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THE
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The cover features the home at 8056 Whisper Lake W Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach.

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Sand Castles: Spring into Summer Issue



By Janet Westling

Welcome to our Spring into Summer issue of Sand Castles, a luxury, lifestyle and real estate seasonal section. This spring issue arrives every May during Memorial Day weekend, the unofficial start of the summer vacation season. This spring, the weather has been one of the most pleasant spring times and

such a welcome from our winter.

"Memorial Day", according to Webster's definition, "is a day on which those who died in active military service are remembered." Memorial Day is always observed on the last Monday in May. We celebrate this holiday with family, parades, cookouts and trips to the beautiful beaches we call home.

I used to say that Ponte Vedra beach is Florida's best kept Secret that is until now.

Fifty years ago, local developer Jimmy Stockton had a vision for Ponte Vedra Beach with a new community he called Sawgrass. On April 20, 2024, Sawgrass Country Club celebrated the 50th anniversary with a celebration at the Clubhouse with over 600 members in attendance including its founder Jimmy Stockton, his wife Vikki, and son Jimbo Stockton.

Twenty-seven years ago, the Village of Mayport, Florida, one of the original waterfront communities of the state, was registered under the Mayport Waterfront partnership to preserve the working waterfronts around our state. Today that effort continues with a revitalization that will focus on four pillars for the community. They are commercial fishing, education and research, cultural heritage and history and Eco-tourism. The village of Mayport, Florida is on the Cusp of renewal!

Daryl Atkins, broker, Berkshire Hathaway HSFNR shares his insight "Ponte Vedra Beach, Market Watch, Embracing Change in a resilient market," In his conclusion, key takeaways from our market are shared that give valuable information for buyers and sellers on the current state of the Ponte Vedra Beach, real estate market.

In this issue, eleven realtors share their stories about their amazing new listings each with their own wow factor from the oceanfront to the intracoastal and in between!

If you ever travel to Greece you might want to check out a Blue Zone, (there are 5 around the world). Sawgrass residents Marc and Dee Koutoufaris and their children travel to Greece every summer to visit their family who live on the Greek island of Ikaria. "The Island of Long Livers," Ikaria, Greece is one of 5 Blue Zones around the world where the average people live the longest!

Back home on Florida's First Coast, Dr. Shyam Paryani, Director, EMHA Program Chair at Brooks College of Health at the University of North Florida recently launched a new health indicator. "Personal Health Monitoring: The Key to a Long and

Healthy Life", and shares the details of a new health monitor whose goal is to improve your health and fitness with better outcomes.

School Board Representative. Kelly Barrera writes her year-end report on the accomplishments and celebrations and achievements by our students who were recognized on April 25th when our district hosted the American Youth Character Counts awards and praise for the Nease High school award winning Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp.

Dr. Shyam Paryani along with his wife Dr. Sharon Paryani traveled this Spring to India to attend a family wedding and they share their trip, "South India: A Magical Land with Geographic and Cultural Diversity." with vivid details and beautiful photos of their most recent journey back to Kerala, India that National Geographic magazine described as, "Ten paradises of the World." and "50 must see destinations of a lifetime."

With the football season almost upon us, the Jaguars Brian Sexton covers the recent Jaguars draft with insight into where the franchise is headed into the future with his story titled, "It's all about the quarterback."

Kendra McCrary, President, of the Women's Board, Wolfson Childrens Hospital fills us in on our what fall events the Women's Board has on the calendar from the Florida Forum to the First Coast Design Show.

Wallace Brooks, Head of School at St. Johns Academy, shares a fitting Memorial Day Story titled, 'St. Johns Academy Salutes the Military all year long!

On May 3rd. I hosted, "A Sand Castles thank you luncheon", for all our advertisers with special guest speakers, Matt Rapp from the North Florida Land Trust and Nick Primrose candidate for the State House in my home in Sawgrass Country Club.

Florida House, on Capitol Hill is our nation's only state embassy. The Trustees held its annual spring meeting this year at the University of Florida in Gainesville with a kickoff at Visors Rooftop at Spurriers Gridiron Grille with special guest Coach Steve Spurrier who joined the gathering and thanked the trustees for choosing his restaurant. The meeting included tours of the University campus, the Museum of Natural History and a dinner with the presentation of the 2024 Distinguished Artist and Author Awards,

In closing, our home is our castle, and at the beaches it is our castle in the sand. From palm trees to sand dunes, and golf courses to resort living, Jacksonville, Ponte Vedra and the beaches communities offer the most desirable living in Northeast Florida.

Janet Westling, REALTOR, GRI, CIPS Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty Sand Castles Creator and Contributing Editor, Award-winning section www.janetwestling.com.

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PONTE VEDRA BEACH MARKET WATCH

Embracing change in a resilient market



By Daryl Atkins

As we dive into the current state of the Ponte Vedra Beach real estate market, it is evident that our area continues to be a sought-after destination for homebuyers. Many are seeking a blend of beautiful coastal living, upscale amenities and an active lifestyle. This appeals to a diverse range of residents, from young professionals to retirees, vacation homeowners as well as long time loyal residents.

MARKET TRENDS

Over the past year, the Ponte Vedra Beach real estate market has experienced notable shifts and trends influenced by several factors including lower mortgage rates (recall they were around 8% at year's end), demographic shifts, evolving buyer preferences and post pandemic economic hangovers. Despite these challenges, the local housing market has remained resilient, with strong demand driving home prices upwards. This has recently been further fueled by Jacksonville being named the number two labor market in the U.S.

HOME PRICES AND VALUE

One of the defining features of the Ponte Vedra Beach real estate market is the consistent increases of home values. In recent months, median home prices have continued to rise, reflecting the high demand for properties in the area. According to NEFAR multiple

listing service data, the median sales price for single-family homes in Ponte Vedra Beach has increased by 4.3% over the past year, boasting a \$950,000 median sales price, one of the highest in the state. This upward trajectory underscores the desirability of the local housing market and the value that Ponte Vedra Beach properties offer to buyers. (Note that the median sales price of St. Johns County is about \$550,000 with Duval County at \$350,000.)

INVENTORY LEVELS AND MARKET ACTIVITY

Balanced market or not? Many markets are experiencing lower inventory levels in the U.S. However, real estate pros know that the state of inventory is very location specific and hyperlocal. Despite the strong demand for homes, inventory levels in Ponte Vedra Beach are surprisingly higher with 5.5 months' supply of active inventory. That is approximately 65% higher than last year at this time. As we approach the "old school" standard of six months' supply, one could debate that we are close to a "dual or balanced market." But hold the phone ... the 21 average days on market tells another story of a more competitive market environment, where it is common to see multiple offers and bidding wars. In addition, many relocation buyers from other areas are still funneling into Northeast Florida as well. As a result, homes are selling quickly, often within days of being listed and, in some cases, the sellers are frequently receiving offers at or above the asking price. According to NEFAR this



is true for exactly 4.3% of those listings.

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

In response to the growing demand for housing, custom new construction and development projects have continued to emerge in Ponte Vedra Beach, offering buyers additional options in the market. From luxury waterfront estates to golf course communities and condominium developments, a diverse range of properties is available that cater to various lifestyles and preferences. These new construction projects contribute to the overall vibrancy and expansion of the Ponte Vedra Beach real estate market, attracting buyers seeking modern amenities and custom-designed homes. There are also vacant lots to be found in our area for custom builds, however priced accordingly to the scarcity and uniqueness of the lot.

CONCLUSION

Key takeaways for our market are that the Ponte Vedra Beach real estate market remains dynamic and resilient, characterized by strong demand, rising home prices, and outstanding inventory. As we look ahead, continued economic growth, demographic shifts, interest rates and lifestyle preferences will shape the trajectory of the local housing market. Whether you are considering buying, selling, or investing in Ponte Vedra Beach real estate, it is essential to stay well informed about market trends and work with a local, trusted and knowledgeable real estate professional that can provide valuable insights and guidance every step of the way.

Daryl Atkins is the broker manager of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty Ponte Vedra Beach / Nocatee office located at 333 Village Main St, Ste 670, Ponte Vedra Beach.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

It's all about the quarterback



By Brian Sexton

Photo by Susan Griffin

Two hundred fifty thousand people crowded into Cadillac Square on a cool spring evening in late April in downtown Detroit. They weren't there to sing along with Taylor Swift or to rally for one presidential candidate or the other, and most of them weren't in good enough shape to be there to lace up their sneakers and run a marathon. Instead, they were there, dressed to the flavor of their favorite NFL team, to watch men in suits walk across a stage and hug another man while holding a jersey with their name on it. I don't know if they keep records on such things, but I can't imagine more people gathering in downtown Detroit for any single reason at any time in the Motor City's history.

It's hard to fathom that a nonsporting sporting event like the NFL Draft could be so compelling that it would draw more eyeballs than the NBA Playoffs, but once again it did. The NFL is so ridiculously popular that their ratings climbed 6% with more than 12 million viewers while the NBA lost 8% from 2023 and drew fewer than 4 million.

Jaguars fans on-site and watching on television were among the masses and, of course, eager to see how General Manager Trent Baalke and Head Coach Doug Pederson would use the NFL's annual spring refresh to lift the team's roster above the nine-win threshold of



the last two seasons.

Cornerback was the most obvious need, what with Darius Williams released last February, but the Jaguars didn't claim one in the first round despite the No. 1 defensive back in the class being right there for them to take. This was the best collection of offensive linemen in my 30 years covering the event and the Jaguars had their choice of offensive tackle, guard or center and let them all go by. They could have added to their pass rush with the best edge rusher on the list — and who doesn't need a bigger arsenal to attack the quarterback?

Baalke and Pederson pushed those concerns to later rounds in favor of their young quarterback. This season is about Trevor Lawrence and everything is about putting him in position to at least brush up against his enormous potential if not fully grasp it.

Pederson is wired into the most successful franchise in football, the two-time defending Super Bowl Champion Kansas City Chiefs via his friendship with Andy Reid. Their offensive line was just above average last year, their running game unremarkable, the receiving corps unremarkable and

any defense at all was the result of just defensive tackle Chris Jones and cornerback L'Jarius Sneed. At one point they had lost four of five games after Thanksgiving when they almost never lost and ended up on the road in the playoffs, which had never happened since Patrick Mahomes arrived.

But in Buffalo and in Baltimore and especially in overtime in the Super Bowl it was Mahomes who went eight for eight and led his team on the game-winning drive. The NFL is built for great quarterbacks and Mahomes proved that once again with his late-game heroics in February.

Pederson believes Lawrence can be that guy in teal and wanted to use this draft to give him a weapon that unlocks the offense and allows him to play like the guy who once seemed unstoppable at Clemson. Imagine how that big, fast receiver down the field would stress a defense and make things easier for Christian Kirk and Evan Engram.

Lawrence has everything you want in a quarterback; the size, arm-strength, mobility, experience, leadership and desire to be great. The Jaguars have seen glimpses of that in his first three seasons.

They're going to have to fine-tune the offensive line to keep the quarterback upright, and the running game must be better to keep the offense on the field instead of punting. The defense will look different this season under new coordinator Ryan Nielsen and so will special teams with a new kicker and a new approach to kickoffs.

But this draft and this season are about the quarterback, who is soon due for the kind of contract that will forever alter his future and hopefully change the fortunes of a franchise in search of its first championship in its 30th NFL season.

If he does, it's not hard to imagine a huge crowd in downtown Jacksonville.



