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The Register
INSIDE

Thursday, October 24, 2024

PonteVedraRecorder.com

VOLUME 55, NO. 52 \$1.00

Voters to decide two local tax issues

By Shaun Ryan

St. Johns County voters are being asked to decide two referenda during this election cycle that, if passed, would help fund critical needs of the school district.

One is a renewal of a half-cent sales surtax to be used for construction, reconstruction and improvements to school facilities. The other is a one-mill increase in residential property taxes that would be used for increasing teacher pay and other purposes.

In anticipation of the vote, the St. Johns County School District has been conducting a series of town hall meetings to make the case for passage.

Introducing the topic at the Tuesday, Oct. 15, meeting, School Superintendent Tim Forson said the funds were needed "to protect and determine a stable future for St. Johns County schools."

"In order to do that, we've got to make some commitments to ensure that we have outstanding teachers in front of children, that we have the bus drivers that we need to operate our systems, the food

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- Nov. 15 - Women's Day and Business Expo
- Nov. 16 - Kidpreneurs Day



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New teen novel combines history, adventure

By Anthony Richards

History and the stories behind it have always been a love of Kate Stollenwerck's and it has led to her releasing her second book called "Don't Let Me Down."

The book was published on Oct. 22, and it is a sequel to her first novel "Hello, Goodbye," as it follows the latest adventures of a 16-year-old girl named Hailey.

Building off the first book, Hailey continues to find more family secrets, but this time it comes when she learns more about her mysterious great-grandfather and his past that turns her present into a whirlwind adventure.

According to Stollenwerck, Hailey tries to forget the past but realizes sometimes it is too important to just let it be.


The tale dives into stories associated with World War II and Nazi Germany in a unique combination of historically accurate



Contributed photo


Kate Stollenwerck released her second book, "Don't Let Me Down," on Oct. 22.

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THE RECORDER

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



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

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BRIEFS

Goddard School to host trunk-or-treat

The Goddard School of Ponte Vedra Beach is celebrating Halloween by hosting a trunk-or-treat festival for current and future families seeking high-quality early childhood education for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years old. There will be face painting, festive games, airbrush tattoos, pony rides, a DJ, a photo booth and more.

The event will be held 3-5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24, at the school, 45 Executive Way, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Beach cleanup is Saturday

The Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM) will conduct a beach cleanup from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 26. Meet at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Participants will be directed to a specific beach for cleanup. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended.

Email Candace.Killian@FloridaDEP.gov to participate.

Bank of America helps those affected by hurricanes

Bank of America has committed \$2 million to the American Red Cross and other organizations on the ground to support those impacted by Hurricane Milton.

The first \$1.5 million will be deployed now to the American Red Cross as they focus on providing immediate relief in Florida, including shelter, food, supplies and mental health services to those who need assistance. The remaining \$500,000 will be allocated as needs are identified with

partners supporting relief efforts in Florida. Leaders in the bank's Florida markets will also partner with local organizations long-term as they help devastated communities navigate the path to recovery.

This \$2 million is in addition to \$1 million the bank committed in funding to support those impacted by Hurricane Helene, as it works closely with local organizations in those communities as well.

The bank is also offering financial assistance to clients across the state of Florida who may have been impacted. Bank of America teams have also deployed mobile financial centers and ATMs in hardest-hit areas.

Webinar set for Florida Communities Trust Grant Applications

The Florida Communities Trust will host a Parks and Open Space Grant Application Webinar at 10 a.m. Oct. 29 in advance of the 2024-25 grant application cycle. It will inform potential applicants on the application process and provide them an opportunity to ask questions.

The Florida Communities Trust has received \$15 million in appropriations to fund grants during this application cycle. Applications will be accepted from Nov. 1 to 5 p.m. Jan. 15.

Attendees should register prior to the meeting. Register at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6793468272669546332>.

Once registered, you will receive a confirmation message with instructions for joining.

