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Thursday, July 25, 2024

PonteVedraRecorder.com

VOLUME 55, NO. 39 \$1.00

Proposed tax rates approved

By Shaun Ryan

On Tuesday, July 16, The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners approved the proposed millage rates for fiscal year 2025. For the fifth consecutive year, the rate remains flat, though increases in property values will result in increased tax bills.

The vote was 4-1 with Commissioner Krista Joseph opposing passage. She argued that the board should consider approving the rolled-back rate instead of the proposed

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\$1.8M Vilano Beach Oceanfront Park project completed

For The Recorder

St. Johns County joined the St. Johns Cultural Council and Vilano Beach Main Street on Wednesday, July 17, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the reopening of Vilano Beach Oceanfront Park, 2752 Anahma Drive, St. Augustine, following its \$1.8 million renovation.

The renovation project included:

- Improvements to the northern walk-over to bring into ADA compliance
- Renovation of existing restrooms
- Construction of a covered performance stage with terraced seating
- Construction of new outdoor showers
- Construction of changing stations
- Installation of a new climbing play



St. Johns County photo

Commissioner Henry Dean cuts the ribbon on the completed Vilano Beach Oceanfront Park project, while stakeholders gather round.

PROJECT continues on Page 5

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



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

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

BRIEFS

Voter registration party change deadline Monday

The deadline for St. Johns County residents to register to vote, or for registered voters to change their party affiliation, for the upcoming Aug. 20 primary election is Monday, July 22.

Online voter registration is available at registertovoteflorida.gov. Voter registration is also available at local public libraries, tax collector offices and the Supervisor of Elections Office during regular business hours.

The Aug. 20 primary election is open to all registered voters in St. Johns County. Voters are encouraged to go to votesjc.gov and use "My Voter Status" to view their sample ballot ahead of the July 22 deadline.

Florida is a closed primary state, therefore Republican voters will receive a Republican ballot, Democrat voters will receive a Democratic ballot, and voters with No Party Affiliation or a minor party will receive a Nonpartisan ballot and cannot vote for party candidates.

Universal Primary Contests are the exception. There is one Universal Primary Contest on the 2024 primary election ballot: Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller (Rep). This contest is open to all voters and will appear on all ballots.

Voters can also go to votesjc.gov to update voter information or request a vote-by-mail ballot. Voters who need to update their address are encouraged to do so before Election Day so that they will know their correct polling location.

For more information, go to votesjc.gov or call the Elections Office at 904-823-2238.

Clerk's Office plans passport event

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller will hold a special Passport Saturday Event from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 3, at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center in St. Augustine. The extended business hours make applying for a passport more convenient for those seeking to travel this upcoming season.

The Recording Department will be open on Aug. 3 to accept and review applications for first-time passports, new passports for persons whose previous passport was issued

more than 15 years ago, minors under age 16, or whose passport was lost, stolen or damaged. Other passports must be renewed by mail using Form DS-82, which is available at travel.state.gov.

Anyone traveling internationally must have a passport book, including infants, and every applicant for a new passport must appear in person, regardless of age. According to the U.S. Department of State, the current processing times for routine service are

BRIEFS continues on Page 9

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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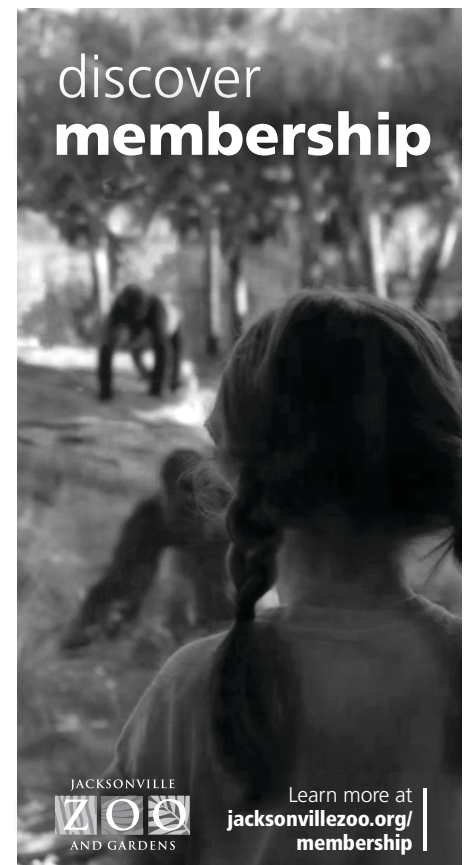
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Primary Election Guide to be published



The Ponte Vedra Recorder is preparing to publish its Primary Election Guide, which will come out Aug. 8. We hope to include a brief blurb and photo of each candidate on the ballot.

Candidates who would like to participate can email a portrait-style photo and a list of qualifications they would like to highlight to shaun@pontevedrarecorder.com. Alternatively, they may choose to list issues they would like to address if elected.

Please note: Due to spatial limitations, we can only accept up to 100 words of text.

Longer responses will be edited. We also reserve the right to edit text for spelling and grammar where needed, though we will make every effort to preserve your wording. Please do not name opponents.

The deadline for submissions is noon Aug. 5, though candidates are encouraged to send submissions as soon as possible.

The most successful photos would be jpegs sent as attachments, though we will try to work with other formats where possible. Please try to avoid sending Apple photos that use the HEIC extension.

Note the blurb and photo are not connected to any paid advertisement and is a free service offered to all candidates identified for the upcoming election as listed on the St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections website. This is wholly a project of The Ponte Vedra Recorder and is not in any way associated with the St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Office or any other entity.

For advertising opportunities, please contact publisher Susan Griffin at susan@pontevedrarecorder.com.

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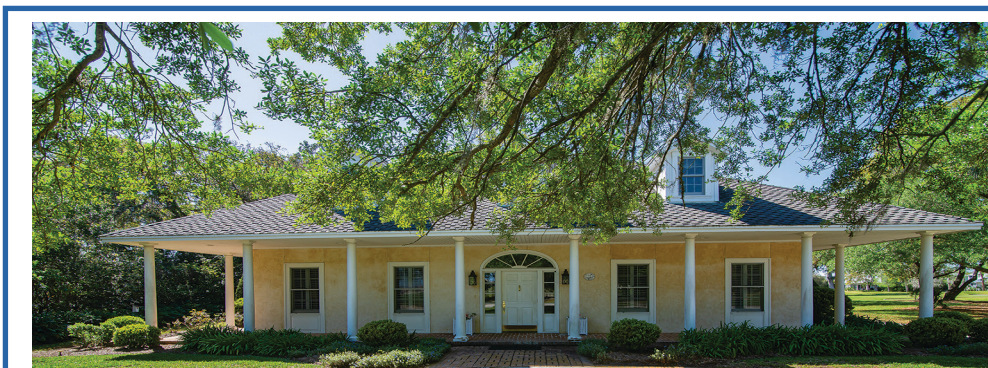
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OBITUARIES



Diane Lazelle Tyler

Diane Lazelle Tyler passed away peacefully at Community Hospice McGraw Center on July 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, Alexxis and Liberty; step-children and a great-grandson.

The memorial service was held at 11 a.m. July 22, 2024, 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

Sue Ellen Barber

Sue Ellen Barber, 78, of Ponte Vedra Beach died July 12, 2024. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Austin Fowlkes Barbour

Austin Fowlkes Barbour, 93, of Ponte Vedra Beach died July 1, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

David Chen

David Chen, 100, of Ponte Vedra died July 14, 2024. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Stephanie Michelle Cooper

Stephanie Michelle Cooper, 60, of Jacksonville died July 17, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Reece William Cramer

Reece William Cramer, 67, of Ponte Vedra died July 16, 2024. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Paul Ray Day

Paul Ray Day, 85, of Jacksonville died

July 20, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Thomas Arthur Dobrowolski

Thomas Arthur Dobrowolski, 36, of Jacksonville Beach died July 19, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Scott Edward Gilpin

Scott Edward Gilpin, 60, of Neptune Beach died July 15, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre 904-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com.

Virginia Ann Kane

Virginia Ann Kane, 89, of Ponte Vedra Beach died July 17, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Shirley King

Shirley King, 88, of Ponte Vedra died July 13, 2024. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

John Koch

John Koch, 82, of Ponte Vedra died July 8, 2024. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery –

904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Katharina LeBlanc

Katharina LeBlanc, 98, of Jacksonville Beach died July 15, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Sean Patrick McAteer

Sean Patrick McAteer, 56, of Jacksonville died July 16, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com.

Edwin J. Monsma

Edwin J. Monsma, 93, of Ponte Vedra Beach died July 16, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Patricia Ann Murphy

Patricia Ann Murphy, 91, of Atlantic Beach died July 20, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Bobby Purvis

Bobby Purvis, 90, of Ponte Vedra Beach died July 6, 2024. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

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Project

Continued from 1

structure and recreation features

- Renovation of the existing south walkover
- Addition of ADA parking in the existing parking lot

Matthews DCCM (formerly Matthews Design Group) and POND were the design consultants on the project, with E.B. Morris General Contractors Inc. leading construction. St. Johns County funded the renovation project's \$1,814,400 budget through park impact fees and the Tree Bank Fund.

District 5 Commissioner Henry Dean praised the community's tireless dedication to seeing the park improved.

"When I first became a commissioner in 2016 and Vilano Beach was part of my district, [Vilano Beach community member Vivian Browning] called me and sat down with me and she was like a pit bull on a pork chop ... and we got this done," Dean said. "We now have a very, very vibrant Main Street, which has been very active in getting this project done."

Linda LaCerva, president of Vilano

Beach Main Street, emphasized the county's collaboration with locals to ensure a shared vision was brought to life to everyone's satisfaction.

"They had at least four community meetings to bring the community's ideas together, three times before the Design Review Board, and they didn't just have a conversation; they actually implemented what we wanted to do," LaCerva said. "We can't be happier than we are."

Parks and Recreation Director Ryan Kane remarked how satisfying it was for his department to be able to help provide Vilano locals with another space to gather and enjoy their remarkable slice of St. Johns County's 42 miles of beaches.

"The most important piece is the community, and this came together from community involvement," Kane said. "There were concerns that used to be held down at the Airstream Row ... and that's why we're sitting here today, because that [type of performance space] is coming back and hitting that need for the community."

After the speakers were finished and the turquoise ribbon was cut, attendees enjoyed food, drinks and live music on the new stage courtesy of Vilano Beach Main Street.

Tax rates

Continued from 1

rate. The rolled-back rate would generate the same revenue in terms of dollars as last year, which would not necessarily account for inflation or accommodate new expenses.

Commissioner Henry Dean expressed agreement with Joseph's concerns but, since the rate can be lowered but not increased after approval, supported the proposed rate for the time being.

The \$1.2 billion budget is actually a reduction from last year's \$1.67 billion spending plan.

The proposed aggregate rate is \$6.83 per \$1,000 of taxable value, of which \$4.65 is for the general fund. The aggregate rolled-back rate is \$6.38 per \$1,000 of taxable value, of which \$4.32 would be for the general fund.

The proposed rate would bring in \$40.8 million (\$27.9 million for the general fund). The rolled-back rate would bring in \$15.7 million (\$10.9 million for the general fund), a reduc-

tion of about \$25 million to fund the budget as presented.

There has been a 13.2% increase in taxable value over the past year, according to calculations by the St. Johns County Property Appraiser's Office, which is why the rate, while remaining flat, will generate more tax revenue. Still, due to the state's Save Our Homes provision, homesteaded property owners will experience only a 3% increase over last year. Non-homesteaded property tax increases are capped at 10%.

If the rate is ultimately approved, the owner of a homesteaded property valued at \$500,000 would see a tax bill of about \$3,074 in 2025.

The board unanimously authorized completion of the budget and set the first public hearing at 5:01 p.m. Sept. 3 in the county auditorium. Once adopted, the budget will go into effect Oct. 1, 2024.

For further information, go to sjcfl.us/departments/office-of-management-and-budget.

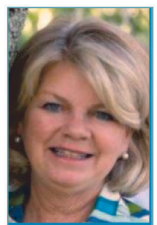
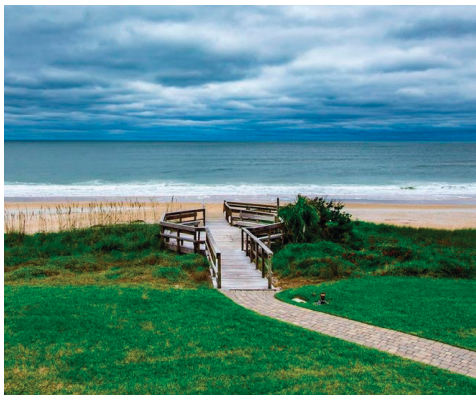
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Hannah and Carlos Lopez are the husband-and-wife real estate team *The Lopez Group*. But when they aren't matching homes to prospective homeowners, they own and operate *Fire & Ash*, a mobile cigar and espresso lounge based in St. Augustine.

Hannah and Carlos Lopez

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me about Fire & Ash.

Hannah Lopez: We launched in March. The concept of Fire & Ash is a super-sleek mobile trailer. On the inside, we have a custom-made humidor and also an espresso machine. ...

Carlos is from Havana, Cuba, so we really wanted to tie in a lot of his culture with kind of like a Cuban flair, and so we figured that espresso and cigars are really the perfect way to tie it together.

We offer a pop-up lounge, as well, for different events, so people can network and hang out and relax while they smoke their cigars. ...

They (customers) order from the window, and they can smell the coffee and see the premium cigars that we offer.

Carlos is the cigar king of the truck, so he's the one who can help guide consumers with what would be a good match for them.

Are there any brands you want to mention?

Carlos Lopez: We just have pretty much very popular brands like Montecristo, Romeo y Julieta and Perdomo, but we can carry any brand out there, and we do rotate our inventory.

What kinds of events do you bring your truck to?

Hannah Lopez: We can take it to any sort of private event. Right now, we're kind of looking at golf tournaments, corporate events, private events — even birthday parties and stuff like that — but really, we like to do it on a higher end, higher scale. So, like a wedding, where there are enough people who can enjoy it. We can really provide an elevated service for that specific event.

