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The Register
INSIDE

Thursday, June 27, 2024

PonteVedraRecorder.com

VOLUME 55, NO. 35 \$1.00

Civil rights, Juneteenth discussed

By Shaun Ryan

St. Augustine, founded in 1565, is the oldest extant city in America with European roots.

But that's only part of the story, because of all the cities across the nation, it possesses another significant distinction: It's also the oldest in terms of Black history. Approximately 50 Africans were

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Discussing the issues

By Anthony Richards

The Palm Valley Community Association and Ponte Vedra Community Association teamed up to host a candidate forum for the upcoming St. Johns County political races for District 7 State Senator and District 18 State Representative.

It is a unique time because both seats will have someone new in them since the incumbents, state Sen. Travis Hutson and state Rep. Cyndi Stevenson, have served their allotted number of terms and cannot run again for those positions.

Five candidates took to the stage in the Ponte Vedra Beach Public Library's meeting room and an-



Photo by Anthony Richards

Candidates running for local state Senate and House of Representatives seats spoke at a public forum on June 25 at the Ponte Vedra Beach Public Library.

ISSUES continues on Page 5

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



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BRIEFS

St. Johns County addresses North Beach flooding

St. Johns County hosted a community forum, a boat tour with elected officials and a press conference on Friday, June 21, to share options that will address stormwater flooding in North Beach area neighborhoods due to outfalls from the Intracoastal Waterway.

The activities included participation from Joy Andrews, St. Johns County administrator; Scott Beaver, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office director of patrol; Greg Caldwell, St. Johns County public works director; Henry Dean, St. Johns County District 5 commissioner; Rep. Cyndi Stevenson, Florida House of Representatives, District 17; and U.S. Congressman John H. Rutherford, U.S. House of Representatives, District 5.

Significant storms that have impacted North Beach since 2016 include hurricanes Matthew (2016), Irma (2017), Ian (2022) and Nicole (2022). During the community forum, the county's Public Works Department discussed several options to construct a bulkhead along the ICW from Euclid Avenue to 23rd Street.

"What a wonderful morning we had taking a hard look at that area north of here, which is under a substantial risk of flooding even during summer storms, not to mention nor'easters and hurricanes," Dean said.

"FEMA has potentially two programs that I think we are going to be able to tap into to assist with some of the funding that's going to be required to protect these properties," Rutherford said.

The county's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs will seek state and federal funds later this year to complete the project.

Blood donations needed

Blood donations have declined and blood usage at local hospitals has increased, which has led to a summer blood shortage. Without an adequate blood supply, patient care will be affected. LifeSouth Community Blood Centers is urging the community to donate now.

At this time, all LifeSouth donors will receive a \$20 e-gift card, and double red cell and platelet donors receive a \$40 e-gift card.

To find a blood drive near you, call LifeSouth toll-free at 888-795-2707, go to

lifesouth.org or download the LifeSouth app. Appointments can also be made online.

Nature journaling event is July 11

Join nature journaling instructor Elaine Bergstrom at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve to explore the wonders at the reserve on July 11. Each month focuses on different topics using words, pictures and numbers to learn

BRIEFS continues on Page 14

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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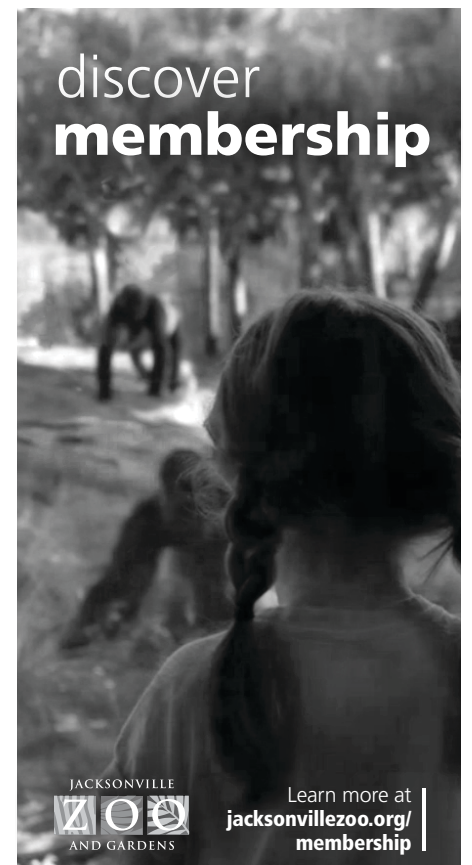
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Voting is now open for Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra contest

The Recorder is holding its sixth annual Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra contest, covering ZIP codes 32082 and 32081.

Readers currently have the chance to vote for their favorite businesses, professional services, organizations and more in multiple categories online. From best new business to best charity event, best real estate agent to best personal trainer and best seafood to best boutique, the categories run the gamut and are sure to include your favorite things.

Votes can be made on the website at

pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2024.

Voting will take place until July 26, during which each person can vote once per day in as many categories as he or she wants. The nominees who receive the most votes will be named 2024 Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra. Nominations and voting are completely free and open to the public.

The Best Of platform on The Record-



er's website will feature lists of nominees in an easy-to-use format.

Winners will receive a free certificate and a Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra window cling.

Each winner will also be listed in our Best of the Best of Ponte Vedra special section and on the winner's website.

Winners will be notified by Recorder staff after votes are counted.

Nominees can participate in advertising packages that promote their entry by expanding their listing to feature additional details on the business. For more information or to find out how to get your nominated business or product involved in promotions that will be going on throughout the contest cycle, email susan@pontevedrarecorder.com or call 904-686-3938.

Vote for your favorite business, service, person, restaurant or product now at www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2024.

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2BD | 2 BA | 1500sf | \$1,150,000

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OBITUARIES

Jill Ilene Hornsby

Jill Ilene Hornsby, age 88, of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, passed away June 19, 2024. She was born February 21, 1936, to James and Ruth Ingraham in Oregon, IL. Jill was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and aunt to so many. Her journey took her to many places. After growing up in Oregon, IL, she moved to Jacksonville Beach, FL, to attend Jacksonville University. After living in Savannah, GA then Dixon, IL she returned to Florida in 1997, this time to her beloved Ponte Vedra.

She is survived by her loving husband, Thomas Hornsby, of Ponte Vedra, FL, children Mark Taylor (Ruth) of Tybee Island, GA, Chris Hornsby (Patty) of Denver, CO, and Sarah Hornsby (Pedro) of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and grandchildren Carson Taylor, Dylan Taylor, Madeline Hornsby, William Hornsby, Gabriel Gadelha, and Luiza Gadelha.

Jill was preceded in death by her parents, and beloved sisters, Jackie Muhlbaier, Susan Wood, and Sandra Hawkins, and her brother Richard Ingraham.

A Celebration of Life will be held in Ponte Vedra to commemorate the impact she had on the lives of those around her.

A Graveside Service will be held at Washington Grove Cemetery in Chana, IL at a later date. Please visit her online Tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com.

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Fundraiser held for Alaimo

A fundraiser to support St. Johns County Commissioner Roy Alaimo's campaign was held Friday, June 21, at the Classic Car Museum, 4730 U.S. 1, St. Augustine.

Contributed photos



UPCOMING TOPICS

<p>Insights on Non-profits and Donation Drive August 14, 2024 5:15-7:30 PM</p>
<p>Local Business Insights September 11, 2024 5:15-7:30 PM</p>
<p>Closing Awards Ceremony November 15, 2024 5:15-7:30 PM</p>

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Issues

Continued from 1

answered a series of questions suggested by the local voters pertaining to topics important to them.

Gerry James, Tom Leek and David Shoar were on hand running for state Senate, while Kim Kendall and Nick Primrose are running for the House of Representatives. Each is a Republican, with a focus on the upcoming primary elections on Aug. 20 and the early voting period, Aug. 10-17.

Many topics were discussed on the night, including property insurance, education and public safety as each candidate was given the chance to state their primary goals if elected.

James spoke strongly about an increased focus on tightening down the state's borders and monitoring who is entering for the sake of public safety.

"My goal is to deport all illegal aliens from this state," James said.

He also spoke about limiting the role and influence that the state government has at the local level and be less regulating of its people, especially when it

comes to home rule.

"There are times when the state has to step in, but only in extreme cases," James said.

Leek spoke about the property insurance crisis faced in Florida and how to deal with insurance companies leaving the state or limiting their property insurance coverage.

"Rampant litigation is the reason they are leaving," Leek said. "Florida has 8% of the nation's property insurance claims, but 80% of the litigation occurs in the state, so only eight cents of it makes it back to the consumer. That system is not about you, but about making everybody rich but you."

He talked about limiting a home's risk during a hurricane by working on making houses more resilient so that they are more equipped to withstand such storms, which is a major topic especially in coastal towns.

"It's about making it, so you won't have to rebuild but just repair instead," Leek said.

Shoar took a different approach to the question about property insurance rates.

"I don't think the insurance companies are going broke and obviously

we live in a state where we're vulnerable to certain conditions, but I think every state has that," Shoar said. "I think we've got to make sure that our Citizens Insurance fund is there for our citizens, and quite frankly, if an insurance company wants to leave, there's probably another one coming right behind it."

Similar to James, Shoar believed that fewer regulations from the state level and more focus on allowing the local governments to do their part is something he supports.

"What I've heard is a lot of government solutions but the fact of it is that infrastructure and growth come from the local level," Shoar said.

Kendall stated that she fully supports the beach renourishment projects going on.

"What is Florida without its beaches?" Kendall said.

She is also looking forward, if elected, to helping figure out how to best handle the transportation issues that exist in the area to keep up with the growing population.

"You have to be good at working together (with other government entities)

and prioritizing," Kendall said. "I've done work with this and know firsthand what it takes."

According to Kendall, she supports the school voucher system but believes that it should change to where the money should follow and stay with those families.

For Primrose, he understands the importance of growth for communities but also said that it is important to not allow coastal towns to build up too much with skyscrapers and other high-rise buildings, to prevent major damage in the wake of a storm.

He also agrees that the state should have less involvement in local school systems.

"I think deregulation of schools was good," Primrose said. "Get Tallahassee out of local school decisions, but I do believe they should be involved when it comes to creating standards the schools follow."

The community associations will host another forum for County Commission candidates at Christ Episcopal Church at 400 San Juan Drive from 6 to 8 p.m. on July 9.

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Roger Amidon is the chief operating officer and general manager for The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach, an upscale community located off State Road A1A. He began working there in September after a distinguished career with Palm Beach County and various resorts and hotels.

Roger Amidon

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me about The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach.

The Plantation is a private community consisting of 577 residential homes. Once you buy a home here at The Plantation, your membership starts immediately. There is no wait list. You have to buy a home to become a member. There are no outside memberships in any of our sports: golf, tennis, pickleball, croquet.

We have a newly renovated clubhouse that we opened on Jan. 10. That was a significant investment by all 577 homeowners.

With those 577 homes, typically we say two members per, so just under 1,200 members. Sixty-five percent of them play golf — most partake in some sport activity.

A lot really enjoy the amenities that we have to offer. We have the clubhouse and our in-progress, soon-to-be renovated beach house. It's about three-quarters of a mile from here at Mickler's Beach. It's really a fantastic amenity for our members. Our due date to open that up is going to be the last week of July. It's got a junior Olympic-size swimming pool that will be newly heated. We've got two food and beverage outlets there. One called Surfside, which will be on the south side of the property; it will cater to a more casual dining: smash burgers, hot dogs, fried food, French fries, onion rings and even pizza. We'll also be doing some wine sales and beer sales out of that building.

The beach house, which has been there since 1987, is being renovated. That will be the more upper scale lunch-and-dining option versus the very casual dining at Surfside.

And then there's our beach access to the newly re-urished beach.

With the renovation of our clubhouse, we added a terrace for dining and fire pits, and we upgraded everything from the carpet, the floor and the walls to the lighting, artwork, card room, tasting room ... The entire wellness center, or fitness center, is newly renovated, and all state-of-the-art equipment was installed.

What are your responsibilities?

As the general manager and chief operating officer, I oversee the entire team. There are approximately 140 team members. That's overseeing all the departments: finance, golf, marketing, communications, clubhouse, maintenance ...

I report to the board of directors — there are nine board members — and I'm responsible for the entire operation. Everything from marketing it to the financials to revenues we generate from our members in the food-and-beverage areas. ... And overseeing renovations, contractors, HR, whatever is moving around here, I'm responsible for.

Tell me about your background.