For further information, go to <https://floridadep.gov/lands/land-and-recreation-grants/content/parks-and-open-space-florida-forever-grant-program>

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.

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Local community will Walk to Defeat ALS

For The Recorder

On Saturday, 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.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (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 of the ALS Association 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 believe in the power of community and want to make a difference for those impacted by ALS.

"Our Walk to Defeat ALS events bring the ALS community together, providing hope and inspiration for those impacted by ALS," said Calaneet Balas, president and CEO of the ALS Association. "Thanks to your generosity and support, we can fund global research, nationwide advocacy efforts and local care services. All of these efforts are critical to making ALS livable until we can find a cure."

With only two to five years to live, individuals living with ALS have an urgent need, and the community is stepping in

to fill it by participating for those who cannot. Walk to Defeat ALS is the ALS Association's signature event and funds directly support innovative research, care services and advocacy efforts.

Walk check-in is 8 a.m. Walk start is 9:15 a.m.

Ripley's Believe It or Not! is located at 19 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine.

To register, go to www.als.org/Walk-StAugustine. Registered participants who raise \$100 or more receive a commemorative T-shirt.

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

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Decorating for Fall

"Colors are the smiles of nature." — Leigh Hunt



By Kathy Esfahani

As fall arrives, we see seasonal decorations popping up throughout our neighborhoods.

Fall is the season where harvest celebrates the hard work put in during the summer months and the prosperity that results from this diligence. We use natural flowers and fruits to add festive accents around our homes and landscapes. These decorations can be arranged in centerpieces, incorporated in planters or sporadically added throughout your yard to accentuate fall colors, pumpkins or other seasonal decorations.

Popular decorations during fall are corn, gourds, hay bales, mums and pumpkins. Although they may seem to be just a part of the season, each of these items is representative of the festivities we celebrate during fall:

- Corn symbolizes bounty through the many kernels on each cob and the fields that seem never-ending as they stretch toward the horizon.
- Gourds are believed to bring blessings, encourage good health and protect against evil.



Fall decorating

- Hay bales remind us of the harvest and bring out fall feelings in our seasonal displays.
- Mums (chrysanthemums) are especially symbolic during this time of year! They represent optimism, health and joy. Mums come in bright yellow, orange and red. Yellow flowers symbolize intellect and wealth; orange flowers highlight energy, creativity and warmth; and red flowers represent success.
- Pumpkins are the earth's gold! Native Americans valued pumpkins because they could be stored long into

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Flower of the Week



Chrysanthemum ("mum")

winter. With their bulging shapes, they are a symbol for bounty, luck and success!

Many flowers feature seasonal colors and look wonderful in gardens and containers. Popular fall annuals include celosia, dianthus, dusty miller, marigolds, pansies, petunias, snapdragons, supertunias and violas. If you prefer perennials, look for crotons, firespike, geraniums, mums, pentas and salvia.

Stop by the nursery to gather your fall flowers, hay bales and more! Happy decorating!

Flower of the Week: Chrysanthemum ("Mum")

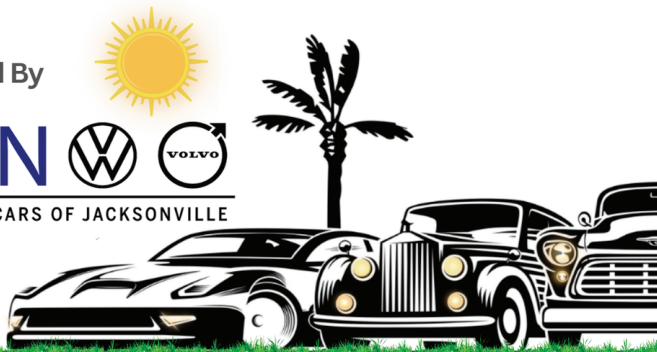
Please email Kathy at kcg.pvr@gmail.com for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future. For more information and ideas, visit Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. The phone number is 904-655-7373.

