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Thursday, July 11, 2024

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VOLUME 55, NO. 37 \$1.00

Commission candidates speak at forum

By Shaun Ryan

Candidates for the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners had an opportunity Tuesday, July 9, to persuade voters to either elect or re-elect them during a two-hour candidates' forum at Christ Episcopal Church.

The nonpartisan event was conducted by the Palm Valley Community Association in collaboration with the Ponte Vedra Community Association.

Participating candidates were:

- For the District 1 seat: Ann-Marie Evans and incumbent Christian Whitehurst.
- For the District 3 seat: Incumbent Roy Alaimo, Heather Harley-Davidson, Michael McDonald and Clay Murphy.

FORUM continues on Page 9

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Ascension St. Johns plants tree to commemorate two years

By Anthony Richards

Ascension St. Vincent's Health Center St. Johns celebrated its two-year anniversary by planting a pansy tree in a grassy area near the hospital's emergency room entrance.

The planting of the tree was part of a ceremony that included a ribbon-cutting by hospital staff while other members of the various departments stood nearby to witness the moment.

"The first year was exciting and we really found a groove and the second seemed like we've really started to develop our culture," Ascension St. Vincent's



Photo by Anthony Richards

ASCENSION continues on Page 4

Ascension St. Vincent's Health Center St. Johns celebrated its two-year anniversary by planting a pansy tree.

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

BRIEFS

Have fun during county's 'Passport to Parks' program

The St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department has announced July's Park and Recreation Month celebration, "Passport to Parks."

Participants in the Parks and Recreation programs held at county parks throughout July will have the opportunity to enter a drawing at the end of the month for prize baskets filled with park-related goodies. All participants must do is post photos of themselves having fun at the events on Facebook or Instagram using #SJCParksAndRec. On Facebook, participants will post their event selfies in the comments of the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department's corresponding post for that event; on Instagram, they will post the pictures independently and tag the department (@sjcparksandrec). Each selfie at a Passport to Parks event will be another opportunity to be picked in the drawing.

The month's events will take place at parks throughout the county, encouraging residents to explore corners of their backyard they may not have seen before.

The events will include: geocaching, Pop-sicles in the Park, pickleball, Family Bingo Night and disc golf.

Learn more and register for events at sjcfl.us/passport-to-parks.

Meteorologist to be Democratic Club speaker

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will meet at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library, 101 Library Blvd., at 6 p.m. Monday, July 22. Optional chat and chew at 5:30 p.m.

The featured speaker, Al Sandrick, is the warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service (Jacksonville). He will discuss climate change and this year's hurricane forecast. For additional information, PVDemclub@gmail.com.

Beach cleanup is Saturday

The Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM) will conduct a beach cleanup from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, June 27. Meet at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Participants will be directed to a

specific beach for cleanup. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended.

Email Candace.Killian@FloridaDEP.gov to participate.

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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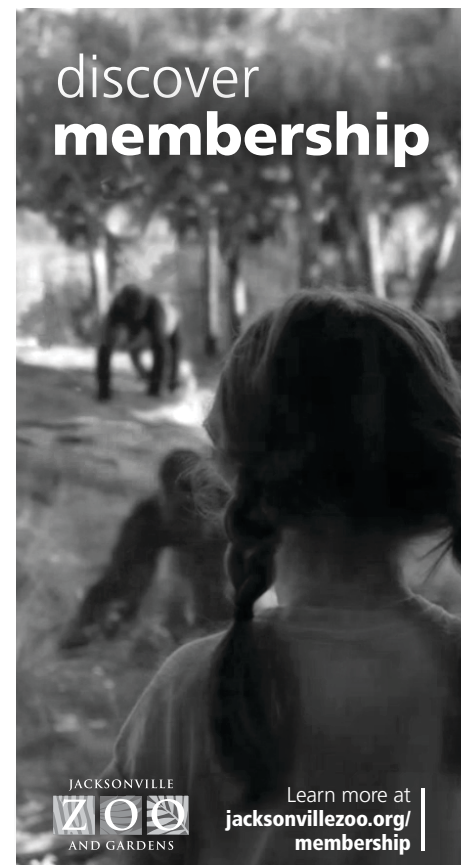
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OBITUARIES



Diane Lazelle Tyler

Diane Lazelle Tyler passed away peacefully at Community Hospice McGraw Center on June 5, 2024. Diane has joined her loving husband, James Lloyd Tyler, who passed away Feb. 19, 2022.

Diane leaves behind a daughter, Karoline Henry; two granddaughters, Alexis and Liberty; step-children and a great-grandson.

The memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. July 22, 2024. All are welcome to celebrate the life of Diane at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Community Hospice McGraw Center.

DEATH NOTICES

Leona Jessica Bowen

Leona Jessica Bowen, 64, of Miami, Florida, died July 3, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com, 904-249-1100.

Maureen Russell

Maureen Russell, 70, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died June 28, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Darlene Mularkey Gentile

Darlene Mularkey Gentile, 95, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died July 4, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com, 904-249-1100.



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Members of the hospital staff helped cut the ribbon during the ceremony.



Photos by Anthony Richards

A moment of prayer was shared prior to the start of the ribbon cutting.



Ascension

Continued from 1

Health Center St. Johns CEO Cory Darling said.

Some of the statistics the hospital saw during its second year included emergency room admittance up 30% and the hospital receiving a 74% favorability rate, which is among the highest of other area Ascensions.

Surgeries performed by the hospital in the past year have grown 157%.

“It really shows the atmosphere we’re striving to create here,” Darling said.

Chief Nursing Officer Sean McAfee joined Darling in looking ahead to what he believes has the makings for another exciting year to come.

“Our third year is going to have some lofty goals,” McAfee said. “That will require the leadership in place, which we feel we have access to the best.”

Darling pointed to the relentless hard work of the staff at the hospital and thanked those in attendance for helping pass along and achieve their goals to their patients of not just treating them but making it the most calming and effective experience for them.

“It takes working together with each other and for each other,” Darling said.

“We have to remember why we are here, and it is for a higher calling. People come through those doors, and they should see the world as it ought to be and not how it is.”

The pansy tree will have purple leaves once in full bloom, which is also the primary color of Ascension, which in the past was often associated with royalty and spirituality.

Just as the hospital grows in the number of years it is around and the number of people it will serve, so will the tree, which can grow up to 30 feet tall and will be quite the sight one day standing in the shadow of the hospital.

“The tree is a fitting sign for the hospital and will be a symbol of the service we provide,” McAfee said.



Ascension St. Vincent’s Health Center St. Johns CEO Cory Darling speaks next to the pansy tree that was planted. The tree is expected to grow 30-feet tall and have purple leaves.

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Ponte Vedra Beach project done two months ahead of schedule

St. Johns County has completed the \$38.6 million Ponte Vedra Beach Restoration Project two months ahead of schedule, with approximately \$30.6 million of the costs covered by state legislative funding and grants.

The project was originally anticipated to be completed by mid-August. Weeks Marine, the county's chosen contractor, worked with two dredges for a limited time, greatly expediting the overall project schedule so that it could be completed by the end of June.

The county secured more than \$30 million from the State of Florida to construct the project, which is estimated to cost approximately \$40 million. If the project is damaged in a declared disaster, it could be eligible for post-disaster funding assistance from FEMA and the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

The Ponte Vedra Beach Restoration Project has restored storm-damaged

dunes and berms to provide storm protection to upland infrastructure with more than 2 million cubic yards of sand dredged in from the ocean. The project has also created additional environmental habitat for wildlife, enhanced the recreational value of the beach and provided substantial coastline fortifications, including dune reconstruction between 13 and 18 feet, beach berm elevation of eight feet and beach width increase of 40 to 180 feet, post-construction.

The project area stretches from the St. Johns-Duval county line to the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve — about nine miles of coastline.

"We're really excited that this project went the way that it did," Coastal Environment Project Manager Sloane Stephens said. "It's been on such an expedited schedule, and our contractor, Weeks Marine, has done a spectacular job with

trying to get things done as fast as possible, and we're really excited that this project will be complete before the end of peak hurricane season in Ponte Vedra."

In coordination with this valuable coastal restoration project, St. Johns County sustained important environmental and physical monitoring of the coastline. Sea turtle nesting season began May 1 and runs through Oct. 31.

In 2023, St. Johns County beaches saw a record 133 green sea turtle nests as part of 1,205 total nests and an estimated 79,811 sea turtle hatchlings. The county recorded these historic conservation successes amid multiple full-scale beach nourishment projects, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Augustine Shore Protection Project, the South Ponte Vedra and Vilano Army Corps Coastal Storm Risk Management Project, the South Ponte Vedra Dune Project and the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project that

has been renourishing St. Johns County beaches in the wake of erosion from Hurricane Ian and Hurricane Nicole.

For more information on St. Johns County Coastal projects, go to sjcfl.us/departments/coastal-projects.

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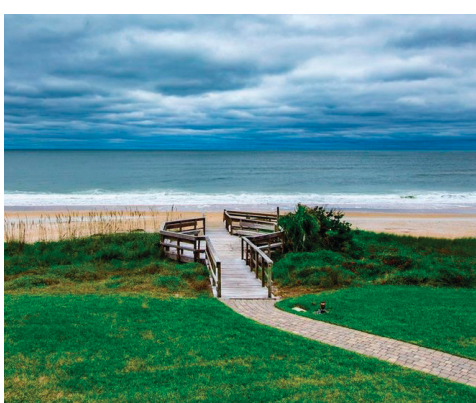
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Michelle and Jack Floyd make up The Floyd Group, in which the mother and son tandem make up a pair of renowned Realtors with deep roots in the Ponte Vedra Beach community. The two have rejoined the ranks of ONE Sotheby's International Realty along with more than \$905 million in career sales.

Michelle and Jack Floyd

As told to Anthony Richards

Tell us a little about yourselves and your backgrounds.

Michelle: I'm originally from Washington D.C. but went to school at the University of Tampa and I have two degrees in economics and psychology, and I'm not sure which one has helped me more as a Realtor, but both have been vital.

I planned to go into law school but that did not work out and now I have more than 30 years of experience in real estate.

I was involved with the development of Marsh Landing and sold the first house there.

Jack: I was born and raised here and ended up going to school for psychology and after school went into the development and building side of things just like my dad.

I wound up living in the Bahamas for 10 years and around 2016 moved back to Jacksonville and began working for a local builder for about a year before I went to Sotheby's.

What is it about ONE Sotheby's that brought you on board?

Jack: The name is internationally known, and our clientele is used to expecting a certain service level that is unique.

It was immediately like talking to family and the vibe is like that for everyone involved.

Michelle: They check on you and really care about their clients. It's not all about the money as the motivating factor.

Jack: The reach Sotheby's has with my mom having her knowledge of the Ponte Vedra area is a great combination to have.

How have you seen the real estate business change over the years?

Michelle: In this business you must be extremely flexible with the times. But I guess that's also what makes it fun.

You spend a lot of time in the office, but you also get to go out and see the properties to get familiar with them and the area you are selling in.

Jack: The way Sotheby's simplifies everything on its platform when it comes to accessing brochures and with emails makes all the difference.

It's all there so that you can break down something in a matter of minutes, if a customer asks a certain question.

Michelle: Every month we get a summary that's very detailed and you can reach out to different offices to share information.

Jack: All that they offer can be mind-blowing but the shortcuts it presents are so worth it.

What are some of the aspects that remain consistent?

Jack: You have to remember that you're still dealing with people and that part of it will never change.

That is where the experience that Michelle has is probably the most important aspect of what we do.

It's like having Tom Brady with two minutes left in the game.



Contributed photo

The mother and son duo of Michelle and Jack Floyd are realtors with ONE Sotheby's International Realty.

What type of properties do you specialize in?

Michelle: We specialize in country clubs and gated communities, which are very popular in Ponte Vedra proper.

Jack: There's not a street or house that we don't know, and we know it like the back of our hand, but Ponte Vedra is also so easy to talk good about because everything you need is right here and convenient for them.

Michelle: We try our best to help offer guidance about the local schools and libraries because they really need to know all the aspects that go into it before they make a big decision like this.

It makes a difference to give our customers a well-rounded view.

What do you have planned for the future?

Jack: I go on the five-year plan and it's just to continue to grow as a business for our clients to continue to be happy with their home purchases.

Michelle: There are times to have fun and then there are times to get serious. We like to remember to have fun and enjoy the aspects of our job.

Jack: If you enjoy what you do, it's not so much work.

What do you enjoy most about living in the North Florida area?

Jack: In our off time we are big water people, so you can find us around anything pertaining to the water.

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Northeast Florida sheriffs endorse Hardwick for re-election

Four sheriffs from Northeast Florida counties endorsed incumbent St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick on Wednesday, July 3, for his re-election campaign.

“Sheriff Rob Hardwick has been an excellent partner protecting and serving Northeast Florida,” said Jacksonville Sheriff TK Waters. “The men and women in uniform of the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office and Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office are working together every day to solve crimes and put the bad guys behind bars. There is no one better to serve in the capacity of sheriff for St. Johns County than Rob Hardwick. I fully endorse him for re-election and am confident the voters of St. Johns County will decidedly put him back in office on Aug. 20.”

Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly also shared his words of support.

