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Holleman Invitational swim meet
Page 4

Thursday, October 3, 2024

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VOLUME 55, NO. 49 \$1.00

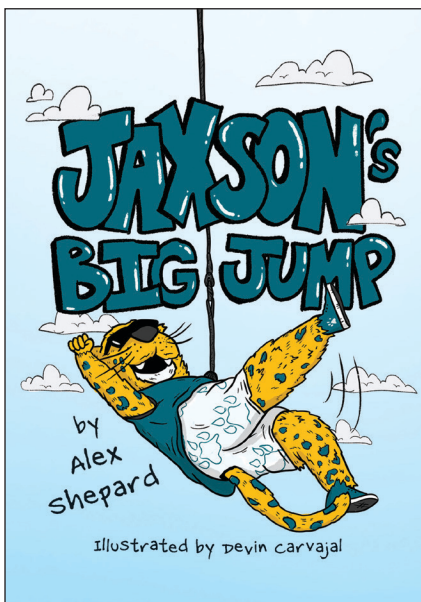
Jaxson de Ville creates children's book

By Anthony Richards

Jaxson de Ville continues to have a big year in 2024, as not only was he inducted into the Mascot Hall of Fame early in the year, but not he is set to launch his new children's book, called "Jaxson's Big Jump."

The book, as told to Alex Shepard and illustrated by Devin Carvajal, takes kids through Jaxson's behind-the-scenes journey of how he prepares for and delights fans with his antics, which have become traditions and a major part of the gameday experience over the years.

BOOK continues on Page 24





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PANTHERS WIN SECOND STRAIGHT OVERTIME THRILLER

By Anthony Richards

Overtimes have become the recurring theme for the Nease football program in recent weeks, as they earned their second straight overtime victory on Monday, Sept. 30, this time a huge 20-17 district win over visiting Gainesville Buchholz.

The win was clinched after Tyler Ghazanfari drilled a field goal to put the Panthers up 20-17 in overtime and then senior safety Shemar McNair broke on a route and jumped in front to intercept a pass at the goal line that erupted the celebration on the Nease sideline and in the stands.

"I just happened to read the play perfectly," McNair said. "In practice we always go at it, and that's a play we run a lot in the red zone, so I was used to seeing



Photo by Anthony Richards

Shemar McNair (No. 15) celebrates the first of his two interceptions on the night with his teammates.

PANTHERS continues on Page 36



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INSIDE

One of Us

Page 6

Business Weekly

Pages 30-32

In the Arts

Pages 33-34

Sports

Pages 35-36

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Subscription Rates, Bulk Mail:

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BRIEFS

Colorful 5K set for Sept. 28

On Saturday, Sept. 28, the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department will host its first Family Color Run 5K at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds, 5840 S.R. 207 E., Elkton.

The event will be suitable for all ages and fitness levels, whether one is a seasoned runner or ready to enjoy a leisurely jog. The 5K will be mostly off-road and will feature colored powder for participants to fill the air with; bring running clothes you don't mind getting a little colorful.

Register at runsignup.com/Race/FL/Elkton/FamilyColorRun5k. Registration cost is \$40 per runner. Participation gets you an official event T-shirt, a commemorative medal, professional timing services and the color stations along the route.

Rutherford opposes Amendments 3 and 4

U.S. Rep. John H. Rutherford recently voiced his opposition to Florida's constitutional referendum process, as well as Amendments 3 and 4, during a special order hour on the U.S. House Floor.

"This November, Floridians are being asked to vote on state constitutional amendments," said Rutherford. "Not only am I opposed to both Amendments 3 and 4, but I am vehemently against using the referendum process to legislate.

"We have a legislature. We have a process to pass laws that does not involve radically changing our constitution. The referendum process seeks to circumvent Florida's legislative process by offering quick, 'easy' and often worse fixes to complicated problems.

"Referendums are shortcuts to hard answers. In order to govern well, we must leave the legislating to our legislature, not special interest groups."

Trunk-or-treat family event planned

Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns County, 205 Trinity Way, St. Johns, will hold a free family event from 2 to 4 p.m. Oct. 20: Trunk-or-treat. There will be a health fair, free candy, prizes, food trucks and more. Costumes are encouraged; there will be a costume contest for all ages up to 12. Bring a treat bucket.

St. Johns County reminds residents of yard waste guidelines

To ensure continued timely and efficient curbside collection, St. Johns County residents are reminded to follow these yard waste guidelines:

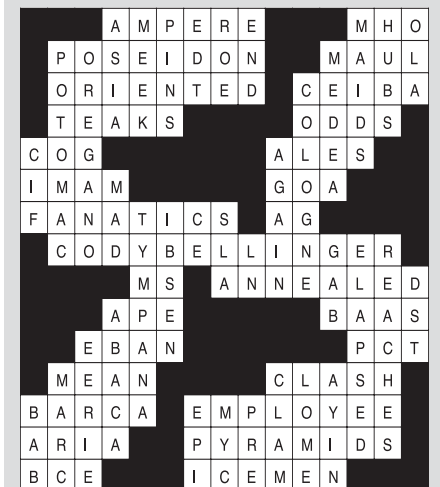
- Standard Collection Days: Yard waste, including bagged debris, will be picked up on regular collection days.
- Branch and Shrub Stacking: Stack branches, shrubs, and stumps (each under six feet in length and 50 pounds) neatly parallel to the curb.
- Debris Containerization: Bag, bundle or place leaves, grass clippings and small debris in a container with a maximum capacity of 32 gallons and a weight limit of 50 pounds.
- Large Yard Waste Piles: Ensure that large piles are neat; if they require separation, they will not be collected.
- Palm Fronds: Stack palm fronds in piles with the fan facing away from the curb.

For additional information and tips on yard waste management, residents can refer to the Yard Waste How-To Guide or visit www.recyclestjohns.com.

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



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9	8	2	3	7	1	5	4	6
4	6	3	8	2	5	9	7	1
8	4	6	5	3	2	7	1	9
7	3	9	1	4	8	2	6	5
1	2	5	6	9	7	4	8	3
3	9	4	7	1	6	8	5	2
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— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

Ceremonies set to bless animals

By Anthony Richards

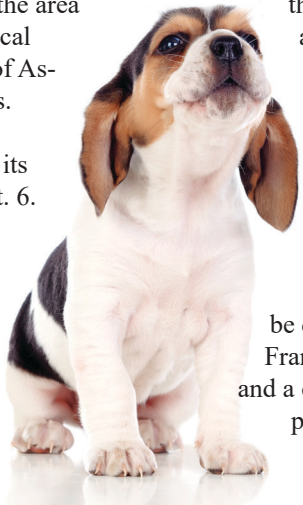
There are blessings of the animals' ceremonies taking place around the area in the coming weeks, as many local churches will honor St. Francis of Assisi as the patron saint of animals.

Lord of Life Lutheran Church will hold a celebration as part of its 9:45 a.m. service on Sunday, Oct. 6.

"This sweet service is often quite vocal with various 'woofs' that funny enough, often come at just the right moment in the liturgy," said Sheila Kolesaire, Lord of Life's council president.

According to Kolesaire, well-behaved family dogs are

invited to attend, although on occasion there has been a family cat in a carrying crate attend the ceremony in the past as well, as all pets are welcome.



While most of the service follows the Lutheran worship, at a certain time each person will bring their pet forward to be blessed by Pastor Karen Biggerstaff.

After service there will be dog biscuits, as well as St. Francis of Assisi prayer cards and a chance to put an inkless print of your dog's paw on a card to remember the occasion.

St. Francis of Assisi is believed to have created the first live Nativity scene at Christmas in 1223 and he is associated with animals and the environment.

His designated feast day is officially October 4, which is also World Animal Day.

Lord of Life Lutheran Church is located at 276 N. Roscoe Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Christ Church in Ponte Vedra Beach held its annual blessing of the animals ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 2, in their

courtyard outside the church.

Finally, the 11th Annual Family Pet Fair and Blessing of the Pets will be held Saturday, Nov. 16, at Fletcher Park in the San Marco area of Jacksonville from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The fair will include vendors discussing pet topics to keep pets safe and healthy and many adoptable pets on hand.

Bishop John Oliver of St. Philip Neri Ecumenical Church will be performing the blessing at 1:15 p.m.

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It was the fourth year of the Frank Holleman Invitational at Planet Swim Aquatics.



Penny Zarczynski and Thomas Smith and Kate Pelot were each winners on the day.



The girls 200 freestyle relay winning team of Penny Zarczynski, Kate Pelot, McKenna Biernacki and Ainsley MacAdams.

Sharks fare well against area's best at Holleman Invitational

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra swim team had an excellent showing at the Fourth Annual Frank Holleman Invitational at Planet Swim Aquatics on Sept. 21, with the girls finishing runner-up and the boys squad coming home in third as a team.

The Sharks were led by coaches Kyle Berry and Ashley Reutter and battled against 20 other schools from around Northeast Florida during the event, which continues to grow with each year.

Some of the standout performances included senior Penny Zarczynski winning both the 50 freestyle and 100 fly, setting a new meet record in the 100 fly in the process with an All-American consideration



Thomas Smith, Aaron Yang, Jono Milicevic, and John Finnemore finished third in the boys 200 freestyle relay.

Contributed photos

time of 54.93 seconds.

Sophomore Thomas Smith did his part for the boys team winning both the 100 fly and 100 backstroke.

Smith showcased his versatility by setting a new school record with both swims and a new meet record in the 100 backstroke at 51.43 seconds.

Other winners for the Sharks came in the form of the girls 200 freestyle relay, where Zarczynski shined again, along with junior Ainsley MacAdams, freshman McKenna Biernacki, and junior Kate Pelot easily won gold in the event.

It was the third straight win for the Sharks in the relay event.

Pelot, Zarczynski and MacAdams were

back at it, and this time joined by junior Sydney Player to finish second place in the girls 200 medley relay.

Meanwhile, junior Lily Doyle had a busy day with a runner-up placing in the 200 freestyle and 500 freestyle, where she also earned an All-American consideration time.

The Sharks had several third-place finishes, including the team of Smith, Aaron Yang, Jono Milicevic and John Finnemore in the boys 200 freestyle relay, Pelot in the 100 freestyle, senior Dean Batelli in the 100 fly and freshman Eli Ahlers in the one-meter diving competition.

The Sharks are preparing for the district meet next up on Tuesday, Oct. 22.

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In May, Jenny and Scott McLaughlin opened a Rita's Italian Ice & Frozen Custard franchise at 840 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach, next to The Fresh Market. The shop's most popular items are frozen custard, Italian ice and gelati, which consist of layers of Italian ice and custard — but there's much more. The Recorder spoke with Jenny McLaughlin about the shop, what's new and her commitment to the community.

Jenny McLaughlin

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell us a little bit about your treats. There are always some great flavors.

"We make our ice daily, using fresh fruit. And some of the flavors are, for instance, watermelon, lemon, cherry," Jenny McLaughlin said. "Our top seller, nationwide, is mango Italian ice."

In fact, Rita's continually rotates its selection of more than 80 flavors. Each visit can be a new experience.

"And there are a lot of ways customers can create their own flair, whether it's putting on toppings or mixing the ice with the custard," McLaughlin added.

Rita's was started in 1984 by a firefighter who sold the treats from his front porch window in Philadelphia. The firefighter, Bob Tumolo, named the business after his wife. Today, the company has grown to more than 550 shops in more than 30 states.

For those who are only familiar with ice cream, how would you describe custard?

"It's got a very creamy, smooth flavor," McLaughlin said. "It's just different than ice cream. It's different than frozen yogurt. It's got a more decadent, layered flavor with creaminess."

Even those who have tried custard elsewhere might be surprised at the unique flavor of Rita's.