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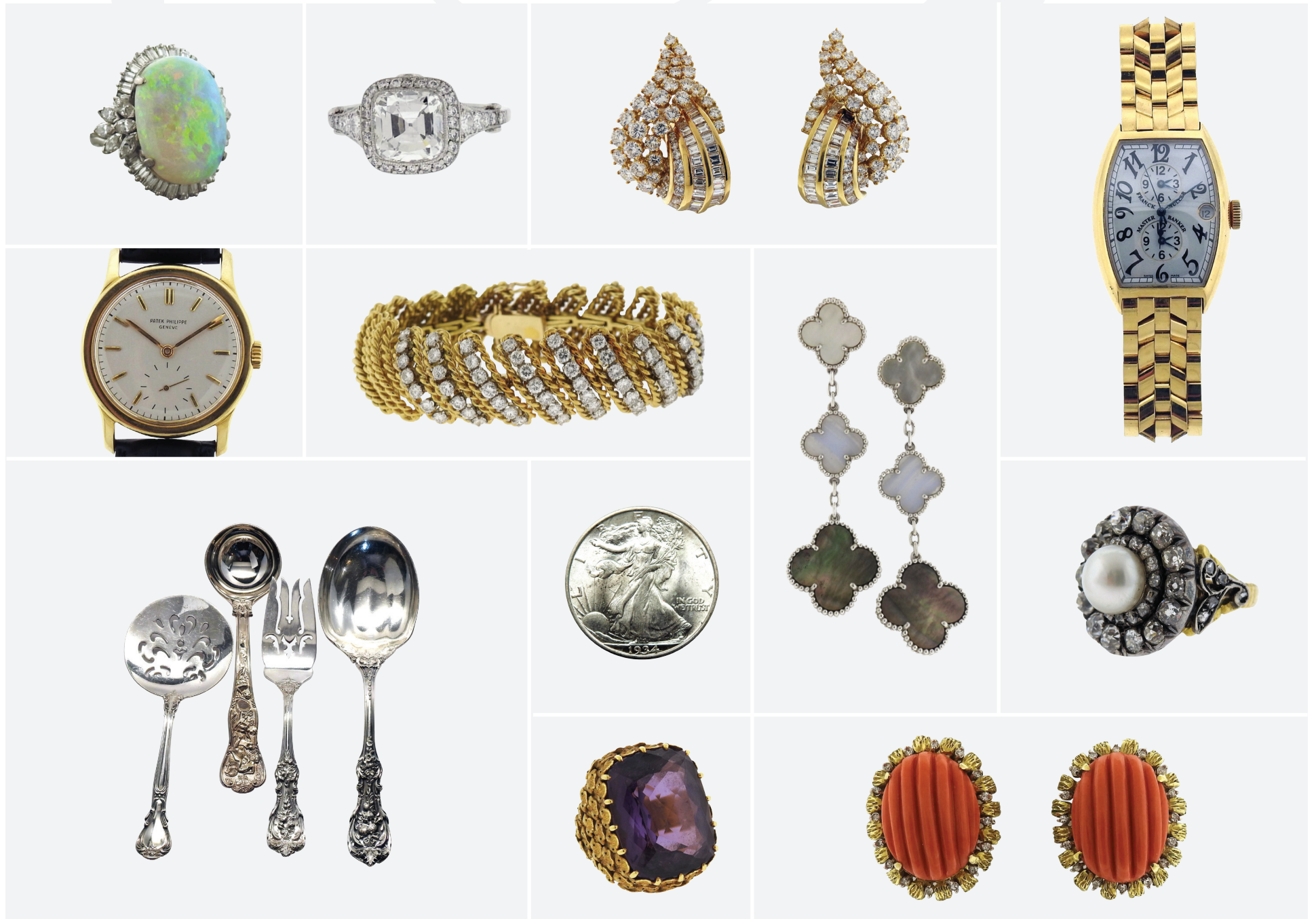
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CALL TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

Laura Miller is a 79-year-old breast cancer survivor who lives in Jacksonville. She talks about her journey and taking the initiative with regular self-exams that could save lives. She also experienced how much of an “emotional invasion” cancer can be and how to approach it with one’s physical and emotional health in mind.

