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The Register  
INSIDE

Thursday, August 29, 2024

PonteVedraRecorder.com

VOLUME 55, NO. 44 \$1.00

## Primary brings about some big changes

By Shaun Ryan

Two St. Johns County commissioners were ousted in the Tuesday, Aug. 20, primary election, and area residents will be represented by new members of the Florida Senate and House.

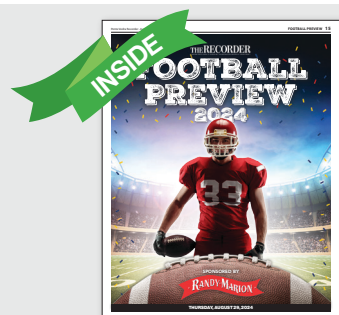
Of the three commissioners seeking re-election, only Christian Whitehurst won his race, though only by a margin of 2% over challenger Ann-Marie Evans. Weston Ferguson finished a distant third.

A write-in candidate has qualified for the general election for District 1.

In the District 5 race, challenger Ann Taylor prevailed over incumbent Henry Dean by a 2% margin. Dean was originally elected to the commission in 2016 and was re-elected in 2020. John Higbee III finished a distant third.

Taylor will face a challenge by Merrill Paul Roland, who qualified for the general election as No Party Affiliation.

PRIMARY continues on Page 11



Football Preview  
Pages 15-34

# FOOTBALL SEASON'S OFF AND RUNNING

What's in store for week two?

By Anthony Richards

The battle between Nease and Ponte Vedra captured the attention during week one, but now the rest of the season starts and the biggest question surrounding both teams is how will they respond in week two?

It was an emotional game for both teams, which can mean a difficult game to bounce back from no matter which side of the scoreboard they ended up on.

The Panthers are coming off a huge victory and could not have scripted a better start to the year, but they must quickly refocus, as they travel to take on the Creekside Knights in another county bout.

The Knights finished with a winning record last season but struggled defensively to slow opponents down and wound up surrendering an average of 33 points per game.

Despite the winning record, those woes defensively were a major reason for the five losses they suffered and that was the case in the opening week this year, as the Knights lost 57-13 to Mandarin.

It is tough to tell with only one game



Photo by Anthony Richards

Nease head coach Collin Drafts celebrates as he is carried by his players following the Panthers' season opening win over the rival Sharks.

being played, and the fact that the Mustangs are considered one of the best teams in the state, whether the 57 points scored is a true example of the Knights' defense this season.

However, if the Knights have not fully corrected their issues on defense from a year ago, the Panthers offense could be able to exploit that for a second straight

week, especially if they play on target and in rhythm like they did against the Sharks.

The Sharks must rebound from the opening loss to the Panthers, as they follow it up with another tough matchup on the road against the Bartram Trail Bears.

WEEK 2 continues on Page 32

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## BRIEFS

### GTM Reserve offers volunteer orientation

Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve will offer a new volunteer orientation on Friday, Sept. 6. Interested volunteers will learn about the background and history of the reserve, volunteer opportunities and the benefits of volunteering at GTM.

Meet from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Sept. 6 at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

After completing the volunteer application at [gtmnerr.org/volunteer](http://gtmnerr.org/volunteer), contact volunteer coordinator Abby Kuhn at [Abigail.Kuhn@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:Abigail.Kuhn@FloridaDEP.gov) to ensure that it was received.

### Afterschool art program still has openings

First Coast Cultural Center still has a few available openings for the Kick StART afterschool program at the following schools on these days: Picolata Crossing (Monday), PV/PV-Rawlings (Monday), Palencia (Tuesday), Ocean Palms (Tuesday), Freedom Crossing Academy (Wednesday), Palm Valley Academy (Friday) and Landrum Middle School (Wednesday, sixth grade).

Students (kindergarten through sixth grade) will learn from master artists from around the world. These weekly, 90-minute adventures will incorporate music, culinary experiences and a variety of art mediums.

Enroll at [firstcoastculturalcenter.org](http://firstcoastculturalcenter.org). Members receive a discount. For more information, contact Kimberly Sheridan at 904-280-0614, Ext. 1205.

### Nature journaling event is Sept. 5

Join nature journaling instructor Elaine Bergstrom at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve to explore the wonders at the reserve on Sept. 5. Each month focuses on different topics using words, pictures and numbers to learn more about what we observe.

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

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

To register, go to [gtmnerr.org/visit/events](http://gtmnerr.org/visit/events).

### Hastings library to reopen at Harris Center

The Hastings Branch Library will resume its regular services and hours at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 3, at its temporary location inside the W.E. Harris Community Center, 400 E. Harris St., Hastings.

Parking for the branch is through the first gate. A new book drop will be placed inside the main entrance of this parking lot. The Hastings Branch Library will be located in rooms 402 and 403.

Clients visiting the St. Johns County Health and Human Services (HHS) office in room 401 can park in the lot accessed through the second gate. HHS will hold office hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesdays through Thursdays. For more information on these services, call 904-209-6140.

Materials checked out from the branch before the closure on Aug. 3 will not be due until Sept. 9.

### GTM Reserve offers course on birding

A five-week course on birding, "If You Can Name It, You Can Love It," will start Sept. 6 at Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Learn about what makes the area supportive of many bird species and how to use birding applications to enhance your ability to identify birds and create a personal bird list. You will also practice your skills in the field.

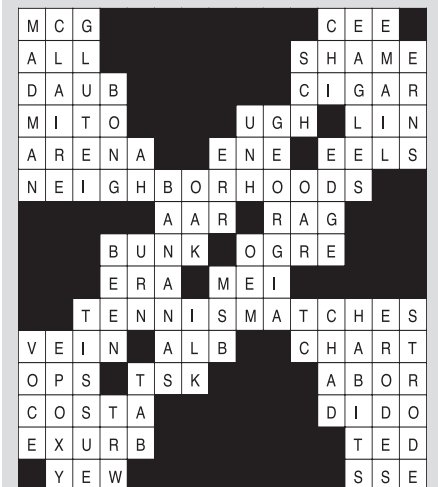
Meet from 10 to 11:30 p.m. at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Register at [gtmnerr.org/visit/events](http://gtmnerr.org/visit/events).

The price for the course is \$175 for members of Friends of the GTM Reserve and \$225 for non-members.

### 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.

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



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

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# Coastal cuisine, curated wines to be featured at Delicious Destinations

## For The Recorder

Step back in time to an environment reflecting the speakeasies of the 1920s for this year's 22nd annual Delicious Destinations event Sept. 6-7 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club benefitting the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation.

This year's coastal speakeasy theme "Sip, Savor & Support" invites you to sip curated wines and savor exquisite coastal-inspired dishes prepared by regionally celebrated chefs in a setting reminiscent of the Roaring '20s.

On Friday, Sept. 6, guests are invited to a special luncheon featuring Chef Colin McClimans, executive chef and owner of Nina May and Opal restaurants in Washington,

D.C. The luncheon will also feature wine educator Shaun C. Wright, fine wine manager for North Florida Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits.

The main event on Saturday, Sept. 7, showcases 14 chefs from top restaurants in Florida and Georgia. Live and silent auctions will also be part of the event.

This year's Delicious Destinations, presented by Miller Electric, is chaired by some of the community's esteemed medical professionals. Dr. Abdi Abbassi, a gastroenterologist at Digestive Disease Consultants, and his wife Kristina Abbassi are co-chairing alongside Dr. Valery Muenyi, also a gastroenterologist at Digestive Disease Consultants, and his wife Dr. Sofia

Muenyi, a family physician at UF Health Jacksonville.

"We are excited to carry on the Delicious Destinations tradition and contribute to the vital support it brings to Ascension St. Vincent's Mission," said Dr. Abdi Abbassi. "This is a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase Ascension St. Vincent's commitment to both health care and philanthropy in Northeast Florida."

Last year's event raised more than

\$298,000 that provided essential medical services, medication management and health care education to those in need.

"We look forward to welcoming even more attendees to this meaningful event," said Dr. Valery Muenyi. "It will be a special evening dedicated to supporting the community outreach programs of Ascension St. Vincent's."

To purchase tickets, go to GiveStVincents.org.

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# Trash collection contract to be terminated

By Shaun Ryan

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners unanimously voted Tuesday, Aug. 20, to proceed with termination of its contract with FCC Environmental Services Florida, its new residential curbside collection provider.

FCC was to begin local operations on Aug. 1 but, in what Commissioner Henry Dean termed “an unmitigated disaster,” failed to pick up the trash at numerous homes. Some residents who did see their trash picked up complained of garbage being spilled in various places.

The county dispatched Road and Bridge workers to collect trash throughout that weekend, logging 900 hours, which FCC will be expected to reimburse. By the Tuesday, Aug. 20, meeting of the County Commission, Road and Bridge had worked 2,200 hours collecting trash.

At its Aug. 6 meeting, the Board of County Commissioners gave FCC seven days to cure the defect. That seven-day period ended Friday, Aug. 16.

In the meantime, the county worked with FCC in an attempt to bring its performance up to expectations, and FCC brought in additional resources. But residents continued to report missed pickups of household trash, recycling and yard waste.

At the regular Aug. 20 meeting, Public Works Director Greg Caldwell said that there had been more than 7,000 calls this month regarding missed pickups or other complaints. More than 3,000 problems were reported through the SJC Connect and Recycle Coach apps, and there were more than 6,000 service requests. County staff had conducted more than 13,000 inspections.

The Board of County Commissioners placed an emergency item on the meeting agenda to discuss the service levels of FCC.

At the meeting, FCC Chief Executive Officer Dan Brazil apologized for the failures. He said the company had dispatched up to 99 trucks to cure the problem and increased staffing by 17% with some workers coming from other states.

He said that, a week prior to the Aug. 1 start date, the map had been changed adding 2,700 houses to the total mix.

At the meeting, the board unanimously declared a local state of emergency and approved a motion for the County Attorney’s Office to proceed with the process to terminate the FCC contract.

The county will seek bids for a replacement provider. Three RFPs (requests for proposal) were issued Monday, Aug. 19, for the three services: residential trash pickup, recycling and yard waste. Caldwell said proposals would be received by Sept. 12.

In the meantime, the county plans to solicit interim service providers to supplement FCC solid waste services. Under the emergency order, the county will use all available resources to get all yard waste picked up as soon as possible.

County Administrator Joy Andrews was authorized to sign contracts for supplemental services for a period not exceeding nine months. Representatives from Meridian Waste and Waste Management spoke at the meeting to offer their

services.

“The county has heard from our community about their disappointment and frustrations with FCC,” Andrews said. “Today, our leadership took bold, aggressive steps to clean up this mess. A new journey begins to regain the confidence of our community when it comes to reassuring them that their trash will be picked up when it should be picked up and they will receive the quality customer service they deserve. It is important to note, under our current contract with FCC, the board’s decision to terminate does not alleviate FCC’s responsibility to continue providing services under the current contract.”

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 Commissioner Krista Joseph voting no. St. Johns County has an estimated 114,000 residential homes that would be served by FCC.

