their inherited IRA distributions over their lifetimes and exceptions exist for certain non-spouse beneficiaries. Minor children of the IRA owner (until the age of majority), chronically ill or disabled individuals, and beneficiaries who are no more than 10 years younger than the IRA owner may opt to stretch their distributions.

The new 10-year requirement applies to IRAs inherited on or after Jan. 1, 2020. But due to confusion over changes to required minimum distribution (RMD) rules for some beneficiaries of inherited IRAs, the IRS waived penalties for individuals who failed to take RMDs in 2021 and 2022 and extended the RMD penalty waiver for 2023.

Although these rulings give beneficiaries — those not eligible for the exemptions listed above — more time to plan, they will eventually need to



start taking RMDs, which could affect their tax situations. To help protect your heirs, consider these suggestions:

- **Using permanent life insurance.**

A properly structured permanent life insurance policy could help you replace the assets your family might lose to the taxes resulting from an inherited IRA. You might even consider naming a charity as the beneficiary of an IRA, rather than your family members. The charity would receive the IRA proceeds tax free, and the life insurance could then provide tax-free benefits to your

heirs.

- **Leaving taxable investment accounts to your heirs.** Apart from your tax-deferred IRA, you may own other, fully taxable accounts containing investments such as stocks or bonds. Typically, these investments receive what's known as a "step-up" in their cost basis once they are inherited. This means your heirs will essentially inherit all the gains your investments earned by the time of your passing — but they won't be taxed on these gains if they sell the assets immediately. This type of sale could help offset the taxes your heirs will incur from the inherited IRA.

The tax and investment issues surrounding inherited IRAs can be complex, so consult with your tax and financial advisers before making any moves. And, as with many areas relating to inheritances, the sooner you start planning, the better.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by Mike Wynn AAMS, Financial Adviser. Edward Jones, Member SIPC


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What does a real estate attorney do?

The complexities of the law can be challenging to those outside the legal profession. An attorney on one's side can help individuals ensure their assets and livelihoods are protected, and even help people avoid costly mistakes.

Investing in real estate is a wise but often expensive endeavor. According to the National Association of Realtors, the median home price of existing (not new) homes was \$410,200 in June 2023. On average, a Canadian home costs 40 percent more than one in the United States. As of August 2023, Canada's MLS Benchmark Price, which measures the price of a "typical" home in Canada in Canadian dollars, was \$750,100.

With so much money riding on real estate transactions, having a professional real estate attorney in one's corner is wise. Recognition of what these professionals can do underscores how valuable they can be.

Roles of a real estate attorney

The main job of a real estate attorney is to ensure the legal transfer of property from a seller to a buyer. Real estate attorneys will prepare and review

documents, ensure that a home title is clear, and facilitate the transfer of funds between parties, according to the online financial resource NerdWallet. Real estate attorneys will identify any unpaid loans, liens, litigation or other claims against the property, uncover deed restrictions and covenants, and any breaks in the chain of title.

In addition to these services, attorneys guide their clients through searches for obligations like taxes, utility charges and homeowners association fees, according to Bankrate. Real estate attorneys also will prepare settlement statements showing the charges to all parties and how the funds will be allocated, including commissions, attorney's fees, underwriting fee, title search fee, taxes, and more.

A real estate attorney can work for those looking to buy or sell a private home, an investment property, a commercial business, or even guide grief-stricken relatives through the process of selling a deceased loved one's home to settle estate obligations.



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County Commissioner Henry Dean Joins Ponte Vedra Law Firm Woolsey Morcom

Henry Dean

Henry Dean, a long-standing St. Johns County resident, began his career shortly after receiving his BBA from the University of Iowa and his Juris Doctor from FSU. With an interest in environmental policy, Henry went on to serve as the Executive Director of the St. Johns River Water Management District for 17 years. Henry also served as the Executive Director of the South Florida Water Management District for four years. Since 2005, he has remained active in conservation efforts as an environmental consultant.