I think golf tournaments are great and the cigars are really a great fit, because they can buy as many as they want, take them out to the course, and they can really enjoy those throughout the day.

You have a really cool portable lounge setup.

Hannah Lopez: We have a black couch and four chairs. We also offer four-foot-tall ash trays that go around the lounge with the huge rug and then some cocktail side tables.

Really, it's just like a comfortable place for them to sit and smoke and just kind of enjoy themselves.

Have you ever done anything like this before?

Carlos Lopez: No, we've both actually worked in local cigar bars, but this is our first time running a business of this type. We are the only ones in St. Augustine and Duval County doing this. ... I realized we have a lot of events here in St. Johns County where cigars could be a great fit. But no one is providing that service. And that's where we came in and took advantage of the opportunity.

Tell me a little about your backgrounds.

Carlos Lopez: Like Hannah said, I am from Havana. I came to the U.S. in 2011. I moved straight from Havana to St. Augustine. I've been here since.

My background is really in law enforcement. I was a deputy for St. Johns County for five years until I decided to join my wife, Hannah, doing real estate. That's our fulltime gig right now. I've always loved investing in real estate, so that's really my passion — and building anything!



Contributed photos

Carlos and Hannah Lopez await customers at the window of their Fire & Ash truck.



The portable lounge setup.

Hannah Lopez: We're very entrepreneurial. I think that's where the drive definitely comes from.

I got into real estate after my first child was born, so right around 2019. I was on a team before. Then in 2021 I decided to go out on my own. Now, Carlos and I are The Lopez Group. So, it's he and I together as a husband-and-wife team.

I'm in real estate because I love to help people, and I'm all about building relationships and guiding them to financial freedom or whatever their goal is with real estate.

So, we've been doing real estate together, and now we have Fire & Ash, and I think Fire & Ash is a great way, also, to be involved in the community and get to know more people.

What do you like most about living in this area?

Hannah Lopez: I was born and raised here in St. Augustine, and I love where we live so much. It's so like a small town, with a "beach" feel. ... We just love having the simple life, and with kids, we're able to pick up and go to the beach when we want to. We can go downtown. We can explore different areas. There's always something to enjoy.



The Fire & Ash truck.

After high school, I lived in Spain for about a year and a half as a live-in nanny, and to me being in St. Augustine really reminds me of Spain. I love the cultural aspect, and it's really cool also to see the Latin community really growing here.

How can readers contact Fire & Ash?

Hannah Lopez: They can look at our Instagram, which links directly to our website, fireandashevents.com.

On Instagram, we are fireandashcigartruck, and our email address is hello@fireandashevents.com. Or they can call me directly: 904-615-3092.

Anything else?

Hannah Lopez: We are definitely open to collaborating with local places, maybe a resort that wants us for any sort of special night, something where we can really provide a service for them and their guests. And maybe a restaurant or a rooftop bar or something like that. We're definitely expanding to do, hopefully, a smaller setup that won't involve the trailer.

But we're definitely open to collaboration.

MSD agrees to trash collection contract, audit with county

By Anthony Richards

Residents in the Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District will have the same trash, recycle and yard waste service they have been accustomed to just with a different provider after the MSD board unanimously voted to accept a contract with St. Johns County and FCC Environmental Services Florida, LLC at a special meeting on July 19.

The county's new contract is set to go into effect beginning Aug. 1, which meant that the MSD had to schedule the special meeting to discuss the topic solely after much discussion and disagreement with the pricing of the deal at the most recent MSD meeting on July 8.

One of the sticking points was the fact that the MSD would have to pay roughly double the rate they had been paying for

the same service parameters.

According to MSD chairman Al 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 had already been lowered from the initial price FCC presented to the MSD of \$35.82.

Hollon met further with county and FCC officials and worked out some stipulations to the contract with MSD attorney Wayne Flowers prior to presenting it to be voted on by the board during the special meeting.

"I've done everything I can to get the price lower, but that's the best we can come up with at this time," Hollon said.

One of the main stipulations added to the contract by the MSD is to have an audit conducted within 30 days of the effective date of the contract, which will be used to calculate a proper number of

homes in the MSD that are not conducive to have a rear-door pickup service.

FCC has agreed to adapt the overall price to reflect the findings of the audit by only pricing those households for two-day service pickup and not for the rear-door option.

According to Hollon, he believes the audit could find up to a couple of hundred houses that could be found not suitable for the service, which could possibly drop the MSD's total from 1,403 housing units to around 1,100 receiving the rear-door pickup.

"I do feel like this is a reasonable rate that they (FCC) have brought forth," St. Johns County Public Works Director Greg Caldwell said.

Caldwell also stated that each of FCC's trucks will be equipped with third-eye technology, which would implement six

different camera angles on the vehicles, which will allow for the best service possible.

Trustee Kitty Switkes asked if the board could come back and make further changes to the contract in a year? Hollon said yes.

Overall, the county's deal with FCC is a seven-year contract with two five-year renewals and would increase the MSD's waste collection budget from \$19,333 to an estimated \$36,740 per month, assuming the audit finds 300 homes that are not viable for side-door pickup.

"We (St. Johns County) are going to dip into our reserves for solid waste to pay for this year's increase with the understanding of making sure that we have a new provider that will provide a high level of service, which we totally expect them to do," Caldwell said.

Women's Giving Alliance awards \$750K to nonprofits

The Women's Giving Alliance (WGA), an initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, announced \$750,000 in grants to 18 Northeast Florida nonprofit organizations — the largest grant pool in the alliance's 23-year history — and a new grantmaking focus at its annual Member Forum in May.

This historic grantmaking was assisted by a challenge grant that raised \$108,000 from members, as well as a focused emphasis during the last 18 months on growing the number of members, which now exceeds 445 women, who each contribute annually to the grants pool.

"WGA was founded with the critical mission of improving the lives of women and girls across Northeast Florida," said Sheila Collier, president of WGA. "We have grown from a small group of committed individuals into a powerhouse grant maker. Our recent growth in membership directly translates into increased support for women and girls

across Northeast Florida."

The grants were ratified by about 250 members during WGA's Member Forum held on May 23 at the University of North Florida's Adam W. Herbert University Center, which featured remarks by Mayor Donna Deegan, a WGA member and the city's first woman mayor.

Eighteen nonprofits will receive one-year grants for the 2024-25 grant year to address client basic needs such as housing, health services, workforce support and other areas. Among the grant recipients were: Betty Griffin Center (\$50,000), Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center (\$10,000), Feeding Northeast Florida (\$50,000), Hubbard House (\$50,000), Operation New Hope (\$40,377), ReThreaded (\$50,000) and Sulzbacher (\$50,000).

"For more than 20 years, the Women's Giving Alliance has led the way in leveraging the power of collective giving in Northeast Florida," said Isaiah M. Oliver,

president of The Community Foundation. "This year's grantmaking has set a new record for impact, and I wish to extend my congratulations to the strategic philanthropists of WGA on this tremendous achievement."

WGA also announced its new grantmaking and community involvement focus for the 2025-26 grant year and beyond: "Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls; Preventing, Surviving, Thriving."

The new focus area was selected following rigorous research, discussion with community leaders and a vote of members. The research found violence against women and girls includes child abuse and neglect, harassment and bullying, intimate partner and domestic violence, predatory social media, rape and sex (human) trafficking. These categories also include subsets such as elder abuse, violence while homeless and cyberbullying.

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Relic installation part of Diocese's 'Day of Youth' celebration

By Anthony Richards

The City of St. Augustine has so much history to offer anyone who visits, but soon it will have another draw for people around the world to come and see with a relic, representing the spirit and legacy of Blessed Carlo Acutis.

Acutis' relic will be placed alongside that of St. Benedict the Moor and new statues of both influential figures at St. Benedict the Moor Mission Church located at 86 Martin Luther King Ave. in St. Augustine.

The installation of the relic will mark the church's new status as a pilgrimage destination for Catholics across the world to visit.

A special ceremony making the relic an official part of the site is scheduled on Aug. 3 and will be part of a larger "Day of Youth," celebration the Diocese of St. Augustine is putting on for the community.

Bishop Erik Pohlmeier has invited the entire community to come out and take part in the festivities, which will include a Mass at St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church beginning at 10 a.m. followed by lunch and games from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

There will also be a scavenger hunt designed to get the entire family involved from 12:30 to 3 p.m. and some of



Contributed photo

Blessed Carlo Acutis

the stops will include the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent, Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine, Tolomato Cemetery and the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche at Mission Nombre de Dios.

It is fitting the events are all part of a grander "Day of Youth" celebration because it celebrates the life and inspiration of Blessed Carlo Acutis, who was a digital-age influencer on his path to sainthood before dying from leukemia at the



Photo courtesy of Visit St. Augustine

A relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis will be placed alongside that of St. Benedict the Moor along with new statues of both influential figures at St. Benedict the Moor Mission Church located at 86 Martin Luther King Ave. in St. Augustine.

age of 15 in 2006.

He was known for his devotion to Eucharistic miracles and Marian apparitions, which he catalogued on a website he designed.

Acutis will hold a historic place as he will be the first Millennial saint, having been born in Generation Y.

Pope Francis and the Consistory of Cardinals voted to approve his canoniza-

tion as well as that of 14 others and he is expected to be proclaimed a saint during the 2025 Jubilee.

Interested individuals and families can register by going to BlessedCarlo.com, which ensures adequate seating and catering for participants. There is a suggested donation of \$25 per person, which covers lunch, memorabilia and activities during the day.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Alaimo touts record on commission

To the Editor:

I'm Roy Alaimo and have humbly served on the St. Johns County Commission in District 3 after being appointed by Gov. DeSantis in 2022.

I stand for limited government, ensuring that power remains in the hands of the people, and I believe lowering taxes is essential to promote economic prosperity and protect your hard-earned money. I advocated for slow and controlled growth to maintain the character and charm of our community. I also support infra-

structure solutions to help ease the traffic congestion we are facing.

Supporting our veterans is a top priority. They have sacrificed so much for our freedom and way of life, and we must ensure they receive the care and respect they deserve. Additionally, I stand firmly with our first responders, ensuring they have the resources and support needed to keep our community safe.

Lastly, I am dedicated to protecting our quality of life, ensuring that St. Johns County remains a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family.

Roy Alaimo For St. Johns County Commission District 3




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Briefs

Continued from 2

between six and eight weeks and expedited service is between two and three weeks.

For more information and details about required documentation, fees and acceptable forms of payment, go to stjohnsclerk.com/passports.

Nature journaling event is Aug. 1

Join nature journaling instructor Elaine Bergstrom at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve to explore the wonders at the reserve on Aug. 1. Each month focuses on different topics using words, pictures and numbers to learn more about what we observe.

The event will be held from 10 a.m. to noon. Meet at the GTM Research Reserve Trailhead Pavilion, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

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

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

Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

The Palm Valley Market is held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Tuesday inside the Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Road. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more.

NAI Hallmark brokers \$3M sale of commercial property

NAI Hallmark, the largest locally owned full-service commercial real estate brokerage and property management firm in Jacksonville, has announced the sale of the property at 815 S. 3rd St., Jacksonville Beach, for \$3 million. Vice President Austin Kay brokered the transaction on behalf of the buyer, BBK Realty Investments. The property was sold vacant, and NAI Hallmark will handle the leasing.

The 7,028-square-foot automotive retail property is located in Jacksonville Beach and tracks more than 39,800 vehicles passing daily. Situated amidst major national and regional tenants, this property has exceptional visibility and is ideal for businesses seeking high-traffic locations.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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Pin Up Paws Calendar makes history with repeat winner

By Anthony Richards

Since the St. Augustine Humane Society created the Pin Up Paws Calendar as a fundraising idea it has continued to not only raise money but also make history over the past couple of years.

It started last year when Katherine the cat received the most votes in the annual contest and became the first cat to ever grace the cover of the calendar after dogs had held the main image for the first 12 years of the competition.

However, Katherine the cat did not stop there but followed it up by being the first back-to-back winner in the calendar's history.

She tallied 4,920 votes, which edged out Cupcake, another cat, who garnered 4,665 votes to give cats the top two spots in the contest.

Of the 13 pets entered in this year's contest, they were the only two to receive more than 4,000 votes.

Katherine is a former shelter cat and has proved to be a very popular cat not just amongst her family but with the local community as well.

She is owned by Jay Johnson who says



Contributed photo

Katherine the cat won the Pin Up Paws Calendar Contest for the second consecutive year.

she loves cold water to drink and is a fan of snuggling while watching television.

She also enjoys playing hide and seek and has a talent for waking up people before their alarm is set to go off and does so with sweet kisses.

Each vote is worth \$1 toward the St. Augustine Humane Society.

The goal was for Katherine to raise

\$2,500 and she surpassed it by nearly double by raising \$4,920 en route to helping the Humane Society raise a total of \$36,089 during the contest.

The 2025 Pin Up Paws calendar will be officially revealed during the Pin Up Paws Party on Oct. 24. This upcoming year's calendar's theme is "Sweet Things."



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Nuñez endorses Leek for state Senate seat



Tom Leek

Florida Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nuñez has endorsed Republican State Rep. Tom Leek (R-Ormond Beach) for the open state Senate District 7 seat.

“I am proud to endorse Tom Leek for the Florida Senate,” said Nuñez. “Tom has been a friend and a colleague for over a decade.

He is a great man, a strong leader and the right candidate for the people of District 7. He will continue to fight for our conservative principles and ensure that Florida remains the freest state in the nation. Tom has my unwavering support and I look forward to welcoming him back to Tallahassee.”

“To have the endorsement of my dear friend Jeanette Nuñez means the world to me and my family,” said Leek. “Thank you, Lt. Governor, for your kind words and for your tireless efforts in making Florida the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.”

Clerk’s Office intern leads policy change for injunction petitioners

For The Record

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller’s office recently reported that it is proud to announce a policy change for injunction cases, proposed by recent Clerk’s Office intern and Florida State University student Hannah Vanover.