FCC currently provides services to Polk, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, Orange

TRASH continues on Page 5

## 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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# Trash

Continued from 4

and Volusia counties, as well as some cities, such as Palm Coast.

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

Clay County officials have been watching the rollout in St. Johns County as FCC is scheduled to begin collection there on Oct. 1. At the Aug. 13 meeting of the Clay County Board of County Commissioners, FCC staff addressed the situation in St. Johns County, speaking about the steps it was undertaking to cure the defect here.

In a Facebook post, Clay County officials addressed the issue: “The county is working closely with FCC Environmental to ensure the transition to the new garbage and yard waste service is done to the level we all expect. ... As we go through the next several weeks, we will continue to work closely with FCC to make sure all of the steps are completed within the transition plan ahead of the Oct. 1 start date.”

# Community enjoys Tribute to Veteran Unsung Heroes

## For The Recorder

The Tribute to Veteran Unsung Heroes honoring Vietnam Airborne veteran Rick McAllister and Air Force veteran Kris Jurski was held in Jacksonville on Saturday, Aug. 17. The program began with a luncheon at the Salem Centre Auditorium.

McAllister presented his moving and sometimes humorous pictorial story of leading a group of Vietnam veterans dealing with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) on a 500-mile healing pilgrimage across Northern Spain on the Camino de Santiago.

McAllister’s presentation of the “Last Patrol: A Pilgrimage of Brotherhood” was a fitting title for the inspiring pilgrimage of the senior veterans. The veterans delivered a scroll in memory of more than 400 Vietnam veterans to the Pilgrim’s Mass at the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. The Apostle St. James is believed to be buried in this cathedral.

Jurski introduced the audience to The Peoples Audit, a grassroots army to help election offices maintain clean voter rolls. He explained the effect of incorrect addresses as a continual problem

to election offices. The Peoples Audit program identifies the invalid addresses for correction. Jurski was surprised when pinned with a lifetime membership by the Florida Republican Assembly President Peter Kouracos for his dedication in helping election offices.

St Johns Veterans Council Chairman Bill Dudley gave an update on the Veterans Village in St. Augustine. The Veterans Village was recently opened to provide affordable transient housing for veterans in need. The Veterans Council plans to open another facility for temporary housing as funds become available. Volunteers are

needed to assist at the Veterans Village. Unsung Heroes of 2023 from the local area attending the event included Dianne Lavelle, Rose Hayden, Eadie Dumm and Takima Porter-Roach, representing her late husband Chief Petty Officer Clarence Roach.

The Atlantic Coast Young Marines presented colors and volunteered at the event.

“I was inspired to see the Atlantic Coast Young Marines once again engaging with veterans,” said veteran Marty Cleghorn. “The Young Marines always remember our Jacksonville veterans.”



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Kim Jones and husband Brett Morson are the co-owners of Tropical Vibes, which sells apparel and products online that are inspired by the tropics. Recently, they have released their own five-year, aged dark rum. Here, Jones tells us a bit about herself and her business. For more information, go to [tropicalvibes.com](http://tropicalvibes.com).

## Kim Jones

### As told to Shaun Ryan

#### Tell me about Tropical Vibes.

Tropical Vibes is a lifestyle brand in that we are about all things tropically inspired. So, we do have apparel, items for the home and our most recent addition, of course, is our new Tropical Vibes Rum.

#### When did you first get into this?

We were actually living in South Florida about four years ago and thought we should get a side hustle because everybody was getting a side hustle back then. So, we started a travel agency. We named it Tropical Vibes Travel.

We created the hat and the shirt with the Tropical Vibes logo with the thought that we were going to be giving hats and shirts to all the legions of travelers that we were sending around the world to all these fabulous places.

As it turned out, we were terrible travel agents. We were really, really bad at it. [Laughs] But people loved the hats and the shirts, so we said, “Well, forget the travel agency business; we’re going into the apparel business.”

So, we pivoted and, of course, started with the apparel. Did really, really well there. And have just segued into the rum because we feel it’s a natural brand extension.

That’s how we got to where we are today.

#### Tell me a little bit about your rum.

The first rum that we have out now is a five-year, aged dark rum. We’re using a sugar cane juice base, which gives it a fantastic flavor. It’s almost more like maybe a whiskey as opposed to a traditional rum, because we’re not using that molasses base. So, it doesn’t have that heavy sweetness that a lot of off-the-shelf rums tend to have. What a lot of people associate with rum is that it’s very heavy and very sweet. Even though ours is five-year-aged in barrels, it does not have that sweetness.

It really has a fantastic flavor that you can just drink on the rocks, and it makes a great old fashioned. Great dark ‘n’ stormy. I think the only way I would not recommend drinking it is neat, because it really does need that little bit of chill for the flavor to really come out.

#### When did you introduce it?

We are really in our first month of rolling it out.

We’ve already had some incoming unsolicited orders from wholesalers in other parts of the country, which is really exciting. They like the brand, and so they’re excited to get it out to their customers.

We really hope people enjoy it. It’s intended to really just help people enjoy the spirit and energy of the tropics — wherever they are.

#### What do you like best about what you do?

The feedback that we get from customers. When we’re selling apparel and customers reach out and just tell us a happy story ... and they send us family photos of everybody wearing Tropical Vibes hats, and everyone’s got big smiles.

We’re not curing disease or changing the world; we’re just trying to make the world a slightly happier place.

I think if we can just put a smile on a customer’s face, then we’ve succeeded.

#### How long have you been living in this area?

We moved here a little over a year ago.



Contributed photo

Kim Jones and husband Brett Morson are the co-founders and co-owners of Tropical Vibes.

#### What do you like best about living here?

It’s kind of funny. I would say the trees, the greenery. Coming from South Florida, where they’ve pretty much paved over every square inch, it’s so refreshing to see so many green spaces and areas that haven’t been developed. It really is beautiful.

I think maybe if you’ve lived here for a long time, you might take it for granted. If you come from somewhere else, it really does make it so much more people-friendly to have all this greenery.

And the beaches are beautiful here.

We absolutely love it.

#### You have an office at the link.

It’s absolutely terrific. It’s a great workspace and the building itself, of course, is beautiful but I think the collaboration and the opportunity to interact with other

entrepreneurs who are at various stages in their businesses has been really invaluable.

Having spent, obviously, the time working from home as everyone did, it’s just really refreshing to come back to an office space where people are excited and doing interesting and creative work. I love being a part of it.

#### How do you like to spend your free time?

We pretty much take every Friday morning off and head out on the boat and do some fishing, which is really relaxing.

I grew up fishing. I grew up in Seattle, salmon-fishing a lot with my dad. I forgot how much I enjoyed it, having been away from it for so long.

And the waterways here are absolutely beautiful. It’s a great way to spend a Friday morning.



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**'cause every stay has a story.**

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**

# Landscape Trivia

"Adopt the pace of Nature. Her secret is patience." — Ralph Waldo Emerson



**By Kathy Esfahani**

There is so much to learn about flowers and gardening! Test your knowledge with these fun trivia questions (answers on page 45):

- 1. Which part of the horseradish plant can be used to make a sauce?  
A) Leaves; B) Root; C) Stems
- 2. When is the best time to plant new grass seed?  
A) Spring; B) Summer; C) Fall
- 3. What plant can survive in complete darkness for several months?  
A) Peace Lily; B) Spider Plant; C) Barley

4. What plant is known to have one of the longest-lasting blooms in the plant kingdom?

- A) Orchid; B) Penta; C) Hibiscus

5. What is the most beneficial treatment you can give your lawn?

- A) Fertilizing; B) Aeration/overseeding; C) Dethatching

6. What is the world's most invasive plant?

- A) Water Hyacinth; B) Lantana; C) Fountain Grass

7. True or false: Lawnmower blades can be sharpened?

- A) True; B) False

8. What type of fruit is used to make gin?

- A) Blackberries; B) Plums; C) Juniper Berries

9. What is the highest approximate altitude where plants can grow?

- A) 15,000 feet; B) 27,000 feet; C) 22,000 feet

10. Which of the following is NOT a benefit of using mulch?

- A) Dry out soil; B) Keep soil cool; C) Prevent weeds

11. Which country has the most diverse variety of flora in the world?

- A) Mexico; B) Brazil; C) Greece

12. What plant species produces the world's hottest pepper?

- A) Ghost Pepper; B) Carolina Reaper; C) Datil Pepper

13. What are the best seasons for planting trees?

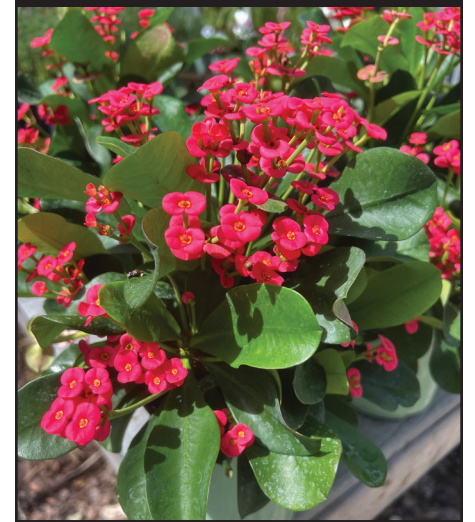
- A) Spring and Summer; B) Fall and Winter; C) Spring and Fall

14. What is the tallest species of grass?

- A) Pampas Grass; B) Switchgrass; C) Bamboo

Photo provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

**Flower of the Week**



**Crown of Thorns**

15. Which element is not an ingredient in most fertilizers?

- A) Nitrogen; B) Oxygen; C) Potassium

*Flower of the Week: Crown of Thorns*

Please email Kathy at [kcg.pvr@gmail.com](mailto: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.

See TRIVIA ANSWERS on Page 45



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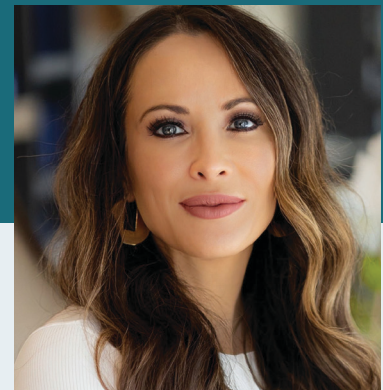
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A new homeowner, identified only as Antwoinette, reacts joyfully to work being done on her home.



Homeowner Fe Lorna and the Raintree team.

Contributed photos

# Habitat plans open house for newest neighborhood

## For The Recorder

Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County (Habitat St. Johns) will conduct an open house from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 6, for the public to see new homes in its Volusia Woods neighborhood.

The address will be 858 Helen St., St. Augustine (just off Volusia Street near the circle to Four Mile Road.)

Habitat St. Johns will also host two home dedications the next day, Saturday,

Sept. 7, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Habitat staff say home dedications are always uplifting and heartfelt, and they want to share the joy and satisfaction the homeowners experience when the key is presented. Attendees will hear their stories and have an opportunity to congratulate them on becoming the newest Habitat St. Johns homeowners.