Henry Dean was elected as St. Johns County's District 5 Commissioner in 2016 and re-elected for a second term in 2020. He is a member of the Florida Bar and served on the Board of Directors for both the Audubon of Florida and the Interstate Council on Water Policy. Henry has four children, and currently lives in St. Augustine Beach with his wife Melanie.

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Woolsey Morcom is an award-winning local law firm that specializes in car accidents, wrongful death, first party property, commercial litigation, family law and criminal defense. With their main office in Nocatee, they have served the Ponte Vedra area for the last 7 years and have 6 offices across the state as well as offices in Texas and California. For help with your legal needs you can contact Woolsey Morcom 24 hours a day by calling (904)-638-4235 or visiting www.WoolseyMorcom.com.

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After Hours at The Blake

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce held its After Hours event recently at The Blake at St. Johns. Attendees said it was a wonderful evening of networking, food and drinks. The Blake at St. Johns is an assisted living and memory care community opening in 2024 in St. Johns.

Contributed photos



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Giving well

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when an opportunity is off-target.

4. Engage those you love and trust: Philanthropy as a shared experience fosters a sense of interdependence and cooperation and can drive greater personal and social change than may be achieved alone. Family philanthropy is also an opportunity to connect with one another, define what you stand for as a family and pass down generational values. Whether giving as a family unit or with a trusted group of individuals, be willing to stretch out of your comfort zone and learn from others and from the communities you choose to serve.

5. Attend to the details: It's important to address the practical details of putting your generosity in motion. Establish a budget including charitable dollars and volunteer time, and consider parameters for discretionary and responsive gifts, even for those random acts of kindness. A budget can aid in planning and decision-making, bringing peace of mind so you can feel good about doing good.

Consider taking time to reflect on how you might find more meaning and fulfillment from your expressions of generosity. Talk to a professional financial adviser if you'd like to learn more

about charitable planning and inspired giving.

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Attorney

Continued from 28

Who do real estate attorneys work for?

If the real estate attorney is representing a client's interests only, that lawyer will be an advocate to the client and work in his or her best interests. Various attorneys tend to be involved in real estate transactions. One will represent the buyer and another the seller. A lawyer may represent the mortgage lender if financing is involved. Another could potentially

represent the title company.

Cost of real estate representation

Certain real estate attorneys will charge a flat fee that encompasses a specific series of jobs, including the preparation of closing documents. Others may charge an hourly rate, particularly if the issue is more complex and involves litigation.

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Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

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904 Home Watch earns accreditation

904 Home Watch has earned accreditation from the National Home Watch Association. The association was formed in 2009 in order to establish and maintain the highest industry standards for home watch and absentee homeowner services throughout the United States and Canada.

Home watch is a visual inspection of a home or property, looking for obvious issues, which means that it is a service that “keeps an eye on things” at your vacation or primary home while you are not in residence. All principals of NHWA Accredited Member companies are background-checked, insured and bonded.

Owner Robert Straub earned a BA in economics from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Then he had a career in the retail business. It was there that he built his foundation for under-

standing the value of customer service and delivering on a promise.

Over the last two decades, Straub has worked in the real estate industry in a variety of roles, primarily in the general brokerage and new home construction arenas. As he transitioned into general brokerage in 2000, he took the significance of customer service and the power of promise with him. He built his business in Baltimore, Maryland, using customer service and promise as its cornerstones.

In 2002, familial changes had Straub and his family relocating to Charlotte, North Carolina. He worked for a large concern, first in sales, and then continued his evolution on the operations side by becoming a project manager, overseeing sales, marketing, construction, warranty and accounting for a single community.

In 2012, Straub’s family moved to Northeast Florida. He continued working with the Charlotte division of a large builder, as a consultant following the acquisition of another builder's land position. And now, he is excited to bring his experience and knowledge to the home watch industry.

Straub watched the price of homes increase for the last five years and the supply of homes decrease over the same timeframe, and he knew that mortgage interest rates were sure to increase. He found a Home Watch website from Southwest Florida, and it intrigued him. He began researching the possibility of doing the same thing, since there are many second homes/condos in his area, along with primary residences where the owners leave for their second homes elsewhere for less than six months. Straub concluded that he could make the business work.