“This policy proposal will aid law enforcement in leveraging social media to locate and serve respondents in injunctions cases,” said John Rundgren, clerk designee. “We appreciate Hannah and our partners at the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office for spearheading this initiative.”

During the required final presentation, Vanover highlighted limitations in the current Service Information Sheet filled out by petitioners and used to aid law enforcement in serving respondents. Her proposal suggested the information sheet should include a field to list social media accounts to prevent service evasion. The St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office acknowledged and supported the additional element to expedite service and streamline injunction proceedings.

“Interning with the St. John’s County Clerk’s Office opened my eyes to how the policies I had been reading and writing about in my schooling were actually practiced,” said Vanover. “Seeing firsthand the work done at the county level allowed me to identify areas for improvement directly, which I might not have been able to see from an outside perspective. Using social media to help protect victims of domestic violence and enabling their cases to be

heard in a timely manner will ensure that impacted citizens feel better protected and served by their county government.”

Vanover is a freshman in the Masters of Applied American Politics and Public Policy program at Florida State University. During her four-week internship in the Family Division, she gained experience interacting with petitioners and observing injunction court. Vanover aspires to pursue a career in policy writing after completing her degree to better serve the community.

The Clerk’s Office Internship Program is designed to expose high school and college students to a career in local government. For more information on internship programs, go to stjohnsclerk.com/internship-information-and-forms.

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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.

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Contributed photos



Nease High School student Daniel Zacharia participated in First Florida Credit Union's 2024 Camp C.E.O. experience.



Creekside High School 10th grader Andrew Quintanilla and Bartram Trail High School 12th grader Katelyn Bitner work on their Camp C.E.O. project, which won the week's competition.

Students gain essential financial information with Camp C.E.O.

In 2017, First Florida Credit Union's Camp C.E.O. was established to address a pressing issue: the rising student loan debt and the alarming statistics showing that two-thirds of adults lacked basic financial literacy. Recognizing the gap in our school curriculum, Camp C.E.O. set out to equip a generation of students with the financial knowledge they need to navigate college and beyond.

Camp C.E.O. covers essential topics like budgeting, understanding credit reports and scores, managing credit cards and loans and fostering entrepreneurial skills. Hosted annually at First Florida Credit Union's St. Johns County branch, Camp C.E.O. offers this free program to 20-25 local teens every summer. This year's camp was hosted between July 15 and 19.

"We taught them valuable tools for creating a budget, for getting a loan for the first time and even investing," said Keith Manze, community relations specialist for First Florida Credit Union. "And the whole purpose is to get them ahead of other teenagers."

Manze noted that it is not all lecture based. It is very hands-on with students also creating their own businesses, prod-

ucts or apps over the course of the week, then presenting it "Shark Tank" style in front of fellow students and a group of judges.

"We learned about credit history, credit cards and how to use them, and retirement plans and investing and all that," said Daniel Zacharia, 14, a Nease High School student. "It was really fun to learn and interesting."




Camp C.E.O. was held at First Florida Credit Union's County Road 210 location in St. Johns County.



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His Excellency Philippe Étienne presents Lawrence Yanovitch with the insignia of chevalier of the Legion of Honor.



Pictured from left, Julien Migeon, His Excellency Philippe Étienne, Her Excellency Denise Campbell Bauer, Lawrence Yanovitch, Natalie Portman, His Excellency Aurélien Lechevallier.

Yanovitch receives France's Legion of Honor

Lawrence J. Yanovitch, a son of Lorraine and the late Joseph Yanovitch of Ponte Vedra Beach, has been knighted into the Légion d'Honneur, or Legion of Honor, France's highest order of merit.

His Excellency Philippe Étienne, who served as France's ambassador to the United States from 2019 to 2023, presented the insignia of chevalier of the Legion of Honor on behalf of the French president to Yanovitch, 63, during a ceremony held on Saturday, June 22, at the Paris residence of the U.S. ambassador to France and Monaco.

Yanovitch received the honor in recognition of his life's work on behalf of low-income populations and for the key role he has played in mobilizing the world's biggest investors and asset managers to work collectively to combat climate change.

Along with Étienne, speakers included U.S. Ambassador Denise Campbell Bauer, French Ambassador Aurélien Lechevallier and Academy Award-winning actress and activist Natalie Portman, who first met Yanovitch through their shared passion and support for global microfinance network FINCA.

The guests at the ceremony, which included approximately 100 members of the international community, diplomatic corps and family and friends, heard Portman and the other speakers describe Yanovitch's journey: from a child being raised on the Space Coast by his mother, a registered pediatric and neonatal nurse, and Air Force officer father, to an international upbringing in pre-revolutionary Iran and elsewhere when his father joined the Boeing Corp., to an early microfinance career with Catholic Relief Services in Thailand and later with FINCA, to senior positions with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, GSMA (the global trade association for mobile network operators and telcos) as president of its Foundation, to most recently the coordinator of a network of global



Lawrence Yanovitch and longtime friend Natalie Portman, actress and humanitarian.



Lawrence Yanovitch, chevalier of the Legion of Honor.



Lawrence Yanovitch delivers his remarks at the Paris residence of the U.S. Ambassador to France and Monaco upon being knighted into the Legion of Honor.

financial leaders committed to accelerating investments in renewable energy and other climate solutions.

The speakers expressed appreciation for what they characterized as a very American spirit of optimism that Yano-

vitch brings to his commitments, positioning his embrace of Paris within a long tradition, starting with Benjamin Franklin, of Americans falling in love with the City of Light.

Mrs. Yanovitch, 90, was unable to travel to Paris for the ceremony but attended via videoconference and received greetings and expressions of gratitude from all the speakers. She was joined by other members of Yanovitch's family, including his brother George, sister-in-law Teri and sister Debra, all of Central Florida, who also watched from home.

In his own remarks (delivered in French and English), Yanovitch spoke of the love he has felt for France since his first visit to that country at the age of 12.

His relocation was facilitated in 2017 by a visa France grants to people of exceptional talents, with full citizenship granted in 2019.

Yanovitch, who also retains his U.S. citizenship, spoke of the deep bonds between the U.S. and its oldest ally, and his gratitude to President Emmanuel Macron for his inspirational leadership.

Yanovitch also described his sense of awe at having met, just three weeks prior at a ceremony on Omaha Beach, fellow Legion of Honor recipient Arlester Brown, a 100-year-old veteran from Washington, D.C.

Along with members of the military who fought for France's liberation, other American recipients of the Legion of Honor include inventors such as Thomas Edison, the Wright brothers and Alexander Graham Bell; writers, musicians and artists such as James Baldwin, Patti Smith, Leonard Bernstein, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Walt Disney and Francis Ford Coppola; economists and business leaders such as Jeff Bezos, Alan Greenspan and Charles Goodyear; and activists and advocates such as Helen Keller.

Since the Legion of Honor's founding in 1802, approximately 10,000 Americans have received the honor.

Preventing, healing injuries play a role in every sports season

By Anthony Richards

With the school year about to start in the coming weeks a new high school sports season is also around the corner, which means not only a chance to cheer on and root for the local teams but also the risk of injury that accompanies playing the games.

However, there are steps to take to make sure these injuries are handled properly and in some cases even prevented.

Although physical therapy is often associated with taking place after an injury has occurred, there are growing ways that are proactive and designed to help prevent injury.

“We offer pre-injury screenings as a way to get a baseline to see if there are areas we need to focus on,” said Mick Janusko, owner of ACTive Family Physical Therapy.

According to Janusko, the screenings can help pinpoint areas of the body that may need further strengthening to



Photo by Anthony Richards

INJURIES continues on **Page 18**

Football is a sport that requires a mobility and quick cutting focus in its physical therapy approach.

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Ascension St. Vincent's in top 15 nationwide

Fortune and PINC AI have named St. Vincent's one of the nation's top 15 health systems for 2024, marking the first time it has made the distinguished list.

St. Vincent's is the only hospital system in Northeast Florida and one of only two in Florida to earn a spot in the 2024 list. The other Florida system in the top 15 is St. Vincent's sister Ascension Florida system, Sacred Heart in the Panhandle. St. Vincent's footprint spans across Northeast Florida and includes hospitals in Riverside, Southside, Clay County and St. Johns County.

This year, more than 350 health systems in the United States were assessed for the top-15 list, which involved an analysis of

eight performance indicators, including data on inpatient deaths, patient complications, health care-associated infections, operational efficiency and patient experience — all of which are metrics St. Vincent's outperformed other systems that do not appear in the top 15.

"St. Vincent's inclusion on this list is a testament to every associate's commitment to providing high-quality, patient-centered care at our hospitals and facilities," said Dr. Syed Jafri, chief clinical officer for Ascension Florida. "We are blessed and thankful for our talented teams that have enabled our health system to be honored nationally. We look forward to continuing to serve those

who need help the most."

Additionally, PINC AI estimates that if all health systems performed at the same level as this year's top performers, it could have saved more than 220,000 additional lives and an additional 196,000 patients could have been complication-free during a given year.

Performance rankings like these provide an objective measure of a health system's ability to deliver consistent high-performing care across the communities they serve. To view the list of all 15 hospital systems, go to Fortune's website.

Ascension St. Vincent's, based in Jacksonville, operates four hospitals and more

than 90 other sites of care and employs more than 5,300 associates. In fiscal year 2023, Ascension St. Vincent's provided more than \$87.7 million in community benefit and care for persons living in poverty.

Ascension is a faith-based health care organization dedicated to transformation through innovation across the continuum of care. As one of the leading nonprofit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable.

For further information, go to ascension.org.

Museum tour focus: Health and pleasure

The Lightner Museum is planning an after-hours tour titled "For Health, For Pleasure: The Hotel Alcazar" from 6 to 8 p.m. July 31. The tour explores the entertainment facilities that made the Hotel Alcazar such a highly prized place to stay.

Designed by the firm of Carrère and Hastings, the Alcazar was the second grand resort hotel built by Henry Flagler in St. Augustine. In a 1910 marketing brochure titled "For Health, For Pleasure," the hotel was celebrated for its entertainment facilities. To attract its

wealthy Gilded Age clientele, the Alcazar featured an alluring combination of exotic architecture, modern amenities, sports and entertainment facilities and fine cuisine.

From "The Alcazar Baths: For Health, For Pleasure," 1910 promotional booklet:

"The Alcazar Baths are the only curative baths in the world available from December to April under such satisfactory conditions ... Patrons may enjoy the benefit of the most modern appliances with which any electrographic institution in the country is supplied."

At the north of the hotel complex was a courtyard lush with tropical plants and lined with a covered arcade of luxury goods stores. The central area of the hotel was dedicated to the baths, a series of spaces designed for the health and wellbeing of hotel guests. To the south was the Casino, a vast four-story space featuring a substantial indoor swimming pool and a grand ballroom. Beyond the Casino, a croquet lawn and tennis courts completed the hotel's entertainments.

Tickets to this special after-hours tour

are limited in quantity. Guests must register in advance. Guests should enter through the front lobby of the museum. The tour will conclude with wine, non-alcoholic beverages and light hors d'oeuvres.

Register at: lmoh.ticketapp.org/portal/product/29

Tickets are \$40 per person, \$20 Lightner Museum members.

Learn more at lightnermuseum.org/events/alcazarafterhours.

DISEASES LINKED TO HIGH CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol is an issue that affects millions of people. Johns Hopkins Medicine says roughly 71 million Americans have high cholesterol. Cholesterol and certain proteins known as lipoproteins are

necessary for the body to function normally. Cholesterol testing measures total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL). When LDL is elevated

in the body, that can raise a person's risk for various health conditions.

1. Peripheral artery disease: PAD is a hardening of arteries in the legs or arms that causes reduced blood flow to these areas of the body.

2. High blood pressure: Cholesterol and hypertension are linked. Cholesterol plaque and calcium can cause the arteries to harden and narrow so the heart has to strain to pump blood throughout the body, indicates the Cleveland Clinic.

3. Coronary heart disease: The main risk from high cholesterol is coronary heart disease, says WebMD. Again, cholesterol plaque can build up in the walls of the arteries and cause them to harden and restrict blood flow. Eventually arteries that feed blood to the heart can cause a partial or total blockage. Heart attack can occur if the blood is completely restricted.

4. Stroke: Arteries in the brain can become blocked by plaque in the blood, potentially leading to a stroke.



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Area hospital conducts first transformative spinal procedure for back pain

St. Vincent's Southside has conducted its first post-trial procedure using the innovative TOPS System. The hospital was the first in the region to trial it.

The innovative technology is used to treat a range of conditions associated with lower back and leg pain. It is an alternative to traditional fusion surgeries for patients suffering from a narrowing of the spinal canal in the lower back.

"We strive to offer innovative technology that provides patients with the most advanced care in Northeast Florida," said Kevin Rinks, president and CEO of St. Vincent's Southside. "This procedure will add to our existing award-winning complex spine capabilities, all in service of delivering care for those who need it most."

The TOPS system allows for greater rotation, bending and extension compared to traditional fusion surgery. Patients with symptoms of lower back pain, sciatica, numbness, tingling, burning sensation and/or radiating leg pain while walking can regain their ability to bend, flex, walk and enjoy activities that were so debilitating before surgery.

Many patients find they have improved walking and movement mobility 48 hours after their procedure.

"This technology will significantly improve the lives of those suffering from lower back pain and will enhance our ability to treat associated conditions," said Dr. Ali Chahlavi, St. Vincent's neurosurgeon.

"Not only will patients have a better range of motion after this procedure, recovery time for most is reduced to only a matter of weeks, instead of up to a year for a



Contributed photo

fusion."

St. Vincent's Southside has earned numerous specialty awards in neurosciences and surgery from Healthgrades over the last few years. This includes being named a top-five hospital in Florida — the only one in Northeast

Florida — for spine surgery in 2024, along with ranking in the top 100 in the country for spine surgery in 2024 and 2022.

St. Vincent's was also recently named a top 15 health system in the country for 2024 by Fortune and PINC AI.



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Cypress Village team wins inaugural InnoTank competition

Cypress Village, a local senior living community, has emerged a winner in LCS' inaugural InnoTank competition, held during the LCS Senior Living Management Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, on June 25. The competition, designed to showcase innovative ideas from corporate and community employees, culminated in a live pitch event where the Cypress Village team secured the \$10,000 grand prize.