Laura Miller

As told to Anthony Richards

Tell us about your breast cancer diagnosis and your journey to recovery.

I first found out in May of 2002 that I had a tumor, and my doctor was terrific, so he was able to get me in and processed and we were able to take care of it with a lumpectomy.

It was stage one and found through mammography, and after they removed the lump, they saw that all the edges were clean, which was a big yay!

I was then scheduled almost immediately for radiation, so I did not have to have chemotherapy.

I had those daily radiation treatments for six weeks, and of course, now I’m off all hormone replacement drugs.

I had it easier than anyone that I know whether that was because of my family and friends and their support or what, I don’t know.

It wasn’t until several years later that my breast started to shrink, and that’s when I started to have back trouble, which my sister was the one who urged me to get the prescription for a prosthesis to help even me out because my body was leaning so much.

Fortunately, breast cancer is no longer a death sentence, but we do need to continue to have early detection, early treatment and a support system that never ends.

It’s always an experience for me when every once and a while I talk about this, and I find out that there are usually about three other people in the room who have gone through something similar or didn’t even know that I’m a breast cancer survivor.

If you can’t tell, then I figure my team’s doing a good job of keeping me well-balanced and correctly sized. And I’m not even talking about appearance but just keeping your body balanced. They have special bras out there that can help.

What advice would you give to women faced with breast cancer?

Make yourself some projects, because you do have some advance notice before you start your chemo. Keep yourself as busy as possible, and I’ve even had friends who kept a journal for that first year and it helped them tremendously.

It’s tough and there’s nothing easy about it because you feel like you’ve been invaded by an unwanted tormentor, and it does things to your psyche.

It’s important no matter what to never forget that womanhood is not made by the size of a breast or the presence of a breast.

I still get my mammograms every year, and I check myself, which is so vital because you know yourself better than anyone else. Mammograms and doctors are not foolproof, but you are.

I panicked the first time I did my self-exam, and the doctor said that you have to remember it’s OK to feel like oatmeal, but it’s not OK to find a raisin. That’s been my guide for about the last 45 years.

It’s a humbling experience and you realize you don’t wait for five-year marks on your birthdays anymore, but you celebrate every day and every birthday.

Also, use a counselor and do not be afraid to ask for some mental health during this, because having



Photo by Anthony Richards

Laura Miller wants those fighting breast cancer to be prepared for the emotional toll it takes and how to help combat it.

someone who knows what their talking about can mean everything. You just need to make a phone call and make it happen.

If you have a dog or a cat, that helps, too, because they know when you can use some comfort. My dogs have gotten me through some very tears and cheers moments over the years.

Cancer can be something that’s very fast growing,

which is why monthly self-checkups are so important or maybe even every time you take a shower. You just don’t want it to sneak up on you, because it will.

And the younger generation is not exempt. Girls, as soon as you get those boobs, started checking them out because this isn’t a game, and it’s something everyone has to do for themselves.

Emergency storm debris contractors to begin in St. Johns County

For The Recorder

Beginning Friday, Oct. 18, emergency debris removal contractors, AshBritt and TetraTech, joined FCC Environmental in the ongoing efforts of collecting storm debris post Hurricane Milton. This is an additional service to support the recovery efforts in St. Johns County.

The decision to bring in the emergency debris removal contractors was made after the county received a major disaster declaration on Friday, Oct. 11.

Federal disaster assistance is available to the state of Florida to supplement recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Milton from Oct. 5 and continuing. For a period of 90 days within the first 120 days from the start of the incident period, assistance for debris removal and emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance, under the public assistance program is authorized at 100%.

Residents are encouraged to move storm



debris curbside as soon as possible.

