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Thursday, August 15, 2024

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Meeting heated over missed trash pickups

By Shaun Ryan

The rollout of residential curbside collection under St. Johns County's new provider was a "catastrophic failure," according to County Commissioner Sarah Arnold, speaking at the Aug. 6 meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

FCC Environmental Services Florida was supposed to begin collections Aug. 1 but as of Tuesday, Aug. 6, many residents were still waiting to see their trash taken away.

"We've had missed pickups in neighborhoods all over the county from Julington Creek Plantation all the way down to Hastings, and everywhere in between," said County Commissioner Christian Whitehurst

TRASH continues on Page 10

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Oldenburg named PLAYERS tournament chair

Neal joins leadership team as newest vice-chair

By Shaun Ryan

THE PLAYERS Championship recently named Tyler Oldenburg its 2025 tournament chairman. He succeeds Lee Nimmicht.

The tournament chairman oversees more than 2,000 volunteers who support all elements of The PGA TOUR's flagship event.

In addition, Hamilton Neal has been named the newest vice-chair in the tournament's volunteer leadership team, commonly called the Red and Blue



Photo provided by PGA Tour

THE PLAYERS Championship tournament volunteer leadership team: Vice-Chair Kevin Copeland, Vice-Chair Laura Renstrom, First Vice-Chair Marc Hassan, Chairman Tyler Oldenburg, Vice-Chair Hamilton Neal and Vice-Chair Luke Pritchett.

PLAYERS continues on Page 7

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BRIEFS

Early voting underway

Early voting for the Aug. 20 primary election began in St. Johns County on Saturday, Aug. 10. It will conclude on Saturday, Aug. 17. Seven polling stations, including the Ponte Vedra Branch Library, are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. For further information, go to votesjc.gov.

Passport Saturday event: 284 applications processed

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller has announced the results of the Aug. 3 Passport Saturday Event. During the event, clerks welcomed 600 residents, successfully processed 284 passport applications and took 249 passport photos.

The office offers passport services 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine. Appointments are encouraged at the main office location and walk-ins are welcome. Julatington Creek and Ponte Vedra annexes offer passport services by appointment only.

To further assist residents, the office has created a comprehensive passport guide that simplifies the application process with clear, step-by-step guidance.

For more information on passport services and to access the passport guide, go to stjohnsclerk.com/passports.

Family Law Workshop Series under way

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's office reports the successful launch of the Family Law Workshop held on Aug. 7 in partnership with St. Johns County Legal Aid and the Law Office of Nancy Harrison.

The workshop attracted 22 residents. Among the key topics discussed were the complexities of child custody arrangements and the procedures for filing legal documents without representation.

Harrison's presentation provided insightful guidance on various family law issues, including practical advice on topics such as divorce, child custody, asset separation and pro se filings.

A recording of the first workshop of the series can be viewed at youtu.be/PR4wfY-29BoM.

The next Family Law Workshop is scheduled for noon to 1 p.m. Sept. 4 at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center. This event is open to the public and free of charge. For more details about the workshop or family law services, go to stjohnsclerk.com/courts/family-law.

BRIEFS continues on Page 4

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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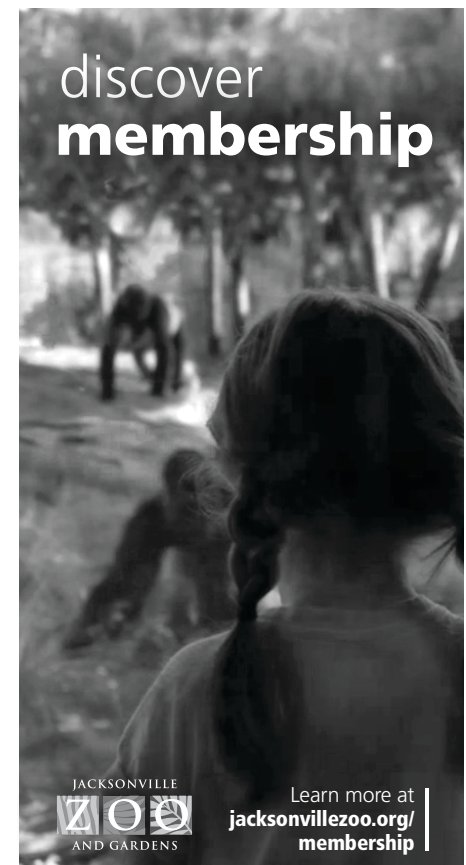


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Kids Expo set for Aug. 18

The Kids Expo returns to World Golf Village Renaissance St. Augustine Resort on Sunday, Aug. 18. Stop by from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to enjoy a fun-filled day with the family. The event is free and indoors.

Parents trying to get ready for a new school year sometimes find planning can be overwhelming. This event is loaded with important information from family-friendly resources and fun afterschool and year-round programs to help with that process.

Kids can grab a balloon animal, pet a

reptile, get a henna tattoo, meet a pirate, make a craft, run the obstacle course, watch youth group performances, play games for prizes and enjoy hands-on activities with community partners. All activities are free.

RSVP at bit.ly/STAKidsExpo to receive updates and schedules. As a bonus, you'll be entered to win four tickets to the Crayola Experience Orlando.

This event is sponsored by Florida Blue, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council, Nitika's Art Factory, Polar Beverages, Second Chance Last Opportunity, The Art House and We Rock the Spectrum Jacksonville.

This event is organized by Touch of Magic Events. For further information or to become a vendor, email info@touchofmagicevents.com.

Coastal Friends topic: Jacksonville history

Coastal Friends will host Dr. Scott L. Matthews, professor of history at Florida State College of Jacksonville, as their guest speaker for the Sept. 4. luncheon. The luncheon runs from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and will be held at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Matthews' topic will be "They Fear Nothing So Much As Their Own People: How The Civil War Fractured Jacksonville And Its Lessons For Us Today."

The luncheon is open to members

and guests, as well as the community. The cost to attend the luncheon is \$25. Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net. The deadline for checks to be received is Friday, Aug. 30.

Luncheons are normally held on the first Wednesday of every month, except for July and August.

New members are welcome throughout the year. Contact brookemeister@msn.com for information on how to join.

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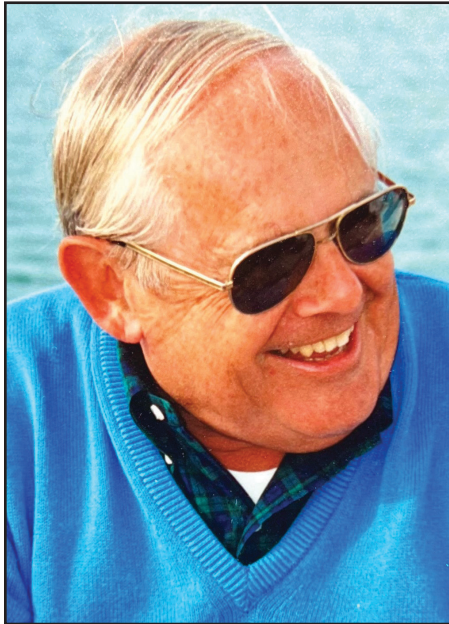


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OBITUARIES

**Milton C. Boesel, Jr. ("Bud")**

Milton Charles Boesel, Jr. ("Bud") passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 8th, in his Leland, Michigan home surrounded by his family. He was 96. Born on July 12, 1928, he was the eldest son of Florence and Milton Boesel of Toledo, Ohio. He graduated from

DeVilbiss High School in Toledo in 1946 where he was a member of the State Champion Track Team and was named to the All-Ohio Track Team. He also earned the rank of Eagle Scout, and later served as Scoutmaster for Troop #27 in the Village of Ottawa Hills.

He received his BA from Yale University in 1950 and his JD from Harvard University in 1953. Upon his graduation from law school, Mr. Boesel entered the Naval Officers Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island. He then served three years as an officer in the U.S. Navy aboard ships in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets.

After completing his naval service, Mr. Boesel returned to Toledo, where he had passed the Ohio, Michigan, and American Bar Association examinations and joined the law firm of Ritter and Boesel, focusing on business law. For a time, he served as Assistant General Counsel of Jeep Corporation. In addition to his law practice, Mr. Boesel served for 23 years as a Director and Officer of the First National Bank of Toledo and its successor organization, Fifth Third Bank. After the merger, Mr. Boesel also served

as a Director of Fifth Third Bancorp in Cincinnati for a number of years.

A small business owner, Mr. Boesel spent several years as a Director, Officer and owner of Hall-Toledo, Inc., a machine company based in Maumee, Ohio.

A dedicated community volunteer, Mr. Boesel served for nine years as the volunteer Tax Commissioner of the Village of Ottawa Hills and several years as a vestry member of Saint Michaels in the Hills Episcopal Church. He devoted much of his time to the Boy Scouts of America, serving as a member of the board and executive committee of the Toledo Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Mr. Boesel was recognized for his service by receiving the Boy Scouts highest local volunteer award, the Silver Beaver. He also enjoyed serving as a little league baseball coach for many years.

An avid sportsman, Mr. Boesel has been a lifelong water and snow skier, tennis player, golfer, fisherman, and hunter. But his passion has always been sailing. He is a founding member of two yacht clubs — North Cape Yacht Club in Toledo, Ohio and Royal Vicar's Yacht Club in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida — he has

always enjoyed being out on the water.

Mr. Boesel married his "trophy wife," Lucy Mather, in March 1961. The couple has three children — Elizabeth Sagges (Michael), Charles, and Andrew — and six grandchildren.

Although born and raised in Toledo, Mr. Boesel and his family have been longtime, seasonal residents of Leland, Michigan. Active in the local community, Mr. Boesel served as Board Member and President of the Leland Country Club as well as a member of the Leland Yacht Club and several other local, non-profit organizations.

For the last several years, the Boesels have resided in Vicar's Landing of Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida where they have maintained memberships in the Sawgrass Country Club, Royal Vicar's Yacht Club, and Christ Church of Ponte Vedra Beach. The Boesels also maintained their lifetime membership in The Toledo Country Club.

Memorial services will be private. In lieu of flowers, the family requests any memorials be directed to the Scholarship Fund of Vicar's Landing or Christ Church of Ponte Vedra Beach.

DEATH NOTICES

Gerald P. Camp

Gerald P. Camp, 79, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Aug. 11, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com, 904-249-1100.

Michael Glen Lee

Michael Glen Lee, 53, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Aug. 10, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com, 904-249-1100.

Vivian G. Ogletree

Vivian G. Ogletree, 70, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Aug. 5, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com, 904-249-1100.

Veterans to relate inspiring stories at event

The Tribute to Veteran Unsung Heroes honoring Vietnam Airborne veteran Rick McAllister and Air Force veteran Kris Jurski is Saturday, Aug. 17. The program begins at noon and is preceded by a luncheon. The event will be held at the Salem Centre Auditorium, 7235 Bentley Road, Jacksonville.

McAllister will tell his pictorial story of leading a group of Vietnam PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) veterans on a 500-mile healing pilgrimage across Northern Spain on the Camino de Santiago. Attendees can hear about this inspiring and important "Last Patrol: A Pilgrimage of Brotherhood."

Jurski is a computer engineer and used that expertise to create The Peoples Audit, a grassroots army to help election offices maintain clean Florida voter rolls.

"Here is an opportunity to hear amazing stories and thank these unsung heroes," said Beth Heath, president of the We Can Be Heroes Foundation. "We are proud to honor Rick McAllister and Kris Jurski of Florida."

Reservations to the program can be made by selecting Trending Now at WeCanBeHeroesFoundation.org. We Can Be Heroes events honor veterans and military with ticket discounts.

Briefs

Continued from 2

Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

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

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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Contributed photos



Dial-A-Ride receives a new van to transport seniors

For The Recorder

Dial-a-Ride, the nonprofit transportation service in Jacksonville Beach for seniors, received an anonymous donation from a member of the Palms Presbyterian Church. The gift enabled the 49-year agency to purchase a van that will take seniors who can no longer drive anywhere they wish to go in the Beaches area.

It will replace an old car that seats two people, with an Acura Odyssey van that

seats six.

“We were so grateful to receive this donation so that we could upgrade our fleet and help more seniors,” said Lori Anderson, executive director of the program. “Although this van does not have wheelchair access, our other three vans are able to accommodate one or two wheelchairs.”

Beaches Council on Aging is the agency that runs the nonprofit program Dial-a-Ride. It has been helping seniors and disabled adults in the Beaches area

since 1975.

The service spans north from Mayport, south to Ponte Vedra Beach and across the Intracoastal to Mayo Clinic and the Cypress Village area.

The demand is growing as the population of aging adults is increasing. Seniors who are losing their ability to drive for health or safety reasons is the reason the service is offered.

Dial-a-Ride wants to assure that those who are stuck in their homes have a way to go to their doctor, grocery shop or get

their hair done.

The operation is simple and free; it only takes a phone call a few days before your appointment and they only ask for a \$5 donation roundtrip. The drivers are kind and courteous and treat our riders like friends, according to the organization.

If you would like to learn more about the service, or know someone in the Jacksonville Beaches area who needs this service, go to beachescoa.org or call 904-246-1477 Ext. 1.

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Craig O'Neal started photography as a hobby but got more involved in it and his passion became a second career that has allowed him to take photos at a variety of events and for a number of companies over the years. It is the stories behind the photos that he has enjoyed the most.

Craig O'Neal

As told to Anthony Richards

Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

I've been in Ponte Vedra now for 35 years, coming here in 1989 from Minneapolis when I came down to help build the first Target store in the area in Orange Park.

I have a background in banking and finance for 37 years but am retired now.

I first got into photography in the early 2000s and started with nature photography as I'm a Florida Master Naturalist and have just always been into nature and weather.

I even taught some classes on how to photograph animals and that sort of stuff. The Guana Preserve has used several of my photos and Bird Island Park behind the Ponte Vedra Library has kiosks that have my photos in them.

Are there any other types of photography that you enjoy?

One day I happened to catch the eye of someone at Jacksonville.com where they had a handful of photographers going around to different events, so I jumped on that, and it gave me opportunities to try different types of photography.

It didn't take me long to find out that concert photography was something that really appealed to me and I did about a decade of that.

I've probably photographed about 100 different concerts, which is tricky to do because you have to capture an image with all the constant movement and the dancing and changing lighting that takes place throughout.

I also photographed my share of Jags games, and it wasn't long before I had a dozen or so companies that I was regularly taking photos for.

What were some of the companies?

Firehouse Subs, the Bolles School, environmental organizations, and I even did some product photography for some high-end jewelers, as well as working for several media companies over the years that afternoon taking shots of the new players on the team.

The media jobs were interesting because you would be shooting a beekeeping farm for a feature in the morning and in the Jaguars locker room. You just never knew what you were going to get, including shooting THE PLAYERS for The Ponte Vedra Recorder.