New showroom introduces creative potential of a home

By Anthony Richards

Photos provided by J. Turner & Co.

When designing the look and feel of a room in a house, that room acts as an open canvas to creativity, so the larger the space the more opportunity to showcase that creativity.

That is the basis behind the latest venture of J. Turner & Co. as they prepare to open a new design showroom located at 5710 U.S. Highway 1 in St. Augustine.

According to co-owner Mark Turner, who owns the business along with his wife Jenny, the showroom is scheduled to be completed and open fully to the public hopefully within the next week.

The pure size of the facility is evident from the outside, but it becomes even more eye-opening as one walks through the doors, as the

“This is the first store that we’ve gone into that was actually built for what we want,” Turner said. “It has been a dream for Jenny and I to really put something together special, and I think we are going to really capture that with this space.”

In comparison, the new showroom is 50,000 square feet compared to 5,000 square feet at the Sawgrass Village location.

Not only does more space allow for more items to have in stock, but it also allows customers to get a better grasp of what a room layout might look like because they will be able to see it firsthand on the showroom floor.

J. Turner & Co. currently owns two locations, in Sawgrass Village and a warehouse further north on Philips Highway in Jacksonville, and that will remain the case as the new showroom will replace the Philips location.

The couple used to travel and moved a lot as a result, and they both realized that each time they sold their house they were being asked if they could leave their beds, sofas and other furniture in the house.

According to Turner, it was those experiences that led his wife to the idea of starting their own furniture store and they have continued to grow ever since.

“70% of our business is design, so we

like to go into homes and do the whole thing,” Turner said. “We would like our retail side to increase.”

The Turners pride themselves on being unique from other home décor stores and they do this by stocking a lot of furniture and home accessories that are from around the world.

“We want to set ourselves apart by putting good quality stuff that we source from Bali, Europe, a lot of our teak (wood) comes out of the Indonesian jungle and our rugs come from Turkey,” Turner said. “We’re doing it a little different and not just going up to a market in the U.S. and buying the stuff.”

They have worked on developing the relationships with these distributors from around the world since they opened in 2015 and the longer they are in business the stronger many of those relationships have become.

“We have a lot of warehouse so we stock a lot of the items that we carry, which is different because if you go into

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Personal health monitoring: *The key to a long, healthy life*

By Shyam B. Paryani MD

With advances in wearables technology, the demand for physical health monitoring has increased. In particular, since the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus on monitoring individual health has greatly increased, resulting in a significant increase in the demand for wearable devices such as the Apple Watch and Fitbit.

Advanced wearable sensors in these devices have flexible, remote, portable and timely capabilities to monitor vital signs and physiologic data. Wearable sensors can monitor vital signs continuously and in real-time, including heart rate, activity level, respiratory status and sleep. Advances in new materials, advanced manufacturing and flexible electronics technologies have improved comfort, real-time and precision and expanded the range of applications.

The vital signals monitored via flexible wearable sensors can be used by the user to decrease damage during exercise, rehabilitation and daily life.

At UNF, we have developed a new health indicator using data collected by wearables and remote patient monitoring devices. We have studied a cohort of elderly home-based population and a group of athletes in multiple sports. We have gathered data over the past two years.

Effortless Monitoring and Risk Assessment Using Integrated Wearable Devices



The Personal Health Monitoring App on a phone



The Personal Health Index

The data gathered included heart rate, VO2 max, heart rate variance, weight, activity level, sleep patterns and general wellness and injury status.

Using the five main parameters of heart status, activity level, BMI, sleep patterns, activity minutes and status of disease condition, we have developed a Personal Health Index (PHI).

The PHI is calculated on a daily basis with scores assigned from 1 to 100. The higher the score, the better

the overall fitness and health parameters are. An algorithm calculates individualized PHI by considering factors such as age, sex and disease status.

Our research explored the potential of continuous remote patient monitoring to improve performance by providing individualized recommendations for lifestyle changes. The Personal Health Index (PHI) score is what we want to see every day when we wake up in the morning. The goal of the PHI score is to show a

singular number that is an indicator of how good your overall health is for that day.

Monitoring the daily PHI score and maintaining it in the optimal zone will assure that the overall personal health and fitness is being properly maintained. It is a daily report card on your wellness status.

Several studies have shown that maintaining the correct activity, heart condition and adequate sleep results in a longer life expectancy as well as a lower likelihood of cognitive decline with age. Since the PHI score is an individualized score for each user, it is the easiest and effective way to assure that your health is maintained for the best outcomes.

We have also designed a customized phone app that displays the PHI and specific recommendations for daily improvement. Personalized coaching is also available for those desiring expert review.

All of these approaches are geared to provide you with all the tools and resources to succeed in improving your health and fitness with better outcomes.

Shyam Paryani, MD, MHA is the Director of Community Engagement and Director of the Executive Master of Health Administration Program at UNF. He is also the lead researcher of Personal Health Monitoring. For more information, contact shyam.paryani@myphms.com.

GUEST COLUMN

The Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County — Time to Grow

By Jeanne Moeller, Board President

The Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County is a beacon of hope for families facing homelessness. The coalition provides a lifeline of support that includes low-income affordable permanent housing along with the much-needed wrap-around services to create resiliency and self-sufficiency.

With a dedicated focus on empowering unhoused families to rebuild their lives, the coalition's comprehensive programs and services play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty. Parents, with minor children living in the household, that are experiencing homelessness often face unique challenges that can make it difficult to secure stable housing and employment.

The Homeless Coalition recognizes the specific needs of these populations and offers tailored assistance to address their individual circumstances and housing barriers. Case managers create a plan consisting of goal setting, life skills training, financial education and child care to personally address each family's needs.

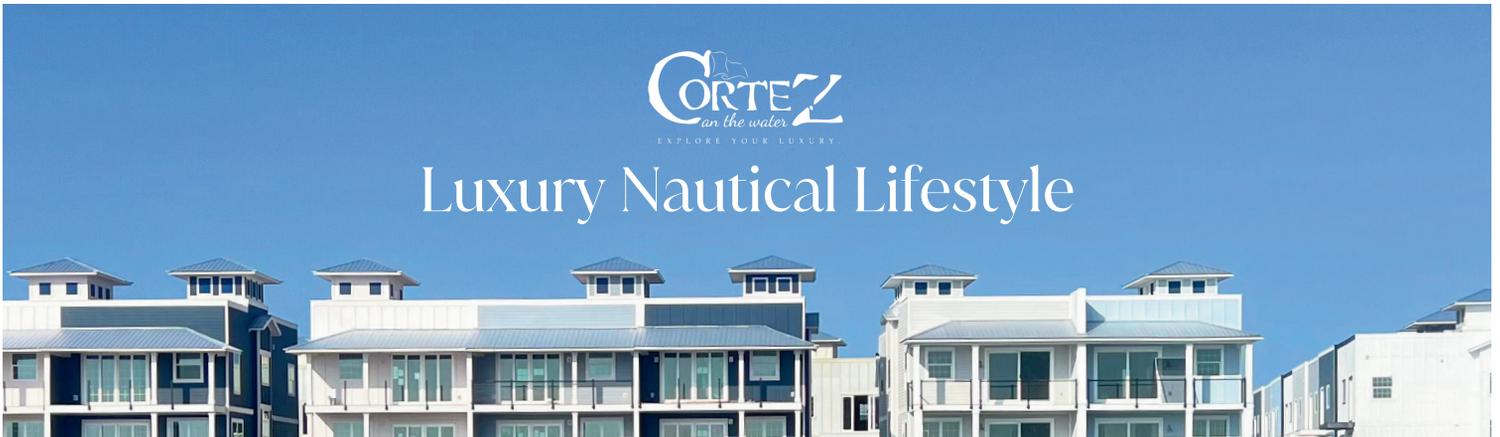
One of the key initiatives of the Homeless Coalition is its commitment to helping our families secure meaningful employment. Through partnerships with local businesses and staffing agencies, the coalition coordinates job placement services, skills training programs and resume-building workshops to help individuals find sustainable work.

By empowering our families to become financially independent, the

coalition aims to create a pathway to stability and success for these families. The Homeless Coalition recently began reporting timely rent payments to all three credit bureaus to increase credit scores and begin preparing families for home ownership.

In response to the ever-growing family homeless population, the Homeless Coalition has launched the 2024 Expansion Campaign to expand needed low-income affordable housing units and supportive services. The campaign aims to raise \$5.6 million to add 16 new cottages and a Children's Education Center to further strengthen the foundation for families to flourish. These new facilities will not only provide much-needed housing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ■



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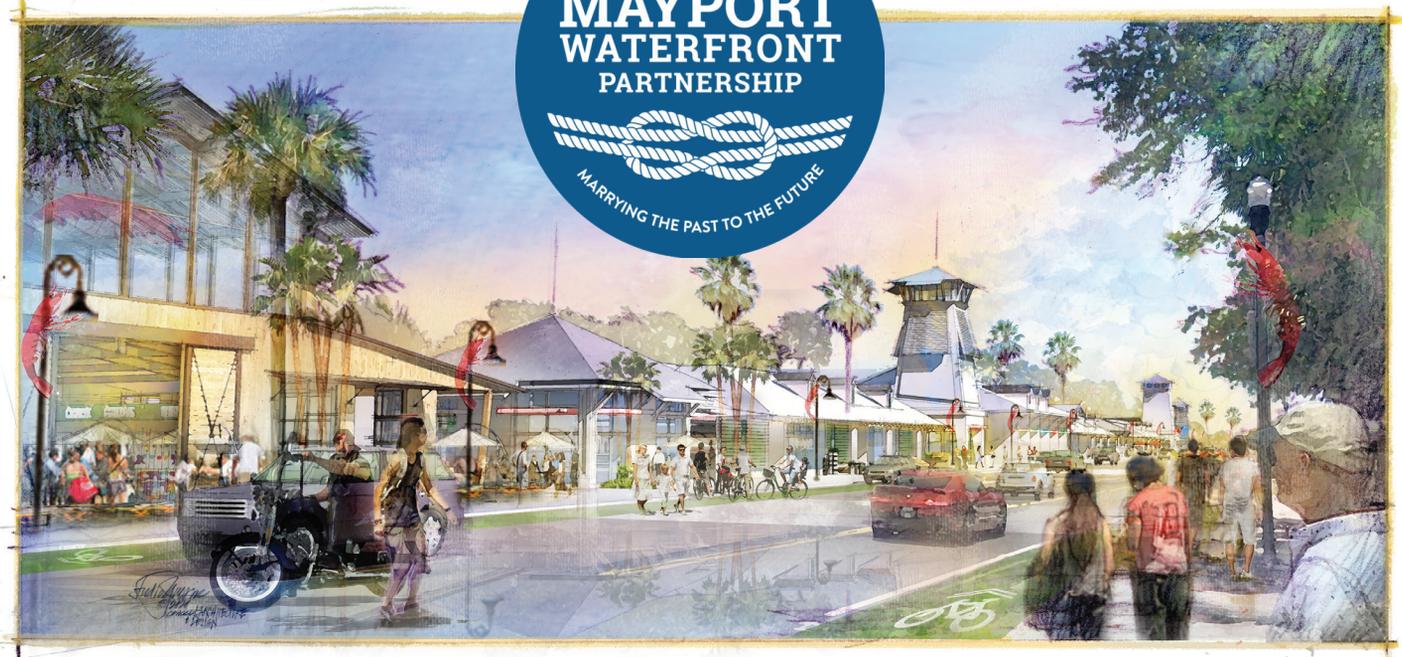


Image provided by Haskell Planning and Design Collaborative

Mayport sketch

FUTURE OF MAYPORT VILLAGE BRIGHT

By Alyce Decker, Mayport Waterfront Partnership chair

The Village of Mayport is on the cusp of a renewal that will invigorate the community and the wider Jacksonville area.