The first three homes were built thanks to the support of The Raintree Restaurant, O.C. Whites Seafood & Spirits and Publix Charities. They each partnered to build

one of the three homes. Everything Cool has temporarily furnished the homes to give everyone an idea of what a furnished home could look like.

“We invite you to join us at Volusia Woods on Sept. 6 and/or Sept. 7 for these two fun events,” said Malinda Everson, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County. “We have been looking forward to this for months now! Habitat St. Johns is very proud of the new homeowners. They have all put in a lot of hard work and dedica-

tion to get to this point, including over 200 sweat-equity hours each.”

Homeownership, she said, provides the stability, security and opportunity for generational wealth that many take for granted.

“This work wouldn’t be possible without all of our partners, donors, volunteers, the St. Johns County and City of St. Augustine leadership and staff, and everyone else we work with to make this possible,”

HABITAT continues on Page 12

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# Primary

Continued from 1

In the District 3 race, challenger Clay Murphy received 47% of the vote, unseating incumbent Roy Alaimo by a margin of 6%. Alaimo was appointed to the board by Gov. Ron DeSantis in 2022 to fill a vacancy created by the death of Commissioner Paul Waldron. Challengers Heather Harley-Davidson and Michael McDonald finished a distant third and fourth, respectively.

A write-in candidate has qualified for the general election.

In other county races, Brandon Patty was re-elected clerk of the court and comptroller over challenger Denver Cook; and Sheriff Rob Hardwick prevailed over challenger Jim Priester, though a write-in candidate has qualified for the general election.

In the District 7 race for Florida state senator, Tom Leek easily prevailed, receiving 47% of the vote. He will face Democrat George Anthony “T” Hill II in the general election. David Shoar, who previously served as St. Johns County sheriff and had received the endorsement of former President Donald Trump, received 27% of the vote Tuesday. Challenger Gerry James received 25%.

State Sen. Travis Hutson currently serves District 7 but could not run again due to term limits.

In the District 18 race for state representative, Kim Kendall prevailed, receiving 58% of the vote to challenger

Nick Primrose’s 42%. State Rep. Cyndi Stevenson currently serves District 18 but could not run again due to term limits.

Kendall, a Republican, will face Democrat Keith Matthews in the general election.

In the District 19 race for state representative, Sam Greco received 63% of the vote to challenger Darryl Boyer’s 36%. A Republican, Greco will face Democrat Adam Morley in the general election.

State Rep. Paul Renner currently serves District 19 but could not run again due to term limits.

In the District 20 race for state representative, Judson Sapp received 65% of the vote to Jamie Watts’ 35%. A Republican, Sapp will face Democrat Tony Connelly in the general election.

State Rep. Bobby Payne currently serves District 20 but could not run again due to term limits.

In St. Johns County’s District 2 School Board race, incumbent Anthony E. Coleman Sr. won re-election with 53% of the vote to challenger Francis Cummings’ 47%.

In the District 5 School Board race, candidates Linda Thomson and Bethany Hilbert will compete in a runoff election held concurrently with the November general election. That’s because none of the four candidates for that office received 50% of the vote plus one. Thomson was the top vote-getter with 41% of the vote. Hilbert followed with 24%. Both Lynn Straughan and Liliana Bristow received 17%. The winner in November will replace Patrick Canan, who currently

serves District 5.

Incumbent U.S. Sen. Rick Scott will face challenger Debbie Mucarsel-Powell in the November general election. Other candidates will include Libertarian Feena Bonoan; Ben Everidge and Tuan TQ Nguyen, both No Party Affiliation; and one write-in.

Scott won the Republican primary with 84% of the vote, challengers Keith Gross and John S. Columbus finishing a distant second and third, respectively.

Mucarsel-Powell won the Democrat primary with 69% of the vote to challenger Stanley Campbell’s 20%. Brian Rush and Rod Joseph finished a distant third and fourth, respectively.

In the District 5 race for U.S. representative, incumbent John H. Rutherford prevailed with 67% of the vote to challenger Mara H. Macie’s 33%. A Republican, Rutherford will face Democrat Jay McGovern in the general election. A write-in candidate has qualified.

In the District 6 race for U.S. representative, incumbent Michael Waltz prevailed with 82% of the vote to challenger John Grow’s 18%. A Republican, Waltz will face Democrat James David Stockton III in the general election. A write-in candidate has qualified.

In the race for Republican state committeeman, Tom Rivers won with 59% of the vote. He faced four challengers.

In the race for Republican state committeewoman, Tamara Renuart won with

48% of the vote. She faced two challengers.

These percentages reflect the unofficial count with all 53 St. Johns County precincts reporting in, though votes by mail remaining only partially reported. Percentages are rounded. Where districts cross county lines, votes from the other counties were included.

Unopposed candidates automatically elected include:

- St. Johns County Property Appraiser: Eddie Creamer, Republican
- St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections: Vicky Oakes, Republican
- St. Johns County Tax Collector: Jennifer Pomar Ravan, Republican
- Municipal Service District of Ponte Vedra Beach, Seat 2: Catherine (Kitty) Switkes
- Municipal Service District of Ponte Vedra Beach, Seat 4: John Cellucci
- Municipal Service District of Ponte Vedra Beach, Seat 6: David Joseph Burch
- State Attorney, 7th Judicial Circuit: R.J. Larizza, Republican
- Public Defender, 7th Judicial Circuit: Matthew Metz, Republican
- County Judge, Group 1: Alexander R. Christine Jr.
- County Judge, Group 3: Lauren Blocker

The general election will be held on Nov. 5. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Early voting will be held from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Oct. 21 through Nov. 2.

# Briefs

Continued from 2

## Explore the beach at GTM Research Reserve

Join others at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM) for a guided exploration hike 9-11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 7. Learn about the Guana peninsula’s natural biodiversity, expansive cultural history, vital estuarine resources and current

efforts to protect these resources.

Meet at GTM Research Reserve Trailhead Pavilion west of the Guana Dam, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Wear comfortable closed-toe shoes. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended. The event is free but online registration and a \$3 fee for parking are required. To register, go to [gtmnerr.org/visit/events](http://gtmnerr.org/visit/events).

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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Homeowner and volunteer share a hug.



Contributed photos

# Habitat

Continued from 10

added Everson. “You are all an important part of the Habitat St. Johns family, and we are lucky and blessed!”

Habitat St. Johns recognized its partners, including Baker Distributing for donating all of the air conditioning systems, St. Augustine Kitchen and Bath for donating all of the kitchen and bathroom countertops, Memorial Presbyterian Church, Knights of Columbus Council 7121 and Knights of Columbus St. John Paul II 16492 for donating the washing machines and dryers, the Board of Realtors

for donating the microwaves and dish-washers, and Lowe’s for providing good prices for almost everything else.

In addition, Whirlpool donated the refrigerators and ovens/stoves, Levolor Blinds donated the bedroom and bathroom blinds, and Schneider donated the electrical supplies for all Habitat for Humanity homes throughout the United States.

Volusia Woods is the beginning of a new strategic plan that will help accelerate the pace and building capacity of Habitat St. Johns from an average of six homes per year to 30 homes per year by 2028-29. Habitat St. Johns is replicating the model other Habitat Florida affiliates have successfully implemented to enable them to

## Sunrise at Volusia Woods.

build more than 30 homes each year to better meet the needs of the county’s workers and residents.

Volusia Woods is Habitat St. Johns’ fourth neighborhood in just over 30 years of operation and will consist of 36 homes when it is finished.

“I cannot emphasize enough the stability alone that comes from owning a Habitat St. Johns home,” said the owner of one of the homes in Habitat St. Johns’ Canopy Oaks neighborhood. “Homeownership provides a sense of security and is a basic need all people should have. The county is growing so quickly, and the housing market is out of control. Safe and affordable housing should be available for everyone, espe-

cially the regular working people in our community”.

Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County has been serving the county’s families and individuals for more than 30 years and is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity, International that originated in Americus Georgia in 1976.

Since 1992, Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County has built approximately 170 houses for families and individuals in need. To qualify for homeownership, applicants must demonstrate need, ability to pay, willingness to partner through 200 sweat-equity hours and have worked or lived in St. Johns County for at least one year.



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# Restaurant owners charged with harboring undocumented workers

U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg has announced that Hua Yao Ke, 38, and Ping Ping Zheng, 37, both of Jacksonville, have been charged by criminal complaint with harboring undocumented workers for commercial advantage and private financial gain. Each faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

According to the complaints, Ke owned and operated the Kamiya 86 Sushi and Thai restaurant located in Ponte Vedra Beach; Zheng owned and operated the Kamiya 86 Asian Bistro and Sushi Bar located in Jacksonville Beach. At the restaurants, Zheng and Ke employed workers who were unlawfully present in the United States and who were not legally authorized to work in the United States, according to the complaints. Contrary to federal law, they did not require the workers to pro-

vide documents to establish that they could legally work in the United States, the U.S. Attorney's Office alleged.

According to the complaints, Ke and Zheng also each owned a residence at which they provided rent-free housing to the undocumented workers and provided the workers with free transportation between the houses and the restaurants. The complaints allege that they paid the workers in cash and did not withhold taxes and other payments from the workers' wages.

A complaint is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed one or more violations of federal criminal law, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations and the Border Patrol, with assistance from the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and the Jacksonville Beach Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Arnold B. Corsmeier.

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# Betty Griffin Center thanks 'ambassadors'

More than 50 area businesses became "ambassadors" for Betty Griffin Center over the last year, providing in-kind and monetary donations to the nonprofit agency that provides emergency shelter and other support services for survivors of domestic and sexual assault in St. Johns County.

"Our success in making the community safe for everyone depends on the support and sponsorships from local businesses and organizations that truly help us provide life-saving services to assault survivors," said Betty Griffin Center Development Director Kenlie Herring. "We just want to thank those individuals and businesses that made our ambassador program a success and hope more businesses will join their ranks as the program enters its second year."

Betty Griffin Center Ambassadors included Mastercraft Builder Group, KeHE Cares, Pearmid Properties LLC, Heidi and Bubba Jimmerson, Jacksonville Jaguars

Foundation, Atlantic Automotive, Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns County, Hardage Giddens, Herbie Wiles Insurance, iVenture Solutions, Main Event, Walmart Foundation, Volkswagen St. Augustine, VyStar Credit Union and many more.

"This generosity from the community directly helps us to provide a safe haven where survivors can find peace, healing and hope — and is also helping us build an educated community around domestic and sexual abuse, which are issues that affect all of us," Herring said.

Betty Griffin Center has many ambassador levels, beginning at the \$500 level. As an ambassador, people and companies are recognized at annual events and in the agency's marketing efforts and receive other benefits throughout the year.

To find out more about becoming a Betty Griffin Center Ambassador, contact Kenlie Herring at 904-808-8544, ext. 207, or by email at [kenlieh@bettygriffincenter.org](mailto:kenlieh@bettygriffincenter.org).

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# FOOTBALL PREVIEW 2024



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THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2024



Senior Drew Price takes over the starting reins at quarterback for the Sharks.



Senior Brian Case is hard to bring down with his physical running style.