"It's a very special recipe," she said. "It's confidential, proprietary. Everyone loves the custard. I think it has a lot to do with the consistency and the natural flavors — and that it's made every day."

What about your gelati? Do customers have some favorite combinations?

"That is definitely a favorite," she said. "A lot of people like to mix the pina colada ice with the vanilla custard, so it tastes like if you were getting a pina colada at a restaurant! There are a lot of different things that you can do based on what flavors we have in custard, ice plus the toppings."

Have you received much feedback since your new shop opened?

"The feedback we've gotten has been amazing!" she said.

Some of the best praise the McLaughlins have received has been with regards to their location. It's near enough to Mickler's Landing to attract beachgoers and it's centrally located to cater to the general Ponte Vedra market. Previously, to get something from Rita's, a Ponte Vedra resident had to drive to Jacksonville Beach or St. Augustine Beach.

"Both of those stores are amazing, but this just makes it more convenient," Jenny McLaughlin said.

How did you decide to buy this franchise?

"The Rita's brand is something Scott grew up on," she said. "When we were thinking about what we wanted to do, it was the first thing that came to mind for him."

It's a family enterprise, with Scott McLaughlin's father, Richard, as a partner in the business and the next generation of McLaughlins either employed there or connected in other ways. The couple are looking at possibly buying some more stores in the future.



Contributed photo

Jenny and Scott McLaughlin with Rita's mascot, Ice Guy.

"The long-term goal is to have these up and running and leave a legacy for our children," Jenny McLaughlin said.

You are also very much involved in the community. Tell me a little bit about that.

"We have done several events with schools," she said. "And we did an event with a Fourth of July golf cart veterans' parade. We had a drive at one of the schools in the Southside area. They were doing a backpack giveaway. It was amazing to see these children who don't really have a lot come up to the cart and get something for free."

She said Rita's was invited to participate by the event sponsor, Baggett Law.

"We just recently did the Jack Wheeler Foundation golf tournament," she added.

The tournament raised money for Jack H. Wheeler Memorial Scholarships, named for the young man who was tragically lost in a traffic accident. The McLaughlins have known the Wheeler family for several years.

In addition, Scott McLaughlin has been active with youth sports programs, coaching baseball, football and basketball teams.

Tell me a little about your professional background.

"I have been in human resources, recruiting, since the '90s," Jenny McLaughlin said. "I'm currently the recruit-

ing director with an IT consulting and solutions group. And then, my husband's been in the mortgage industry for 30 years. So, we both have fulltime, regular jobs."

Her role with the Rita's franchise largely involves marketing and managing the business's social media.

"It's not an area that I have education and training in, but I'm learning it and I love it!" she said. "My purpose right now is to really network and connect and talk about brand awareness."

Where are you from originally?

"I was born in Florida," she said. "Been in Jacksonville since '97. We've been in the St. Augustine area for 10 years. Scott is originally from the Northeast, Philly. He moved here about 20 years ago. So, we're rooted here."

What do you like best about living in this area?

"Obviously, the weather is nice," she said. "We're very outdoorsy people."

The McLaughlins enjoy the beach, boating, canoeing, barbecuing outdoors and visiting the public swimming pool nearby.

For further information about Rita's Italian Ice & Frozen Custard in Ponte Vedra Beach, go to ritaspontevedra@gmail.com.

AdventHealth plans ER in St. Johns County

For The Recorder

AdventHealth has announced the first phase of plans for 10.75 acres in St. Johns County. The health care system will build a 12-bed off-site emergency department (OSED) to expand services in the rapidly growing area.

Located east of I-95, near the intersection of State Road 207 and Wildwood Drive, construction is anticipated to begin in 2025 and be completed by early 2026.

“Our new facility will give residents and visitors greater access to emergency medical care close to home,” said Audrey Gregory, Ph.D., RN, executive vice president and CEO of the AdventHealth East Florida Division. “As an organization, AdventHealth has robust expansion plans, and this latest step forward is an important part of our organization’s long-term vision for growth and our mission to extend the healing ministry of Christ.”

Based in Altamonte Springs, AdventHealth is the only national nonprofit health care system headquartered in



Florida. With more than 90,000 team members, it’s among the largest faith-based systems in the U.S., spanning more than 50 hospitals across nearly a dozen states.

“For more than 150 years, Adven-

tHealth has been a trusted cornerstone of health care in Florida, providing exceptional care that our communities rely on every day,” Gregory said. “In the areas we serve, we are steadfast in upholding the excellence that defines AdventHealth,

while also serving as a key economic driver, creating new jobs and stimulating local businesses.”

AdventHealth’s expansion into St. Johns County builds on the organization’s roots in neighboring Flagler County, where it has cared for the community for more than two decades and employs nearly 1,800 people.

Within the past year, AdventHealth has invested over \$200 million in Flagler County’s health care infrastructure, including opening the county’s second hospital, building the Freytag Cancer Center and bringing eight new physicians to the area.

“Health care has become the largest job creator in Flagler County, and we are proud of our role in reaching this new milestone,” said Denyse Bales-Chubb, president/CEO of the AdventHealth market in Flagler and St. Johns counties. “As our communities grow, we have been growing right alongside them, and we are excited to do the same in St. Johns County.”

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Florida Forum Speaker Series moderators named

For The Recorder

The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital has announced a trio of exceptional moderators for its 2024-25 Florida Forum Speaker Series schedule. Three distinguished Northeast Florida leaders — John Delaney, Shad Khan and Mark Woods — will facilitate thought-provoking and engaging discussions for the Speaker Series presentations.

The program moderator for Rt Hon Boris Johnson is John Delaney, president of Flagler College, former University of North Florida president and Jacksonville mayor. Johnson is the former prime minister of the United Kingdom and a journalist and author. The program is on Oct. 29.

The program moderator for Deepak Chopra is Jacksonville Jaguars team owner Shad Khan. A self-made billionaire who arrived in the United States at



John Delaney



Shad Khan



Mark Woods

age 16 to study engineering, Khan is also owner of global automotive equipment manufacturer Flex-N-Gate, Fulham Football Club of the English Premier League, All Elite Wrestling and Four Seasons Hotel Toronto and is a philanthropist and developer who is investing in Downtown Jacksonville. Chopra is a physician, author and world-renowned pioneer in integrative medicine and personal transformation. The program is on Jan. 15.

The program moderator for Carl Hiaasen is columnist Mark Woods. He has been a columnist at the Florida Times-Union since 2001. Before that, he spent 20 years as a sportswriter at newspapers in Florida, Kentucky, Missouri and

Indiana. Woods is the author of "Lassoing the Sun: A Year in America's National Parks." Hiaasen is a Floridian, journalist and novelist. The program is on Feb. 12.

The Florida Forum series events will take place at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts. Programs begin at 7 p.m. The series is made possible by long-time partners and sponsors Landstar, Wells Fargo and Florida Blue.

Subscriptions for the Florida Forum events start at \$250 each for general seating, \$350 for preferred seating, \$450 for one reserved Bronze-level ticket, \$900 for two reserved Bronze-level tickets, \$2,250 for two reserved Silver-level tickets and \$4,500 for four reserved Gold-

level tickets. The purchase of a Silver or Gold ticket package includes invitations to the private receptions honoring the speakers following the lectures. Patrons younger than 30 may purchase Young Subscriber tickets for \$150 each. To purchase tickets, go to thefloridaforum.com, call 904-202-2886 or email womensboard@bmcjax.com.

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

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

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

For more information, go to womensboardwch.com.

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St. Johns County invests \$2M in land conservation

For The Recorder

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners is investing \$2 million in its Land Acquisition Management Program (LAMP). The board approved the fiscal year 2025 budget during a public hearing held on Sept. 17. More than 30% of St. Johns County is currently protected from development through various conservation efforts and partnerships at local, state and federal levels.

“We are excited about this investment in land conservation,” said Ryan Mauch, environmental supervisor in the Environmental Division/Growth Management Department. “It will allow us to protect and preserve more natural lands for future generations of St. Johns County residents and visitors to enjoy.”

LAMP was featured during the Aug. 6 regular meeting, where a conservation update showcased how more than 30% of St. Johns County land is already under conservation protection. More details can be found at sjcfl.us/LAMP, which includes an interactive land conservation storyboard, a special LAMP video, and access to the Land Acquisition Application for property nominations.

The LAMP Conservation Board iden-

tifies, evaluates and recommends lands for acquisition in the unincorporated areas of the county for conservation, management and passive recreational opportunities.

“LAMP, established in 1999, assists with the acquisition and conservation of lands that enhance or promote ecological communities, green space, water resources and outdoor passive recreation, as well as historic, educational and scientific activities,” Mauch said. “LAMP ranks lands to best achieve program goals, which include protecting habitats and listed species, providing connections to natural corridors and protecting cultural resources.”

Some of the St. Johns County conservation lands featured on the website include:

- **Fort Matanzas and Rattlesnake Island:** 300 acres of Florida coastal environment, featuring dunes, marsh, and maritime forest with threatened and endangered species.

- **Anastasia State Park:** Thousands of acres of rich ecosystems, including tidal marshes home to dolphins, manatees, sea turtles and wading birds.

- **Faver-Dykes State Park:** Borders Pellicer Creek and features wading birds like egrets and herons in tidal marshes.

- **Frank B. Butler Park:** A sand-dune

habitat supporting the threatened gopher tortoise, with direct access to the Matanzas River for water-related recreational activities.

- **Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve:** Nearly 10,000 acres of diverse ecosystems, offering hiking, biking, birdwatching, fishing and educational opportunities.

- **Jack Wright Island:** More than 100 acres of forested wetland and freshwater marsh, viewable from County Road 13 North or by boat from the St. Johns River.

- **Trout Creek Park and Boat Ramp:** Access to nature trails, picnic areas and a community center for events.

- **Stokes Landing Conservation Area:** Protects water resources and wildlife habitat, featuring an observation platform for wildlife viewing.

- **Moses Creek Conservation Area:** A 2,000-acre area with tidal marsh habitat and diverse ecosystems.

- **Southeast Intracoastal Waterway Park:** Hiking trails through critical habitats for threatened species.

- **Alpine Groves Park:** Open space with butterfly gardens and a public boardwalk along the St. Johns River.

- **Palmo Fish Camp Park and Ramp:** A boat ramp providing access to the St. Johns River for fishing and water sports.

- **Ocean Hammock Park:** An 18-acre area with boardwalk access to the beach and various wildlife.

- **Moses Creek Regional Offsite Mitigation Area:** A 450-acre property featuring mixed forests and freshwater wetlands.

- **McCullough Creek Conservation Area:** A 1,400-acre property accessible to the public for passive recreation.

- **Six Mile Creek Preserve:** A cypress swamp providing important wildlife habitat and water activities.

- **San Sebastian River Property (Genovar Property):** A 31-acre site with deep-water access for a future public boat ramp.

- **Anastasia Lakes Conservation Area:** A 50-acre salt marsh property ensuring the preservation of sensitive habitats.

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Jax Tours launches new season

Jax Tours has announced the grand reopening of its tour season, beginning Saturday, Oct. 5. The business says it will bring a fresh and delectable twist to exploring Jacksonville with its newly curated Culinary and Historic Tour Experience. Partnering with four vibrant downtown restaurants, this will be an unforgettable journey through the city's rich history and culinary scene.

Guests will be guided through downtown's storied streets while they savor mouthwatering dishes from local

restaurants. For both lifelong residents and those who are new to the area, the tour is packed with intriguing facts and captivating tales that even locals will find surprising.

"Considering recent challenges facing downtown businesses — such as the Landing's closure — Jax Tours is committed to revitalizing the area by promoting local businesses through engaging food and educational experiences," said Tina Sauvage, founder of Jax Tours. "With the high risk of local



business closures in Jacksonville, our mission is to bring vibrancy back to downtown and foster a stronger community spirit with the mantra 'Locals Supporting Locals.'"