As one of the original Waterfront Communities in the state, since 1997, the Mayport Waterfront Partnership, a registered 501(c)3, has been working to preserve this small working waterfront. In an era of declining commercial fishermen, the Florida Waterfronts Program was developed to “preserve the working waterfronts around the state.”

Currently, there are 23 Waterfront Communities recognized by the State of Florida.

The early years of the partnership brought mixed messages for the future of the Village, with planned development impacted by the market crash of 2008 and the eventual destruction of the existing docks with the thought of a cruise terminal in the area, which was eventually

determined not to be a fit for this area on any number of levels.

Then in 2018, the City of Jacksonville received the seven-plus acres, which have been waiting for the right combination of vision and planning to move forward with development on this waterfront stretch of property in Mayport Village.

Since 1999, the City of Jacksonville has spent more than \$14 million for infrastructure, analysis, research and planning. This investment has prepared the Village for the next steps towards revitalization.

Most recently, The Haskell Company completed a three-stage conceptual plan that highlights and respects both the history and possible and probable development of the Village. New private construction of mixed-use buildings, commercial at street level with residential above, the reworking of the St. Johns Ferry loading lanes by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, the construction of the dock and state-guaranteed funding

for Ocearch, the international shark tracking organization, are signs of what the future of the Village will look like.

A zoning overlay and working waterfront statutes that respect both the size and scale of the Village, blending the past with the future will guide the development of Mayport Village going forward.

The Mayport Waterfront Partnership transitioned from an advisory board to the City of Jacksonville into its current 501(c)3 status. With the support of the city through a \$140,000 grant in 2023 the partnership has focused on its board development through interviews and has welcomed 23 committed individuals who share a passion for the respectful development of the Village.

The partnership has also hired a part-time grant writer to pursue grants guided by the recommendations made by the Haskell plan, hosted the opening of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ■

GUEST COLUMN

Women's Board of Wolfson Children's planning events

By Kendra McCrary, president,
The Women's Board of
Wolfson Children's Hospital



Happy Memorial Day! Memorial Day offers a moment to pause and remember those who have died in service to our great country and way of life.

For children, it brings the start of summer and a break from school. We head outside to enjoy the parks and beaches that make up our amazing community.

For me, summer is the time to look ahead and thoughtfully plan The Women's Board's signature events. Our

more than 400 volunteers are working diligently to prepare for the Florida Forum, our speaker's series that kicks off in the fall, and the First Coast Design Show, an amazing weekend event focused on design and an outstanding collection of exhibitors from across the country. We are reaching out to expand our community of volunteers, donors and sponsors to support Wolfson Children's Hospital.

Recognized among America's Best Children's Hospitals by U.S. News & World Report year after year, Wolfson Children's Hospital of Jacksonville is the only full-service tertiary hospital for children in the region, serving North Florida, South Georgia and beyond. It is a nonprofit organization that provides care for all children, regardless of their ability to pay.

Wolfson Children's Hospital is a remarkable care center with more than 1,507 team members working to provide optimal health for the region's children by providing child- and family-centered care. The hospital has 273 beds and receives more than 119,642 emergency room visits each year, including the most critical child trauma cases in the region. While I hope you never need the services of Wolfson Children's Hospital, I am thankful that we have this amazing institution working in our community.

Enjoy your summer!

Interested in sponsoring the Florida Forum or First Coast Design Show? Prefer information on how to attend our events? Please email womensboard@bmcjax.com or call 904-202-2886 or go to www.womensboardwch.com to get more information.

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Students were recognized April 25 in the American Youth Character Counts Awards ceremony.



Several members of the Nease NJROTC were awarded scholarships.

GUEST COLUMN

St. Johns County schools wrap up exceptional year



Kelly Barrera

By Kelly Barrera,
District 4 School Board representative
Contributed photos

Friday, May 24, marks the completion of a great school year. While the last semester of school is marked by the rigor of course completions, it is also a time of great fun!

It is so rewarding to celebrate the hard work, academic accomplishments, skills acquired, creativity and character of our students! One of the many ways we do this is through our Character Counts! program. This program is an educational framework to teach the universal values of the pillars of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring

and Citizenship. Character Counts! improves the lives of the adults who teach it, the communities that embrace it and the students who make better choices as a result.

Each of our schools conducts ceremonies to recognize students for their character throughout the year. It is one of the highest honors our students receive. On April 25, our school district hosted the American Youth Character Counts Awards to celebrate a senior and junior student honoree from each high school in our county. From Ponte Vedra High School, Benjamin Burk, Viviana Hynes, Mya Richards, Madison Schemitz, Dean Batelli, Jack Brady, Maia Geronimo, Elizabeth Gottschalk, Shadhvi Gowrisankar, Victoria Joseph, Nicholas Storm and Ella York were honored. From Allen D. Nease, Demarco Blackmon, Amber Fields, Daniel Kurian, Kendra Lay, Dominic Cigliano, Pranav Devanand, Stella Gourd, Aiden Kennedy, Sophia Lindsay, Paul Rukab, Ruhi Shanbhag and Raahee Singh were award winners. Our District 4 student athlete honorees, who display the pillars of character on and off the field, were Richard Circelli from Ponte Vedra High School and Brody Haeussner from Allen D. Nease. Our students who were recognized

chose a mentor (many of which were our wonderful teachers) that had influenced them to be the person they have become and share why that person was chosen. It was an incredibly special and powerful evening, and we are so grateful to THE PLAYERS for being the major sponsor of this important program in our county.

Nease High School's award-winning Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (NJROTC) held a well-attended Military Signing Day on May 1, where 15 students received military scholarships. Chief Warrant Officer Michael Donato shared with those in attendance that Nease High School's cadets led the nation in most military scholarship awards. In addition, the U.S. Air Force representative stated that Nease was the only high school to have three students receive the Air Force's \$500,000 scholarships. Our NJROTC was again, this year, selected as the Most Outstanding Unit In Area-12.

Our current student population is 51,910 students. First Coast Technical College has an enrollment of 614 students. Despite budget cuts, we continue to hire great teachers and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ■

BRANDON PATTY

FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER



Dear Residents,

In early December I was notified by the US Navy that I am being involuntarily mobilized to the Middle East, beginning in late May with an anticipated return later this year. It was a call that while unexpected was an honor to receive as I serve as a Lieutenant Commander in the US Navy Reserve. Since then, I have been preparing my family and my office for my extended absence. Per Florida statutes, I have requested a leave from the Governor and appointed a clerk designee to serve in my place. My plan is for the office to continue functioning at the high level it is currently, and I very much look forward to resuming my service as your clerk and comptroller if so relected this year.

I can say without hesitation that serving you and our community as your clerk is an honor of lifetime. We have made some great strides by modernizing and streamlining the office while protecting public dollars, providing world-class customer service to residents and stakeholders, and enhancing transparency across government.

And we have exciting plans for the future as well! As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can ever be service. Thank you!

Brandon Patty
St. Johns Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller



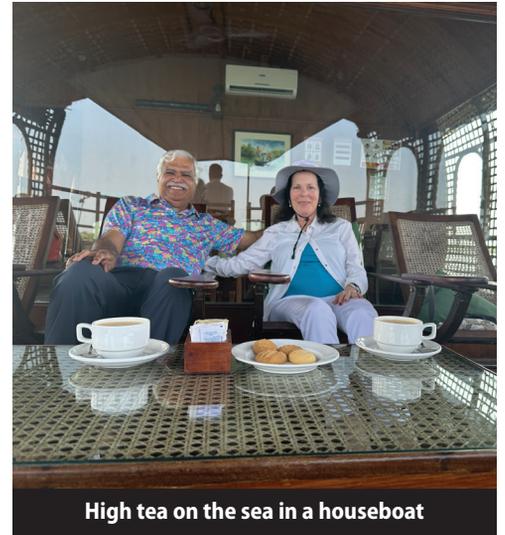
Notable accomplishments while serving as Clerk & Comptroller:

- Certified as a Florida Clerk of Court and Comptroller in 2021, a rigorous training program overseen by the Florida Supreme Court
- Launched the Property Fraud Notification and Prevention Campaign to protect residents from a growing white-collar crime
- Developed and implemented a safe though aggressive short-term investment strategy which earned over \$20 million in interest, thereby increasing funding available for county projects and priorities
- Signed on a third-party management system to verify vendor information and protect against business email compromise and other scams
- Awarded Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the gold standard in governmental accounting, four years in a row
- Invested in the Office of the Inspector General with increased funding and personnel to enhance oversight and accountability across the Clerk's office and county government
- Created and distributed the annual Guide to Taxpayer Dollars, a yearly guide to how tax dollars are assessed, collected and spent on behalf of St. Johns County residents
- Alerted residents to various scams including false missed jury notifications, false county deed records solicitations and others

- Developed and implemented Master Clerk, the first ever career path for employees
- Leveraged cutting edge technology like artificial intelligence to enhance efficiencies and service
- Advocated for and secured additional judge in 2020 to facilitate justice
- Fought for additional dollars and our fair share of the state court budget to attract and retain personnel as St Johns County's court operations was previously one of the least funded in the state
- Instituted Israel-St Johns County Friendship Day and advocated for investment policy revision banning investments in companies that participate in the Boycott, Divesture, and Sanctions movement
- Recognized as a Patriotic Employer by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve



Kathakali classical Indian dance with face painting and costumes



High tea on the sea in a houseboat

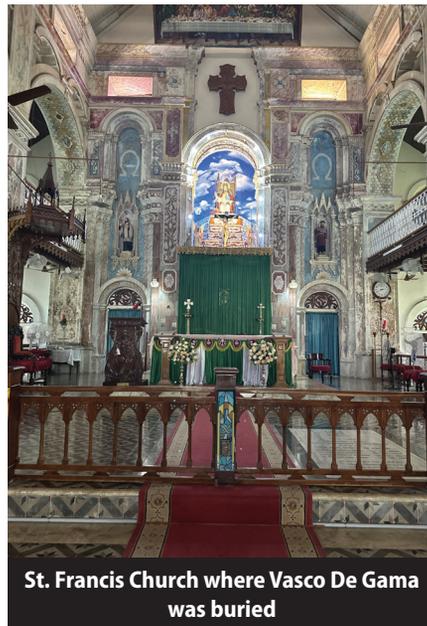
South India: A magical land with geographic and cultural diversity

By Dr. Shyam Paryani
Photos by Dr. Shyam Parani

India is a magical and mystical country that has to be experienced in person to appreciate its beauty and diversity.

Even though I was born in India, each time I visit the country it is a new adventure. Each of the regions in India has very different and contrasting characteristics. In the north are the Himalayan mountains and Kashmir, the palaces and temples in north central India, the jungles of central India and the beautiful coastline of the western region. South India is a microcosm of the geographic and cultural diversity with a beautiful coastline, mountains with tea plantations, the backwaters resembling Kashmir and many beautiful palaces and temples. With my cousin's daughter getting married at a destination wedding in Goa, Sharon and I recently visited South India for 2 weeks.