# PONTE VEDRA SHARKS FOOTBALL PREVIEW

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra Sharks will have a new look at quarterback this season as senior Drew Price takes over for Ben Burk, who had been the starter for three years prior to graduation.

Although it will look different for fans as Burk had become a staple at the position, Price has been sitting behind him learning the system and is ready to take up the role.

Price is similar in stature to Burk and has the potential to hurt a defense with his arm and his legs, so the Sharks offense should not look too different, especially with fellow senior Brian Case at running back.

Case runs with a physical style and seems to only get stronger as the game wears on, running with the same authority on his 10th carry as he does on his 20th.

One of Price's early go-to targets has



been wide receiver Jack Berquist, who at 6-foot-3 and 195 pounds presents a combination of a large catch radius and speed.

Defense has been a staple for the Sharks in recent years and everything hints at that being the same again this season.

Any success they have will start up front with a defensive line that has disruptive playmakers throughout, including Ryker Kemp and Robbie Grieco coming off the edge and Martin Geary clogging up the middle as a 280-pound defensive

tackle.

Length and athleticism are what makes the defensive line so good and a constant for opposing offensive coordinators this will be figuring out the best way to consistently run the ball against this stifling front seven.

Part of the front seven includes the linebacking corps where junior Talan Babin takes over more of a leadership role at middle linebacker as he takes over for his brother Maddux Babin.

The secondary is the level of the defense where there are perhaps the most questions entering the year, after losing several seniors, including both starting safeties.

However, there is a lot of talent that has been waiting in the wings and will now have an opportunity to make their mark, such as junior safety Fionn Day, who will be roaming around in coverage along with senior J.M. Pawlick.



Photos by Anthony Richards  
Robbie Grieco (No. 48) and Martin Geary (No. 50) will be a pair of forces to reckon with along the defensive line for the Sharks this season.



Jack Berquist (No. 14) has been a favorite target of Drew Price's.



The Sharks' secondary is revamped for the 2024 season.



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## PONTE VEDRA SHARKS

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Aug. 30	7:00 pm	@ Bartram Trail
Sep. 6	7:00 pm	Baker County
Sep. 13	7:00 pm	Beachside
Sep. 19	7:00 pm	Menendez
Sep. 27	7:00 pm	@ Fleming Island
Oct. 11	7:00 pm	Middleburg
Oct. 18	7:00 pm	@ Orange Park
Oct. 24	7:00 pm	@ IMG Academy White
Nov. 1	7:00 pm	Creekside

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Senior Maddox Spencer leads a deep Nease receiving corps. The Charleston Southern commit is one of the top receivers in the area.



The Nease Panthers look to repeat as district champions.

Photos by Anthony Richards

# NEASE PANTHERS FOOTBALL PREVIEW

By Anthony Richards

The Nease Panthers defense looks ready for another successful season, especially with the return of defensive coordinator Robert Garth, after a stint at Arkansas State University.

The Panthers have a bevy of experience returning on defense and it starts with the linebacker corps, with senior Joe Miracle, junior Noah Hodge and junior Jacob Curry.

Miracle is back after missing a year due to injury and his time away has made him even more hungry for his senior season to begin, while Hodge and Curry have continued to develop within the Panthers' program and have gone from being the next wave of great Panther defenders to veteran leaders.

Senior safety Shemar McNair transferred to Nease and gives the Panthers another veteran to lean on in the secondary along with Elisha Luckett III, who had a breakout season a year ago when



it comes to interceptions and blocked kicks, and he looks to build off that as a senior.

Offensively, the Panthers are always fun to watch with head coach Collin Drafts calling the plays, and this year should be no different.

Nate Harry is the starting quarterback, which is a role he has been in before, having started several games last season.

That experience and familiarity with his receiving corps should pay dividends, especially with the depth of talent the Panthers have out wide.

It all starts with senior Maddox Spencer whose quickness makes him difficult to cover and a threat to turn a quick slant into a long touchdown in the blink of an eye.

Defenses will be aware of his ability and seek to limit his chances for a big play, but that just creates opportunities for the likes of Brayden Felder and Tyler Ghazanfari.

However, it is not just through the air where the Panthers can hurt opponents, but also on the ground with running back K.J. Perry back for his senior season.

Perry showed continued development with every game he appeared in last year and by the end of the year had gained the complete trust of his coaches and teammates in crucial game situations.

He will be running behind an offensive line that although having to replace a bevy of starters, has gelled together very quickly and will look to not miss a beat when it comes to winning the battles in the trenches.



Senior safety Shemar McNair makes his presence known in the Panthers' secondary.



K.J. Perry and Nate Harry's threat as runners add an extra dimension to the Panthers' offense.



Brayden Felder is a dynamic receiver.

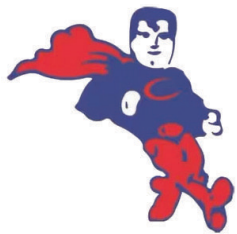
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## NEASE PANTHERS

### 2024 REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Aug. 30	7:00 pm	@ Creekside
Sep. 6	7:30 pm	Ridge Community
Sep. 13	7:00 pm	Fletcher
Sep. 20	7:00 pm	@ St. Augustine
Sep. 27	7:00 pm	Buchholz
Oct. 11	7:00 pm	Bartram Trail
Oct. 18	7:00 pm	Atlantic Coast
Oct. 25	7:00 pm	@ Toci Creek
Nov. 1	7:00 pm	@ Beachside

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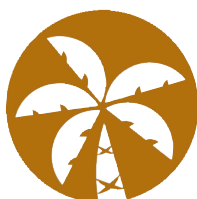
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Beachside High has entered its third season as a football program and the first as part of a district.



Junior quarterback Eddie Jordan surveys the field.

Photo by Anthony Richards

# BEACHSIDE BARRACUDAS FOOTBALL PREVIEW

By Anthony Richards

Beachside High has started its third year as a football program, but it will feel different than the first two because the Barracudas are now part of a district after spending its first two seasons as an independent.

In many ways, it is a new era for the Barracudas who are no longer just playing for pride but now have a shot at a



district title and a playoff berth.

Fortunately, for the Barracudas, winning has quickly become accustomed to in their brief history, with the football teams going 6-4 and 9-1, respectively.

Because of the success, the Barracudas find themselves in a unique position as a team that each opponent in District 3-5A will be fully aware of, especially with the high-flying offense they have been known for under head coach Pete Duffy.

The offense involves a heavy passing attack and a major reason for the execution of the offense is the great understanding that triggerman Eddie Jordan has for the scheme.

Jordan enters his junior year at quarterback and has a unique awareness of the field and the ability to make any throw, and over the years he has become the perfect fit for the offense.

**BEACHSIDE** continues on **Page 22**

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Source: Barron's (May 2024) Barron's Top 250 Private Wealth Management Teams ranking awarded in 2024. This ranking was determined based on an evaluation process conducted by Barron's for the period from Jan 2023-Dec 2023. Neither Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC nor its Financial Advisors or Private Wealth Advisors paid a fee to Barron's to obtain or use the ranking. This ranking is based on an algorithm that includes client retention, industry experience, review of compliance records, firm nominations and quantitative criteria, including assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Investment performance is not a criterion. Rankings are based on the assessment of Barron's, and this ranking may not be representative of any one client's experience. This ranking is not indicative of the Financial Advisor's future performance. Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC is not affiliated with Barron's. Barron's is a registered trademark of Dow Jones & Company, L.P. All rights reserved.



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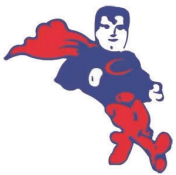
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**BEACHSIDE BARRACUDAS**

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DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Aug. 30	6:30 pm	@ Englewood
Sep. 6	7:00 pm	Menendez
Sep. 13	7:00 pm	@ Ponte Vedra
Sep. 20	7:00 pm	@ Bishop Kenny
Oct. 4	7:00 pm	@ Toco Creek
Oct. 10	7:00 pm	@ Fleming Island
Oct. 18	7:00 pm	Middleburg
Oct. 24	7:00 pm	Orange Park
Nov. 11	7:00 pm	Nease

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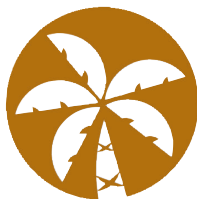


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The Barracudas will compete against several county teams this season.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Beachside defeated Orlando Christian Prep 42-16 to open the season.

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## Beachside

Continued from 20

It also helps that he has weapons surrounding him, including a trio of game-breaking receivers in senior Zach Duncan and juniors Drew Watson and Maddox Hunstad.

Helping protect Jordan are senior Alex Hunter and junior James Harding, who play a vital role as offensive tackles, especially the amount of times Jordan drops back to pass. Providing a clean pocket for Jordan to work in and proper time for plays to develop are their pri-

mary jobs and they are good at it.

Jack House is a versatile player for the Barracudas and has shown the ability to make plays both in the backfield as a running back and with his coverage skills in the secondary.

While House is patrolling in the secondary, senior Riley Hofrichter has a knack for creating turnovers from his defensive end position, including four fumble recoveries a year ago.

The Barracudas are a true wild card this season as they play fellow county teams Ponte Vedra, Nease, Toco Creek and Menendez, which should make for a fun season.

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Aug. 30	6:30 pm	Parker
Sep. 6	6:30 pm	@ Atlantic Coast
Sep. 13	7:00 pm	@ Nease
Sep. 20	6:30 pm	@ Sandalwood
Sep. 27	7:00 pm	@ Oakleaf
Oct. 4	7:00 pm	Flagler Palm Coast
Oct. 11	6:30 pm	Mandarin
Oct. 25	6:30 pm	First Coast
Oct. 31	6:30 pm	Trinity Christian Academy

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# ST. JOHNS COUNTY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

By Anthony Richards

St. Johns County is packed with quality teams this football season, which is even more the case than in recent years because Beachside High and Toco Creek High continue to grow their programs in years three and four, respectively.

This means that the county teams will be playing each other often throughout the season, which is something that just feels right and those local rivals are what high school football is all about at its roots.

The Toros have won their share of games with 11 victories in the last two seasons, but now the focus is on the next step and using those winning seasons as a springboard with playoff bids and deep runs once they get there.

Starting quarterback Ryan Killmer returns for his senior season after tossing 16 touchdowns for the Toros a year ago.

However, he will have a relatively new receiving corps that he will be looking to build connections with in the early going, but he will have junior Vincent Galella to hand the ball off to again.

The St. Augustine Yellow Jackets are looking for another deep run in the postseason after earning a trip to the Class 3S state championship but falling to Mainland.



Photo by Anthony Richards

Senior quarterback Locklan Hewlett orchestrates the St. Augustine offensive attack.

Following a 13-1 season is always difficult but the Yellow Jackets do have key contributors returning that know what it takes to make a title game run.

At the top of the returning playmakers list on offense is Locklan Hewlett, who is the team's signal caller and will have his main target to throw to in fellow

senior Carl Jenkins Jr.

But what makes the Yellow Jackets offense so dangerous is the balanced nature of its gameplan, which should not change too much this year with junior Trendell Anderson stepping into a starting role this season, after averaging 50 yards per game coming off the bench last season.