For the last 40 years, my background is primarily in the resorts, hotel industry. I even did a four-year stint as the executive director for tourism for Palm Beach County. That was a really interesting position. I had been running hotels and resorts prior to that.

One of the county commissioners was the chairperson for the TDC, Tourist Development Council. And our Tourist Development Council were the advisers to the elected officials on where best to invest the bed tax dol-



Contributed photo

Roger Amidon is the chief operating officer and general manager for The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach.

lars that we were collecting.

When I was doing that, it was 2009. We were collecting about \$50 million in bed taxes from our tourists. Now, they're up over \$80 million down in Palm Beach County. Those tourist tax dollars went to funding contracts for sports marketing, film and television, culture and conventions. And millions of dollars were also to pay off a certain debt for a convention center and a baseball stadium.

I learned a lot about the county, because I would go and speak to each of the 39 municipalities there. And I would encourage them to budget for tourism marketing dollars versus just relying on the bed taxes.

I was very involved with the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, which is a state association. It has about 10,000 members. We were there to educate, protect and promote tourism. But also protect the bed taxes from

being raided for other uses. ...

But I spent many years in hotels and resorts, primarily with the Marriott brand. I was an area manager for several of those years, overseeing three, four hotels.

I left the hotel industry for five years, and I joined the ski industry up in Maine and Vermont, working at Sunday River in Maine and then Sugarbush in Vermont. ...

It was really interesting. I learned a lot there. That's where I started to get experience in HOA management. At the ski resort in Maine, I was responsible for eight associations. That was like running eight little mini hotels, each with their own budget, their own board of directors and capital plans. So, I would do monthly board meetings with each one of those eight.

Then, you would have a master board, as well, with

Oakes presents Elections budget

By Shaun Ryan

St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes presented her tentative budget for fiscal year 2025 on Tuesday, June 18, during the regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners. At \$4,096,675, the budget represents an increase of only 0.68% — or \$27,620 — over last year.

This year, the office will handle one of its biggest election cycles. The budget is impacted by several factors:

- the presidential general election, which requires increased staffing and additional poll workers
- the ballot size, which has grown to two cards for the Nov. 5 general election, due in part to the high number of contests and six constitutional amendments
- the county's population growth, which will necessitate the addition of two election day polling places and three

early voting locations

- the purchase of new tabulators to replace aging machines that have been in service since 2010.

Inclusion of the new tabulators in the budget increases the total request to \$5,054,966.

The population estimate for St. Johns County, as per the U.S. Census Bureau, as of last July 1 was 320,110 residents. Of this, 226,100 — or 89.7% — were registered to vote. That figure has since been reduced by 5,322.

Of the remaining voters, 47,184 are registered as Democrats, 121,252 as Republicans and 52,342 as other.

Oakes told commissioners about two new additions her office plans to make. In July, it will launch TextMyGov, which will help voters connect for more information. Also, the addition of One Call Services will improve communication between her office and poll workers.

Marsh Creek Women's Association check presentation

The Marsh Creek Women's Association's Annual Charity Gala raised \$75,000. Checks were presented at their June luncheon at Marsh Creek Country Club to Alpha-Omega Miracle Home, Food 4 Kids and Pie in the Sky. The Triple Crown Sponsor is Chris Shee, CEO and owner of MasterCraft Builder Group. The Superfecta Sponsors are bestbet St. Augustine and Hyundai of St. Augustine. Pictured from left are Phyllis Wood, Malea Guiriba, Barbara Alford, Kaneika Nimmons, Audra Young, Lisa McGlynn, Mimi Iannuzzi and Molly Courcy.

Contributed photo

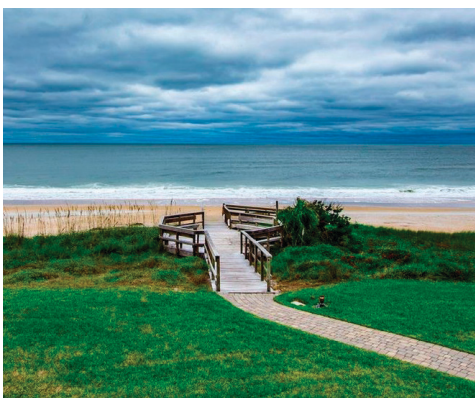


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Students take part in Girls State summer program

By Anthony Richards

Hundreds of high school juniors and seniors traveled out to Tallahassee for a week-long summer leadership and citizenship programs as part of the Girls State initiative.

The trip to the capital is an opportunity to high school students who will be entering their senior year this fall.

Of the 300 delegates that were invited to attend the programs, nine were selected by the American Legion Unit 129 in Jacksonville Beach and represent

Nease and Fletcher high schools.

Those selected were chosen based on their demonstration of leadership, character, scholarship, loyalty and service in their schools and community.

“Merit and ability were the basis for selection,” said Candace Mabry, Girls State chair with Unit 129.

The goal of the programs is to teach objective training focusing on the structure of city, county and state governments operated by students elected to various offices.

That process includes attendees taking

part in a scenario as if they were citizens and creating a mythical state called Seminole, which is divided into 12 cities and six counties.

Students are then assigned to the Nationalist or Federalist Party, so that they experience a two-party political system like the American government.

They experienced all the aspects of the process including political campaigns, debates and crafting bills, while learning the impact and roles that take shape within a democratic society.

Instruction was also presented on law, court systems, parliamentary procedure, and Florida political history.



Contributed photo

The nine delegates that were selected by Unit 129 in Jacksonville Beach. They were from Nease and Fletcher high schools.




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Stevenson endorses Primrose for Florida House seat

Nick Primrose, previously in the general counsel’s office for U.S. Sen. Rick Scott and Gov. Ron DeSantis, announced that state Rep. Cyndi Stevenson of St. Johns County officially endorsed his campaign to take over her seat in Florida State House (District 18).

“Nick Primrose is a thoughtful conservative,” said Stevenson. “Very bright, confident enough to ask questions and strong enough to stand on conservative principles. We need people like Nick in Tallahassee, and I am pleased to endorse him for the state House.”

“Representative Stevenson has been a strong advocate for St. Johns County and has led the charge in protecting the wildlife and natural beauty of our county as well as championing reforms for small

businesses,” said Primrose. “I am thankful for her endorsement and will continue the fight to preserve our treasured beaches, protect the wildlife corridors and trails in our beautiful county and carry the torch for small business success.”

Primrose served as the former deputy general counsel to Florida Governors Ron DeSantis and Rick Scott, where he provided legal advice and counsel regarding economic prosperity, transportation, election security and judicial appointments. While serving DeSantis, Primrose simultaneously served as the general counsel for the Division of Emergency Management, providing legal advice during hurricane and natural disaster response, as well as navigating executive actions related to COVID-19.



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

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Red, White and Blue Flowers

"Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth." — George Washington



By Kathy Esfahani

As we celebrate America's birthday, we often stay busy with cookouts, summer activities and fireworks. But don't forget your landscape! There are many options for adding patriotic colors to your gardens and planters. Consider the following flowers as you

incorporate red, white and blue into your yard:

- Red mandevilla plants are tropical vines with large, showy blooms. A mandevilla is low maintenance — just provide regular water and lots of sun! Plant this flower in an area that receives at least 6-8 hours of sunlight. Provide a trellis or arbor to encourage your mandevilla to climb.
- White vincas are heat-tolerant annuals. They prefer full sun and may become leggy if planted in an area of too much shade. Vincas should be watered only when the top inch of the soil is dry to the touch. Plan to water moderately once a week but not in periods of heavy rain.
- Blue salvia can be planted in beds or planters, used as



Red, white and blue flowers

both prefer full sun and moist soil. If you must choose a location with partial shade, select an area of morning sun but afternoon shade to protect these plants from the hottest sun of the day. Petunia flowers will attract hummingbirds and pollinating insects to your landscape.

- White impatiens are traditionally planted during the spring months for continuous color throughout the summer. They are a great choice for beds or planters in shady areas. Water regularly to keep the soil moist but not soggy. Impatiens can be pruned if they grow leggy in the late

borders and look great in arrangements! Look for areas of full sun when incorporating blue salvia into your landscape. Water regularly at the base of the plants to keep the soil moist but the leaves dry, and deadhead to remove old blooms as needed. These flowers attract pollinators such as bees, birds, and butterflies.

- Red petunias are a great companion plant to blue salvia because they



Flower of the Week

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Plumbago

summer heat.

- Blue plumbago features five-petal flowers that bloom during the spring, summer and fall. Plumbago grows quickly and tends to be deer-resistant! These plants prefer areas of full sun or partial afternoon shade. They are useful as foundational plants or for privacy screens. Prune plumbago occasionally to keep the plants full but be careful not to reduce flowering by cutting too much.

- Red pentas are low-maintenance plants that grow and bloom well in the heat! Be sure they get plenty of water and enjoy the colorful flowers throughout the summer. In our area, Pentas may die off during the winter months, but they

FLOWERS continues on **Page 11**

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Nease NJROTC cadets graduate from training

Eight Nease NJROTC cadets graduated from a week's training at the Area 8, 9 & 10 Leadership Academy held at Riverside Preparatory Academy in Gainesville, Ga., on June 15.

The training brought together 288 cadets from 67 high schools in areas 8, 9 and 10, which includes Northern Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and parts of North Carolina and Tennessee. The top JROTC naval science instructors from the region directed the training, which covered leadership, precision drill, academics and physical fitness.

Chief Warrant Officer Michael Donato from the Nease NJROTC program instructed a leadership course at the academy.

Completing Leadership Academy from Nease were Dominick Cigliano, Cameron Collins, Alex Cummings, Carrie Hendricks, Annie Heiry, Audrey Jovel, Tyler Labardee and Emma Newman.

This academy is for the top cadets from each of the NJROTC units in the regions. Of the 288 graduates of the weeklong intensive training, three of the Nease



Contributed photo

Eight Nease NJROTC cadets graduated from a week's training at the Area 8, 9 & 10 Leadership Academy held at Riverside Preparatory Academy in Gainesville, Ga., on June 15.

cadets were individually recognized for academics (Newman), physical fitness (Collins) and Iron Woman (Jovel), and Jovel was awarded Honor Cadet.

All eight Nease cadets took on leadership roles being

appointed as platoon commanders (Cigliano, Collins, Hendricks, Jovel) and squad leaders (Cummings, Heiry, Labardee, Newman).

Cummings was squad leader for Alpha 2, which won Alpha Company honor platoon and overall academics. Collins was PC for the overall honor platoon, the overall drill performance, the overall PI performance and the overall room-inspection performance.

Nease NJROTC enjoyed another successful school year (2023-24); they lead the nation in military scholarships, receiving 16 scholarships with five of them being to military service academies. They extended their drill championship to 10 years straight as the Area 10 Champions and placed sixth at Navy Drill Nationals. They also were designated as the Area 10 Most Outstanding NJROTC Unit, for 13 out of the last 16 years.

"We graduated a lot of our outstanding cadet leaders this year but are looking forward to continuing our legacy of excellence with these new Leadership Academy graduates going into the 2024-25 school year," said Donato.

Flowers

Continued from 10

often regrow as the weather warms up in the spring. These flowers are wonderful for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds!

- White begonias produce beautiful, dainty flowers but also feature unique

leaves that add interest and texture to gardens or containers. Look for areas of shade or indirect sunlight and well-drained soil when planning for begonias. Although they are easy to grow, be sure to deadhead begonias to clear away old flowers and encourage blooming.

- Blue daze is a perennial in our area that produces delicate blue flowers off and

on throughout the year. This continuous blooming makes these plants well suited for borders in garden beds or supplemental flowers in planters. Blue daze is ideal for Florida landscapes as it is drought- and salt-tolerant and enjoys growing in full sun or partial shade.

Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Plumbago

Please email Kathy at kcg.pvr@gmail.com for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future. For more information and ideas, visit Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. The phone number is 904-655-7373.



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'Big-Hearted Charlie's' legacy lives on at swim meet



Contributed photos

The Joseph family sponsored the Planet Swim summer championships in honor of their son and brother, Charlie, who died in Iraq in 2016.

By Anthony Richards

Planet Swim Aquatics in Ponte Vedra held its annual summer championships last weekend and it was even more special than it usually is because it was sponsored by Big-Hearted Charlie.

Big-Hearted Charlie is an initiative started by St. Johns County Commissioner Krista Keating-Joseph following the death of her son while serving his county in Iraq in 2016.

Her son, Charles Keating IV, or Charlie as he was known, was a Navy SEAL and after his death Joseph began writing a string of children's books that followed the adventures of "Big-Hearted Charlie," a fictional character who dreamed of being a Navy SEAL.