What are some of the memorable photo assignments you've done?

One of the more interesting trips I took was spending a week in Cuba learning to shoot street photography.

I learned the importance of making conversation and getting to know the people you are shooting and that you don't just walk up and take their photo.

You'll find most people are interested and open to you taking their photo if you show an interest in them. I've done that ever since.

Also, 10 years ago I was asked by National Geographic to be on a TV show they had about the wild monkeys living along the river in Ocala.

I had a cameo on the show, and they used some of my photos as well. It was definitely the highlight of my career as a photographer.



Contributed photo

Craig O'Neal has turned photography into a second career that has spanned over decades.

What evolution have you seen in the photography world over the years?

There's been a lot of evolution in photography when it comes to the equipment that is used.

Phones' cameras have gotten so good, and although they still don't have the same capabilities and quality, I remember a day when it was laughable to think that a phone camera was even close to the quality of an SLR.

So the types of photos have not changed so much, but it's the process taken to get the imagery that has.

What advice would you give to someone looking to get into photography?

For anyone interested, it's important to have an idea about the subject they wish to pursue because that goes a long way in determining the equipment they will need.

Their approach will change based on the amount of lighting and the angles available to shoot from.

I am completely self-taught, but I spent a lot of time learning what to do and what not to do.

I suggest joining a photography group and find out what you like and don't like because if you like what you're shooting, you will have more of a passion for it.

I've found that some of the nicest people I've met are photographers because they're always willing to offer up advice from their own experiences.

What do you enjoy most about living in Northeast Florida?

I've been here now for more than half my life, and I enjoy the community and the people that live here.

I'm just so comfortable here now. It is truly my home.

PLAYERS

Continued from 1

Coats. The team manages the 48 committees responsible for the operations central to THE PLAYERS.

In addition to Oldenburg and Neal, the team consists of First Vice-Chair Marc Hassan and vice-chairs Kevin Copeland, Laura Renstrom and Luke Pritchett.

Oldenburg, a Jacksonville native, is in his 12th year as a volunteer. He has volunteered with several committees, including general parking, ecology, practice grounds, Patriots' Outpost and benefactor hospitality.

He lives in Deerwood with his wife, Katelyn, and their three children.

Oldenburg is a shareholder at Marks Gray P.A., one of Jacksonville's oldest law firms. He has been recognized as one of the Best Lawyers in America (2024) and a Florida Super Lawyer (2023).

"I am so honored to work alongside the amazing volunteer team at THE PLAYERS and assume the position of 2025 chairman," he said. "THE PLAYERS volunteers have become my extended family over the years, and their passion and dedication continually motivate me to always do my best. I hope to live up to the high standards set by Lee Nimnicht and all past chairpersons and am looking forward to a 2025 championship that is successful on the course and throughout



2025 Chairman Tyler Oldenburg

the greater Northeast Florida community."

Neal grew up in Central Kentucky and moved here in 2000.

Though he didn't play golf at the time, he always loved the game, and a meeting with a member of the leadership team proved fortuitous. Told the tournament was looking for people to get involved in the community, Neal stepped up.

THE PLAYERS' support for local charities appeals to Neal, who serves as vice president on the board of Investing in Kids (INK!), which supports teachers and students in St. Johns County, and sits on the YMCA Nocatee Board of Direc-



Vice-Chair Hamilton Neal

tors. A supporter of the arts, he has also served on the board for Florida Theatre.

As a member of the volunteer leadership team, he is discovering new ways to support area charities.

"I couldn't do anything that touches more nonprofits than what we do for THE PLAYERS," he said.

Neal is a financial planner with Bridge-water Wealth Advisors of Raymond James in Ponte Vedra Beach. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Kentucky. He lives in Nocatee with wife Michelle and their four children.

This is Neal's 16th year with THE

PLAYERS.

"I started at Patriots' Outpost as an assistant chair and just fell in love with it," he said.

He steps into his new role with knowledge about the committees he will oversee, as he has been a part of most of them over the years.

In his new role, Neal will oversee the volunteer services division, supervising apparel, credentials, concessions, office and volunteer personnel, photography, recognition, supplies, volunteer information, offsite shuttle and volunteer transportation.

He said it was "truly an honor" to be selected as a member of the volunteer leadership team.

"You dream about it early on in your volunteer years, and then when it happens, it's humbling but it's also just pretty unbelievable," he said. "I don't know if everybody feels the way that I feel, but volunteering at the tournament has meant so much to me and my family that being able to be in the top leadership — it's pretty special."

The 2025 PLAYERS Championship will be held March 11-16. Learn more at theplayers.com.

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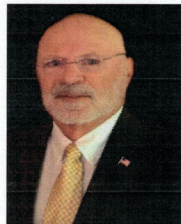
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Kris Jurski



Rick McAllister



Veteran Kris Jurski is a Computer Engineer and used that expertise to uncover thousands of fraudulent votes in the 2020 election. He created the People's Audit to help citizens check who is voting from their homes. The system has since grown to monitor millions of voters statewide for anomalies. Hear how fraudulent ballots were created and how his grassroots army was able to clean millions of improper voters off the Florida rolls.

Vietnam Airborne Veteran Rick McAllister recently led a group of Vietnam PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) veterans on a 500-mile healing pilgrimage across Northern Spain on the Camino se Santiago. Hear about this inspiring and important "Last Patrol: A Pilgrimage of Brotherhood."

When: Saturday, August 17, 2024, 11:30 a.m. Light Lunch. Noon Presentation.

Where: Salem Centre Auditorium, 7235 Bentley Road, Jacksonville, FL 32256

Seating is limited: Early Bird Cost is \$40 and includes lunch. Reserve a table for six for \$240. Table for eight is \$280 (includes one free ticket).

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MSD seeks answers for garbage collection issues

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District Board of Trustees weighed in on the ongoing garbage collection crisis that is taking place following issues with FCC Environmental Services since taking over in St. Johns County on Aug. 1.

“It’s really been a rough start to the contract,” MSD Chairman Al Hollon said during the MSD meeting on Aug. 12.

St. Johns County Public Works Director Greg Caldwell attended the meeting and responded to questions the board had.

“I issued them a notice of default this past week stating that they had seven days to provide us an action item list or cure everything,” Caldwell said. “They’re better today than they were yesterday, and they were better yesterday than they were the day before, but we know we’re not anywhere where we want to be.”

Trustee Kitty Switkes and Hollon both stated that they have run into confusion when dealing with FCC and its customer service.

“I called Friday, and they said our pickup was Friday, and then I called today, and they said my pickup for yard trash and recycling is Wednesday, so I don’t know what to tell my neighbors because they’re changing it every time I call.”

Caldwell stated that the county is meeting with FCC’s senior leadership each day to go over the routes and the data collected to continue to strive to figure out all the issues faced.

“I worked with the supervisor at Republic (Services, the previous contracted collector) for several years, who was overseeing everything up here, and I happened to talk to him on Friday and he said, ‘You can’t serve the MSD on a three-day schedule,’ and that’s what they’ve been doing,” Hollon said.

If the issues are not corrected, the option of looking into breaking the contract and getting another company to service the county has been discussed.

However, Caldwell stated that route would also have challenges that would come with it.

“That would compound the issue as well, so our hope is that FCC makes it right because continuing this cycle is not good for anybody,” Caldwell said. “Hopefully they can right the ship.”

Caldwell also mentioned to the board the county’s proposal to mill and resurface roughly one mile of the southern portion of San Juan Drive with an expected completion date by September 30.

“Once we start the process and get the contractor on board, it would probably be about a day maybe two days to mill it and then we’ll start resurfacing it,” Caldwell said.

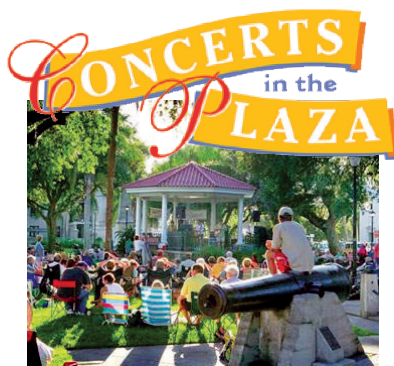
According to Caldwell, the county looking into widening San Juan Drive by

an additional foot on either side because it currently stands at 20 feet in width with one section that may stretch to 21 feet.

“We had heard overtime about the speeding that has occurred on San Juan Drive,” Caldwell said. “We feel that if we widen it by any means, it would just increase the ability for people to feel comfortable on the road and that usually increases the speed they’re going. I know that’s the last thing anyone wants up in this area.”

Trustee Mickey White asked Caldwell about any future plans to resurface the Miranda Road Bridge and mentioned the county’s bridge program.

“We work with the DOT to inspect all the bridges out there, and I believe in the next couple of years we have funds to really look at the Miranda Bridge and see really what all improvements are necessary there,” Caldwell said. “I think Duane (Kent, county engineer) is really looking into spearheading that.”



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Veteran suicides down, program credited

By Shaun Ryan

Veteran suicides continue to be a concern in Florida, but where citizens have taken The Fire Watch’s Watch Stander course, the rate has fallen significantly.

The Fire Watch, a nonprofit working to end veteran suicide by offering the free intervention training, released its 2024 Annual Report: Veteran Suicide in Florida in July. The report finds that, following a significant decline in 2019 and 2020, veteran suicides increased over the next two years.

In Florida, the veteran suicide rate is more than 2.5 times that of civilian suicides.

“Veterans continue to struggle with suicidal ideation,” said The Fire Watch Executive Director Nick Howland. “It’s our responsibility — the community’s responsibility — to stand vigilant for veterans, to recognize the signs of crisis and to connect veterans in crisis to the help they need.”

The Fire Watch was founded in 2019 in Northeast Florida, where more than 4,000 people have taken the Watch Stander course. The report shows that the rate here has decreased 27% from 2019 and 2020. Throughout the rest of Florida, the decrease was only 1%.

In St. Johns County, there were four veteran suicides in 2022 — the latest year that data is available — out of a veteran population of 21,667. This is down from the baseline year of 2019, when 13 veteran suicides were reported, and 2020, when there were eight. There are 372 Watch Standers in the county.

In Duval County, there were 41 veteran suicides in 2022 out of a veteran population of 82,346. This is down from 44 in 2019 but up from 24 in 2020 and 22 in 2021. There are 1,048 Watch Standers in Duval County.

The report found that the highest increases were in Lee, Santa Rosa, Flagler, Jackson and Gulf counties. Statewide, there were 655 veteran sui-

cides in 2022, down from 660 in 2019. Veterans at the opposite ends of the age spectrum tended to die by suicide more often than those between 35 and 74, at least in Northeast Florida. The rate for males was nearly twice that for females.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ most recent report found that there were 6,392 veteran suicides in 2021.

“The Watch Stander program we built in Northeast Florida and have now extended to Central and Southeast Florida is working,” said The Fire Watch founding member Brigadier General (Ret.) Mike Fleming. “But even one veteran suicide is too many. Veterans are heroes who have written a blank check for up to and including their lives to protect our community. Now it is time for our community to protect them.”

To view the full report or to register to become a Watch Stander, go to thefirewatch.org.

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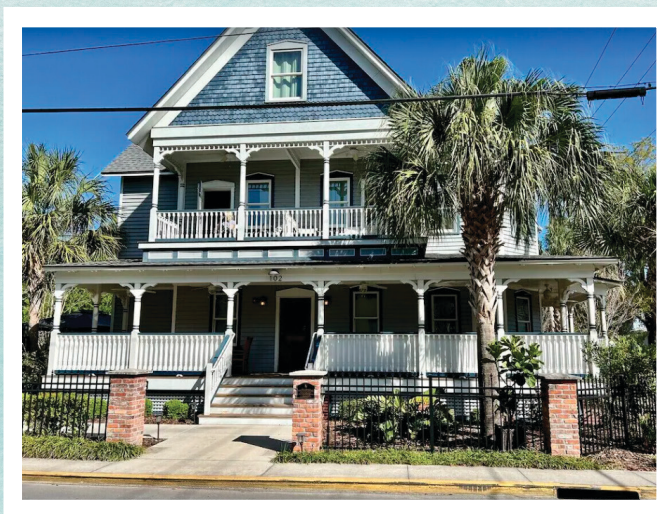
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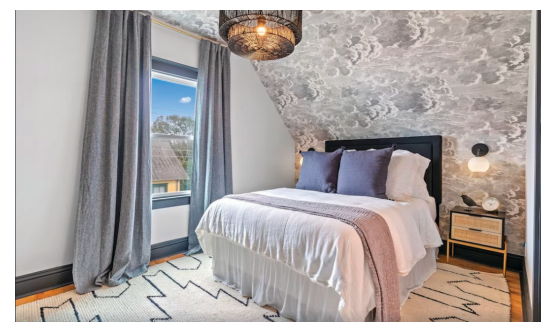
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Trash

Continued from 1

during the meeting.

Some residents who did see their trash picked up complained of garbage being spilled in various places.

In response to calls from residents, the county dispatched its Road and Bridge workers to collect trash throughout the weekend of Aug. 3-4.

St. Johns County Public Works Director Greg Caldwell reported that a notice warning of default would be sent to FCC. The company would have seven days to cure the defect or the county would take action. If that seven days began Aug. 6, it would have expired Tuesday, Aug. 13, though no dates were

specifically mentioned at the meeting.

In the meantime, county officials have been meeting with FCC twice daily to get answers and updates.

“They’d better get it right or we have provisions in the contract to move forward,” Caldwell said at the Aug. 6 meeting.

An FCC official, speaking at the meeting, promised, “We will fix this.”

St. Johns County reported Saturday, Aug. 10, that it was diligently working with FCC to bring their performance into compliance with the terms of the contract documents.

FCC brought in additional resources from frontline garbage truck drivers to route supervisors, operations specialists, the company president and the company CEO. County officials said operations

were trending positively. Anecdotally, collection appears to have been put back on track.

The County Commission selected FCC as the top-ranked firm at its Dec. 19 meeting and approved contracting with it by a vote of 4-1, with County Commissioner Krista Joseph voting no.

FCC currently provides services to several other counties, as well as some cities, such as Palm Coast. St. Johns County has an estimated 114,000 residential homes that would be served by FCC.

The \$28,265,040 contract is for a period of seven years with an option for two five-year renewals.

At the Aug. 6 meeting, Joseph proposed that the agreement with FCC be terminated and negotiations begun with

the county’s former providers.

County Commissioner Henry Dean, calling the rollout “an unmitigated disaster,” put that into the form of a motion: that, should FCC fail to cure the defect within the seven-day period, staff would be directed to terminate the agreement and seek bids for a replacement.

The motion passed unanimously.

If the commission decides to move forward as stated in the motion, it would have to conduct another meeting and issue the RFP (request for proposal) to get bids.