The Bartram Trail Bears and Creekside Knights are both looking for more consistency despite finishing with winning records last season.

The Bears have shown that they are capable of a winning season even when they experience turnover on the roster and that will be the task at hand this season, as they look to replace most of its offensive and defensive production.

For the Knights, it's about finding consistency despite going 6-5 last season, and it starts on the defensive side of the ball after they struggled and gave up 33 points per game.

The Menendez Falcons continue to build its program under head coach Anthony Rivers, and one area where they have done well is in district play, where they have had winning records each of the past two years.

Now they just must translate that to the rest of the schedule and a winning season is within reach.





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Sep. 6	7:00 pm	@ Palatka
Sep. 13	7:00 pm	Episcopal School of Jacksonville
Sep. 27	7:30 pm	@ Master's Academy
Oct. 4	7:00 pm	@ Impact Christian Academy
Oct. 11	7:00 pm	Christ's Church Academy
Oct. 18	7:00 pm	KIPP Bold City
Oct. 24	7:30 pm	University Christian
Nov. 1	7:00 pm	@ Bishop Kenny

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# JAGUARS FOOTBALL PREVIEW

By Anthony Richards

It has been an offseason full of looking back and looking forward for the Jacksonville Jaguars after going 1-5 down the stretch to end last season, which led to them missing the playoffs.

That left a sour taste in the mouths of everyone involved, from the players and coaches to the fans, and the best remedy is to start a new season and make up for it with wins and finishing the job this time around.

Since head coach Doug Pederson arrived in town, he along with general manager Trent Baalke have been instrumental in helping change the culture of the team and with it comes a change in expectations of the fanbase.

Winning and trips to the postseason have quickly become the expected norm, which means not meeting those expectations creates the emotions of shock and disappointment.

The moves made by the Jaguars through free agency this offseason was evident that they are aware of not meeting those expectations and are doing everything to fill the voids that may have been existent a year ago.

It starts with the receiving corps, which lost Calvin Ridley and Zay Jones,



Josh Hines-Allen looks to follow up his Pro Bowl season from a year ago.

but added Gabe Davis in free agency and drafted Brian Thomas Jr. out of Louisiana State University in the first round.

Davis and Thomas Jr. have looked the part during training camp as they have quickly looked fluid within the Jaguars' offensive system and although it may take some time before they are completely on the same page with quarterback Trevor Lawrence, the weapons on that side of the ball are plentiful, especially with Christian Kirk back from a late season injury and Parker Washington continuing his development in his second year.

The question remains on the offensive line, which is a veteran group, but one that has experienced their share of inju-



Photos by Anthony Richards

Trevor Lawrence has a bevy of weapons out wide to throw to this season.

ries of late.

If they can protect Lawrence and allow him the time to find the weapons out wide, it could be a big year both statistically and in the win column.

Defense was a major concern as last season wore on and it became an issue during the losing streak at the end of the year.

As a result, Ryan Nielsen was hired

as the team's defensive coordinator and the early reviews have been extremely positive during training camp and the preseason games, where the Jaguars have been flying to the ball and shown an increased physicality, especially against the run.

Josh Hines-Allen and Travon Walker return as arguably the league's best defensive end duo.

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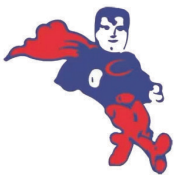
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DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Aug. 30	7:00 pm	Ponte Vedra
Sep. 6	7:30 pm	@ Ware County
Sep. 13	7:00 pm	@ Creekside
Sep. 20	7:00 pm	@ Orange Park
Sep. 27	7:00 pm	@ Toco Creek
Oct. 11	7:00 pm	@ Nease
Oct. 18	7:00 pm	St. Augustine
Oct. 25	7:00 pm	Buchholz
Nov. 1	7:00 pm	Ribault

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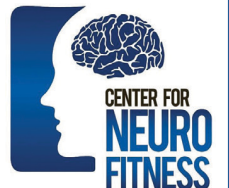
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Nate Harry threw three touchdown passes to help lead the Panthers.



Maddox Spencer of Nease stiff-arms a defender on a kickoff return.

Photos by Anthony Richards

# PANTHERS MAKE IT BACK-TO-BACK OVER RIVAL SHARKS

**By Anthony Richards**

The Nease Panthers opened the season with a memorable victory as they defeated the rival Ponte Vedra Sharks 24-7 on Aug. 23.

It was the second straight win for the Panthers (1-0) over their biggest rival and third in the past four years, which

for seniors like middle linebacker Joe Miracle is a record they will always cherish.

“I love it,” Miracle said. “Best feeling in the world.”

Miracle had a key play in the game as he dove to pick off a pass intended for the running back out of the backfield, which halted a Sharks’ (0-1) drive just

shy of the red zone early in the fourth quarter to help preserve the victory.

According to head coach Colin Drafts, it was one of the best weeks of practice he has experienced in his years coaching, and the results backed that up.

“All week we were locked in and then this morning, we had the best morning lift we’ve ever had to get prepared for

this game tonight,” Miracle said.

It was a complete game all around by the Panthers who were able to control the lines of scrimmage on both sides of the ball and it led to plenty of success.

The offensive line did an excellent job of protecting senior quarterback Nate

**PANTHERS** continues on **Page 32**

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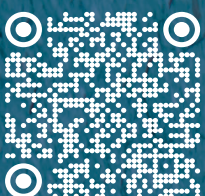
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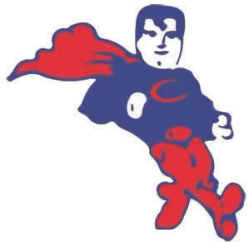
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DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Aug. 30	7:00 pm	Nease
Sep. 6	7:00 pm	@ Spruce Creek
Sep. 13	7:00 pm	Bartram Trail
Sep. 19	7:00 pm	Winter Park
Sep. 27	7:00 pm	Sandalwood
Oct. 4	7:00 pm	@ Fleming Island
Oct. 11	6:30 pm	@ Atlantic Coast
Oct. 18	7:00 pm	Raines
Nov. 1	7:00 pm	@ Ponte Vedra

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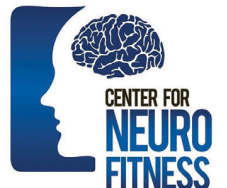
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# BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE

Ponte Vedra The Nease Panthers started the football season with a 24-7 win over the rival Ponte Vedra Sharks. The following are photos from the week one matchup.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Richard O'Connor's

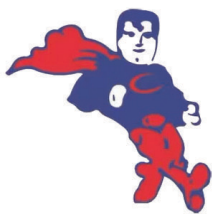
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DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Aug. 31	3:30 pm	Miami
Sep. 7	7:00 pm	Samford
Sep. 14	3:30 pm	Texas A&M
Sep. 21	12:00 pm	@ Mississippi State
Oct. 5	TBA	UCF
Oct. 12	TBA	@ Tennessee
Oct. 19	TBA	Kentucky
Nov. 2	3:30 pm	vs. Georgia (Jacksonville, FL)
Nov. 9	12:00 pm	@ Texas
Nov. 16	TBA	LSU
Nov. 23	12:00 pm	Ole Miss
Nov. 30	TBA	@ Florida State

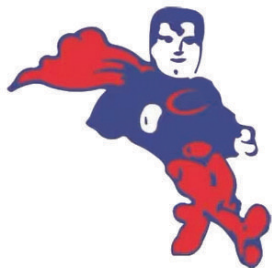


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### 2024 REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Sep. 9	1:00 pm	@ Miami Dolphins
Sep. 15	1:00 pm	Cleveland Browns
Sep. 23	7:30 pm	@ Buffalo Bills
Sep. 29	1:00 pm	@ Houston Texans
Oct. 6	1:00 pm	Indianapolis Colts
Oct. 13	9:30 am	@ Chicago Bears
Oct. 20	9:30 am	New England Patriots
Oct. 27	1:00 pm	Green Bay Packers
Nov. 3	8:20 pm	@ Philadelphia Eagles
Nov. 10	1:00 pm	Minnesota Vikings
Nov. 17	1:00 pm	@ Detroit Lions
Dec. 1	1:00 pm	Houston Texans
Dec. 8	1:00 pm	@ Tennessee Titans
Dec. 15	1:00 pm	New York Jets
Dec. 22	4:25 pm	@ Las Vegas Raiders
Dec. 29	1:00 pm	Tennessee Titans
TBD	TBD	@ Indianapolis Colts

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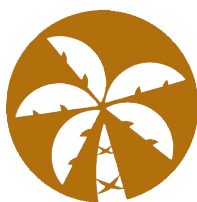
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Nate Harry and the Panthers' offense looks to continue the offensive production against Creekside.

## Week 2

Continued from 1

Bartram Trail trailed 12-2 in the third quarter at home against Sumner, but wound up winning 34-12, thanks to a furious late comeback.

The Bears are a traditional winning program, but appeared to figure things out in the second half of their season opener and could carry over the momentum into the next contest against the Sharks.

One of the things the Sharks have going for them is a stellar defense, especially



Photos by Anthony Richards

### The Sharks will look to bounce back in week two against Bartram Trail on the road.

along the defensive front that could cause havoc at any moment, and that will be crucial in slowing down the Bears' attack.

The Beachside Barracudas opened the season with a blowout 42-16 win over Orlando Christian Prep and will also go on the road as they travel to Duval County to face the Englewood Rams.

Eddie Jordan and the offense looked sharp out of the gate with a five-touchdown performance and a pair of wide receivers in Drew Watson and Maddox Hunstad having 100-plus-yard nights.

The Barracudas are hoping that offensive production travels well in their first road game of the young season.

## Panthers

Continued from 28

Harry, who threw three touchdowns on the night, including a pair to Brayden Felder and another to Maddox Spencer.

Four different receivers caught passes

on the night for the Panthers as Harry spread the ball around to his playmakers, as the Panthers jumped out to a 21-7 halftime lead.

Tyler Ghazanfari connected on a field goal in the third quarter to increase the lead, but the Panthers were able to manage the game from there and work on

running the clock down the stretch.

Defensively, the Panthers were flying to the ball, as they were seemingly filling up every running lane that appeared to be there for Sharks' star running back Brian Case.

"We played together tonight, and I feel like we're just a very disciplined team,"

Miracle said.

The big plays were hard to come by for the Sharks, as a result with Case scoring their lone touchdown in the first quarter from a yard out after quarterback Drew Price broke free into the secondary for a 40-plus yard run and was pushed out at the goal line.