"Anytime I can keep his memory alive I will," Joseph said. "It's nice to know that he's still spreading his word."

Charlie was honored by President Obama in 2016, but Joseph and his family continue to honor his legacy as well any chance they get through her books and by sponsoring community events, such as the summer championships.

One of the things they focus on when they sponsor events is to make sure that part of the legacy honored is that of a respect and patriotism for the United States.

According to Joseph, one of the most touching moments of the entire event was when they played a video about a veteran

on the digital screen overlooking the pool and she noticed everyone stopped swimming or what they were doing to watch the video.

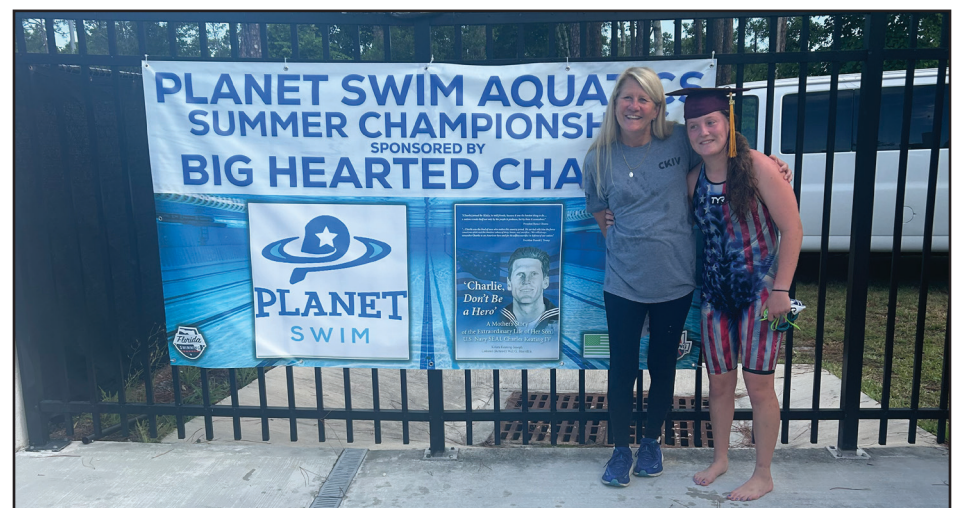
"That meant a lot, because my son was like many of these kids and he trained for running, broke a four-minute mile and had dreams of competing at the Olympics," Joseph said. "But then, one day he chose to follow another dream and serve his country. It's important for the next generation to see and understand that."

It is not the first time the family has been involved with Planet Swim, as Joseph's daughter Ali and husband Dr. Ron Joseph have been strong supporters of the programs offered by the facility, and Ali has swum there for years.

"We've been sponsoring small events for the past eight years, but nothing quite like this," Joseph said. "Planet Swim and the community there has just been such a nice family of support for her over the years, so it just seemed perfect."

One of the special ways Planet Swim thanked Ali and her family was to have Ali's teacher attend the event and present her with her high school diploma, since she missed her high school graduation to attend a swim meet earlier in the year.

"Ali and her brother were super close," Joseph said. "When he passed away in Iraq, the only letter he had wrote was to her. It's nice that bond is still strong."



Krista Keating-Joseph with her daughter Ali, who was awarded her high school diploma during the event after missing the ceremony earlier in the year due to a swim meet.




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Amidon

Continued from 6

all eight of the presidents from those associations.

The president of Sunday River really liked what I was doing, so he promoted me to vice president of lodging to Sugarbush. And I took on 11 associations over there — in addition to the golf course, tennis facility, spa facility and transportation for 4,000 skiers a day.

I moved to Florida in 1996 and came back into the hotel business. That was down in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. I lived in Jupiter, Florida, for 27 years with my wife, and we raised our two kids there.

So, I've worked at resorts. I've worked downtown convention center hotels with 1,200 rooms, beachfront resorts, suburban properties ...

But the important thing, living in an area so long, was getting engaged with the local community. That's what I enjoy doing. Working not only with the team, but saying, "We have to get involved with the local community. Our business is in the local community."

People want to do business with people they trust. I was able to establish that over 27 years, and that's what I plan on doing up here in Ponte Vedra Beach.

So, then, I was approached by a couple of club managers in Palm Beach County,

and they said, "Roger, you should join our business." I said, "OK." I got to speak to a headhunter. This position became available, and I called them on it. We arranged the interview in July, and I was invited back for a second one in early August. I was offered the position in early August and I reported here on Sept. 5.

It's been a great move for my wife and I. We were familiar with the area already. Our son went to University of North Florida. So, we would come up and see him, maybe, twice a month. And we would stay at the Sawgrass Marriott and dine in all the restaurants around here. So, we were pretty familiar with it.

One thing my wife and I have found is it's a different pace. It's a nice pace. People are friendly. You don't get honked at. We're really enjoying the area.

We ended up purchasing a home. We're having it built over in Nocatee. That was just my commitment to The Plantation: I'm going to plant myself here and have a home built ... we plan to stay for many, many years.

How did you get started in this line of work?

When I attended college, I was going for teaching. I wanted to be a physical teacher back at my high school in a little town called Lafayette, New York. That was my desire, to stay in my little town, get an education, come back and then

give back.

I was very involved with athletics — not only in high school but also in college — playing everything: baseball, basketball, football.

Football, basketball and baseball really taught me the skill of leading.

Playing football, I was the quarterback. You're in charge; you're responsible for leading the team. And we did pretty well. The same thing with the basketball and the baseball ...

I enjoyed leading people and encouraging people. I made a lot of mistakes along the way, too. But you learn from that.

Then, after college, I moved to Marco Island, Florida, to be a roommate with my buddy. I didn't know where Marco was, but when I got down there, I thought I was in Heaven. I got to clean pools. I was outside. Still not knowing what I really wanted to do.

Then, my friend was working at the Marriott resort. He said, "You should apply." So, I went there and applied for a job.

And then, the rest is history.

I never knew that hospitality would then lead me in this direction, but it has really worked out very, very well — not only for myself, but also for my wife and our two kids. ...

What do you like best about what you do?

I really enjoy leading people. Then,

leading people for many years has turned into helping people achieve new levels of success for themselves. ...

Being around this community is very nice. The members here are engaging. They have high expectations. If someone has a question, you've got to listen to them. You answer the best that you can. And if you don't have the answer, you've got to get back to them. You'd better make sure you follow up, because that's what they're relying on.

What do you like about living here?

The proximity to the beautiful beach, the Intracoastal ... And then the exciting and up-and-coming neighborhood where we are in Nocatee. My wife is really enjoying that. We're getting to know a lot of the restaurants and the retail shops. ...

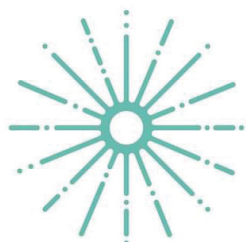
The sense up here is a bit of the South, which is nice. The sincerity is genuine. That's the way my wife and I describe it. It's genuine. The people are genuine.

And coming from South Florida, Palm Beach County, there's a lot of traffic down there. So it's a nice pace here. ...

How do you like to spend your free time?

I spend my free time primarily with my wife. And we enjoy traveling. So, if it's a weekend getaway up to Savannah, we're good.

And we really enjoy cruising. We'll be going on our 40th cruise soon.



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Juneteenth

Continued from 1

among those who arrived here with Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles in 1565.

It was here that the first free African settlement in what is now the United States was established in 1738: Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose — Fort Mose for short.

It was here that one of the earliest public readings of President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation brought freedom to African-American slaves while many in other parts of the nation had to wait for the Civil War to end.

And it was here that events helped to precipitate passage of the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964.

It’s a history worth telling, a history in fact told through exhibits and events at the Lincolville Museum and Cultural Center, located at 102 M.L. King Ave., St. Augustine.

Thursday, June 20, the museum’s executive director, Gayle Phillips, spoke before a gathering of St. Augustine Yacht Club members and guests as part of the club’s “Lunch and Learn” series.

“If you celebrate emancipation, if you celebrate Juneteenth, if you celebrate the passing of the Civil Rights Act, you’re celebrating freedom, dignity and equality for all mankind,” Phillips said.

The presentation marked a juxtaposition of some historically relevant events.

The 60th anniversary of the U.S. Senate’s passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 fell on the previous day, June 19. It was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2 of that year.

Also on June 19, America observed Juneteenth, which annually celebrates the freeing of 250,000 enslaved Black people with the arrival of Union troops in Galveston Bay 159 years ago.

And this year marks the 150th anniversary of the St. Augustine Yacht Club, whose first commodore, Major General



Photo by Shaun Ryan

Lincolville Museum and Cultural Center Executive Director Gayle Phillips speaks about Juneteenth and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 during a recent event.

Gordon Granger, had been the very official who ordered enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation upon the Union victory in Galveston.

“Juneteenth is symbolic of freedom, a freedom that allows us to live peacefully with and among people who may be different from ourselves,” Phillips said. “America demands that we not overlook the differences but rather embrace them as a part of the tapestry that makes this country great and unique.”

The greater portion of Phillips’ presentation focused on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and St. Augustine’s role in the related movement.

Invited to the Nation’s Oldest City by civil rights pioneers such as Dr. Robert B. Hayling, the Rev. Goldie Eubanks and Henry Twine, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visited on May 18, 1964. On June 11, King; Hayling; the Rev. Ralph Abernathy; Mary Peabody, mother of Massachusetts Gov. Endicott Peabody; and Esther Burgess, wife of an Episcopal bishop in Boston, were arrested for trespassing after attempting to eat at the Monson Motor

Lodge, which was then reserved for Whites only.

While in jail, King wrote to Rabbi Israel Dresner seeking his support. In his letter, King described St. Augustine as “the most lawless community in which we have ever worked.”

In response, 17 Jewish rabbis traveled to St. Augustine to protest racial segregation, discrimination and violence. They were jailed on June 18, one week after King’s arrest. The rabbis famously composed a letter explaining their perspective titled “Why We Went to St. Augustine.”

In a photo taken that same day and published many times since, the owner of the Monson Motor Lodge attempted to force protestors out of the motel pool by pouring acid into it. The related nationwide news coverage arguably contributed to the end of an 83-day filibuster in the Senate and the subsequent passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

King’s visit was important to the movement. “Dr. King strategized by day and held rallies by night,” Phillips said. “He moved among the homes of many residents, like Cora Tyson, who’s still here in this community ... and Miss Janie Price, who passed away last year. They held rallies at Lincolville churches, like St. Paul AME Church.”

These rallies were attended by overflow crowds and, occasionally, celebrities like baseball great Jackie Robinson.

“Dr. King’s appeal was often the same: Won’t you come? What will you do?” said Phillips.

Though much has transpired since that summer of 1964, Phillips pointed out that challenges persist.

“I’m reminded by the words of Dr. King: ‘What will you do?’” she said. “What will you do to make America the place promised in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution? Will you stand up against unjust laws? Will you speak out against unjust treatment? Will you come to the aid of those who cannot stand up for themselves?”

The Lincolville Museum and Cultural Center is open 1-4 p.m. Sunday and Monday, 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For further information, go to lincolvillemuseum.org.

Briefs

Continued from 2

more about what we observe.

The event will be held from 10 a.m. to noon. Meet at the GTM Research

Reserve Trailhead Pavilion, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Wear comfortable closed-toe shoes. Hat, insect repellent, water, sunscreen and binoculars are recommended. The event is free but online registration is required.

To register, go to gtmnerr.org/visit/ events.

Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

The Palm Valley Market is held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Tuesday inside the Palm Valley Community Center, 148

Canal Road. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan



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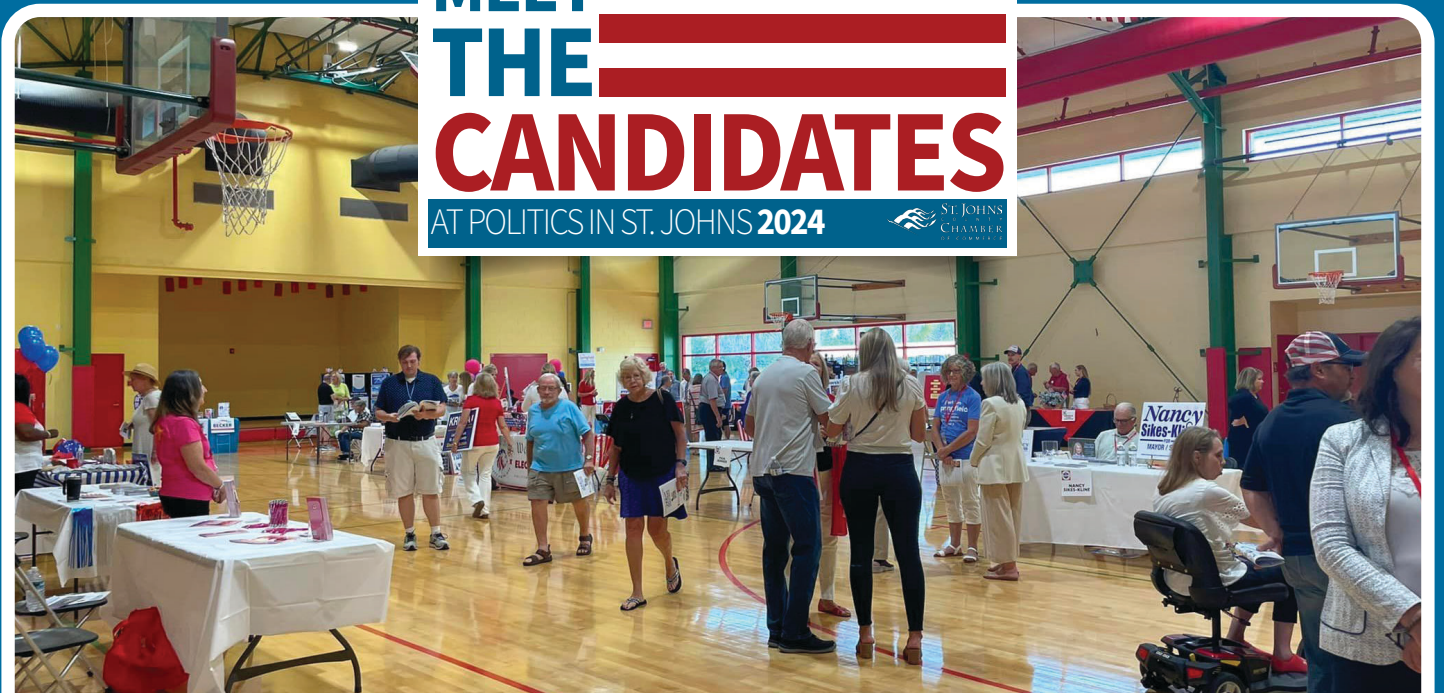
Meet the Candidates 2024 at Politics in St. Johns

Tuesday, July 23, 5:30-7:30 p.m. | Beachside High School, St. Johns

Wednesday, July 31, 5-7 p.m. | Solomon Calhoun Community Center, St. Augustine

Meet the Candidates at Politics in St. Johns gives the community the opportunity to meet the candidates running for office this election and learn more about the issues that matter to them. The photos below are from the 2022 Politics in St. Johns event.

Photos provided by the St. Johns Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO



Isabelle Renault
President/CEO, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Preparation is key to resilience, success

In business, proactive planning and informed decision-making are crucial to success. Doing the research and being prepared for anything makes a business more resilient and successful.

This time of year is a critical time of preparation — for hurricane season and for the upcoming primary and general elections in the fall. These events might not seem related, but they can each significantly impact a business's operations, finances and overall stability.

By having robust disaster preparedness plans in place, businesses can minimize downtime, protect assets and ensure employee safety. This includes

securing facilities, backing up data and establishing communication protocols to swiftly respond to disruptions.

The Chamber recently hosted a presentation from Kelly Wilson, director of the county's Emergency Management department, to ensure our members had the information they need to be ready for the 2024 storm season. An easy way any business can prepare for hurricane season is to follow the Chamber on social media. The Chamber serves as the official liaison to the business community in case of hurricanes or other emergencies, and our team will share updates and resources for all businesses on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/sjc-chamber>.

Preparation for elections is also important, and the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is committed to supporting an informed, engaged community.

Staying informed about political developments and getting to know the people running for office, especially local seats, allows companies to capitalize on opportunities and maintain consumer and employee confidence during periods of political transition.

To facilitate this preparation, the Chamber is hosting two Meet the Candidates at PISJ events (formerly Politics in St. Johns), giving the public an opportunity to connect with candidates one on one and ask questions about the issues they care about. Bringing together so many candidates in one place allows community members to speak with all candidates and make the most informed choices when voting.

Ultimately, we must all be prepared and informed in order to make the best decisions for our businesses and our communities. The Chamber is committed to providing education and information to support an informed, engaged community.

Isabelle Renault,
President & CEO, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Chamber adds tourism development manager to staff



Daniel Lee

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce recently hired Daniel Lee as the marketing and tourism development manager to support the Chamber's tourism promotion and overall marketing efforts.

Lee brings a blend of marketing and tourism-destination experience to the role. He spent the last several years with Firehouse Subs as a field marketing coordinator, where he managed all facets of marketing for more than 60 restaurants in the Southeast United States and led major local partnership activations with the Jacksonville Jaguars and Jacksonville Icemen.

Prior to that, he worked at the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum managing and supporting social media, public relations, advertising and visitor experience efforts.

"In my short time with the Chamber, I have already seen the passion from our team and the Chamber community towards growing the area's reputation as a stellar tourism destination," Lee said about joining the Chamber team. "I'm looking forward to working with our members to help drive even more of that success."

A Pennsylvania native, Lee spent his childhood traveling to St. Augustine with his family to visit his grandparents, who are longtime residents. He eventually moved to the area to attend Flagler College, where he earned a degree in tourism and hospitality management in 2018.

Lee will manage and promote the Ponte Vedra Beach Visitor Information Center, curate content for Ponte Vedra-focused tourism websites, and promote the autism certification grant program for tourism and hospitality businesses in St. Johns County.

Chamber brings back pre-election events in St. Johns County

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is providing community members the opportunity to connect with political candidates ahead of the 2024 election.

Meet the Candidates at PISJ (formerly Politics in St. Johns) will be held Tuesday, July 23, in St. Johns and Wednesday, July 31, in St. Augustine. The meet-and-greet events allow citizens to meet and speak with candidates running for public office.

"The Chamber is proud to bring these events to the residents of St. Johns County," said Isabelle Renault, president and CEO of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. "This meet-and-greet gives the public face time with candidates to ask questions and learn information that will help them make the most informed decision in the voting booth."

Held every two years, these events

**MEET
THE
CANDIDATES**
AT POLITICS IN ST. JOHNS 2024



draw hundreds of attendees from around the county to connect with candidates campaigning for all levels of government. The events are free to attend for the public; candidates pay for exhibition space.

At the events, attendees can also show support for the candidates of their

choice in a straw poll by the UNF Public Opinion Research Lab. Attendees will be encouraged to have conversations with all candidates before voting in the straw poll.

"The Chamber is providing an important venue for the public to be as educated and informed as possible," Renault

Meet the Candidates at PISJ

When: 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 23

Where: Beachside High School, 200 Great Barracuda Way, St. Johns

More information: https://bit.ly/pisj2024_north

When: 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, July 31

Where: Solomon Calhoun Community Center, 1300 Duval St., St. Augustine

More information: https://bit.ly/pisj2024_south

said. "This is a unique opportunity for residents to have these one-on-one conversations with candidates and asking questions about issues that matter to them."

Chamber golf tournament planned for fall 2024

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce will hold the annual Golf Classic on Monday, Sept. 30, at Marsh Landing Country Club in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The golf tournament will support the Chamber's mission to deliver continuous service to members and to the community. Golfers can network with fellow business professionals and industry leaders while

enjoying a day of friendly competition on the links.

Marsh Landing's golf course is a nature lover's paradise, with great views all along the course. The tournament is open to Chamber members and non-members; golfers can sign up as a foursome or individually, and sponsorships are available.

2024 St. Johns County Chamber Golf Classic

When: Monday, Sept. 30. Check-in begins at 7 a.m.

Where: Marsh Landing Country Club, Ponte Vedra Beach

Cost: Foursome, \$1,200; individual, \$300

Register: https://bit.ly/chamber_golf_2024



Photo provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

The St. Johns County Chamber Golf Classic will be held Monday, Sept. 30, at Marsh Landing Country Club.

Florida SBDC Small Business Success Summit coming to Ponte Vedra

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to sponsor the upcoming Florida SBDC Network 2024 Small Business Success Summit.

The Florida SBDC Network Small Business Success Summit will take place Aug. 19-20 in Ponte Vedra Beach. This event will bring small business owners, Florida SBDC Network experienced business consultants and partners from across the state together to help small business owners walk away with strategies and connections to help further their business.

The summit will feature keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities that will allow small business professionals to walk away with tangible strategies and connections to help their business start, grow and thrive.

Florida SBDC Small Business Success Summit

When: Aug. 19-20

Where: Sawgrass Marriott, Ponte Vedra Beach

More information and registration: https://floridasbdc.org/success_summit/

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Chamber at Noon focuses on planning for hurricane season

We all dread hurricane season, but we also know how important it is to be prepared. At June's Chamber at Noon, Kelly Wilson of St. Johns County Emergency Management shared critical information about how we all can make sure our families, homes and businesses are ready for anything.

Wilson explained that the most fundamental function of Emergency Management is coordinating information and resources. During a storm, dozens of people fill the Emergency Operations Center to provide support to the community and direct resources to those who need them.

Preparing for hurricane season is always important, but with so much new development, the county has more residents who might have never experienced a Florida hurricane season, so education and communication is more important than ever.

The county's Emergency Management department has many resources for residents and businesses, and Wilson emphasized the importance of making a plan well before a storm is headed our way.

While St. Johns County hasn't experienced a direct hit by a hurricane since Hurricane Dora made landfall near St. Augustine in 1964, the county is still impacted by hurricanes nearly every year. Flooding (from both storm surge and rainfall) can be devastating, and heavy wind is often responsible for major damage. Wilson pointed out the importance of knowing if your home or business is in a flood zone (which is different from your evacuation zone) and of carrying flood insurance.

For resources and more information, go to sjcchamber.com/hurricane-preparedness-for-businesses.



Photo by Susan Griffin

Kelly Wilson (second from left), deputy director of St. Johns County Emergency Management, shared tips and resources for preparing for hurricane season at a recent Chamber at Noon in Ponte Vedra Beach. With Wilson are Elizabeth Bernardino, vice president of program development and marketing for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, and Harmony and Todd Marshall of All Dry Services of SE Jacksonville, who sponsored the event.

Lisa Barton Team hosts Chamber After Hours

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division held an After Hours event on April 17 that was hosted by the Lisa Barton Team with Keller Williams Realty Atlantic Partners at their Sawgrass Village location. Lori Adams, Cabi clothing representative, co-sponsored the event, and it was a great opportunity to meet and mingle with other local business representatives.

Photo by Susan Griffin



Chamber After Hours

The May 24 Chamber After Hours was held at ERX Emergency Restoration Experts. ERX offers restoration services for homes and businesses following damage from fire, flood or other emergencies. Learn more at goabsinc.com.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, June 27th, 3pm-6pm

Anastasia Mosquito Control District (AMCD)

120 EOC Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32092

Mosquito activity will be peak seasons, AMCD encourages residents to empty containers, reduce and avoid outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, and take personal protection against mosquito bites and prevent the risk from mosquito-borne diseases.



AMCD's Disease Vector Education Center opens Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free admission through September.

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St. Johns County Chamber celebrates new foundation

Kickoff event exceeds fundraising goal to establish scholarships for Leadership St. Johns

For The Register

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce celebrated its newly launched foundation on April 25 with its inaugural fundraising event, hosted by bestbet St. Augustine.

More than 100 members of the community participated in a charity poker tournament that raised more than \$11,000 — exceeding the event’s fundraising goal — to fund scholarships for Leadership St. Johns, the foundation’s cornerstone program.

“The community will benefit tremendously from the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Foundation,” said Cecil Gibson, the foundation’s board chair. “By offering financial assistance, the foundation’s work will create opportunities for highly qualified candidates to participate in the region’s premier leadership development program, Leadership St. Johns.”

Jamie Shelton, bestbet president and CEO, offered to host the fundraiser to support the Chamber and the new foundation.

“bestbet is always interested in helping out the communities in which we operate, and the St. Johns County Chamber Foundation checks all our boxes for community involvement,” said Shelton, who serves on the Chamber’s board of directors.

In addition to Leadership St. Johns, the foundation will also focus on creating an emergency fund for businesses to support recovery from natural disasters or economic downturns, as well as workforce development through partnerships with local educational institutions.