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of County Commissioners is Tuesday, Aug. 20. No agenda item for that meeting indicates that the county will pursue this action.

Realtors, others clean up Northeast Florida waterways



Contributed photo

More than 100 volunteers celebrated the fourth annual NEFAR Clean-up Northeast Florida Waters at an after-party at NEFAR headquarters on July 27. The group collected approximately 4,200 pounds of trash from the St. Johns River.

Jacksonville Councilman Joe Carlucci and his family were among the more than 200 volunteers clad in neon orange T-shirts participating in the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) fourth annual Clean-up Northeast Florida Waterways event on July 27.

NEFAR hosted seven clean-up sites, including four Northeast Florida boat ramps, a woody area near Millers

Creek in St. Nicholas, and along the shoreline of the Northbank and Southbank Riverwalks. Participants enjoyed a party after the clean-up at the NEFAR Resource Center.

More than two tons of trash was collected, as NEFAR aimed to hit its final goal of collecting at least 10,000 pounds of garbage from Northeast Florida’s waterways this summer.

“Our goal this year was 10,000 pounds of trash, and after this weekend I think we will be close,” said Mark Feagle of Watson Realty, a founder of the event. “This is a collective effort, and I thank all who took the time on Saturday morning to come out and make a difference for our Florida waters.”

The large waterway collection event was the second of three to be hosted by NEFAR this summer. On July 13, Realtors from the Putnam County area hosted a waterway event that collected more than 1,000 pounds of garbage from the St. Johns River and other tributaries around Palatka.

It is the fourth consecutive year NEFAR has organized a comprehensive waterways clean-up in Northeast Florida.

Carlucci joined his wife, Victoria, and two sons in collecting many bags of garbage from under the Acosta Bridge on July 27.

The event also included a boat convoy, which traveled to Goat Island and other hard-to-reach locales in the St. Johns River.

JDog Junk Removal & Hauling drove to various locations to pick up the trash.

“My 16-cubit-yard truck was completely full,” said Yuriy, of JDog, who also sponsored the event.

Also sponsoring the event were realMLS, Watson Realty Corp., First Federal Bank, NEFAR CEO Glenn East on behalf of the St. Johns Bass Anglers, NXT Real Estate, the Coastal Conservation Association and Jax Boat Rentals.



2024 Primary Election

August 20, 2024
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You can return your vote-by-mail ballot by mail, in person to the Elections Office, or to a Secure Ballot Intake Station at any early voting location from August 10 – August 17 during the hours of voting.

For election information, call or visit:
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“I’m humbled to ask for your vote on August 20th so that I can continue to serve our community with integrity and honor.”

- Sheriff Rob Hardwick
ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Paid for by Rob Hardwick, Republican, for St. Johns County Sheriff

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

Butterfly Gardens

"Happiness is like a butterfly, the more you chase it, the more it will evade you, but if you notice the other things around you, it will gently come and sit on your shoulder." — Henry David Thoreau



By Kathy Esfahani

It can be captivating to watch a butterfly! We find ourselves taking a moment away from the hectic demands of everyday life to enjoy the wonder of these delicate creatures. Planting a butterfly garden is a beautiful and colorful way to attract butterflies into

your landscape!

An intentionally planned butterfly garden provides a safe place for these visitors. They can easily find food and water, take shelter and reproduce. Strong butterfly populations also support the larger environment by attracting other insects that benefit the garden and providing food for animals, birds and lizards that help control pests in the garden.

A sustainable butterfly garden should include vegetation that supports both adults and larvae; plants that provide



Butterfly Garden

shelter from strong temperatures, heavy rain and predators; and a water source for the butterflies.

Remember these tips as you design your butterfly garden:

- Garden both in full sun and partial shade.
- Include plants that support larvae and adult butterflies.
- Select a variety of plants that bloom at different times so that the butterflies have a consistent food source.
- Use quality topsoil to ensure plants and flowers are enriched.
- Include sweet-smelling plants and/or herbs such as sedum and lavender.
- Arrange plants in groups as butterflies are more likely to land in a concentration of color instead of on a single plant.

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery



Flower of the Week

Coreopsis

- Choose plants of varying heights, colors, shapes and sizes.
 - Include a water feature — even a simple shallow dish with water and rocks will encourage butterflies to visit!
- When planning for your butterfly garden, be sure to include several of the following plants: black-eyed Susan, butterfly bush, coreopsis, fennel, firebush, gaillardia, lantana, milkweed, pentas, porterweed, purple passion vine, sage and sunflowers.

Happy planting!

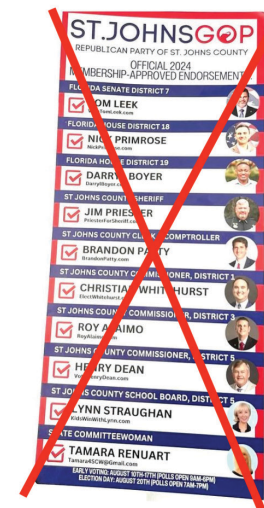
Flower of the Week: Coreopsis

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.

Ann-Marie Evans and Ann Taylor support Fire and Rescue. What we don't support is firefighters being heavily "encouraged" to campaign on their own time - for any candidate.

We learned about this from emails to firefighters from the St. Johns Cty. Professional Firefighters Association (union). We ruffled a few feathers, but we will continue to stand up for what is right. If elected, we look forward to supporting our fire and rescue workers and working with the union. We also back the BLUE.

"The Anns" are both endorsed by the real St. Johns County Republican Party. Be sure to consult the authentic slate and not the fraudulent slate that was mailed out.



Fake GOP slate



Authentic GOP slate

ElectAnn-Marie.com VoteAnnTaylor.com

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

Palm trees showcase durability during storms

By Anthony Richards

Hurricanes can affect trees in an area by uprooting them due to the high winds that can blow off branches and uproot at times.

One of the common trees throughout Florida is the palm tree with more than 2,600 species calling Florida home, according to the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

That includes the Sabal Palm, which is Florida's official state tree.

However, despite being so common to Florida, palm trees must withstand a storm when one rolls through but may have its vibrant green palm fronds suddenly wilted and thinned out due to the extreme winds and torrential rains a storm can produce.

According to Brian Bahder, associate professor at the University of Florida's Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center, palm trees not only provide a very tropical feel to a yard's landscape, but they also can play a vital role in the ecosystem.

"Some species are natives and are important food and nesting sources for our native wildlife," Bahder said. "Meanwhile, other palm species are critical crops worldwide, with coconut and oil



Photo courtesy of Tyler Jones/University of Florida

Established healthy palm trees can withstand storms like Hurricane Debby without serious problems.

palms being the most important."

Healthy foods like acai also come from palm trees, making it a nutritious addition to the landscape as well.

One of the popular questions Bahder gets asked by residents pertains to how strong palm trees are against a tropical storm or hurricane.

"An established healthy palm will

withstand a storm like Hurricane Debby without serious problems," Bahder said. "Depending on the palm, the leaves might shred or bend at the petiole, but not sustain significant damage that would require replanting. Palms have hundreds of fibrous roots that anchor them in the ground, nicely, and the trunks of palms have their vascular tissue ran-

domly distributed throughout the trunk. They don't run perfectly straight up and down, they "snake" their way through the trunk, and that gives the palm trunk high flexibility and more resistance to breaking when compared to typical trees, like oak trees."

One of the easiest ways to determine whether a palm has survived a storm can be simply by its appearance.

"Unless the canopy falls off, it should be fine if the palm looks similar to its appearance before the storm," Bahder said. "It may be possible for fungal pathogens to make their way into the canopy, combined with excess rainfall, but this likely won't manifest for a while."

Bahder suggested taking a patient approach following a storm and giving palm trees six months or even longer before it becomes apparent whether the tree will recover or not.

"Palms are slower growers than typical trees, and they only have one growth point, palms with a single trunk, that is, so it will take longer to know if it is recovering compared to other plants," Bahder said. "This depends heavily on the palm species and the extent of damage. Some palm species could fully recover in six months, while others could take years."



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ElderSource launches campaign for hunger relief among older adults

For The Recorder

Thousands of local older adults are currently on waiting lists to receive home-delivered meals. Each day they're forced to make tough decisions between buying medicine or groceries — and the problem is getting worse.

Nonprofit ElderSource has launched its Suppers for Seniors campaign, working to raise \$50,000 that will be matched by the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Funds to help move low-income people off the waitlist for desperately needed food assistance.

“More than 5,000 low-income older adults in our area need food assistance,” said Linda Levin, CEO of the nonprofit ElderSource. “As the Area Agency on Aging for Northeast Florida, ElderSource has always focused on connections, linking older adults and caregivers with resources that enhance their lives. We have a rare opportunity to make a big im-

pact with this campaign.”

Funds raised through the campaign will help ElderSource provide home-delivered meals to local seniors in need through programs like Meals-on-Wheels.

To meet the acute need — and in honor of ElderSource’s 50th anniversary of service — the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Funds offered a one-time matching challenge grant of \$50,000. Because of this challenge grant, every donation made to Suppers for Seniors will be matched up to \$50,000. That means ElderSource has the opportunity to raise \$100,000 toward feeding low-income older adults in its seven-county Northeast Florida service area.

Research shows one in five food-insecure homes in America include an older adult. Almost 11% of 50- to 59-year-olds and more than 9% of 60- to 69-year-olds are food insecure.

For more information about how you can help, go to MyElderSource.org/SuppersForSeniors.

Guy Harvey Foundation to offer fun sessions

Guy Harvey Foundation, the nonprofit organization that promotes marine conservation, funds innovative scientific research and develops cutting-edge educational programs for students, has announced a partnership with Florida Fin Fest, a free ocean conservation, education and music festival presented by Natural Life set for Sept. 13-14 in Jacksonville Beach.

“We are thrilled to partner with Florida Fin Fest with activations in the Education Village,” said Jessica Harvey, CEO of the Guy Harvey Foundation. “Education is so vital, particularly as we foster the next era of marine conservationists. We want to inspire and encourage a better understanding of marine wildlife and how to conserve our precious resources.”

The Guy Harvey Foundation will host a series of free, engaging 30-minute fish printing and mural painting activations in the Education Village at the Seawalk Pavilion. The sessions are set for 5 and 6 p.m. Friday, Sept. 13, and between noon and 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 14. Attendees are invited to add their creativity to complete a mural outlined by world-renowned artist,



Contributed photo

Crowds gather at a past Florida Fin Fest.

conservationist and scientist Guy Harvey.

Attendees can also purchase Guy Harvey Lokai bracelets featuring his iconic artwork. A portion of sales from the bracelets benefit ocean conservation through the Guy Harvey Foundation. All Lokai bracelets carry a small bead filled with elements from the highest and lowest points on Earth, water from Mount Everest and mud from the Dead Sea, reminding those who wear them to stay humble during life’s peaks and hopeful during its lows.

For more information, visit Florida Fin Fest at flfinfest.com or Guy Harvey Foundation at guyharveyfoundation.org.

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THE AD IS PAID FOR BY THE CAMPAIGN TO ELECT DR. MICHEL S. PAWLOWSKI FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY STATE COMMITTEEMAN, 109 KINGS QUARRY LANE, ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH, FL 32080.



Contributed photos

Here are some pictures from past Holiday Tours of Homes.

Garden Club of St. Augustine plans 53rd Holiday Tour of Homes

For The Recorder

The Garden Club of St. Augustine will host its 53rd Holiday Tour of Homes “Christmas in the Gilded Age” from noon to 5 p.m. Dec. 8. This is one of St. Augustine’s oldest and most anticipated holiday traditions. The tea and boutique will be held from noon to 4 p.m. at River House, 179 Marine St.

Six houses will be decorated by the Garden Club of St. Augustine. All of the Floral arrangements and holiday wreaths, swags and garland are made with fresh flowers and local, native greenery.

Designers work with the homeowners

to come up with unique plans to complement their homes and décor. The houses are all located in The Flagler Model Land Neighborhood, with two houses on Ribberia Street, three on Valencia Street and the Markland House on King Street. The homes are a short walking distance from the downtown garage on Castillo Drive.

This is considered a walking tour with limited transportation provided. Council on Aging buses will be located at the parking garage, River House and on the corner of Malaga and Valencia streets. Some of the homes have steps.

The tea includes holiday cookies made by the Garden Club members, coffee, tea and punch. The boutique will take place in several rooms of the River House.

Holiday wreaths, ornaments, live arrangements and gift baskets made by Garden



Club members will be for sale. A “will call area” will be available so attendees do not have to carry their purchases on

the tour.

Tickets will go on sale on Oct. 1. The cost is \$45 per ticket, and they sell out quickly.

For information on how to purchase tickets online, go to gardenclubofstaugustine.org.

Tickets may be purchased at the following local venues (cash or check sales only) starting Oct. 1:

- Southern Horticulture, 1690 A1A S, St. Augustine (phone: 904-471-0440)
- Leonardi’s Nursery, 902 Anastasia Blvd., St. Augustine (phone: 904-829-5909)
- Flowers by Shirley, 2200 U.S. 1, St. Augustine (phone: 904-824-8163)
- Downtown Whetstone Chocolate, 139 King St., St. Augustine (phone: 904-217-0275)

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Cutest Pet Contest under way now

The Jacksonville Humane Society’s (JHS) Cutest Pet Contest is back for its fifth year. The virtual contest raises money to support JHS pets while naming

one lucky dog or cat the Cutest Pet in Jacksonville. Submissions and voting opened Aug. 1. The final day to submit your dog or cat is Aug. 27, with the final

day to vote for the pet you think is the cutest being Aug. 31.

The grand prize winner will earn the coveted title of “Jacksonville’s Cutest Pet,” be featured on digital billboards across Jacksonville, have a one-hour professional pet photoshoot, win a prize pack from JHS and Subaru of Jacksonville, three tickets to the Jaguars vs. Colts game on Oct. 6 and more. Eleven runners-up will be featured on the JHS website throughout 2025 and win JHS and Subaru prize packs.

A \$10 donation is required to enter the Cutest Pet Contest. A \$5 donation is required to vote on contestants (\$1 counts as one vote, with a minimum of 5 votes).

“The Cutest Pet Contest is a fun way for our friends in Northeast Florida to show off their beloved pets and use their competitive spirits to help pets in need in our community,” said Denise Deisler, CEO of JHS. “This fundraiser would not be possible without the support of our partners at Subaru of Jacksonville, and we are so grateful to them!”

For more information on the contest’s guidelines, how to enter and other prizes, go to jaxhumane.org/photo.