904 Home Watch serves St. Johns County, Duval County, Nocatee, Sawgrass Country Club, Marsh Landing



Robert Straub

Country Club, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville Beach, Ponte Vedra Beach and Ponte Vedra. Straub can be reached at 904-468-7027 or at 904homewatch@gmail.com. Learn more from his website, at 904homewatchllc.com.

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GUEST COLUMN

Should I have under/uninsured motorist coverage?



By Phil Vogelsang

Under/Uninsured Motorist Coverage (commonly called UM coverage) is something every car insurance company offers as additional

Contributed photo
Phil Vogelsang

coverage. While insurance companies in Florida are required to offer a minimum of \$10,000 in bodily injury per person, \$20,000 per accident, you are not obligated by the state to have it. However, you are entitled to obtain coverage up to the amount of bodily injury coverage you have on your policy, and there are quite a few reasons why this type of coverage can be worth the added cost. A common misconception is that UM insurance will only be available if you're in an accident with someone who doesn't have insurance. However, the "under" insured portion of the policy will be available to you should your damages exceed the policy of the person that hit you. For example, if the individual involved in your accident only had \$10,000 in

coverage and you have \$100,000 in UM coverage you would be entitled to not only seek \$10,000 from the other driver but an additional \$100,000 from your own policy. In that scenario, your UM coverage saves you from having to come out of pocket for the difference left after the responsible party's policy has been exhausted. Perhaps one of its greatest benefits, UM insurance will also be available in the event you are the victim of a hit and run accident.

Now you might ask yourself, "What are the odds that I am the victim of a hit and run? Or that I will be hit by an uninsured, or underinsured motorist?" The answer is higher than you may think, according to a 2021 study by the Insurance Research Council, Florida ranks sixth in the country for the number of uninsured drivers at 20.4%, which is substantially higher than the national average of 13%. In Florida, drivers are considered "insured" with limits as low as \$10,000 per person/\$20,000 per accident for bodily injury. 49% of Florida auto insurance policies have limits of \$25,000 per person or lower. These lower policy amounts wouldn't cover a hospital visit if you, or someone you love, were involved in a serious accident. If that ever

were the case, and you had adequate UM coverage, it would be available to you, saving an already difficult time from becoming even more challenging.

Now that we have discussed the benefits of having UM coverage when you're involved in an accident with the underinsured, what if the at-fault party has no insurance? You can still file a lawsuit against the at-fault party and receive a court awarded judgment against them, but it could end up being just that. Let's say you do win a judgment and the defendant does not have enough money to pay you the amount awarded by the judgment; you are likely never going to see any of the money you are rightfully owed. You have the option to return to court to seek an order that requires payment, but you are going to have a hard time finding a lawyer who is willing to file a lawsuit against a party who obviously has no money to recover for their client. This is exactly why it is important to carry your own UM motorist coverage, so if you find yourself in the situation mentioned above you are at least able to cover the various costs associated with an accident through your own UM policy.

So, if you can afford the additional

monthly cost, we highly recommend having UM insurance to ensure you're covered no matter what the situation of the individual responsible for the accident may be. There is a common saying, "It is better to have and not need than to need and not have," and it couldn't hold truer when it comes to UM coverage.

We at Woolsey Morcom hope you never need our services, but if you or someone you know has suffered an injury due to someone else's negligence or wrongdoing, contact one of our experienced personal injury attorneys today for a free consultation about your claim. We have attorneys on standby who will speak with you and let you know what your rights are. Call us first at 904-638-4235 or visit our website at Woolsey-Morcom.com.

Phil Vogelsang is an experienced personal injury attorney who has handled thousands of civil, employment, family and criminal matters in private practice. He is a former prosecutor and has been a practicing attorney since 2007. He has had more than 100 trials as an attorney and has never lost a personal injury, wrongful death or criminal defense case.