Adhere to the following guidelines to assist the county in these recovery efforts:

- Place storm debris in piles along the curb (not in the roadway) and at least 3 feet from utility boxes, mailboxes, poles, fire

hydrants and other obstacles.

- Bagged or containerized yard debris will be collected by your residential hauler on your regular yard waste collection day.
- Separate vegetation from all other storm-related debris such as construction

debris and appliances.

• Normal household garbage, recycling and bagged debris will be picked up on schedule by FCC Environmental. Continue to follow your normal curbside collection schedule and guidelines.

• No chemicals or hazardous waste will be collected curbside. All hazardous waste may be brought to Tillman Ridge or Stratton Road Transfer Station for disposal during operating hours.

Any residents with issues or concerns can contact the St. Johns County Solid Waste Division at 904-827-6980 or SolidWaste@sjcfl.us. Residents can also report issues, such as missed residential solid waste collection, through the Recycle Coach app or by submitting a service request through the SJC Connect app.

For more information about storm debris, collection schedules and the curbside collection guidelines, go to www.RecycleStJohns.com.

Seaside Estate in Ponte Vedra Beach

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



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St. Johns County gets \$11M for public safety, community services

For The Recorder

St. Johns County has announced a significant advancement in public safety and community services with the award of \$7.1 million for additional firefighters and \$4 million for the construction of the new Hastings Library and Community Center.

The \$7.1 million from the FEMA Staffing for Adequate Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants Program will allow for the hiring of 21 additional firefighters and will cover the total cost of salary and benefits for three years, bolstering emergency response capabilities in alignment with National Fire Safety Standards.

The new firefighters will be stationed at a forthcoming fire station in the southwestern region of St. Johns County and will support the operation of additional tanker trucks, ensuring a robust water supply during emergency fire operations. This expansion will improve response times, increase staffing and enhance service delivery to residents and visitors.

“St. Johns County Fire Rescue is always there and always ready to help our community, especially in a time of crisis,” said U.S. Rep. John Rutherford. “That’s why I was proud to help secure \$7.1 million from the SAFER Grants Program to help hire an additional 21 firefighters to staff a new fire station in St. Johns County. St. Johns County is experiencing huge



Contributed image

A rendering of the Hastings Library and Community Center.

growth, and this valuable funding will help our first responders get where they need to go, when they need to get there, and save lives.”

In addition to the SAFER grant, St. Johns County Fire Rescue was also awarded the Technical Assistance Grant from the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, totaling \$50,489. This grant will be used to purchase a natural gas pipeline fire training simulator. In partnership with TECO Peoples Gas, firefighters will receive comprehensive

training to enhance their emergency response skills to these types of incidents.

“Our fire rescue personnel train to respond to dangerous incidents that threaten the lives of our First Coast community, including natural gas pipeline fires,” said Rutherford. “That’s why I was proud to help St. Johns County Fire Rescue secure over \$50 thousand from the prestigious Technical Assistance Grants Program. Simulators like these will help improve fire rescue training and response effectiveness. As co-chair of the House Modeling

and Simulation Caucus, I am glad to see SJC Fire Rescue will be able to utilize state-of-the-art simulators to enhance their training.”

The St. Johns County Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, in partnership with St. Johns County Public Library System, Health and Human Services, and Public Works, has secured a competitive \$4 million grant from Florida Commerce to support the construction of the Hastings Library and Community Center. This project will create vital community resources, including classrooms, multi-purpose spaces, telehealth rooms and a food pantry.

“This is a great example of how county staff are working to identify innovative ways to fund our critical infrastructure projects,” St. Johns County Chair Sarah Arnold said. “The Hastings Library and Community Center will provide essential services to the Hastings area, fostering education, health and community engagement.”


St. Johns County is committed to improving public safety and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. The \$11.5 million in competitive awards secured by the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in September of 2024 reflects the county’s dedication and continued investment in community-focused services.