“As a veteran law enforcement officer of 30 years, Sheriff Rob Hardwick knows what it takes to keep his community safe,” said Staly. “Since he took office, the relationship between the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office and the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office has only strengthened. I am confident our partnership will continue to grow as we both work to keep Northeast Florida the safest place to be. I wholeheartedly endorse



Contributed photo

Putman County Sheriff H.D. “Gator” DeLoach, Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook, St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick, Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly and Jacksonville Sheriff TK Waters are seen in front of the Castillo San Marcos in St. Augustine. Hardwick has received the endorsement of the other four Northeast Florida sheriffs for his re-election.

Rob’s re-election efforts and encourage St. Johns County voters to cast their vote for him on Aug. 20.”

As a combat veteran, chief investigator, chief of police and now sheriff for

the last four years, Sheriff Rob Hardwick is uniquely qualified to continue to serve as sheriff of St. Johns County,” added Putman County Sheriff H.D. “Gator” DeLoach. “Having grown up through the ranks myself, I have a great deal of respect for him and his dedicated service to his community. I look forward to building upon the partnership between the Putnam County Sheriff’s Office and St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office and serving alongside Sheriff Hardwick again. I am proud to support his re-election and urge all St. Johns County voters to vote for Sheriff Rob Hardwick on Aug. 20.”

Rounding out the endorsements, Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook also offered her support.

“Sheriff Hardwick and I were both elected four years ago,” Cook said. “During that time, we have worked together to serve our communities and protect the quality of life we deserve. Criminals have told others not to commit crimes in our respective counties because we don’t tolerate crime and will hold them accountable for their actions. St. Johns County is safer due to Sheriff Hardwick’s leadership. I am proud to call Sheriff Hardwick a partner in law enforcement and endorse him for re-election.”

Hardwick expressed his gratitude for

their support.

“I am truly humbled by the confidence my adjacent county sheriffs have in me to continue my service as sheriff of St. Johns County,” he said. “Since becoming sheriff, I set out to further community partnerships with our surrounding agencies. I believe we have accomplished that, and I look forward to furthering that mission for the safety and security of citizens and visitors across Northeast Florida. I will continue to work hard to earn the trust of the residents of St. Johns County and would be honored to have their vote on Aug. 20.”

Hardwick’s law enforcement career spans 30 years. He was first elected as St. Johns County sheriff in 2020 and previously served as the St. Augustine Beach chief of police from 2013 to 2020. Prior to that, he served in the 7th Judicial Circuit State Attorney’s Office, the St. Augustine Police Department, the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office and the Florida Department of Corrections.

In addition to his law enforcement career, Hardwick is a combat veteran with 25 years of service in the U.S. Army and Florida Army National Guard.

He and wife Kendell have been married for 32 years. They have two adult sons.

Hardwick’s campaign website is vote-hardwick.com.




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Forum

Continued from 1

• For the District 5 seat: Incumbent Henry Dean and Ann Taylor.

The candidates took turns answering questions largely drawn from members of the public. The forum started with the candidates listing their priorities.

Those cited by Evans included growth, government waste and preservation. Opponent Whitehurst listed infrastructure, environmental protection and enhancements to quality of life.

Alaimo mentioned managing growth and the county's infrastructure, and keeping taxes low. Harley-Davidson cited overdevelopment. McDonald prioritized transparency and accountability, as well as support for neglected communities. Murphy mentioned growth, as well as its impact on traffic, the county's infrastructure and fiscal responsibility.

Dean emphasized his continued involvement with environmental issues, particularly beach renourishment, and cited both growth management and support for law enforcement among his priorities. Taylor prioritized the need to slow growth and cited her opposition to tax increases; she also spoke of a need to preserve trees and reducing clear-cutting.

The candidates were asked how they wanted to address the county's record population growth.



Photo by Shaun Ryan

Candidates for the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners await the start of a recent candidates' forum

Harley-Davidson took a balanced position, calling for "sensible growth" while protecting the environment.

"My candidacy is about the environment — and the rights and the needs of the people," she said.

McDonald also mentioned a need for better balance.

"I would just protect everybody's property rights to the best of my ability and look at their project with an open mind ... and try to deter as much wetland building as we can," he said.

Citing uncertainty about the future, especially with regard to shifting political realities, Murphy endorsed reducing the projections listed in the county's Comprehensive Plan to encompass only the next decade.

Dean said he will continue his practice of applying a two-pronged test to every construction project proposed by developers. He said each project must be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods and

must have either existing infrastructure or infrastructure that will be concurrent with the construction.

One of the challenges he mentioned was projects approved by prior boards.

"When I became a commissioner, there were already 100,000 units that were approved prior to 2008," he said.

"When something new is coming in ... we've got to think about existing property owners, as well," Taylor said.

She said she was not opposed to all growth, but that the county needs to slow down its residential growth.

Evans said when inspecting the proposed Comprehensive Plan, she was shocked by a projection that the population would increase by 97%.

"It does not have to be that way," she said. "It should not be that way. I'm passionate about this. It's wrong. Our infrastructure can't possibly catch up if we continue to build at the rate that we are."

She voiced opposition to blanket ap-

proval of developer requests for rezoning and variances.

Whitehurst pointed out the county's challenge in attempting to deny rezoning requests. He cited case law that restricts local governments from denying these requests without providing adequate rationale for the denial. Additionally, such a rezoning request is subject to judicial review.

Whitehurst went on to say he had voted against some development proposals and had insisted upon infrastructure prior to occupation by homeowners in a development.

Alaimo said he has also applied the two-prong test and has voted down "quite a bit of development" during his time on the board. He supported asking more from developers up front and holding them accountable.

Other questions addressed by the candidates involved public beach access, resiliency planning, public safety and economic growth.

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MSD raises issues with costs of new trash collection contract

By Anthony Richards

St. Johns County has agreed to a contract with new trash and recycling collector FCC Environmental Services Florida, but there are still many questions that the Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District has regarding the price of the service.

The county's new contract is set to go into effect beginning Aug. 1, but MSD chairman Al Hollon raising some issues he had with the deal, primarily the fact that the MSD would have to pay roughly double the rate they had been paying for the same service parameters.

According to Hollon, the MSD is currently paying \$13.77 per household for two-day service and side door pickup, and that would increase to \$28.61, which has been lowered from the initial price FCC presented to the MSD of \$35.82.

The initial price was a shock to Hollon who stated that he had been asking for a price from FCC since the beginning of the year, and did not get anything from them until June 19, which puts the MSD in a tight spot because they must create a budget in the coming months and need

to have an idea of what it will cost.

As a result, Hollon will meet with county and FCC representation to continue to negotiate the price and he also mentioned the clause in the contract that would allow the MSD to opt out and go with another vendor.

The \$28.61 charged to the MSD is broken down with \$17-plus charged for the second pickup and the remaining \$11-plus amount due for the side door pickup for both days.

The county's price of \$21.22 per household is what they pay for the first pickup to take place with \$8.62 going toward household trash, \$7-plus going to yard waste and \$5 and change charged for recycling.

"The big problem I've got is that they have already baked into that number the cost of their equipment and their labor costs for \$8.62, so why should we be charged double in Ponte Vedra when you don't charge others for the same service," Hollon said.

Trustee Mickey White also questioned why the second trash pickup costs \$17-plus while the first pickup only has a price of \$8.62?

"That just doesn't jibe," White said.

The expiring contract the county had with Republic Services began in 2003 and has been in affect for the past two decades with amendments taking place at times.

"As an administration we sat down and said now's the time to go back out and test the market," St. Johns County Public Works Director Greg Caldwell said. "We met with FCC and about 13 other vendors, and said, 'What will this service provider look like in the future and for the entire county?'"

According to Caldwell, the county presented six different options they were looking at to be bid on and Republic Services only bid on one of them compared to Waste Management who put in for five of the options and FCC who put a bid in for every option.

"Not only did FCC put in for every option, but their pricing countywide from year one, the second lowest to them was about a \$12 million gap," Caldwell said. "We've been hearing about other counties and municipalities going through an extreme increase in household collection cost, but we (St.

Johns County) went from \$15.61 per house to \$21.22, which we were pretty excited about."

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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.

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Low-Maintenance Landscaping

"Those who find beauty in all of nature will find themselves at one with the secrets of life itself."

— L. Wolfe Gilbert

By Kathy Esfahani



Kathy Esfahani

Keeping your yard beautiful does not have to require hours of work! Low-maintenance landscaping is attainable and enjoyable with just a bit of planning.

Although every flower and/or plant needs some level of maintenance, it is possible to find colorful plants, evergreens and shrubs that only need attention from time to time.

Keep these tips in mind when planning a low maintenance landscape:

- Plants that tolerate heat are more viable in our area. Look for Florida-



Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

friendly plants when selecting options for your yard. Consider the sturdiness of a plant for resisting high heat/humidity, wind and changing weather.

- Although there are flowers that require less attention than others, look

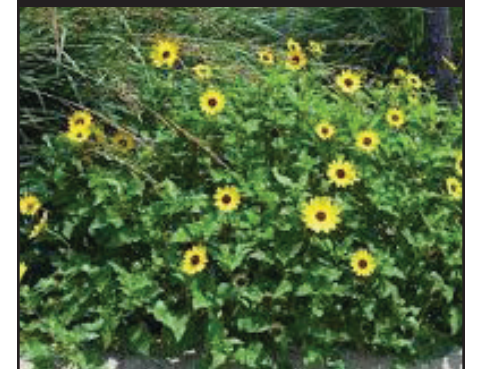
for plants with colorful and interesting foliage. Flowers generally require more time, deadheading and replacement. Foliage offers not only color, but also textures, shapes and patterns. Look for plants with variegated leaves featuring stripes or color splashes.

- Consider the form of a plant that you choose: Do you prefer a tight, clean look or a more loose, natural appearance? Look for plants that fit the form you prefer to avoid extra trimming.

- Choose larger plants with a broad reach, side-to-side or cascading branches. These choices might include palms, shrubs or groundcovers. By selecting bigger options, you will gain a lush, full look with fewer total plants and, therefore, have less to maintain.

- Slow growing evergreen plants and trees are nice alternatives for a low-maintenance landscape since they do not drop their leaves. Be cautious of adding evergreens that grow more quickly, however, as they do require more pruning.

Flower of the Week



Dune Sunflower

As you design your low-maintenance landscape, consider the following plants to add color, fullness and interest to your yard: African iris, agapanthus, arboricola, Aztec grass, black-eyed susan, blue daze, cast iron plant, croton, dune sunflower, foxtail fern, gaillardia, lantana, liriopse, muhly grass, penta, rosemary, vinca and any ginger or succulent.

Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Dune Sunflower

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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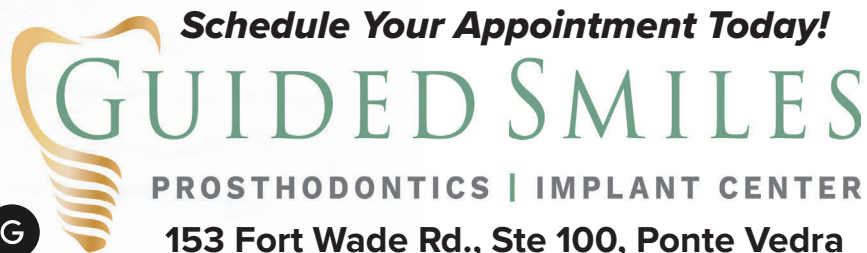
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New program offers fun, effective ADHD solutions

By Shaun Ryan

Families seeking better ways to address the challenges posed by ADHD have a new resource in the community.

Unlockt, a program that relies upon scientifically supported principles, helps children to develop emotional intelligence, self-regulation abilities and academic readiness.

“It is a comprehensive approach to empowering parents to utilize strategies that help their kids with ADHD,” said Unlockt lead clinician Eva Luther.

The program officially launched in April and the first families signed up in May. It grew out of Luther’s efforts to address the concerns of local parents who simply did not know where to turn for solutions.

Those efforts caught the attention of Raghu Misra, co-founder of the link, who had been researching the topic himself in search of alternatives to a tendency by society to rely on medication as the primary means of treating ADHD.

A board-certified behavior analyst and certified special education teacher, Luther has worked in Duval County Schools and other school systems in Massachusetts.

She meets with parents in one-on-one sessions at the link for about an hour a couple of times per month. Meanwhile, the children in the program visit The Brain Arcade, a unique, specially designed space at the link, for about 45

minutes three times a week.

“They work on physical activities, and they work on executive functioning activities,” Luther explained. “That helps to develop their self-regulation skills, working on emotions and how to manage those emotions. They work on cognitive skills, like increasing their focus, increasing their attention, and then they also work on ways to manage their energy.”

The Brain Arcade is an environment of fun and learning where the students rotate through activity stations. They are never made to feel as though there is something within them that requires “fixing” or that they are going to some sort of clinic.

They start each visit in the energy and movement area, where they identify their energy levels and do exercises to either raise or lower those levels as needed.

From there, they work with cutting-edge technology tools, the first of which uses eye-tracking processes to evaluate their visual functioning. Another station challenges the students in a game designed to aid attention, tracking, focusing and processing speed. A third station addresses processing speed, memory, tracking and reflexes.