National Geographic's Traveler magazine named Kerala, India, as one of the "10 paradises of the world" and "50 must-see destinations of a lifetime." We visited five different areas of the state. Vasco De Gama landed in 1498 in Kochin as an original Portuguese settlement. There are original buildings from that era, including St. Francis Church where he was originally buried.



St. Francis Church where Vasco De Gama was buried

Fishermen still use Chinese nets, which are an iconic picture at sunset on the lake. The town still has the look and feel of the original fishing village.

Next, we traveled to a hill station in Munnar with tea plantations producing the best tea with chai stands everywhere. You can actually walk in the plantations and see the workers pick the tea leaves. The area is surrounded by mountains of the Western Ghats.

Next we traveled to Thekaddy, which is known for its traditional Kathakali



Indian woman with sari riding a motor scooter

classical dance with face painting and costumes that we got to experience close up with the cast. That region is also known for the Periyar Tiger Preserve with not only Bengal tigers but also leopards and elephants and other wildlife.

Lake Kumarakom and Apellley are known for the huge lake and backwaters with houseboats. It reminded us of Kashmir when we stayed on a houseboat. We stayed here a day on the houseboat with a personal chef serving meals and high tea on the sea.

As we traveled through the cities, there was lots of traffic with many cars and scooters. It was not unusual to see Indian women beautifully dressed in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ■



Iconic Chinese fishing nets at sunset

SOUTH INDIA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

saris and kurtas riding a scooter with a helmet.

Then there was the capital city, Trivandrum, with the richest temple in the world housing gold and diamonds valued at \$1.2 trillion. The local royal family still controls the Padmanabhaswamy temple and its riches. It was amazing to see so much diversity in terrain and culture in Kerala. This was definitely worth doing with many sights that are representative



Padmanabhaswamy Temple, which houses gold and diamonds

of the various regions of India and is now an item checked off our bucket list!

Drs. Shyam and Sharon Paryani reside

in Ponte Vedra Beach and love to travel. Shyam was born in India but grew up in Jacksonville since the age of 11. Sharon was born and raised in Jacksonville.



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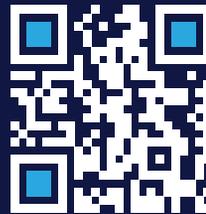
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Trustees of Florida's embassy explore UF campus

By Claire King
Contributed photos

Florida House on Capitol Hill hosted its annual spring trustee meeting for 2024 on the University of Florida campus this year, immersing themselves in the vibrant energy of Gainesville's iconic university.

Florida House trustees and guests explored notable locations around campus, kicking off festivities with a warm welcome at Visors Rooftop at Spurrier's Gridiron Grille. Coach Steve Spurrier himself joined the gathering, extending his gratitude for choosing his restaurant and treating guests to his renowned cuisine.

The following day, Florida House Trustees embarked on a full campus tour starting with a visit to the honeybee lab. Led by world-renowned expert Dr. Jamie Ellis, trustees gained insights into honeybee conservation and ecology. They had a firsthand look at the hives, honey extractors and their one-of-a-kind indoor bee observation room. They then journeyed to Smathers Libraries, where trustees explored the UF Judaica Library and perused historic memorabilia from Florida House and other notable figures. They enjoyed seeing an archival video featuring Rhea Chiles, Florida House's founder, in conversation with then-Congressman Bill Nelson.



Concluding their campus tour, the trustees embarked on an exploration of Malachowski Hall, the newest addition to the UF campus. Led by engineer ambassadors, they witnessed students leading research in AI, data information

and technology.

Trustees enjoyed the Florida Museum of Natural History before dinner and the awarding of the 2024 Distinguished Artist and Author Awards, celebrating the profound impact of Pulitzer Prize winner Dr. Jack E. Davis and National Geographic photographer Mac Stone. And after a morning of conducting business, the Harn Museum of Art docents led the trustees on private tours of their extensive collections, including the Vickers Collection of Florida landscapes.

Florida House is the only state embassy in the nation's capital. Situated in a Victorian townhouse on the corner of East Capitol and Second Streets Northeast, the embassy welcomes more than 10,000 Floridians and their friends every year, whether traveling on business or vacation. As a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, Florida House accepts no state tax dollars.

Visit Florida House to see the stunning pictures of Florida icon Clyde Butcher, take a tour of the newly renovated interior and garden, or just relax with a glass of orange juice during a busy day in Washington, D.C. To see all the happenings at Florida House, follow on social media @floridahousedc.

CHRISTIAN WHITEHURST

★
County Commission

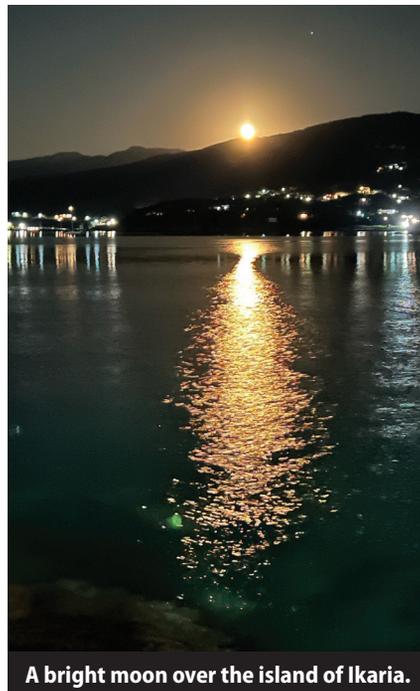


Fighting For St. Johns

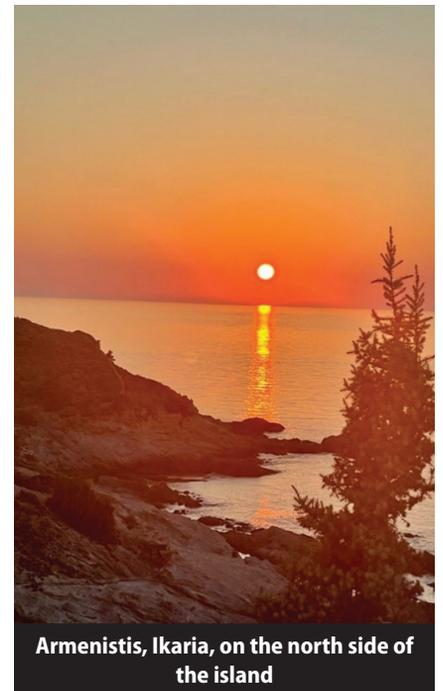
- Protected Our Beaches
- Invested in Public Safety
- Preserved Farmland
- Slowed the Growth
- Held Developers Accountable
- Led Effort for 4 New Regional Parks
- Invested in New & Improved Roads
- Never Raised Taxes on Residents
- Increased Land Conservation & Preservation



A beach on the north side of the island of Ikaria.



A bright moon over the island of Ikaria.



Armenistis, Ikaria, on the north side of the island

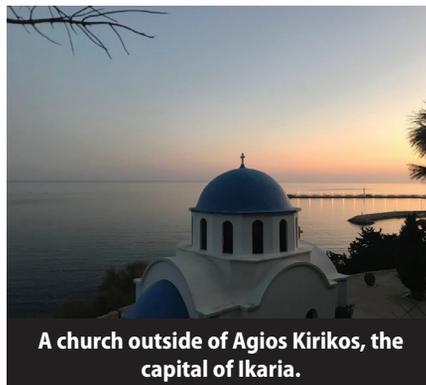
The Island of Long Livers

By Marc and Dee Koutoufaris
Contributed photos

Have you ever been on a moving walkway and when you get to the end you feel like you went from speed walking to slow motion? What if I were to tell you there is a place on Earth where you can leave behind the fast pace of life, slow down and be able to relax and enjoy all that is around you? There is such a place, and it is on the Greek island of Ikaria (e-ka-ria). This is where our family is from.

Ikaria is located in the eastern Aegean Sea, east of Athens and just a few miles from Turkey. It received its name from Icarus, who in Greek mythology, flew too high to the sun with his wax wings and fell into the sea.

The island is accessible by superfast ferry boats, which take roughly five hours from Piraeus (the main port outside of Athens) or 50 minutes by turbo prop plane from Athens. The island is not the smallest of the Greek isles, and it is not the most populated or visited either like Santorini, Mykonos and Crete. It sits in the water with a slightly Southwest to Northeast direction and measures roughly 20 miles long and six miles at its widest point. However, it is divided by large



A church outside of Agios Kirikos, the capital of Ikaria.



Mousaka (potato/eggplant base with meat sauce and bechamel on top)

mountain peaks and foothills running through its spine.

There are roughly 8,500 year-round inhabitants with that population rising to 18,000 during the summer months, especially in late July and early August.

You will experience, not just island time, but Ikarian time, which along with the people, make this place so special. Ikaria has been identified as one of five Blue Zones of the world where on average people live the longest. Why? The culture is filled with family, social engagement, walking, swimming, a lot of fresh nonprocessed foods and little to no stress. Ikarian time does not have hands on its clock face; rarely does one see an Ikarian wear a watch. You cannot rush things when there; you have to allow things to come to you. For many, their first time on the island may feel as though the island is so outdated and backwards, but is it?

After a few days on the island, we find ourselves shedding the stress of the world.

We base our activities and plans off of the sun, temperature and desire versus schedules and alarms. We spend hours in the “platia” (a town’s center square) having several coffees or drinks with friends both old and new from late morning to late into the night. We get our bread from the local artisan bakery that still utilizes the original oven, several generations old.

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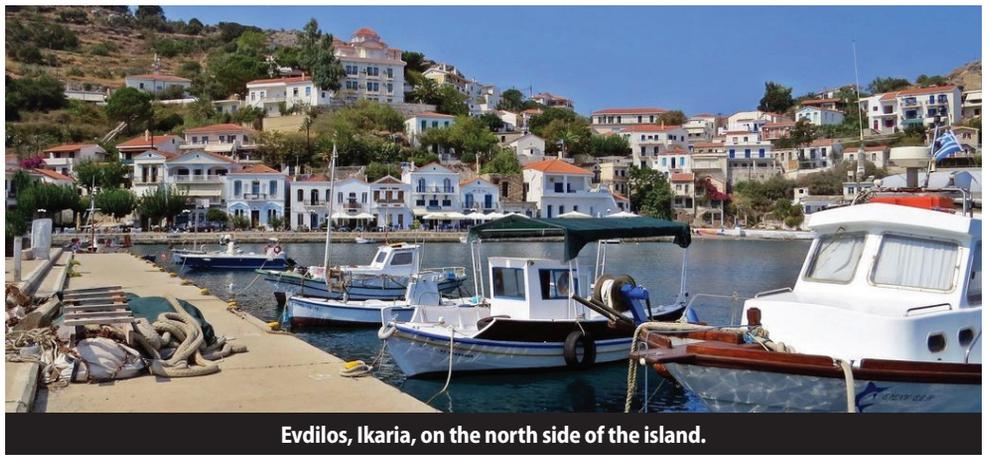
[sand castles]

ISLAND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Nightly, we eat at different small mom-and-pop restaurants where the menu changes daily based on what is fresh, and the servers are family members. When you do get into this mode of operation, everything — and we mean everything — changes. The air is filled with the fragrance of ripe figs and blooming flowers. The food tastes amazing, and the sounds all around you create a symphony of music. The pace slows to a crawl and you literally can feel the weight on your shoulders and chest wash away in the cool crystal blue waters of the Aegean hitting the marble rocks on the beach.

We hope one day you might have the opportunity to visit Ikaria and experience what true Greek island living is like. You will never forget it and it will be a feeling like no other!