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In the Arts



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Abstract Art Workshop set for Nov. 6

The Professional Artists of St. Augustine (PASTA) Fine Art Gallery, of 214 Charlotte St., St. Augustine, has announced an inspirational, educational and purely fun Abstract Art Workshop to be held at the gallery from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 6. All materials are supplied, and attendees may want to bring either an art smock or apron. Attendees can sign up at pastagalleryart.com/events. The cost of the event is \$20, plus taxes and fees. Snacks will be provided.

“If you have ever found yourself in a museum staring at an abstract painting and saying to yourself, ‘I don’t get it,’ then this is the class for you,” said Jenny Keyser, artist member and workshop instructor. “Not only will we give you a background and history on this game changing art form, but we’ll explore our own abstract ideas in paint on paper, so you too can take home your own abstract art masterpiece.”

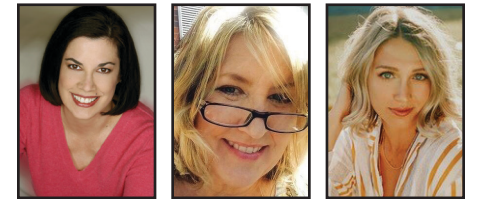
The concept of abstract art and its art

form have been around for more than 100 years. This radical art form is rooted in Impressionism, post-Impressionism and Cubism. These artistic movements led to the general belief that art could be non-representational, meaning there was no actual reference to “real world” objects. Many instead, insisted that abstract art was created from the artist’s interior “feelings” and the paint, collage, sculpture, etc., evoked that feeling, allowing viewers to transcend the representational and experience their own unique feeling.

Keyser is an award-winning artist whose work has been shown internationally in galleries and museums, and has been acquired by the Joan Flasch Artist Book Collection at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Craft in Portland, Oregon. Her paintings consist of watercolor, colored pencil, acrylic paint and oil on archival paper or canvas.

Recent shows include Works on Paper

at the Long Beach Island Foundation for the Arts and Sciences as juried by Esther Adler curator at MOMA; Loss, Redemption and Grace at EBD4 in Atlanta; and Lon Art’s Sheroes Revoluciones London exhibition. Additionally, she is the founder of the Mother Art: Revisited collective, which has had recent shows in both London and Scotland. She teaches children through adults across the United States. Her formal education includes a B.S. in biology from Vanderbilt University, a certificate in Museum Studies from Northwestern University, and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Nancy J. Cohen

Julie G. DeLegal

Melody Pendlebury

Indie Author Day is Saturday

Each year, libraries and organizations bring local independently published authors and readers together for a day of education, networking, live panels and book events. This year, the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library is teaming with the local chapter of the Florida Writers Association, and sponsorship by the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library, to host Indie Author Day 2023 on Saturday, Nov. 4, at the library.

The daylong free event is open to the public, but participants must first register online at: sjcpls.org/event/indie-author-showcase.

Indie Author Day begins at 10:30 a.m. with a keynote talk by Nancy J. Cohen, the award-winning indie author of the “Bad Hair Day Mysteries.” Her novels, featuring South Florida hair stylist Marla Vail, were named Best Cozy Mystery by Suspense Magazine, won the Reader’s Favorite Book Award and many other accolades. Her non-fiction titles have also won several awards.

Starting at approximately 11 a.m., three indie authors will discuss the pros and cons of being an independently published author in a panel discussion titled, “So, You Want to be an Indie Author?” The authors include Nancy J. Cohen, Eric Hoffer Prize winner Julie G. DeLegal and Jacksonville children’s author Melody Pendlebury. Each author will be available to sign and sell their books following the panel discussion.

Light refreshments during the lunch hour will be available on site, made possible by the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

The final event of the day, beginning at 2 p.m., is a book fair with area indie authors who will briefly discuss their writing journey and their books. They will all be available for one-on-one conversation and book sales. The authors are Martha Louise, Skye Taylor, Eileen Erikson, Maggie FitzRoy, Patricia Daly-Lipe, Judith Erwin and the writing team of Rich and Lucy Lipari.

The sale of books by the various authors will benefit Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. The event is free and open to the public.