Students receive rewards and praise for their efforts and can even choose to delay reception of their rewards in order to save up for bigger prizes.

The final stop is the regulation station.



Photo by Shaun Ryan

Unlockt Program Director Eva Luther and founder Raghu Misra stand below the Brain Arcade sign.

“We teach things like mindfulness,” said Luther. “We teach breathing, yoga activities, ways to calm down. We do imagery. We do journaling.”

This is where students gain skills that will be useful when confronted with a stressful situation.

Luther offers parents a complimentary consultation to determine whether the program is a good fit for them and their family. Unlockt does not require

that children have an ADHD diagnosis. And, though it is a nonmedicated approach, it does not exclude students who do receive medication.

Unlockt is approved for Step Up for Students, so families can use the scholarship funds for these services.

For further information about Unlockt, go to unlockt.life.

The link is located at 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra.

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THE RECORDER

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Writer supports informed decision making in upcoming elections

To The Editor:

As a proud resident of St. Johns County for the past 30 years, I have had the privilege of witnessing the growth and evolution that has shaped our beloved community. Through the highs and lows, I have seen firsthand the positive changes that have enriched our lives and the challenges that have tested our strength. As we approach the upcoming elections, it is crucial that we come together as a community, informed, engaged and united in our commitment to shaping the future of St. Johns County.

One issue that weighs heavily on my heart during election season is the influx of negative mailers that flood our mailboxes and inboxes. These glossy, expensive pieces are meticulously designed to manipulate our emotions with lies and misinformation. It is essential that we approach these mailers with a critical eye, questioning their credibility and unraveling the motives behind the distorted messages they convey. By staying vigilant and wary of these deceptive tactics, we can shield ourselves from falling prey to divisive influences.

Rather than succumbing to the negativity and discord sown by these mailers, let us channel our energies into thorough research, active participation in candidate forums and meetings and gaining a deep understanding of the critical issues at hand. By fostering a community grounded in respect and civility, we can make informed decisions and throw our support behind candidates who exhibit a genuine dedication to serving the best interests of St. Johns County.

It is imperative that we do not allow ourselves to be swayed or misled by external forces seeking to undermine our unity and sow confusion. Instead, let us arm ourselves with knowledge, critical thinking and a shared vision for a brighter tomorrow for our community. Through collaboration and solidarity in the face of adversity, we can drive positive change and ensure that St. Johns County continues to thrive and prosper for generations to come.

Having witnessed the evolution of our community over the years, I have grown to appreciate the tireless efforts and commitment of our elected officials as they navigate the intricate landscape of governance while upholding the core values that define St. Johns County. It is easy to criticize these public servants, especially amidst the fervor of an election campaign characterized by heightened tensions and lofty

promises. However, it is crucial that we approach these discussions with empathy, recognizing that our elected officials are individuals deeply rooted in our community, sharing our dreams and aspirations.

As we prepare to exercise our voting rights in the upcoming elections, I implore my fellow residents to engage in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. Let us delve into the heart of the issues, seek out reliable information and actively participate in the democratic process. While it may be tempting for new candidates to make grandiose pledges and launch attacks on incumbents, it is incumbent upon us as vot-

ers to look beyond the superficial rhetoric and evaluate the practical solutions being put forth.

In conclusion, let us bear in mind that the future of St. Johns County rests in our hands. By approaching the electoral process with an open mind, and a spirit of collaboration, we can collectively shape a brighter tomorrow for our community. Together, let us stand resolute against division and discord, and strive towards a shared vision of prosperity, and unity for this county we proudly call home.

Martha Gleason

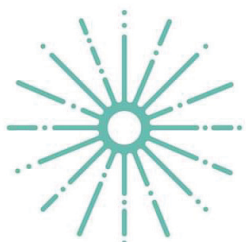
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Patients from the world over gather for a photo at Gulani Vision Institute before flying home.

Blind man from Africa leaves Jacksonville with sight restored — as a new Jaguars fan

In an 8,000-mile journey of hope, a blind young man from Africa traveled to Jacksonville recently for a transformative, sight-restoring surgery with world-renowned eye surgeon, Dr. Arun Gulani. After the life-changing procedure, Zola

not only gained his vision but also a new passion for the Jacksonville Jaguars. His family, equally thrilled, bought Jaguars T-shirts — especially No. 16 Trevor Lawrence — and made plans to enjoy the First Coast’s sights and entertainment.

“This has to be a miracle!” Zola exclaimed. “I want to stay back and enjoy Jacksonville with my new vision.” Zola’s story highlights the transformative power of medical innovation and the hope it brings. Zola joined more than 20 patients from around the world who traveled to Gulani Vision Institute recently seeking pioneering techniques, including patented LaZrPlastique and Corneoplastique techniques.

concepts and trail-blazing technologies, has revolutionized the treatment for this condition. His patented innovative no-cut lasik (LaZrPlastique), no-pain cataract surgery (LenzOplastique) and no-transplant Corneoplastique techniques can safely and painlessly, without any injections or needles, grant these patients excellent vision within minutes despite years or even decades of suffering.

Patients with extreme complications of keratoconus (where the cornea becomes such high astigmatism that it becomes cone shaped instead of having a normal dome shape) often live a life of disability and dependence unless given effective medical attention.

That these procedures attract patients internationally contributes to a phenomenon known as medical tourism. In fact, the institute has consulted patients from more than 102 countries.

Keratoconus, the condition that afflicted Zola, can be detected in one of every 200 patients in the United States. The incidence is even higher worldwide, leaving patients in their youth blinded and dependent. The predominant treatment for this condition is a debilitating and invasive corneal transplant, which can be expensive. The alternative would be uncomfortable hard contact lenses. Gulani, with his innovative surgical





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Zola and his family with Dr. Arun Gulani.

Celebrate your birthday with a pool party!

Pool parties are the perfect way to celebrate a birthday and stay cool in the hot Florida summer sun, but pools also can be dangerous. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, drowning remains the No. 1 threat to children. Simple precautionary measures can save lives.

- Never leave a child unattended in a pool or around any body of water no matter how small, even for a minute.
- Teach children basic water safety.
- Avoid overloading the pool with too many boisterous swimmers, especially if adults, older kids and young kids are in the water. Small children can quickly get lost in the fray.
- Avoid swimming if you have been consuming alcohol.
- Designate a lifeguard, whether it's a hired, certified professional, or someone who has taken on the task and will keep eyes fixed on the pool at all times while swimmers are present.
- Establish rules and enforce them. Prohibit diving into shallow water and running around the slippery edge of the pool.
- Learn how to

administer CPR to both children and adults.

- If a child goes missing, look for him or her in the pool first.
- Minimize the use of pool floats that can obscure the view of the pool floor when there are many swimmers present.
- Keep a phone handy at all time. Promptly call for emergency services if the need arises.
- Ensure everyone immediately exits the pool if thunder is heard or lightning is seen.
- Turn off the filter pump while guests are swimming, particularly to protect against entrapment on pool drains or pipes.
- Be sure the water chemistry is balanced in pools and spas so that swimmers are not irritated by the chemicals and the water is sanitary. Also, keep in mind that swim diapers are not foolproof. Check youngsters often so that waste does not end up in the pool.

These are just some pool safety tips to keep everyone protected during pool parties or any time the pool is used.



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7th Annual Nocatee 4th of July Golf Cart Parade

The 7th annual Independence Day Golf Cart Parade featured more than 300 festively decorated golf carts, creating a vibrant display of patriotism and community spirit. The parade began at Nocatee Station Field, then went through Splash Waterpark, the Town Center communities, and ended in Willowcove. Spectators lined the streets along the path of the parade and cheered on participants, observing the creative decorations.

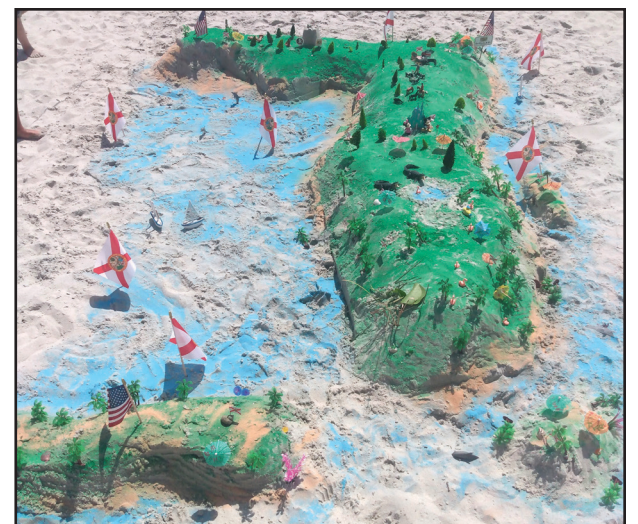
Photos by Susan Griffin



INDEPENDENCE DAY SAND SCULPTURES

As part of its Independence Day festivities, the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club held a sandcastle contest. Here are some of the entries. 'Whale of a 4th' won Most Patriotic; 'Gator Wrasslin' won Most Creative; 'Here Comes the Sun,' a depiction of the Sunshine state, won Best Overall; and "Princess Castle" was a more traditional castle made from sand.

Photos by Mike Mulhern



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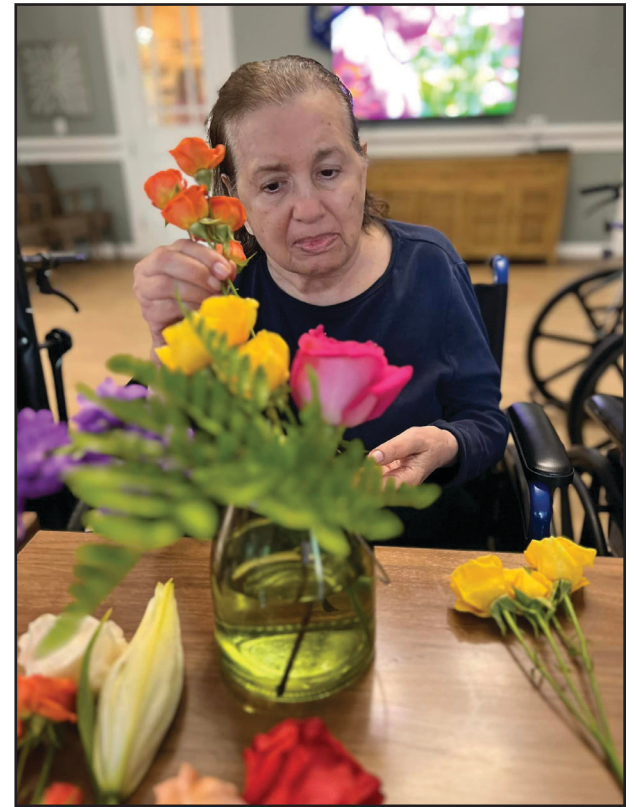
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....AND MORE INSIDE!



Ponte Vedra Gardens residents enjoy fun summer of events

The residents at Ponte Vedra Gardens Memory Care Community have enjoyed several events in recent months, including visiting Millie's Ice Cream Shop in Jacksonville, enjoying beverages and sweet potato bars at a "Tea with Dee" event and weekly flower arranging sessions.

Photos courtesy of Ponte Vedra Gardens



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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!

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www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2024/#11



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GUEST COLUMN

Sunnyside Up for Retirees in this Economy

Submitted by Stratton & Company

Economic factors for fiscally conservative retirees — those seeking less risk and more predictable outcomes — have never been more favorable. The current financial climate is turning the retirement industry upside down. However, many retirees have not changed their strategy to match the change in rates and remain unaware of the unique opportunities this economic bubble presents.

Our clients often share stories about their first mortgage, with tales of paying 12%, 14% or even 16% interest. However, few were able to take advantage of the high fixed income rates of those times, because we were young and broke! We were borrowing money, rather than earning interest through CDs, fixed annuities or other fixed-income financial instruments. But today, successful retirees have paid off their mortgages, or refinanced at a low rate, and have considerable assets that should be working for you! And while you've had to endure near-zero rates for over a decade, the landscape has changed

dramatically. Short-term interest rates surged from nearly zero to over 5% this year, giving retirees with assets a sunnyside up scenario.

The rapid increase in rates resulted from a perfect storm of political unrest, a global pandemic and a government printing press working overtime for over three years. The national debt has doubled in the past five years, reaching nearly \$35 trillion. But if you've saved diligently over the decades, this environment can work in your favor.

Today, retirees with saved assets can enjoy substantial fixed income performance, guaranteed. This is a rare opportunity, and while diversification remains wise, having a portion of your retirement funds in fixed income instruments can be a wise move. The current favorable rates may not last, and the Federal Reserve could cut rates, slowing down this beneficial period. But if you take advantage of fixed income, you can lock in these high rates for your lifetime.

Modern retirement planning, including using fixed rates like CDs and modern annuities, work exceptionally well for today's retirees. There are many options

to enhance financial security and optimize IRA assets, with low-risk vehicles. With modern annuities — not your parents' antique, inflexible products — and thoughtful planning, retirees can achieve greater income and financial security than we have seen in recent decades.

Though the financial world may seem upside down, these times are particularly good for retirees. The current climate may be harder for the younger generations, but retirees have an exceptional chance to secure their financial future. The era of almost 0% interest rates since the Great Recession of 2008 has ended, and we are now seeing incredible rates on savings and impressive guaranteed income payouts for life.