Seaside Estate in Ponte Vedra Beach

Perfectly positioned along the banks of the Atlantic Ocean, in the first block of South Ponte Vedra Boulevard, this stunning 4BR/3.5BA home offers a beautiful contemporary oceanfront setting with Intracoastal views that could grace the cover of Coastal Living magazine. This completely renovated private residence with well-appointed living spaces, features two sweeping oceanfront porches, a private beach walkover and a 21' x 21' rooftop deck with panoramic water and preserve view perfect for outdoor entertaining. This elevated and dominant position allows for extraordinary ocean views, in a spectacular setting, with lush grounds that include a putting green, in an historic seaside resort, epitomizing the Florida lifestyle! Listed for \$3,999,994.00

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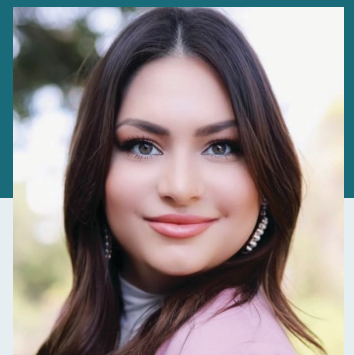
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Johnson, Chopra, Hiaasen to speak during Florida Forum series

The Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital has announced the 2024-25 Florida Forum Speaker Series schedule. The speakers and event dates are:

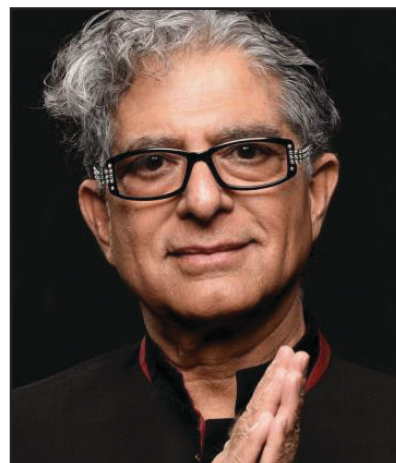
- Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, journalist and author Rt Hon Boris Johnson on Oct. 29. Johnson’s memoir, “Unleashed,” will be released on Oct. 15.
- Physician, author and world-renowned pioneer in integrative medicine and personal transformation Deepak Chopra on Jan. 15, 2025. Chopra’s new book on the role of AI on well-being, “Digital Dharma,” will be released on Sept. 17.
- Floridian, journalist and novelist Carl Hiaasen on Feb. 12, 2025. Hiaasen’s book, “Bad Monkey,” has been made into a 10-part series starring Vince Vaughn for Apple TV. It will debut Aug. 14.

The Florida Forum series events will take place at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts. Programs begin at 7 p.m.

Subscriptions for the Florida Forum events start at \$250 each for general seating, \$350 for preferred seating, \$450 for one reserved Bronze level ticket, \$900 for two reserved Bronze level tickets, \$2,250 for two reserved Silver level tickets and \$4,500 for four reserved Gold level tickets. The purchase of a Silver or Gold ticket package includes invitations to the private receptions honoring the speakers following the lectures. Patrons under the age of 30 may purchase Young Subscriber tick-



Boris Johnson



Deepak Chopra



Carl Hiaasen

ets for \$150 each.

To purchase tickets, go to thefloridaforum.com, call 904-202-2886, or email womensboard@bmcjax.com.

The series is made possible by long-time partners and sponsors Landstar, Wells Fargo and Florida Blue. This year’s Florida Forum Speaker Series co-chairs are Randy DeFoor and Maxine McBride.

Presented by The Women’s Board, the Florida Forum raises awareness and funds for Wolfson Children’s Hospital, supporting its mission to ensure the finest available pediatric health care for all children.

The Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital is

committed to raising \$1.5 million for two new Kids Kare Mobile Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and other Wolfson Children’s Hospital programs. The Kids Kare Mobile ICUs are part of Wolfson Children’s Hospital’s Neonatal and Pediatric Critical Care Transport fleet and include necessary life-support equipment for the transportation of critically ill and injured infants and children.

Kids Kare vehicles and helicopters safely transport nearly 3,000 infants and children a year to Wolfson Children’s Hospital for emergency neonatal and pediatric critical and trauma care.

For more information, go to womensboardwch.com.



A leap forward in rehabilitative care



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Baptist Beaches/Wolfson Children’s Rehabilitation Center has unveiled a new, larger facility on the Baptist Beaches campus.

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Free health care provided to Jacksonville Summer Camp Youth

Vision is Priceless, Ascension St. Vincent's and the Florida Department of Health provided free health screenings for 230 summer camp youth, grades one through 12, at the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation. This initiative offers essential medical, dental and vision care at no cost, significantly impacting the families the foundation serves.

The foundation, based in the 32209 ZIP code, primarily serves youth/families who live near or under the poverty line and in Health Zone 1. Many families struggle with financial challenges, often limiting their access to necessary health care services. These partnerships ensure that children receive the care they need to thrive.

Vision is Priceless provided vision screening for all kids and glasses for the ones who qualified. Ascension St. Vincent's performed physicals and overall health screenings for all youth. Dental cleanings were provided by the Florida Department of Health, who used their mobile outreach van equipped with all dental tools necessary for on-the-go treatment. Along with the dental cleanings, sealants were used on teeth with small cavities, so families could prepare for the financial expense of treating the cavity.

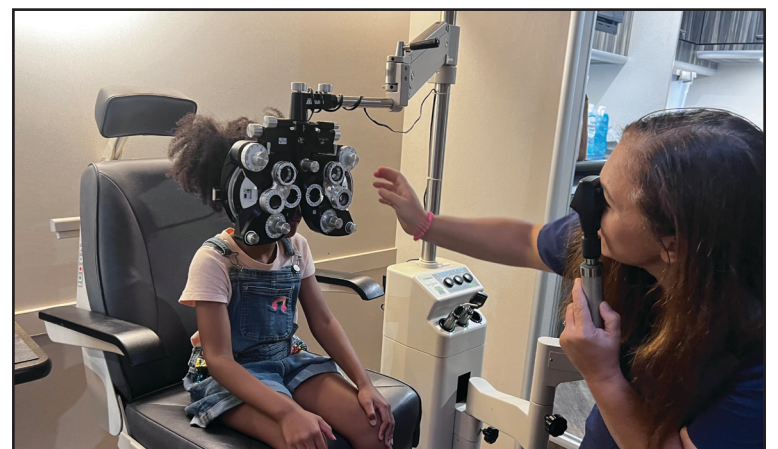
Proper health care is foundational to a child's development and academic success and these services provide a critical lifeline for families facing economic hardship. This inspiring show of community support and dedication to health equity ensures these Jacksonville youth have an equal chance for success.



Contributed photos
Florida Department of Health offered dental cleanings.



Ascension St. Vincent's performed health screenings.



Vision is Priceless provided vision screening.


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Realtors group donates to local Special Olympics

For The Recorder

A check was presented to Special Olympics Head Coach for Duval County Jeff Burnette, his fellow coaches and approximately 24 Special Olympic athletes at Jacksonville Beach on Saturday, Aug. 10, by local Coldwell Banker Beaches Realtor Group CBV Cares Realtors and their Broker Manager Michele De Liberto.

The funding will assist the athletes in their participation in the Special Olympics State Surf Championship, to be held on Cocoa Beach during the upcoming weekend of Aug. 23.

“The ultimate objective of Special Olympics Florida is to help people with intellectual disabilities participate as productive and respected members of society at large, by offering them a fair opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents through sports training and competition, and by increasing the public’s awareness of their capabilities and needs,” according to the Special Olympics Florida.

For more information on Special Olympics in the Duval County area and ways to participate as volunteers and/or donate, call Burnette 678-637-7316 or go to specialolympicsflorida.org/northeast.

CBV Cares is a charitable fundraising organization created by Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty real estate agents who support area charitable, non-profit organization efforts. For more information, call Beaches CBV Cares Chair Carole Bayer at 904-860-5000 or Co-Chair Nancy Hammond at 816-820-6103 or go to facebook.com/CBVCares



Contributed photo

Coldwell Banker Realtor Savannah Elam and Coldwell Banker CBV Cares Co-Chair Carole Bayer present a check to Special Olympics Coach Jeff Burnette, assisted by Coldwell CBV Cares Co-Chair Nancy Hammond and Coldwell Banker Broker Manager Michele DeLiberto as Special Olympics athletes and coaches gather round.



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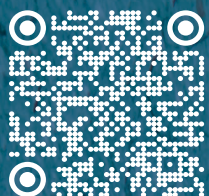
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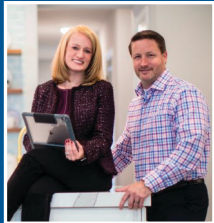
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Congratulations to our July Leaders!



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SEASIDE AT PV BEACH
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James Valenti (904) 806-2132



WILLOWCOVE
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AUSTIN PARK
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Christine Rich (904) 349-6163



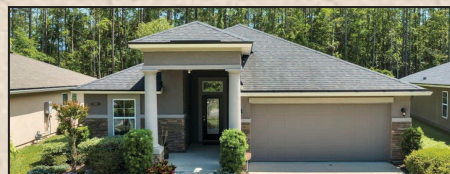
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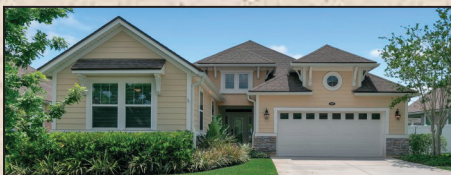
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Meredith Schwarz (904) 309-3036



SAINT AUGUSTINE
3 BR, 2 BA, 2,509 SF - \$550,000
Meredith Schwarz (904) 309-3036

Teen Club conducts back-to-school drive

For The Recorder

The link Teen Club capped off their summer with a heartwarming back-to-school supply drive, benefiting local students in need as they prepare for the 2024-25 school year. In partnership with the Historic Eastside Community Development Corporation (HECDC), the Teen Club assembled and donated essential school supplies to support 100 students. They also supported 50 additional students via St. Johns County nonprofit, Investing in Kids (INK!). These donations were made possible thanks to the generous contributions from Sapna Foundation and the link.

The donated supplies included new backpacks, highlighters, spiral notebooks, composition notebooks, crayons, pencil cases, tissues and a variety of other classroom necessities.

The link Teen Club proudly handed over 100 fully-packed backpacks to Suzanne Pickett, president of the HECDC, during the Teen Club weekly meetup.

“Our role is to act as a resource and liaison for the community,” said Pickett. “Right now it’s back to school, so we are very excited to be able to provide these backpacks. Thank you so much to [Sapna Foundation]. We are able to provide these school supplies and backpacks to families



Suzanne Pickett, president of the Historic Eastside Community Development Corp., is seen at the link with several of the backpacks assembled by members of the Teen Club.



Teen Club members gather up items to place in the backpacks.

who are not able to get adequate school supplies.”

They delivered 50 additional backpacks and supplies to Cathy Newman, executive director of INK! St. Johns.

“Thank you to [the link] for collecting all of these supplies for the students at St.



Members of the link Teen Club amid the mountain of backpacks they assembled for students in St. Johns County schools.

John’s Tech High School,” said Newman. “I know that the teachers and administration at the school would really appreciate all of this. They have such great ideas and strategies to help their students excel this year. The backpacks and supplies will help them put their students on the right path to



Contributed photos

Teen Club members gather up items to place in the backpacks

success.”

The link Teen Club, established in October 2023 under the leadership of Jeff Tawney, director of operations at the link, has been actively engaged in community service since its inception. Their commitment to charitable work continues to grow, with no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

For those interested in joining the link Teen Club and making a difference in the community, contact Tawney at Jeff@thelink.zone.

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Stuff The Bus effort to help teachers, students

For The Recorder

As students and teachers prepare to go back to school, the St. Johns County Education Foundation is asking the community to help collect the supplies students and teachers need to succeed.

St. Johns County Education Foundation Inc., which operates as Investing in Kids (INK!), in partnership with the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, The Bailey Group and the St. Johns County School District, will host a Stuff the Bus collection drive at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre Farmers Market from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 17.

Community members are invited to “stuff” new school supply donations onto the school bus in the parking lot of the Amphitheatre. Donations will support public school students and teachers at schools across St. Johns County. In addition, members of the school district’s transportation department will be on site to promote the benefits and opportunities of being a bus operator.

Each summer, INK! and community partners host the annual Tools 4 Schools countywide school supply drive to help teachers and students prepare for the school year. Tools 4 Schools is a community-based classroom supply initiative that provides classroom supplies

Tools 4 Schools “Stuff the Bus” Event Details:

Venue: St. Augustine Amphitheatre, 1340 A1A South St. Augustine, FL 32080

Date: Saturday, August 17, 2024

Time: 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

Details: theamp.com/events/detail/stuff-the-bus or facebook.com/events/1021645392987125

to teachers and students throughout the academic year, reducing out-of-pocket expenses for educators and providing teachers and students with the tools needed for success in the classroom.

“The Tools 4 Schools program launched 15 years ago to provide public school teachers in St. Johns County access to free school supplies for their students,” said Cathy Newman, INK! executive director. “During the 2023 to 2024 school year, INK! staff and volunteers filled and delivered more than 2,200 teacher-requested orders of supplies and educational materials for classrooms in St. Johns County valued in excess of \$135,000.”

The Tools 4 Schools program has operated out of The Bailey Group Resource

Depot, a permanent location donated by The Bailey Group that provides storage for the supplies collected during summer collection drives and throughout the year. Throughout the school year, teachers can order supplies online through the INK! website; orders are filled and delivered by INK! staff and volunteers to teachers at their schools.

“The Bailey Group Resource Depot has been instrumental in transforming the Tools 4 Schools initiative from an occasional event into a perennial online shop where teachers can obtain classroom supplies,” said Becky Cromwell, senior account manager, The Bailey Group. “It is truly inspiring to witness our community rallying to back our dedicated educators and staff.”

A 2023 Teacher Spending Survey conducted by AdoptAClassroom.org found that teachers nationwide spend approximately \$860 of their own money purchasing school supplies for their students and classrooms. The goal of INK!’s Tools 4 Schools program is to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for educators while providing the supplies necessary for student success with the goal of serving approximately 52,000 students and 3,200 teachers countywide.

“We are incredibly proud to support the Tools 4 Schools donation drive

through the Stuff the Bus event at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre Farmers Market on Aug. 17,” said Diany Markovits, the St. Augustine Amphitheatre’s public relations director. “This initiative not only highlights the importance of community involvement but also directly impacts the educational experiences of students and teachers in St. Johns County. We look forward to joining our community members in this critical effort.”