Jax Tours is your gateway to discovering Jacksonville's past and present.

The walking tours offer a combination of historical insights and delectable bites from four renowned local restaurants — all included in the tour price. The goal is to boost local businesses by drawing new visitors and showcasing the unique charm of the city.

Tours are scheduled two to three Saturdays a month, starting at 4 p.m., with more tours to be added soon. With only 15 spots available per tour, reservations are expected to fill up quickly. Secure a place at jaxtours.com.

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Churchmen meeting

Pictured from left at the recent meeting of the Churchmen: John Ekdahl, Churchmen chair; Lisa Rinamen, St. Johns River Keeper; and Rich Reilly, Churchmen vice-chair.

Contributed photo



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Community sponsors 82 students overcoming challenges

For The Recorder

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation (MWYF) is celebrating a powerful show of support from the Northeast Florida community, as 82 of their students have been sponsored through its “Sponsor a Champion” program. This commitment by individuals, businesses and community organizations ensures that these students have the resources and mentorship needed to excel in school, sports and life.

“Sponsorship is more than just a donation,” said Terri Florio, CEO of MWYF. “It’s a commitment to helping our youth

build the skills, confidence and resilience they need to succeed in life. With the support of our community, we’re able to guide our students toward brighter futures and set them up for long-term success.”

Sponsorship dollars help fund key elements of the foundation’s work, including:

- Homework assistance and tutoring to ensure students achieve academic success.
- Tennis training and competition to develop discipline, teamwork and leadership.
- Life skills classes covering topics such as health, financial literacy and career preparation.

Community service opportunities that encourage students to give back and stay connected to their neighborhoods.

Sponsors are not only making a financial contribution, but also serving as role models and advocates for their students’ success.

“Encouraging the student I sponsor to be the best he can be fit into my life goals,” said one sponsor, Monica Heseman. “In my quarterly letters I often quoted sports personalities to encourage his success in life.”

MWYF’s mission is to develop champions in classrooms, on tennis courts and throughout communities, helping disad-

vantaged youth rise above challenges and strive toward bright futures. The impact of these sponsorships goes beyond financial support — it’s an investment in the future of Jacksonville’s youth.

MWYF is a Jacksonville-based youth development program that empowers young individuals through academic assistance, life skills, mentorship and tennis programs. The foundation is dedicated to providing comprehensive support for students, nurturing their potential and fostering positive growth.

Learn more at malwashington.com.

School tax issues topic of meetings

The St. Johns County School District is planning town hall meetings to discuss two referendum items being brought to voters at the Nov. 5 election.

One referendum is to continue the half-cent sales tax, which supports the school district’s capital outlay budget in four areas: safety, growth, maintenance

and technology. The second referendum is for an increase of one mill to support the operating budget to increase salaries of teachers and staff, invest in school safety and student welfare, and enhance educational programs including science, technology, art, music and athletics.

These represent two separate items on

the ballot.

The meetings will take place as follows:

- Thursday, Oct. 3, at 6 p.m. at Gamble Rogers Middle School, 6250 U.S. 1 South. St. Augustine
- Tuesday, Oct. 15, at 6 p.m. at the St. Johns County School District Admin-

istrative Building, 40 Orange St., St. Augustine, and via Webex. Instructions to access the meeting virtually will be posted on the school district’s website, stjohns.k12.fl.us

- Thursday, Oct. 17, at 6 p.m. at Allen D. Nease High School, 10550 Ray Road, Ponte Vedra

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Budget-friendly ways to update a wardrobe

An individual's appearance can speak volumes. For many, that underscores the importance of having a wardrobe that presents the image they want to project.

Unless you have unlimited funds, the process of curating a wardrobe can take time. Life brings with it many expenses, but it's possible to update your wardrobe

each season without breaking the bank. Check out these seven money-saving suggestions before visiting retailers.

1. Investigate your closet (and others')

Take stock of what's already in your closet and drawers. You may forget what you have, particularly if you pack away

seasonal items. In addition, check with roommates or family members to see if they have any pieces they don't use or would like to swap. This keeps everyone looking fresh.

2. Turn pants into shorts or capris

Who hasn't had the dryer shrink an item that once fit? Over time, the hemline on a dress may creep up or pants just don't hit at the right spot on the ankle any longer. Rather than wasting an item, with some minor tailoring you can transform pants into shorts or capris and transform long dresses into short ones.

3. Invest in high-quality basics

Keep a cheat sheet in your pocket or purse when shopping so you can pick up items when they are on discount. Staples to stock a wardrobe include a basic black dress, classic black dress pants, white dress shirt, A-line skirt in a neutral color, any occasion tops, and well-fitting darker wash jeans. For men, basics include slacks and blazers or a well-fitting suit, dress shirts in a few neutral colors, casual khaki slacks, well-fitting jeans, and casual polo shirts. Choose high-quality, timeless basics to ensure they will last for years in your closet.

4. Set your budget and shopping plan

Some people like to establish monthly

shopping budgets, while others updating their wardrobes prefer to shop seasonally. Figure out how much you can devote to new clothes (after taking inventory of current items) and stick to that amount. If you're a person who has difficulty saying "no" when shopping, shop with cash instead of card. When your funds are depleted, exit the store.

5. Shop from the back

Sale and clearance racks tend to be at the back of department stores and other retailers. Start there to grab some pieces before working your way forward to where the newer, more costly items are displayed.

6. Stick to a neutral color palette

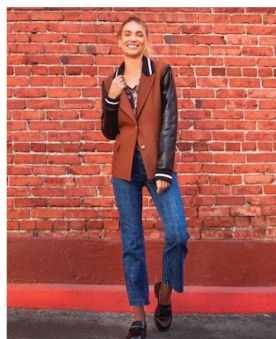
It's easier to mix and match newer items with pieces you already have if the colors blend. If you want to add pops of color, do so with accessories such as belts, ties, purses, or jewelry.

7. Shop thrift sales or consignment

Just because it's used doesn't make durable clothing any less valuable. Thrift and consignment stores sell products at very low cost. Some places even have days during the week when ticketed items are slashed in price even further. Thrift and consignment stores also are great places to find unique and high-end pieces for less.

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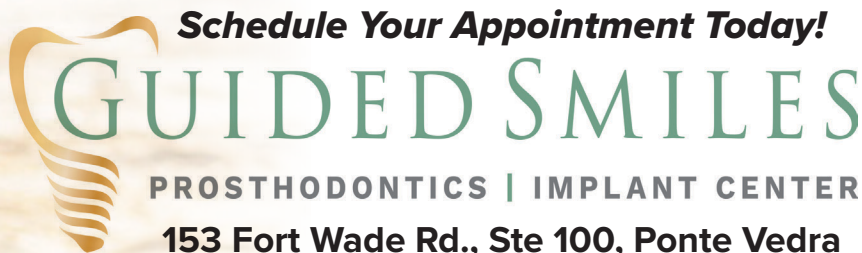
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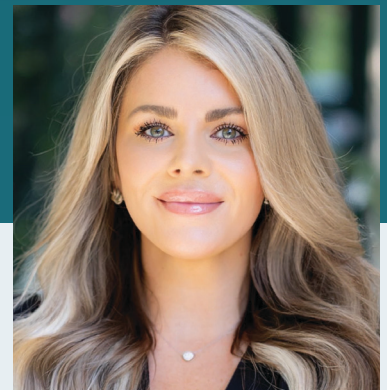
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PLAYERS announces \$50K grants for nonprofits

For The Recorder

In gratitude for 50 years of community support and to celebrate the success of THE PLAYERS Championship's 50th anniversary this past March, THE PLAYERS has announced an update to THE PLAYERS Grant Program. This year, \$50,000 grants will be offered as a special tribute to this significant milestone.

"As THE PLAYERS looks back on five decades in Northeast Florida, it's only right that we find a special way to give back to the community that has given so much to us," said Lee Smith, executive director of THE PLAYERS Championship. "These grants are our way of honoring this milestone and demonstrating our ongoing commitment

to supporting the organizations that make a real difference in our hometown."

THE PLAYERS Grant Program is open to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that operate within Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties and align with THE PLAYERS' primary focus areas, including youth services, education, character development, health, wellness and sports and military support.

Applications for THE PLAYERS Grant Program are open until Oct. 31. For detailed information on how to apply, go to theplayers.com/community. To keep up to date on the latest community news and opportunities, subscribe to the community newsletter through the same site.



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Kidspreneurs Day



Ocean Palms students launch reading adventure

Students at Ocean Palms Elementary School are embarking on a storied school year. The Sunshine State Young Readers Award Program, a statewide reading program that features new titles each year, is turning a new page at Ocean Palms as the 2024-2025 books arrived.

Brought to the students by the PTO, classrooms and the library received a total of about 400 new books, so students could set out on adventures with a new tale. Those who read all 15 books, make the Otter Wall of Fame!

Contributed photos

The OPE PTO Book Fair Committee delivers newly arrived Sunshine State Young Readers Award Books to classrooms at Ocean Palms.

A class in the library at Ocean Palms gets a peek at the new Sunshine State Young Readers Award Books that just arrived.



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Trevor and Marissa Lawrence named Wolfson Children's Hospital ambassadors

For The Recorder

Wolfson Children's Hospital recently named Trevor Lawrence, quarterback of the Jacksonville Jaguars, and his wife Marissa as ambassadors of Wolfson Children's Hospital.

This new relationship was recently unveiled at a private signing ceremony where the couple joined hospital staff, inspiring patients and their families to celebrate the occasion.

"At Wolfson Children's, we know how important it is to be a member of a well-oiled team," said Allegra C. Jaros, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital. "Each teammate plays a vital role in winning battles against the illnesses and injuries our children may face. There is no more important team to our community than the team at Wolfson Children's. It just makes sense that our NFL team's quarterback and his wife would be a key part of our team that cares for and saves the lives of our community's children."

In their role, the Lawrences will help bring inspiration, joy and hope to infants and children in need of the specialized care provided at Wolfson Children's Hospital and will promote child and family



Contributed photo

Trevor and Marissa Lawrence have been named ambassadors of Wolfson Children's Hospital.

health and well-being by being advocates for kids.

"The work provided by the care team at Wolfson Children's is important to our community and helps keep the youngest Jaguars fans healthy," Trevor Lawrence said. "We are proud to stand with the Wolfson Children's team and look for-

ward to advocating for the well-being of kids in Jacksonville and highlighting the amazing work of the staff."

The event featured several Wolfson Children's patients who served as "sports reporters" for the day. Kennedy (age 8), Tyler (age 9) and Zion (age 14), each had the opportunity to ask the Lawrences

a few questions during a light-hearted interview session.

After the interviews, the Lawrences signed a ceremonial agreement, marking the beginning of this new partnership and a promise to help kids tackle challenges and get stronger every day. As a token of appreciation, they presented the patients in attendance with gift bags and autographed memorabilia, while the hospital welcomed the Lawrences with official team badges and jackets to symbolize their role as part of the Wolfson Children's team.

"We are deeply honored to have Trevor and Marissa join our Wolfson Children's team," said Michael A. Mayo, president and CEO of Baptist Health. "Their compassion and dedication to child health will have a lasting impact on the children we serve."

For nearly 30 years, Baptist Health has partnered with the Jacksonville Jaguars on and off the field to build a healthier community. In a new approach to this partnership beginning with the 2025 season, Wolfson Children's will become the first-ever Official Children's Hospital of the Jacksonville Jaguars.



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WEEKDAYS AT 11AM | NBC12 HD

Contributed photos



Tickets available for Jimmy Jam BBQ Slam, to be held Jan. 11

For The Recorder

Where there's smoke, there's great barbecue!