Taking a prudent portion of your retirement savings and investing in fixed income can significantly improve your retirement. Using a more substantial allocation combined with your growth portfolio may even lead to an excess of income, potentially resulting in more funds to enjoy your retirement now while you're feeling great and ready to live your life.

Embrace the sunny side of this economic anomaly and leverage these

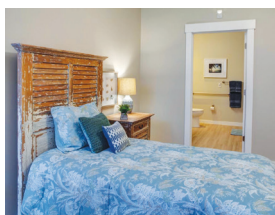
favorable conditions to enhance your retirement security. This period offers a unique opportunity to secure a financially stable and stress-free retirement. If you haven't changed up your strategy since these rates have changed, it's time to act!

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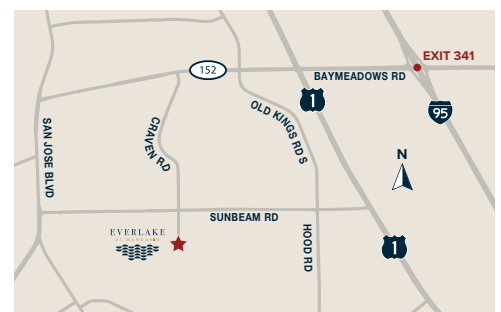
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Scammers look to capitalize during storm season

By Anthony Richards

With hurricane season in full swing, FEMA warns that there are many con artists and criminals that can try to steal money or personal information during the vulnerable time that is the aftermath of a storm.

According to FEMA, thieves will try to apply for FEMA assistance by using names, addresses and Social Security numbers they have stolen from those impacted by storms.

Unfortunately, senior citizens are often the intended targets for scammers.

The organization advises that if a FEMA inspector comes to one's home without them having submitted a FEMA application, it is likely that their information may have been used without their knowledge to create a FEMA application.

If this case arises, FEMA wants the homeowners to inform the inspector that they did not apply with FEMA and a request to stop will be submitted.

However, if a letter is received in the mail but assistance was not requested, the recipient should call the FEMA helpline



at 800-621-33-62.

The helpline can also help assist in creating a proper FEMA application after the scammed account is taken care of.

The Social Security Administration reminds someone being a target of a

scam that the best approach is to stay calm and be cautious of any contact with anyone claiming to be from a government agency.

As a result of the scammers targeting FEMA and its possible clients, the

Scams FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance crews are in place with housing inspectors and other officials assigned to work in areas that have been impacted by storms in an attempt to curb the threat of fraud.

Members of these crews carry official identification badges with photo IDs. FEMA representatives never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help in filling out applications.

One of the easiest ways to determine a scammer from an official is that an official agent with FEMA will never promise a disaster grant in return for payment, which means requests for banking information from someone claiming to be a FEMA inspector is a certain red flag, as FEMA inspectors are not authorized to collect personal finance information.

Anyone who believes they are the victim of a scam, must report it immediately to their local police or sheriff's department or contact Florida's Office of the Attorney General by calling 866-9-NO-SCAM (866-966-7226) or going to myfloridalegal.com to file a fraud complaint.

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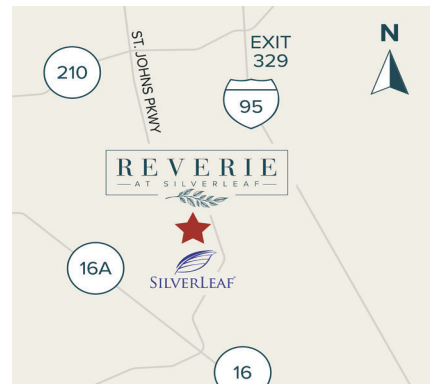


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Cypress Village car show brings classic cars, community together

For The Recorder

Cypress Village’s third annual car show roared to life with more than 20 stunning vehicles on display, delighting residents and visitors alike.

The car show featured a remarkable lineup of vehicles, each with its unique charm and story. Among the standout

cars were a 1941 Ford V8, 1939 Ford Woodie, Ferrari 360, 1927 Ford Roadster, 1953 Surf Woodie Deluxe, 1974 VW Bug, Ford Starliner, 1957 Chevy and a custom 1955 Ford.

One of the show’s highlights was the Resident’s Choice Award, which allowed attendees to vote for their favorite vehicle. This year’s award went to

Mike Buddeke’s meticulously restored 1932 Hudson. The car, steeped in history, was originally owned by Buddeke’s uncle, a drag racer in the ’60s in the Chicago area. After his uncle’s passing, the car was left to Buddeke in a state of disrepair. Determined to honor his uncle’s legacy, Buddeke embarked on a coast-to-coast restoration journey, from

Florida to California, transforming the Hudson into a show-stopping masterpiece. The only original piece from his uncle’s era is the 1964 Corvette motor, a testament to the car’s storied past.

Buddeke expressed his gratitude for the recognition, saying, “This car rep-

CAR SHOW continues on **Page 25**

If you want to be there for them, you have to be there for **YOU!**



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Car show

Continued from 24

resents a family legacy, and I'm thrilled to share it with the Cypress Village community.”

In addition to the impressive vehicles, attendees enjoyed delicious treats and refreshing beverages from the food trucks Smart Drinks and Doodlebops Ice Cream.

Cypress Village extended its thanks to sponsors Raymond James and Concierge Care for their support.

Attendees were treated to a blend of classic tunes and contemporary hits, featuring live entertainment by musician Robbie Trice.

“We are thrilled with the success of our third annual car show,” said Ty Morgan, executive director. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for our residents

and the community to come together and enjoy a day of fun and camaraderie. We’re grateful to everyone who participated, from the car owners to our Community Life Services team and vendors, for making this event truly special.”

Cypress Village’s car show continues to be a beloved tradition, bringing together people of all ages to appreciate the beauty and craftsmanship of classic and modern cars.

Several residents have said that the car show brings back fond memories from their youth. One resident even pointed to a classic car and remarked, “That’s the car my boyfriend picked me up in when I was 17!”

The event not only unites the community but also pays tribute to the dedication and passion of car aficionados like Buddeke, whose stories and vehicles honor family legacies and cherished memories.

For more information about Cypress Village and upcoming events, go to cypressvillageretirement.com or contact Lisa Green, director of sales and marketing.

Cypress Village is a premier senior living community in Jacksonville, offering a vibrant and engaging lifestyle for its residents. With a range of amenities and activities, Cypress Village provides an enriching environment where residents can thrive and enjoy their golden years.



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Senior centers plan programs, activities

The following programs and activities are being offered this month at specific COA centers.

PLAYERS COMMUNITY SENIOR CENTER

The following programs will be held in July at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. If you have any questions, call the center at 904-209-3659.

Lunch — Tuesdays: Noon to 1 p.m. Registration is required in advance and a \$5-per-meal fee is required.

Lunch — Thursdays: Noon to 1 p.m. Registration is required in advance and a \$5-per-meal fee is required.

Caregiver Support Group (Free Program): 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Wednesdays. The group is open to all adult caregivers; meets once a month, on the first Wednesday of each month. Register with the Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900.

Chair Exercise — Thursdays: Four weeks starting July 11 from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Tai Chi: Four weeks starting July 11 from 10 to 11 a.m.

Canasta — Thursdays: Four weeks starting July 11 from 10 a.m. to noon.

Bingo — Thursdays: Four weeks starting July 11 from 1 to 2 p.m.

Wii Bowling: Four weeks starting July 11 from 10 to 11 a.m.

Technical Help for phones and computers: Available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Community Hospice Presentation: The behavior of a person with Alzheimer's disease or other types of advanced dementia presents many challenges. Repetition, wandering, incontinence and grooming are daily struggles for caregivers. Community Hospice's Doug Schilling offers effective methods of dealing with difficult behaviors. 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, July 11.

Check Your Blood Pressure with Nurse Fran: 10-11 a.m. Thursday, July 11. Free.

Happy Birthday, July Babies! Enjoy cake, ice cream and the music of Ivan Smith while celebrating July birthdays. 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, July 16.

Queen Bee Honey & Tea: June Hill of Queen Bee Honey and Tea will be on site. Stop in and put some sweetness in your life. 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, July 18.

Who's Who? This is going to be fun! Bring in an old photo and everyone will try to guess who is who! Baby, graduation, military, wedding photos; pick your best likeness. Prizes and refreshments. 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, July 23.

Integrative Memory Enhancement Program: Is your brain healthy? Is your forgetfulness normal? Learn how you can give your brain more exercise with COA's Integrative Memory Enhancement Program (IMEP) classes. 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, July 25.



Feeding Northeast Florida: This is a series of free nutrition classes and cooking demonstrations from the local foodbank, Feeding Northeast Florida. Topics covered: My Plate, Basic Cooking Skills, Food Safety, Shopping on a Budget, Meal Planning and Physical Activity. 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, July 30.

COA CENTER AT UF HEALTH NOCATEE

The following programs will be held in July at COA Center at UF Health Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra. Unless specified otherwise, register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling 904-814-9407. Programs are open to adults ages 18-plus. For more information, go to coasjc.org/center-at-nocatee.

Tuesdays

Caregiver Support Group: All caregivers are welcome. The group meets every Tuesday from 1 to 2:30 p.m. There is a trained facilitator present at every meeting to guide the group.

Open Card Play: Bring your deck of cards and join others in playing the card game of your choice. No instructor will be present. This is a self-directed group. 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays.

Widows and Widowers: Social group meeting the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Some meetings may take place outside the COA.

Fire Safety Presented by St. Johns County Fire & Rescue: Learn what you need to know to protect you and your family. People with hearing, sight and physical disabilities may be at higher risk. 10 a.m. July 16.

Reclaimed Water in the Home Landscape: Learn about the principles of reclaimed water and its benefits in residential gardening. Learn how to safely use it in your home landscape, including fruit and vegetable plantings. A free presentation by Terra Freeman, urban and commercial horticulture extension agent for UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. July 30.

Wednesdays

Open Art: Bring your art or craft project to work on while socializing with friends. Meets every Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Mah Jongg Meet-up: Open play for experienced players. 1-3 p.m. July 24, 31; and 3-5 p.m. July 17.

Medication Review by Appointment: Have your prescriptions evaluated by a pharmacist volunteer. Then meet one-to-one to discuss the results to relay to your physician. Wednesday mornings by appointment.

Genealogy Group: A genealogy expert will guide you in discovering your ancestors on the third Wednesday of each month. 1 to 2:30 p.m. July 17. No cost to attend.

Life Quest Organ Recovery Program, Presented by Donate Life Florida: What does it mean to be an organ donor? 10-11 a.m. July 24

Hidden in Plain Sight: The Prevention Coalition of St. Johns County will inform parents and grandparents what to look for to protect the children and community from potentially deadly substance misuse. All ages 18-plus are welcome to attend. 10-11 a.m. July 31

Caregiver Needs Assessment: Make an appointment with a qualified dementia care specialist who will set up a time to discuss your situation one to one; develop an individualized education and needs assessment; support and guide; and become empowered to find solutions for those needs. Call to schedule a free appointment 904-814-9407 or email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com.

RIVER HOUSE

The following programs will be held this month at COA's River House, 179 Marine St., St. Augustine. For further information, call 904-209-3655 (Monday-Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org or go to coasjc.org/river-house.

Registration is required for the following programs, and space is limited. To review course details and to register, go to <https://coasjc.coursetorm.com/cat->

coasjc.org/river-house:

Living and Thriving with Cancer – For You, and Your Loved Ones, From One Who Is: 1:30 to 3 p.m. July 22

Fish for Dinner: How to Clean Your Catch: 9-11 a.m. July 23

Bellydance Basics and Beyond: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Three weeks starting July 11

American Sign Language for Beginners: 10:30 to 11:30 p.m. Three weeks starting July 11

Tai Chi and Qigong: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Three weeks starting July 11

Bellydance Basics Level 1: 10:45 to 11:45 a.m. Three weeks starting July 11

Watercolor: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Two weeks starting July 11

Colored Pencil Art: 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Three weeks starting July 11

Open Programs

Open programs are free and, where noted, may require registration. Go to coasjc.org/river-house for more information

Container Gardening — Think Outside the Pot with Design in Mind: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 15. Attend for a visual presentation and hands-on demonstration while venturing into the world of beautiful and interesting concepts for container gardening. Presented by St. Johns County Master Gardener Karen Doyle. Pre-registration is required. Call 904-209-3655 to register.

Mahjong Open Play: 1-3 p.m. Mondays. Bring your mahjong game and play.

NAVY Florida VA Benefits: 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. July 15. Veterans, spouses and adult children are invited to a special workshop to learn how they may be eligible for long term care benefits to pay for home care, assisted living or dementia care.

Healing Hearts: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. July 23. A group for grieving a loss. Meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month.

One-on-One Tech Help: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 23 and 30. One-on-one help for your smart phone, tablet or laptop questions. Call 904-209-3655 to reserve a one-hour spot.

Happy Hookers: 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays. Join this social group as they crochet, knit, etc.

Widow to Widow: 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Wednesdays. A widows support group for widows, by widows.