Requested Supplies for the 2024-25 School Year:

- New youth and adult backpacks
- Number 2 pencils
- Pens — black, blue, and/or red
- Crayola Markers — classic thick, classic thin, and/or classic thick washable
- Crayola colored pencils
- Crayola crayons
- Mechanical pencils
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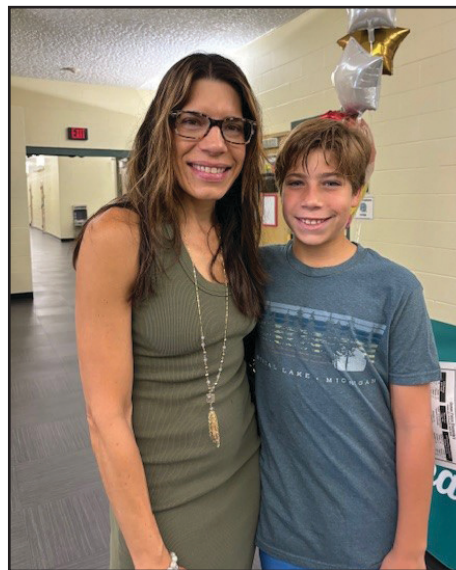
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Kindergartners and new families to Ocean Palms Elementary heard a brief presentation about the school and toured OPE in preparation for their first day.

Ocean Palms plans a “Gold Medal Year”



New schedules, new teachers and new beginnings abound on the heels of the first day back to school at Ocean Palms Elementary.

Kindergartners and new OPE students toured the school on Aug. 9, learning about what to expect the first day and how to navigate the grounds to find their classrooms and the many resources on campus.

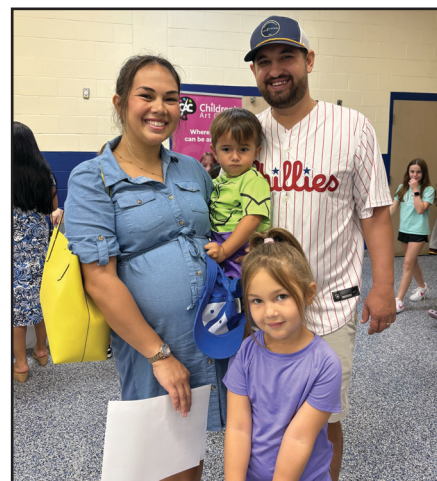
Additionally, on Aug. 7, teachers and staff were welcomed back with a Metro Diner lunch provided by the PTO. The staff enjoyed refreshments, while decked out in their “Go for the Gold” attire. Go Team OPE and Team USA!

Finally, on Aug. 9, students and families were welcomed back into the school to meet with teachers and reunite with friends and classmates — kicking off a school year that promises to be “pure gold!”

Teachers and staff were welcomed back to school with a “Go for the Gold” themed lunch.



OPE students and families headed into school for Meet the Teacher to visit with teachers and reunite with friends and classmates.



Landrum kicks off year with back-to-school events



Eighth grade Web leaders



Students and families at "Meet the Teacher"

For The Recorder

Landrum Middle School recently buzzed with energy as students, parents and staff gathered for a series of dynamic back-to-school activities.

The excitement began early with dedicated eighth-grade Web leaders, who underwent special training before warmly welcoming the incoming sixth-graders for an exclusive orientation event sponsored by Beaches Orthodontics the week before school started.

This initiative ensured that new students felt at home and ready to thrive from day one.

The momentum continued with a highly successful "Meet the Teacher," sponsored by Rita's, where students and their families had the opportunity to walk through their schedules and connect with the educators who will be guiding them throughout the year.

The event saw an incredible turnout, with parents and students alike eagerly engaging with the teachers and the school community.

Capping off the festivities, the Landrum Middle School PTO hosted an exclusive "Meet the Principal" event at The Lodge. Parents gathered for a chance to meet the new principal, Troy Kasting, in an informal and welcoming setting. The event not only provided a unique opportunity for parents to connect with each other but also allowed Kasting to share his background, vision and goals for the upcoming school year. His enthusiasm and commitment to fostering a vibrant and supportive learning environment left a lasting impression on all who attended.

As the school year begins, officials say Landrum Middle School is ready to build on the excitement and positive energy generated by these events.



Troy Kasting and his family



Landrum's PTO team

Contributed photos

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Military families prepare for new school year

Thousands of families attended the First Coast YMCA's Operation Salute: Annual Military Appreciation Back to School Bash. The event, which was held in partnership with VyStar Credit Union, was held at various YMCA locations throughout the area. Families of active-duty military and veterans attended and received free back-to-school supplies, and spoke with local vendors. Pictured are attendees at the YMCA at Baptist North location.

Contributed photos



Motorists should drive carefully around new school

For The Recorder

Classes are under way at the newly built Trout Creek Academy, located at 855 Timberwolf Trail, St. Augustine. Drivers traveling in the vicinity of Trout Creek Academy on County Road 16A and Timberwolf Trail will notice new signs and flashing beacons installed by St. Johns County Public Works. This is the newly installed intersection conflict warning system, and it's the first warning system of its kind on St. Johns County roads.

This new warning system uses radar to detect vehicles on Timberwolf Trail that are approaching C.R. 16A. When a vehicle is detected on Timberwolf Trail, the system will activate flashing yellow warning beacons on C.R. 16A. This will prompt drivers on C.R. 16A to slow down and watch for vehicles coming out of Timberwolf Trail. On Timberwolf Trail, the stop sign has a 24-hour continuous flashing beacon to remind drivers to come to a complete stop



before entering onto C.R. 16A. Drivers on C.R. 16A will also be alerted by the newly installed oversized signs that reads: "VEHICLE ENTERING HIGHWAY WHEN FLASHING."

"Public safety is our top priority," St. Johns County Public Works Director Greg Caldwell said. "The newly installed vehicle detection system will help promote more cautious driving and

elevated awareness in this area."

Drivers should take note that weekday morning drop-off starts at 7:40 a.m., and afternoon pick-up begins at 2:20 p.m.

Approximately an hour before and after these times, drivers should anticipate a higher volume of traffic with sudden slowdowns and intermittent back-ups.

"Patience and planning are paramount during the first days, sometimes weeks,

of school," Brennan Asplen, deputy superintendent for the St. Johns County School District, said. "Students will arrive to Trout Creek Academy as car and bus riders, walkers and bikers."

Trout Creek Academy has designated areas for both the car line and the bus line for walkers, bikers and cart riders to travel safely.

"The overall safety of students, staff and visitors at our schools is a priority for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, and traffic safety is a major component," Sheriff Rob Hardwick said. "Plan for the usual delays that come with the first few weeks of school as families are establishing their routines, and we are evaluating the traffic flow at new locations to determine if additional resources are needed. In addition to the increase in traditional vehicle traffic, there will be an influx of school buses, pedestrians, bicycles and golf carts on our roadways, and it's important to understand the related laws and regulations."

Six elected to Betty Griffin Center Board of Directors

For The Recorder

The Betty Griffin Center Board of Directors elected John Daly, Gina Mangus, Jodi Midiri, Karen Breakell, Lauren Carpenter and Anthony Coleman to join the board this month for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year.



John Daly

Daly is a senior director with Cisco Systems where he has been employed for 18 years. Offering a broad base of professional experience, Daly just received a graduate certificate in artificial intelligence and machine learning from the University of California at Berkeley. He has also worked with a tech company in Silicon Valley, where he managed project management offices and engineering organizations. During his career, he also worked as a deputy sheriff and volunteer fire fighter.

Mangus serves as senior director of asset strategy and development for GuideWell Health, where she leads strategic initiatives to optimize and expand delivery of high quality, affordable clinical care across the State of Florida



Gina Mangus

for members of Florida Blue. Prior to joining GuideWell, she spent 17 years at a Northeast Florida-based health system serving in progressively responsible leadership roles in marketing, community health improvement, strategic planning and patient engagement, most recently as executive vice president of strategy and advancement.



Jodi Midiri

Midiri is a board-certified neurologist and psychiatrist who is currently an outpatient psychiatrist with Mosaic Lifecare, where she provides full-time clinical services to children, adolescents and adults. Previously, she served in a similar capacity at Southern Illinois Healthcare in Carbondale, Illinois, and as an inpatient psychiatrist at Hartgrove Hospital in Chicago. Midiri began her professional career as outpa-

tient psychiatrist and medical director at St. Joe's CMH at Centerville, Michigan.



Karen Breakell

Breakell is the manager of development for major gifts at K9s For Warriors, a nonprofit that provides support services to veterans. Her previous career included work at several nonprofit and government organizations, including leadership roles at a major university and Nemour's Children's Hospital. Breakell began her professional career at Duke Energy in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she served as manager of Florida corporation communications. She lives in Ponte Vedra Beach.



Lauren Carpenter

Born and raised in St. Augustine, Carpenter has built an extensive career in finance and has a strong commitment to nonprofit work. She is currently the chief financial officer for SJC

Cultural Events Inc. — now a nonprofit agency managing the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, Sing Out Loud Festival and Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series.

Prior to that, Carpenter served as Betty Griffin Center's chief financial officer for eight years and previously was the finance director for the Early Learning Coalition of St. Johns County.



Anthony Coleman

Coleman, who is the board vice chair for the St. Johns County School System, has served as a role model to thousands of children in St. Johns County, spending most of his career as a youth resource deputy at Pedro Menendez High School.

Previously, Coleman served in law enforcement, joining the Putnam County Sheriff's Office in 1986 before joining the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office (SJSO) in 1988 as a patrol officer. During his time with the SJSO, he worked in both patrol and community-oriented policing before moving to the youth resource deputy section.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for your selfless service to St. Johns County and our Environment

To the Editor:

Dear Commissioner Dean,
I very much enjoyed meeting with you recently to discuss the Workforce Housing Project for Wildwood Road in St. Augustine. In preparing for our meeting, I had learned a little about you, but spending time with you made such an impression that I decided to delve deeper into your background and career. What I discovered left me amazed at how much you have accomplished in your life and all that you have done for environmental preservation in Northeast Florida. I learned that you had served as Gov. Reubin Askew's environmental adviser, as attorney for the State Land Planning Agency, general counsel for the Florida Department of Natural Resources, executive director of the St. Johns River Water Management District for 17 years, executive director of the South Florida Water Management District where you led the Everglades Restoration Program, a member of the Board of Directors for the Audubon Society for Florida, and even as a member of the Interstate Council on Water Quality Policy.

When I drive through Ponte Vedra Beach, it seems that every other house on Ponte Vedra Boulevard has a campaign sign for you in their yard, and I'm sure this is due to your tireless work on the beach restoration project for this area, which was decades overdue. Restoring our dunes not only protects the local ecosystem for wildlife on our beaches but also provides the first line of defense for

our homes against erosion and storms. Efforts like these ensure our homes and property remain protected both now and in the future.

It was also amazing to learn that you were one of the key figures in securing the sale, dedication and acceptance of the Guana Preserve with 11,000 acres and five-and-a-half miles of beachfront as a state park, to be preserved forever for our citizens. The Peyton family certainly deserves an incredible amount of credit for their selfless willingness to give up miles of beachfront developable land and thousands of acres of beautiful uplands on the peninsula where thousands of homes could have been built. It's mind-boggling to think of the value that those lands would now have for development, but thanks to the Peyton family's generosity and government servants like you who made it happen, they will now be preserved for all time.

The Guana Preserve holds a special place in my family's heart, as well as for many others like us. I lived on Neck Road from the early '90s until a few years ago, and now own the only private island in the Guana, where I hope to build a humble cottage soon to spend the rest of my days among the sable palms and the orange grove I have been planting. There have been countless hours spent in my little swamp boat exploring Guana Lake and adventuring in the peninsula part of the state park. My children, Peter and Ally, grew up learning everything about the flora and fauna in the Guana, and those experiences left an indelible impression on them that shaped their paths as adults.

Jimbo Stockton's boys, Jamie and Bobby, are the same ages as my son Peter and my daughter Ally, and Jimbo and I spent many days with the kids exploring the Guana. I recall one hike in particular from the Guana Dam to Neck Road

where we lived. We started our journey at the dam, a place with a lot of history for Jimbo. His grandfather had built it in the 1950s to create Lake Ponte Vedra, originally for duck hunting, and Jimbo often spoke about how his granddad had always wanted the land to be preserved. As we set off, the kids proudly showed up sporting huge backpacks that Jimbo and I ended up carrying in very short order. When we stopped for lunch and to fish at McNeil's pond, we discovered why the backpacks were so heavy ... The kids, about 10 years old at the time, had packed enough canned goods to trek across the entire state! That was an adventurous hike — I also remember that we came across a large rattlesnake that someone had unfortunately killed, and the boys had quite an argument about who would get to carry the rattlesnake back home. Only someone with boys would understand why little boys would even want to carry a dead rattlesnake, but I can remember like it was yesterday that the boys worked up a system for taking turns passing the rattlesnake around, and Ally got so upset that she was not included ... "Dad, the boys won't let me carry the rattlesnake!" She petitioned the "Dad Court" for a ruling on the matter, and Jimbo and I made sure that she got her equal rattlesnake-carrying time!

This story may seem a little trivial until I tell you that when Ally went on to UNF for college to major in biology, she joined a research team studying herpetology (amphibians and reptiles). Her research made it onto the front page of the Florida Times-Union and earned her the moniker "Gopher Tortoise Lady"! Together, Ally and an engineering student, Kevin Nguyen, invented a robot capable of driving into gopher tortoise burrows and filming, providing information not only on the health of the turtles but also on all the other animals that utilize their bur-

rows, including rattlesnakes! Ally went on to get her PhD at Rutgers University in cell and developmental biology and recently completed her postdoctoral work at MIT. She will be starting a new position at the end of this year as a professor at the University of Colorado, where she will lead her own research group. Ally ended up marrying her research partner, Kevin, who also grew up in Ponte Vedra, and I am now blessed with two beautiful grandchildren. Their wedding was on the edge of the Guana State Park. I remember asking Ally what inspired her to accomplish all that she has in her career, and she said simply that it was her experiences growing up in the Guana. Waking up every day surrounded by nature helped her develop her love of the outdoors and science. Similarly, my son Peter was influenced by his days in the Guana, building treehouses and chasing critters around, and has developed a lifelong love for nature. Hopefully, his kids and grandkids will do the same. Peter lives in Palm Valley and owns a successful marketing company called Launchpad Creative. He is an avid fisherman and hunter, and his company, among other industries, specializes in marketing for the boat manufacturing industry.

In closing, I want to take a moment to personally thank the Stockton family for having the vision to assemble the land so many years ago, and the Peyton family for their incredible generosity in choosing to preserve it. But most of all, I want to thank you for making it all happen. Your efforts have led to what I believe is the most significant contribution to the environment of St. Johns County that we will ever see. This is a legacy that will touch the lives of generations to come.

**Forever grateful,
Pete Legeza
The Legeza family**

Sept. 10 deadline to appeal property value

For The Recorder

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's office wants to remind residents that the annual St. Johns County Value Adjustment Board (VAB) petition filing period begins on Friday, Aug. 16, and runs through Sept. 10.

"Our Minutes and Records Division plays a vital role in the VAB process," said John Rundgren, clerk designee. "We ensure residents have the necessary resources to file appeals related to their property value assessments, schedule hearings and maintain records of the proceedings."