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Landrum names Teachers, Employee of the Year

Landrum Middle School has announced its honorees for the 2024-25 academic year. Kandise Ellis was named Teacher of the Year. Bridget Gagnon was honored as Rookie Teacher of the Year, and Ian Carpenter was recognized as School-Related Employee of the Year.

Ellis is recognized as a dedicated teacher who works tirelessly to support students, ensuring they thrive both academically and personally. Her commitment to her students and the school community has made her an invaluable part of Landrum Middle.

Gagnon teaches U.S. history and also leads the National Junior Honor Society, fostering leadership and service among her students. In addition to her dedication in the classroom, she serves as the head coach for the Lady Lions Basketball team. Her passion for teaching and student engagement has quickly made her a standout at Landrum.

Ian Carpenter, a valued member of the custodial team, takes great pride in maintaining the school's environment, ensuring a clean and welcoming space for both students and staff. His hard work and attention to detail are key to the daily operations at Landrum.

Contributed photos



Kandise Ellis with Landrum Principal Troy Kasting and Assistant Principal Moira McCabe



Bridget Gagnon with Landrum Principal Troy Kasting and Assistant Principal Moira McCabe



Ian Carpenter with Landrum Principal Troy Kasting and Maintenance Coordinator Brett Butler

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Daniel marks 140 years

Daniel, Florida's oldest child-care agency, recently celebrated their 140th anniversary with members of their 1884 Giving Society. The event, held on Oct. 3 at VyStar Tower, welcomed about 100 guests to enjoy cocktails, heavy hors d'oeuvres and heartfelt stories about the many ways their loyal support has helped improve the lives of children and families over the years.

The agency also announced that in honor of its 140th anniversary, they are working to raise \$140,000 in October. The first \$50,000 in donations made during the month will be matched by the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Funds.

Contributed photos



Chuck and Sally Ayers of Ponte Vedra Beach



Owen and West Wingate of Ponte Vedra Beach



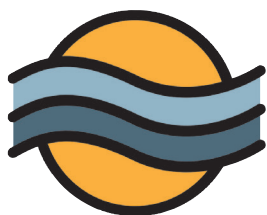
Guests listened to inspiring stories celebrating Daniel's 140 years of service.



Daniel President and CEO Lesley Wells, Trustee Shep Colledge, Carmella Prescott, Daniel client Zachariah Houdari and his girlfriend Myai Brown.



Guests enjoyed mingling with each other at the event.



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Keep little goblins' stomachs happy this year

Provided by Gastroenterology of Greater Orlando

Halloween is almost here, and for many parents, that means preparing for an exciting night of costumes, candy and fun with the kids. While Halloween is all about indulging in spooky treats, it's also important to make sure your little goblins' stomachs don't turn into monsters. Too much candy can lead to upset stomachs, sugar crashes or a lasting stomachache.

But with a few simple tricks (pun intended!), you can help keep your kids' stomachs happy and healthy while still enjoying the magic of Halloween.

Here are some gastroenterologist-approved tips:

Fuel up before the fun begins — Halloween is a marathon, not a sprint, especially for kids eager to collect as much candy as possible. Before they hit the neighborhood for trick-or-treating, make sure they have a balanced, nutritious dinner. Opt for foods rich in protein, fiber and healthy fats, like grilled chicken with veggies or a hearty quinoa salad. These nutrients will help balance blood sugar levels, reduce the risk of overindulging in sweets and keep them full and energized all night.

A sneaky bonus: A well-fed little goblin is less likely to dive headfirst into their candy haul, giving you time to manage their intake.

Set candy limits without ruining the fun — It's inevitable: the candy haul is going to be big. But that doesn't mean kids need to eat it all in one night! Before Halloween night, set clear expectations about how much candy they can enjoy. A fun way to manage this is by creating a "candy bank" where they can "deposit" their candy and withdraw a couple of pieces each day. You could even turn it into a fun game by offering trade-in options for healthier treats or non-food rewards, like stickers or extra playtime.

Giving your little one some autonomy over their candy consumption, while



setting healthy limits, will help avoid stomach trouble and promote moderation.