Open Game Play: 12:15 to 3:15 p.m. Thursdays. Bring your deck of cards or your board game and socialize over a friendly game of your choosing. There are games available at River House.

Do You Need a Living Will and How Can You Avoid the Need for a Guardianship: 10-11 a.m. July 19 Presented by Megan Wall of St. Johns County Legal Aid.

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Rise 55+ at Nocatee hosts Grounds for Discussion event

Rise 55+ Active Living at Nocatee hosted a Realtor event called Grounds for Discussion at the community's clubhouse on June 26.

The event featured coffee from Florida Coffee Peddler and served as a networking event for Realtors and a way for them to further get to know Rise 55+ Active Living at Nocatee so that they can refer it to future clients.

Photos by Susan Griffin



ElderSource seeks members for advisory council

ElderSource, a nonprofit organization that works to empower elders, adults with disabilities and their caregivers in order to age with dignity and independence, is seeking volunteer members to its advisory council, specifically seniors who reside in St. Johns County.

Duties for an advisory council member are to report on the needs of elderly and emerging issues in their respective counties; review and comment on the agency's Area Plan; study legislative issues and advocate on behalf of the elderly; assist in promoting the mission, programs and activities of the agency; and to educate the public about the needs and the contributions of the elderly.

"Our advisory council members are an important asset to our organization," said Linda Levin, CEO of ElderSource.

"They are an active voice we need to hear in order for us to stay in touch on senior issues affecting the communities in which they live."

Meetings are held the third Thursday of every other month from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. and conducted virtually using the Zoom platform.

For more information about how to become an ElderSource Advisory Council member, call 904-391-6690 or email Sherry.Holmes@MyElderSource.org.

ElderSource is a state designated Area Agency on Aging and Aging & Disability Resource Center funded in part by state and federal grants, foundation grants and private donations. It reaches out to more than 12,000 people each year throughout its seven-county service area in Northeast Florida.

Council on Aging benefit gala set for Aug. 4

Nonprofit St. Johns County Council on Aging (COA) has announced its annual fundraising gala, “STAYIN’ ALIVE, An Evening on the Matanzas,” to be held on Sunday, Aug. 4, at River House, 179 Marine St., in St. Augustine. Tickets are \$150 per person and may be purchased online at coasjc.org/gala.

Guests are invited to attend a glittering, 1970s-inspired gala at River House, featuring dinner, DJ, dancing and a silent charity auction to include eight travel packages sponsored by AmFund. 1970s or resort casual attire is suggested for the festivities. Proceeds will support Council on Aging’s work in service to seniors and caregivers in St. Johns County.

Trips to be offered at silent auction include South Africa Photo Safari; Greece & Greek Islands Odyssey; Alaska Cruise; Sedona Spa Getaway, Arizona; Wine, Wonders & Romance of France; Spain — Barcelona & Majorca; Taste of Tuscany, Italy; and Iceland, Land of the Vikings.

To read details and itinerary information on each trip, go to coasjc.org/gala.

All trip packages include:

- 4-star or above accommodations
- Valid for three years with no blackout dates
- Dedicated travel specialist to book your trip



Contributed photo

The gala will be held at River House, 179 Marine St., St. Augustine.

- Options to extend and add additional travelers are available
 - Travel packages are giftable
- Bidding will be open for a limited time, so be ready to bid, win and travel for a good cause.

To purchase gala tickets and for more information, go to coasjc.org/gala. For information on event sponsorship opportunities, contact COA’s Janel Graham at 904-209-3697 or jgraham@coasjc.org. The annual gala, now in its 21st year,

is the companion event to COA’s annual fundraising golf tournament to be held the following day on Monday, Aug. 5, at The Palencia Club in St. Augustine. For information on the tournament, go to coasjc.org/champions.



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Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library offers programs

Here's a look at some of the programs planned for July at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. To see the complete schedule, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch.

Adult Coloring Club

When: 1-2:30 p.m. July 23

Supplies will be provided. Feel free to bring a snack.

Free Tech Help with David

When: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. July 11.

Are you feeling frustrated by technology, such as how to use your laptop or your phone? Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library's Tech Volunteer David Ross is here to help. Bring your device and your questions. David can help you one-on-one with your tech, including iPhone and Android cell phones or tablets, PC and Mac laptops, and Nook and Kindle readers. RSVP to 904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org.

Learn about Marineland: The World's First Oceanarium

When: 4-5 p.m. July 11

Participants will travel back in time to 1938 for the grand opening of Marine Studios, the world's first oceanarium and underwater film studio. From Florida tourism to literary greats to architectural styles to marine science — so many firsts in history happened at Marineland, and it's still happening today! Learn all about

the past, present and future of this famous marine science facility from Marineland's historian, Terran McGinnis. This informative talk is best suited for teens and adults.

Adventures in Technology for Adults

When: 11 to 11:30 a.m. July 12

Explore helpful tech tips each month with the adult services librarian. Each month will feature a different topic covered over a 30-minute talk. Some sessions will include interactive instructions to use apps and computer databases, so participants are encouraged to bring their personal devices and smartphones. In July, learn how you can take steps to secure your accounts, from social media to smartphones, for the benefit of your loved ones. RSVP at 904-827-6950.

Sit & Get Fit

When: 11 a.m. to noon July 16

Looking for fitness and wellness tips to incorporate into your daily routine? Learn how to stay healthy and strong with minimal equipment and light weights, even from the comfort of our own homes. Karen Cataldo, a JCA fitness team director, will speak to the benefits these practices provide when you incorporate them into your regular routine. Participants should come prepared to participate in light exercise. Register online at sjcpls.org or call 904-827-6950.

Chef Warren: Thrill of the Grill

When: 6-7 p.m. July 16

Join Chef Warren as he shares all the tips and hints you'll need to elevate your grilling. Whether it's steaks, chicken, veggies or dessert, you will learn the secrets of the great grilling masters. Chef Warren will explain which cuts of beef and chicken, types of fish, and which veggies are best for grilling. He will also share which cooking techniques will guarantee a delicious entrée while addressing questions such as: Will marinating make a tough cut of meat tender? What's the difference between grilling and barbecuing? Which is better, a gas or charcoal grill? Does it matter which charcoal I use? When should I baste my ribs or chicken with sauce? Can I grill fruit and how? And much more! Chef Warren will end his presentation with a cooking demonstration, preparing a healthy grilled marinated swordfish entrée that anyone can replicate in their own home in less than 10 minutes. Registration is required at sjcpls.org or call 904-827-6950.

Free Tech Help with David

When: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. July 25.

This is a walk-in session.

Are you feeling frustrated by technology, such as how to use your laptop or your phone? Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library's tech volunteer David Ross is here to help. Bring your device and your questions. David can help you one-on-one with

your tech, including iPhone and Android cell phones or tablets, PC and Mac laptops, and Nook and Kindle readers.

Crafters Corner for Adults

When: 1-3 p.m. July 25

Engage in hands-on crafting sessions offering a perfect opportunity to unwind and socialize. Visit the adult section of the library to view the upcoming month's sample. RSVP to 904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org. Supplies and space are limited.

Continuum of Care Lunch & Learn

When: 10:30 a.m. to noon July 30

This event is designed to answer common questions surrounding the senior continuum of care. An estate law attorney will talk about why planning for the future with the right documents is so important. A home care professional will speak about how home care can help seniors age in place. A senior placement specialist will talk about the tough transition from your home to a facility and the challenges. And a hospice professional will dispel the myths associated with hospice and speak about the purpose of hospice and how it helps families. A complimentary lunch will be served after the event. Participants can mingle with the speakers and ask questions during this time. RSVP to 904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org. Seats are limited.

Seniors can boost energy with the right foods

A nutritious diet is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. And for seniors, the right diet can be a key part of treating any number of health issues. In fact, changing one's diet may be something seniors can consider if they are feeling sluggish. Food can be a helpful ally for seniors dealing with fatigue and low energy. WebMD says eating a balanced diet is one of the ways to improve low energy levels, and that balanced diet should include certain foods that are natural energy boosters.

- **Whole grains:** Switching refined grains for whole grains is a good way to boost energy. These grains are full of complex carbohydrates that help boost metabolism and provide energy. They'll also work longer in the body than the more refined options. Swap out "white" products like breads and rices for whole wheat or brown rice.

- **Lean protein sources:** While protein does not give the same quick boost of energy as a high carbohydrate meal, it will help fuel the body and keep a person feeling full longer. According to Discovery Senior Living, protein helps increase concentration levels, produces stronger muscles and helps maintain optimal blood sugar levels. Chicken, tuna and legumes are some notable protein



sources.

- **Nuts:** Most nuts are a complete package that provide healthy fats, proteins and amino acids that are good for the body. The fiber and carbohydrates in nuts digest more slowly and help provide a steady supply of energy throughout the day. Replace croutons in salads with nuts or sprinkle some nuts on oatmeal at breakfast.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** Berries, sweet

potatoes, dark, leafy greens, and other produce are low-calorie, low-sugar options for snacks and sides that boost health. They're full of fiber and antioxidants that can ward off illness, and they can provide an energy boost as well. Berries and vegetables can be added to smoothies or salads.

The right foods can help seniors restore energy levels and promote overall health.

The role of a home health aide

Home health aides, sometimes called personal care aides, are brought in to assist a person with activities of daily life. An HHA typically helps a person who may need some assistance with tasks they cannot perform due to illness or disability. HHAs may work in a person's home, in a group home or in another care facility. HHAs may perform various duties, including:

- assistance with personal care, such as dressing, feeding, moving from bed to chair, etc.
- checking vital signs
- monitoring a client
- light housekeeping
- meal planning and cooking
- picking up prescriptions
- companionship

HHAs typically will not provide skilled nursing care and may not be able to offer recommendations on treatment or medications. Individuals can find the services of HHAs who may work independently or are placed through agencies. Sometimes a doctor or hospital will have connections to HHA services and can make referrals. It can be useful to interview several potential HHAs to find one who will fit with the needs and personality of the person requiring assistance. A good HHA will be compassionate, patient and flexible. As illness or injury also can affect a person's mood, HHAs must be able to adjust if a client is reluctant to receive help or is depressed or anxious from his or her limitations.

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Black history museum site recommended to DeSantis

Contributed photo

The decision is in.

St. Johns County is the location of the Florida Museum of Black History, as recommended by the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force after its meeting on June 28, where the Task Force voted 6-1 to formally transmit this recommendation to the governor and the Legislature.

“We did it!” St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners Chair Sarah Arnold exclaimed. “The St. Johns County community rallied together and displayed their determination to get this museum. It is a testament to the tenacity of our team and the public’s passion for the history of St. Augustine and the surrounding communities.”

On May 11, 2023, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a law relating to a Florida Museum of Black History Task Force. The bill created a nine-member task force to provide recommendations for the planning, construction, operation and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History. One of the goals of the Task Force is to recommend to DeSantis, the president of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the Senate and the minority leader of the House of Representatives a location for the museum.

“I am so proud of our partners in this process,” County Administrator Joy Andrews proclaimed. “They never quit fighting for this museum. They were alongside the county every step of the way. They traveled with us many times to Tallahassee to tell our story of Black history and its importance on a state and national level.”

The project partners for St. Johns County’s proposal included the Florida Memorial Museum, West Augustine Community Redevelopment Area, Accord Civil Rights Museum, Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center, St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau, St. Johns Cultural Council and the City of St. Augustine.

Andrews said that on June 19, the county hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the successful relocation of



the Canright House. It is a home where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was scheduled to stay in the 1960s before segregationists vandalized it.

The home was moved to Collier-Blocker-Puryear Park from its original Butler Beach site. The park sits on the former site of Florida Memorial University (FMU), one of the state's oldest academic centers and a historically Black university. St. Johns County plans to place its campus-style Black history museum on the former site of FMU located in West Augustine.

“The placement of this historic home on the museum site will add to the opportunities to learn about Black history in St. Johns County,” Andrews said.

The Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources notified St.

Johns County on April 15 that its proposal scored among the top four prospective locations.

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners voted April 16 to negotiate a purchase and sale agreement with Florida Memorial University to develop a campus-style museum of African-American history, performing arts, cultural exhibits and more.

At the ninth meeting of the task force on May 21, the members voted 5-4 in favor of recommending St. Johns County, affirming the location’s top rank for the third time. Following a meticulous selection and scoring process, St. Johns County emerged as the leading choice, surpassing Eatonville/Orange County, Opa-locka and Sarasota.

St. Johns County is a world-class

African-American heritage destination with abundant historic and cultural sites. These include:

- ACCORD Civil Rights Museum
- ACCORD Freedom Trail, with 30-plus African-American heritage locations
- Al Lewis Archway: Florida Normal & Industrial Institute
- Butler Beach
- Fort Mose Historic State Park
- Excelsior School Building
- Lincolnville
- Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center
- Plaza de la Constitucion
- Coquina Slave Cabin
- St. Augustine Beach Hotel
- St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church
- Zion Missionary Baptist Church
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NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION

Post 129 sent pair to nationals as part of memorable year
By Anthony Richards
Reading opportunities both to Boys and Girls Nation from the same area of a state is very unusual, but it is from more than 100 miles from the same American Legion post. That was the case when Harley Paulsen and Steve Black were chosen to represent the 2023 program, which included a visit to Washington, D.C. Paulsen is a member of the club's ROTC and is a member of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Black is a senior at Ponte Vedra High School and will be attending the United States Naval Academy after graduation. For both, the opportunity to take part in this program was an honor and something they will always cherish, and they shared their experiences and journeys to the post during Post 129's meeting on Feb. 1. "For me the coolest thing was getting to see the school building and getting to see the ROTC building and the ROTC cadets," Paulsen said. "It was a great experience and I will be attending the United States Naval Academy after graduation."