The winning team from Cypress Village included Sarra Ninya, associate executive director; Michelle Fredenburg, director of quality and reimbursement; Stephanie Markoski, health care administrator; and Laurel Mundell, director of administrative services. Their groundbreaking idea was selected from five finalists, each demonstrating exceptional innovation, viability and potential to significantly impact the senior living industry.

"We are grateful to have won the inaugural InnoTank competition," said Ninya. "Our team worked diligently to develop a proposal that not only meets the needs of our community but also aligns with the broader goals of LCS. This win is a testament to our collective dedication and passion for improving the lives of our residents."

The InnoTank competition invited LCS employees to share innovative proposals for potential business ventures, products or services with the capacity to significantly influence communities and the senior living industry. Participants were tasked with presenting their ideas in a concise and engaging 10-minute pitch, judged on several criteria including clarity, persuasiveness, engagement and confidence.

The Cypress Village team's winning proposal impressed the judges with its unique business model,



Contributed photo

Cypress Village won the \$10,000 grand prize at the InnoTank competition.

clear demonstration of market potential and compelling problem-solution fit. The pitch outlined a novel approach to enhancing community operations and improving service delivery, showcasing the team's deep understanding of the industry's needs and their innovative spirit.

"The finalists for this inaugural event were truly exceptional," said Frank Vedder, LCS senior vice president and chief information officer. "Every individual and group delivered remarkable pitches that showcased their innovative ideas and displayed their heart for making a difference."

Vedder and Joel Nelson, LCS chief executive officer, served as judges, joined by industry-leading technology experts:

- Katie Schmitz, head of principal investing and fund management at Ziegler and managing principal of the

Ziegler Link-age Funds, a venture capital fund family supporting innovation among entrepreneurs and senior living and health care providers.

- Tej Dhawan, co-founder and managing director of Plains Angels, a central Iowa network of angel investors. He manages Mango Seed Investments, Plains Angels Investment Fund, and participates in the Midwest Angel Syndicate and the Iowa Angel Investor Summit.

- Ginna Baik, executive board member at America's Society on Aging, board member at Leading Age California, trustee of the John A. Hartford Foundation and chairman of the board at OATS (Older Adults Tech Services), an affiliate of AARP. Baik has more than a decade of experience in senior care and technology, focusing on providing scalable technology and services to underserved populations.

Each finalist's pitch was confidential until the live competition, adding to the anticipation and excitement of the event. The Cypress Village team's proposal stood out for its innovative approach to enhancing community operations and improving service delivery. Their pitch clearly demonstrated market potential, a compelling problem-solution fit and a viable business model, securing their place as the competition's winners.

The victory not only brings recognition to the Cypress Village team but also highlights the innovative culture fostered within the LCS organization. The InnoTank competition serves as a platform for employees to contribute transformative ideas that can shape the future of senior living communities.

For more information about Cypress Village and the award-winning proposal, contact LIFE@cyprsvillagereirement.com or 904-223-6100.

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Anderson named Baptist Medical Center Nassau president



Tara Beth Anderson

Tara Beth Anderson, MSN, RN, NE-BC, has joined Baptist Health as hospital president at Baptist Medical Center Nassau effective July 22. With an extensive background in health care leadership, Anderson brings both operational and clinical expertise to this role, which will lead a team of 922 team members and physicians.

Anderson joins Baptist Nassau from HCA Florida Capital Hospital in Tallahassee, where she served as chief nursing officer with clinical and operational oversight across multiple service lines. Under her leadership, the hospital saw significant growth and improvements in quality.

"We are confident Tara Beth's exceptional leadership, coupled with her commitment to excellence and engagement, will position Baptist Nassau to deliver even more value to the community," said

Matthew A. Zuino, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Baptist Health.

Prior to her role in Tallahassee, Anderson served in leadership roles at HCA Frankfort Regional Medical Center in Kentucky, HCA Tulane Health System in Louisiana, LifePoint Healthcare Teche Regional Medical Center in Louisiana and Carteret Health Care in North Carolina, among others.

"I was drawn to health care because of my passion for improving patient care and that is still what motivates me today," said Anderson. "I am excited to now be part of a nonprofit, locally governed, faith-based organization and can't wait to make a positive impact on the health of the community we are privileged to serve."

Anderson is currently pursuing a doctorate in executive healthcare leadership from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She received her Master of Science in nursing and post-RN Bachelor of Science in nursing from Eastern Kentucky University.

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Moss named one of nation's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives

Modern Healthcare has recognized R. Lawrence Moss, president and CEO of Nemours Children's Health, as one of the nation's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives for 2024.

This marks the third time Moss has been named to this elite group.

"Our 2024 honorees work in all corners of health care at organizations of all sizes," said Mary Ellen Podmolik, editor-in-chief at Modern Healthcare. "Yet they share a commitment to improving their organizations inside and out — building a stronger workforce, expanding access to care and improving the bottom line. Our 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives also find time to be part of their communities — a crucial part of understanding patients' needs and redefining health care."

This recognition program honors licensed clinicians in executive roles who are deemed by their peers and the senior editors of Modern Healthcare as paving the way to better health through their leadership qualities, innovation, community service and achievements inside and outside of their organizations.

"Being named among the nation's top clinical executives is a humbling honor and one that I deeply appreciate, but the true recognition goes to Nemours Children's," said Moss. "It is my privilege to lead such a forward-thinking

organization with associates who are so fully dedicated to our vision of creating a healthier population by starting with children and keeping kids healthy: "well beyond medicine."

Moss approaches this vision with his prescription for fixing U.S. health care:

- Understand what health is — medical care is responsible for less than 20% of health;
- Pay for health — rather than volume of medical care;
- Start with children — they are the lever to change adult health and the economy.

His prescription draws on decades of evidence that lifetime health trajectories are set in early childhood.

To implement this approach, Nemours is investing more than \$100 million in the Whole Child Health Model to improve population health and keep children healthy; expanding its clinically integrated Kidwell Network, which already has nearly 200,000 patients; operating programs for early childhood literacy, healthy eating and physical activity in 42 states; coordinating care to address care gaps and social drivers of health for 93,000 patients last year; and embedding behavioral health services in primary care clinics.

This year's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives are profiled in the June 10 issue of Modern Healthcare and online at ModernHealthcare.com/50Most.

Recovery Fair a day of fun for families

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare will celebrate National Recovery Month at the fourth annual Recovery Fair to be held noon to 4 p.m. Sept. 28 at the St. Augustine Classic Car Museum, 4730 U.S. 1 South, St. Augustine.

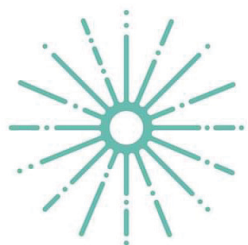
The Recovery Fair promises a day filled with fun and engaging activities for both children and adults. With reduced admission to the museum and free entry for kids younger than 12, it's a perfect opportunity for families to come together.

Various behavioral health organizations will be present to provide resource information. Attendees can also create Memorial Rocks, enjoy food from local food trucks, listen to live music and receive free T-shirts while supplies last.

Attendees will hear testimonials from people on their recovery journey.

This event aims to honor those in recovery and provide support and resources for individuals seeking more information. The only expenses for attendees will be for food from the available food trucks.

For more information, go to epicbh.org/recovery-fair or call 904-829-3295.



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Injuries

Continued from 13

prevent a serious injury from eventually taking place.

“We can work on a range to increase mobility or strengthen a certain area,” Janusko said. “If you’re jumping or cutting and are not able to control your motions it can lead to injury, especially in high school when kids are still growing into their bodies.”

That continued body development even into high school is why Janusko is a proponent of making sure parents are encouraging their children to play multiple sports instead of just specializing in one.

“There are so many benefits associated with playing various sports, including cutting down on the amount of injuries and burnout that kids go through,” Janusko said.

Playing the same sport throughout the year instead of switching it up can lead to extra wear and tear on the certain muscles used during that specific sport, while playing other sports that focus more on other muscle groups can allow a proper time for muscle recuperation.

According to Janusko, as a result, the training program an athlete develops will also be based on the sports they play, as some sports, such as football, basketball

and volleyball require a more lateral mobility and quick cutting focus, while softball, baseball and golf would take a more rotational movement approach.

“It can be a hard to relay that message at times, but it is very important as a parent to be responsible for keeping your child on the right path,” Janusko said.

He has experienced the same feelings many athletes who come and see him are having as they begin the rehabilitation of their injury, as he suffered two ACL tears while competing in high school.

“We connect ourselves so much with the sports we play, and I know what it’s like to identify with a sport and then to have that identity taken away suddenly,” Janusko said. “It’s the physical and mental side that you have to be able to address.”

However, one of the things Janusko loves about the physical therapy world is the amount of continuing education that is required to take place and the advances in therapy that have taken shape because of it.

That includes keeping track of the latest new surgery methods doctors are using so that the physical therapy after the fact can be best tailored to complement it.

“It’s really about having a plan in place and that includes post-game massages and therapy sessions throughout the season to make sure athletes are maintaining their health,” Janusko said.

Film focus is teen suicide

“My Ascension,” a feature-length documentary that tells the story of 16-year-old Emma Benoit, a varsity cheerleader who was paralyzed by a suicide attempt, will be screened in St. Johns County in August.

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare, INK!, United Way of St. Johns County and the St. Johns County School District are collaborating to bring the film “My Ascension” back to St. Johns County.

The documentary chronicles Emma’s experience of being paralyzed by her suicide attempt and her subsequent mission to use her story to help others find hope and stay alive. After the screening, there will be a discussion on youth suicide prevention and mental wellness with Emma and EPIC Behavioral Healthcare providers.

“My Ascension” follows Emma’s journey as she works to bring Hope Squad, a school-based suicide prevention program, to Louisiana. The film also shares the stories of two young people who tragically did not survive their attempts, and we learn from their families, friends, school

officials and suicide prevention experts about the devastating effects of suicide and what can be done to prevent it.

The issue is relevant in today’s world. Recent research has shown a significant increase in mental health issues among teenagers, particularly girls, and a rise in teen suicides. As a result, EPIC is emphasizing the importance of suicide awareness and prevention.

The film will be screened at the following locations:

- The link, 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra Beach. 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 25

- St. Augustine High School, 3205 Varella Ave., St. Augustine. 6-9 p.m. Monday, Aug. 26

- Pedro Menendez High School, 600 S.R. 206 West, St. Augustine. 6-9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 27

- Toco Creek High School, 11200 St. Johns Parkway, St. Augustine. 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 28

- Creekside High School, 100 Knights Lane, St. Johns. 6-9 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29

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Upgrade Labs plans facilities in Ponte Vedra, elsewhere

Upgrade Labs, the world's first "Human Upgrade Center" and brainchild of Danger Coffee founder Dave Asprey, has announced success stemming from the 10th annual Biohacking Conference and the growth seen by the business so far in 2024 with plans for five new locations in the remainder of the year.

Hosted in Dallas this year, the 10th annual Biohacking Conference, a three-day event that pushes the boundaries of human potential and longevity, has been the brand's most successful to date.

A milestone for Upgrade Labs, the event served as an opportunity for "biohackers" to come together and learn from the leaders at the forefront of the industry.

The brand is already planning for the 2025 and 2026 conferences to be held in Austin, Texas, Upgrade Labs' home market.

Having celebrated the opening of their

new locations in Calgary, Alberta, in April, and Oakville, Ontario, in May, the brand anticipates opening several new locations throughout North America.

Upgrade Labs will be bringing new facilities to: Ponte Vedra Beach; Orlando; Greenville, South Carolina; Austin, Texas; Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; and Park City, Utah.

Dave Asprey, founder and CEO of Upgrade Labs, spoke on the impact of these new locations.

"We are thrilled to be opening six new locations in 2024, as this is a huge step

towards our brand's ultimate mission of introducing restorative and preventative therapies to new communities," he said. "We are confident that we have found the right partners to join the Upgrade Labs brand as we work to positively impact lives throughout North America."

Upgrade Labs has spent the last year honing its efforts on laying a strong foundation at the corporate level in order to best support franchise partners and ensure strong location openings.

In Q1 of 2024, Upgrade Labs hired a new fractional chief marketing officer,

Carin Oliver, and has benefited from her expertise and support.

"Approaching our development from a slow and strategic standpoint has allowed Upgrade Labs to ensure continuity of guests' experience as well as franchisee success across all of our locations," said Asprey. "We have worked hard to streamline our operations and boost internal support to help best guide our franchisees and are seeing our efforts pay off through our national growth, and we are eager to find new potential franchisees to join the Upgrade Labs family."



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MD, FACC, FHRS



Vincent Caracciolo
MD, FACC



Ameeth Vedre
MD, FACC, FACP,
FASE, FASNC



Sebastian Carrasquillo
MD, FACC

What to know about heatstroke

Fun in the sun is a big part of the appeal of summer. Outdoor recreation and relaxation kicks up a notch each summer, contributing to a vibe that is as welcoming as it is warm.

Summer is indeed all about recreation, but individuals also must remain safe when spending time outdoors. Heatstroke is a potentially deadly condition that can be prevented with some basic knowledge of what it is and how it manifests.

What is heatstroke?

The Mayo Clinic notes that heatstroke is caused by the body overheating. When individuals suffer heatstroke, it is usually because they have been exposed to high temperatures for long periods of time or have been physically exerting themselves in such conditions.

Symptoms of heatstroke

Heatstroke can manifest in various ways, producing symptoms that may include:

- Elevated body temperature: The Mayo Clinic notes that a core body temperature of 104°F or higher is a main sign of heatstroke.
- Altered mental state: Someone suffering from heatstroke may begin to feel confused, agitated, irritable, and/or delirious. In addition, such individuals may begin to behave erratically, which can involve slurred speech.
- Changes in sweating patterns: People may begin to sweat differently depending on why they are suffering from heatstroke.