"The Truth in Millage or TRIM notice is the most important property tax document you receive from our office," said Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer. "The TRIM notice will be mailed on Aug. 16, 2024. This starts a 25-day period that you may request an informal conference with the Property Appraiser's Office to address any questions or concerns you have about your property. Should we not be able to reach an agreement on your concerns during this period, the VAB is the next step in the process."

Residents will soon receive Truth in Millage (TRIM) notices, detailing their property's assessed and market values. The TRIM notice outlines proposed prop-

erty taxes and assessments, including any applicable exemptions. Property owners who disagree with their property's assessed value, classification, or exemption status are encouraged to file a petition with the VAB.

The VAB operates independently from the Property Appraiser and Tax Collector. It is composed of five members: two from the Board of County Commissioners, one from the county's School Board, and two citizen representatives. The board is responsible for hearing appeals related to the denial of exemptions and classifications, property assessments and ad valorem tax deferrals.

Petitions may be submitted online, by

mail, or in person at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, located at 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, FL 32084. In-person petitions must be received by 5 p.m. on Sept. 10, while online petitions can be submitted until 11:59 p.m. on the same day.

For more information and resources regarding VAB filings, go to stjohnsclerk.com/vab or contact the Clerk's office at 904-819-3600.

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600 attend Coalition for Children conference

The Florida Coalition for Children Foundation and the FCC Learning Community held their annual conference on July 21-23 at the Marriott Sawgrass Resort and Spa in Ponte Vedra Beach, with more than 600 in attendance.

Twenty-five workshops and a keynote address by Jack Brewer, a nationally known advocate for the role of fatherhood in children’s lives, took place over the two-and-a-half-day event. The agenda was chosen with the intent to inspire and elevate conversations about innovating measurable improvements for child and family well-being in Florida.

Opening the plenary session was an inspirational address by Brewer of the Brewer Foundation, an ordained minister with expertise in the fields of global economic development, sports and finance through his roles as a successful entrepreneur, news contributor and humanitarian who has been appointed by the White House to the U.S. Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys.

The 2024 educational roster was created from a list of national experts and Florida-centered leaders in community-based care. Topics from the 25 session choices ranged from national movements like Thriving Families Safer Children to human services workforce innovation studies, to the important engagement of impacted youth and parent/caregivers with lived expertise.

Community Café-style strategy sessions and discussion panels also took place among invited members of the child welfare field; Florida Legislators, state university representatives and other dignitaries were in attendance.

Ten individuals were recognized for excellence in



Contributed photo

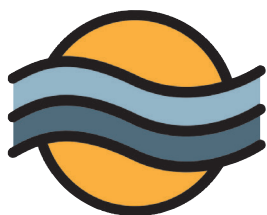
Jack Brewer

the 2024 Awards Program, with St. Augustine Youth Services personnel receiving a record number this year.

The recipients are 2024 Collective Impact Leadership Award: Schuyler Siefker, executive director, St. Augustine Youth Services; 2024 Nurturing Well-being Award: Moraima Montano-Cruz, professional house parent, St. Augustine Youth Services; 2024 Parent/Caregiver with Lived Experience Leadership Award: Fawn Collins, peer advocate, St. Augustine Youth Services; 2024 Foster and/or Adoptive Parents of the Year Award: Kathryn and Gilbert Melendez, foster parents, Children's Network of Hillsborough County and Camelot Community Care; 2024 Youth/Young Adult Leadership Award: Dylan Chandler, young adult leader, Camelot Community Care; 2024 Innovator of the Year: Mike Watkins, president and CEO, Northwest Florida Health Network; 2024 Champion for Children: T. Delores Dunn, CEO/president, Center for Family and Child Enrichment; 2024 FCC Foundation Chair Award: Tiffany DaSilva, chair, FCC System Operations Committee and vice president, Florida Programs, Neighbor to Family, Inc.; the FCC Chairman’s Award: Karin Flositz, CEO, Community Partnership for Children; and the 2024 FCC President’s Award: Julie Smythe, vice president, Child Welfare Specialty Plan, Sunshine Health.

The 2024 Conference theme of “Rise and Thrive” was chosen as a means to provide attendees with tools for increased wellness in both their professional and personal lives. A guided meditation for all attendees set the tone during the opening session, yoga and golf activities were highlighted, and examples of positive affirmations were found throughout the event to support FCC Members’ and guests’ well-being.

For more details about the 2024 FCC Conference, contact Conference@flchildren.org.



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Chabad @ the Beaches Hebrew School registration opens

Chabad @ the Beaches' Hebrew School is gearing up for another exciting year.

This innovative Hebrew School offers a stimulating-yet-friendly environment, welcoming children of all levels of observance and affiliation. Kids gain a deep sense of Jewish pride and knowledge through engaging and interactive lessons.

From Hebrew reading and writing to Jewish history and holidays, the students discover the joys, values and traditions of their heritage. Dedicated and enthusiastic teachers bring lessons to life with cre-

ativity and passion, ensuring every class is a unique and memorable experience.

"Our goal is for children to have a great time, to love Judaism and to connect to their heritage," said Leah Kurinsky, director of Chabad @ the Beaches. "This program offers a first taste of Jewish learning in a creative, joyful, hands-on and interesting way."

"Our underlying approach is for children to enjoy their time at Hebrew School, leaving them with positive experiences and a greater appreciation for Jewish education," added Dafne Blank,

program director. "There is nothing that gives us greater joy than making Judaism so joyful and exciting for the children. They are often so busy having fun, they don't notice how much they are learning!"

This is Hebrew School done differently. With the Aleph Champ method of Hebrew reading, using a Karate-based system, along with our innovative curriculums and personalized attention, the school has an outstanding success rate of thrilled parents and students.

Registration for Chabad Hebrew

School is now open for the 2024-25 year. The Hebrew School, housed at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life, 521 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra, will open on Aug. 28. Classes are held on Wednesday afternoons and are offered for children ages 5-13.

To schedule an appointment to discuss the Chabad Hebrew School, call 904-543 9301 or e-mail info@chabadbeaches.com.

For further information, go to chabadbeaches.com/hebrewschool.

Car donations help build homes

Submitted by Habitat St. Johns

Dr. Caleb Bunting is a local chiropractor and owner of Serenoa Vitality and Wellness on State Road 16 in St. Johns County. He recently donated his first car to Habitat St. Johns.

The 2006 Nissan Sentra was his grandparents' car. Bunting bought it from his grandparents in 2011 when he was in high school named the car "Tom" after his grandfather. He has a lot of happy memories about the car, including the rides back and forth from college in Tampa, to visit his parents and grandparents in Tennessee and carpooling with friends everywhere and anywhere.

When he bought the car, it had about 50,000 miles, and when he donated it at the end of 2023, it had more than 200,000 miles on it.

The car had a lot of sentimental value for Bunting. He recounted that his grandfather was a paraplegic, and the car had some modifications that enabled his grandpa, Tom, to drive it. Those modifications were undone when Bunting took ownership, but the evidence of

those modifications was still evident. He said the car always reminded him of his grandparents.

When the car started showing its age, one of Bunting's friends suggested he donate the car to Habitat St. Johns through the Cars for Homes program, and that is what he did. He felt donating the car would help benefit someone trying to get into a home after its many years of loyal service to him.

Others can do as Bunting did and help local, hardworking families and individuals, including teachers, CNAs, hospital workers, first responders, restaurant and hospitality staff, small business workers, seniors and others get into a new home of their own through Habitat for Humanity's Cars for Homes program. All the donor has to do is go to habitatstjohns.org/cars4homes or call 877-277-4344, provide the necessary information, have the vehicle title and set up a pickup date. Volunteers will pick up the car even if it doesn't run.

The funds Habitat St. Johns receives from the sale of the car help with building homes and buying land to help those



Contributed photo

Dr. Caleb Bunting with a photo of the car he donated to the Habitat for Humanity's Cars for Homes program.

working hard every day to become homeowners.

Homeownership offers stability, security and the opportunity for generational wealth that isn't possible as a renter. It

also gives the homeowners a space of their own. Many prospective homeowners are paying high rents, living with relatives or have one or more roommates to make ends meet.

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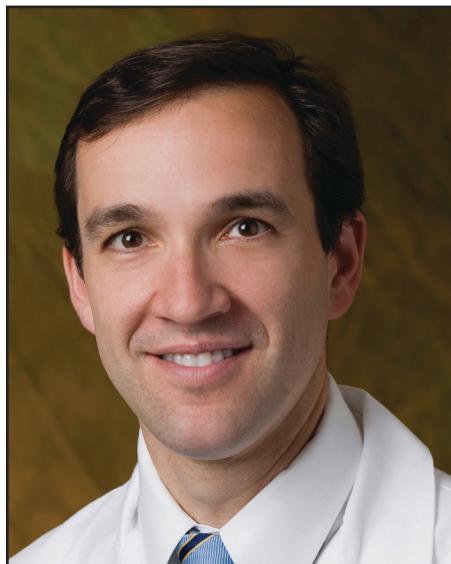
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GUEST COLUMN

What my patient wishes she'd known about AFib treatment



By Anthony Magnano, M.D.,
Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside

Atrial fibrillation, also known as AFib, is a common heart condition that puts patients at risk for heart failure and can increase the chance of stroke by five times. That's why our team of cardiologists at Ascension St. Vincent's continues to stay at the forefront of new technology and effective treatments, to protect the patients in our care.

While millions of patients have AFib, many aren't aware of all the latest options that can help treat the condition and help prevent the increased risk of stroke that comes with it. I spoke with my patient Vi, age 71, to learn more about what she wishes she'd known before her recent procedure with the latest version of the



WATCHMAN Device.

Experience With AFib

"I started experiencing symptoms of AFib about nine years ago," Vi told me. "My heart would race and race. I'd never even heard of AFib and had no idea what was going on. They put me on different medications and got it under control, but the blood thinners I was on made me bleed and bruise easily. I like to bike a lot, but I felt worried about falling. Not to mention, the medications were expensive, and I wanted to get off them."

AFib is such a potent risk factor for stroke because the upper chambers of the heart (or atria) do not contract properly, allowing blood to pool in a cavity known as the left atrial appendage. The pooled blood can form a clot that travels to your brain's arteries, interrupting blood flow and leading to a stroke.

Anticoagulation medications are still the first-line approach to prevent this risk

for most patients. However, unintended bleeding can become problematic for certain individuals. If the left atrial appendage is surgically removed or occluded, then this risk of stroke is effectively managed without the added bleeding risks of anticoagulation. That's where the WATCHMAN device comes in.

About Left Atrial Appendage Occlusion and the WATCHMAN Device

I told Vi about the WATCHMAN device, a stroke prevention treatment option that could allow her to come off anticoagulation medications. The WATCHMAN is an implant placed in your heart to block off the left atrial appendage and prevent blood clots from entering the bloodstream. This non-invasive procedure typically takes less than a half hour, as we insert the device through a vein in the leg. Using the WATCHMAN allows doctors to reduce stroke risk without putting patients at risk for increased bleeding.

Vi had her WATCHMAN procedure early this year and has been doing well now that she's off anticoagulation medications.

"The procedure was a breeze. It was similar to having an ablation and very easy. I went home the same day," she explained.

Take Control of Your AFib Care

Vi was nervous when she first learned about the WATCHMAN and waited about two years before having the procedure. She wants other AFib patients like her to know they don't have to wait.

"Trust your doctor and do the procedure if he recommends it. I'm glad I did," she said. "I just wish I'd known how easy it was and done it sooner!"

The WATCHMAN is just one exciting new advancement in AFib treatment, but there are many more in all aspects of cardiovascular care. The most important thing is to always work with your doctor to find the right treatment plan for you.

If you or a loved one have struggled with symptoms of AFib, such as heart palpitations/fluttery heartbeat, dizziness and fatigue, don't wait. Schedule an appointment with one of our cardiologists to discuss your treatment options today.

Dr. Anthony Magnano is a Ponte Vedra resident and Chief of Cardiology at Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside in Jacksonville. For more information on Dr. Magnano and his specialty in treating Atrial fibrillation, visit ascension.org/JaxHeart or call 904-388-1820.



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Balanced housing market in view in Northeast Florida

For The Recorder

Every metric in the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) market statistics report for July shows the housing market making a shift towards a balanced market. Although the market is not totally balanced yet, stabilization is on its way, and that is good news for buyers.

“July statistics showed a continued stabilization of the real estate market in Northeast Florida towards a traditional balanced marketplace,” said 2024 NEFAR President Rory Dubin. “Despite a worsening economy and high inflation, median prices were down slightly and the Home Affordability Index was up. Days on market are longer, and inventory of homes to purchase is higher,” he said.

Specifically, over Northeast Florida’s six-county region, the median sales price for single-family homes inched down by less than half a percentage point to

\$398,970. Meanwhile the Home Affordability Index crept up 1.6% to register at 65.

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% downpayment.

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 higher than 100 means that the family has more than enough income, while a value less than 100 means that the typical family doesn’t have enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan.

July’s median for days on the market

rocketed up 20% to 42 days and the active inventory of homes shot up 11.6% to 7,897 homes, indications that the market is more conducive to buyers.

Other metrics of note: Month to month, closed sales in the six-county region dropped 4.8% to 1,868. Pending sales plummeted 20.3% to 1,387, while new listings rose 3.9% to 3,318.

“Purchasing a home or property remains one of the very best ways to hedge against inflation and the volatility of the stock market,” said Dubin. “It’s more important than ever to consult a Realtor who is fully trained to aid sellers in pricing their homes accurately in the market. Realtors also are essential in assisting buyers in negotiating the purchase of a new home. Rest assured. The best time to buy or sell a home is today, and Realtors have the specific knowledge to optimize that experience.”

In St. Johns County, July’s median prices increased 1.9% to \$591,000 for

single-family homes. The median days on the market increased 31.9% to 62. Month-to-month, closed sales dropped 13.5% to 505, pending sales sank 19.7% to 354 and new listings inched up 1.2% to 817. Active inventory climbed 9.7% to 2,334 homes, a 4.6-month supply.

The Home Affordability Index remained unchanged at 44, indicating that it is very expensive to live in St. Johns County.

In Duval County, the July median price of single-family housing was \$345,500, a 1.6% increase from the month before. The median number of days on the market in June was 36, 20% longer than in June. Month-to-month closed sales fell 1.9% to 928, pending sales plummeted 21.2% to 692, and new listings rose 1.1% to 1,682 homes. Active inventory for the county climbed 12.5% to 3,566 homes, a 3.8-month supply.

In July, the Home Affordability Index remained steady at 75.

Real estate practice changes to be implemented on August 17

For The Recorder

On behalf of the National Association of Realtors (NAR), the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) is reminding its members, real estate professionals and consumers that on Saturday, Aug. 17, the practice changes following NAR’s Settlement Agreement that would resolve claims brought on behalf of home sellers related to broker commissions will be

implemented across the country.