Presented in partnership with title sponsor MasterCraft Builder Group, the Jimmy Jam BBQ Slam returns to St. Johns County Fairgrounds on Jan. 11 for an epic day of barbecue, chili, "chowda," music, cars and more.

The fairgrounds are located at 5840 State Road 207 in Elkton.

Every dollar raised by the event goes to support the philanthropic work of Jimmy Jam Community Outreach, a local organization rooted in giving and friendship.

"The event was inspired by our dear friend, James 'Jimmy Jam' Wray," says Tim Gause, vice president of Jimmy

Jam Community Outreach. "He loved barbecue, he loved cars, but, more than anything, he was committed to leaving this world a better place by helping anyone he could. This event funds the work we do through Jimmy Jam Community Outreach. Funds stay local to help our neighbors in times of need, whether it's with meals, wheelchair ramps, bills, repairs and more. And let me tell you, Jimmy Jam would have loved all of this."

As seen on Food Network's "BBQ*USA," the Jimmy Jam BBQ Slam is the largest barbecue competition in North Florida. Sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbecue Society, it features the best pitmasters from across the nation, competing at either the Backyard or Pro level. Teams will serve up barbecued chicken, ribs, pork and brisket. A panel of certified

judges will decide the winners, with the awards presentation at 5 p.m.

Barbecue will be served to the public from 2 to 4 p.m., and visitors will vote for the People's Choice Award.

New this year is a sanctioned chili cook-off, where anyone can compete to take the top prize. By popular demand, the Food Mafia is bringing back the Chowda Bowl. Local restaurants will offer their take on the classic chowder to see who wins the top prize.

Chowder tasting begins at 11 a.m. and finishes at 3 p.m.

The Car Show is another showpiece of the event, featuring specialty and classic cars, trucks and motorcycles. Visitors can check out all of the rides, with trophies presented to the best whips at noon.

Attendees can compete in a cornhole

tournament, with registration beginning at 11 a.m. and bags flying at noon. The free kids' zone is packed full of games and activities for the littlest barbecue fans, while more than 50 vendors offer an array of goods, from datil sauce and candy to art, candles, jewelry and more.

Live music will set the stage all day, with acts including Stephen Quinn, Dewey Via Band and Orlando Mendez.

Tickets are on sale at eventbrite.com/e/9th-annual-jimmy-jam-bbq-slam-car-show-tickets-940626688747?aff=erelexpmlt and are \$15 now and \$20 beginning Dec. 1. Kids age 10 and younger will be admitted free. The Cornhole Tournament and Car Show require additional tickets.

Gates open at 10 a.m., and parking is free.

Tickets on sale now! Visit thefloridaforum.com.

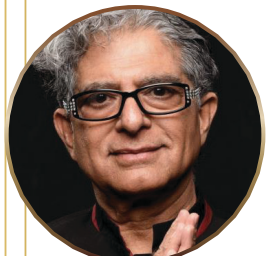
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Award supports teaching fellow at Cathedral Arts Project

For The Recorder

The Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) has been awarded by the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Funds a \$500,000 gift to create a new named teaching artist fellow position, the Delores Barr Weaver Teaching Artist Fellow in Theatre. CAP welcomed Christian Anderson as the new Delores Barr Weaver Teaching Artist Fellow in Theatre.

“I greatly appreciate being part of the strategic way the Cathedral Arts Project is building an arts education infrastructure in Jacksonville,” said Delores Barr Weaver. “For so many years, their efforts have expanded what is possible for children through the arts. I’m proud to help fund their vision.”

To be eligible to receive this gift, CAP was required to secure a matching \$500,000 donation from one donor. The organization met the stipulation of the challenge by receiving a match-

ing \$500,000 gift from Betty and Tom Petway. Their donation will continue to underwrite the Petway Teaching Artist Fellow in Visual Arts position, held by Ashlee Collins, which was established in 2022.

“We are thrilled to support CAP because we recognize the value of teaching children the important skills in problem solving, decision-making, creativity and teamwork, resulting in higher academic accomplishments,” said the Petways. “We know that children who are enrolled in CAP programs are well-rounded, more socially aware, and possess greater confidence in themselves and in their future journey toward personal achievement.”

Both gifts will support teaching artist fellow positions for five years. The Delores Barr Weaver Teaching Artist Fellow in Theatre will have the unique opportunity to blend their artistic passion with a commitment to educational excellence,

fostering both creativity and literacy in elementary school students. The fellow will provide theatre and literacy arts integration programs as well as an after-school theatre program.

CAP’s teaching artist fellows teach 18-20 instructional hours per week, preparing students for a lifetime of engagement with the arts by encouraging them to explore learning opportunities and persevere with challenging tasks.

In addition to these endowed positions, CAP also welcomes three new teaching fellows: Lindsay M. Bowyer as Teaching Artist Fellow in Visual Arts, Chelsye P. Ginn as Teaching Artist Fellow in Theatre and Sarah J. Morrell as Teaching Artist Fellow in Music.

As full-time employees, they also have

dedicated hours for lesson planning and preparation, administrative tasks and professional development. They seek out and organize opportunities for their students to perform or exhibit both at their schools and in the community, as well as arrange field trip and guest artist opportunities for their classes.

“We are honored to receive this important gift from the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Funds and grateful to Betty and Tom Petway for continuing to champion our teaching artist fellow program,” said Rev. Kimberly Hyatt, CAP president and CEO. “It is the generous support of our community that provides us the ability to create opportunities for all children to have access to the transformative power of quality arts education.”

DEATH NOTICES

Barbara Kovacs

Barbara Kovacs, 86, of Neptune Beach, Florida, died Sept. 27, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Ardis Mavis Lomheim

Ardis Mavis Lomheim, 92, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Sept. 26, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

2024 Best of the Beaches
THE RECORDER

NOMINATIONS BEGIN OCTOBER 4TH

The Recorder presents the second annual **Best of the Beaches**, featuring your favorite businesses in Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach and Ponte Vedra Beach! This includes businesses in zip codes 32250, 32266, 32233, and 32082.

NOMINATIONS: Oct. 4 - Nov. 10
VOTING: Nov. 11 - Dec. 2
WINNERS ANNOUNCED: Dec. 26

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Realtor group donates to Mission House ahead of gala

A grant check for \$1,000 was presented to Jacksonville Beaches Mission House Executive Director Lucas Seilhmyer and staff on Sept. 25 by local Ponte Vedra Realtor Group CBV Cares members and their Coldwell Banker broker manager.

The check is in support of Mission House's annual fundraiser, The Grazie Gala, and their ongoing care of our area's homeless and those in need of medical care who would otherwise have no resource for care.

The Grazie Gala will be held 6-9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 5, at The Yards at Sawgrass Players Club located at 254 Alta Mar Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach. This planned dressy casual event will be catered by Poppy's Italiano.

Tickets are available for the event along with opportunities to bid on silent auction items. For more information, go to www.missionhousejax.org or call Fred Richards, development director, at 904-241-6767. Mission House is located at 800 Shetter Ave. on Jacksonville Beach.

For more information on the Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty (CBVR) Group CBV Cares, contact Co-Chair Carole Bayer at cbayerrealtor@gmail.com or call 904-860-5000. The Coldwell Banker Vanguard Realty Beaches office is located at 240 Ponte Vedra Park Blvd., Suite 100, Ponte Vedra Beach.



Contributed photo

Pictured from left are Mission House Development Director Fred Richards, Mission House Dev. Event Coordinator Chelsea Basilius, Mission House Director of Business Administration London Shell, CBVR Broker Manager Michele DeLiberto, Mission House Executive Director Lucas Seilhmyer, and CBV Cares Co-Chairs Nancy Hammond and Carole Bayer.

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2024 General Election November 5, 2024



Vicky Oakes
St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections

October 7, 2024
DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR
THE 2024 GENERAL ELECTION

Avoid Lines at the Polls!

The 2024 General Election ballot is two-pages, and high voter turnout is expected. Request a vote-by-mail ballot to vote from home, or if voting in person, study your sample ballot before heading to the polls!



Be a prepared voter, Be ELECTION READY!

Vote-by-Mail

- Deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed: **5 PM on October 24**
- Vote-by-mail ballots must be returned to the Elections Office by **7 PM on Election Day, November 5**, to be counted

Early Voting

October 21 – November 2, 2024
8 AM to 6 PM

Daily at all early voting locations

For a list of locations, visit www.votesjc.gov

Election Day

Tuesday, November 5, 2024
Polls open 7 AM to 7 PM

Voters must vote at their assigned polling place on Election Day. Find your polling place online at www.votesjc.gov

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DREAM FINDERS HOMES



CHAMPIONS
FOR CHILD SAFETY

PRO-AM

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Golf tournament to support Monique Burr Foundation programs

For The Recorder

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children (MBF) recently announced plans for the 2024 Dream Finders Homes Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament.

The tournament is Monday, Dec. 2, at The Palencia Club in St. Augustine. The tournament's Pairings Party is Sunday, Dec. 1.

"With 14 million youth served through our MBF Prevention Education Programs, and so many more to reach, our annual golf tournament is all the more critical to our efforts to raise much-needed funds and awareness," said Tanya Ramos-Puig, MBF chief executive officer. "The participants and sponsors of our Dream Finders Homes Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament help fuel our life-saving work and create lasting impact in the lives of our most vulnerable citizens, not only in Jacksonville but across our nation and around the globe.

Last year, the tournament raised more than \$457,000 in support of protecting youth from child victimization. The community response to support this popular event has been positive, but there are still many children the foundation hopes to reach. Sponsorship opportunities, ranging from \$2,000 to \$50,000, are available. Companies and individuals interested in supporting child safety are encouraged to learn more about the sponsorship benefits.

Go to ChampionsForChildSafety.com or contact Ashle Fike at ashle@mbfpreventioneducation.org or call 904-299-6128.

All proceeds from the Dream Finders Homes Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament support the foundation and its Prevention Education Programs. These programs are designed to empower youth, equipping them with strategies to prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to various challenges such as bullying, online dangers, child abuse and exploitation/trafficking.

2024 Dream Finders Homes Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament sponsors include title sponsor Dream Finders Homes, and presenting sponsors AT&T, Impact Landscaping and Irrigation, The Jahna Family, Jax Utilities Management, MJC Land Development and Perry Homes.

Other sponsors include Ahead, AndersonOrd Apparel, Auld & White Constructors, Barraco and Associates, Callaway, Club Car, Coastal Engineering Associates, Coastal Oak Wealth Advisors, Donna J. Feldman & Mo Krausman, Doumar Insurance, EW Consultants, FMS Bonds, GreenPointe Holdings, Hampton Golf, Invision Construction, KPMG, Lennar Homes, Lucido and Associates, Master-Craft Builder Group, Pepsi, The Palencia Club, PRI Productions, State Farm (Denny Doyle), Sysco, Tito's Vodka and Wrathell, Hunt and Associates.

To join this list, go to ChampionsForChildSafety.com.

Voter registration deadline is Oct. 7

For The Recorder

The deadline for St. Johns County residents to register to vote for the upcoming Nov. 5 General Election is Monday, Oct. 7.

The Supervisor of Elections Office, 4455 Avenue A, Suite 101, St. Augustine, will be open on Saturday, Oct. 5, for special hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to assist voters registering to vote ahead of the Oct. 7 deadline.

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

It is recommended that all voters go to www.votesjc.gov and use “My Voter Status” to check their registration status and voter information. The site can also be used to update voter records, view sample ballots or request a vote-by-mail ballot. Voters who need to update their address are encouraged to do so before election day so that they will know their correct polling location.

The 2024 General Election is open to all registered St. Johns County voters. Due to high expected voter turnout and the



length of the two-page ballot, the Supervisor of Elections is encouraging voters to study and mark their sample ballot before heading to the polls, or to request a vote-by-mail ballot to vote from the comfort of home.