Evdilos, Ikaria, on the north side of the island.



Stuffed zucchini



Soufiko is a Greek ratatouille with squash, eggplants, onions and any other vegetable they have in the kitchen.



A statue of Icarus falling.

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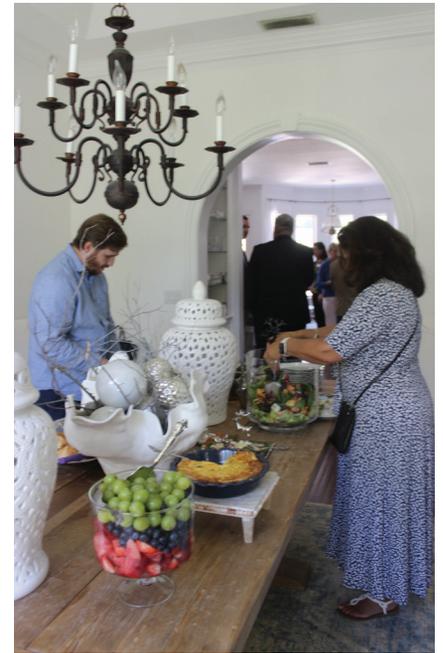
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Sand Castles thank you luncheon

Photos by Susan Griffin

On May 3rd, Sand Castles held a thank you luncheon for advertisers at the home of Sand Castles founder Janet Westling in Sawgrass Country Club.

The luncheon featured two guest speakers from the community.

The first speaker, Mr. Matt Rapp, Director of the North Florida Land Trust gave an informative talk about the history of the land Trust, the accomplishments of the Trust and future initiatives. "Its Now or Never" slogan paints a picture of the importance of preserving North Florida for generations



to come.

Nick Primrose, candidate for the State Representative , District 18 spoke about his commitment to protecting

small businesses from burdensome government regulations, safeguarding our natural habitats across St. Johns County to ensure coastal resiliency and water quality and ensure a brighter future for St. John's residents.

Guests had the opportunity to ask questions of the speakers and left with a greater understanding of the North Florida Land Trust, and the conservative candidate for the State House.

The luncheon was the second in a series that will continue in July and October, that will invite and thank advertisers and feature speakers from the business and non-profit community.







INSIDE THE LEGENDS THAT LIE AMONG US: JAMES R. STOCKTON

James R. Stockton: JR's plan for a modern Ponte Vedra... then and now

Originally published October 30, 2014

By Janet Westling

Photos provided by Kevin Ramsey

Forty years ago, a developer's dream to take some very raw land that was almost uninhabitable and turn it into a world class community became a reality. In 1974, the golf course and community James R. (Jimmy) Stockton Jr., envisioned on a Safari in Africa four years before, opened to an enthusiastic response with brisk sales. Golf course architect Ed Seay and Stockton's team succeeded in creating Sawgrass, the first Planned Unit Development in St. Johns County, and Stockton's vision for a modern Ponte Vedra was launched!

OUR ORIGINS: THE EARLY HISTORY OF PONTE VEDRA

Once a sleepy, 28-mile stretch of beach,

Ponte Vedra Beach was first discovered some say by Ponce de Leon who landed briefly on our shores then settled on a more suitable landing site in St. Augustine in 1513.

Many communities along our Florida coast make the same claim. But whatever the facts are, one thing that we do know is that many visitors have set foot on our shores. From European explorers to native Americans this eclectic mix of settlers have walked our beaches, herded cattle, planted indigo and rice, made moonshine and mined for minerals.

In 1914, the National Lead Company mined our sands from Jacksonville Beach to South Ponte Vedra Beach for rutile, zircon and ilmenite, which were in demand during World War I. They named their coastal mining town Mineral City, which is our present day Ponte Vedra Beach. They constructed a club house and a nine-hole golf course for their

employees, guests and visiting executives. In 1927, a log cabin was built to house their guests. Ten years later, they opened an inn.

THE TELFAIR STOCKTON COMPANY LAUNCHES A PREMIER RESORT

When the minerals were no longer in demand the National Lead Company decided to cultivate a new crop of revenue from the land they owned. Florida was becoming a destination for tourists from the north. Capitalizing on the 17 miles of land they owned in Mineral City, the National Lead executives in 1928 hired Stockton's grandfather's company, the Telfair Stockton Company, to create an exclusive private club. This club would be designed to cater to the upper-class and upper-middle class.

Joe Davin was the land engineer

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 ■

[from the pages of sand castles]

STOCKTON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

and Jim Stockton Sr. was the designer, planner, and manager of this new resort. All traces of the former mine were removed and in its place beautiful landscaping was planted. Another change was needed. This new town, with their new brand, needed a new name!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The origin of name Ponte Vedra came

about when one of the executives of the National Lead Company read an article about Ponte Vedra, Spain, as the birthplace of Christopher Columbus, which was incorrect. Ponte Vedra the name, had a sophisticated, European appeal and was immediately chosen for the new town.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

This new resort town with its new European name was not easily accessible. James Stockton Sr. appealed to the

governor, who was a personal friend, and made a request for a new road. The last segment of the East Coast Scenic Highway, from Jacksonville Beach south to St. Augustine was completed, and Ponte Vedra, the resort community, was ready for buyers.

THE MARKETING PLAN

Stockton, a graduate of Princeton University, contacted his friends and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32 ■



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This 3BR/3.5BA, 4458sf home with soaring 12-ft ceilings & amazing golf to Waterview is simply Paradise. Surrounded by beautiful trees, this home reeks of customization. Italian plaster walls tons of crown molding & Coffered ceilings adorn this exquisitely built home. The home is on a .68 acre lot with a 4-car garage & 2 office spaces. Sold for \$1,950,000.



Call Deb Pettry
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Ocean view condo overlooking the heart of Jacksonville Beach, just steps to the beach and pier. Garage parking with private storage, fitness room, clubroom, cabana deck with pool/spa. Offered at \$595,000.



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904-910-6355



SOLD

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Call Janet Westling
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St. John's Academy salutes military all year long

Contributed photos

As Memorial Day approaches, the nation takes time to honor those who have served our country in military service and have made the ultimate sacrifice. St. John's Academy has established traditions that recognize military members at several of the school's events and in the course of study throughout the school year, for example:

- Friday assembly with the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem recognizing the military parents and visitors in attendance.
- Special assemblies to honor both Veterans Day and Memorial Day, recognizing parents and grandparents who have served in the armed forces.
- Curriculum: The school's classical Christian studies introduce the American Founding Fathers and traditional holidays in the second grade. In the fifth and sixth grades, America's history starts with the explorers and



concludes in the present day using primary sources and literature integrated with the time period. Plus, a revisit of American government and literature

in the 11th grade rounds out their understanding of the foundational documents and why the nation is worth protecting.

- The yearend Spring

Revue includes the Presentation of Colors and singing of all the military anthems: "Anchors Aweigh," "The Marines' Hymn," "The U.S. Air Force," "The Army Goes Rolling Along" and the Coast Guard's anthem "Semper Paratus."

• Special presentations by the American Military Historical Society about World War I, presented by a group of dedicated men who poured their hearts and souls into creating the collection, which they shared with the students.

• Most recently, the USO visited St. John's Academy to celebrate April as the month of "A Military Child." Forty-two students were presented with special gift bags.

"We are proud to honor our United States military all year long at St. John's Academy," said Wallis Brooks St. John's Academy head of school. "May God Bless America!"

Learn more about St. John's Academy, established 1995, by going to stjohnsacademy.com.

Protect St. Johns



Henry Dean's Conservation Record

- Led the effort to protect and restore our 42 miles of beaches
- Initiated the re-establishment of our LAMP Committee (Land Acquisition and Management Program)
- Directly involved in conservation land negotiations and acquisitions around the entire state, totaling 1.25 million acres, including 60,000 acres in St. Johns: Guana River Preserve, Twelve Mile Swamp, Deep Creek, Moses Creek, and Matanzas State Forest
- Led the effort to restore 200,000 acres of the headwaters of the St. Johns River as part of the St. Johns River Upper Basin Restoration Project
- Directly involved in the acquisition of 700,000 acres of riverine floodplain along the entire 300 mile stretch of the St. Johns River and its major tributaries
- Established first minimum flows and levels in Florida for the Wekiva River System
- Led efforts to acquire critical buffers to benefit Silver Springs and Silver Glen Springs
- Led the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program

HENRY
DEAN



FOR COUNTY COMMISSION - DISTRICT 5



Qi and Michael Bruce



Jimmy Stockton and Jimbo Stockton

Sawgrass Country Club celebrates its 50th Anniversary

By Janet Westling
Contributed photos

On Saturday April 20th, Sawgrass Country Club members celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the club in 1974.

Over 600 members attended a spectacular gala at Clubhouse, throughout

the club, on the terraces and on the lawn overlooking the golf course.

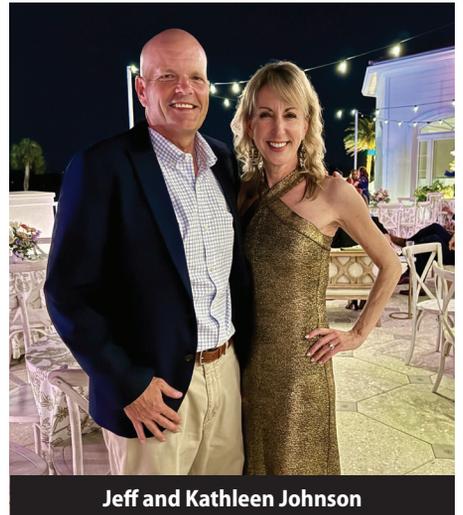
Jimmy Stockton Jr., who founded the club 50 years ago, was honored at the celebration.

"Sawgrass 50th memories! What an incredible celebration! Thank you to the past and present leadership, the board, the membership, and the community

for your kindness and thoughtfulness acknowledging and honoring my father as the founder, creator and developer of Sawgrass in the middle of the spectacular 50th Anniversary Gala. It was a labor of love for him to create a unique and very special community," Jimbo Stockton said, son of the developer of Sawgrass.