‘Messiah’ performance benefits nonprofits

An upcoming ballet and choral production of “Messiah” by Handel will feature professional and amateur dancers and musicians working together to raise money for charity. The performance will be held at 6 p.m. Nov. 18 at Jacksonville Performing Arts Center Moran Theatre, 300 Water St, Jacksonville. Among those participating will be Grace Conservatory and the Saint Augustine Community Chorus.

The performance will benefit Alpha Omega Miracle Home, Emmanuel Project of Northeast Florida, Jacksonville Arts and Music School (JAMS), Saint Augustine Community Chorus, Unveiled Productions and Peace of Heart Community.

Tickets are \$55 to \$125. To purchase tickets, go to <https://www.ticketmaster.com/grace-conservatory-jacksonville-florida-11-18-2023/event/22005EABCA38CD7D>.

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WEEK 11 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Postseason fate, scenarios on the line



Bryce Frick (No. 10) and the Nease Panthers are in position for a district title after their win over Ponte Vedra. Now they look to finish the deal with a victory over Toco Creek this Friday at 7 p.m.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Ponte Vedra's Ben Burk (with ball) runs for yards against Nease. He and the Sharks look to keep their playoff hopes alive with a win over Creekside on the road Friday at 7 p.m.

By Anthony Richards

There is just one week remaining in the regular season but there is so much left to play for, as postseason bids and seeding will be on the line when things kick off this Friday night.

The Nease Panthers are riding high following their huge comeback victory over rival Ponte Vedra last week, and the win has now put them in control of their own destiny when it comes to winning a district title.

However, they still have business to take care of because they still have one more district contest left when they welcome in Toco Creek into the Panther Den on Friday at 7 p.m.

For the Panthers (6-3, 2-0), a win makes things very simple, because it

would clinch a district championship for them and in turn also solidify a spot in the playoffs.

A loss on the other hand would make things very interesting and they would create a three-way tie at the top of the District 4-4S standings with the Panthers, Sharks and Toros all with a district record of 2-1 which would bring tiebreakers into play.

This will likely leave it up to the state rankings since head-to-head would not help resolve the matter.

Only eight teams will make it in as part of Region 1 in Class 4S, and the Panthers are currently ranked No. 26, which means a loss is unlikely to catapult them the number of spots they would need up the rankings, so in order to avoid the stress of waiting for others

to decide their fate, they will focus on finishing the job and wrapping up the district title by defeating the Toros (5-4, 1-1).

The Toros did not fare well against the Sharks a couple of weeks ago, falling 38-6 on the road, but are fresh off a confidence-building 29-28 district win of their own against Flagler Palm Coast.

It can be difficult at times, at any level in the next game following a big emotional win that can take so much out of the players, but you can bet that the Panthers' coaching staff has been making sure in practice that the Panthers are aware of what's at stake for them and the program.

There are a couple of scenarios in which the Sharks can make it into the postseason, but of course the most obvi-

ous one is that they win this Friday on the road against the Creekside Knights and leave no doubt that they belong as an at-large bid.

The Sharks are currently eighth in Class 4S rankings and a win over No. 12 Creekside would only help boost their strength of schedule.

However, Creekside will be looking for another big win for its resume and defeating the Sharks may be just enough to put them in position for an at-large bid, so the implications and scenarios heading into the final week of play abound and it will be fun to see how it all plays out.

Only time will tell how it all plays out, but we will all know a lot more after the final whistles blow in this Friday night's contests.

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Father-son team wins beach volleyball tournament

By Jennie Flinn

The sweet taste of victory was made even sweeter when it occurred between a local father and son at a recent beach volleyball tournament. In an extraordinary display of talent and teamwork, 47-year-old Andor Gyulai and his 16-year-old son, Thor Summers-Gyulai, emerged as champions in Jacksonville Beach's AA tournament.

Representing the oldest and youngest players in the event, the familial pair went undefeated through all seven games. The achievement makes Thor the first high school teenager in more than five years to clinch a AA tournament championship in the Jacksonville area.

"Thor exhibited sheer determination and skill throughout the tournament, capturing the win in a thrilling match," said Andor Gyulai, speaking as a proud father, tournament teammate, and Thor's volleyball coach.