“The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Foundation is a natural extension of the Chamber’s work to promote a vibrant, diverse business environment in St. Johns County,” said Isabelle Renault, Chamber president and CEO. “The foundation opens new avenues for programs and philanthropic work to make a difference in the community at large as we work to strengthen our business community.”

The foundation is led by a board of directors comprised of business leaders in the county. The founding members include Board Chair Cecil Gibson (Ameris Bank), Vice Chair Orville Dothage (Northrop Grumman), Secretary/Treasurer Erika Alba (Woolsey/Morcom), Nancy Dering Mock (Nancy Dering Mock Consulting) and Chamber President and CEO Isabelle Renault.

More information about the foundation is available at sjchamberfoundation.org.

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is the premier business advocacy organization in St. Johns County. With more than 1,100 member businesses across a variety of industries, the Chamber is committed to delivering continuous service to members and the community through public policy, economic development and business education to cultivate an environment where businesses can grow and thrive.

Learn more about the chamber at sjchamber.com.



Contributed photo

bestbet St. Augustine hosted a charity poker tournament to benefit the St. Johns County Chamber Foundation. The event raised more than \$11,000 to establish a scholarship fund for Leadership St. Johns, to develop workforce development programs and to support the creation of an emergency fund to assist local businesses in times of natural disaster or economic downturn.



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MD, FACC, FHRS



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Elected officials provide update on state legislative efforts

St. Johns County Commissioner Sarah Arnold was a featured speaker at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce 2024 Legislative Update Breakfast held on May 17. Arnold provided updates on the county's legislative priorities, including initiatives to address the recruitment, retention and long-term care for emergency responders and critical transportation projects that will provide traffic relief along I-95 and U.S. 1.

Arnold said, "This year, our 2024 take home, pending we don't get vetoed by the governor, was more than \$53 million in appropriations. Out of that, \$26 million is for public safety. We have been very active in initiating and prioritizing new legislation for a presumptive disability for our first responders regarding neurological deficits from chemicals these first responders are exposed to in fires."

Joining Arnold on the stage for legislative updates were Paul Renner, speaker



Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

of the Florida House of Representatives; Mayor Nancy Sikes Kline, City of St. Augustine; Mayor Dylan Rumrell, City of St. Augustine Beach; Shorty Robbins, legislative aide to state Rep. Cyndi Ste-

venson; and Craft Talbot, legislative aide for state Sen. Travis Hutson.

Adam Tecler, director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, said, "St. Johns County is hopeful of receiv-

ing the governor's approval of several county projects in the FY 25 state budget, including \$11.7 million for a District 23 Regional Medical Examiner's Office, \$7.5 million to widen State Road 16 to four lanes from IGP to I-95, \$10 million to extend County Road 2209 from IGP to State Road 16, \$7.5 million for an all hazards regional fire training and unified command center, \$7.5 million for a central public safety station, \$4.75 million for the South Ponte Vedra Beach dune restoration, \$225,000 for the Lincolnville Museum and \$125,000 for the Historic Vilano Beach Street Improvements."

Tecler has served as the county's grants and legislative development manager since 2022. During that time, the county has secured more than \$170 million in funds to advance critical infrastructure projects. In November 2023, the Grants and Legislative Affairs Office was restructured to become the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. Tecler was confirmed as the director on April 16, 2024.

Rob Hardwick
St. Johns County Sheriff

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 - ✓ **Dedicated Sheriff**
 - ✓ **Husband & Father**
- COMMUNITY LEADER**



"I'm humbled to ask for your vote on August 20th so that I can continue to serve our community with integrity and honor."

- **Sheriff Rob Hardwick**
ST. JOHNS COUNTY

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Chamber After Hours at RISE at Nocatee

The May 22 Chamber After Hours event was held at the RISE at Nocatee, celebrating the opening of the clubhouse for the 55+ active living community on Preservation Trail. Attendees enjoyed great food, drinks and networking. Jerry Shaffer and his team hosted the event.

Photo by First Coast Headshots provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Old Coast Pickleball ribbon cutting

Old Coast Pickleball held its ribbon cutting on April 26. It was an afternoon of networking and celebrating.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Chamber Before Hours at TPC Sawgrass

The June 12 Chamber Before Hours was held at TPC Sawgrass. Attending was a great group for networking and catching up with friends to kick off the workday. Find more Chamber Before Hours events on the calendar at https://bit.ly/sjc_chamber_events.

Photo by Susan Griffin



Concert hall is Chamber at Noon subject

The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is changing — in a wonderful way! Dianya Markovits of SJC Cultural Events and Jerry Wilson, president of Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, were guests at the May 15 Chamber at Noon. They spoke about the major updates and renovations to this community landmark. Go to pvconcerthall.com to learn more about the venue and what's to come.

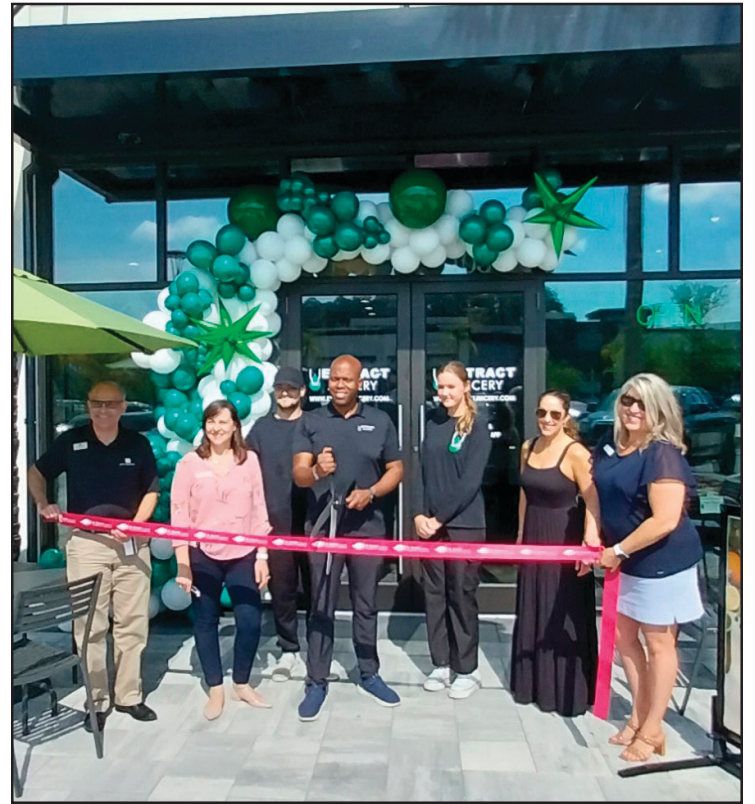
Photo by Susan Griffin



Extract Juicery ribbon cutting

Extract Juicery owner Kevin Walker cuts the ribbon April 26 for his new shop at 104 Ashourian Ave., Suite 103, in St. Johns. To learn more about Extract Juicery, go to extractjuicery.com.

Photo by Shaun Ryan



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Oakes speaks to Women with Vision Council

St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes spoke to the Chamber's Women with Vision Council on June 17. Her presentation focused on the importance of voting and the role of women in elections throughout history. Find everything you need to know about voting in St. Johns County at votesjc.gov.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Ameriprise Financial ribbon cutting

Ameriprise Financial held its ribbon cutting on April 25. It was an afternoon of networking and celebrating.

Photo by Susan Griffin



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219 St. 21st. Ave., Jacksonville Beach, FL

This is the perfect location, just steps to the beach and close to restaurants and shopping. This like-new home lives large. Three bedrooms downstairs with a full bath and sitting area allow for various living arrangements. The beautiful kitchen upstairs features quartz countertops, white shaker cabinets, stainless steel appliances, and a breakfast bar that opens to the living area. This open-concept living space is perfect for entertaining and brings people together to create long-lasting memories. Upstairs also boasts the primary bedroom with a beautiful ensuite and his-and-her closets. Live like you are on vacation every day. Offered for \$1,249,000



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Brand New Coastal Construction in Ponte Vedra Beach
110 S. Wilderness Trail, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

Brand new construction by Barnett Custom Homes to be completed Summer 2024 is situated on over a third acre lot in Ponte Vedra Beach! This modern farmhouse designed home is 3,518 square feet, 5 bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms & large upstairs bonus room. From the charming wraparound front porch to the expansive rear covered patio perfect for summer cookouts and star gazing! The 3-car garage completes the home with an additional 170 sf storage room. Home to include cementitious siding, shingle roof with metal roof accents, 7 inch European oak wood floors, ceiling beams, kitchen with custom wood cabinetry, quartz counters, stainless appliances including gas range. Offered for \$1,799,900



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Luxury in Every Detail of this New Construction Home
3136 Sunshine Court, Jacksonville Beach, FL

Luxury newly built home in South Jax beach. Chef's kitchen, huge butler's pantry with second dishwasher. Convenient main floor laundry room, 5th bedroom/office. Upstairs boasts a luxurious primary suite with dual vanities, walk-in closets and separate soaking tub. Three additional bedrooms, two baths, and 2nd laundry room round out the upper level. Step outside to your own private oasis with a sparkling swimming pool surrounded by lush zoysia grass. The covered porch is equipped with a built-in gas grill, perfect for entertaining poolside. 3-car garage featuring ample space for your vehicles and a dedicated area for your golf cart! Offered for \$1,750,000



Gerry Williamson
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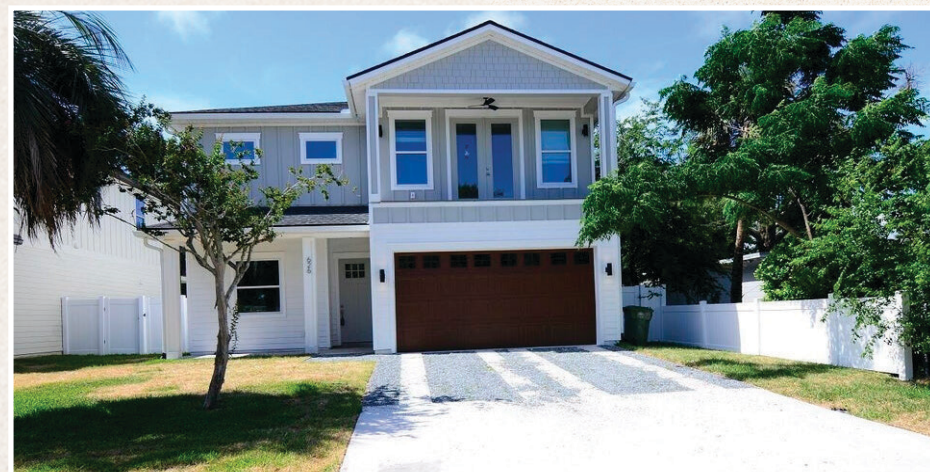


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Luxury newly built home in South Jax beach. Chef's kitchen, huge butler's pantry with second dishwasher. Convenient main floor laundry room, 5th bedroom/office. Upstairs boasts a luxurious primary suite with dual vanities, walk-in closets and separate soaking tub. Three additional bedrooms, two baths, and 2nd laundry room round out the upper level. Step outside to your own private oasis with a sparkling swimming pool surrounded by lush zoysia grass. The covered porch is equipped with a built-in gas grill, perfect for entertaining poolside. 3-car garage featuring ample space for your vehicles and a dedicated area for your golf cart! Offered for \$1,750,000



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1466 Marsh View Court., Atlantic Beach, FL

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Passport Realty LLC
(904) 502-7693
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New Five Star Ponte Vedra Beach Coastal Home
502 Morning Side Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

Perfect timing for anyone looking for new construction east of A1A in Ponte Vedra Beach. This old-style coastal beach home is the ultra-modern family home & is ready for immediate occupancy & summer beach fun. Imagine taking a quick walk down the sidewalk for easy beach access or a 4 minute golf cart ride to the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club! Your new lifestyle comes complete with 4 bedrooms plus office (or 5th bedroom) to handle any size family. Preview today and see where your future family memories will be made! Offered for \$2,295,000



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4Ever Young ribbon cutting

4Ever Young Anti-Aging Solutions — St. Johns held its grand opening bash and ribbon cutting on April 12. It was an evening of networking and celebrating.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Chamber Before Hours

The April 10 Chamber Before Hours was held at Coastal Compass. Cutter Arey and his team hosted the morning of networking, food and coffee.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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Flagler Family Medicine and Wellness ribbon cutting

Flagler Family Medicine and Wellness held a ribbon cutting at its new location in St. Augustine on June 7. In addition to family medicine, the practice offers a proactive wellness approach including full service well-woman exams, wellness coaches and medical physicians. Learn more at flaglerfamilymedicine.com.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



CURE Urgent and Primary Care ribbon cutting

CURE Urgent and Primary Care held a ribbon cutting May 1 at Silverleaf for its third location.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



CHRISTIAN WHITEHURST

★
County Commission

Fighting For St. Johns

- ✓ Slowed the Growth
- ✓ Led Effort for 4 New Regional Parks
- ✓ Increased Infrastructure
- ✓ Protected Our Beaches
- ✓ Held Developers Accountable
- ✓ Supports Veterans & First Responders

Paid by Christian Whitehurst, Republican, for St. Johns County Commission.