Sample ballots are available online at www.votesjc.gov and will be mailed to all registered St. Johns County voters who have not requested a vote-by-mail ballot in early October.

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

Volunteers to ‘Make a Difference’ on Oct. 19

For The Recorder

The St. Johns Housing Partnership (SJHP), creating safe, clean, affordable housing in North Florida since 1996, has announced a countywide initiative on “National Make a Difference Day,” from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 19.

Make a Difference Day will mobilize volunteers who will spread out over St. Johns County to help paint, clean and repair homes for veterans, the elderly or disabled. Volunteers are needed for exterior house painting, repairs, landscaping, yard clean up and to help build wheelchair ramps.

“The annual Make a Difference Day promotes the idea of volunteering and making an impact in one’s own community,” noted SJHP Executive Director Bill Lazar. “It amplifies the idea that any act of kindness, no matter the size, can go a long way in making



a difference for someone else.”

Individuals, teams and companies can go to www.sjhp.org to volunteer on Make a Difference Day. In addition to recruiting volunteers, SJHP need donations of materials and in-kind donations.

National Make a Difference Day was created by USA Weekend magazine in 1992 to offer community support and encourage volunteerism across the country.

Points of Light, a nonprofit organization founded by former U.S. President George H. W. Bush, is the official co-sponsor of Make a Difference Day. Ever since its inception, Make a Difference Day has echoed in 30 countries and has inspired more than 30 million volunteer hours.

For more information contact the St. Johns Housing Partnership at 904-824-0902 or info@sjhp.org.

Meet Makeshia & her family...

Keshia is a Habitat St. Johns Homeowner.

Makeshia reflected “Having the Habitat home will help me save money, because it is cheaper than rent, and I don’t have to worry about the amount going up. So now when I get a raise, it will help us.”

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

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Transplanting Trees

"Nature soothes us. Nature heals us, and something more, the woods are a place of power." — Frederick Lenz



By Kathy Esfahani

In northeast Florida, we are part of Planting Zone 9. We have warm winters and hot summers that allow us to plant year-round. This climate

also enables us to transplant trees during the fall, winter, and early spring months. Transplant after a tree has dropped leaves in the fall and before new buds appear in the spring. It is best to avoid transplanting trees in the summer as the excessive heat can increase the potential for shock in a newly moved tree.

Keep the following tips in mind for a successful tree transplant:

- Be sure your tree is healthy and free



Crape Myrtle

from diseases and/or pests. An unhealthy tree may not be strong enough to survive the move.

- Select a new home for the tree that has similar soil and sunlight to what the tree is accustomed to having.

- Prepare your destination hole before removing the tree from its original location. The hole should be approximately three times as wide as the root ball and close to the same depth.

- Gather the branches of the tree with twine or burlap before digging.
- Strive to face the tree in the same direction when you replant it. Mark the side of the tree facing north with a ribbon or string while it is in the original location and orient it in the same direction when placing it in the new hole.
- Try to move as much of the root system as possible. Dig a root ball approximately 10-12 inches across for every 1 inch diameter of the tree's trunk (for example, dig a root ball 30-36 inches across for a tree with a 3 inch diameter trunk).
- Plant the tree only deep enough to line up the soil line of the root ball with the soil line of the new area.
- Fill the hole with subsoil first and then topsoil. Be sure to tamp down the soil as you go to prevent air pockets around the root ball. It can also be helpful to add water to the hole when it is half full of dirt.
- Be sure to water the tree in its new home regularly. Keep the soil moist but not soggy. Continue to monitor the tree, especially for watering as needed, for several months after transplanting.



Flower of the Week

Drift Rose

- Consider adding 2-3 inches of mulch around the tree to help it retain the moisture it needs. Be careful not to let the mulch touch the trunk of the tree.
- Transplanting a tree is not an easy project, so be sure to seek professional help if needed. However, moving existing trees can be a great way to redesign your landscape while making use of already successful plants! Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Drift Rose

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



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Book

Continued from 1

This includes Jaxson talking about his sky-high bungee jump to kick off Jaguars' home games, which has become perhaps the most famous tradition of them all.

The book will have a limited edition print run of 4,000 copies and retail for \$19.95. It is available on Fanatics.com by

going to the website and clicking on the "Be the First" page to receive an email reminder regarding its availability for purchase.

It will also be available in all Fanatics Pro Shops in and around EverBank Stadium beginning Oct. 25.

"On the heels of Jaxson's recent Mascot Hall of Fame induction, you can add 'children's book author' to his ever-growing list of accomplishments," said Christy

Stechman Zynda, Jaguars director of entertainment groups and grassroots events. "Kids of all ages will enjoy this book about Jaxson's most legendary stunt as he gears up for game day."

"Jaxson's Big Jump" will be making its way to kids around Jacksonville in the coming months, with Literacy Locker Room events, sponsored by JEA at five area schools.

Jaguars' players, Legends and/or entertainment representatives will read the book to students and provide meet-and-greets with Jaxson himself and THE ROAR cheerleaders. Each classroom at the schools will receive a copy of the book as part of the event.

Earlier this week, patients at Nemours Children's Clinic were given a sneak peek of the book with a special reading by former Jaguars kicker Josh Scobee and they each received a backpack with an autographed book from Jaxson and photo opportunities with the mascot and THE ROAR.

Nemours will also host an upcoming Literacy Locker Room this fall.

They strive to grow a love of reading in children through the Nemours Children's Reading Brightstart! Program, which it offers to families as a helpful educational tool in this area.

More than 287,000 children are currently supported with the Reading Brightstart! program.



ST. JOHNS COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER
Eddie Creamer, CFA



NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF TAX ROLL

Pursuant to Sections 193.122 and 197.323, Florida Statutes, Notice is Hereby Given that the Tax Roll for St. Johns County was Certified to the St. Johns County Tax Collector on the 10th day of October, 2024, for the Collection of 2024 Taxes Pending Value Adjustment Board Changes.

EDDIE CREAMER
ST. JOHNS COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

For additional information, please visit our website at www.sjcpa.gov or contact us at (904) 827-5500

Sponsor's support leads student to Morehouse College

Contributed photos

For The Recorder

A recent graduate of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation (MWYF), Caleb Owens, is attending Morehouse College this fall — thanks in part to the support of his sponsor, Monica Heseman. For four years, Heseman has been more than just a sponsor; she has been a leader for Caleb, helping him overcome obstacles and reach this achievement.

Many of the youth at MWYF face economic challenges, living near or below the poverty line. The sponsorship relationship offered Caleb a critical source of encouragement and accountability.

“Seeing how Caleb matured emotionally and intellectually over the past four years has been the most rewarding aspect of my sponsorship,” said Heseman. “I attended the end-of-year awards ceremony at MWYF and sat in front of Caleb’s mother as he was continually called to the stage to accept numerous awards. I’m not sure who felt prouder — his mother or myself.”

The MWYF Sponsor a Champion program connects a student with a dedicated supporter who provides encouragement and accountability throughout the school year. Students send hand-written letters to their sponsors each quarter, sharing their academic progress and personal growth. The program nurtures responsibility and connection, motivating the youth to stay focused on their goals.

“MWYF and my sponsor have pushed me to be the best I can be,” Caleb Owens said. “Ms. Monica’s letters always made me feel supported and like someone wanted to see me do great things.”

As MWYF continues to bridge opportunity gaps for students in Jacksonville, Caleb and Monica’s story



Caleb Owens and Monica Heseman

serves as a powerful example of what is possible when mentorship, support and commitment come together.

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation is a Jacksonville-based youth development program that empowers young individuals through academic assistance,



Caleb Owens and his parents

life skills, mentorship and tennis programs. The foundation is dedicated to providing comprehensive support for students, nurturing their potential and fostering positive growth.

Learn more at malwashington.com.



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Walk to Defeat ALS is Oct. 26

For The Recorder

On Oct. 26, people living with ALS, family members, friends, caregivers and others affected by ALS will gather at Ripley's Believe It or Not! for the 2024 Walk to Defeat ALS St. Augustine.

ALS, often called Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease affecting nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. It gradually robs people of the ability to walk, move, talk, swallow and eventually breathe. ALS has no known cause or cure, and the community is coming together to make ALS livable for everyone, everywhere.

Hundreds of people will rally together at Walk to Defeat ALS to fuel the mission and support people living with ALS in the region. Many who participate have a loved one who is battling ALS while others walk in memory of a loved one who has lost their fight. Some participate simply because they want to make ALS a livable disease for everyone, everywhere, while experts tirelessly search for a cure.

The walk will raise both funds and awareness. To register to participate, go to als.org/WalkStAugustine. Registered participants who raise \$100 or more receive a commemorative T-shirt.

Ripley's Believe It or Not! is located at 19 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine. Check in time is 8 a.m. The event starts at 9:15 a.m.

St. Johns County proposes economic incentives for cancer institute

The life and legacy of Tyler Mert Ergisi, who was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer that took his life at the age of 19, will be illuminated with a new cancer research institute in St. Johns County. On July 16, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners approved a motion to draft an economic development incentive agreement for the TyMe Institute Inc. for consideration at a future County Commission meeting.

The incentive's estimated value is \$621,031. TyMe Institute will develop more than 30,000 square feet of space for a cancer prevention clinic, including a future cancer research laboratory and small-scale cancer drug manufacturing facility. The project will create 54 new high-wage jobs with an average income that is more than 125% of St. Johns County's average annual wage. The total anticipated investment by the TyMe Institute in land, building and equipment is approximately \$20.5 million.

"The TyMe Institute is dedicated to combating cancer with innovation,



Tyler Mert Ergisi

partnerships and prevention methodologies that have yet to be undertaken by the research or health care industries," said County Commission Chair Sarah Arnold, who represents District 2, the future location of TyMe Institute. "This is more than

an investment in bricks and buildings; it is an investment in health and life."

The Ergisi family released a statement about the TyMe Institute opening in St. Johns County:

"Our son, Tyler Mert Ergisi, was diagnosed with osteosarcoma (bone cancer), a deadly cancer that took his life at the age of 19. TyMe (Tyler Mert Ergisi) Institute is founded to honor his courageous battle against cancer. The Ergisi family has resolved to use all their resources, relationships, knowledge and economic strength in the quest to find a cure for children like Tyler. We aspire to save one life at a time so that other parents may never endure the unimaginable pain of losing a child."

The incentive request includes the reimbursement of 100% of impact fees, four years of county ad valorem taxes paid on capital improvements and four years of county tangible personal property taxes paid. TyMe Institute is anticipated to open in the fourth quarter of 2025 in The Fountains at St. Johns, located on County Road 210.

Human trafficking awareness walk planned

Operation Underground Railroad Rescue NE FL is planning its second annual Human Trafficking Awareness Walk for 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 19.

OUR Rescue NE FL has three goals: To bring awareness to human trafficking by starting a conversation.

Prevention through education: Giving kids the knowledge to protect themselves from the predators, groomers online and possibly around them.



Contributed photo

Raising funds for the cause. The Human Trafficking Awareness

Walk through the streets of St. Augustine is a family friendly event for all ages. Walkers will meet at the St. Augustine Visitors Center, 10 S. Castillo Drive.

To order your free tickets click on link, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-event-our-rescue-ne-florida-human-trafficking-awareness-walk-tickets-1009434835767>.

For more information, go to www.ourrescue.org.



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Golf tournament to help local students in need

For The Recorder

The number of school children who need financial assistance at Valley Ridge Academy in Nocatee is on the rise at the same time government funding to help them is declining. That’s why the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra hosted its inaugural “NFL Par-Tee Charity Golf Tournament” at nearby Palm Valley Golf Course on Sept. 22.

The proceeds from the event will go to Valley Ridge Academy and other Nocatee schools to help them with students who are in need as well as funding other charitable efforts of the Rotary Club’s foundation.