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate! — With all the excitement of costumes and trick-or-treating, it's easy to forget about staying hydrated. Candy is loaded with sugar, which can lead to dehydration, and that's something no parent wants to deal with. Encourage your kids to drink water before, during and after their candy adventures. You can even jazz it up by letting them pick out a spooky Halloween-themed water bottle or cup to carry around during trick-or-treating.

Bonus tip: Drinking plenty of water will also help keep their digestion running smoothly and prevent constipation.

Watch out for sugar-free traps — You might think reaching for sugar-free candies is a healthier choice, but be careful! Many sugar-free candies contain sugar alcohols like sorbitol or xylitol, which can cause bloating, gas and diarrhea in kids (and adults). While sugar-free treats might seem like a better option, it's often best to stick with regular candy in moderation to avoid stomach troubles from sugar alcohol.

Mix in some healthier treats — Halloween doesn't have to be all about

candy! Mix in some healthier options by offering fun, festive snacks like homemade trail mix with dark chocolate chips, nuts and dried fruit or pumpkin-shaped rice cakes. These treats can help satisfy their sweet tooth while providing extra fiber and nutrients to support digestion.

You can also hand out non-candy options like Halloween-themed stickers, glow sticks or small toys. These alternatives are just as fun and can help balance out the candy overload.

Go easy on the late-night snacking — After a night of trick-or-treating, it's tempting for kids to dive into their candy stash right before bed. But sugar and digestion don't always play nice, especially right before bedtime. Eating a large amount of candy late at night can lead to stomachaches and restless sleep.

Encourage your little ones to save their candy for the next day and opt for

a lighter, healthier snack before bed, like a banana or a small bowl of yogurt. A stomach-friendly bedtime snack will help them sleep better and wake up ready for more Halloween fun!

Keep an eye on food allergies — With so many different types of candy, it's important to check labels for allergens like peanuts, tree nuts or dairy. If your child has a food allergy, have a plan in place to swap out any candies that could be harmful. Many communities offer "Teal Pumpkin Project" houses, which provide non-food treats for children with allergies, so keep an eye out for those teal pumpkins when trick-or-treating!

With these tips in mind, your little goblins can enjoy Halloween without any scary stomach aches. As always, moderation is key, and a balanced approach to treats will help ensure everyone has a happy and healthy Halloween!

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Attention Precinct 405/407 Voters

Voters assigned to Precinct 405/407 will still be voting at 1050 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach, on Election Day, November 5, 2024.

On Election Day, note the alternate driveway and signage directing voters to the back of the property, to the **Council on Aging** building, to avoid the ongoing construction.

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Tax

Continued from 1

services workers, the paraprofessionals, the school leaders — all of those individuals,” he said. “We need to make sure that when it’s time to build a school that we have assets and the ability and the capacity to do that.”

St. Johns County Schools is the envy of many of Florida’s 67 districts. It has received an A grade every year since grading began in 2004 — one of only two districts to do so — and maintains a graduation rate of 94%.

But it faces challenges, partially as the result of a population boom that isn’t expected to subside anytime soon.

Between 2005 and 2023, the county’s population has gone from about 160,000 to about 320,000. With that comes an increase in enrollment, up 123% in that time. Currently at 52,000 students, that number is projected to increase by 13,000 in the next nine years.

At the same time, costs associated with accommodating that surge have risen.

Meanwhile, on the funding side, the state has reduced the amount of tax revenue received by the district. In the last decade, the required local effort — that portion of ad valorem taxes levied on assessed property values according to a formula set by the state — has been reduced from 5 to 3 mills.

This reduction, which has occurred incrementally each year, has prompted other districts — currently 27 of them — to levy

additional millage to compensate.

While it is true that increased property values in recent years would generate more revenue, St. Johns County Schools does not fully benefit. All tax revenue goes to the state, which redistributes it so that students in poorer districts will not necessarily suffer due to a shortage in funding relative to wealthier districts, such as St. Johns.