A sophomore at Ponte Vedra High School, Thor is recognized as one of the nation's top U16 Beach Volleyball players. Last year on his high school team, Thor led in aces and serve reception, and ranked as the second-best attacker, setting high expectations for this year's performance.

"It would be a huge accomplishment to help lead our high school team to a state championship this year since our team has a ton of talent," Thor said.

As a coach, Andor Gyulai sees big things in his son's volleyball future.

"At 6 foot 4 inches tall and growing, Thor is just beginning to see his physical potential," he said. "I have trained and coached with the best beach players in the world, and Thor is on track to be a future Olympian. We believe he could qualify for

the professional beach volleyball tour as early as next year."

Andor Gyulai has the experience to make such bold statements. He played on the UCLA Men's Volleyball Team, which clinched the NCAA national championship his senior year in 1998. He's got more than 50,000 hours and 30 years of coaching under his belt. At only 16 years old, he coached his high school volleyball team in South Africa.

His love for volleyball continued into adulthood where he and his wife, Vanessa Summers-Gyulai (a former top-20 ranked Florida teen tennis star), turned a passion into a profession in 2009 when they launched the first-ever volleyball video coaching website, Volleyball1on1.com. Both parents nurtured Thor's early love for the game. Vanessa leaned on her tennis skills and coached him to perfect his serve.

In December of 2021, Andor and Vanessa moved their family of five from California to the Nocatee area when they recognized its potential for young volleyball players.

Almost as soon as their feet hit the Florida sand, they founded the St. Johns Volleyball Club, which offers training to fourth through eighth graders at Nocatee Fields Park and Fruit Cove. This works out perfectly for their two daughters, Veda, age 12, and Charlie, age 7. Not surprisingly, Veda competes in volleyball tournaments and Charlie is starting to train with the family.

Andor and Vanessa are deeply passionate about sharing their proprietary volleyball coaching tools to help future standout athletes achieve their fullest potential in volleyball and life.

"Thor's skills reached a new peak in



Contributed photos

A proud family moment. Vanessa Summers-Gyulai, left, congratulates son Thor Gyulai-Summers and her husband, Andor Gyulai, right, after the father-son pair won the championship game in a recent AA Jacksonville Beach volleyball tournament. At ages 16 and 47, Thor and Andor represented the youngest and oldest players in the tournament, going undefeated in every game through the championship.

this tournament when he sealed the win with a decisive block and dig-kill maneuver," Andor Gyulai said. "I am just happy I can still compete with him, and it's a bonus to win some local tournaments together."

For more information on St. Johns Volleyball Club, go to stjohnsvolleyballclub.com.

For more information on Florida's beach volleyball tournaments, go to ssova.com.

Sharks volleyball upsets top seed Gulf Breeze in regional semifinals



Contributed photo

The Ponte Vedra Sharks defeated the No. 1-seeded Gulf Breeze Dolphins in five sets, 25-22, 14-25, 25-20, 19-25, 15-7 in the Class 6A regional semifinals.



Photo by Anthony Richards

It is all smiles for the Sharks as they make another deep playoff run with the win.

Panthers

Continued from 1

Carter said. “I was a sophomore on varsity when we won here before, and now getting the chance to do it again is just unmatched.”

Frick not only scored the game-tying touchdown run, but he was on target throughout the night both passing and rushing the ball, and when he looked down the field, his favorite targets were Maddox Spencer and Brayden Felder, who had a coming out party with his performance.

“Brayden’s one of the best players we’ve got and he’s only a sophomore,” Spencer said. “I know that if I’m getting double-teamed, then we’ll have him one-on-one, which I feel is almost like a guaranteed completion.”

Allowing Frick to have the time he needed to survey the field and find his receiving weapons was the play of the Panthers’ offensive line, which held together strong as a unit against an aggressive front seven of Ponte Vedra.

“We worked on some new schemes in



Photo by Anthony Richards

Nease students stormed the field at Ponte Vedra High to celebrate with players after the game.

the bye week and just practiced and got it right,” senior center Demarco Blackmon said.

According to Blackmon, a large part of preparation was getting ready for the loud atmosphere that the Shark Tank presented to play in.