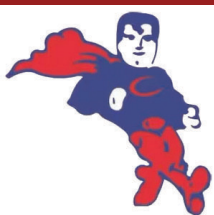
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DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Sep. 2	7:30 pm	Boston College
Sep. 14	12:00 pm	Memphis
Sep. 21	TBA	California
Sep. 28	TBA	@ Southern Methodist University
Oct. 5	TBA	Clemson
Oct. 18	7:00 pm	Duke
Oct. 26	TBA	@ Miami
Nov. 2	TBA	North Carolina
Nov. 9	7:30 pm	@ Notre Dame
Nov. 23	TBA	Charleston Southern
Nov. 30	TBA	Florida





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**GEORGIA BULLDOGS**

**2024 REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE**

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT/LOCATION
Aug. 31	12:00 pm	Clemson (Atlanta, GA)
Sep. 7	2:00 pm	Tennessee Tech
Sep. 14	7:30 pm	@ Kentucky
Sep. 28	7:30 pm	@ Alabama
Oct. 5	TBA	Auburn
Oct. 12	TBA	Mississippi State
Oct. 19	TBA	@ Texas
Nov. 2	3:30 pm	Florida (Jacksonville, FL)
Nov. 9	TBA	@ Ole Miss
Nov. 16	TBA	Tennessee
Nov. 23	12:45 pm	UMass
Nov. 29	7:30 pm	Georgia Tech

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Photos by Kara Pound

Local residents gather to protest proposals by the state DEP to build a lodge, pickleball courts and a disc golf course within Anastasia State Park.

# DEP meeting for Anastasia Park changes postponed

By Shaun Ryan

A plan by the state Department of Environmental Protection to “enhance public access, recreation and lodging at state parks” has drawn opposition statewide, including in St. Johns County. Sunday, hundreds of local residents lined State Road A1A at the entrance to Anastasia State Park to protest proposals concerning the park.

In support of the state’s “Great Outdoors Initiative,” the DEP wants to develop a park lodge with a capacity of up to 350 rooms, four pickleball courts and a disc golf course within the park, mostly in areas now in an undeveloped, natural state.

The DEP had scheduled public meetings for Tuesday, Aug. 27, at eight sites across the state, each focused on a different park and the specific developments planned there. Locally, the meeting regarding Anastasia State Park was to have been held at First Coast Technical College.

But Friday, Aug. 23, the DEP posted the following message on X:

“Due to the overwhelming interest with the 2024-25 Great Outdoors Initiative, DEP is looking for new venues to accommodate the public. We want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate. Public input is vital to DEP decision-making. To gather feedback on your favorite state parks, we’ve launched a dedicated webpage for more suggestions. ... New meeting dates will be announced soon, with meetings expected the week of Sept. 2, 2024.”

Sunday, St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners Chair Sarah Arnold issued the following statement:

“The State of Florida has not contacted



St. Johns County with any details of this project. Parks are for people and not about projects for profit. Our Board of County Commissioners has been consistent in our views on natural resource conservation and protection. This proposed project is absolutely contrary to our county board's vision and priorities. As a board, we will seriously address this proposed project with all available recourse. Anastasia State Park is a state-owned recreation area inside the city limits of the City of St. Augustine. It may involve a review by its staff and its City Commission."

The City of St. Augustine released the following statement on its Facebook page:

“The city has not been contacted by the State of Florida with any details of this project. The project will require a review by city staff for compliance with the city’s Comprehensive Plan and various sections of the Municipal Code



of Ordinances. If the State of Florida is required to obtain approval for aspects of this project by the city’s Planning and Zoning Board, City Commission, or any other city board, then the State of Florida will apply to the necessary board to obtain these permits. The City of St. Augustine respects a fair and transparent process and does not pre-judge this development proposal before the state has the opportunity to present this project to the community during the defined public hearing process. To do so may jeopardize the integrity of the process and result in unintended consequences. We ask for the patience of the community while we discover exactly what the State of Florida is proposing and how that project will move through the local review process.”

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce added its voice to the issue via Facebook:

“Our Chamber Board of Directors have voted to officially oppose the proposed



development by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection at Anastasia State Park.”

Here’s a look at the plan as defined by the DEP on its website:

**Anastasia Lodge:** The objective is to expand overnight accommodations beyond traditional camping. The lodge would be located east of the campground and south of the beach access parking area.

**Recreational Facilities:** The four pickleball courts and a disc golf course would be located east of the main park drive adjacent to the Salt Run Use Area. Existing parking would serve visitors, though parking may be expanded if necessary. An existing restroom could be upgraded or expanded as necessary.

To read more about the DEP’s proposals, click on the “Document” link at [floridadep.gov/parks/parks-office-park-planning/documents/anastasia-state-park-draft-ump-amendment-2024](http://floridadep.gov/parks/parks-office-park-planning/documents/anastasia-state-park-draft-ump-amendment-2024).

# Business Weekly

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2024 PAGE 36

[www.PonteVedraRecorder.com](https://www.PonteVedraRecorder.com)

## Sawgrass Pet Resort celebrates expansion with dual ribbon cuttings

By Anthony Richards

Some major additions have taken place at Sawgrass Pet Resort, so big that two ribbon cuttings were needed in the same day.

They both happened as part of the same open house ceremony on Aug. 18 that celebrated Sawgrass Pet Resort's new boarding area and trail, as well as the grand opening of Sunrise Vet at Sawgrass.

An additional 2,000 square feet was added to the Sawgrass Pet Resort facility, which will be used as pet boarding space. Artificial turf was also laid down as part of the resort's backyard and new fencing was placed around.

According to Sawgrass Pet Resort owner Kate Wagner, the renovations have been some time coming and she credited everyone that have helped make it happen, especially facilities manager Daniel O'Connell.

"He was at my first open house and now he's at this one," Wagner said.

She opened Sawgrass Pet Resort in March of 2020 and since then has been thinking of ways in which they can better serve the community.

The renovations required some late nights, but seeing the finished product and the



Photo courtesy of Chris Gillyard Photography

Sawgrass Pet Resort held an open house ceremony and ribbon cutting for its new boarding area and trail.

EXPANSION continues on Page 57



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Photo courtesy of St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

Sunrise Vet also held a ribbon cutting during the open house celebration on Aug. 18.

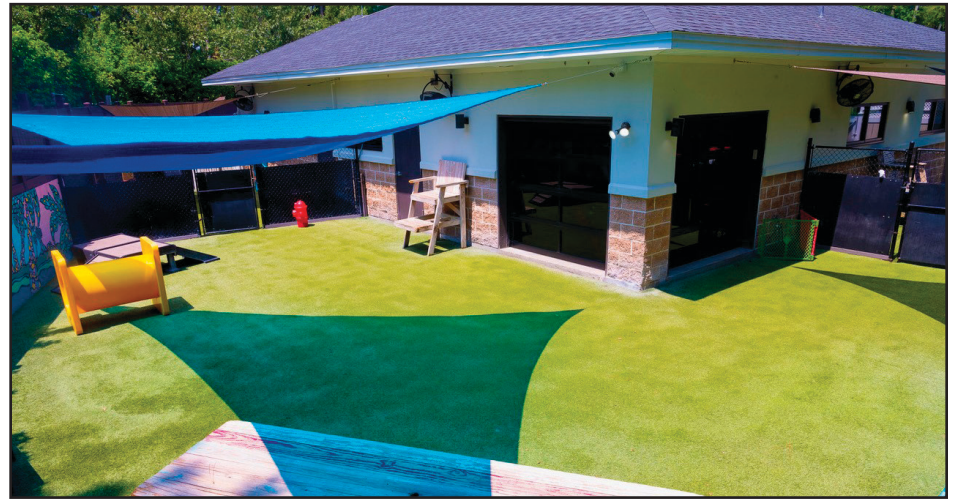


Photo courtesy of Chris Gillyard Photography

Part of the renovations included a new boarding area with artificial turf where dogs can play.

## Expansion

Continued from 36

amount of people who showed up to take part in the grand reveal assured Wagner once again that it was all worth it.

“Sometimes when I pulled up or would be leaving at 1:30 a.m. I would just sit there for a while and just take in its beauty,” Wagner said.

The renovations mean even more to Wagner because it was one of her dogs that helped her continue even through the long hours.

“My inspiration for it was that we needed a dog daycare, and we needed it to be one that we trusted,” Wagner said.

“You’re not going to leave your dogs with someone that you don’t trust.”

Her dog Bella passed away on July 10 and there is a memorial for her at the facility.

“It means a lot, because our dogs were up there with us a lot during all of this,” Wagner said. After all, we did it for dogs like Bella and families like ours.”

Throughout the process and at the ceremony, Wagner continued to be blown away by the support from the community and the curiosity surrounding the facility and how it was coming along.

“I know they weren’t just coming because of me but for my dedicated team that I have working here,” Wagner said. “It’s a palpable happiness that we’ve



Photo courtesy of Chris Gillyard Photography

A walking trail was created behind Sawgrass Pet Resort.

created that you can feel when you walk in. The open house just continued on that feeling.”

Now that the ceremony has wrapped up and the renovations are in full use, Wagner is already thinking about the next

improvements to be made.

“There’s always something we’re adding or implementing,” Wagner said. “I’ve also always seen us as growing in a more community sense.”

Part of that growth is a possible Trunk or Treat event that Wagner is currently attempting to plan to take place in the resort’s parking lot with money raised going to Safe Pet Rescue.

Although Sunrise Vet is a tenant of Sawgrass Pet Resort, Wagner said it seems like a perfect fit and that owner Dr. Melissa Johnson shares the same passion for animals as she does.

“I like genuine people, and I try to surround myself with them, so I thought she would be a great addition,” Wagner said.

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# Benchmarks of Success

## A look at major career developments in the area

### Dr. Patrick Harris joins UF Health St. Johns

Patrick J. Harris, D.O., a board-certified family medicine physician, has joined UF Health St. Johns and is now caring for patients at UF Health Primary Care — Treaty Oaks. Harris' clinical expertise spans the full scope of primary care with special emphasis on improving patient health using osteopathic medicine.

Harris' primary care practice provides management and treatment of the full range of health conditions. He is an expert in skin surgeries. He also provides care for cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension, high cholesterol and heart arrhythmias; sports medicine and non-surgical musculoskeletal disorders; respiratory infections, flu and colds; and geriatric medicine to care for the unique medical, mental and psychosocial needs of senior patients.

As an osteopathic physician, Harris focuses on treating the whole person. He offers osteopathic manipulation treatment, known as OMT, to address a wide variety of conditions such as arthritis and headaches, as well as musculoskeletal injuries and aches that include lower back, neck and joint pain.

Harris earned his medical degree in osteopathic medicine from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale

and completed his internship and residency in family practice at Columbus Regional Medical Center in Columbus, Georgia. He is a member of the American Osteopathic Association and the American Academy of Family Practice.



Susan Addison

### Addison joins real estate company's local office

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty has announced the addition of Susan Addison to its team of real estate professionals. With a dynamic career spanning multiple major corporate environments and successful start-ups, Addison brings a wealth of experience in sales, marketing and strategic leadership to her new role.

Addison is known for her exceptional skills in building and enhancing organizational public image, driving product/service lines and fostering top-producing relationships with global customers and business partners. Her extensive background includes a proven track record in developing and executing business strategies that elevate product awareness, expand market share and enhance company profitability.

Addison can be reached at Susan.Addison@FloridaNetworkRealty.com or 706-662-5762 SAddison.FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

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cated at 333 Village Main St., Suite 670, Ponte Vedra Beach. Broker/Manager Erin Spalding can be reached at 904-285-1800, Erin.Spalding@FloridaNetworkRealty.com and floridanetworkrealtycareers.com.