The latest data from the St. Johns County School District has identified 12 children who are homeless and attending Nocatee area schools. Furthermore, an estimated total of 65 children at three Nocatee K-8 schools require food donations on the weekends to get by.

Complicating matters, these schools are losing COVID-related relief grants from the federal government as part of the America Rescue Plan Act. This means



Contributed photos

helping children who are financially disadvantaged attend a class field trip with their peers, for example, or enroll in an after-school care program is becoming

more difficult.

Over the past two years, Valley Ridge Academy has seen a significant increase in the number of students in need. The

majority of them have a home but lack the financial resources to cover “out-of-pocket” school-related expenses. Others meet the federal McKinney-Vento Act definition of being homeless as they either lack a fixed, regular or adequate nighttime residence, or do not live with a parent or legal guardian and are thus considered to be an “unaccompanied youth.”

The NFL Par-Tee Charity Golf Tournament consisted of teams of golfers, each teeing off in a shotgun start for the event. Local merchants donated raffle prizes ranging from a free annual social membership at TPC Sawgrass to 500 free smoothies from Clean Juice in Nocatee.

There was a hole-in-one contest for a free golf cart from Nextgen Carts, a family-friendly “Fun Zone” that included games like a marshmallow driving contest, and food provided by the BF’ND and Mister Softee food trucks.

About 50 volunteers (high school students from Nease, Ponte Vedra and Creekside included, along with adults) helped out and several golfers took part.

Organizers estimate that the event generated \$5,000 for the cause.



After 20 years, Halloween tradition draws to close

For The Recorder

Halloween Doors & More has been a cherished tradition in Jacksonville for two decades, bringing joy and comfort to countless families. But this will be its final year.

What began as a desire to raise awareness for Community PedsCare, the pediatric program of Community Hospice & Palliative Care, developed into a beloved annual celebration that has benefited the lives of many children living with serious and life-limiting illnesses while including families from all over each year celebrating and raising awareness of the PedsCare program.

The story of Halloween Doors & More began in 2000 when Betty Petway and Susan DuBow had a brainstorming session with a bold vision: to create an event that would function as a gala, raise awareness and generate substantial funds, all while being an event where the sponsors' and guests' children, along with the children of Community PedsCare, could participate and enjoy themselves. This unique concept, blending the elements of a high-profile fundraiser with Halloween's whimsical and inclusive spirit, set the

event apart from others.

Recognizing the need for a strong planning team, Brook Acosta-Rua and Jill McGriff joined DuBow to chair the first annual event. Together, this dedicated group spent 18 months carefully crafting what would become one of Jacksonville's most anticipated events, becoming at the time, the highest grossing first year event in Jacksonville's history.

In October 2001, the inaugural Halloween Doors & More event debuted, transforming the Jacksonville Fairgrounds Exhibition Hall into a fantastical world of enchantment. From the beginning, the event captured the hearts of the community, drawing in families, volunteers and local businesses eager to support a heartfelt and impactful cause.

Over the years, the event has continued to evolve, with each year bringing a new theme and new surprises, culminating this year in a circus-themed extravaganza. This evolution has kept the event fresh and engaging, attracting new participants and retaining the interest of long-time supporters.

Since its inception, Halloween Doors & More has raised more than \$10 million, directly supporting Community PedsCare

and the children and families it serves.

This incredible financial impact has ensured that comprehensive, compassionate care remains available to those who need it most at no cost to the families. The funds have enabled the program to grow and adapt, providing essential services and support during some of the most challenging times in these families' lives.

But the legacy of Halloween Doors & More extends far beyond the dollars raised. For the pediatric patients of Community PedsCare, the event has been more than just a day of fun — it has been a source of hope, a break from the routine of medical treatments and a reminder that they are not alone.

For their families, it has provided an opportunity to see their children laugh, play and be surrounded by a community that cares.

The success of Halloween Doors & More would not have been possible without the unwavering involvement of the community and the passion of various North Florida organizations. Their commitment over the past 20 years has been the driving force behind the event's enduring success. This support is a testament to the power of community and

shared purpose in achieving incredible things.

As the event celebrates its 20th anniversary, Halloween Doors & More will be a poignant farewell to a tradition that has meant so much to so many. It will be a time to reflect on this event's incredible impact on the community and celebrate its legacy.

This is also a great time to look forward to the future and introduce Roars & More, a gala of a different sort, which will be held at the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens in February. More information will be available soon.

For those who have been a part of Halloween Doors & More over the years, whether as organizers, volunteers, donors or attendees, this final event is an opportunity to come together one last time to celebrate the magic, the memories and the difference it has been made for patients and families.

As the Jacksonville Fairgrounds Exhibition Hall fills with the sights and sounds of Halloween one more time, it will be a moment to honor the past, cherish the present and look forward to the continued impact of Community PedsCare in the years to come.

Pin Up Paws fundraiser helps provide resources for local pets

For The Recorder

On Thursday, Oct. 24, the St. Augustine Humane Society will celebrate the release of its 2025 Pin Up Paws Calendar with a soiree and silent auction at The White Room, 1 King St., St. Augustine. This and the organization's other annual fundraiser events support the work of the St. Augustine Humane Society, which is committed to promoting successful pet ownership through various services.

"We love hosting these events and gathering together our community of animal advocates," said Carolyn Sindad Smith, executive director of the St. Augustine Humane Society. "But it's their purpose

that is truly extraordinary. Our charitable events raise funds that help keep our free and low-cost services available. We value being the trusted source that residents can turn to when they need advice, a helping hand, or critical services. And we take that trust very seriously."

The St. Augustine Humane Society takes its mission very seriously, ensuring the organization can help as many pets and "pet parents" as possible. The organization's end-of-year numbers show its success. In 2023 alone, the St. Augustine Humane Society:

- Assisted 1,500 new clients
- Performed 2,698 wellness visits
- Administered 8,025 vaccinations

- Implanted 720 microchips
- Performed 2,885 spay/neuter surgeries
- Performed 275 specialty surgeries
- Performed 96 dental procedures
- Distributed more than 26,000 pounds of free food

The St. Augustine Humane Society is also committed to maintaining a standard of excellence in its operations. It maintains a Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar, a service that analyzes nonprofits. Only 5% of U.S. nonprofits hold a seal of transparency, and less than 1% have earned the Platinum Seal. This means that philanthropists can feel confident their financial gifts are being used appropriately.

The 2025 Sweet Things Pin Up Paws

Party is a fun experience for those looking to support the St. Augustine Humane Society's work. The Pin Up Paws Auction is packed with fun experiences, useful gift cards and unique one-of-a-kind collectibles.

All auction items can be viewed at 32auctions.com/organizations/36391/auctions/163255?r=1&t=all.

The event promises a delightful evening with dinner, complimentary wine, live music by the House Cats Quartet, a silent auction, wine pull and more.

Pin Up Paws Party tickets are \$145 per person and may be purchased at eventgroove.com/event/Pin-Up-Paws-Party-2024-91420.

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Jacksonville Arboretum receives \$1M grant

For The Recorder

The Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens (JABG) has received a \$1 million grant from the River Branch Foundation, marking a significant milestone in the organization's growth and commitment to environmental stewardship.

This transformative grant, the largest in JABG's history, will propel the organization's goals in cultivating a thriving green space and educating the community on the importance of environmental conservation.

"This grant represents a turning point for JABG, and we are incredibly grateful to the River Branch Foundation for their visionary support," said JABG Executive Director Dana Doody. "With this crucial funding, we are

well-positioned to become a leader in environmental education and to serve as a family-friendly green space for all Jacksonville residents to enjoy."

The grant will empower JABG to focus on several key initiatives aimed at enhancing the visitor experience and strengthening JABG's environmental impact, including investing in essential maintenance equipment, enhancing visitor accessibility, improving security measures and hiring additional necessary staff.

Most importantly, funding from this grant will also contribute to JABG's sustainability as an organization, including enhancements of events at JABG such as Glowing Gardens, the organization's new and improved annual light show.

"The arboretum has gained incred-

ible momentum over the past few years, and it is great to see the support coming from the community," District 2 Councilman Mike Gay said. "I'm eager to see how the nonprofit organization will continue to progress, especially with this generous support from the River Branch Foundation."

Given its history, the growth of JABG has been undeniable. Between the 1940s and 1960s, large tracts of the Regency area were mined of the minerals used to make titanium, leaving the property that is now JABG with very little remaining vegetation. Following this, the property was acquired by the City of Jacksonville to provide a buffer zone between the JEA wastewater plant and the residential neighborhoods to the east.

For the following 30 years, the property began to regrow vegetation and

wildlife, and was officially leased to JABG, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, in 2006, with intent to develop, operate and maintain the property. The Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens officially opened to the public on Nov. 15, 2008.

A short walk on the property confirms JABG's commitment to the rebirth and growth of this property, with support from the River Branch Foundation marking a new turning point for the organization — accelerating its mission to cultivate understanding and wonder by engaging the community through the natural beauty of Northeast Florida.

For more information about JABG, go to jacksonvillearboretum.org. For major gift inquiries, email Michelle Beers, director of philanthropy, at michelleb@jacksonvillearboretum.org.

Area student named National Youth Heart Ambassador

The American Heart Association, celebrating 100 years of lifesaving service in 2024, has named a seventh-grade student at Julia Landon College Preparatory & Leadership Development School as one of 20 volunteer national Youth Heart Ambassadors for the 2024-25 school year.

Anushya Baruah, 12, of Jacksonville will collaborate with the American Heart Association's school engagement programs, Kids Heart Challenge and American Heart Challenge, to spread heart health awareness among her peers.

The American Heart Association accepted nominations nationwide from young people who have been impacted by heart disease or stroke. Youth with a personal diagnosis, a family history of cardiovascular disease or a passion for leading a heart-healthy life were encouraged to apply for the Youth Heart Ambassador role. Anushya's grandfather battled heart disease, and she is motivated to enact change among her peers and to empower people to lead healthy lives.

"I am very grateful for this opportunity to be the 2024-25 Youth Heart Ambassador and learn more about heart disease," Baruah said.

The Youth Heart Ambassadors serve a one-year commitment as a volunteer of the American Heart Association as-

sisting the organization to be a relentless force for healthier lives for all. The position gives youth a voice to encourage, advocate and emphasize the need to raise critical funding in their local communities as they share the impact cardiovascular disease has had on their lives.

"Schools participating in our free community service-learning programs, Kids Heart and American Heart Challenge, is so important for fostering a heart-healthy community," said Amanda Tewey, school engagement director at the American Heart Association. "When students have the opportunity to share their personal why, they inspire their peers and drive change."

The Kids Heart Challenge and American Heart Challenge are dynamic service-learning fundraising programs that teach students how to improve their overall health while making a positive impact on others. Through engaging curriculums and interactive challenges, students get active, have fun and raise essential funds for congenital heart defects, nutrition security, CPR training, mental well-being and more. These efforts support the American Heart Association's mission to create a world of longer, healthier lives.

"We are excited to announce that a local student has been selected to represent the American Heart Associa-

tion nationally," Tewey said. "This not only highlights her dedication but also brings immense pride and excitement to our community, encouraging others to join the fight against heart disease and stroke."

Schools interested in participating in

either Kids Heart Challenge or American Heart Challenge can register now at heart.org/en/professional/educator/school-programs for the 2024-25 school year. More information about the Youth Heart Ambassadors can be found at heart.org/youthambassadors.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024 PAGE 30

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Baptist Health gets top marks for use of digital tools

For The Recorder

Baptist Health has announced that its expert use of digital technology to enhance the delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care has been recognized by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS).

Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center has become the first organization in the world to earn HIMSS's Community Care Outcomes Maturity Model (C-COMM) Stage 7 validation for improving patient engagement and outcomes outside of hospital settings.