Frank and Lisa Kolisek



Jeff and Kathleen Johnson



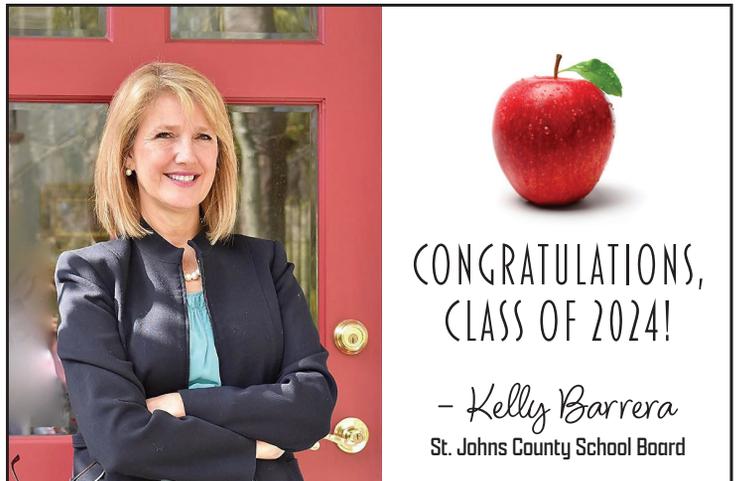
Jimbo Stockton and Mariann Wernick

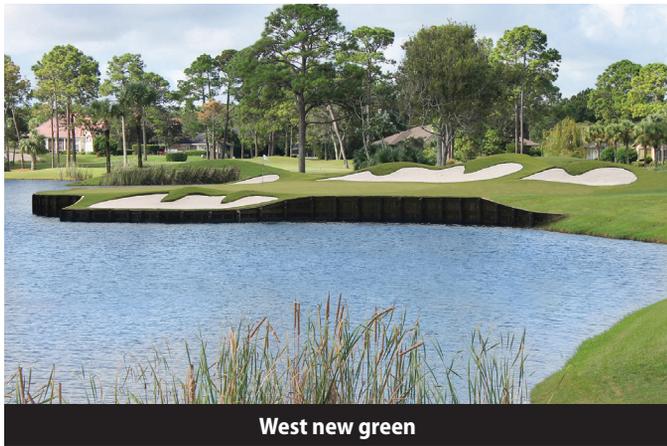


Friends celebrate Sawgrass Country Club's 50th anniversary

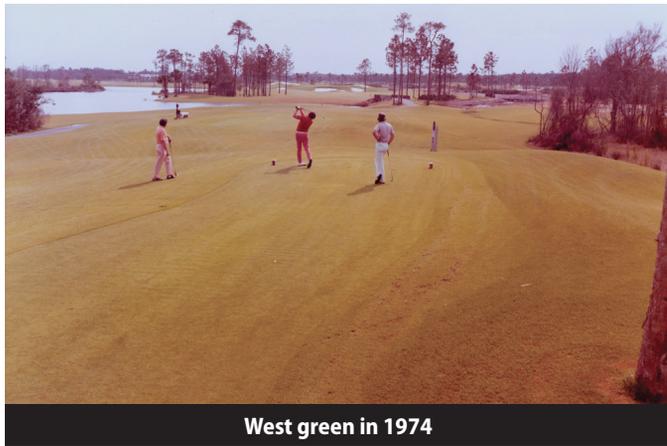


Lisa Kolisek, Frank Kolisek, Jimbo Stockton, Mariann Wernick and Jeanell Wilson





West new green



West green in 1974

STOCKTON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

fellow alumni and asked them to come to Florida to visit the new oceanfront club at Ponte Vedra. To encourage membership, they were offered a very reasonable fee to join the club as non-residents.

British architect Herbert Bertram, designed the par-72, 6,811-yard Ocean course, creating the area's first resort golf experience. Another first, according to golf historians, is that the ninth hole boasts the first island green ever built.

The Princeton pipeline proved very successful. The resort grew as the wealthy fled the severe Northern temperatures in the winter for the more temperate Southern shores in the new town of Ponte Vedra.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES

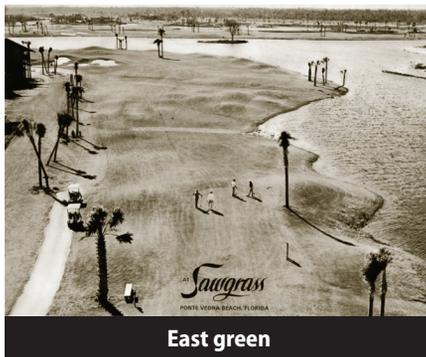
In 1929, just one year after the new town was named, the crash of Wall Street and the Great Depression slowed the growth along the Ponte Vedra coast. In 1942, National Lead Company sold its interest to the Ponte Vedra Corporation owned by the Telfair Stockton Company.

Over the next 30 years, Ponte Vedra, the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club and the surrounding community grew and prospered.

THE EARLY '70S AND THE BIRTH OF STOCKTON'S PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

Stockton who had worked for his dad's company in the 60's left in 1966 to start his own company, the Stockton Land Corporation. In 1969, James Stockton Sr. passed away.

One year later on a planned African safari that extended into two months, Stockton had time to think about the 600



East green

acres of land he purchased west of Ponte Vedra Boulevard and the 1,600 feet of oceanfront land on the east.

"I wanted to create a modern Ponte Vedra," Stockton said. "In 1970, during the Augusta National, I met Charlie Frazer who was developing Hilton Head a planned community."

The idea of a planned unit development was a new concept in the early '70's, Stockton said.

He set out to learn the new design that was taking shape all over the US.

From Hilton Head to Palm Springs and north to Connecticut, Stockton toured the up and coming communities, and returned home to begin his plan for a "modern Ponte Vedra." This remote coast of North Florida, in the resort town his grandfather and dad had launched just 30 years before, was ready for the third generation of Stocktons to leave their mark.

He began to organize his team. A most fortuitous connection was meeting Ed Seay through friends and family. Seay, a recent graduate of the University of Florida, shared the same values and both were Marines. Their partnership was formed and Seay's first golf course design was a magnificent, challenging course that was destined for history.

But first the land needed to be tamed. According to Al Hammack, whose firm

was hired for this project, "the original Sawgrass property was not very pretty. It consisted of palmettos, slash pines and was very flat."

"Jimmy Stockton had a vision for a large, planned, gated community," Hammack said. "He approached my consulting engineering/planning/surveying company: Bessent, Hammack and Ruckman, Inc. We had done the engineering for Amelia Island Plantation and he liked it."

One million cubic yards of dirt were moved and in its path 100 acres of lakes provided the necessary drainage and elevation for the golf course, roads and building sites. Jimmy Stockton's beachfront property was just across the boulevard. A curve in Ponte Vedra Boulevard was made so that there was room to build the Beach Club, pools and parking with direct access to the beach for members.

The team was now complete. With Hammack's firm, Don Cheek as planner, Seay as golf course architect and contractors, Stockton's dream team and the community were taking shape.

There was just one more item to get done: It needed a name.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? AGAIN!

This new community needed a name of its own. For days the Stockton team threw out all kinds of ideas. But everything fell short. Out of hundreds of names in a file one by one they were all discarded.

They started to use the name "Diego" after all the area was originally named that in the land grant called diego plains. But that name also was rejected.

The team was running out of time. They were down to deadline and getting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 ■

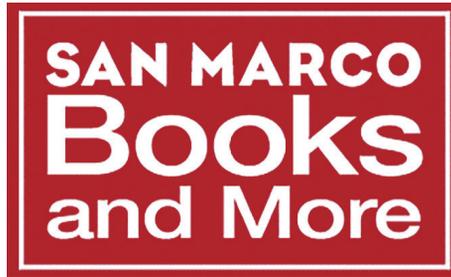
Jodi Picoult to visit local book store

By Desiree Baily

San Marco Books and More has announced that author Jodi Picoult will be coming to Jacksonville on Aug. 24. The New York Times best-selling author, who has written more than 25 books, brings a fascinating new novel about the possibility of Shakespeare's true identity, "By Any Other Name."

Here's a summary:

In 2024, playwright Melina Green has just written a new work inspired by the life of her Elizabethan ancestor, Emilia Bassano. But seeing it performed is unlikely in a theater world where the



playing field isn't level for women. As Melina wonders if she dares risk failure again, her best friend takes the decision out of her hands and submits the play to a festival under a male pseudonym.

In 1581, young Emilia Bassano is a

ward of English aristocrats. Her lessons on languages, history and writing have endowed her with a sharp wit and a gift for storytelling, but like most women of her day, she is allowed no voice of her own. Forced to become a mistress to the Lord Chamberlain, who oversees all theatrical productions in England, Emilia sees firsthand how the words of playwrights can move an audience. She begins to form a plan to secretly bring a play of her own to the stage — by paying an actor named William Shakespeare to front her work.

Tickets to the Aug. 24 event are available on the San Marco Books and More website, or at bit.ly/JODISMB.



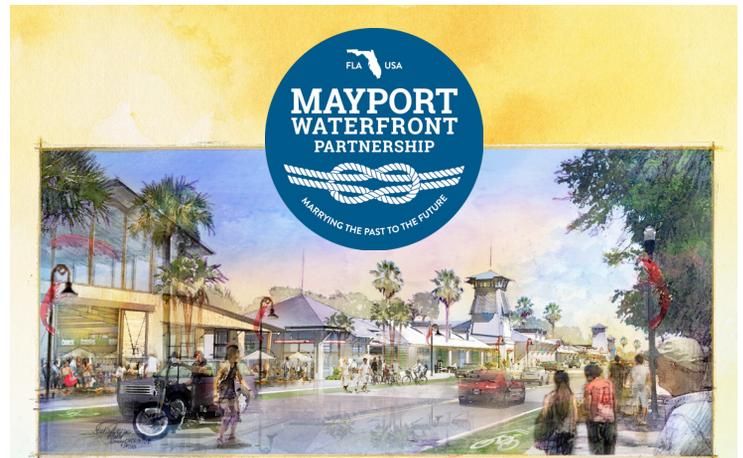
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SCHOOLS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

great support staff. Our areas of highest need include instructors in Exceptional Student Education, math and science instructors, bus operators, paraprofessionals and custodians.

Lisa Knuze, our principal of Allen D. Nease High School, is retiring in June. She has served our community in several leadership positions over the years, including as assistant principal at Nease and for the opening and beginning years of Ponte Vedra High School, as well as principal at Switzerland Point Middle School. We wish her the very best as she moves to be closer to family.

We are happy to welcome Gina Foncesca as our incoming principal at Nease. She brings a strong high school background and familiarity with our community. Gina also served as assistant principal of Ponte Vedra High School, principal at Freedom Crossing Academy and worked at our district office as director of Secondary Education.



A student is honored at the American Youth Character Counts Awards ceremony.

In August, we look forward to opening our two new K-8 schools, Lakeside and Trout Creek academies. Our new K-8 in the Rivertown

community is expected to open for the 2025-26 school year, followed by two additional K-8s in 2026-27 in the Silverleaf and Nocatee communities.

Over the summer, our Student Services department will conduct training for the Positive Behavior Improvement System (PBIS), a program that provides a proactive approach to school safety and behavior. Currently, PBIS is in 24 of our schools and will expand to four additional schools in August, including Alice B. Landrum Middle School.

As this school year finishes, I would like to thank our awesome students, wonderful teachers and staff for the important work they do each day. Thank you to our parents, guardians, volunteers, business partners for enriching each of our schools. And thank you to our community for supporting our traditional public schools.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate our 2024 high school graduates and wish them the best in their future endeavors. I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer!

COALITION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

for unhoused families but will also develop a supportive community in which our children can thrive and build a future.

The addition of new cottages will offer families a safe and secure place to call home while they rebuild their lives. An on-site Children's Education Center will create an environment that will allow children to continue their education through tutoring and creativity sessions outside of school. To make this vision a reality, the Homeless Coalition is calling on the community to support the 2024 Expansion Campaign.

We need you and your help to raise the funds needed to access this campaign's full impact and potential reach. With the community's help, the coalition can continue to work towards ending family homelessness in St Johns County.

Together, we can make a difference and provide a brighter future for those facing homelessness and hardship. Please help us reach our \$5.6 million goal by donating now. You

may donate online at <https://homelesscoalitionstjohns.com/donate>.

If you would like a tour of our five-acre campus and learn more about the services the Homeless Coalition provides, contact us at 904-819-0059.



MAYPORT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Gulliford Community Center on Ocean Street, sponsored and held a resiliency workshop in conjunction with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia attended by key professionals representing numerous state and city agencies, participated in the Beaches Art Walk evenings, held a Village Potluck Dinner, presented at the annual state conference of the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association and was recently awarded a \$2,500 grant from the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida to develop both a digital and hard copy Village newsletter for residents to keep up to date on news that affects this small 60-acre community.