Kristi Collins

### Collins joins Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa

Kristi Collins has joined Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa as the new membership director for Cabana Beach Club. She will oversee membership for the resort's private club located on Ponte Vedra Beach.

Collins brings a diverse background to the role, including nearly 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry. Her experience includes Topgolf, where she specialized in membership and events, and as membership director of Queens Harbour Yacht and Country Club, and Oak Bridge Tennis Club (now known as The Yards).

For more information about Cabana Beach Club memberships or to schedule a tour, visit [SawgrassMarriottBeachClub.com/Memberships](http://SawgrassMarriottBeachClub.com/Memberships).

### Weatherby-Hunter named First Coast YMCA chief development officer

As part of its ongoing efforts to support the evolving needs within the five-county region of Northeast Florida, the First Coast YMCA has named Jackson-



Courtney Weatherby-Hunter

ville-native Courtney Weatherby-Hunter as its new chief development officer. Weatherby-Hunter, who will begin her new role on Oct. 14, will lead fundraising and development initiatives that expand the First Coast YMCA's reach and support its three areas of impact of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

A graduate of the University of North Florida, Weatherby-Hunter has spent nearly two decades in development in Northeast Florida. Most recently, she served as the senior director of fund development for the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. She also helped guide fundraising efforts for the Children's Home Society of Florida, We Care Jacksonville and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida.

Among the key projects that Weatherby-Hunter will oversee in her new role include fundraising campaigns for the construction of the Peyton Family YMCA in the Durbin Park community, as well as continued upgrades to the Winston Family YMCA in Riverside, the Brown Family YMCA in Ponte Vedra Beach, the McArthur Family YMCA in Fernandina Beach and a permanent footprint in the West Augustine neighborhood of St. Augustine.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

# The Plantation announces grand reopening of Beach House

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach ("The Plantation"), has announced the grand reopening of its Beach House after the completion of a comprehensive renovation project. This extensive transformation is the final phase of a three-part enhancement initiative designed to elevate the community's amenities and provide an unparalleled experience for its members.

The centerpiece of the Beach House renovation is the expanded kitchen facilities, which now house a complete Floribbean-style restaurant. This new culinary destination offers a fusion of flavors inspired by Floridian and Caribbean cuisine, promising a unique and vibrant dining experience for members.

In addition to the restaurant, the renovation includes the construction of the new Surfside building. This facility features a casual food shack that includes bar offerings, changing rooms and showers, providing members with enhanced convenience and comfort. The junior

Olympic size pool has undergone a full renovation, and the pool area has also been significantly upgraded with new pool and deck furniture, offering a refreshed and inviting atmosphere for relaxation while taking in the views of the Atlantic Ocean.

These improvements mark the culmination of a broader renovation strategy at The Plantation, which also included a complete remodel of the clubhouse and an expansion of the pickleball courts. With these enhancements, The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach continues to set the standard for luxury living and recreational excellence in the region.

"We are thrilled to unveil the newly renovated Beach House to our members," said Roger Amidon, general manager/chief operating officer. "This project reflects our commitment to continually enhancing the amenities and experiences we offer, ensuring that The Plantation remains a premier club for our members."



The junior Olympic size pool at The Plantation's newly renovated Beach House.

Contributed photo

GUEST COLUMN

# Dividend-paying stocks: pros and cons

Contributed photo

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

A dividend is a portion of a company’s profit that’s paid to shareholders. That means dividend-paying stocks may provide a source of income. But they can also carry some degree of risk.

So, what do investors need to consider when it comes to dividend-paying stocks? In this Q&A, Austin Pickle, senior wealth investment solutions analyst with Wells Fargo Investment Institute, provides important information for investors to keep in mind.

## 1. What are the potential benefits of dividend-paying stocks?

“One of the big benefits is that these stocks may provide a more reliable income stream compared to some other investment options,” Pickle says.

Companies tend to issue dividends on a routine basis, such as quarterly or semi-annually, which may create a dependable income stream. Another benefit? The stocks can yield some favorable tax treatment.

“It’s going to depend on your tax situation,” Pickle says, “but in general, you may have a relatively lower tax rate for dividends compared to income gained by selling investments.” As long as the dividend-paying stock meets IRS requirements for a qualified dividend, the dividend is taxed at the lower long-term capital gains tax rate instead of being taxed as regular capital gains income. “So an investor could receive income from a dividend-paying stock without selling the stock and have



a lower tax bill compared to that of a non-dividend-paying stock, which must be sold to receive income,” he says.

## 2. Who should include dividend-paying stocks in their portfolio?

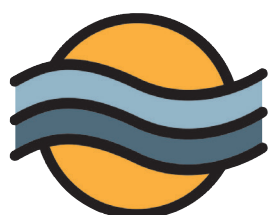
Many types of investors have the potential to benefit from dividend-paying stocks. “But these stocks may be more valuable for investors who are a bit older — maybe those in retirement or close to retirement who really value a more reliable income stream,” Pickle says. “I think they’re typically beneficial from a diversifica-

tion perspective, especially when interest rates are low. Dividend-paying stocks tend to have an inverse relationship with interest rates: When interest rates go down, you may see some of these dividend-paying stocks perform better.”

## 3. What are the risks associated with dividend-paying stocks?

“Firms can reduce or cancel their dividends — especially during times of economic uncertainty and times

STOCKS continues on Page 40



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# Stocks

Continued from 40

of crisis,” says Pickle. “And there’s still the risk that dividends could be cut periodically, even without the trigger of a crisis event. And if tax rates change, it could mean you’d pay more, as well.”

## Explore your options with professional advisers

Pickle stresses that investors should discuss the pros and cons of dividend-paying stocks with a financial adviser to help make sure they fill a need within an individual investment portfolio and make sense for a specific financial situation.

“You should also talk to your CPA or tax professional to make sure that you understand what the tax consequences are for your particular situation,” he advises.

**Equity securities are subject to market risk, which means their value may fluctuate in response to general economic and market conditions, the prospects of individual companies, and industry sectors. Investments in equity securities are generally more volatile than other types of securities. There is no guarantee**

**that dividend-paying stocks will return more than the overall stock market. Dividends are not guaranteed and are subject to change or elimination.**

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

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# Before Hours at Ascension

Ascension St. Vincent’s Jacksonville hosted a Chamber Before Hours gathering on August 7 for members and friends at the St. Johns County hospital. Guests heard from Mary Anne Thomas, director of foundation development, and Cory Darling, president of Ascension St. Vincent’s St. Johns County. They shared information about the foundation and how it supports the hospital’s community outreach ministries that provide care for impoverished and underinsured residents of Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia. Learn more about Ascension St. Vincent’s at <https://bit.ly/3LVP4Rw>.

Photo courtesy of St. John’s County Chamber of Commerce



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# B Social Gift & Clothing Boutique opens second location

## For The Recorder

B Social Gift & Clothing Boutique, owned by Brittney Patty, has announced the opening of its second location in St. Augustine. This expansion comes as a result of the boutique's continued success and growing customer demand for its unique and hand-picked items.

With more than 15 years of experience in the boutique industry, Patty has established herself as a distinguished entrepreneur with a passion for curating one-of-a-kind pieces. Known for her keen eye for fashion trends and dedication to providing exceptional customer service, Patty has built a loyal customer base that extends beyond the local community.

B Social Gift & Clothing Boutique sets itself apart by offering a carefully curated selection of clothing, accessories and gifts from all around the United States. Patty travels across the country to handpick each item, ensuring that customers have access to exclusive and distinctive pieces that can be found under one roof. Some of the brands include enewton, Capri Blue, Nora Fleming, Spanx, Z Supply, Spartina, Happy Everything, Mud Pie, Smith & Quinn, BuddyLove, Karlie, THML and many more.

Through strategic use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, B Social has fostered a strong online presence and garnered a dedicated following. Patty uses these platforms to showcase new arrivals, engage with customers and create a sense of community around the boutique. The power of social media, combined with word-of-mouth recommendations, has been instrumental in driving traffic and attracting new customers to B Social.



Contributed photos

**The second B Social Gift & Clothing Boutique is located at 389 Paseo Reyes Drive, No. 203, St. Augustine.**

The new location at 389 Paseo Reyes Drive, No. 203, St. Augustine opened its doors on Monday, Aug. 26, just in time for football season and fall must-haves. Located in Palencia, the boutique will offer locals and tourists alike an opportunity to explore a unique shopping experience. With its charming atmosphere, personalized service and carefully curated selection, B Social Gift & Clothing Boutique aims to become a must-visit destination for fashion enthusiasts and gift seekers.

"We are excited to expand and bring the B Social experience to more people," said Patty. "Our goal is to



**The shelves at B Social Gift & Clothing Boutique are filled with carefully curated products.**

provide our customers with a shopping experience that is not only enjoyable but also allows them to discover curated looks for the busy mom on the go."

For more information about B Social Gift & Clothing Boutique, go to [shopsocial.com](http://shopsocial.com).




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## Students perform at Harvard, win second place in competition

### For The Recorder

The Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) String Orchestra Quartet was awarded second prize in the ensemble category at the Crescendo International Music Competition, a youth music nonprofit that aims to inspire individuals to pursue their passion for music. As prize winners, the students were invited to perform at Harvard University’s John Knowles Paine Concert Hall.

Students Jovan (11th grade), Deiloy (11th grade), N’Diyah (9th grade), and Leo (11th grade), all from the Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, are members of the CAP String Orchestra. This is an ensemble of current and former CAP string students who collaborate, perform and further their understanding of classical and contemporary music.

The quartet performed “Eight Organ Preludes and Fugues arranged for String Quartet by J.S. Bach” on May 18. This is the third consecutive year CAP students have performed at the internationally renowned competition.

“Performing at Harvard was a dream come true,” said N’Diyah. “To be able to visit and play at such a prestigious institution has been a highlight of my musical journey. I’m so humbled by the opportunity and look forward to future endeavors.”

The youth music competition has been held annually since 2007. There are two rounds of competitions — auditions and



Contributed photo

The students perform at the Crescendo International Music Competition.

winners’ recitals. Auditions were held both by video submission and in person throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia in November and December of 2023.

The competitions allow performers to maximize their potential and serve as a professional setting for aspiring musicians to showcase their talents at prestigious concert halls worldwide. Performers are also presented with an invaluable opportunity to interact with other musicians and learn essential life lessons, such

as having the confidence to get back up after stumbling.

“Providing young artists with experiences like these allows for them to envision a career path forward in the arts,” said CAP President and CEO Rev. Kimberly L. Hyatt. “We are grateful to be able to support students in pursuing their dreams as artists through experiences that spark inspiration and foster dedication to their chosen art form.”

Two students from the quartet performed at festivals this summer. Deiloy

attended the Bendada Artist Academy (BMF) and music festival in Bendada, Portugal. Students who attend the BMF Artist Academy have the opportunity to study with acclaimed faculty, engage in lectures and masterclasses with professional artists and perform in collaboration with chamber music ensembles.