Major sculpture created in Mandarin
Harriet Beecher Stowe subject of work
By Shaun Ryan
A landmark work of art is taking shape in Mandarin — and the public will have an opportunity to see it as it is unveiled this month. The sculpture, titled "Harriet Beecher Stowe in Mandarin," will be unveiled in Mandarin, before being moved to its final location. The sculpture will be unveiled in Mandarin, before being moved to its final location. The sculpture will be unveiled in Mandarin, before being moved to its final location.

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St. Johns County makes progress on road projects

The St. Johns County Public Works Department updated the community on the progress it is making on more than 10 miles of road construction projects and other transportation improvements at the June 18 St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners regular meeting.

The presentation can be viewed with the video-on-demand services the county's Office of Public Affairs provides at sjcfl.us/GovTV.

"You guys are doing so much work," District 1 Commissioner Christian Whitehurst said. "This is going to be a massive improvement on our roadways once these projects are finished. Thank you for taking all of this on at one time."

Public Works Director Greg Caldwell highlighted these projects during his presentation:

- Longleaf Pine Parkway: This project widens more than four miles of Longleaf Pine Parkway from Roberts Road to Veterans Parkway from two to four lanes. It also includes installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Shetland Drive and Longleaf Pine Parkway.
- County Road 210 (Greenbriar to Cimarrone): This project will begin

at the current four lanes at Cimarrone Boulevard and extend west to the intersection of Greenbriar Road, a distance of approximately 2.3 miles.

- County Road 2209 Central Segment: This four-lane section is 7.7 miles from C.R. 210 to State Road 16. The current construction project is 3.9 miles from Silverleaf Parkway to S.R. 16.
- County Road 210 Widening (I-95 to U.S. 1): This project will complete the six-lane widening of C.R. 210 from Trinity Way to Beachwalk Boulevard. This includes the signalization at the intersection of C.R. 210 and Cumberland/Badger Park Drive.

Caldwell mentioned that the Capital Improvement Project Public Access Dashboard is available at sjcfl.us/departments/public-works/engineering and is a great way to stay informed on all transportation projects and projects for parks, stormwater drainage and facilities. There are currently 100 projects with a budget of \$340.7 million.

The capital improvement project can sometimes create temporary road closures. The public can stay informed at www.sjcfl.us/roadclosures on various road closures by the county and FDOT.

Guide for tracking tax dollars released

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller has released the fourth edition of the Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR), "Tracking Your Tax Dollars: A Guide to St. Johns County's Finances."

The Popular Annual Financial Report highlights key information from the detailed Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), which provides an annual overview of the county's finances and budget.

Designed to be concise and easy to read, the PAFR presents a clear picture of St. Johns County's financial situation for fiscal year 2022-23, including how tax dollars are collected, spent and invested.

"This guide provides St. Johns County with easy access to evident insights into how tax dollars are managed," said Clerk Designee John Rundgren. "'Tracking Your Tax Dollars' helps residents understand the county's financial position with full trans-

parency, strengthening the integrity of our services and our commitment to serving the community."

The 20-page booklet also presents economic information and notable trends on demographics, housing, taxes and more. Covering financial data for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2023, the PAFR emphasizes visibility to county tax dollar management.

The PAFR is available online at stjohnsclerk.com/pafr. Printed copies can be requested at the St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller, Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine.

The ACFR includes the financial statements for the Board of County Commissioners, Clerk of the Court, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections and Tax Collector. The full report is accessible online at stjohnsclerk.com/acfr.

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Contributed photos



A bookmobile staff member helps a patron check out a book at the World Golf Village stop.



Kids hold up their favorite books at a bookmobile location stop.

St. Johns County library system launches revamped bookmobile

The St. Johns County Public Library System has announced the return of its bookmobile, which provides books and programs to regional areas of the community.

The new bookmobile schedule is in effect until Aug. 26 and includes:

- Mondays: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Faith Community Church, 3450 County Road 210, St. Johns
- Wednesdays: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at UF Health Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra

- Fridays: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the World Golf Village Convention Center, 500 S. Legacy Trail, St. Augustine

Additional details are available at sjcpls.org/branches/bookmobile.

“After a brief hiatus for mechanical maintenance, the library system’s community outreach team has been busy preparing a revamped summer schedule to ensure the public’s browsing experience remains comfortable and enjoyable,” Director Debra Rhodes Gibson said.

The bookmobile allows patrons to browse onboard items, pick up requested items, return items and use free Wi-Fi.

“We want to thank the community for hanging in there while we’ve been off the road,” said Alexandra Barr, community outreach manager. “With our valued patrons in mind, we have combined our various stops into these three regional locations, allowing us to hook the bookmobile up to electricity. This change ensures we are able to provide consistent air conditioning, extend our

time on location and offer more frequent service.”

In May, SJCPLS announced its summer reading program, which continues through July 27. The bookmobile will provide opportunities for summer reading participants to access their materials for the “Adventure Begins at Your Library” program.

“We can now take the summer reading program out into our community, which is exciting for our staff and the community we serve,” Gibson said.

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SCAN TO LEARN MORE



Public can meet candidates at Chamber event

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is providing community members with 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, at Beachside High School in St. Johns and Thursday, July 31, at Solomon Calhoun Community Center 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

non-partisan events to the residents and business owners 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, the Chamber’s Meet the Candidate events draw hundreds of residents from around the county to connect with candidates campaigning for all levels of government.

At the events, attendees can also show support for the candidates of their choice in a straw poll conducted by the University of North Florida Public Opinion Research Lab. Attendees are encouraged to have conversations with all candidates before voting in the straw poll.

This year’s events will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 23, at Beachside High School, 200 Great Baracuda Way, St. Johns, and from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, July 31, at Solomon Calhoun Community Center, 1300 Duval St., St. Augustine.

“The Chamber is providing an important venue for the public to be as informed as possible,” said Berta Odom, chair of the Board of Directors of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. “This is a unique opportunity for residents to have these one-on-one conversations with candidates and ask questions about issues that matter to them.”

Both events are free and open to the public. For more information, residents and candidates should go to bit.ly/pisj2024.

Contributed photos



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Students' sand art raises \$600 for Epic Cure

On May 23, the National Honor Society from Ponte Vedra High School took part in the Third Annual Sand Art Contest to support Epic Cure. More than 100 students competed in groups, creating a total of 20 sand art pieces. One team crafted a replica of Dr. Sanzo, the PVHS vice principal, and won the competition for the second consecutive year. The club collectively raised a little more than \$600.

Contributed photos



The winning sand art creation.



Students reveal their sand art creation.



The awards ceremony

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Interns Ainsley and Mallie with a puppy patient



Intern Ainsley preps a kitten for surgery



Intern Mallie helps to vaccinate a kitten



Humane Society Executive Director Carolyn Sindad Smith with interns Ainsley and Mallie

Beachside students intern with Humane Society

For The Recorder

The St. Augustine Humane Society has some special visitors of the human variety this summer.

Mallie and Ainsley are students at Beachside High School and, for the second summer in a row, are interning at the St. Augustine Humane Society. They are part of a program that gives high school students the skills to graduate with real on-the-job knowledge.

Students who enroll in Beachside High School's Academy of Veterinary Studies, St. Johns County's only high school program of its kind, can earn an industry certificate as a Certified Veterinary Assistant and are prepared for careers in veterinary medicine. And with the Humane Society's

high volume of work, Mallie and Ainsley are learning a lot.

"Interning with the Humane Society has allowed me to get a lot of hands-on experience working with the animals," said Mallie. "It's awesome to have a behind-the-scenes look at the veterinary world."

"I love that every day here is so different," added Ainsley. "I've been able to experience so much with this internship that I honestly don't think I would have elsewhere."

The interns work 25-30 hours per week and interact with at least 30 patients each day. They need 250 total hours for the academy's four-year curriculum.

Many veterinary internships are not as hands-on. On any given day, the interns may complete patient intake, prep animals

for surgery, sterilize surgical supplies, process bloodwork, use a microscope to identify parasites and more. The Humane Society's supervisory staff promotes as much hands-on learning as possible.

"This intern program is such an incredible opportunity for the students and for us," said Operations Manager Jeannie McLain. "They are so motivated and eager to learn, and we love being able to share such vital knowledge and experiences with them."

The interns' help is greatly needed, as the Humane Society's mission is a big one. They work tirelessly to ensure that all pets are safe, happy and healthy through low-cost services.

Funding can be the biggest obstacle to the longevity of experiences like the intern

program.

"I love being able to see the passion that our interns have for the animals, and it's just amazing to see them learning so much every day," said Carolyn Sindad Smith, Humane Society executive director. "That's why it is important to keep this program going."

The best way to support the Humane Society's work is to get involved in its fundraisers. Currently, the organization is hosting the 2025 Sweet Things Pin Up Paws Calendar Contest, where humans can submit pictures of their pet companions for a chance to be in the annual calendar.

For more information, to enter your pet or cast a vote, go to pinuppaws.com.

PTOs join forces to help new school

Area parent-teacher organizations from Liberty Pines Academy, Ocean Palms Elementary and Landrum Middle School came together to support the new St. Johns County school, Lakeside Academy, opening this school year in our community.

Local PTOs help fill gaps in funding at schools through the purchase of technology, teacher grants and more. As a result, these three schools donated to help Lakeside Academy's PTO hit the ground running. With a collective donation of \$11,000, Lakeside will have a foundation from which it can grow its PTO in the upcoming school year.

Contributed photo
PTO presidents from Ocean Palms Elementary, Lakeside Academy, Liberty Pines Academy and Landrum Middle School joined forces to provide Lakeside Academy PTO, a new school opening this year, with \$11,000 to start the school year.



Local softball team second in state

Ponte Vedra Girls Softball team finished second in the state in the 2024 Babe Ruth Tournament that was held in Lake City from June 27 to July 1. Pictured are: players Reese Agliata, Emma Ash, Laura Buchanan, Vivian Dunn, Maddie Knowles, Kennedy Evans, Lilly Lyons, Hadley Patrick, Katelyn Roberts, Vivian Rudgers, Claire Stanley, Riley Stratton, Landry Wilson and Margaret Worrell; and coaches Tyler Dunn, Cory Evans, Rick Agliata, JR Rudgers and Don Stanley.

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Business Weekly

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— FEATURING —
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What buyers can do to get the best mortgage rate

Mortgage interest rates have been headlining financial news segments for several years running. Much of that news has been met with less than open arms, as rates have risen dramatically in recent years, an increase that is related to the ripple effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mortgage interest rates did not immediately spike after the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic in March 2020. In fact, data from the lender Freddie Mac indicates mortgage rates were still well below 4 percent on January 1, 2022. However, those rates hovered around 7 percent by the end of that year, and were still around that level at the start of 2024.

With such high interest rates, it's understandable if prospective home buyers feel helpless. However, there's much buyers can do to help themselves as they seek to secure the lowest mortgage interest rate possible.

• **Read your credit report and improve your score, if necessary.** Many prospective home buyers save up for years in anticipation of the day when they will purchase their own home. During this period, buyers can read their credit reports and address any discrepancies while taking steps to improve their credit scores. Lenders consider a host of variables to determine an applicant's credit worthiness, and credit history and credit scores bear significant influence. The higher an applicant's credit score, the more favorable mortgage rate he or she is likely to get.

• **Take control of your debt-to-income ratio.** Debt-to-income (DTI) ratio refers to what you owe in relation to how much you earn. The lower your DTI, the better you look to lenders. According to Bankrate, lenders typically want to avoid issuing mortgages to individuals if the monthly

payment will exceed 28 percent of their gross monthly income, and people who may be near that threshold for a given home may be denied a mortgage if their DTI is high. Prospective home buyers currently carrying significant debt, including consumer debt like credit cards and/or student loan debts, should make a concerted effort to pay down that debt prior to applying for a mortgage. Prioritize paying off consumer debt before applying for a mortgage.

• **Maintain a strong employment record.** Steady employment and consistent earnings make mortgage applicants more attractive in the eyes of lenders. If you are currently shopping for a home or about to make an offer, now might not be the best time to switch jobs. Self-employed individuals and freelancers working multiple jobs can still qualify for a good mortgage

rate, but they may need to provide more extensive documentation that indicates their earnings going back several years. Individuals who have been working full-time for the same company for years may only need to provide W-2 forms from the two most recent tax years.

• **Shop around for rates.** Rates may not fluctuate much between lenders, but it's still worth shopping around for mortgage rates. A study from Freddie Mac found that the benefits of shopping around for a mortgage rate were especially notable in 2022 compared to the decade prior, saving borrowers who took the time to shop for rates substantial sums of money.

Mortgage rates remain high compared to a half decade ago, but prospective home buyers can take steps to increase their chances of qualifying for a favorable rate.