NAR recommends all multiple listing services (MLS) implement practice changes by Aug. 17. Realtor MLSs (those owned exclusively by one or more Realtor associations) must implement the changes by this date to remain in compliance with NAR policy.

Under the settlement, the following practice changes will take effect:

- Offers of compensation will be prohibited on multiple listing services. Offers of compensation will continue to be an option consumers can pursue off-MLS through negotiation and consultation with real estate professionals. Offers of compensation help make homeownership and the benefits of professional representation more accessible to buyers — especially first-time homebuyers — increase home-

ownership opportunities for historically underserved groups, and benefit sellers by expanding the potential buyer pool and ensuring they receive the best offer possible for their property.

- Agents working with a buyer must enter into a written buyer agreement before touring a home. The practice changes

CHANGES continues on **Page 31**

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Three join Ascension Florida Board of Directors

Ascension Florida has announced that three new members have joined the ministry's board of directors. This board is vital to the long-term planning and decision-making process as Ascension Florida continuously shifts to meet the needs of thousands of Floridians who require its care daily. The board also works to advance the mission of Ascension's Catholic Ministry, finding innovative ways to care for those struggling most.

New members joining the board include:



Helen Rowan

• Helen Rowan has served as the chair of the board of Ascension St. Vincent's in Jacksonville. She helped oversee the growth and maintenance of 120 clinics, 5,000 associates and a \$1 billion budget. She

formerly served as the chair of the Board of Trustees of the Episcopal School of Jacksonville, a private (PreK-12) school with 1,400 students on four campuses and a \$36 million budget. Rowan's term

runs until July 2026.



Aundra Wallace

• Aundra Wallace, the president of JAXUSA Partnership — the regional economic development arm of JAX Chamber. He leads a team in business development, workforce development, research and marketing. Prior to joining JAXUSA, he served as CEO of the City of Jacksonville's Downtown Investment Authority, where he directed economic development efforts in downtown Jacksonville. Wallace's term runs until July 2026.

• Cory Fosdyck is a wealth management adviser and the resident director of the Merrill Lynch Wealth Management office in Destin, Florida. Fosdyck also



Cory Fosdyck

served as chairman of the board for the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation in 2015 and 2019 and was named to the Forbes "Best-in-State Wealth Advisers" list in 2022 and 2023. Fosdyck's

term runs until July 2027.

"The diverse backgrounds and experiences of our Ascension Florida Board members are core components to advancing our mission and strategic vision," said Ascension Florida President and CEO Don King. "It is from all of our associates' varied experiences and expertise that we are able to cement Ascension's place as a quality health care organization."

Different types of insurance products

Financial security is vitally important for adults and their families. Recognition of that reality is evident in the efforts individuals make to secure their financial futures, which include investing in education, retirement planning and saving.

Insurance is another way individuals protect their financial security and the safety of their families. Insurance products run the gamut from auto insurance policies to annuities. It can benefit anyone to refresh their memories about the signifi-

INSURANCE continues on Page 32

Changes

Continued from 30

do not require an agency agreement or dictate any type of relationship. NAR encourages all members to address form changes and prepare to educate real estate professionals and consumers about revised forms as soon as possible ahead of Aug. 17. NAR policy does not dictate terms of buyer agreements, but NAR has created resources to assist with implementation of the settlement terms — such as tips on clarity and emphasizing consumer choice and a "Written Buyer Agreements 101" resource.

"NAR members are dedicated, intelligent and highly adaptable experts in their fields — that's why Realtors are such an integral part of the homebuying and -selling process," said Kevin Sears, president of NAR. "These changes help to further empower consumers with clarity and choice when buying and selling a home. As the Aug. 17 practice change implementation date approaches, I am confident in our members' abilities to prepare for and embrace this evolution of our industry and help to guide consumers in the new landscape."

Consumers can find additional information on what these changes mean for their homebuying and selling experiences in NAR's buyers and sellers guides. For NAR members, the practice changes are outlined in detail here, and detailed information is available in NAR's FAQ. Go to facts.realtor for the latest updates on the settlement and practice changes.

Information about NAR is available at nar.realtor.

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Bluebird Hardwater launches new flavors, expands to West Coast

Bluebird Hardwater, the industry disruptor and trailblazer behind the first-ever canned alcoholic water, has announced its latest innovation with the introduction of flavored varieties made with real juice. This launch marks a significant milestone for the brand, its first product extension since inception, and entrance to the West Coast with an expansion into Southern California.

“We’re incredibly excited to introduce this new future of Bluebird Hardwater,” said Will Blum, CEO and co-founder of Bluebird Hardwater. “This launch is a result of listening to our community and understanding their preferences through extensive research. Our goal is to offer

canned alcoholic water that is a simple and clean drinking experience for any occasion.”

Bluebird Hardwater is in a category of its own, breaking the mold in the crowded beverage industry with the first-ever canned alcoholic water. This innovative creation fills a massive gap, offering a cleaner, more refreshing drinking experience that’s unlike anything else out there.

There are no carbonation, sweeteners or preservatives. At 88 calories per 12-ounce serving, the new lime, cranberry and pineapple flavors are made up of real fruit, and premium spirits with ultra-purified water at an ABV (alcohol by volume) of just 4.5%.

Introducing the new flavor options:

- **Vodka Water + Lime** – Made with vodka, purified water and a squeeze of lime juice.
- **Vodka Water + Cranberry** – Made with vodka, purified water and real fruit.
- **Tequila Water + Lime** – Made with a premium Blanco tequila made from agave, purified water and a dash of lime juice.
- **Tequila Water + Pineapple** – Made with a premium Blanco tequila made from agave, purified water and real fruit.

In a strategic move to provide canned alcoholic water to more consumers, Bluebird Hardwater will expand to the West Coast, debuting in Southern California through Stone Distributing Co. The new flavor va-

rieties will be available for purchase at local Ralphs and Total Wine locations. This expansion brings Bluebird Hardwater to four states: California, Florida, New York and Tennessee, with plans for nationwide distribution by the end of 2024.

“Ralphs and Total Wine are ideal retailers for our launch into the California market,” said Blum. “We look forward to introducing Bluebird Hardwater to consumers in Southern California and share our passion for quality and clean drinking.”

For more information, go to bluebird-hardwater.com.

Bluebird Hardwater is based in Jacksonville Beach.

Insurance

Continued from 31

cance of various insurance products that can help them protect their financial freedom and manage unforeseen life events that much more easily.

Annuities

Annuities are a type of contract between a consumer and an insurance company. When individuals purchase an annuity, they may pay a large, single premium or make a number of payments over a designated

period of time. In exchange for those payments, annuity holders guarantee a future income. Money in an annuity grows on a tax-deferred basis. When an annuity reaches maturity, money can be withdrawn in a lump sum or withdrawals can be arranged on a fixed payment system, which is why annuities are often characterized as means to ensuring income later in life.

Life insurance

It’s easy for young adults to overlook the importance of life insurance. After all, few individuals in their twenties or thirties think about providing for their families upon their

passing. But life insurance is vital to securing the long-term financial security of your family, even for those individuals who have yet to start a family of their own. In addition, monthly premiums on life insurance policies tend to be lower the earlier a policy is opened, which provides another benefit to looking into life insurance at a young age.

Travel insurance

The main reason to purchase travel insurance is to secure protection against financial loss if you’re forced to cancel, delay or interrupt a trip. Confirm what a policy does and does not offer with an insurance agency

representative. The knowledge that a travel investment is protected should plans change can make it all the more enjoyable to plan vacations.

Natural disaster insurance

Homeowners and even renters are urged to carefully read their existing homeowners’ or renters’ insurance policies to confirm what level of coverage, if any, their policy provides against natural disasters. Many companies will offer separate coverage against natural disasters and should be considered if you live near areas affected by weather and other natural disasters.

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GUEST COLUMN

Going back to school: Tips on how to pay for it

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

Going back to school can help you advance in your job, re-enter the workforce or support a second act as you chart a completely new career. But what are the right strategies adults should keep in mind to help manage education expenses?

Here are some financial tips for going back to school as an adult:

See what your employer offers. Many large companies offer benefits such as tuition reimbursement through a qualified program that may be excluded from income. But even if it is taxed as income, that's still a great strategy versus paying it yourself. Check with your employer to see if they offer any scholarships, educational discounts or other resources that you could tap into.

Consider tax-deferred educational savings plans. If you have money in a 529 plan or Coverdell Education Savings Account (ESA), it may make sense to use those funds for you to go back to school. Did the plan begin as a way to fund a child's education? The beneficiary can often be changed to a qualified family member. Is your planned enrollment date months or years in the future? You may be able to make contributions to a



Contributed photo

529 plan between now and then to build up funds. In the case of ESAs, however, contributions are not allowed after the beneficiary attains age 18 and the beneficiary has to be under age 30.

Remember tax deductions and/or tax credits. Though not a source of direct funding, some education expenses (if you are qualified) may be tax deductible. Also, education expenses may qualify for either the American Opportunity or Lifetime Learning Credit. IRS Publication 970: Tax Benefits for Education provides a comprehensive overview of tax benefits and tax rules related to education.

Tap into retirement funds only if you understand the rules. You can use IRA

savings for "qualified higher educational expenses" and avoid penalties for early withdrawal, though you'll still owe taxes using a traditional IRA. With a Roth IRA, you are able to access your contributions tax- and penalty-free. The earnings portion may be subject to tax, and like a Traditional IRA, you may be able to avoid the early withdrawal penalty if used for qualified higher education expenses. Likewise, it may be possible to borrow from your 401(k) plan. You will want to check with your plan administrator. But tapping into retirement funds should be among the last options you consider because you're spending resources you originally invested in your future. If you

feel you have to do it, make sure you're using the money for qualified expenses.

Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses carefully before investing in a 529 savings plan. The official statement, which contains this and other information, can be obtained by calling your financial advisor. Read it carefully before you invest.

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Tips to consider when shopping for insurance

Insurance is a necessity that can provide a financial safety net in the case of accidents, natural disasters, injuries, and other emergencies. Adequate coverage can ensure policy holders' lives are not turned upside down when an unexpected event like an auto accident or harsh storm threatens to drain their bank accounts.

The stakes are indeed high when shopping for insurance, as consumers want to be sure the policy they ultimately choose is going to safeguard them if or when they need it. With that in mind, individuals can consider these tips when shopping for insurance.

- **Resist any inclination to make price your top priority.** Price should not be an afterthought when shopping for insurance, but it's important that consumers avoid making it their mission to find the lowest possible premiums. Though a low-cost policy might suit your immediate financial needs, such a policy may not offer a level of coverage necessary to prevent adverse financial outcomes should you experience accident or injury. It's best to prioritize getting the coverage you need over the lowest possible policy cost.

- **Comparison shop.** Once you have identified the level of coverage you

need, you can then begin comparison shopping. Most insurance providers can issue quotes in a matter of minutes, and many offer similar levels of coverage. So the process of gathering quotes on policies offering similar, if not identical, coverage should not take long.

- **Shop around for discounts, too.** Savvy consumers know to shop around for discounts that can lower the cost of a given policy. For example, many providers discount their homeowners' policies if policy holders install security features in their homes. Home alarm systems, security cameras and even added exterior lighting might help lower the cost of homeowners' insurance policies. Such discounts can typically be found regardless of which type of policy you're looking for, so shop around or speak directly with customer service representatives to identify ways to lower the cost of coverage.

- **Choose additional coverage for particularly valuable items.** Certain items, like engagement rings, may require additional coverage not offered by standard policies. For example, a standard renter's insurance policy may not cover expensive jewelry. But losing an item like an engagement ring to theft or a natural disaster can be emotion-

ally devastating and costly to replace. Such a blow is easier to manage when policy holders know the items are fully covered.

Insurance is necessary whether individuals are looking to protect their

health, their homes, their cars, or their financial futures. A few simple strategies can ensure consumers have the coverage they need to avoid financial ruin should they experience an accident, injury or natural disaster.



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Benchmarks of Success

A look at major career developments in the area



D. Samuel Inman

Inman named CEO at Community First Credit Union

The Board of Directors of Community First Credit Union of Florida has announced that D. Samuel Inman has been selected as its new CEO and president, assuming the position on Aug. 31 after a brief transition alongside retiring CEO John

Hirabayashi.

Inman most recently served as chief financial officer and chief risk officer at Community First and has held various leadership roles since joining the organization in 1990. He started at the credit union as an assistant accounting manager and became its first internal auditor. Inman joined the senior leadership team as CFO in 1997.

Inman has played an instrumental role in growing Community First's assets from \$156 million to \$2.7 billion with \$344 million in retained earnings since joining the organization more than 34 years ago.

Among his successes, Inman led a 2016 planning process that established a goal to become a \$2 billion credit union by 2020, a goal that was achieved and surpassed. He is also credited with building the organization's risk management function, aggressively expanding the ATM and branch network, and growing the retail investment services program to more than 5,000 clients and \$400 million in assets under management.

Sporting JAX adds two to front office team

Sporting JAX, the United Soccer League (USL) franchise group bringing men's and women's professional soccer to Northeast Florida, has announced the expansion of its leadership team with the addition of David Phillips as director of marketing and brand and Madison Holesko as director of ticket sales and service. These strategic hires come as the club prepares for its next phase of growth and success.

"It's an exciting time for Sporting JAX as we enhance our front office with two dynamic sports management professionals," said Steve Livingstone, president and CEO of Sporting JAX. "David and Madison bring invaluable experience and expertise to these vital roles. We are confident their leadership will elevate our marketing and sales efforts to fuel our organization's continued growth."



David Phillips

Phillips will spearhead brand marketing strategies for the men's and women's clubs to cultivate fan growth and engagement. He will also oversee the marketing team, collaborate with supporting agencies and execute campaigns while creating exceptional match-day experiences.

Phillips joins Sporting JAX after nearly three years as marketing manager for ASM Global, where he spearheaded marketing efforts for City of Jacksonville venues including VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, EverBank Stadium, Jacksonville

Center for the Performing Arts, among others.



Madison Holesko

Holesko will lead Sporting JAX's day-to-day operations of ticket sales and service teams, including sales and marketing materials and management of sales staff. Additionally, he will manage ticket sales strategy and execution for both clubs, along with hospitality and stadium event sales. Holesko returns to his hometown after more than two years with the Houston Texans as their group sales manager. Before his time with the Texans, he also served in group sales leadership roles for the Jacksonville Jaguars for three years and Orlando Magic for over four years.

LeMaire named to new post at foundation

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida recently announced that Mark D. LeMaire is returning to the foundation as vice president, strategic donor initiatives, a newly created executive position that will oversee growing work in strategic grantmaking for the foundation's fundholders.