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- Reduces the risk of developing breast cancer by as much as 14 percent, according to the American Cancer Society.
- Helps a person maintain a healthy weight and lose body fat.
- Improves cardiovascular fitness by strengthening the heart.
- Improves muscle endurance.
- Helps to prevent or manage conditions like stroke, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes, according to the Mayo Clinic.
- Boosts immune function to make a person less susceptible to common viruses like the cold and flu.
- Eases joint pain associated with arthritis, and can even prevent osteoarthritis from developing in the first place, according to Harvard Health.
- Helps tame cravings for sweets and other fattening or sugary foods.

The faster and more frequently a person walks, the greater the benefits. One also can alternate periods of leisurely walking with brisk walking as a form of interval training to burn more calories and improve cardiovascular fitness.

Heatstroke

Continued from 19

When heatstroke is brought on by hot weather, a person's skin will feel hot and dry to the touch, notably leading to a lack of sweat. When heatstroke occurs because of strenuous exercise in hot weather, the skin may feel dry and slightly moist.

- Nausea and vomiting: Heatstroke can make people feel sick to their stomach and even induce vomiting.

- Flushed skin: This recognizable symptom is marked by skin turning red as body temperature spikes.

- Changes in breathing: Heatstroke can cause rapid, shallow breathing.

- Elevated heart rate: The Harvard Medical School notes that the heart experiences stress when the human body sheds heat. That stress can cause the heart to beat faster and pump harder.

- Headache: Some people with heatstroke experience a throbbing headache.

Preventing heatstroke

The CDC notes that drinking plenty of water, cooling off in air conditioned rooms, limiting time outdoors on particularly hot days, taking frequent breaks if you must be outside, and wearing light-colored, loose-fitting clothing and sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher are some ways to beat the heat and avoid heatstroke.

Ascension St. Vincent's hospitals recognized for quality of care

U.S. News and World Report has recognized the quality of care at St. Vincent's Riverside, Southside and Clay County in its 2024-25 Best Hospital Rankings. These rankings are published annually to help patients across the country make important health care decisions.

St. Vincent's Riverside was named a Best Regional Hospital, recognized for its high performance in seven different procedures and conditions. They include congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, kidney failure, knee replacement, stroke and leukemia, lymphoma and melanoma.

St. Vincent's Southside and Clay County were named High Performing Hospitals, indicating that they placed in the top 10% for a specialty or achieved the highest possible rating for a common procedure or condition. Southside was recognized for its high performance for heart attack and hip replacement. Clay County was recognized for its high performance for congestive heart failure, COPD, diabetes and stroke.

"Every patient who receives treatment at a St. Vincent's location is provided with high quality care from the moment they walk through our doors," said Dr. Syed Jafri, chief clinical officer for Ascension Florida. "We are blessed that our physicians and care teams are being recognized for their quality, patient-centered care."

U.S. News's Best Hospitals project evaluates U.S. adult hospitals annually on how they provide 35 different types of care. The rankings of 15 medical specialties use a variety of quality measures to identify the hospitals that excel at handling the most complex and difficult cases. The ratings of 20 procedures and conditions are based entirely on objective quality indicators, such as patient outcomes and nurse staffing levels.

St. Vincent's was also recently named a top 15 health system in the country for 2024 by Fortune and PINC AI. St. Vincent's Clay County was also named to the U.S. News and World Report's 2024 Best Hospitals for Maternity Care (Uncomplicated Pregnancy) list.


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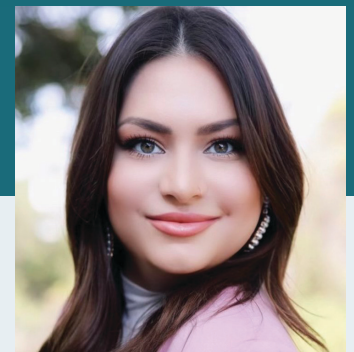
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The Recorder's garden columnist, Kathy Esfahani of Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, shares her tips for growing gorgeous gardens in Northeast Florida.

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

The Rainy Season!

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass ... It's about learning to dance in the rain." — Vivian Green



By Kathy Esfahani

Mother Nature has been generous with water lately! What does this mean for your landscape?

High levels of rain and humidity can cause an increase of insects and fungus in lawns as well as on flowers and plants. There are many products on the market to help control fungus

and garden pests. It can be overwhelming when you see all of the options, but keep in mind a general rule of thumb: One chemical product can be used for each category of pests:

- Insecticide: Malathion — used on fruits, vegetables, landscaping and shrubs to control pests
- Fungicide: Daconil — used to treat more than 75 diseases on flowers, landscaping and trees (fruit and shade)
- Neem Oil is an organic option — be sure to apply it more frequently than the chemical alternatives.

There are more natural ways to treat pests and fungus in the garden, but they require extra attention and



Lawn Fungus

continuous effort. This home remedy is beneficial short term if you are waiting on professional help. You may need to be apply this solution weekly for best results:

DIY Organic Spray: 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil plus 1 teaspoon of nonantibacterial liquid dishwashing detergent. Mix with one gallon of water and spray on affected plants.

Because overwatering and high humidity can cause the growth of fungus in lawns, consider limiting your irrigation system during periods of frequent heavy rains. It is recommended to seek professional advice if your

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Flower of the Week



Portulaca Moss Rose

lawn needs treatment. There are several types of sod used in our area, and treatments can be specific to certain types of sod. You want to be sure that the treatment you choose is most effective for your lawn.

After the rainy season, the appearance of fungus and pests will naturally decline, and you can return to more enjoyment and less treatment in your landscape. Hang in there!

Happy gardening!

Flower of the Week: Portulaca Moss Rose

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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Chandler named Bolles director of global learning, engagement

For The Recorder

Bolles Associate Head of School Andrew Forrester recently announced that longtime faculty member Allison Chandler has been named the school's new director of global learning and engagement. Chandler has taught various social studies classes with a global focus at The Bolles School since 2006 and has served as the social studies department chair for three years.

Forrester said Chandler's breadth of experience and passion for fostering global awareness and cultural understanding will undoubtedly enrich the educational journeys of Bolles students.

"We are thrilled to have a talented, thoughtful educator like Allison take on this critical role and continue the momentum of the department of global learning and engagement," Forrester said. "She has been an invaluable faculty member for the past 18 years, giving her a unique perspective as she takes the helm of the



Allison Chandler

department. We look forward to seeing the innovative programs and opportunities she will surely bring to the table for our

students."

Chandler follows in the footsteps of the department's founding director, Natalia Aycart, who left the role to spend more time at home with her family and newborn daughter. Among her many accomplishments, Aycart facilitated the opening of the Chahlavi Center for Global Learning and Engagement, established the Bolles Global Scholar Program and advanced global learning and intercultural competence across all four campuses.

Chandler has been deeply involved with the Bolles Department of Global Learning and Engagement, beginning in 2017 when she paired up with Bolles Spanish teacher Carrie Ezzell to co-chair a task force to review what Bolles was already doing in the area of global learning and how that could be expanded upon. During Aycart's maternity leave, Chandler was appointed to take over her responsibilities as director, including teaching GLE classes and overseeing the Global Entrepreneurship Challenge.

"I've always believed that my role as an educator is to prepare our students for the modern world," Chandler said. "It's essential that we give our students the skills and experiences to be active, global citizens."

Her extensive work in global learning ranges from participating in a Harvard Graduate School Think Tank on Global Education in 2018 and co-designing the Bolles Guatemala Expedition program to completing research for her graduate thesis in Bogota, Colombia. This summer, she will travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the Global Education Benchmark Group to investigate intercultural dialogue in practice.

Chandler holds bachelor's degrees in psychology and history as well as a Master of Arts in history from the University of North Florida, and her professional development has centered primarily on global studies. She is also a Dewan Teaching Fellow and the recipient of the Duane Ottenstroer Excellence in Teaching Fellowship twice (2012, 2015).

NEFAR plans St. Johns River clean-up on July 27

For The Recorder

The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) kicked off the first portion of its annual Clean-up Florida Waterways event by collecting 1,000 pounds of trash from the waterways in Putnam County on July 13. The Putnam County event was the first of three events comprising this year's Waterways Clean-up.

Jacksonville Clean-up

On July 27 from 9 to 11 a.m., NEFAR will host six clean-up stations in Northeast Florida and members of the public are invited to attend.

All participants will receive a T-shirt and be supplied with gloves, grabbers, trash bags and buckets with the goal of collecting 10,000 pounds of garbage from areas in the region that feed into Northeast

Florida's waterways.

All participants are invited to a party after the clean-up, which will be held at the NEFAR Resource Center, 7801 Deercreek Club Road, Jacksonville.

Locations for the clean-up on July 27 will be:

- Black Creek Marina (aka Knights Marine Boat Ramp), 1470 River Lane (off U.S. 17) Green Cove Springs
- Wayne B. Stevens Boat Ramp, 4555 Ortega Farms Blvd., Jacksonville
- Bert Maxwell Boat Ramp and road leading to the area, 500 Maxwell Road, Jacksonville
- Sidney Geffen Park (North Riverwalk area between Riverside Arts Market and the Landing), 505 Alfred Dupont Place, Jacksonville
- Friendship Fountain area of the South Riverwalk, 1015 Museum Circle, Jack-

sonville

• Lions Club Boat Ramp, 4322 Richard Denby Gatlin Road, Jacksonville
Snacks and water will be available at all six locations.

A convoy of boats will also meet at the Lions Club Boat Ramp in Arlington and make its way to Goat Island, areas near JAXPort and underneath the Mathews Bridge to clean-up areas that are not easily accessible by land. Members of the public who wish to join the convoy should expect to meet around 8 a.m. in the waters near the boat ramp.

NEFAR's Inaugural Trash Challenge

The NEFAR Inaugural Trash Challenge is open to all NEFAR members as well as the public.

Having begun on June 5, it will extend until midnight Thursday, Aug. 1. During

that time, participants are asked to collect five-gallon buckets or bags of trash anywhere in Northeast Florida. Each participant should register on the iAngler app, and they will be asked to upload photos of their filled trash bags or containers. Their progress will be tracked on the iAngler app.

A cash prize of \$250 will be awarded to the participant who collects the most trash. Prizes will also be awarded to the participant from the public who collects the most trash and to the NEFAR member who collects the most trash. Also, all participants who did not win one of the three top prizes will have their names placed in a raffle. Raffle tickets will be awarded to each participant based upon the number of trash bags collected.

A full "trash" leaderboard will be updated each week on the iAngler app.

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How to make a home more cozy

The meaning of the term “cozy” varies as it pertains to home decor. For some, cozy may mean intimate spaces with lots of quilts and throws. For others, cozy could indicate bright and airy spaces enhanced by plenty of fresh foliage. Regardless of how they define cozy, homeowners typically want their homes to be inviting and comfortable. With that in mind, the following are some ways to impart a cozy vibe to any living space.

- Make use of a fireplace. Flames lapping wood (or faux wood in the event of gas-powered fireplaces) can put anyone in a tranquil state of mind. Fireplaces add instant ambiance and make great places for people to congregate and engage in conversation. During warmer months when the fire isn’t blazing, decorative candles can be lit to mimic the same feel.
- Add texture in the design. Texture can be anything from a raised pattern on wallpaper to a knotty area rug to a mosaic piece of artwork. A home with texture tends to create cozier impressions than one with all sleek and smooth surfaces.
- Enjoy a soft rug. Although many design experts say hardwood floors or



laminated options are easier for allergies and keeping a home clean, a soft rug underfoot can be welcoming. Rather than wall-to-wall carpeting, place area rugs in spots that can use some cozying up,

such as beneath beds and even under the dining table.

- Light candles. The warm, flickering light of candles adds cozy vibes in spaces. According to The Spruce and Paula Boston, a visual merchandiser for Festive Lights, candles can be used throughout a home to create instant atmosphere. Exercise caution with candles and fully extinguish them before retiring for the evening.
 - Update bedding for the season. Crisp and light cotton and linen are cozy materials when the weather is warm. But when the temperature starts to dip, flannel or jersey bedding makes a bed that much more inviting, says Real Simple.
 - Invest in lots of pillows. Pillows can instantly make a spot more cozy, whether it’s the living room sofa or an outdoor lounging nook. Look for materials that are durable for the space in which they’re being used.
 - Think about warm lighting. The transition from incandescent light bulbs to halogen and LED is beneficial from an environmental standpoint. However, LEDs illuminate with a more stark, blue light that can seem clinical in home spaces. Look for bulbs where the “temperature” can be customized. The more the color spectrum leans toward warm light, the more cozy a space will feel. This can be enhanced by putting some lights on dimmer switches, and toning down the brightness as needed.
 - Install a bookshelf. Even for those who are strict devotees of e-readers, a shelf full of actual books interspersed with some well-placed knickknacks can make a room feel more cozy. Books add texture, the feel of hallowed halls and libraries, and visual appeal.
- Making a home more cozy doesn’t have to be complicated. A few easy modifications can improve interior spaces.

Elevate the backyard experience

Outdoor spaces like patios, decks, yards, and even front porches remain popular places for homeowners and their loved ones to congregate. Various studies have shown that those who spend more time outside in nature have lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression. Homeowners who want to maximize the potential of their outdoor spaces can look to these ideas to take backyards up a notch or two.

Establish a gathering spot

A well-designed yard has one or more dedicated gathering spots, particularly areas that enable comfort underfoot. Homeowners can consider hardscape that enables individuals to spend time outdoors without standing in soggy or buggy situations. Whether they’re traditional decks, platform decks, concrete or paver patios, or areas separated from the lawn with pea gravel or another type of rock, homeowners can make the yard more useable through these spaces.

Invest in an outdoor cooking area

Grilling, smoking and even making brick oven pizzas outdoors is a major component of backyard entertainment. Outdoor kitchens can increase the convenience of prepping, cooking and serving food outdoors. Grills and other cooking gear can be built into weather-resistant counters and cabinetry.