The C-COMM model measures how

health care organizations leverage information and technology to better engage with patients, families and caregivers across community-based service environments such as primary care, home health and telehealth. C-COMM Stage 7 is the highest level of accreditation awarded by HIMSS, a nonprofit body dedicated to improving the quality, safety, cost-effectiveness and access to health care through information and technology systems.

The elite recognition signifies the full integration of well-known digital tools like MyChart that allows health information to be shared effectively between patients and their clinical teams, with others such

as the Baptist Access app, which features interactive maps, "Find a Doctor" and "Parking Reminder" tools to help patients find where they parked and how to navigate to a specific location inside our health care facilities. The integration and optimization of these tools enhances patient engagement, experience, quality of care and safety and ultimately leads to improved patient outcomes.

"Today, the majority of treatments, care and services take place outside the confines of hospitals or acute care settings," said Bill Putnam, MD, medical director of Baptist MD Anderson. "Digital tools help patients navigate their health care journey and help

us connect with them and meet them where they are. They allow us to manage and adjust treatments to ensure patients receive the top-quality, patient-centered cancer care they have come to expect from us."

"The innovative use of technology is reshaping how high-quality health care is delivered, and we are proud to be driving this change," said Aaron Miri, senior vice president and chief digital and information officer of Baptist Health. "This recognition is a testament to the commitment of our information technology and clinical teams to optimize our information and technology capabilities to create a healthier community."



Scott Maynard, Isabelle Renault, Dr. Erika Hamer and Elizabeth Bernardino.



The event had a great turnout celebrating Ponte Vedra Wellness Center's 20th anniversary.

Ponte Vedra Wellness celebrates 20 years with Chamber after hours

Ponte Vedra Wellness remembered 20 years in business and its long partnership with the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division during an "after hours" event it hosted.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Ponte Vedra Wellness gave out door prizes at the event.



Scott Maynard and Ericha Gore.

GUEST COLUMN

What is long-term care, and how can you plan for it financially?

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors



Long-term care is the services needed to help you if a chronic illness or disability stops you from living on your own or performing daily personal activities such as getting dressed, taking medicine or making meals.

You might not need these services until later in life but consider planning well in advance. You don't want to be developing a plan to pay for long-term care after you already need it. Here are four considerations to keep in mind as you develop a long-term care plan:

Know the different levels of care and their costs

Aging in place often refers to services being delivered to you in your home and can include aid rendered by visiting nurses, family and friends. It can also mean living in a continuing care community that has different facilities, each providing increasing levels of care. You move into the facility that matches the level of care you need and move to higher levels of care as you require them. The benefit of residing in such a community is that you "age in place" as you progress through the facili-

ties that offer the level of care you need. It can be comforting to know that you will not need to seek a new care facility each time your care requirements change.

An assisted living facility is often a residence that provides staff who can assist with daily needs (showering, dressing, taking medications). Moving into assisted living may also add a level of security knowing that you are not alone if a fall or a health event occurs.

Skilled care refers to a residential facility (or nursing home) that includes on-site medical care. These facilities often include short-term rehabilitation services following a hospital stay as well as 24-hour nursing care for full-time residents who require extensive assistance and supervision. Memory care units may also be provided in these facilities for residents with cogni-

tive challenges such as Alzheimer's who require the most extreme level of supervision and care.

Discuss how you want to be looked after with loved ones

It is important for you to communicate your wishes so that they can be understood and considered. Though you may assume your adult children are going to care for and support you if the need for long-term care arises, you should find out whether that is the case by speaking to them directly. Consider working together to create an action plan that supports your needs.

Consider how you'll pay for long-term care

Health insurance and government programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare,

impose restrictions and limits when it comes to paying for long-term care. That means you may need to incorporate other approaches into your plan such as liquidating assets, paying out of pocket, relying on a family member to pay, or purchasing long-term care insurance.

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Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns County launches spine conditions clinic

For The Recorder

St. Vincent's St. Johns County has launched a neurosurgery clinic, providing advanced surgical care for spine conditions. The neurosurgeons at this new clinic are a team of brain and spine specialists from across the country, sharing best practices, knowledge and research, bringing the best of its integrated national network of care to the St. Johns community.

"St. Johns County is a fast-growing community, and we've recognized the need to expand with it," said Dr. Ali Chalavi, neurosurgeon with St. Vincent's. "We're excited to begin this new clinic at the hospital, ensuring our patients have access to high-quality neurosurgical care where they live."

Surgery is rarely the first option for patients. However, if it is recommended as part of their care, the experienced neurosurgeons at St. Vincent's St. Johns County develop highly specialized, advanced surgical treatment plans that are customized for the individual patient. Its care teams provide comprehensive care for every patient at every step in the process.

St. Vincent's surgeons are skilled in all aspects of adult neurological care. They offer high-quality diagnosis and treatment including:

- Minimally-invasive and complex spine surgery
- Craniotomy for tumor resection



Contributed photo

- Stereotactic radiosurgery
- Epilepsy surgery
- Surgery for treatment of chronic pain

"Providing access to high-quality, specialized care that is based on the unique needs of every patient has been our goal since opening our doors a little more than two years ago," said Cory Darling, president and CEO of St. Vincent's St. Johns County. "This is a significant expansion of our commitment to providing the services that are needed most in our community."

This service line expansion will provide much needed care for expanding neighborhoods in St. Johns County. It is the fourth fastest growing county in the United States, according to JAXUSA, with an average annual population increase of 4%.

This expansion comes after the hospital was designated as a Primary Stroke Center by the Joint Commission in spring 2024. More importantly, this strategy brings mission-driven health care to more patients across Northeast Florida.

St. Vincent's is a leader in spine surgery. St. Vincent's Southside was designated a top 5 hospital for spine surgery in Florida and one of America's 100 Best Hospitals for Spine Surgery by Healthgrades.

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

Master planned community proposed for St. Johns County

For The Recorder

Aegis Gibson LLC has proposed plans for Water Lily, a significant new development that is set to reshape the landscape of St. Johns County.

This master-planned community spans approximately 1,118 acres, located at the intersection of County Road 214 and State Road 13 North, within the West County Road 214 area. The project will

combine residential and commercial spaces in an integrated environment, while blending seamlessly with the county's natural surroundings and addressing critical infrastructure needs.

Water Lily is located adjacent to the St. Johns River, with its current land use focused on farming. The transition from agricultural land to residential use will drastically reduce fertilizer runoff into the river, according to the developer. As part

of the project's commitment to sustainability, advanced stormwater management systems will be incorporated to further protect the river and surrounding ecosystems.

The development will offer up to 3,000 homes, with a diverse range of housing options, alongside 280,000 square feet of mixed-use commercial space. This area will provide essential neighborhood goods and services to residents.

In addition to this, the project will preserve more than 275 acres of wetlands, maintain canopies of specimen trees and plant more than 25,000 native trees, a significant environmental enhancement as much of the current land has been used for farming, leaving it without tree cover, according to the developer.

A key feature of Water Lily is its commitment to supporting the existing community. There are roughly 400 residential homes near the project, some of which are currently as far as 10 miles from the nearest fire station. Water Lily will construct a new fire station, improving safety for both future residents and those in the surrounding area.

Another major benefit is the development of an onsite water and wastewater treatment plant, which will be handed over to the county for operation. This facility will not only serve the Water Lily community but will also extend services to neighboring homes, many of which

currently rely on septic tank systems.

The development will also dedicate riverfront property to St. Johns County, enhancing public access to the St. Johns River and providing new recreational opportunities. Water Lily's infrastructure will feature comprehensive road systems, utilities, drainage and stormwater management, all designed to support the long-term sustainability and functionality of the community.

The project will include age-restricted housing, which will ensure minimal impact on local schools and minimize traffic compared to typical residential developments. The project is expected to be completed in phases over several years, with each phase ensuring careful planning and the preservation of natural resources.

"We are excited to bring the Water Lily project to St. Johns County," said Ashley Allen, director of operations at Aegis Gibson. "Our vision is to create a community that harmonizes residential and commercial spaces while protecting the environment and supporting the existing community through essential infrastructure improvements."

With its blend of housing, commercial space, preserved natural areas, and critical infrastructure enhancements, Water Lily is poised to meet the needs of St. Johns County's growing population while safeguarding its natural heritage, the developer said.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024 · PAGE 33 www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Film festival to launch year-round model with “Beyond Triathlon” documentary

For The Recorder

In response to a growing demand from a burgeoning group of both young and established filmmakers in Northeast Florida and around the state, the Jacksonville Film Festival has announced plans to launch a pilot program representing a transformative shift to year-round entertainment.

This groundbreaking move for the festival ushers in a new era in the city's cultural landscape. Launching this innovative new model for the nonprofit is the Oct. 12 debut screening of “Beyond Triathlon,” a cinematic journey into the evolution of competitive women’s sports as viewed through the eyes of philanthropist and master-class athlete Dorothy S. Dorion and other female athlete pioneers and trailblazers.

Inspired by the book of the same name, “Beyond Triathlon” offers a thought-provoking examination of the challenges, triumphs and significant milestones experienced by women on their journeys in master sports.

“Beyond Triathlon offers the perfect opportunity to underscore the festival’s commitment to fostering continuous engagement with filmmakers, artists and enthusiasts,” said Tim Driscoll, Jacksonville Film Festival program director. “The festival is excited to showcase this documentary at the renowned Lazzara Performance Hall on the University of North Florida campus; we are committed to elevating Jacksonville's prominence as a dynamic hub for creative expression and cinematic excellence.”

Moez Limayem, president of the University of North Florida (UNF) said, “UNF is honored to host the debut event for this film with its inspiring narrative. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to legacy donor Dottie Dorion, whose generosity knows no bounds as evidenced by her pledge that 100% of the premiere's proceeds will bolster UNF Athletic Scholarships.”

In addition to having a long history of donating scholarships to the university, Dorion also provided critical funding for the building of the Dorion Fitness



Contributed photo

Master-class athlete Dorothy S. Dorion is featured in the film, “Beyond Triathlon.”

Center in 1978. Today, the Dorion Fitness Center, which boasts 27,000 square feet of fitness floor space, is located on the second floor of the Student Wellness Complex.

“I am incredibly proud of our partnership with the Jacksonville Film Festival and the University of North Florida,” said Dorion. “Together, we are not just telling a story; we are inspiring audiences to push beyond their limits, embrace resilience and foster a community of unwavering support.”

She concluded, “With UNF and the Jacksonville Film Festival by our side, the journey ahead promises to be as exhilarating as crossing the finish line of an Ironman.”

Tickets for the “Beyond Triathlon” premiere and reception are priced at \$10 and can be purchased online at <https://beyondtriathlon.com>. All proceeds from the event will benefit the University of North Florida’s Athletics Programs.

Jacksonville Film Festival is the longest-running film festival in Jacksonville. It is a not-for-profit, annual film festival that showcases in-competition and out-of-competition American and International independent films.

For more information, go to JacksonvilleFilmFestival.com.

Sisters in Crime plans writers’ workshop

Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime is planning a one-day writers’ workshop from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 5, at the San Marco Community Center, 1936 Hendricks Ave. The topic will be “Double Vision: Writing Dual Timelines.” The presenter will be Denny S. Bryce.

Bryce is a best-selling, award-winning author of historical fiction. She is also an NPR book critic, an adjunct professor at Drexel University and a freelance writer who has written for Harper’s Bazaar and USA Today. She is a member of the Historical Novel Society, Women’s Fiction Writers Association and Tall Poppy Writers.

There will be a catered lunch. Reservations are required.

Topics include “Foundations of Dual Timeline Narratives, Types and Analysis,” “Writing a Back Cover and Multiple Points of View.”

Cost to Sisters in Crime members and college students is \$50. Cost to nonmembers is \$70.