LeMaire re-joins the staff of The Community Foundation after previously serving in multiple leadership roles at the foundation for nearly 10 years, including in grantmaking and donor services in Duval, Putnam and St. Johns counties.

The new position, which will be part of the foundation's executive leadership team, was created to support fundholders who partner with The Community Foundation's expert staff for strategic guidance as well as implementation of their grantmaking. LeMaire's start date is Aug. 26.

Cosgrove installed as Florida Medical Association president

Lisa A. Cosgrove, M.D., of Jacksonville was installed as 148th president of the Florida Medical Association (FMA) on Aug. 3 during the association's annual meeting in Orlando. She is a board-certified pediatrician who retired in 2019 after four decades of practicing medicine, and she remains an influential advocate for Florida's physicians and their patients.

Dr. Cosgrove is a native of Little Rock, Arkansas, and a third-generation physician. She began her health care career as a nurse in the pediatric/neonatal intensive care unit at Miami Children's Hospital. She earned her medical degree from the Ross University School of Medicine and completed residency training in pediatrics at Emory University.

Cosgrove moved to Florida in 1993 and joined Atlantic Coast Pediatrics, a private practice on Merritt Island.

Prior to becoming FMA president-elect in 2023, Cosgrove was FMA vice president and FMA secretary. She also served as specialty society representative to the FMA Board of Governors and is a longtime FMA PAC member.

Hart receives award from builders association

The Northeast Florida Builders Association has announced that NEFBA Past President Curtis Hart of Hart Resources has been awarded the Dick Baker Award by the Florida Home Builders Association (FHBA). Hart will receive this award at the upcoming FHBA Fall Conference in October. Hart Resources is located in Jacksonville.

The Dick Baker Award is named in honor of NEFBA's Past President Dick Baker, who demonstrated incredible courage and a fighting spirit. The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate remarkable resolve in facing life's challenges.



Dr. Glen Martin

Martin appointed vice president of medical affairs for two hospitals

Baptist Health has appointed Glen Martin, MD, vice president of medical affairs for Baptist Medical Center Beaches and Baptist Medical Center Nassau.

Reporting directly to the health system's chief medical officer and collaborating with its chief quality officer, Martin will work closely with the medical staffs and administration of the two hospitals to deliver patient-centric, effective and streamlined clinical care.

Martin has been a member of Baptist Health's medical staff since 2005 through his employment with U.S. Anesthesia Partners North Florida, which provides anesthesia services to Baptist Health. He served as the inaugural president of U.S. Anesthesia Partners North Florida from 2017 to 2019 and was on the local Clinical Governance Board from 2017 to 2024. Martin played a key role in the merger of two anesthesia practices into one large group to provide higher-quality patient care and more efficiently serve Baptist Health and the Jacksonville community.

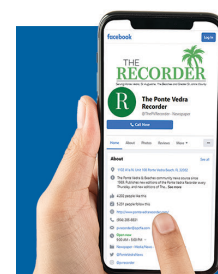
Throughout his 19 years on Baptist Health's medical staff, Martin has held numerous leadership roles, including chief of staff for Baptist Beaches during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, he served on the Medical Staff Quality Management Committee and was chairman for seven years.

Martin is a board-certified anesthesiologist and a fellow of the American Society of Anesthesiology.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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Two join Florida Theatre board

Two new members have joined the Florida Theatre Board of Directors: Ed Lombard and Angela Merritt. Both were nominated by the organizational committee and have agreed to serve a three-year term as regular voting members of the board of directors.

The Florida Theatre is governed by a board of directors drawn from the community's civic leadership, who volunteer to oversee the institution's policies, governance and finances. There are currently 30 board members serving in this capacity.

Lombard is a managing partner with Agility Wealth Management and a financial adviser with Raymond James Financial Services. He is a chartered retirement planning counselor with more than two decades of financial planning industry experience.

Merritt is a senior account manager with DEX Imaging, helping businesses with document management and office equipment solutions. She has been with DEX Imaging since 2003 and has a background in graphic design, which gives her a unique perspective on what employees need from their copiers, printers, scanners and fax machines.

"The Florida Theatre Board of Directors is a diverse group of citizen activists from all across the First Coast region who are dedicated to preserving a unique Jacksonville landmark and supporting the organization's efforts to provide our friends and neighbors with live entertainment by the world's best performers," said Numa Saisselin, president of the Florida Theatre. "Ed Lombard and Angela Merritt bring a wealth of talent and their own experiences in business and as Jacksonville residents to this effort, and we welcome them."

Lightfield is featured artist for September

For The Recorder

Deborah Lightfield, an award-winning Northeast Florida artist, will be the featured artist of the month for September at the Butterfield Garage Art Gallery, 137 King St., St. Augustine. Her opening reception will be held at the gallery during their popular First Friday Artwalk, 5-9 p.m. Sept. 6.

Lightfield will be on hand and will be showcasing new artwork using a unique and elevated ocean wash technique. At 6 p.m., she will take the floor to talk about this technique, offer suggestions and take questions.

Lightfield is widely celebrated for her captivating artworks that intricately blend realism with elements of surrealism, inviting viewers into enchanting worlds of imagination and introspection. Her mastery of light, color and texture imbues her pieces with a transcendent quality that resonates deeply with audiences.

She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the James Madison University in Virginia before pursuing a career as a jewelry designer and creator, and art teacher. Since settling in Ponte Vedra, she has participated in a variety of juried arts shows in Jacksonville, Ponte Vedra and St. Augustine and has won awards from the St. Augustine Art Association and the Art Center in Jacksonville.

She is currently a member of the Butterfield Gallery Art Gallery and the



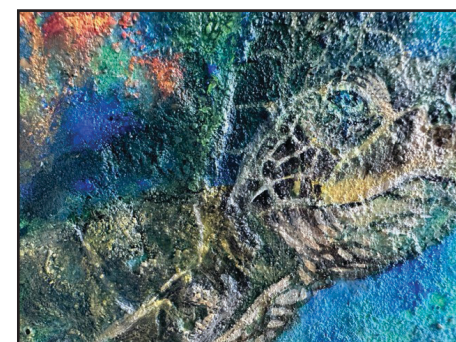
Contributed photos

Artist Deborah Lightfield

Professional Artists of St. Augustine (PASTA) Fine Art Gallery.

Lightfield's ocean wash technique was a process she began years ago and has implemented in her body of artwork. She has elevated the process to create fine artwork that is archival. With the ocean as her source of inspiration and influence, she uses the natural processes of ocean waves to create random patterns on her watercolor paper or canvas.

The ocean wash process may take several days to dry, after which excess sand is swept away and, from the resulting complex shapes and colors, Light-



A work of art by Deborah Lightfield using her ocean wash technique.

field allows her inspiration to move her by including additional painting techniques.

Over the years, she has approached the process with various applications from pre-painting the canvas or paper surfaces prior to the ocean wash or adding modeling compounds to the surface to vary the outcomes. The ocean wash technique is a constantly evolving process that continues to invigorate Lightfield's art processes.

"I allow the natural elements of ocean waves, sand and wind to direct where the painting will go," Lightfield said. "Once the paint is placed on the wet canvas, I can start to visualize where the painting is taking me. It's a process I love because it is purely contemplative and expressive, while allowing the child in me to play."

Lightfield's website, lightfieldart.com, showcases current and archived work.



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Sports

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The Beachside student section will be ready when the Barracudas host Atlantic Coast High in a preseason jamboree at 7 p.m. Aug. 16.



Senior Nate Harry (carrying ball) is competing for the starting job at quarterback for the Panthers.



Brian Case will look to fuel the Sharks' offense during his senior year. Photos by Anthony Richards

Jamborees present glimpse into 2024 football season

By Anthony Richards

This Friday Aug. 16 the wait for high school football games will finally be over as preseason jamborees will be played across the First Coast.

That includes both Ponte Vedra High and Beachside High hosting matchups, while Nease High will take to the road for their first action of the season.

Although the games do not count toward the season standings, it will be the first glimpse of this year's squads in live game action since the spring games.

All the schools have been holding fall practice and scrimmages, but nothing

compares to taking the field on a Friday night with another team lined up on the other side.

One thing for sure, is that each coaching staff and players will have a much better idea about where they are at and what they do well at this point and what they need to continue to work on heading into the season following the jamborees, which is why they have become a valuable tool for coaches over the years.

The Ponte Vedra Sharks will host St. Augustine in the Shark Tank, while the Beachside Barracudas take on the Atlantic Coast Stingrays with both games starting at 7 p.m. Aug. 16.

One of the questions the Sharks have is how they will replace some valuable senior leadership at key positions, including at quarterback with Ben Burk having graduated after being the man under center for the past three seasons.

The jamboree will give fans the first glimpse of the new era of Sharks football, and it will come against a Yellow Jackets squad that finished 13-1 a year ago, so it should be an excellent measuring stick on where they need to grow moving forward.

For the Barracudas, they are now in a district and making the postseason for the first time in the school's short history is

the top priority on the table.

Unlike the Sharks, the Barracudas return quarterback Eddie Jordan and look to build upon the winning seasons they have had in their first two campaigns.

The Panthers will make a trip to Clay County to face the Oakleaf Knights at 7 p.m. on Aug. 16. As they will also get experience making a road trip for the first in the new season.

It is the first step for the Panthers in their quest to repeat as district champions. They have had a quarterback battle of their own with several having been competing for the starting spot through the spring and into fall camp.

Papineau returns to Northeast Florida for practices

Nease High alum and Florida State defensive back Cade Papineau is a freshman defensive back for the Florida State Seminoles and recently took part in a practice at the Flex Field at EverBank Stadium as the team made a trip to Jacksonville on Aug. 7 and 8.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Nease alum and Florida State defensive back Cade Papineau receives instruction from a coach during practice.



Papineau takes part in a tackling drill.

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WORD SEARCH SOLUTION (puzzle on page 46)

R S X W X D D T L N M O B B A C T I O N
 M A S W B Y O A Y F B F D A D N I M L T
 P F Y E O M E F P T E X E X O T Y U A P
 Y R P C N W P X M I I G E M B W R U C D D
 C Y R R R V L T O A G O L V A D C O X I O O
 D I E S A Y L P Y M F N I M R B M V S C
 V G V T B L T E T R I W T B X M E C Y T O
 B N E A F I U I W C U N C P O M M V H O R
 V I N M F T B C V D L I A M M M D A P P R
 W G T I B L D I S E U T O T G I P C T P
 O A I N Y E E X F A G W R D I S A C U I
 E T O A P W T X L U V N P E E O T I A U
 G C N S L Y C U I A F O Q O N B N N U
 D Y F T E C G P W B R V I L H O S E I S
 E Y D P H H V M U D I R A D R G B G N L
 A W L A R P C O E B Y L E U R V B I A N
 F D G N A B Y A M D O U I F N A O P O W
 P I C O G N I T I V E D C T E U C A N F
 N W B D U W H A S V D I Y F Y R V A H P
 H E A L T H F G E R B T H G I S E Y E A

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INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF JOHN JOSEPH TORICS A/K/A JOHN JOSEPH TORICS III, DECEASED, CHRIS UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF TORICS, U.S. BANK TRUST ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE OF CAPITAL TRUST 1, STATE CLERK OF COURT, CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA, LISA ANN GRIFFIN SPOUSE OF LISA ANN UNKNOWN TENANT(S) IN COMMON WITH N/K/A LISA GRIFFIN, are the highest and best bidder for cash at the public sale, to be held at 10:00 A.M. on August 15, 2024, the following details as set forth in said Final Judgment.

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R S X W X D D T L N M O B B A C T I O N
M A S W B Y O A Y F B F D A D N I M L T
P F Y E O M E F P T E X E X O T Y U A P
Y R P C N W P X M I I G E M B W R U C D
C Y R R V L T O A G O L V A D C O X I O
D I E S A Y L P Y M F N I M R B M V S C
V G V T B L T E T R I W T B X M E C Y T
B N E A F I U I W C U N C P O M M V H O
V I N M F T B C V D L I A M M M D A P R
W G T I B L D I S E U T O T G I P C T P
O A I N Y E E X F A G W R D I S A C U I
E T O A P W T X L U V N P E E O I I A U
G C N S L Y C U I A F O O O N B N N N U
D Y F T E C G P W B R V I L H O S E I S
E Y D P H H V M U D I R A D R G B G N L
A W L A R P C O E B Y L E U R V B I A N
F D G N A B Y A M D O U I F N A O P O W
P I C O G N I T I V E D C T E U C A N F
N W B D U W H A S V D I Y F Y R V A H P
H E A L T H F G E R B T H G I S E Y E A

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

- | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| ACHES | COGNITIVE | LONGEVITY | PREVENTION |
| ACTION | DOCTOR | MEMORY | PROACTIVE |
| AGING | EXAMINATION | MIND | REFERRAL |
| BODY | EYESIGHT | MOBILITY | STAMINA |
| BONE | FLEXIBILITY | PAINS | VACCINE |
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CROSSWORD																	
		1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9					
		10				11				12							
13	14					15				16				17	18		
19						20			21	22							
23										24							
			25							26							
27	28	29								30				31	32	33	
34														35			
36			37	38	39	40			41	42	43	44					
			45							46							
47	48	49								50				51	52	53	
54										55							
56								57	58				59				
			60					61					62				
			63					64					65				

ACROSS

- Major American automaker (abbr.)
- Pressure measurement
- Two-year-old sheep
- Indigenous person from Laos or Thailand
- Up in the air (abbr.)
- Actress de Armas
- Not moving
- Cool!
- Bog arum genus
- Perceptible by touch
- Type of test
- Monetary units
- Collection of various things
- Sum of five and one
- Type of sword
- Hates
- Immobile
- Pie __ mode
- Moved quickly
- Passenger's place on a motorbike
- A way through
- Former US Secretary of Education Duncan
- Leader
- Flowing
- Greetings
- Remedy
- Soft lightweight fabric
- Building material
- Sea bream
- A way to cause to be swollen
- One and only
- People get one in summer
- Wreath
- Thus far
- They __
- Sea eagle

DOWN

- Policemen (French)
- Toy dog
- Inflamed colon disease
- Can't move
- Helps little firms
- Lists of names, subjects, etc.
- Takes down
- Makes possible
- Wife of Julius Constantius
- Engine additive
- Arctic explorers (abbr.)
- Written account
- Consumed
- Something the first shall be
- No (slang)
- Gov't lawyers
- Peyton's little brother
- Small amount

- Investment vehicle
- Fall behind
- Midway between northeast and east
- Head pain
- Popular sport in England and India
- King Charles's sister
- Boat race
- About fish
- Maid servant
- Able to be marketed
- Tinier
- Parts per billion (abbr.)
- Paddle
- Oneness
- Bitter chemical
- Not around
- Very fast airplane
- Swiss river

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

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

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



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