BACKYARD continues on Page 28

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How to know when it's time to replace your windows

Windows are a major component of a home. Window installation professionals will tell homeowners that the average life span of residential windows is between 15 and 30 years. Most well-maintained products can last 20 years, so homeowners who have windows approaching that age may want to schedule a window assessment and possible replacement. Replacing windows is a job that requires advanced skill, and this is not a do-it-yourself project. There are many qualified professional window installation companies that will work with homeowners to measure, order and install windows that will fit with the style of a home and local weather, all while providing features the homeowner desires. For those wondering when to replace windows, Pella and Renewal by Andersen, two of the premiere window manufacturers, offer these guidelines.

- Difficulty opening and closing windows. A window that does not operate as it should, can aggravate homeowners. If windows are sticking shut or cannot be securely closed, it's probably time for something new.
- There's apparent window damage. Accidents happen, and if a rock is kicked up from a lawnmower and cracks a window or if spring baseball practice has gone



awry with an errant throw, windows may require replacement.

- Drafts in the window are common. If heating and cooling systems are working overtime, drafty, poorly insulated windows could be to blame. Various agencies can perform energy efficiency tests in a home. Windows that are determined to be the weak spots should be replaced.
- Dated windows are present in the home. Older windows may pose safety hazards, especially those in older homes.

WINDOWS continues on **Page 27**



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Signs to repair or replace your roof

The exterior components of a home, such as the siding and the roof, help to protect its occupants from the elements. While many roofing materials can last for decades, at some point in time homeowners will likely have to repair or replace the roof on their home. Roof wear and tear may not always be so evident, particularly because most homeowners do not make it a point to get on their roofs very often. The first sign of roof damage typically is a leak that is noticeable from the indoors. It may include a



browned spot on the ceiling or even pooling water in the attic. Leak from storm damage or something minor like a water intrusion through a nail hole or from a lost shingle typically can be repaired easily enough. However, additional indicators may necessitate a complete roof overhaul. Here are some signs a roof is in need of repairs or replacement.

- Sagging roof: If the roof is sagging, it could be due to excess

ROOF continues on **Page 28**

Windows

Continued from 26

A larger window may be needed to comply with fire safety codes allowing for window egress. Dated windows also may simply look “old” and compromise the aesthetics of a home.

- Outdoor noises are noticed quite readily. Newer windows can help reduce noise transmission. So those leaf blowers, airplanes, barking dogs, and kids playing basketball up the street won’t disturb

homeowners as they try to enjoy some peace and quiet indoors.

- Fading indoors is noted. Windows that do not feature low-emissivity (Low-E) glass coatings will not block UV rays. Those rays can cause fading to wood floors and furniture or pretty much anything the sunlight touches. Replacing existing windows with Low-E coating alternatives can safeguard belongings and improve window efficiency.

Window replacement may be necessary when existing windows are showing signs of aging or damage.



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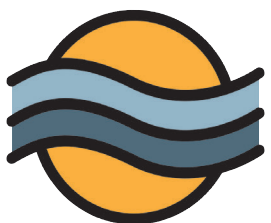
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Roof

Continued from 27

loads, such as water-damaged shingles or even weakened roof structure. A professional will need to restore the integrity of the roof.

- **Cracking and buckling:** It is likely that shingles will have to be replaced if there is cracking or if shingles are buckling and warping.
- **Exposed nails:** Exposed nails may rust and contribute to a leaky roof, says Family Handyman. How long the nails were exposed could indicate if the roof can be repaired or if everything should be redone.
- **Lost granules:** Asphalt roofing shingles

have small granules on the surface. Over time these granules will slowly degrade and fall off. If there are many granules in gutters or if one can see that portions of the shingles are bare, it is likely time for a new roof.

- **Visible light:** Homeowners who can see light streams coming into the home need roof repair. This is indicative of holes, cracks or spaces in the roof.
 - **Growth on the roof:** Mold and mildew on the roof is a sign that the roof needs to be repaired or replaced. Such growths contribute to rot that jeopardizes the integrity of the roof.
- A durable roof protects a home from the elements. Various symptoms signal that it is time to repair or replace a roof.

Backyard

Continued from 24

Install a pergola

A pergola or another structure is the perfect way to add privacy to a gathering spot and create more shade and weather protection when Mother Nature does not want to cooperate. Think beyond the summer season. When making backyard improvements, homeowners can incorporate ideas that make the yard more functional during different seasons. For example, a fire pit or outdoor fireplace can be a spot for making summer s'mores or sipping mulled cider



in the fall. An enclosed three-season room offers the opportunity to see nature and enjoy it without bearing the full brunt of chilly temperatures. There are many ways homeowners can enhance the functionality and appeal of their backyards.



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Business Weekly

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Photos by Susan Griffin

The link celebrates third anniversary

By Shaun Ryan

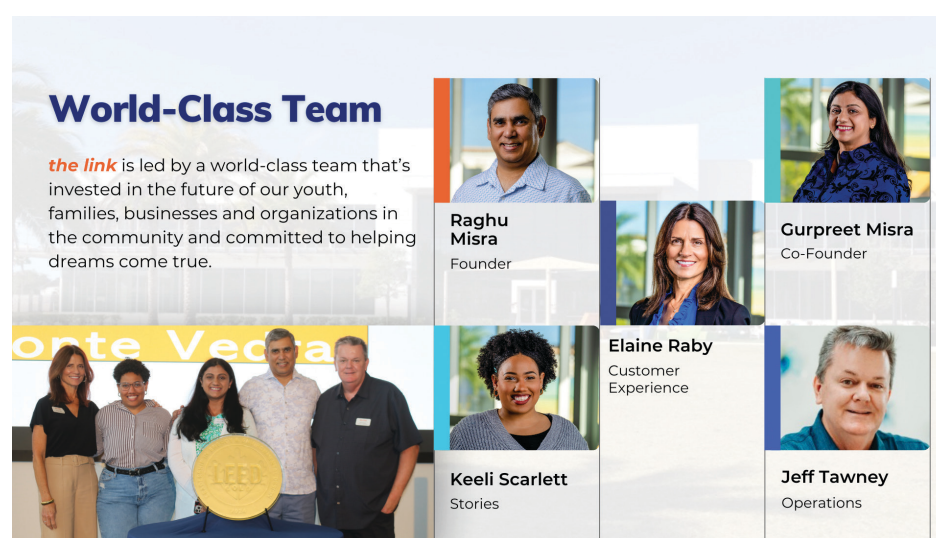
The link marked its third anniversary and held its annual membership appreciation celebration Saturday, July 20, with a theme of “community,” because, according to its recent Facebook post, “our community of members are the heart of everything we do.”

Attendees enjoyed dinner, ice cream, special giveaways and more in the “space that inspires,” a 22,500-square-foot smart building in Nocatee Town Center. The lobby was filled with members for the event.

The link is the creation of Raghu and Gurpreet Misra. It defies facile categorization and has earned the right to be termed “unique” — a word often overused in the hyperbolic culture of the 21st century but one that nevertheless applies in this case.

From the beginning, Raghu Misra described the link as a place where entrepreneurs can start and grow their businesses, but also a place for their children to engage in recreational and educational activities. Since that initial introduction to the community, the link has proven itself all of that and more.

For the entrepreneurs, it offers a host of co-working space options. For the community, it offers a seemingly endless



parade of activities and events, classes and camps. It has hosted cultural celebrations, music and entertainment events, educational opportunities and so much more. And its Flagler Health+ Immersive Studio takes visitors to places they have never had an opportunity to visit in person.

According to data from the link, the facility has helped more than 75 startups, held more than 200 events, positively impacted more than 5,000 children and awarded more than 10,000 volunteer hours. It is perhaps surprising that so much is being accomplished by the link’s

small team, which is comprised of the Misras, Elaine Raby (customer experience), Jeff Tawney (operations) and Keeli Scarlett (stories).

The past year has seen a continuation of the link’s EnterCircle entrepreneurship summit; the introduction of Unlocked, an innovative approach to helping children with ADHD; and the establishment of Circle of Creation, designed to support women seeking to expand their horizons.

Unusual events, like the upcoming Bark Fest, join regular programming, such as Collisions & Coffee, which brings together innovators from across

the spectrum of professions; the Supper Club, where diners discover a host of international dishes; and the Teen Club, where youths forge friendships and make a difference in their community.

On June 27, the link received an award from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification system, earning a gold status.

“It’s been quite a journey,” said Raghu Misra. The membership has grown diverse alongside the population of Nocatee and what they want from the link has been evolving. The team has adapted and evolved with those shifts. The link has not stood still, and people are sometimes surprised at what they find there.

“Every five, six months, somebody comes and says, ‘Oh, I didn’t know you’re doing that now,’” Misra said. “It’s a good thing to hear because we are constantly doing more things based on what the community is saying they would like to see at the link.”

He expressed gratitude for these insights shared by the members.

It’s always been difficult to sum up exactly what the link is, but perhaps just as difficult would be to imagine the community without this unique gem.

The link is located at 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra Beach. Learn more at thelink.zone.

Benchmarks of Success

A look at major career developments in the area



Seuter named regional director

Catholic Charities Bureau, Inc. recently named Eileen Seuter regional director of its Jacksonville office.

Eileen Seuter

She will oversee all planning, organization and direction of the organization's operations and programs in Duval, Clay, Nassau and Baker counties, which transform the lives of thousands of individuals in need each year.

Seuter has more than 30 years of experience in the nonprofit field working with vulnerable populations in the areas of foster care, substance use disorder, mental health and homeless assistance services. Her experience includes program administration, service delivery systems administration and development. Notable roles include chief operating officer with LSF Health Systems, and most recently, chief development officer at Sulzbacher.



Automotive News honors Porter

Phil Porter Jr. of Subaru of Jacksonville was named one of Automotive News' 40 Under 40. This annual program honors 40 high

Phil Porter Jr.

achievers at new-car dealerships who are under 40 years old.

"I am honored and humbled to receive this recognition. It is a testament to the dedication of the entire Subaru of Jacksonville team and the many incredible mentors I've had along the way," said Porter, executive management of Subaru of Jacksonville.

Automotive News received nominations from across the U.S. and identified outstanding performers in a large field of high-quality talent at dealerships. The winners were profiled in the July 8 issue of Automotive News, the leading news source for the global automotive industry.



Farrell joins Beach Homes Realty

Florida-based agent Lisa Farrell has moved her real estate license to Beach Homes Realty — a national beach-focused real estate company.

Lisa Farrell

With the brokerage, Farrell will specialize in beach homes and land on and around St. Augustine, Flagler Beach, Ponte Vedra Beach, Palm Coast and Crescent Beach.

Farrell is a dedicated real estate professional specializing in the beautiful beach communities of Ponte Vedra Beach, St. Augustine Beach, Butler Beach, Crescent Beach and Flagler Beach. Growing up in Atlanta, Georgia, she spent her summers vacationing in St. Augustine with her family. Over the past 45 years, she has witnessed and appreciated the growth and development of the area.

She relocated to St. Augustine in 2006 and has become an expert in the local market.



Letisha Bereola

Bereola named director of podcasting

WJCT Public Media has announced the appointment of Letisha Bereola as the organization's director of

podcasting.

In her new role, Bereola will manage the on-demand local listening experience at WJCT Public Media. This includes managing the pipeline of podcast-first content from project development through production and release, along with overseeing the on-demand release of WJCT radio programming. Her role includes fully integrating on-demand audio in WJCT's local listening strategy for non-music programming, making sure that strategy meets the needs of a range of stakeholders, including audiences, institutional partners and sponsors.

Bereola is the founder of Paradigm Media Group, a production company focused on podcast development and production. She's produced podcasts for New York Times best-selling authors, non-profits, entrepreneurs and creatives. Before podcasting, Bereola spent over 10 years as a local television news anchor, spending seven years on TV screens in the Jacksonville area.

PGA Tour taps Weitz for new role

Andy Weitz has been named chief marketing and communications officer and executive vice president, investor relations, for The PGA Tour's global operations. He will be responsible for positioning the PGA Tour brand for current and future investment while communicating its global strategy and performance to the Tour's stakeholders and beyond.

In addition to overseeing marketing and communications for The PGA Tour, Weitz will take on a newly

created investor relations role that is responsible for developing messaging and communicating strategy for PGA Tour Enterprises, a for-profit subsidiary of PGA Tour, Inc., incorporated earlier this year. In January, the Strategic Sports Group made an initial investment of \$1.5 billion — with up to \$3 billion available — into the new commercial venture, and this funding will allow the PGA Tour to make significant strategic investments to enhance the PGA Tour experience for fans and players, and benefitting tournaments, sponsors and other constituents.

North Florida Land Trust welcomes new employees

North Florida Land Trust has added new employees to all of its departments.

Joel Benn is the new conservation transactions manager and helps implement the trust's strategic plan. He is responsible for real estate transactions, including implementing landowner research and outreach and handling negotiations, due diligence and closings.

Benn earned his juris doctor at the University of Florida's Levin College of Law and previously served as assistant general counsel for the St. Johns River Water Management District, where he played an active role in conservation acquisitions.

Chris Bebout joined the nonprofit as a land management specialist and assists in monitoring and implementing the stewardship department's land management plans. His duties include timber management, exotic species control, vegetation maintenance, property infrastructure maintenance and monitoring of land management and habitat restoration projects.

Brenda Lynch and Willow Logue are the newest members of the philanthropic services team. Lynch holds the title of development officer, and Logue is the board executive assistant. Lynch, a graduate of Ithaca College, works closely with the director of philanthropic

services on fundraising and relationship-building activities to support ongoing operations and growth.

Logue serves as the liaison between the board of directors and the trust and handles all aspects of board management, including scheduling, materials, updates and stewardship.

Michelle Smith is the operations and grants manager for the trust and supports the president, NFLT operations and the board of directors. She is responsible for a variety of operational, financial and administrative functions for the trust.



Mallory Salter

Pivot CPAs promotes Salter

Pivot CPAs, Northeast Florida's largest locally owned certified public accounting firm, has announced the promotion of Mallory Salter to

assurance partner.

Salter joined Pivot CPAs in 2010 and has been a vital asset to the firm, providing assurance services to both privately and publicly held companies. Her focus areas include residential and commercial construction, manufacturing and distribution and employee benefit plan audits.