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Promises Made, Promises Kept.

When I was elected in 2020 I promised to fight for St. Johns County, and that's exactly what I did. I led the charge for four new regional parks, providing more ballfields, green space and recreational opportunities for our children and families. As a conservative Republican, I fought to eliminate wasteful spending and keep taxes low to protect our quality of life. I've fought to slow the growth by denying incompatible developments to allow our infrastructure to catch up and ensure developers pay their fair share. With your vote, I will continue fighting for our St. Johns values every day.

-Christian Whitehurst

Overcapacity roads. Overcrowded schools that are no longer ranked #1 in the state. Vote out the commissioners who are overdeveloping our county.

Fl. Dept. of Ed.



Henry Dean approved nearly 30,000 homes in two terms and Christian Whitehurst approved over 15,000 in one term.* They claim they slowed the growth! Elect the Anns, Aug. 20.



Challenging Henry Dean. Ann Taylor has two sons in our crowded schools and is a former businesswoman of 25 years with. A current HOA board president, Ann helped win the fight against a wood burning polluter that fouled the air in our county for 2 years.

VoteAnnTaylor.com



Challenging Whitehurst. Ann-Marie Evans owned a thriving law firm.* Mom to 7, including 3 in our schools, she is the proud wife of a retired police officer. Ann-Marie is exposing wasteful spending in our county.

*Admitted to practice law in WA only

ElectAnn-Marie.com

Dean & Whitehurst claim they're:



FACT: Voters kept taxes low by saying NO to Whitehurst and Dean's 15% sales tax increase (which was heavily promoted by a developer-funded PAC.)

FACT: To pay for needed parks and other facilities, Dean and Whitehurst are taking out a \$140 million loan**, and they'll pay off that debt with future impact fees - requiring more development! We already have 56,000 entitled homes not yet built. No wonder we can't break even, despite record revenues. Dean told a reporter SilverLeaf's 5000+ homes would cost taxpayers \$50 million* "in road needs." We can't afford four more years of developer-funded commissioners.

Slow the growth.

Elect the Anns

Endorsed by the St. Johns County Republican Party.

*Source of commissioners' approved homes/housing units: SJC BOCC Agendas

** Bond: Jesse Dunn, SJC OMB Dean: \$50M for road needs: Action News Jax, 5/17/22

Paid for by Ann-Marie Evans and Ann Taylor for St. Johns County Commissioners, Districts 1 and 5

Advanced Business Solutions ribbon cutting

Advanced Business Solutions, LLC held a ribbon cutting on May 22. Learn more about ABS at <https://www.goabsinc.com/>

Photo provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Tropical Smoothie Café ribbon cutting

Tropical Smoothie Café, 5821 Beach Blvd., held a ribbon cutting and grand opening on May 24. The staff and owners are friendly and helpful, and the menu and smoothies are delicious — just in time for summer fun.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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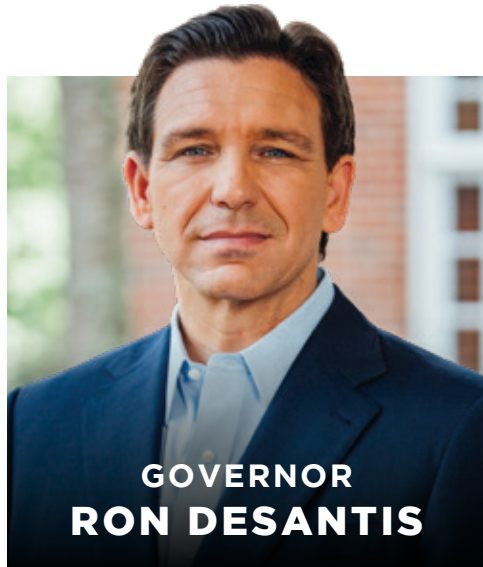
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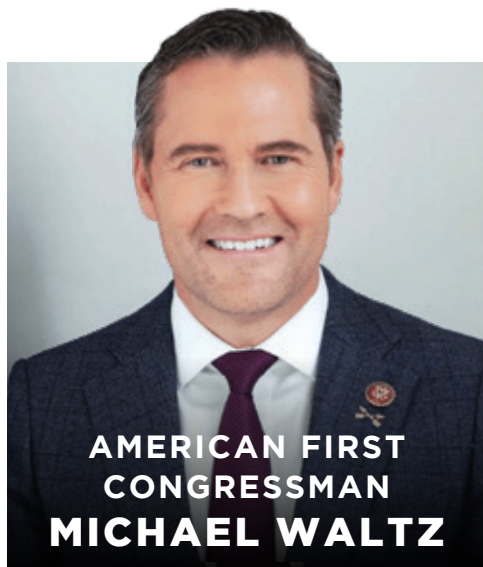
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IN THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY
STATE SENATE DISTRICT 7

Paid by Tom Leek, Republican, for State Senate

Culver's ribbon cutting

Culver's opened its newest location on Stratton Boulevard in St. Augustine, holding a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 20. The team is led by Garth and Lisa Darton. Of more than 1,000 Culver's locations, their restaurant on U.S. 1 is the fourth busiest in the entire United States.

Photo by First Coast Headshots provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Land Title of America ribbon cutting

A Chamber After Hours Event and ribbon cutting was held April 24 at Land Title of America Inc. Stephen Collins and his team hosted the evening of networking, food and drinks.

Photo provided by St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Myth & Legend holds ribbon cutting

Myth & Legend held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on May 10. It was an afternoon of networking and celebrating.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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Paid for by Clay Murphy for St. Johns Commissioner District 3 and Approved, SJC D3 R



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 THAT DOESN'T
 DISAPPOINT."**

**"THIS IS SUCH A NEAT HIDDEN
 GEM OF A RESTAURANT/HANG
 OUT SPOT! THE FOOD IS KILLER,
 BUT IT IS THE FANTASTIC STAFF
 THAT KEEPS ME COMING BACK.
 LOVE THIS PLACE!!"**



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Flagler Crossing ribbon cutting

St. Johns County and the City of St. Augustine took another step forward in offering new options in attainable housing with the ribbon cutting April 28 at Flagler Crossing apartments. Congratulations to Corner Lot on the completion of phase one of this project. Plans for phase two are already in place.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



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Meet Brandon




Dedicated Clerk & Comptroller
US Naval Reserve Officer
Devoted Husband & Father
Governor DeSantis Appointee



Paid by Brandon Patty, Republican, for St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller.
 Use of military rank, job titles, and photographs in uniform does not imply endorsement by the Department of the Navy or the Department of Defense.

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FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY COMMISSION

Hometown Conservative

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- ✓ Infrastructure Solutions
- ✓ Slow & Controlled Growth
- ✓ Stand with Our Veterans
- ✓ Support First Responders
- ✓ Lower Taxes
- ✓ Protect Our Quality of Life

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Meet Roy



Paid by Roy Alaimo, Republican, for St. Johns County Commission.

Pacetti Road Self Storage ribbon cutting

Pacetti Road Self Storage held a ribbon cutting June 13 at its new location in St. Augustine. In addition to self-storage rental they also offer indoor RV and boat storage, as well as outdoor RV and boat parking in St. Augustine. Learn more at pacettiroadselfstorage.com/.../pacetti-road

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce




Patients Not Prisoners ribbon cutting

Patients Not Prisoners held a ribbon cutting on May 31 at the Waterworks in St. Augustine. Founder Lisa Taliaferro established the organization to help people with mental illness receive care instead of being criminalized.


Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce





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Jim and his wife, Paula, live in the southern part of St. Johns with their two horses and loyal pup Cadey. They enjoy attending services at the historical First Baptist Church of Hastings.

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Strive Counseling ribbon cutting

Strive Counseling held a ribbon cutting on May 17. Lindsay Farber is owner and lead therapist; she helps families and couples create a harmonious future. For more information, go to @Strive Counseling St. Augustine.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



Chamber Before Hours

First Florida Credit Union hosted the June 7 Chamber Before Hours at the recently opened Durbin branch in the northwestern part of St. Johns County. In addition to the great networking and conversation, attendees heard from the credit union's Lena Hull, who shared more information about the credit union and a summer program designed to help teens learn important financial skills and the principles of building good credit. Learn more about FFCU at firstflorida.org.

Photo provided by The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce



HENRY DEAN

Protect St. Johns

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FOR COUNTY COMMISSION - DISTRICT 5

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- ✓ Stands with Our Veterans & First Responders
- ✓ Backs Our Tourism Industry
- ✓ Led Effort to Protect Our Beaches
- ✓ Invested in Infrastructure to Fix Our Roads
- ✓ Held Developers Accountable
- ✓ Slowed the Growth

Paid by Henry Dean, Republican, for St. Johns County Commission.



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ON A MISSION

Meet Your Local Nonprofit




Contributed photos

Volunteers pack food that will help feed hundreds of starving children during a past MobilePack event.

Volunteers sought to pack meals for starving children

By Shaun Ryan

The statistics are sobering: 10,000 of the world’s children die each day from hunger and related causes, according to the United Nations.

In addition, UNICEF’s most recent report estimates that 36 million children younger than 5 are acutely malnourished across 32 countries.

Fortunately, volunteers in organizations like Feed My Starving Children are trying to do something about it. A Christian-based nonprofit formed 37 years ago in Chicago, Feed My Starving Children has delivered more than 4 billion meals to hungry children around the world through both its “corporate” packing sites and hundreds of Mobile-Pack events spearheaded by volunteers in communities across America.



Never heard of Feed My Children? That’s probably because it doesn’t spend money on publicity. Nearly 100% of all donations go to the purchase of ingredients. The food is packed by volunteers and then shipped off to countries in greatest need to be distributed by partner organizations within those countries.

In fact, Charity Navigator has given

the organization a four-star rating for the past 18 years, ranking it among the top 1% of charities evaluated for financial transparency and integrity.

In August, local residents will have an opportunity to join other volunteers in packing nutritious meals for hungry children. This will be the fifth MobilePack for the Beaches-based group. It operates

out of Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church but is not limited to church members.

“It’s open to everybody,” explained Greg Groshan, financial director for the local group. “They feed everybody. In fact, they have a Halal certification, because they want to feed Muslim communities. So, I don’t want anybody to feel they’re not welcome to contribute or volunteer. We help all children.”

The group hopes to pack 147,700 meals — 9.45 tons of food. To accomplish that, it needs about 700 volunteers — 120 for each of the two-hour shifts. Each shift will pack 25,000 meals.

If that goal is met, the food-packing event will provide 402 children with one meal a day.

“For many of these children, this is the

MEALS continues on Page 39



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St. Francis House co-founder attends anniversary reception



Contributed photos

Joan and Don Lohr



St. Francis House celebrated its 40th anniversary with a reception on May 19.

On Sunday, May 19, St. Francis House celebrated its donors at a reception at the Magnolia Room at the Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park. Donors enjoyed mimosas, light refreshments, live guitar music and networking.

Among the 80-plus attendees was Joan Lohr, one of the founders of St. Francis House. In the early 1980s, she and Father Baker from the Basilica had the vision for a soup kitchen to

feed the homeless men, women and families in downtown St. Augustine. As a result, St. Francis House was founded in 1984 and is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

St. Francis House has grown from a soup kitchen to a full-time shelter offering food, shelter and vital programs and assistance to the homeless men, women and families in St. Johns County. St. Francis House currently has space for 26 men, 14 women and

four families. In the near future, it will open a new family shelter, which will provide 36 more beds for homeless families with minor children.

The donor event was a great opportunity to thank donors. Lohr stood and said a few inspiring words at the event. The reception concluded with a few door prize giveaways and a few words from Executive Director Judith Dembowski, Assistant Director Karen Hensel and Board Chair Ed Dwyer.



St. Francis House co-founder Joan Lohr speaks during the recent anniversary reception.