Currently, the City of Jacksonville is beginning the design for the development of new docks for the commercial fishing industry in the Village as part of the waterfront acreage. This project will anchor the further development and growth of this area. We have heard from some commercial fishermen who have been displaced by the hurricanes, that seriously affected the southwestern portion of the state, that the need for commercial docks is greater than ever.

The future of Mayport Village will rest on the respectful and honest approach of these four pillars for the future: commercial fishing, education and research, cultural heritage and history and eco-tourism.

The partnership believes the best is yet-to-come and its guiding belief is that "a rising tide lifts all boats."



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Proudly Supported by Veterans and Law Enforcement

Meet Jim Priester

Jim's 27-year career with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office follows in the footsteps of a family proudly dedicated to Florida law enforcement—he is the fourth generation of loyal public servants. His training, service, knowledge and experience encompassed all areas of the office—including concurrent, specialized training and service with the SWAT Team, the Bomb Squad and the Dive team.

During his career, he served in many roles with the Sheriff's Office and established relationships of trust with all ages of the citizens of St. Johns County—from youth to seniors. Jim achieved the top levels, in multiple disciplines, as a Certified Law Enforcement Trainer during his seven years in the SJSO Training Unit. Prior to his promotion to Sergeant, he supervised the entire Patrol Division Field Training and Evaluation Program. As a Patrol Shift Leader, Jim was involved in several life threatening events that required his leadership and critical thinking skills to ensure the safety of the deputies working with him as well as the community affected by these situations. While leading the Community Affairs Unit as Sergeant and ultimately Lieutenant, he supervised and managed multiple agency functions, community events and crime prevention programs. All employees assigned under his command followed his example and became more actively involved with numerous community organizations. As Patrol Watch Commander, Lieutenant Priester was not only responsible for up to two-thirds of the county's geographical area but also managed up to 25-plus deputies and their supervisors.

Throughout his career, Priester has been honored for his dedication to service: he has earned the Lifesaving Award for saving the life of a fellow deputy sheriff; the Combat Award; three Meritorious Service Awards; two Sheriff's Commendations and two Sheriff's Unit Awards and his 20 Year Commendation. Priester was awarded the original Proclamation declaring October 21st 2014 as K9 Baron Day after he carried K9 Baron out of the woods to a vehicle that rushed him to an emergency vet. Sadly, K9 Baron died from injuries sustained in the line of duty.

Jim and his wife, Paula, live in Hastings with their two horses and loyal pup Cadey. They enjoy attending services at the historical First Baptist Church of Hastings and being a part of the tight-knit community.



Paid by Jim Priester, Republican, for Sheriff.

SHOWROOM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

another furniture store, you may like a table, but it might be two weeks before they can put it in your house,” Turner said. “Sometimes our deliveries are the next day because if you’re like me, you don’t want to wait.”

The new showroom will also feature a design center so that customers can pick out the type of upholstery they want for their couch or the finish they want for their dining room table and do it all on site.

“We want to make it the one-stop shop for your home and make it a little easier to come across what you want,” Turner said. “

A grand opening is planned for some time in June as the finishing touches are still being applied to the space in anticipation of that event, which will include free giveaways and other special customer interactions during the day.



Photo provided by J. Turner & Co.



The Sawgrass Beach Club



Course construction

STOCKTON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

pressure by their attorneys for a name.

That evening over drinks, Stockton recalled, with Ed Seay, Don Cheek and friends along with a good bottle of Dewar’s Scotch, a name finally appeared.

“Let’s call it Sawgrass,” Stockton said. “We certainly have plenty of it out there.”

For those unfamiliar with the plant, sawgrass with its sharp blade only grows in swamps. It is sharp as a knife and can cut your clothes to shreds!

Sawgrass was chosen as the name for the new community with the new concept in land development and a golf course whose name would be synonymous with

golf greats throughout the world.

ED SEAY’S WORLD FAMOUS GOLF COURSE

In 1974, the year the Sawgrass golf course opened, Deane Beman became the chairman of the PGA Tour. He was a visionary and he set his sights on a permanent home for the “golfers” own tournament.

Beman is quoted in the book “Golf’s Driving Force” by Adam Shupak with his sentiment, “We needed to have a with a community that would commit itself to as much championship as we would commit to the community.”

The North Florida community from in town to the Beaches welcomed the tournament with open arms and from

1977-1981 Sawgrass Country Club was home to the TPC or back in those days it was called the Championship!

A MODERN PONTE VEDRA

Today, the developer and visionary Jimmy Stockton Jr. spends a lot of his time outdoors fishing and organizing fishing adventures, taking his travelers to far-away places. His home is on a beautiful sanctuary on the Guana River along the boulevard, in Ponte Vedra, where generations of Stocktons lived, developed and marketed to the world.

We know Ponte Vedra as our paradise in North Florida and when we travel the world we return home wondering why we ever left!



The interior reminds us that one's home is one's castle.



The pool area of the estate.

Estate in heart of Ponte Vedra Beach

By Jeanne Pilcher

Photos by Bold City Virtual Tours

Step inside this stunning Provence Manor home in prestigious Sawgrass Island just steps away from the world-renowned Players Club. Close proximity to the beaches, fine dining, Mayo Clinic and minutes to the Dye Valley and TPC Stadium courses, this four-bedroom home plus office, media room and large activities room has so much to offer.

With its sophisticated design and Old

World charm, this property is the essence of luxury living, making it the perfect retreat for families seeking both style and comfort. You'll love the tranquility of your private pool set against the beautiful water to golf views of the Valley Course's ninth hole.

The heart of this home lies within its kitchen overlooking the family room and casual dining area; a perfect gathering place to entertain friends or just enjoy family. Venture upstairs and check out the

media room and versatile loft space ready to adapt to your lifestyle needs.

Don't miss the third-story activities room with so many possibilities. Step into the epitome of refined living, where every detail has been meticulously crafted to create a seamless blend of timeless elegance and comfort.

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Listed by Jeanne Pilcher
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An exterior view of the home at 9020 Marsh View Court



The bright interior of the home

Home offers resort-like coastal living

By **Cici Anderson & Jenna Fisher**
Contributed photos

This is a truly exceptional and rare opportunity to call this exquisite residence your home. Beyond meticulously renovated and cared for with superb curb appeal, it graces a prime location inside the gated community of Marsh Landing, Ponte Vedra's premier country club community with social membership included.

Nestled on a private street, this custom-built brick home boasts

picturesque golf course and marsh views. It is beautifully renovated with the finest finishes throughout. The kitchen is truly a masterpiece with furniture grade cabinetry, a large island, honed Carrara marble countertops and high-end appliances. The gorgeous butler's pantry and lovely breakfast room with adjoining grill porch make entertaining a dream.

The main floor also features a gracious primary suite with marble spa-inspired bath, two walk-in closets, an elegant study and dining and living rooms,

mudroom, two powder rooms and a family room with custom stone fireplace.

Upstairs includes three spacious suites, each with walk-in closets and baths, an upstairs family room with balcony and an expansive "Florida basement."

This spectacular property offers the epitome of gracious resort-like coastal living.

This property, located at 9020 Marsh View Court, is represented by Marsh Landing Realty and listed by Cici Anderson and Jenna Fisher and offered for \$2,699,000.

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The spacious kitchen



The home at 149 Deer Cove Drive is on a cul-de-sac



The view from the screened lanai.

Marsh Landing home offers waterfront views

By Lisa Barton

Contributed photos

Located in the prestigious, gated community of Marsh Landing Country Club, 149 Deer Cove Drive is a wonderful lakefront home conveniently situated on a cul-de-sac. This beautifully appointed home is 3,000 square feet — perfect for the family looking for elegant living with a smaller footprint. You'll find ample outdoor living areas, all with sweeping waterfront views.

This floor plan offers open spaces to gather, tranquil places to retreat, and a

natural flow for entertaining. The soaring ceilings and new plank floors reflect the bright natural light. Recently renovated, the spacious kitchen features custom cabinetry, double ovens, induction cooktop, beverage fridge, granite counters and lots of space to cook and entertain.

On the main floor you'll find the owners' suite with two large closets, a wellness area with a private outdoor retreat, a separate office and full guest bath. Upstairs are three more spacious bedrooms and another bathroom. The screened lanai flows from the family room

and owners' suite, creating a quiet oasis for enjoying the breeze off of the lake.

Marsh Landing Country Club is a gated community in Ponte Vedra Beach. The recently renovated country club offers golf, tennis, swimming, fitness and dining. Membership in the country club is optional for the neighborhood's residents. In addition to the club, Marsh Landing has two playgrounds, basketball courts, a soccer field and walking path.

Offered for \$1,349,000

Keller Williams Realty Atlantic Partners
Lisa Barton, Broker Associate

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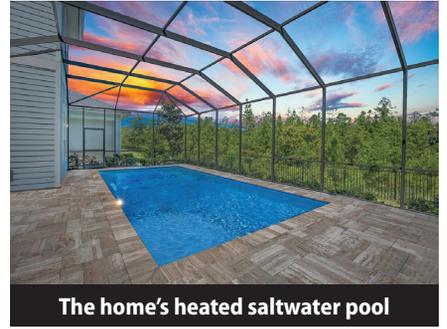
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The home in Dorado, seen at sunset.



The dining room



The home's heated saltwater pool

Amenities abound in Dorado community

By **Cyndi King**
Contributed photos

Indulge in the epitome of coastal luxury living with this stunning four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath pool home nestled in the highly sought-after, gated Beachwalk community of Dorado. Immerse yourself in the tranquil beauty of nature as this residence boasts a picturesque backdrop, backing up to a serene preserve.

Step inside to discover an inviting open floor plan, perfect for both relaxing and entertaining. The main floor features a

spacious primary bedroom, providing ultimate convenience and privacy. Ascend to the second level where a charming loft awaits, along with three additional bedrooms offering ample space for family and guests.

Park and charge your electric car (Tesla installed) in the expanded two-car garage.

Outside, your own private oasis awaits with a sparkling heated saltwater pool, inviting you to unwind amidst the Florida sunshine. But the allure doesn't end there — this community offers an array of resort-style amenities, including the sprawling 14-plus acre Crystal Lagoon, a

state-of-the-art fitness center, tennis courts and a clubhouse for gatherings and events.

Not only does this residence offer unparalleled comfort and style, but it also provides access to the top-rated St. Johns County schools, ensuring an exceptional education for your family. Don't miss this opportunity to experience the perfect blend of luxury, convenience and natural beauty in Beachwalk. Your dream home awaits!

Offered at \$850,000 by **Cyndi King** at **Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty 904-687-8000.**

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A jewel of a home in Old Ponte Vedra

By Elizabeth Hudgins & Sarah Alexander
Contributed photos

Welcome to this charming home nestled in the highly desired area of Old Ponte Vedra, offering unparalleled privacy with lush landscape and gorgeous golf course views.

Custom-built by Carroll Browning, one of PVB's premier builders at the time, this jewel of a home is classic and provides the perfect framework for a buyer to make it their own. The property boasts just under a half an acre, with a large circular drive, side-entry garage and no immediate

neighbor to the north.

The first floor has two bedrooms with ADA-compliant doorways and barrier-free showers in both full baths, and the second floor has two more ensuite bedrooms. Step outside to discover the enchanting outdoor space where you can enjoy alfresco dining or simply relax amidst the serene surroundings. The mature trees and landscaping provide shade and privacy, creating a tranquil oasis right outside your door.