A Jacksonville native, Salter holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of North Florida and a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Central Florida. She began her career in private accounting, accumulating more than three years of experience in the construction industry.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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GUEST COLUMN

Five ways to help protect your family online

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

Here are some ways to help protect your family online:

1. Learn to spot imposter scams

Have you ever received a call, text or email regarding suspicious activity detected on your account or suspended online access? It could be a scammer trying to convince you to share sensitive information that would enable them to access your accounts.

Increasingly, criminals are able to impersonate financial institutions, large companies and even government agencies by spoofing caller ID or email addresses so they appear to be legitimate. When you receive a suspicious or unexpected communication, do not respond or click any email links. Instead, contact the company directly using a phone number on its website. Learn more about how to spot common scams at wellsfargo.com/security.

2. Manage and monitor your credit

Protecting your credit file from unauthorized activity and fraud is essential to protecting your identity and finances. Consider placing a credit freeze on your credit file as well as children's and elderly family members' credit files.

Credit freezes must be implemented and lifted separately at each credit bureau



Contributed photo

(Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) for yourself and each individual you're acting behalf of. Upon the completion of a credit freeze, you will be provided a PIN code that can be used to lift a freeze. Store this code in a safe location should you need access to it in the future.

Regularly review your credit file to identify and report errors or potentially suspicious activity to the credit bureau it's found at. The three major U.S. credit bureaus are required to provide one free credit report annually upon request via annualcreditreport.com

3. Limit what you share on social media

Cyber criminals and fraudsters scour social media profiles for clues to security

questions, passwords and other information that could help them impersonate potential victims online.

Consider setting your social media profiles to private — and encourage your family members to do the same. Finally, watch what information you disclose. Revealing too much personal information in your social profiles or posts can put you at greater risk of identity theft, especially if your bank or other companies use that information to verify your identity.

4. Protect your home network

Ensure your home's wireless network is protected with a strong, unique password. Consider using a unique phrase with a mix of letters, numbers and special characters. Additionally, avoid using any part

of your name or home address, information shared on social media, or anything else someone could easily guess.

5. Stay up-to-date

Cybercriminals change their tactics frequently, so try to stay on top of the latest threats. Keep your devices and apps updated with the latest security patches, and be sure to review the resources provided by your bank, investment firm and other financial providers to understand ways to help protect your family and yourself online. Sign up to receive scam alerts from the Federal Trade Commission by visiting ftc.gov and selecting "Get Consumer Alerts."

This article was written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Ponte Vedra Wealth Management Group in Ponte Vedra Beach at 904-273-7918.

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Community First Credit Union plans 25th branch

For The Recorder

Community First Credit Union has completed the purchase of a lot at State Road 207 and Brinkhoff Road, which is slated to become its newest freestanding branch in St. Johns County.

The Treaty Oaks location is scheduled to open in 2025. It will become the credit union's 25th branch and fourth branch in St. Johns County, which includes locations in St. Augustine and Murabella along with a new branch under construction at Beachwalk.

The Treaty Oaks location will be similar to the Community First branch recently opened on State Road 16 in Murabella. It will be designed by TTV Architects and will be built by Auld & White Constructors.

Community First is expanding and improving its branch network aiming to enhance member service by configuring spaces to create a modern retail experience. Upon completion, the 3,100-square-foot Treaty Oaks Branch will feature a full-service lobby and drive-through, two ATMs (drive-up and walk-up), and Community First's signature tower feature.



Contributed image

An artist's rendering of the Community First Credit Union branch planned for State Road 207 and Brinkhoff Road.

Designed with Community First's modern branch concept, the Treaty Oaks Branch will have an open floor plan, upgraded digital technologies and a historical mural depicting the history of the Treaty Oaks and Moultrie Creek area. Nearly 20,000 Community First members live in St. Johns County with 2,000 living within five miles of the Treaty Oaks Branch.

"Our St. Johns expansion represents a strategic plan to better serve our members where they are," said John Hirabayashi, CEO and president of Community First. "The Treaty Oaks property is a prime location in the growing S.R. 207 area east of I-95."

Community First is undertaking its largest historic investment in its branch network with six new branches announced or opened since 2022 when it had 19 locations.

The credit union recently announced the opening of its Murabella Branch (branch 22), the start of construction of its Beachwalk Branch (branch 23), a property purchase for its Callahan Branch (branch 24). It is also building a new location in Southside Quarter on Gate Parkway to replace its Baymeadows Branch.

Community First Credit Union of Florida is a state-chartered credit union based in Jacksonville serving anyone who lives or works on the First Coast.

Community First is one of the largest credit unions in Florida with \$2.8 billion in assets and serving 175,000 members. Community First has 22 locations and more than 450 employees. A not-for-profit, Community First is a full-service financial institution offering banking, loans, mortgages and investments for consumers and businesses across the First Coast.

For more information, go to communityfirstfl.org.

First Florida Credit Union named Credit Union of The Year

For The Recorder

First Florida Credit Union (FFCU) has been named Credit Union of the Year in the large asset size category by the League of Southeastern Credit Unions. The award recognizes LSCU-affiliated credit unions for their outstanding achievements in the areas of day-to-day operations, financial prowess and community outreach.

"First Florida Credit Union's dedication to intelligent growth has resulted in remarkable success, positioning the organization as a standout in the industry," LSCU said in a statement announcing the award last month. "The credit union's net loan portfolio surged by more than \$32 million last year, surpassing expectations and offsetting rising costs."

FFCU President and CEO Brent Lister

Real estate market equalizes between buyers, sellers

For The Recorder

It appears that the Northeast Florida housing market is slowing to what is expected in a rising-interest-rate environment.

Although the median price of single-family homes rose 1.3% over the region to \$405,000, other factors indicate that the market has stabilized and that interest rates that hover around 7% may be finally catching up with buyers.

Throughout the region, housing inventory increased more than 31% to 7,764 homes, a 4.1-month supply and the highest since January 2019.

And other market statistics are not what we usually see in the month of June. Closed sales usually go up, not down, yet in Northeast Florida for single-family homes closed sales declined nearly 11% to 1,907. Similarly, pending sales usually go up and not down in June, yet pending sales last

month plummeted 35% to 1,261 homes.

“The Northeast Florida real estate market is back to a stabilized level between sellers and buyers,” said 2024 NEFAR President Rory Dubin. “Days on market climbed by almost two weeks from last month to 39 days, pending sales dropped significantly as well as new listings. Months of supply is now up to four months as active inventory climbed towards 7,800 listings.”

Meanwhile, the region’s Home Affordability Index remained the same as in May with June registering at 63.

The Home Affordability Index measures housing affordability for the region. In other words, it measures whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income and median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability.

This index measures affordability factors

for all homebuyers making a 20% down-payment. An index of 100 is defined as the point where a median-income family has the exact amount of income needed to purchase a median-priced existing home. An index value greater than 100 means that the family has more than enough income, while a value lower than 100 means that a family doesn’t have enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan.

“With interest rates averaging at or above 7% today and the election year upon us, it is more important than ever for both sellers and buyers to use a trusted Realtor from the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors to gain the most accurate and recent information to navigate the buying or selling process to make smart decisions,” Dubin said.

In St. Johns County, June 2024 median prices increased 2.6% to \$579,900 for single-family homes. The median days on the market increased 20.2% to 51. Month-

to-month, closed sales dropped 9.6% to 573, pending sales catapulted down 39.2% to 333 and new listings fell 2.5% to 835.

Active inventory climbed 13% to 2,298 homes, a four-month supply. The Home Affordability Index dropped to 44, indicating that it is very expensive to live in St. Johns County.

In Duval County, the June 2024 median price of single-family housing was \$340,900, a slight decrease of 1.2% from the month before. The median number of days on the market in June was 34, more than double from May 2024. Month-to-month closed sales fell 12.6% to 913, pending sales plummeted 36.6% to 612, and new listings dropped 2% to 1,709 homes.

Active inventory for the county climbed 21.7% to 3,533 homes, a 3.9-month supply. The Home Affordability Index inched up to 75.

Credit Union

Continued from 32

accepted the award during the LSCU annual conference June 14.

“We are honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award, which we wouldn’t have received if it weren’t for

our employees’ dedication to working together to enrich our members’ lives,” Lister said.

LSCU noted that FFCU boasts an impressive wallet share averaging more than \$29,000 per member, well above industry standard. It also recognized how FFCU has embraced digital innovation by implementing cutting-edge cybersecurity

measures and new technology that enhances its automated loan decision-making system that resulted in a 10% increase in loan approvals last year.

“Beyond financial achievements, First Florida Credit Union’s commitment to uplifting its community shines through various charitable initiatives and it has even earned accolades such as a Bold City

Community Choice Award and recognition as one of the Best Companies to Work For in Florida by Florida Trend magazine,” LSCU said.

FFCU was the only Northeast Florida credit union to be recognized with the award this year. It is the second time LSCU has named FFCU Credit Union of the Year.

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Generation Homes receive two awards at Parade of Homes

For The Record

It's been called a spectacular vacation getaway.

Judges in the Northeast Florida Builders Association Parade of Homes felt the same way. They rewarded custom design builder Generation Homes in two categories, Gold winner in the \$2.4 million to \$2.5 million category and Best Secondary Space for the E Komo Mai in St. Augustine Beach.

"The Generation Homes team could not be prouder to win with our most recent custom design build home for wonderfully kind and generous owners who envisioned this design for family vacations and gatherings," said Cora Johnston, president of Generation Homes.

The five-bedroom, six-and-half-bath home stands out as a vacation retreat, embracing the charm of coastal living with a contemporary twist, modern beach houses that offer the perfect blend of leisure and style.

Designer Alexis Koklias created relaxed coastal interiors, layering different fabrics and materials, accomplishing a laid-back feel, while successfully combining a traditional seaside look with a more contemporary beach house.

The three-story, 3,379-square-foot home was designed by Rob Florez Design, a full-service custom home design company. The floorplan offers a third-floor gathering space with a living room, kitchen, two dining spaces and south and north facing porches.



On the first floor there is another gathering room off the pool with a bunk bed niche for the children or young adults to have their own special space. The light and airy ensuite bedrooms have fluffy king size beds and showered baths.

The pool gives off a natural vibe as a side yard oasis. While inside, smart TVs and smart speakers collaborate to enhance the home entertainment experience.

"Couldn't have done it without you, Cora, and your Generation Homes team," said owner John Burda who named the home E Komo Mai. "You have been so great to us. I am so glad Generation Homes won the gold and that we played a small part in it."

He picked up the phrase while on vacation in Hawaii. In Hawaiian, "e komo mai" means come in and welcome with a feeling of belonging, coming together and a sense of community.

"Cora has a winning team with everyone in her company," added Burda. "Especially Mike (Fenner) and Alexis (Koklias). Generation Homes listens to what new homeowners want in their home."

The home was built to appeal to the discriminating vacationer or as secondary residence. Generation Homes' Karen Roske mentioned that positive feedback was tremendous during several Realtor open houses.

The Burdas enjoy their beach access



Contributed photos

at the end of 5th Street, giving them the opportunity to relax, walk or ride on wide sandy beach. The home is amid walkable St. Augustine Beach dining, shopping and the pier.

Nearby attractions include the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, The Alligator Farm, St. Augustine Lighthouse and all that St. Augustine, the Nation's Oldest City, has to offer.

"E Komo Mai exemplifies our unwavering commitment to meet the expectations of homeowners today, tomorrow and for generations to come," said Johnston. "From the first design meeting to the final meeting when we hand over the keys."

For more information, go to generationhomesusa.com or call 904-955-4769.

Bank of America announces local student leaders

For The Recorder

Bank of America recently announced that four area high school juniors and seniors were selected as Student Leaders, an eight-week paid summer internship connecting students to employment, skills development and community service.

The students will gain practical work and leadership experience and receive financial education coaching from Bank of America's Better Money Habits curriculum, while working alongside local

nonprofit Communities in Schools of Jacksonville.

This is the 20th year Bank of America has offered this competitive paid internship program in Jacksonville, with 95 high school students selected as Student Leaders since the program began in 2004.

"By providing career and leadership development opportunities for teens for 20 years, we continue to help develop the next generation of skilled workers, which is essential to the region's long-term economic growth," said Mark Bennett, president, Bank of America Jacksonville.

"These exceptional teens selected for the Student Leaders program will not only gain practical work and life experience, but the community in turn will gain help from local nonprofits and a diverse pipeline of talent as these young adults enter the local workforce."

The class of 2024 Jacksonville Bank of America Student Leaders are:

- Rahul Kollum, Beachside High School: Rahul's passion for aiding others inspired him to volunteer at Brooks Rehabilitation. At his school, he created a club called Beachside Stocks, which created a stock market simulation for more than 30 students to learn how the stock market functions and the importance of investing wisely.

- Vandana Guru, Allen D. Nease High School: Vandana serves as a board member with Jacksonville Tamil Mandram Youth Committee, a nonprofit that promotes interaction with the Tamil com-

munity in Northeast Florida. Vandana has also worked to direct events like a toilet-ries drive for the local homeless shelter.

- Angelina Che, recent senior at Atlantic Coast High School: Angelina has volunteered at her local library and with Feeding Northeast Florida Food Bank and BigFuture Ambassador, an organization that helps prepare students for life after high school.

- Anjali Gusani, The Bolles School: Anjali created and led her school's first chapter of Future Business Leaders of America. She has also served as a U.S. State Department Youth Ambassador for Chile and Argentina and volunteered in Mayor Donna Deegan's transition team.

Along with Student Leaders, Bank of America is connecting several teens and young adults to paid jobs and internships with Jacksonville Humane Society through its Summer Youth Employment Program.

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In the Arts



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Music therapy program to continue despite loss of state funding

For almost two decades, Sound Connections has offered music therapy to students free of charge in St. Johns County, but the remaining \$61,000 required to provide this benefit to four Title 1 schools was cut as part of the State of Florida’s defunding of arts programs.

However, this outreach of First Coast Cultural Center will continue to serve more than 500 students, trusting that the much-needed funds will be obtained through grants and financial support from individuals, foundations and corporations, especially in the St. Augustine area.