Contributed photo

Chef Michael Lugo and Wine Director Lyndsay Burnett.

Local restaurants earn prestigious wine awards

Viva Hospitality's trio of restaurants — Michael's St. Augustine, La Nouvelle and Pesca Vilano — have been recognized by Wine Spectator in its annual awards naming the best wine restaurants in the world.

Michael's and La Nouvelle received the Best of Award of Excellence, while Pesca Vilano received the Award of Excellence.

The awards acknowledge restaurants that invest in their wine program, providing superb lists and knowledgeable service.

"We've invested 18 years building a global wine list at Michael's," says Michael Lugo, owner and executive chef at Viva Hospitality. "When my team started working on the concept for La Nouvelle, we committed to developing a wine program that was unlike any in this area. Lyndsay Burnett, our wine director, and I wanted to showcase France's vast and diverse wine-making regions with respect,

AWARDS continues on Page 40

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Real estate team joins Coldwell Banker Premier Properties

Longtime local Realtors Peggy Gachet and Janice Long have joined Coldwell Banker Premier Properties as the The Gachet Long Team in St. Augustine Beach, located at 661 A1A Beach Blvd. The veteran businesswomen specialize in high-end home sales, and each holds the Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist designation from The Institute for Luxury Home Marketing. The identification requires Realtors to meet stringent professional practices and to confirm home sales priced at a threshold of \$800,000 in St. Johns County.

The local Coldwell Banker location is renowned for its founder Steve Cupolo. He established Premier Properties which later joined the Schmidt Family of Companies. Cupolo is a regional vice president for the organization.

Gachet brings 30 years of real estate experience as a top producer for the Watson Realty Corp. office in St. Augustine Beach. Earning the Graduate, Realtor Institute (GRI) designation, Gachet is an industry sales and production leader who works closely with prospective home buyers and sellers. She has vast experience and in-depth knowledge about technical subjects and the fundamentals of real estate in the luxury sector. Her experience in sales and marketing includes Delta Air Lines and leadership roles with Rotary Club of St. Augustine Sunset. She previously served as president of Rotary Club of St. Augustine.

Gachet supports a myriad of organizations with a dedication to community service and helping those in need.

Gachet's experience as a real estate broker and management professional includes operating a top-producing realty office with Marsh Creek Home Sales at Watson Realty Corp. Her educational background and University of Alabama degree in counseling along with previous sales and marketing experience with Delta Air Lines Inc. supports her targeted communications skills.

Gachet has fostered and adopted pets from S.A.F.E.



Contributed photo

The Gachet Long Team consists of longtime local Realtors Peggy Gachet and Janice Long.

for many years and is working with the nonprofit to encourage responsible pet ownership.

Gachet and Long specialize in working with buyers and sellers with a variety of residential properties.

"When Coldwell Banker Premier Properties began working with Schmidt, I knew the systems and marketing capabilities for our clients were going to be among the best in the business," said Gachet. "We offer the industry's most sophisticated state-of-the-art tools, technology and international exposure along with the nation's leading relocation network, CARTUS. The company has the funding to support us as agents for our discriminating buyers and sellers. And now, The Gachet Long Team has global support. We are honored and pleased to be associ-

ated with the new real estate group."

Long has vast experience in real estate and interior design beginning in 2006 in Key West, where she represented a residential home developer and gained extensive experience in property sales, construction coordination and staging and merchandising homes.

She has a recognized history as a former president of the Rotary Club of Key West and is the current treasurer of the Rotary Club of St. Augustine Sunset. She is active with community organizations that support her dedication for service and collaboration.

Long is also involved in raising funds at Flagler College as a board member of the Women of Vision. She is a key fundraiser for many nonprofit and for-profit businesses in Northeast Florida. Long is also a champion ballroom dancer.

Previously, she served as a technology solutions expert from 1979 until 2006 while achieving top sales and additional recognition for marketing, leasing, training, operations and logistics in telecommunications and technology. She also worked in banking and loans for many years. She holds an associate degree in business with honor roll status from DeKalb College, which is now Perimeter College at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Gachet Long Team is headquartered in the Coldwell Banker Premier Properties office, which is a full-service company with more than 85 sales associates in offices located in St. Augustine Beach, Palm Coast and Ormond Beach.

Coldwell Banker Premier Properties is St. Augustine's largest national franchise with a global reach. For more information, call 904-377-0832 or email peggygachet@gmail.com.

For further information, go to thegachetlongteam.cbpphomes.com.



Pesca Vilano is located at 117 Vilano Road.



Michael's is located at 25 Cuna St., St. Augustine.



La Nouvelle is located at 102 Bridge St., St. Augustine.

Awards

Continued from 39

integrity and thoughtful intent. The staff's buy-in from day one has meant the world to me. Magic happens when a team comes together with a shared vision."

Launched in 1981, the Restaurant Awards represent the world's only program focused exclusively on restaurant wine service. They are assigned on three levels: the Award of Excellence, the Best of Award of Excellence and the Grand Award.

Michael's and La Nouvelle were recog-

nized with the Best of Award Excellence, given to only 1,531 restaurants worldwide that display excellent breadth across multiple winegrowing regions and/or significant vertical depth of top producers, along with superior presentation.

Pesca Vilano received the Award of Excellence, bestowed upon 2,150 restaurants, with a wine list featuring a well-chosen assortment of quality producers along with a thematic match to the menu in price and style.

Lugo's culinary curiosity began in his grandmother's kitchen, and those humble beginnings are evident in all his ventures. The bespoke wine programs, painstaking-

ly sourced ingredients, deft dish preparation, and the commitment to impeccable hospitality are executed with the air of a beloved family member cooking for their brood. That deep investment has carried over into the selection of each property's curated beverage program.

"I stepped into an absolute gem at Michael's," said Burnett. "With La Nouvelle, Michael had a really clear vision, and we had fun with it, stepping outside of the lines and taking chances. It normally takes years and a globally diverse wine list to earn this type of recognition, but because we invested in quality vintages, worked to showcase the depth of French wine

production and learned from our past experiences, in less than a year, we've built a wine program we are proud of and are truly honored to receive these awards."

The Viva Hospitality restaurants are all in St. Augustine.

Michael's, located at 25 Cuna St., features a seasonal menu focused on steaks and coastal Spanish-inspired cuisine; La Nouvelle, located at 102 Bridge St., features French Nouveau cuisine with an elevated edge; Pesca Vilano, located at 117 Vilano Road, is a tribute to Lugo's Puerto Rican lineage, fusing global coastal cuisine with Latin flavors.

Learn more at vivahosp.com.

Contributed photos

'High-end, authentic barbershop' opens in Nocatee Town Center

For The Recorder

V's Barbershop, a franchised, authentic barber shop will open a new location within the Nocatee Town Center this Thursday, July 11, next to the new Chop House Nocatee site location.

While a "Grand Opening" celebration and event will come this fall, the new shop will open for business at 300 Pine Lake Drive, Suite 103, Ponte Vedra Beach, at 10 a.m. Clients are encouraged to download the V's Barbershop mobile app to schedule appointments or call 904-594-2887 if they prefer to schedule over the phone.

In keeping with the brand's authentic reputation, the Nocatee location features antique barber chairs from the 1950s and iconic, era-appropriate sports imagery on the walls amongst nostalgic flooring and decor, all of which provide a relaxing atmosphere for a transformational experience.

The professionally trained stylists can accommodate traditional or contemporary cuts paired with other services such as old-fashioned hot lather, straight-edge razor shaves, facials, beard treatments and relaxing head and neck massages.

While V's caters to the more masculine client, it is a kid-friendly, family-friendly establishment. V's Barbershop also recognizes and thanks the nation's active-



Contributed photo

duty and retired-military members, first responders and frontline health care workers by offering a 20% discount on any service, every day.

Together with seasoned entrepreneur and Nocatee resident Nick Crouch, Operating Partner and Master

Barber MoonJoo (MJ) Park said she looks forward to fulfilling a much-needed respite for area gentlemen and their families.

Park started her barbering career in Houston, Texas, in 2018. Along with her years of experience, she brings extreme attention to detail and a deep commitment to providing exceptional guest experiences for each client. In fact, Crouch was a client of MJ's previously and raved about her abilities, which led to the decision to join forces and bring the V's experience to the Nocatee community.

About V's Barbershop

In 1999, Jim Valenzuela, known throughout the company as "Mr. V," opened the first V's Barbershop in Phoenix, Arizona. Growing up in Tucson, some of Valenzuela's fondest memories were the days spent with his father going to Nick's Barber Shop for a haircut.

After his own son was born in 1994, Valenzuela wanted to recreate those same experiences but was unable to find a local barbershop that would accommodate these requests. Subsequently, this helped Mr. V identify a need in the marketplace for a first-class barbershop, one that would allow family experiences.

Nearly 25 years later, V's Barbershop has more than 60 locations across 19 different states and has become the place to go for the authentic barbershop experience.

Crowley awarded major U.S. contract

Extending its trusted relationship with the U.S. government, Crowley recently announced the award by U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) of a \$ 2.3 billion, seven-year contract to continue serving the military's transportation and logistics needs under the Defense Freight Transportation Services program.

Crowley was awarded the original Defense Freight Transportation Services (DFTS I) contract in 2017. One of the largest logistics contracts under the federal government, DFTS encompasses all forms of surface transportation throughout the continental U.S., Alaska and Canada, including less than truckload (LTL), full truckload (FTL), expedited, time definite and rail services as well as cross-docking and warehousing.

"There is no greater honor than to serve the logistics needs of our nation's military service members with the trust of the U.S. Department of Defense," said Ray Fitzgerald, chief operating officer for Crowley. "The lasting partnership built with USTRANSCOM is a privilege that the people at Crowley never take

lightly as we ensure an efficient and effective supply chain for the military and other agencies' needs. We are humbled and immensely proud to continue delivering this critical transportation service for America's defense safely and reliably."

During its ongoing DFTS services, Crowley has received multiple high-performance ratings from USTRANSCOM and praise from the Defense Logistics Agency, and the company put in place technology solutions to maximize freight transportation efficiency and value.

As it enters the new contract (DFTS II), Crowley will also continue to utilize small businesses and diverse suppliers that help drive investment and resiliency in communities coast to coast, exceeding \$600 million in diverse small business contracting.

Crowley grew its network of carriers and suppliers by more than 500%, tripling the minimum capacity needed to effectively service 300,000 movements annually of critical equipment and supplies.

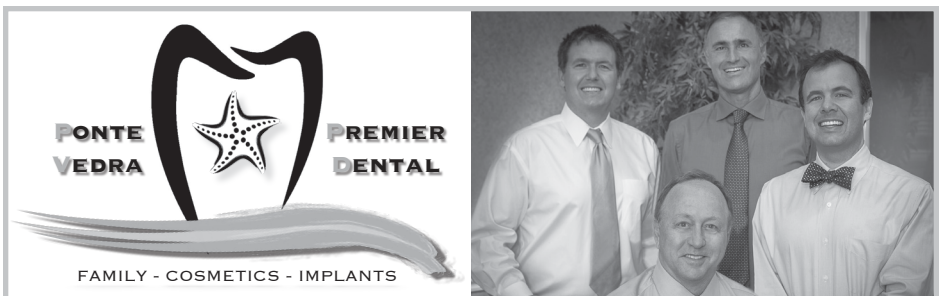
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Lotus Noodle Bar receives prestigious invitation

Less than a year after opening, Chef Barry Honan's Lotus Noodle Bar has received accolades that are bestowed on the nation's finest restaurants.

Honan and his team were invited to create a meal at the prestigious Beard House, an invitation extended by The James Beard Foundation to only the finest chefs in the country. His team "performed" for Foundation members and the public, presenting an exquisitely crafted dinner, with every detail and ingredient coordinated to perfection. Located at 56 Grove St. in the nation's oldest city, St. Augustine, Lotus Noodle Bar's reputation has gone beyond local favorite to a Southern stand-out.

"I've always had these goals and dreams for Lotus," says Honan, who is both chef and owner. "Seeing them come to fruition is incredibly satisfying. This is a milestone moment in my culinary journey, one that fills me with a profound sense of honor and reverence. To be invited to these hallowed halls is a distinction that I wear with the deepest respect and appreciation. Culinary legends have graced the Beard House with their genius. To follow in their footsteps is both humbling and inspiring. It is my sincere hope that through my cuisine, I can pay homage to the rich legacy of the James Beard House while also offering a glimpse into



Justice Willoughby, Barry Honan and Evan Stecher

Contributed photo

my own culinary vision and the unique perspective that Lotus brings."

The James Beard Foundation house director invites chefs based on specific criteria, including reputation, use of high-quality ingredients and demonstrated excellence in a particular discipline. The director makes the final selection based on the proposed menu and wine list, schedule and their judgment.

Honan and his crew served 74 guests on June 25 at the Beard House, a bespoke multi-level townhouse in Greenwich Village in New York. The home belonged to the late James Beard, a famous food critic, author and educator. Beard, who died in 1985, was known as a champion for regional and seasonally influenced American cuisine during a time when the nation was fascinated by mass-produced convenience foods.