Enjoy easy access to the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club, access to JTB and South

Jax Beach shopping /dining! This unique locale is just minutes from the PGA World Headquarters, home of THE PLAYERS Championship, five-star resorts, the ATP Tennis headquarters, the world-renowned Mayo Clinic and the Guana preserve. With close proximity to the beach, golf, tennis and fitness center, experience the Ponte Vedra lifestyle and enjoy vacation living year-round.

Offered for \$3,150,000

Elizabeth Hudgins and Sarah Alexander -
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices
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A view of the breakfast area and kitchen.



The exterior of 229 Lamplighter Lane.



The pool and summer kitchen.

Tranquility, luxury on Lamplighter Lane

By **Tina Webster**

Contributed photos

Discover a harmonious blend of luxury and nature in this gem. Nestled within the prestigious gates of Marsh Landing, this 4,808-square-foot, five-bed, four-and-a-half-bath home located at 229 Lamplighter Lane offers an exquisite blend of luxury, comfort and convenience. Renovated to perfection, it boasts spectacular marsh views, hardwood floors and two gas fireplaces. This stunning property, situated on the marsh, is close to the pristine Ponte

Vedra beaches and epitomizes the quintessential Florida lifestyle.

Beyond its enviable location, 229 Lamplighter Lane exudes charm and sophistication. From the meticulously manicured landscapes to the elegant interior finishes, every aspect of this home reflects impeccable craftsmanship and attention to detail. Enjoy a beautiful sunset in your outdoor oasis, which includes a summer kitchen and gorgeous pool with a hot tub. The open floor plan creates the perfect venue for entertaining.

Residents can indulge in a serene ambiance while still enjoying easy access

to a plethora of amenities, including upscale shopping, fine dining and recreational activities. Whether relaxing in the comfort of their private sanctuary or exploring the vibrant surroundings, homeowners will find an abundance of opportunities to create lasting memories.

Experience the epitome of coastal living at 229 Lamplighter Lane, where tranquility meets luxury in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach.

Offered by **Tina Webster** at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty — twebster1@comcast.net

*As a buyer's agent, all of these homes were found off market this year and **SOLD!***



SOLD IN MARSH LANDING

109 Teal Nest Court | Sold for \$2,620,000



SOLD IN SAWGRASS

6 Sandpiper Cove | Sold for \$1,800,000



SOLD IN PLANTATION AT PONTE VEDRA

212 Laurel Lane | Sold for \$1,395,000

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13831 Ibis Point Blvd. | 4 br, 3 ba | Offered for \$579,000



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528 Le Master Dr. | 4 br, 4 ba | Offered for \$2,399,000



MARSH LANDING COUNTRY CLUB

229 Lamp Lighter Lane | 5 br, 5 ba | Offered for \$2,490,000



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A view of the course



The Residences at World Golf Village is the address for golfers.



A look at the kitchen area

A home for the golf enthusiast

By **Devon Witt**

Contributed photos

If golf is your game, The Residences at World Golf Village is the place for you! The King & Bear and Slammer & Squire courses of World Golf Village were collaboratively designed by Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Sam Snead and Gene Sarazen. The nicknames for these legends were then used to name the courses: “The King” for Arnold Palmer and “The Bear” for Jack Nicklaus, “The Slammer” for Snead and “The Squire” for Sarazen.

Situated on the eighth hole of Slammer & Squire, 345 N. Shore Circle, unit 1226,

in St. Augustine’s World Golf Village offers an unparalleled blend of luxury living and golf course vistas. This condo lives like a single-family home with three bedrooms and three full bathrooms, hardwood floors throughout and a large screened patio with panoramic views of lush fairways and manicured greens.

With multiple renowned golf courses just a stone’s throw away, enthusiasts can tee off to their heart’s content, exploring a diverse range of challenges and landscapes. From the links-style layout of the King & Bear front nine to the unspoiled preserve areas of Slammer & Squire, there is something for everyone.

Residents have access to all King & Bear amenities, which include a newly remodeled pool and spa, clubhouse with fitness center and game room.

Ideal for short-term rentals or as a permanent residence, this condo provides the flexibility to cater to various lifestyle needs. Whether it’s a weeklong escape or a year-round retreat, residents can bask in the comforts of home while immersing themselves in the vibrant golfing community.

Offered at \$415,000

For more information, contact Devon Witt at devon.witt@floridanetworkrealty.com or at 904-607-1281.



The Residences at World Golf Village: 345 N Shore Circle, Unit 1226

- Expansive golf course views from this second story condo with elevator access.
- 3 bed/3 baths with hardwood floors throughout.
- Great for investment or full time use

Offered at \$399,000



Isles of the World in World Golf Village: 543 Hedgewood Drive

- End unit townhome
- Unique guest suite with kitchenette & private entrance above garage
- Lake view with courtyard entry

Offered at \$434,900



Devon Witt

REALTOR, SRES, RCC Certified

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The home at 24315 Moss Creek Lane



The family room offers views of the natural surroundings.



The swimming pool area is a tranquil retreat.

Home harmonizes with natural surroundings

By **Suzanne Layser**

Contributed photos

This lovely home at 24315 Moss Creek Lane in Marsh Landing boasts an open and spacious floor plan designed for modern living and entertaining.

The interior design exudes coastal elegance, with high ceilings, oak floors and luxurious finishes. The gourmet kitchen is a chef's delight, equipped with stainless appliances, custom cabinetry and a large center island with a built-in wine cooler. The kitchen opens to a casual dining area and cozy

family room with panoramic views of the marsh, creating an inviting living area.

The screened lanai flows seamlessly from the family room, merging the indoor and outdoor living spaces.

The spacious primary bedroom with a recently renovated and luxurious bathroom is on the ground level. The split floor plan features three additional bedrooms on the first floor and an enormous bonus room and full bathroom upstairs. This is a great space for children or a home gym!

Every element of the beautiful outdoor living space is designed to

harmonize with the serene natural surroundings. The pool is a tranquil retreat to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and enjoy the beauty of nature.

The gazebo would be a great spot for an outdoor kitchen with stunning views. A private dock extends from the backyard to a tidal creek. The dock is a perfect spot to launch kayaks, paddleboards or a small boat.

**Represented by Keller Williams
Realty Atlantic Partners
Listed by Suzanne Layser and Lisa Barton —
Lisa Barton Team
Offered for \$2,200,000**

Home is warm and inviting

By **Sean Muserallo**

Contributed photos

Touch down in Turtle Shores this summer with this stunning custom-built home at 185 Turtle Cove, Ponte Vedra Beach, within walking distance of the beach. This five-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom home epitomizes the ease and joys of living at the beach.

The top floor has expansive views of the Intracoastal Waterway. Sit and stare at blue skies and green marsh on the balcony until the sun dips below the horizon, painting the most colorful skies on a nightly basis. You can hear and see the ocean from this level, too.

The home itself is very warm and inviting with exceptional craftsmanship



The front of the home at 185 Turtle Cove.

on every level. It's a subtle mix of coastal charm and traditional design. You have the space you need inside to host large family gatherings. The kitchen connects the living and dining rooms, and the bedrooms are on the first, second and third floors. Large picture windows frame every view outdoors letting in tons of natural light. Entertain in the outdoor grill area with a backyard that stretches long enough to add a pool.

The Turtle Shores community offers resort-style amenities, including a heated pool, tennis and pickleball courts, hot tub, playground, gym and clubhouse. Residents also enjoy access



You can see and hear the ocean from this third-floor balcony.

to a private, community-owned beach via a pedestrian-safe tunnel. With low HOA fees, no CDD fee, and a minimum rental period of six months, Turtle Shores provides an exclusive, yet welcoming, environment for residents of all ages.

This residence on Turtle Cove Court sits towards the end of the cul-de-sac, the perfect spot for playing outside with kids. Living here is like coming home from vacation to a vacation destination!

**Represented by Keller Williams
Realty Atlantic Partners
Listed by Sean Muserallo — Lisa Barton Team
Offered for \$999,000**

Luxurious living on River Enclave Lane

By Jennifer Sexton & Wes Mock
Contributed photos

Welcome to 2599 River Enclave Lane, where luxury meets tranquility. This breathtaking residence is nestled on the banks of a serene waterway leading to Dunns Creek and the majestic St. Johns River, offering a slice of paradise like no other. Situated on an expansive 1.36-acre lot, this property is a testament to meticulous design and impeccable taste.

Less than 15 minutes from Town Center or downtown, this home offers a dream waterfront lifestyle. With its convenient location, the best of both worlds — serene waterfront living and easy access to urban amenities — is at your fingertips.

This stunning home boasts four bedrooms, four full and three half



bathrooms, and 4,458 square feet of thoughtfully designed living space. Upon stepping inside, one is immediately captivated by the seamless blend of indoor and outdoor living. The open floor plan invites you to bask in the natural light and stunning views.

The property features an array of outdoor amenities, including a pool, hot tub, outdoor kitchen, workshop and a new 22-inch floating dry dock, making it a water lover's paradise. The outdoor space is perfect for entertaining, relaxation and enjoying the picturesque waterfront views. The freshly painted exterior, new roof and new AC units add to the allure of this exceptional

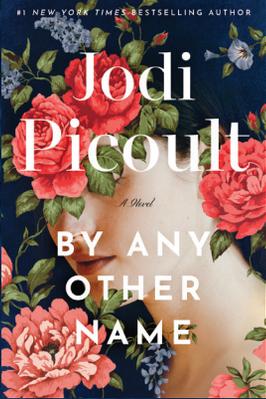
property, ensuring both aesthetic appeal and comfort.

2599 River Enclave Lane presents an unparalleled opportunity to embrace a waterfront lifestyle in a meticulously designed and updated residence. With its ideal location, extensive outdoor amenities, and luxurious interior features, this property offers a rare blend of tranquility and convenience. Don't miss out on the chance to make this waterfront paradise your own. Schedule a viewing today and start living the dream!

Offered at \$1,695,000
Listed by Compass Florida
Jennifer Sexton & Wes Mock

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Home perfect for luxury living

By Marsha Keller
Contributed photos

Plantation Oaks is a breathtaking community that features stunning iron gates and majestic live oaks. The amenity center boasts a range of activities, including a lakeside pool, playground, pickleball, tennis and basketball courts, offering an excellent opportunity to meet your neighbors.

As you enter the home through the solid mahogany doors, you'll find a tropical oasis designed by Pools by John Clarkson. The open layout and solid hardwood flooring create a warm and inviting atmosphere. The



The home at 444 Clearwater Drive



A view of the foyer and staircase

12-foot ceilings with crown molding and wooden trim provide a timeless elegance, while the solid core eight-foot doors speak to the quality of construction. With a new roof and spray foam insulation, the utilities remain low throughout the year.

The first floor includes a primary bedroom, a second bedroom with an ensuite, and a home office. The home's design integrates indoor and outdoor spaces, offering an elegant setting for hosting gatherings or enjoying leisure time.

The staircase with wrought-iron banister leads to two more bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms and a bonus

space with a half-bath for fitness, play, home theater or a second office.

The public beach access is only a mile away, making it easy to enjoy the beautiful coastline. Every detail has been carefully considered to make it the perfect place to call home.

With its exceptional amenities, quality construction and convenient location, 444 Clearwater Drive is the perfect home for those seeking luxury living.

Represented by Keller Williams
Realty Atlantic Partners
Listed by Marsha Keller — Lisa Barton Team
Offered for \$1,570,000



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