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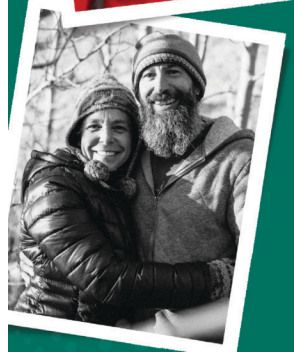



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Partnership addresses youth mental health crisis

St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS), a leading nonprofit agency dedicated to supporting the mental and behavioral health needs of youth in Northeast Florida, has announced a new partnership with the Community First Cares Foundation, the 501(c)3 nonprofit foundation of Community First Credit Union.

The partnership will help provide care for the critical mental health needs of youth in St. Johns County, signaling a proactive approach to tackling pressing challenges beyond a one-time financial gift.

With St. Johns County experiencing exponential population growth, the demand for mental health services has reached alarming levels and will only grow in the future. Suicide rates, hospitalizations and other mental health struggles have become a local and national epidemic. As Community First expands its footprint in St. Johns County, it is taking an active role in providing essential community mental health support for local youth.

“Corporate partnerships like those between SAYS and companies like Community First, Bozard Ford, MasterCraft Builder Group and others allow SAYS leadership to proactively respond to the



St. Augustine Youth Services and the Community First Cares Foundation are working together to meet the challenges of the youth mental health crisis in this community.

Contributed photo

evolving needs of our agency and the community,” says Schuyler Siefker, executive director of St. Augustine Youth Services. “This partnership is about joining forces with Community First to make a tangible, measurable difference in the lives of vulnerable youth.”

Through this partnership, Community First Cares is actively supporting SAYS in providing vital community-based support and services tailored to address the mental health crisis gripping local youth. From crisis intervention, counseling and therapy sessions to peer support and family advocacy, the combined efforts of St. Augustine Youth Services and Community First Cares will empower young individuals and their caregivers to navigate their mental health challenges and build a brighter future.

“Community First Cares is deeply committed to the wellbeing of our community, especially the youngest and most vulnerable among us,” said Missy Peters, executive director of the Community First Cares Foundation. “By joining forces with St. Augustine Youth Services, we aim to create a ripple effect of positive change, offering hope and support to those who need it most within our growing community.”

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PLAYERS, Duval Asphalt Products donate to Pine Castle

Pine Castle, one of Northeast Florida's leading agencies that serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DDs), recently received three golf carts donated by THE PLAYERS Championship to help engage and provide support for its participants on the Employment Pathway. Additionally, Duval Asphalt Products Inc. has committed to providing new paving for much of the 10-acre campus to ensure safety and provide a smooth ride for the new carts.

Pine Castle offers its participants two pathways within its academy to pursue their individual talents and interests: the Pathway to Life Enrichment or the Pathway to Community Employment. On the Employment Pathway, participants earn at least minimum wage while working on job-training skills and contracts. On-campus opportunities include manufacturing assembly, the wood shop and trade crew training in culinary, janitorial or maintenance.

“These golf carts will serve a great purpose in helping our crews get around and do their jobs here on our 10-acre

campus,” said Lori Ann Whittington, chief executive officer. “Participants on the Employment Pathway will learn how to responsibly use the carts while working in their individual trade crews, sharpening their skills and adding to their workplace experience, helping them prepare for future jobs in our community.”

THE PLAYERS is dedicated to giving back to the communities where they live, work and host one of the world's most recognized sporting events, THE PLAYERS Championship. Over the past 50 years, THE PLAYERS has supported more than 300 nonprofit organizations in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties, including Pine Castle.

“At THE PLAYERS, our commitment to giving back to the community is at the heart of everything we do,” said Lee Smith, executive director of THE PLAYERS. “We're proud to support organizations like Pine Castle, and through initiatives like to Employment Pathway program, we strive to make a positive impact in Northeast Florida, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to thrive and

succeed.”

In addition to the donation of golf carts from THE PLAYERS, Pine Castle received a gift of services from Duval Asphalt that will provide new paving across much of the 10-acre campus. Not only will the updated paving provide a safer surface for staff and participants alike to walk on but will also provide a smoother ride for the golf carts.

“We are truly grateful for this amazing gift from Duval Asphalt to replace most of our aging pavement across the campus,” said Whittington. “We can't wait to see the new paving with the beautiful golf carts in Pine Castle's colors of green and blue traveling around the campus with ease.”

Duval Asphalt is committed to providing support and services to organizations in the community. Duval Asphalt focuses its charitable contributions and participation almost exclusively on local nonprofits, many of which have or currently provide support to their employees and their families.

“We are honored to provide our time

and resources to improve the overall appearance, functionality and safety of Pine Castle's asphalt driveways, walkways and parking areas.” said Jennifer Garrett, director of marketing and business development.

On May 16, THE PLAYERS staff and the Championship's Red Coats, a group of local civic and corporate leaders who oversee the tournament's volunteer efforts, helped unveil the carts to the Pine Castle campus.

The unveiling ceremony featured words from the Pine Castle staff, including Whittington, testimony from two participants on their experiences in the Employment Pathway, and a ribbon cutting ceremony.

“I currently work on the culinary crew where I'm learning about the food service industry in a real working kitchen where we serve food to staff and participants,” said Pine Castle participant Anna. “These golf carts and the new pavement on campus are going to be so helpful when transporting food, and we're very happy

PINE CASTLE continues on **Page 39**

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Pine Castle

Continued from 38

to have them.”

The afternoon continued with an abundance of outdoor activities for the Pine Castle participants to enjoy, as well as a picnic-style barbecue for all, and a hands-on experience for THE PLAYERS and Red Coats volunteers in the Pine Castle Woodshop.

With a legacy spanning more than 70 years, Pine Castle has been a steadfast advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs), fostering growth and inclusivity throughout its history. As an organization, Pine Castle serves and empowers adults with intellectual and developmental differences through opportunities to learn, work and connect. The organization has helped pioneer the philosophy that individuals with IDD have the right to live full and productive lives and envisions a community where they can achieve their potential for independence.

Hubbard House seeks storm supplies

With hurricane season officially underway, Hubbard House is asking local residents to add a few extra items to their supply list to donate toward the emergency shelter’s storm preparations.

As the certified domestic violence center serving Duval and Baker counties, Hubbard House shelters about 120 survivors of domestic violence and their children each day. In addition to being a safe place to stay for survivors, the shelter features other lifesaving, life-changing services, like job coaching, counseling and housing support.

“We’re here for survivors, including during severe storms and hurricanes,” said Hubbard House CEO Dr.

Gail Patin. “Our community’s help means we can keep our pantries stocked and flashlights on through any emergency.”

Hubbard House’s hurricane supply list includes a variety of items, like nonperishable foods, paper products and batteries. For a full list of supplies, see Hubbard House’s website.

For more information or to schedule a drop-off appointment, contact development@hubbardhouse.org.

For survivors of domestic violence, Hubbard House advocates are available 24/7 for free, confidential support through the Hubbard House Hotline at 904-354-3114 and Hubbard House Textline at 904-210-3698.

Meals

Continued from 35

only meal they will get that day,” said Groshan.

Volunteers can register as independents or in groups, which is ideal for families, businesses, church groups, clubs and more. In fact, the Ponte Vedra High School varsity football team has been a big part of these events. And stu-

dents can earn community service credit for volunteering.

But manpower is but one of the group’s needs. Organizers must also raise a total \$43,000 to pay for the meals, each of which costs only 29 cents.

“Even a dollar provides three meals to somebody,” said event chair Gary Graham. “Ten dollars can feed 35 kids, which happens to be a classroom size.”

Here’s a look at the cost of the meals:

- \$106 feeds a child for a year.
- \$424 feeds a family for a year.
- \$2,255 feeds a classroom of children for a year.
- \$12,000 feeds a whole village.

In the group’s first four packing events, 2,291 volunteers packed 485,598 meals, feeding 1,330 children daily for a full year.

The MobilePack events will be held at 3 and 6:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 16, and at 9 a.m., noon and 2:30 p.m. Saturday,

Aug. 17, at the Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church, 4510 Palm Valley Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Volunteers must first register at <https://give.fmssc.org/jacksonville>.

Donations are made there as well. Note that it’s important to include the “Jacksonville” portion of the website address or you will be connected to the larger organization rather than the local group.

For further information, email Graham at graham-gary@att.net.



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HUGS launches summer program



Contributed photo

Local all-volunteer nonprofit HUGS St. Johns has partnered with St. Johns County Parks and Recreation to launch a new program designed to combat food insecurity among local children-in-need during the summer months. The program was designed to augment HUGS' existing school-based emergency food pantry program at 20 St. Johns County public school locations. Both the summer camp pantries and school-based pantries are restocked monthly with kid-friendly, grab-and-go meals so children facing hardships may bring them home as needed. Here, Ponte Vedra High students Sam Cills, left, and Jackson Miller help HUGS St. Johns to coordinate the summer program and deliveries to three Parks and Recreation camp locations in St. Augustine and Hastings. Parks and Rec staff then identify children who may benefit from the take-home meals. Go to stjohnshugs.org for more information or to make a donation.

\$50K donation to help battle against childhood cancer

Kate Amato Foundation (KAF) recently received a donation of \$50,000 from Experian Health, a segment of Experian, a global data and technology company. This significant contribution will prove instrumental in funding innovative pediatric cancer research at leading facilities across the country.

KAF will use the donation to develop safer, smarter and more-effective treatments for children battling cancer.

Pediatric cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children. Despite this grim reality, only 4% of total federal research funding is allocated to childhood cancers.

Additionally, the pharmaceutical industry's reluctance to invest in pediatric cancer research, citing the larger and more profitable adult cancer market, highlights the dire need for initiatives like this. Deeming childhood cancer research "not a good investment" only perpetuates the cycle of underfunding and limited treatment options for young patients.

Donations and partnerships like the one with Experian are not just impactful but es-

sential in advancing progress and ultimately saving young lives.

Experian Health serves more than 60% of U.S. hospitals and more than 7,500 medical practices, labs, pharmacies and other health care providers with data and technology that simplifies health care.

Kate Amato Foundation is optimistic about the relationship with Experian Health, anticipating that their shared vision and collaborative efforts will pave the way for transformative advancements in pediatric cancer research and bring renewed optimism to countless young lives. Their hope is that this is the beginning of a long and fruitful partnership and that other companies, as well as individual donors, will follow the lead of Experian Health and join the battle against childhood cancer.

This funding will provide what is desperately needed to develop more effective treatments for children suffering from this disease.

If you would like to donate to the foundation or learn more about their work, go to kateamatofoundation.org.

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Business Weekly

For MORE business news, go to facebook.com/ThePVRecorder

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Community First building Beachwalk branch

Community First Credit Union has started construction on its newest expansion branch located at 525 Beachwalk Shore Drive in St. Johns County. The credit union's Beachwalk Branch will be its 23rd branch when it opens in early 2025.

Community First purchased the land for the branch in November 2023. The branch was designed by TTV Architects and is being built by Auld & White Constructors.

Community First's Beachwalk location is an outparcel to the retail center at Beachwalk. Upon completion, the 3,150-square-foot Beachwalk Branch will feature a full-service lobby and drive-through, two ATMs (drive-up and walk-up), and Community First's signature tower feature.

Designed with Community First's modern branch concept, the Beachwalk Branch will have an open floor plan, upgraded digital technologies and a historical mural depicting the history of eastern St. Johns. The branch will serve the nearly 4,000 Community First members living within five miles of the retail center.

This new branch is part of the credit union's Branch Transformation Project, which aims to enhance member service by configuring spaces to create a modern retail experience. Beachwalk will be the credit union's third branch location in St. Johns County.

"The Beachwalk and greater eastern St. Johns County are growing

rapidly," said John Hirabayashi, CEO and president of Community First.

"Community First is aggressively expanding our branch network to better serve residents where they live."

Community First is undertaking its largest one-time investment in its branch network with five expansion branches in the works or newly opened. In addition to the new Beachwalk, the credit union recently opened its 20th branch at Northpoint Village and its 21st branch at Boulevard Crossing and its 22nd branch in Murabella.

It also announced on May 31 it has closed on land for its Callahan Branch, which will become its 24th branch and second in Nassau County when it opens in 2025. It is also building a new location for its Baymeadows Branch in Southside Quarter on Gate Parkway.

Community First Credit Union of Florida is a state-chartered credit union based in Jacksonville serving anyone who lives or works on the First Coast. Community First is one of the largest credit unions in Florida with \$2.8 billion in assets and serving 175,000 members.

Community First has 22 locations and more than 450 employees. A not-for-profit, Community First is a full-service financial institution offering banking, loans, mortgages and investments for consumers and businesses across the First Coast.