“We knew they were going to be loud, so all week we worked practices with loud music, and I think it definitely helped us,” Blackmon said.

For Jones, when he saw the extra point sail through the uprights, it was not only big because it gave the Panthers the lead,

but it also gave him a sense of relief after having chances to win the game against Ponte Vedra a season ago, but it did not work out as well.

“When I kick the ball, I just work on getting in my zone, where there’s no distractions and it’s just me doing my job,” Jones said. “Last year I missed a kick from about the same yards away and also got one blocked, so this was my redemption. I just knew I wasn’t going to miss again.”

Not only did he convert the extra point, but he also drilled a 38-yard field goal earlier in the game.

“It just proves that every point matters,” Jones said.

Another Nease senior who will forever cherish the win knowing that it will be the last chance he gets to play against Ponte Vedra on a football field, is running back Cam Smith.

“I just wanted the clock to be at all zeros and have the scoreboard with Nease on top, that’s all I was waiting for,” Smith said. “I’m so excited right now, I could do a backflip. It was just such a highly competitive level out there, but we all proved ourselves tonight.”



Bryce Frick stands in the pocket and surveys the field.



Both teams’ captains make their way to midfield for the coin toss.



A large share of Nease students made the trip over for the game.

ANOTHER MEMORABLE BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE

The Ponte Vedra Sharks and Nease Panthers resumed their annual rivalry football field, and the 2023 atmosphere was one to remember, from the plays on the field to the roars from the fans in the stands.

Photos by Anthony Richards



The Ponte Vedra student section.



Brian Case applies a stiff-arm to Noah Hodge as he fights for extra yards.



Maddox Spencer of Nease (No. 14) and Ponte Vedra’s Joe Mahoney (No. 21) presented a fun matchup to watch during the game.



Brayden Felder of Nease reaches out to haul in a touchdown reception on fourth down.

Ponte Vedra CLASSIFIEDS

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*Additional Lines Can be Purchased
*All Rates Are NET

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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					31			32		33		
	34				35			36		37	38	
		39		40		41				42	43	
44	45				46		47			48		
49				50		51					52	
53		54	55					56	57	58	59	60
	61						62					
		63										
			64						65			

ACROSS

1. A way to drop
4. Bits per inch
7. Ghosts
12. Presents
15. Noises
16. Honorable fourth name in ancient Rome
18. Elevated railroad
19. A way to drench
20. The Tarheel State
21. Lilly and Manning are two
24. Where golfers begin
27. Harvester
30. Unit of subjective loudness
31. Jewish calendar month
33. Dash
34. Armed conflict
35. Daisy __: Broadway actress
37. Jump
39. Get free of
41. A written proposal or reminder
42. Organic chemistry reactive structure
44. African country
47. Cool!
48. Used to treat Parkinson's disease
49. __ route
50. Ed Murrow's home
52. Lethal dose
53. Give cards incorrectly
56. A treeless grassy plain
61. Famed R.L. Stevenson novel
63. In an incisive way
64. Mark Wahlberg's screen partner
65. Criticize

6. Data
7. Something curved in shape
8. Root mean square (abbr.)
9. Farm state
10. Pre-1917 emperor of Russia
11. Short-term memory
12. Indigenous peoples of central Canada
13. Honor as holy
14. Monetary unit of Samoa
17. Company that rings receipts
22. City in Finland
23. Small finch
24. Arctic explorers (abbr.)
25. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
26. Very willing

28. Partner to "oohed"
29. Turntable
32. Major Hindu deity
36. Move head slightly
38. Plain-woven fabric
40. Die
43. Shipped as cargo
44. Something highly prized
45. Individual thing or person
46. Humbled
51. Speak indistinctly
54. No seats available
55. Financial obligation
56. Green vegetable
57. Tough outer skin of fruit
58. __ Spumante (Italian wine)
59. Troubles
60. Singer Charles
62. Camper

SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

DOWN

1. Mountain in the Julian Alps
2. A domed or vaulted recess
3. Trade agreement
4. Larger
5. Edged

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!

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