This passion for fresh, seasonal cuisine is in line with Honan's culinary ethos. The Lotus team prepared two dishes for the diners at the Beard House. The first was a Japanese Congee or Okayu, a Japanese rice porridge featuring Kurobata bacon, Japanese mushrooms, truffle confit, Katsubushi Furikake, Negi and French Burgundy truffles. Their second dish was an Izakaya smoked potato salad with blue crab, yuzu koshō, Sunomono cucumber, fried garlic, Japanese ikura and toasted togarashi.

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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!!"



St. Augustine Distillery unveils reserve rum

St. Augustine Distillery has announced the release of its new Reserve Rum, available exclusively in the distillery's retail shop starting Saturday, July 20. This unique 100-proof spirit is a testament to the distillery's dedication to craftsmanship and innovation.

The Reserve Rum marks a significant milestone as not only the distillery's first ultra-premium rum, but also the first rum crafted from concept to completion under the tenure of new production head, Richard deMontmollin.

Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, this highly limited-edition rum is a blend of four-year-old rum, three-year-old "Queen's Share" rum and rum aged for more than a year in a Spanish orange wine (Vino de Naranja) cask. The blend is further aged for an additional year in a cask that previously aged Cognac for 10 years, resulting in an explosive and layered rum expression.

"Our Reserve Rum is the culmination of years of dedication, experimentation and passion," said deMontmollin, vice president of production at St. Augustine Distillery and the mind behind the spirit. "This release is a testament to our com-

mitment to pushing the boundaries of rum making and delivering a truly unique and exceptional spirit."

On the nose, the Reserve Rum reveals strong cane ethanol, ripe banana, Madagascar vanilla and earthy roots. The palate delivers a symphony of sweet orange, grassy notes, licorice, a hint of crisp mint and a creamy mouthfeel. The finish is marked by lingering cane sweetness and vanilla, with oak fading quickly.

The intricate process behind the Reserve Rum showcases St. Augustine Distillery's expertise in creating a diverse range of offerings from a single spirit type. This premium rum blends historic rum production processes with modern finishing techniques, using casks that previously housed Cognac, Madagascar vanilla beans, Orange Wine and the distillery's very own Florida Bourbon.

During the July 20 launch, the Reserve Rum will retail for \$150 per bottle exclusively in the distillery's gift shop, with a limited number of bottles available in this initial release. The gift shop is open every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For further information, call 904-825-4962 or go to staugustinedistillery.com.



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In the Arts



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Single tickets for Jacksonville Symphony's 75th Season on sale

The Jacksonville Symphony has announced that single tickets for its 75th Anniversary Season are now on sale. This season promises a celebration of exceptional programming with world premieres, award-winning artists, special events and more.

"It is with great joy and excitement that we unveil the Jacksonville Symphony's 75th Season," said Steven B. Libman, president and CEO of the Jacksonville Symphony. "Over the past seven decades, the symphony has served as the fabric of Jacksonville's cultural landscape, weaving together the threads of music and community spirit through uplifting experiences. This milestone is a testament to our mission of reaching new artistic heights year after year. The 2024-25 season promises to soar to an even higher caliber."

The season kicks off with a performance of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection" on Sept. 21, featuring operatic megastars Ailyn Pérez and Isabel Leonard, who starred in the film "Maestro" with Bradley Cooper, the Jacksonville Symphony Chorus, University of North Florida Chorale, Jacksonville University Singers, and the full power of the Jacksonville Symphony.

Other season highlights include:

• **World premiere of "Parrots + Palms: The Songs of Buffett & Fins":** A groundbreaking tribute to Jimmy Buffett and his musical "fins," co-produced by the Jacksonville Symphony



Courtney Lewis
Music Director

and Spot-On Entertainment.

• **Violins of Hope: Building Bridges Through the Power of Music:** An internationally acclaimed concert series featuring restored instruments from the Holocaust, showcasing resilience and remembrance.

• **Florida Blue Classical Series:** Featuring masterpieces such as Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 and Igor Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring."

• **World Premieres:** New works by artist-in-residence Conrad Tao, Carlos Simon and Angel Lam.

• **Pops Concerts:** Music from Cher, Donna Summer, Stevie Wonder, The Eagles and The Righteous Brothers.

• **Holiday Specials:** Including the return of Holiday Pops, First Coast Nutcracker, Handel's Messiah, and new additions like Big Band Holiday and Holiday Brass, Organ & Percussion.

• **Symphonic Nights at the Movies:** Featuring "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows — Part 1" in Concert, "Star Wars: A New Hope" in Concert, and "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows — Part 2" in Concert.

• **Take 6:** With 10 Grammy Awards, 10 Dove Awards and a Soul Train

Award, the multi-platinum sextet boasts six virtuosic voices blending in crystal clear harmony across genres.

"This season holds a special place in our hearts, reflecting on our rich history and unwavering commitment to artistic excellence," said Courtney Lewis, music director of the Jacksonville Symphony. "Each meticulously curated performance serves as a testament to our dedication to providing unforgettable, musical experiences. Our anniversary season heralds a new dawn, marked by exceptional programming and a revitalized brand embodying pride for our community, the vitality of our performances and the energy of our orchestra."

Single tickets and new subscriptions are available now. To explore the season lineup, go to JaxSymphony.org or call the box office at 904-354-5547.

The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida's leading nonprofit performing arts organization offering live performances at Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts and other venues throughout the area. Led by Libman and Lewis, the symphony reaches more than 113,000 individuals through over 125 performances each season. In addition, the symphony provides music instruction for youth and operates the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras.

For more information about the symphony, go to JaxSymphony.org.

Author's topic: How to edit a novel



Joni M. Fisher

Writing a novel is only the first step; editing ensures that it's the best possible novel. Award-winning crime writer Joni M. Fisher will share the best editing practices in her workshop, "Editing Down to the Bones" at the Ponte Vedra Writers meeting, 11 a.m. Saturday, July 20, at the

Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

Fisher will have a detailed handout tracking the editing process from first draft to finished product. Telling writers, "Don't bother editing until you complete the first draft," Fisher will cover structure, setting, scene and sequel, dialogue and more.

Fisher writes suspenseful crime stories about heroines who don't wait to be rescued. After working decades in journalism, she turned to writing about crime. Her Compass Crimes series has won awards from the Next Generation Indie Book Awards, The Christian Indie Book Awards, Reader's Favorite Book Awards, Kindle Book Awards and the Royal Palm Literary Awards. A member of the American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW) and a lifetime member of the Florida Writers Association (FWA), she also served on the Arts and Humanities Advisory Board for Southeastern University. As an instrument-rated private pilot, she reports for General Aviation News. Her fingerprints are on file with the FBI.

The Ponte Vedra Writers group is part of the Florida Writers Association, a statewide, membership organization dedicated to the support of both aspiring and published writers in any genre. The July 20 meeting is free and open to members and nonmembers alike.

For information on FWA go to floridawriters.org.

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The Ponte Vedra Athletic Association will have youth tackle football again this fall.



Noc-Pal Area Athletics' football teams will compete in the Pop Warner First Coast Conference.

YOUTH FALL SPORTS REGISTRATION ONGOING FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

By Anthony Richards

Summer is moving by quickly and soon enough fall sports will take over, and the first step toward that is ongoing with registration for fall sports now open.

Noc-Pal Area Athletics and the Ponte Vedra Athletic Association each have a slew of fall sports that are currently in the process of gathering players and coaches through sign-ups for the upcoming season.

Football is known as a traditional fall sport at all levels and that includes at the youngest of levels, as both associations

are looking for their next crop of children interested in taking part in youth tackle football this season.

The PVAA will have three leagues this fall divided up based on age groups, with Commander Blue for 6-, 7- and 8-year-olds, as well as Captain Blue for ages 9 and 10 and Admiral Blue for players 11 and 12 years old.

The league age is determined by the age the specific player will be on July 31.

According to the North Florida Youth Football Conference website, there is a waiting list for players in the Commander Blue and Captain Blue leagues, while

Admiral Blue is still accepting players.

The NPAA tackle football teams, also known as the "Big Catz," play in the Pop Warner First Coast Conference.

Four teams make up the association's football squads with 8-under, 10-under, 11-under and 12-under teams taking part.

Both associations play various other youth programs around the Greater Jacksonville and St. Johns County areas.

The NPAA promises that each player will get a minimum number of plays they are involved in during each game and have the ability to compete for specific positions and additional playing

time based on their effort, attitude and performance during practices.

Cheerleading will also be offered during the fall to accompany football and the NPAA is also looking to try something new by offering a wrestling program this fall.

The program will be open to boys and girls ages 7 to 18 and the sessions will be held at Nease High Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 7 p.m. from Aug. 13 to Oct. 31.

Both PVAA and NPAA are nonprofits and are therefore "non-school" programs that do not have any affiliation with Ponte Vedra High or Nease High.

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VOTNG IS NOW OPEN!




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/#!/

Legals	Dogs
<p>NOTICE TO CREDITORS</p> <p>IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION File No. CP24-0469 Division 59 IN RE: ESTATE OF DOUGLAS WAYDE MACKE, Deceased.</p> <p>The administration of the estate of DOUGLAS WAYDE MACKE, deceased, whose date of death was May 5, 2024, is pending in the Circuit Court for St. Johns County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, FL 32084. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.</p> <p>All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.</p> <p>All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.</p> <p>ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.</p> <p>NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.</p> <p>The date of first publication of this notice is July 11, 2024.</p> <p>Personal Representative: /s/ Brooke Michelle Macke BROOKE MICHELLE MACKE 112 Summerhill Circle St. Augustine, Florida 32086 Attorney for Personal Representative: /s/ James E. Bedsole JAMES E. BEDSOLE, ESQ. FL. Bar No.: 500194 2450 Old Moultrie Road, Ste. 104 St. Augustine, FL 32086 Tel: (904) 797-8701 service@bedsolelaw.com Legal 93869 Published 7/11/2024 and 7/18/2024 in St. Johns County's Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper</p>	<p>Puppy for Sale</p> <p>Shih-tzu neutered male puppy, 5 months old, up to date on shots, sweet tempered, loves children & adults & loves to play. \$900 Local in PV, call or text (904) 610-1233</p>  <p>If veterinary care is unavailable or unaffordable, ask for Happy Jack® animal healthcare for cats, dogs, & horses. At Tractor Supply®. Distributed by Florida Hardware 800-793-0926.</p> <p>Home Improvement/Service</p> <p>Don't Pay For Covered Home Repairs Again! Our home warranty covers ALL MAJOR SYSTEMS AND APPLIANCES. We stand by our service and if we can't fix it, we'll replace it! Pick the plan that fits your budget! Call: 1-888-521-2793</p>
<p>WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP & RESTORATION: A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do complete repairs to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-866-782-4060. Have zip code of service location ready when you call!</p>	<p>PROTECT YOUR HOME from pests safely and affordably. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders and other pests. Locally owned and affordable.</p> <p>Call for a quote or inspection today 1-877-644-9799 Have zip code of property ready when calling!</p>

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Voting is now open!



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VOTE DAILY - the last day to vote is July 26th at midnight!



Scan the QR code to vote for your favorites!

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Miscellaneous

Wesley Financial Group, LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt & fees cancelled in 2019. Get free info package & learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. **833-308-1971**

Replace your roof w/the best looking & longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! 3 styles & multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off install + Additional 10% off install (military, health & 1st responders.) **1-833-370-1234**

Miscellaneous

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Jacuzzi Bath Remodel can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer.) Offer ends 8/25/24. **Call 1-844-501-3208**

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CROSSWORD													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	
13								14					
15							16	17	18			19	
20						21					22		
23						24				25			
26			27	28	29				30				
			31						32				
			33					34					
35	36	37					38						
39						40					41	42	43
44					45						46		
47				48							49		
50			51						52	53	54		
55		56							57				
58									59				

ACROSS

- Book size
- Indonesian Island
- "The Sopranos" character
- Plants often found in stews
- Stern
- Atomic #52
- Often seen after a company name
- Silk garments
- Inhibiting hormone (abbr.)
- Type of beer
- Margarine
- Throw lightly
- Explains again
- Raccoon-like animal
- Sneaker parts
- Platforms
- Scored perfectly
- One's essence
- Strikes with a firm blow
- Makes tractors
- Music term
- Lack of energy
- Vestments
- __ and feathers
- Total
- Gobbler
- One with Japanese immigrant parents
- Type of braking system (abbr.)
- Home of Rudy Flyer
- Manageable
- Lugged
- Irritated
- Sea eagles
- Warm seasons

- Rocker's accessory
- Very important person
- It precedes two
- Flavored
- Musical notes
- String instrument (slang)
- Mister
- Fine, light linen fabric
- Absence of bacteria
- Discounts
- Area units
- A description of one's life
- Gazelles
- Plumbing fixture
- Makes especially happy
- One side of something many-sided
- Frosts

- Defunct monetary unit of Guinea
- Female animal species
- School terms
- Written law
- Unpleasant aroma
- Nuclear weapon
- One who challenges
- Opposite of first
- Able to be utilized
- Less interesting
- Implants
- Canister
- Gestures
- After B
- Romanian monetary unit
- Long-term memory
- Cash machine
- The Volunteer State

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

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

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

DOWN

- About visual sense
- Part of a horse's saddle
- In a way, interchanged



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