Learn more at communityfirstfl.org.



Contributed photos

An artist's rendering of the new Beachwalk branch of Community First Credit Union.



Groundbreaking for the new Community First Credit Union Beachwalk branch.

Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra announces its first Black Belt Ceremony

On Saturday, July 13, Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra, owned and operated by Code Coast Consulting, will honor its first three "Black Belt Ninjas" in a special Black Belt Ceremony. This event marks a significant milestone for the local community of aspiring young coders and highlights the dedication and achievements of these students.

The ceremony will celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of these young coding prodigies, who have completed an extensive curriculum designed to teach them critical thinking, problem-solving and coding skills. These students

have demonstrated a mastery of JavaScript and C# and have published their first video games.

The event will feature speeches from the students, their instructors and representatives from Code Coast Consulting. The "Black Belt Ninjas" will provide a demonstration of their video games, show how they made the games and discuss their journey through the Code Ninjas process from white belt to black belt.

Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra is located at 258 Solana Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

"We are incredibly proud of our first 'Black Belt Ninjas,'" said Joel Gresch,

director of Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra. "Their journey represents not only their dedication and hard work but also the supportive and nurturing environment that Code Ninjas provides. This ceremony is a testament to what our students can achieve with determination and the right guidance."

This milestone is a significant achievement not only for the students but also for Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra, as it exemplifies the effectiveness of its curriculum and the passion of its instructors. Code Ninjas continues to inspire and empower the next generation of coders, fostering

a community where young minds can develop and thrive.

For more information about this event or Code Ninjas Ponte Vedra, go to codeninjas.com/ponte-vedra or email pontevedrabeachfl@codeninjas.com.

Code Ninjas is the world's largest and fastest-growing kids' coding franchise, with hundreds of locations in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. At Code Ninjas, kids learn to code while building video games. They gain problem-solving, critical thinking and STEM skills in a fun, safe and inspiring environment.

In the Arts

Send your arts news to
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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com



“Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” will be shown at Alhambra Theatre & Dining until Aug. 11.



Photo courtesy of Alhambra Theatre & Dining
Markus Mann who was cast as Joseph sings during the performance.

Alhambra’s latest show is fun mix of color, sound

By Anthony Richards

The latest show to grace the stage at Alhambra Theatre & Dining is perhaps the most colorful and eclectic performance the theater has ever seen. “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” took centerstage on June 20 and it provides an array of colors and musical genres for the audience to enjoy. As not only do they have a mix of colors both with the wardrobe choices but also with the background visuals and

lighting effects used. After taking a brief hiatus from musicals for one show, the Alhambra brought back the musical flavor in a big way to the delight of all the musical lovers out there. And the musical selection keeps the audience on their toes throughout with the element of surprise in full swing, as there are scenes dedicated to everything from a country theme to that of a Rock-N-Rolling pharaoh. Another aspect that made the show

unique is that due to it being during the summer, they were able to use a youth ensemble to accompany and share the stage with the actors at times. The youth ensemble consists of 16 children ranging from 8 years old to a rising sophomore in high school, who is Salka Corring, who attends Ponte Vedra High and is grateful to be doing what she is passionate about during her summer break. The youth ensemble is divided up with some performing in shows from June 20

to July 14 and others taking part in the showings July 16 to Aug. 11, while a handful are scheduled to do every show throughout its time in the theater. All the children were local and for many of them it was not the first time they had been in an Alhambra production. The cast features a wide array, including Aaron DeCicco who has the role of the narrator during the play and offers a strong vocal range when singing, especially alongside Markus Mann who was cast as Joseph. DeCicco shares the stage with her husband Erik DeCicco who plays Rueben, one of Joseph’s brothers, and was the primary vocal focus during the country music scene, which also brought about its share of laughs and smiles from the crowd. Mann has a theater career spanning more than a decade and has performed all over the country and the world, including the Asian premier of “Madagascar: A Musical Adventure.” Justin Murphy offers a unique performance as pharaoh but with more of an Elvis style to his portrayal. He got to perform with his wife and son during the show, as his son Trey made his return to the Alhambra as Benjamin, while his wife Shelia was a member of the ensemble. Trey’s talent as a voice actor has been on display in the past as he is the voice of Taborr in “Star Wars: Young Jedi” on Disney Plus.

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Homeless Coalition, JaxTHRIVE team up for summer art series

This summer, JaxTHRIVE volunteers are partnering with the Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County for an engaging summer art program.

They are examining the work of a variety of well-known artists with the children residing at the Coalition, providing them with a fun and educational experience.

On May 30, they focused on Vincent Van Gogh, the celebrated Dutch post-Impressionist painter. They explored some of his masterpieces, including “Starry Night,” “Irises” and “Sunflowers.” The children enjoyed creating their own Van Gogh-inspired drawings and paintings, incorporating mixed media into their artwork.

During the class on June 14, they highlighted Joan Miró, the renowned Spanish painter and sculptor known for his blend of Naturalism and Abstraction. They

studied some of his famous works, such as the “Constellations” series and “The Tilled Field.” Inspired by Miró, the students created whimsical dog and monkey renditions in his unique style.

The next JaxTHRIVE SmartART event will be held on Friday, June 28. Participants will be learning about Pablo

Picasso and will create self-portraits inspired by the distinct painting styles of one of his periods.

JaxTHRIVE invites interested high school students to take part. If you are interested in participating or would like to donate art supplies, email jaxthrive@gmail.com.

Contributed photos



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SEPTEMBER 8, 2024

String Quartet Op. 76, No. 2 "Quinten" • Joseph Haydn
String Quartet No. 1 • Bela Bartok

NOVEMBER 10, 2024

String Quartet in F Major • Mikhail Glinka
String Quartet No. 8, Op. 110 • Dmitri Shostakovich
String Quartet No. 1 • Sergei Rachmaninoff

JANUARY 19, 2025

Guest artists: Hyunsoon Whang, piano and Giovanni Bertoni, clarinet.
Fantasy in D minor, K. 397 • Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Trio in E-flat Major, K. 498 "Kegelstatt" • Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Piano Quartet in G minor, K. 493 • Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

String Quartet in G Major • Florence Price
String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106 • Antonin Dvorak

MARCH 23, 2025

Acoustic Analog: A Tribute to William and Sonia Hecht (World Premiere) • Alex Cooper
Commissioned by Danny & Robin Berenberg for the Florida Chamber Music Project
String Sextet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 36 • Johannes Brahms

JUNE 1, 2025

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Sports

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Sporting JAX and All Nations Soccer teamed up to announce that a soccer clinic will be held prior to the Stateside Cup matchup between Wolves and West Ham United at EverBank Stadium on July 27.



Members of All Nations Soccer demonstrated some of their skills at the Flex Field at EverBank Stadium on June 25.

Photos by Anthony Richards

Sporting JAX clinic to add to already big day for soccer in city

By Anthony Richards

Sporting JAX announced that it will host a soccer clinic prior to the Stateside Cup matchup between English Premier League clubs Wolves and West Ham United on July 27.

The announcement was held at the Flex Field next to Daily's Place on June 25 and included a group of children from All Nations Soccer, a local organization that offers the opportunity to play soccer for those who are refugees or children of refugees.

"We're making community magic happen here," said former Jacksonville Jaguars' running back Fred Taylor, who

is a minority owner with Sporting JAX. "My vision when I joined the club was to make sure they are inclusive and finding different ways to give back to all areas of the community."

Roughly 300 children are expected and include both boys and girls of a variety of ages.

"It's an opportunity to just engage the community even further with the World Cup right around the corner," Taylor said. "The future of soccer in America is extremely bright, and to have the opportunity to capture these kids at an early age is important. Allowing these kids to feel wanted is what it's all about, and it brings

joy to my heart."

The United States will join Canada and Mexico as the host countries for the 2026 World Cup, as it will be the first time since 1994 that the event will be held in North America.

The fact that Sporting JAX is striving to create clinics and leagues for children and people with any background is something Taylor is most proud of.

"Sports has always been a common denominator and it has shown the ability to break down barriers and bring people from all over together," Taylor said.

Since Taylor became part of the Sporting JAX ownership group, he has found

himself watching soccer and trying to familiarize himself with the sport every chance he gets.

"It reminds me of my first year in the NFL and trying to learn the new playbook, but it's really coming along," Taylor chuckled. "I know this community and we love our sports here."

The Stateside Cup contest will mark its own significance, as it will mark the first time two English Premier League clubs face off against each other in Jacksonville.

The matchup will start at 7 p.m. with the youth clinic taking place from 5 to 6 p.m. Tickets to the clinic will come with a ticket to the match and cost \$65.

Ponte Vedra lacrosse teams triumph at tournament

The Ponte Vedra Lacrosse 8U Jaws Black Tip and Threshers teams emerged victorious in both 8U divisions at the Orlando Summer Faceoff Lacrosse Tournament, held on June 1-2 in Kissimmee. The Jaws Black Tip and Threshers competed against teams from all over the state to secure their championship titles. James Hensley, the Jaws Mascot, was on hand to energize the teams and excite the crowd.

The Black Tips triumphed over the Mantee Wildcats in the final game with a score of 9-2, while the Threshers claimed victory against the Lacrosse Club Orlando Jedi, finishing 14-3 to win the championship.

The Black Tip roster includes #2 Ted Beagin, #6 AJ Marrapese, #12 Joey Fugger, #14 Ashton Rose, #17 Hudson Carlson, #18 Akamu Laughlin, #21 Leo Del-lavecchia, #22 Gray Roberts, #27 Bradley Johnson, #31 Colin Dunn, #33 Harris Hensley, #45 Jake Werba,



The 8U Jaws Black Tip Team with their medals

#51 Cam "Bones" Eidson and #55 Pat McKenney.

The Threshers roster includes #24 Zac Baumgartner, #11 Noah Blazosky, #8 Quinn Burke, #1 Keegan Chandler, #1 Liam Grimsley, #6 Remy Hedberg, #1



The 8U Jaws Threshers Team with their medals

Reid Hensley, #21 Preston Johnson, #15 Casen Mesaros, #13 Will Polniak, #10 Shep Wilensky and #25 Wells Barnes.

Contributed photos

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The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 55 years of community news excellence, has launched our sixth annual BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32081 & 32082.

YOU, our valued readers, now have the chance to vote for your favorite businesses in various categories online. Online voting begins June 15th after nominations are complete. **VOTE DAILY** - the last day to vote is July 26th at midnight!



Scan the QR code to vote now!

www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2024/#1

Legals

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
Case Number: CP24-0426
Division: 59

In re: Estate of:
BARRY WOODROW NEWSOME,
Deceased.

The administration of the estate of BARRY WOODROW NEWSOME, deceased, file number CP24-0426, Division 59, is pending in the Circuit Court for St. Johns County, Florida, the address of which is 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Johns County Courthouse, Probate Division, St. Augustine, Florida 32084. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against the decedent's estate, including unmatu- red, contingent or unliquidated claims, on whom a copy of this notice is served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE, OR THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate, including unmatu- red, contingent or unliquidated claims, must file their claims with this court WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, CREDITORS MUST FILE CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE WITH THE COURT DURING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN S. 733.702, AND 733.710, OR BE FOREVER BARRED.

Date of the first publication of this notice is June 27, 2024.

Personal Representative:
Kelly Newsome Cerasaro,
5121 Liberty Lake Drive South,
Jacksonville, Florida 32258.

Attorney for Personal Representative:

Lester Makofka, Esquire,
Fla. Bar No.: 0156936,
Makofka Legal Group, PLLC,
6622 Southpoint Drive South- Suite 355,
Jacksonville, FL 32216,
telephone: (904) 503-8471, email:
lester@bestjaxlegal.com

Legal 92006 Published 6/27/2024 and 7/4/2024 in St. John's County's Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper

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Dated at St. Augustine, Florida, this 19th day of June 2024.

Joyce Young
Legal 91866 Published 6/27/2024 in St. Johns County's Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper

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- Mutual savings bank
- Initial public offering
- Denial
- Northeastern institution of higher learning (abbr.)
- A doctrine
- Consumed
- Trent Reznor's band
- Perform in a movie
- Schoolhouse implements
- Mathematical term
- Man who behaves dishonorably
- Expression of regret
- Martens
- Approval
- Pleasantly warm
- The Eurasian hoopoe
- NBAer Bradley
- Engineering organization
- Horsefly
- Type of sandwich
- A day in the middle of the month

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

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

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

DOWN

- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Goat-like mammal
- Swiss river



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