Jovan attended the Sewanee Summer Music Festival, a four-week intensive program that offers two high level orchestral experiences — the Cumberland Orchestra and the Sewanee Symphony. Jovan participated in the Cumberland Orchestra, a pre-professional symphony orchestra for advanced pre-college and college students. In addition to chamber music groups, Jovan performed high level repertoire and worked with numerous teaching artists throughout his time at Sewanee.

“Going to Bendada meant taking another step forward on my life’s journey,” said Deiloy. “Portugal was an unforgettable experience. While I enjoyed taking in the sights and experiencing a different culture, I was most excited to hone my craft and take my violin playing to the next level. Participating in CAP string programs since elementary school has provided significant opportunities such as this one, allowing me to collaborate with others and develop my craft.”

To learn more about CAP and how it serves students across Northeast Florida, go to capkids.org.



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Photos by Anthony Richards



# Alhambra captures roller coaster of emotions in 'Gypsy'

By Anthony Richards

Another American Broadway classic is currently gracing the stage at Alhambra Theatre & Dining in Jacksonville.

This time it is "Gypsy: A Musical Fable," which opened at the Alhambra on Aug. 22 and will be showcased through Sept. 18 and then again from Sept. 24 to 29.

The musical is one that follows the tale of a mother who pushes her two daughters into the world of show business, one of which was Gypsy Rose Lee, a famous burlesque performer who released her memoir in 1957 and it was adapted into the musical two years later.

The play does an effective job of taking the audience through the roller coaster of emotion that is felt throughout, with everything from joy and excitement to sadness and heartbreak.

A combination of performer portrayal and stage lighting really helped capture the mood from scene to scene and it was excellently conveyed to the audience.

The family drama portrayed during the production is something that proved to be very relatable, as even if families are not confronted with the same circumstances, it brought about the family drama that many deal with to some degree.

Not only did the show focus on family on stage, but it also proved to be family-centered behind the scenes as well, as Tod Booth is the executive producer and director, and his wife Lisa Valdini Booth played the leading role of Mama Rose in the show.

It is the third time she has played the character, having done so in previous adaptations of "Gypsy," so it was something she was quite comfortable with, and her performance reflected that.

Logen Cheatham played "Louise" and Torie D'Alessandro played "June," and both seemed to work well with Booth, as their performances seemed to feed off



each other as a true mother and daughter relationship would.

It was D'Alessandro's first time performing at Alhambra, while Cheatham is performing her third show at the theater, as well as recently filming a Hallmark movie that is scheduled to air this winter.

One of the final leading roles was held by Pete Clapsis, who plays Herbie, the family's agent.

Clapsis has become a regular at Alhambra with several performances of late since he did his first show in 2015.

The Alhambra's food menu in conjunc-

tion with the show is unique, just like the performance itself, in that it features an Asian theme for both the first and second course, as the main course includes options, such as half-roasted teriyaki chicken, shrimp and scallop Lo Mein and sweet and sour pork rack.



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# Local artist exhibits abstract paintings



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Artist Siggy Buckley is conducting her first exhibit at the Ponte Vedra Branch Library.

By Shaun Ryan

Experimental artist Siggy Buckley is, in both her life and her art, anything but conventional.

Viewing her exhibit at the Ponte Vedra Branch Library, one is surprised by the variety. The visitor is immediately met with a very abstract piece, 36-by-36-inch “Side by Side,” which evokes a natural landscape, ground and sky, while rendering the elements with unexpected geometry and placement. Then, one encounters her 11-by-14-inch “Dream of Future Self,” a ghostly image of a mature woman contained within a minimalist structure. Nearby, hangs a more traditional representation, “Cherry Blossoms.”

An artist who works exclusively in

acrylics — she previously tried and dispensed with watercolors and charcoal — her entire approach is unique, perhaps arising from her many diverse experiences.

New to painting — she started just a year and a half ago — she defies the conventions of the lifelong artist. She claims she cannot sketch, enjoys recreating established masterpieces and likes paintings that look good in her living room.

Buckley grew up in Germany, where she was a teacher, married with two children. Life changed radically when her then-husband, an accountant, decided that the family should move to Ireland and become organic farmers. A city girl, she gave it a try, but it wasn’t for her.

She tried other things: teaching German at the University of Limerick, working as a matchmaker in Dublin until the coming of internet dating sites rendered her services redundant and getting involved with wine importing.

But she still hadn’t found what she was looking for, as one Irish band might have put it.

“I wanted to go to a country that was a bit warmer, had a better climate than Ireland,” she said.

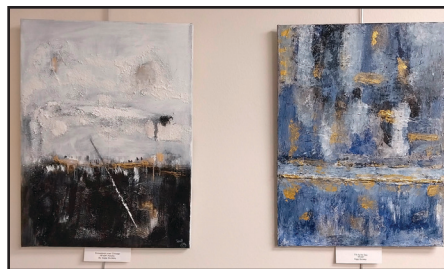
A friend suggested Orlando. Her grown children having moved back to Germany, there was little reason not to make the move and she came to Florida in 2003, purchasing a house to rent out to Walt Disney World vacationers.

Within a week of her arrival, she met the man who would, in 2005, become her husband.

“We knew we were made for each other,” she said.

The couple moved to Ponte Vedra Beach.

Learning about the diary she’d kept during her time in Ireland, her husband



Left: “Snowstorm over Chicago,” 18-by-24, acrylic. Right: “City by the Sea,” 18-by-24 inches, acrylic



Recorder photos

Side by Side,” 36-by-36 inches, acrylic



“Landscape in Blue & Gold,” 18-by-24 inches, acrylic



“Waves,” 18-by-24 inches, acrylic

suggested she write a book. She published two books that drew on her experiences: “Next Time Lucky: How to Find Your Mr. Right” and “I Once Had a Farm in Ireland.” Both are available on Amazon.

Her writing style has a snappy quality and draws you into her world. In fact, it was her talent as a writer that prompted a friend to suggest she try another creative pursuit: painting.

Last fall, she joined the art walk in Neptune Beach but was not able to actively participate. She wondered if there

was another way to share her art.

“I walked into the library, and there were big acrylics, bigger than mine, in the entranceway,” she recalled. “I thought: Mine should be hanging here!”

She sought out library staff and found out how she could show her work in what is now her first exhibit.

A public meet-and-greet with Buckley is scheduled for 3 to 4:30 p.m. Sept. 22 at the Ponte Vedra Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd.

Buckley’s paintings are available for purchase. Learn more at her Instagram page, [instagram.com/siggybuckleyartist](https://www.instagram.com/siggybuckleyartist). Her email address is [Hernibs1@gmail.com](mailto:Hernibs1@gmail.com).

## Florida Chamber Music Project to open season Sept. 8 with Haydn, Bartok

Florida Chamber Music Project (FCMP) will open its 12th season on Sept. 8 performing Joseph Haydn and Bela Bartok at the Beaches Museum Chapel at the Beaches Museum at 505 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville Beach. The concert is sponsored by Danny and Robin Berenberg and Ken and Joan Hecht.

“String Quartet Op. 76, No. 2 ‘Quinten’ by Joseph Haydn and String Quartet No. 1 by Bela Bartok are considered to be the building blocks of string quartet literature,” said Susan Pardue, artistic director of FCMP. “Haydn is known as the father of string quartets and Bartok’s quartets are the crowning achievement of 20th century string quartet literature.”

Tickets are available for this concert as well as the whole season. Season tickets for the six concert series cost

\$162 and are on sale now. There is also a three-concert flex ticket purchase for \$81. Single tickets are \$30 at the door or through 904TIX. Student tickets are \$10 and available only at the door.

Beaches Museum Chapel is wheelchair-accessible and has free parking along Pablo Avenue near 4th Street North of Beach Boulevard. All concerts begin at 3 p.m. Attendees are invited to join the musicians after the concert for refreshments.

The Florida Chamber Music Project was founded 12 years ago by violist Pardue. Joining her are violinists Patrice Evans and Ann Hertler and cellist Laurie Casseday. All are members of the Jacksonville Symphony.

For advance tickets online at [flchambermusic.org](http://flchambermusic.org).



Contributed photo

Pictured from left: Ann Hertler, Patrice Evans, Laurie Casseday, Susan Pardue

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## WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

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

## LANDSCAPE TRIVIA ANSWERS

- See **TRIVIA QUESTIONS** on page 8:
- 1. B) Root
  - 2. A) Spring
  - 3. C) Barley
  - 4. A) Orchid
  - 5. B) Aeration/overseeding
  - 6. A) Water Hyacinth
  - 7. A) True
  - 8. C) Juniper Berries
  - 9. C) 22,000 feet
  - 10. A) Dry out soil
  - 11. B) Brazil
  - 12. B) Carolina Reaper
  - 13. C) Spring and Fall
  - 14. C) Bamboo
  - 15. B) Oxygen

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## FALL SEASON WORD SEARCH

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

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

- |          |            |            |           |
|----------|------------|------------|-----------|
| APPLES   | CORNUCOPIA | FOGGY      | LEAF      |
| AUTUMNAL | COZY       | FOLIAGE    | OCTOBER   |
| CHESTNUT | CRISP      | GOURD      | PUMPKIN   |
| CHILLY   | EQUINOX    | HARVEST    | RAKE      |
| COOLER   | FALL       | HARVESTING | SCARECROW |
| CORN     | FIREPLACE  | HAY        | SWEATER   |

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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	

- ACROSS**
- Microgram
  - After B
  - Everything
  - An unfortunate development
  - Coat with sticky substance
  - Cylinder of tobacco for smoking
  - Minimum interval take off
  - Yuck!
  - NBA sensation Jeremy
  - Where some rockers work
  - Midway between northeast and east
  - Snake-like fishes
  - Groups of homes
  - Swiss river
  - Useful towel
  - "The Wire" character "Moreland"
  - Oafish creature
  - A major division of geological time
  - Bird-like Chinese dinosaur
  - Sporting events
  - Body part
  - Clerical vestment
  - Shows data
  - Some are "special"
  - Expression of disappointment
  - Students' rights document (abbr.)
  - Vacation locale Costa \_\_\_
  - Pop singer
  - Distract outside a city
  - Mark Wahlberg comedy
  - Coniferous tree
  - Midway between south and southeast
- DOWN**
- Lunatic
  - Actress Danes
  - Buttock muscles
  - The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet
  - Popular 70s rockers
  - Electronic communication
  - Trigraph
  - Sea eagles
  - Low-pitched, resonant sound
  - Northeastern US university (abbr.)
  - Home of the Bulldogs
  - Exclamation of surprise
  - Make a mistake
  - Advantage
  - Monkeys love them
  - Wood
  - Paddle
  - Past participle of be
  - Tall, rounded vase
  - Device manufacturers
  - Financial institution (abbr.)
  - Paper product
  - A type
  - Atomic #43
  - Red Hot Chili Peppers' drummer
  - Behaviors
  - Decays
  - Walked confidently
  - Voice (Italian)
  - Class of adhesives
  - Bar bill
  - One-time aerospace firm

### SUDOKU

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

**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!

Level: Intermediate

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