“Students find music so enjoyable and accessible, and I love seeing them smile as they grow academically, socially and emotionally with music,” said Candice Sirak, board certified music therapist and Sound Connections clinical manager.

Sound Connections is offered to all pre-K students and self-contained Access Points Classrooms (with modified curriculum) for kindergarten through fifth grade. The cost per student is \$250, which equates to \$5,000 to support one class or \$15,000 to support one school for an entire school year.

Nine schools will offer the program during the 2024-25 school year. Four are Title 1 schools: Crookshank Elementary, Osceola Elementary, Webster Elementary and the pre-K classes at the First Coast Technical Center. Five other schools already have funding through various donors: Cunningham Creek Elementary, Durbin Creek Elementary, Ocean Palms Elementary, PV/PV Rawlings Elementary and Valley Ridge Academy.

“First Coast Cultural Center has been offering music therapy since 2006,” said Donna Guzzo, First Coast Cultural Center president and CEO. “We know it is beneficial in improving self-esteem. It can decrease anxiety, and it can help improve communication skills. We now hear from former students who are young adults that have graduated high school or are in college and have not forgotten the program. We are committed to making a life impact on these children.”

Sirak said she also looks forward to another year teaching creative strategies to help students learn through music.

“Students really enjoy when I sing the words in a book to them instead of just reading it,” she said. “Some of my older students like writing songs, as well.”

To donate or sponsor a student or for more program details, go to firstcoastculturalcenter.org/programs-events/sound-connections-r.

Individual music therapy sessions are also available at First Coast Cultural Center for a fee.

Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville announces grant program

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, in partnership with the City of Jacksonville, recently announced a new grant program to serve local individual working artists in Duval County.

“The Artist Grant Program: Operational Grants for Individual Artists” is city-funded through the Cultural Council and a first of its kind in Jacksonville.

The establishment of the new Artist Grant Program leverages the Cultural Council’s extensive 30-plus year partnership with the city, as well as its extensive knowledge of the cultural sector. This investment significantly expands the Cultural Council’s grant-making scope and fiduciary stewardship within the city, aiming to enrich the creative sector and provide an economic ripple effect to all residents and businesses in Jacksonville.

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville currently manages the Cultural Service Grant Program that provides the city approximately \$114 million in creative economic impact.

The Artist Grant Program was developed in collaboration with one of the mayor’s transition committees, the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Committee, and the City of Jacksonville. The inaugural program aims to invigorate and support the artist sector in Duval County and establish a framework that enhances the local economy and makes our city the

best place to live and thrive for Northeast regional artists.

“Arts and culture has been a priority to my administration since the get-go,” said Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan. “It’s no secret that Jacksonville is brimming with talent and creativity, so we are excited to be able to further support our artists, who truly exemplify the creative heart and soul of our city. Through this new program, Jacksonville-based creatives will have an even greater support system to help them to develop and showcase their talents, build a larger audience and succeed financially. And ultimately, I hope that it will encourage them to stay here and continue to share their talents with us.”

“As champions for Jacksonville’s creative sector and vibrant cultural landscape, we believe in the transformative power of arts and culture, mutually enhancing economic growth and quality of life for our city,” said Diana Donovan, executive director of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville. “As we leveraged national best practices, we anticipate this program will ignite Duval County’s creative economy, while trailblazing Jacksonville as a city that acquires and retains creative talent through professional development and intentional capacity building. The Artist Grant Program will ensure that Jacksonville becomes the

place for talented creatives to live, work, play and stay.”

Sixty grants of \$10,000 will be awarded in the pilot program’s inaugural year, totaling \$600,000 in direct grants for artists across multiple disciplines. A review panel, as outlined in the legislation, will comprise two professional artists, two community members, two Cultural Council board members and a chair, who all have a deep knowledge of artistry, government compliance, fiscal responsibility and city grants. The panel will evaluate all applications and the Cultural Council will announce the grant awards by the end of 2024.

The program is designed to assist practicing, professional artists in any medium or discipline residing in Duval County, and also includes creative entrepreneurs and cultural workers who work directly, primarily and to the benefit of individual artists such as curators, producers and presenters.

In addition to the artist grants, the pilot program will include workshops to educate artists about the grant writing process. Grantees will also receive coaching and professional development training through Sept. 30, 2025.

Applications will open Monday, July 29, and close Aug. 30. For more information on the Artist Grant Program, go to culturalcouncil.org/artistgrant.

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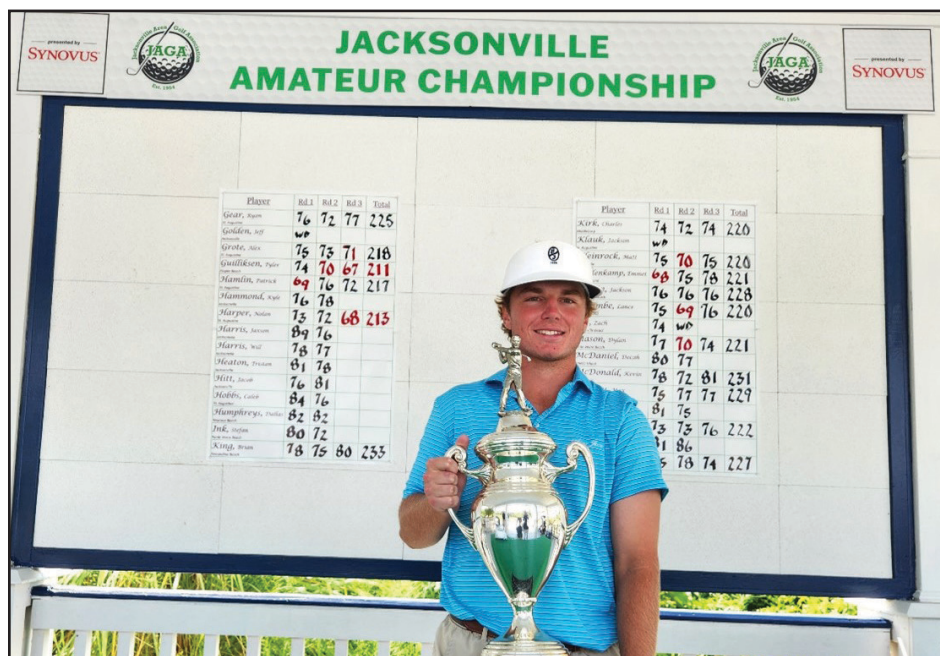
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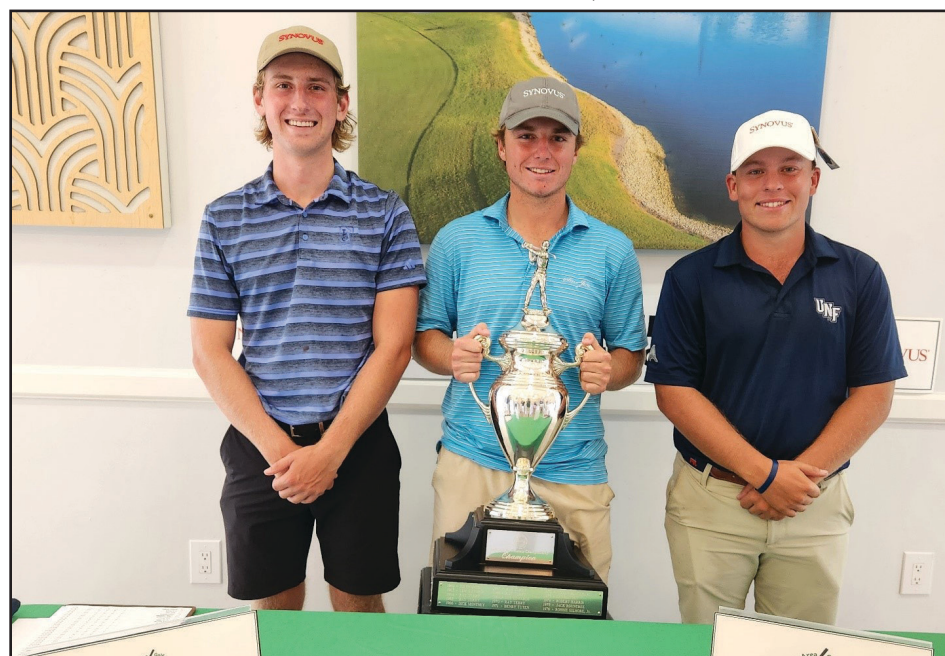
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Photos courtesy of Jacksonville Amateur Golf Association



Adam Waller of Jacksonville won the 63rd JAGA Jacksonville Amateur Championship presented by Synovus in a playoff.



Top finishers at the event included (left to right) Luke Balaskiewicz (tied for third), Adam Waller (champion) and Jason Duff (runner-up).

Waller wins Jacksonville Amateur in playoff

Elkton native Duff finishes runner-up for second straight year

By Anthony Richards

The 63rd JAGA Jacksonville Amateur Championship presented by Synovus needed extra golf to decide the winner and it was Adam Waller who went home victorious after defeating 2022 champion Jason Duff in a three-hole playoff.

What made the championship battle down the stretch even more interesting was the fact that it pitted a pair of local golfers against each other on the course at Jacksonville Golf and Country Club.

Waller graduated from Wolfson High in

Jacksonville and will be entering his sophomore year at Valdosta State, while Duff is an Elkton resident and went to Menendez High.

Wolfson High has had quite the representation atop the leaderboard at the Jacksonville Amateur Championship in recent years, as followed in the footsteps of his former Wolfson teammate Will Davis, who won last year's title, but was unable to defend it due to a scheduling conflict.

Waller and Duff both finished with a three-round total of six-under to force a playoff, which was decided on the 18th hole as Duff hit an errant tee shot that drifted out of bounds that proved to be the difference in the battle.

It was another close call for Duff, who finished runner-up at the event for the sec-

ond consecutive year.

Waller started off the event with an opening round by shooting even par before making a charge up the board with a six-under in the second round as he found his groove.

That big second round was enough to help him win the tournament as he shot another even par in the third round before edging out Duff in the playoff.

Luke Balaskiewicz, who will be entering his senior year at the Bolles School this fall, shot five-under and finished in a tie for third place with Tyler Gulliksen of Flagler Beach.

Gulliksen was one of the more veteran players in the field, having graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 2010.

Both reached third place in different ways as Balaskiewicz pumped out a four-

under first round and set the tone for the rest of his tournament, as he was the co-leader along with Waller after 36 holes.

Gulliksen, however, entered the final round at even par but got on a run en route to posting a five-under round and presenting a real threat for the overall title on the final day.

This year's championship featured 90 of Northeast Florida's top amateur golfers with more than half of the field having a handicap index of zero or less.

2024 is JAGA's 71st year as an organization and 63 of those years they have held the Jacksonville Amateur Championship, which rotates among various golf courses around the Northeast Florida area. Next year's event will be hosted by Timuquana Country Club for the first time.

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NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 11th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION

The collage includes several articles and ads:

- Major sculpture created in Mandarin**: Harriet Beecher Stowe subject of work. By Shaun Ryan.
- Post 129 sent pair to nationals as part of memorable year**: By Anthony Richards.
- Family Chiropractic Care for Nearly 20 Years**: Wellness Center.
- INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!**: The Recorder's coverage of the 2024 Lotus Eletre.
- 2024 Lotus Eletre NOW ORDERING**: Advertisement for the car.
- Public Auction**: Extra Space Storage advertisement.

Email:

legal@PonteVedraRecorder.com

Or Call Shelli Shealy at

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1	2	3	4			5	6	7	8	9	10			
11						12						13	14	15
16						17				18				
19				20	21			22	23				24	
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43					44						45	46	47	48
49				50					51	52				
53			54						55					
56		57					58				59			
60					61	62					63			
				64							65			

ACROSS

- 1. Average damage per system (abbr.)
- 5. Lustful woodland gods (Greek mythology)
- 11. Colombian Town
- 12. Sour
- 16. A way to stuff
- 17. Former AL MVP Vaughn
- 18. Carried or transported
- 19. Cannot even fathom
- 24. Hammer is one
- 25. A way to separate
- 26. Not moving
- 27. Women's service organization (abbr.)
- 28. German river
- 29. Quantitative fact
- 30. A person's head
- 31. Process that produces ammonia
- 33. French modernist painter
- 34. Too much noise
- 38. Agree to a demand
- 39. One a line at right angles to a ship's length
- 40. Employees
- 43. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
- 44. Component of hemoglobin
- 45. Quick and skillful in movement
- 49. Passing trend
- 50. Part of the eye
- 51. One who acclaims
- 53. Deadly amount (abbr.)
- 54. Taste property
- 56. Genus of mosquitoes
- 58. Blood type
- 59. A group of countries in special alliance
- 60. Institute legal proceedings against
- 63. Shade of a color
- 64. Spoke
- 65. Work units

- 4. Boil at low temperature
- 5. Lapps of northern Scandinavia
- 6. Poisonous plant
- 7. Atomic #22
- 8. 36 inches
- 9. Monetary unit of Russia
- 10. Type of gin
- 13. An alternative
- 14. Alone
- 15. A way to ooze
- 20. Publicity
- 21. American firm
- 22. Jewish calendar month
- 23. Popular sandwich
- 27. Comedian Cook
- 29. The NFL's big game (abbr.)
- 30. Political action committee
- 31. Make a low, steady sound
- 32. Legendary sportscaster Michaels
- 33. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- 34. Designed to keep ears warm

- 35. One who scrapes
- 36. Tear into two or more pieces
- 37. Supervises flying
- 38. Flying arm of the U.S. military (abbr.)
- 40. District in Peru
- 41. One died leaving a will
- 42. Morning
- 44. The world of the dead
- 45. Widen
- 46. Drink containing medicine
- 47. Celebrating
- 48. Secret encounters
- 50. A type of tag
- 51. Halfback
- 52. Modern tech
- 54. Monetary unit
- 55. Resigned to one's sleeping chamber
- 57. Execute or perform
- 61. "The Golden State"
- 62. "The Beehive State" (abbr.)

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

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

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

DOWN

- 1. Charge with a crime
- 2. Mended with yarn
- 3. North Atlantic flatfish

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