More details are available at neflorasistersincrime.org.

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CONCERT REVIEW

Jacksonville Symphony brings VIPs to the stage in Classical Series opener

By Matt Bickett

On the heels of Hurricane Helene's devastating arrival and departure, a sizable audience gathered at Jacoby Hall for an evening of moving music. The Jacksonville Symphony continued its celebration of its 75th anniversary season on Friday and Saturday nights with a knack for assembling a cast of musical luminaries — both familiar and new. Notable guests at this opening concert of the Florida Blue Classical Series were composer Britany J. Green and pianist Joyce Yang.

The concert opened with a world premiere of Green's engaging new work for orchestra, "TESTIFY!" The tightly focused, eight-minute work for full orchestra features delightfully buoyant rhythms and a joyful tambourine. Composed as a musical snapshot of a feeling, "TESTIFY!" convincingly explores the interplay of orchestral conventions — where professional musicians read from sheet music — with Green's memories of "Mama — a self-proclaimed 'non-musician,'" as the program notes explain.

Percussionist Joel Panian's expertly executed tambourine feature, a rare focus for the repertoire, shined a glimmer of dance-like freedom onto the ensemble's otherwise frequently heady programming. Following the composer's instruction for lighthearted whoops from those on stage, the piece started up with playful clarinet licks leading to jaunty string phrases. Glimpses of a Sunday morning hymn ("I'm So Glad") appeared through the dancing moments, although the performance's high points called out for more rhythmic risk-taking from the ensemble.

Taking cues from the American minimalist tradition and grounded in Green's engagement with Black feminist theory, "TESTIFY!" showed the Jacksonville Symphony and its audience embracing a world centered on musical memory, maternal influence and bodily shouts and dances. With Green's inspiring compositional vision so convincingly embraced, the Symphony heralded a new era of the Classical Series's depth and relevance.

Turning from the gleefully new to the warmly familiar, the Symphony gave a substantial account of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto. Starting with pianist Joyce Yang's strong entrance to the stage, then her powerful sound in the opening chords, the performers turned all eyes on stage and the audience could not look away. An earthy sound in the strings' opening theme complimented the refined dynamism of Yang's virtuosity in the open-

ing movement.

Music Director Courtney Lewis's minimal direction wisely shepherded the ensemble's collaboration, bringing attention to Yang's commanding presence through her mastery of the work. The second movement saw moments of the ensemble overshooting its aim in accommodating the soloist, allowing the piano's brilliance and volume to outshine an overly still and almost timid sound.

The hard work of coordinating Rachmaninoff's complicated phrases between soloist and orchestra paid off in a serene close to the second movement. The Symphony helped ground Yang's pianistic fireworks in the final movement, bringing the partnership to an amiable close in the final movement's bright ending.

After the intermission, the Symphony brought to the stage an altogether different VIP — the ideal hero of Strauss's epic "Ein Heldenleben" ("A Hero's Life"). This tone poem depicting an imaginary hero's life story (the hero likely being the composer himself) provided the Symphony a chance to celebrate the heroes among its own ranks in an epic musical journey.

Lewis's eye for long-term pacing invited the audience along on a thrilling ride to start, carrying listeners forward with a balanced attention to the big picture and Strauss's nearly overwhelming small details. Following a robust rendition of the opening section, the characterization of the hero's adversaries (Strauss's infamously unflattering depiction of music critics like myself!) lacked the chaos of the critics' chatter, instead presenting too beautiful a sound in the winds.

Beauty and warmth gloriously found their proper home in "The Hero's Companion," with the ensemble's gentle interludes answering concertmaster Adelya Nartadjieva's mesmerizing solos that featured particularly expressive double stops. Offstage trumpets brilliantly ushered in the Symphony's especially characterful account of "The Hero at Battle".

While the performance's transition to peaceful resolution lost dramatic intensity, the work's final retreat highlighted some of the Symphony's best moments of the evening. Lewis's gesture here evolved into its most refined, and the return of violin solos brought intimacy to the performance. Perhaps most striking, principal hornist Kevin Reid displayed a balanced sense for expressiveness and precision in the closing moments' unforgettable solo. Following such a large undertaking, I left with a sense that the VIP list on stage extended beyond the program's headliners.

Matt Bickett is a musician and scholar living in Jacksonville.

Author to address character, setting



Sarah Bewley

For The Recorder

Developing distinctive characters and realistic fictional settings is the mark of a good writer. Award-winning author and playwright Sarah Bewley provides valuable insights to the process in her workshop, "Creating Individual Voices and Fictional Settings that Feel Real," during the Ponte Vedra Writers meeting, 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12, at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

"Have you ever read a book where you cannot tell who is speaking unless the author tells you? It's really annoying. Do the men and women sound the same?" Bewley said. "Setting is a defining aspect of any book, and it's important to help your reader see just where they are when they read your book."

Bewley has been a private investigator and a freelance writer and is an award-winning playwright. Her love of mysteries inspired her to write her first book, "Burning Eden." Her second book, "Frozen Eden" was released July 30. In her spare time, she rock-climbs, takes boxing lessons and loves reading and dogs.

The Ponte Vedra Writers group is part of the Florida Writers Association, a statewide membership organization dedicated to the support of both aspiring and published writers in any genre.

The Oct. 12 meeting is free and open to members and non-members alike. For information on FWA go to floridawriters.org.

Sundays at Stetson's concert is Oct. 13

Sundays at Stetson's will present its annual Songs For Stetson concert on Oct. 13, this year featuring Jeanie Fitchen and Jim Bickerstaff. Music starts at 2 p.m. A donation of \$10 per person is suggested to offset the costs of bringing live folk music to Northeast Florida. Reservations are not required but seating is limited; arrive early to guarantee your seat.

Songwriter, storyteller and recording artist Fitchen has come a long way since her first festival appearance at the Florida Folk Festival in 1966. Since then, she has traveled throughout Florida, Tennessee, New York, Alaska and points in between, earning accolades and awards for her performances, songwriting and recordings.

Bickerstaff is a veteran performer, songwriter, audio engineer and producer. He has worked with some of the top names in the industry including projects for Capricorn Records and Warner Brothers.

Beluthahatchee is located at 1523 State Road 13, Fruit Cove, at the end of a short dirt road, a quarter mile south of Roberts Road.

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Jack Berquist (No. 14) hauls in a deep pass for the Sharks.



The Sharks defense converges upon a Fleming Island ball carrier.

Resilient Sharks fall short in road trip to Fleming Island

The Ponte Vedra Sharks lost a close district contest on the road against the Fleming Island Golden Eagles (3-2, 2-0) in week six, 31-29. Despite the loss, the Sharks (3-2, 1-1) made a late comeback and showcased a lot of resiliency in the game.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Cooper Sobieck plays tight defense against a receiver.



Drew Price runs the ball.



Drew Price and Brian Case run a read play.

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Nease Head Coach Collin Drafts said this year's Panthers are a "special" group.



The current Nease cheer team spent time prior to the game with junior cheerleaders.

Panthers

Continued from 1

it and had a real feel for it, which allowed me to break on the ball and get a 'W' for our team."

His interception was his second on the night and came on third and goal, which proved crucial because not only did it end the game, but it prevented the Bobcats from attempting a field goal to force a potential second overtime.

Some players may play an entire high school career without ever playing in an overtime game and now the Panthers have experience two in as many weeks.

"It's stressful and it gets to my heart," Curry chuckled. "When you're out there, you're just trying to make a play no matter how you can," Curry said. "Shemar was the one that made it, and he does that kind stuff all the time in practice, so I knew he had it all the way."

Not only did the Panthers win another game in overtime, but they also came back from trailing at halftime to win, as they continue to show the ability to stand tall instead of crumbling when adversity hits.

"I believe a lot of people didn't think we could beat that team out there tonight, but we did and we're not even close to being



The Nease student section was loud even after two lightning delays.

done," McNair said.

The adjectives to describe the Panthers this season are getting harder to come up with as they continue to impress by compiling memorable wins and impressive performances each week.

"There's something special that's going on right now with this group, and it's only just begun," Head Coach Collin Drafts said.

Ghazanfari was clutch on multiple occasions late in the contest, as he crushed a 37-yard field goal, that had plenty of distance behind it to give the Panthers their first lead of the night, 17-14 with 3:34 left to play.

However, despite the Panthers' defense providing relentless pressure on the Bobcats' quarterback Trace Johnson, he was able to convert a couple of lengthy third downs to extend a late drive and they

hit a 40-yard field goal with nine seconds remaining to force overtime.

Prior to the field goal, the Bobcats had been held scoreless during the second half, as the Panthers' defense again made the proper adjustments after trailing 14-7 at halftime.

"They make me look good," defensive coordinator Robert Garth said. "I tell them all the time, 'that if all 11 guys are working in unison, it doesn't matter what I call, it will work because of the players we have,' and that showed again tonight."

Joe Miracle was a stat sheet stuffer as he made plays in a variety of ways, including sacks, tackles for a loss, and an interception that set up Ghazanfari's field goal attempt in regulation.

His interception came shortly after the Panthers tied it up at 14-all after Nate Harry connected with Maddox Spencer on a slant route for a touchdown.

"We're all so versatile and we're just athletes out there, which is what makes us so special," Miracle said. "I feel like by the end of the season we'll all be off to college playing at the division one level and I can't wait to see that."

The start of the game was delayed one and a half hours due to lightning in the area.



Nate Harry scrambles for yards. He had a 60-yard touchdown run in the game.



Maddox Spencer was a go-to target in the passing game once again.

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File No.: CP24-0649
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The administration of the estate of Lillie Belle Ferguson, deceased, whose date of death was November 23, 2023, File Number: CP24-0649 is pending in the Circuit Court for St. Johns County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, Florida 32084. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice has been served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE TIME OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

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

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

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| CELEBRATE | FEAST | GUESTS | NEW YEAR'S DAY |
| CHANUKAH | FESTIVE | HALLOWEEN | PASSOVER |
| CHRISTMAS | FIREWORKS | HOLIDAYS | PRESENTS |
| DINING | FOOD | INDEPENDENCE | THANKSGIVING |
| EASTER | FRIENDS | INVITATION | TOGETHER |
| EXCITEMENT | GAMES | KWANZAA | VACATION |

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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						

ACROSS

- Current unit
- Reciprocal of an ohm
- God of the sea
- A way to disfigure
- Positioned
- Tall tropical American tree
- Large deciduous trees
- ___ and ends
- Part of a machine
- Brews
- One who leads prayers in a mosque
- Indian state
- Partisans
- Top lawyer in the land
- Former Dodgers MVP
- Title for women
- Heated and allowed to slowly cool
- Copycat
- Sounds
- One-time Israeli diplomat Abba
- Part of (abbr.)
- Hateful
- Collide
- European football heavyweight
- One who works for you
- Song
- Ancient marvels
- Bridge building degree
- Delivery boys

DOWN

- Continent
- Submissive
- There's a lot in a bowling alley
- Sun up in New York
- Court decision ___ v. Wade
- Finish line
- Young women

ACROSS

- Hives of activity
- Hyman Roth's right-hand man Johnny
- Eastern U.S. river
- Popular cooking ingredient
- Greek mythological princess
- Scent for men
- Cost, insurance and freight (abbr.)
- Once more
- Irate
- Triangular spaces above a door
- Norwegian playwright and poet Henrik
- Atomic #58
- Patti Hearst's captors

DOWN

- Natural logarithm
- Talk incessantly
- Went by
- Strives
- Fall back
- Manila hemp
- Not easily explained
- Former "Double Dare" host Summers
- Mollusk
- Capital of Togo
- Letter of Semitic scripts
- Founder of Babism
- Indicates near
- Family of regulator genes
- Indicates before

SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

Here's How It Works:

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



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