There is an impact, but this dispersal, which makes St. Johns something of a “donor county,” reduces any windfall.

A rising tide may lift all boats, but a widely spread tide lifts them by much less.

Half-cent sales tax

The first referendum concerns a 10-year renewal of the half-cent sales surtax, which was initially approved by voters in 2015, but which will sunset next year.

This tax has generated an average of \$37 million annually. It is levied on taxable sales, and so affects all consumers, not just property owners. However, that also means 38% of it is paid by visitors.

Consumers who are used to paying the tax won’t see any increase, with one possible exception. In this inflationary period, costs have increased, so the accompanying tax will reflect that. Still, the impact on consumers should be negligible.

Funds raised through this tax would be restricted for use in the district’s capital outlay budget. While not the sole source of revenue for these expenses, the surtax has helped build new schools and repair existing ones over the past decade. It has also paid for enhanced security measures.

Since 2015, the district has made 13 roof replacements, purchased 12,000 computers and more than 1,400 LED panels with surtax revenue.

The district currently educates 13,000 students in 600 portables to avoid overcrowding. Otherwise, an additional 16 elementary

schools would have to be constructed to accommodate those students, but school construction costs have risen dramatically. When Pine Island Academy, a K-8 school located south of Nocatee, was built in 2021, the cost was \$38 million. The district opened two new schools this year, Trout Creek Academy and Lakeside Academy — both also K-8 — and the cost was \$62 million apiece.

Currently, the district pays \$49 million a year on mortgages.

One mill increase

The second referendum would help recruit and retain teachers and support staff, invest in school safety (such as school resource officers and nurses) and enhance programs in science, technology, art, music, athletics and more.

The starting salaries for teachers in St. Johns County schools, according to Chief of Staff Michael Degutis, who also spoke at the meeting, is \$48,642.

The average teacher’s salary is lower than that of three bordering districts, which raises concerns that instructional staff could seek out jobs elsewhere.

The average teacher salary in Flagler County is \$58,369. In Duval, it’s \$55,282. In Putnam, it’s \$55,000. In St. Johns, it’s \$53,484.

That said, this is an average, so a district weighted with more senior staff would skew the figure upward. According to Degutis, about half the teachers in St. Johns County have been with the district no longer than five years.

At the same time, this mill would also help increase pay for bus drivers, food service workers, custodians, paraprofessionals, etc. Currently, the district is short by about 50 to 55 bus drivers, which has ramifications for transportation of students.

If passed, the increase would be restricted

to four years by state statute.

One mill equals one dollar for every \$1,000 of assessed property value, minus the \$25,000 homestead exemption.

Using September figures, the latest available, the median price of a home in St. Johns County is \$550,000. However, the average price of a home is less than that: about \$360,000.

So, if the referendum passes, the owner of a \$360,000 home, after the homestead exemption, would pay \$335 more in property taxes for each of the four years that the mill is levied.

The total tax would depend on the millage rate for any one of those fiscal years, but had it been enacted for 2024-25 — where the levy stands at \$5.278 for each \$1,000 of assessed value — that average homeowner would pay \$2,103.

Where the impact would be more greatly felt would be with homeowners on the low end of the earning scale or those on a fixed income. While the percentage would remain constant, and therefore proportional to the — presumably — lower value of the home, that homeowner would feel a pinch to his or her expendable income.

Groceries, gasoline, medical bills, etc., impact those with lower incomes more than those with higher incomes. A gallon of milk costs the same regardless of earnings, but it makes up a greater proportion of income for the low-wage earner. A tax increase would then have to come from a diminished reserve.

As an example, the owner of a \$125,000 home, minus the homestead exemption, would pay an additional \$100 if the referendum passes. The total tax bill, again using 2024-25 numbers, would be about \$628.

For those earning, say, \$30,000 and living paycheck to paycheck, the absence of that extra \$100 — as little as that sounds to many residents — could prove a burden.



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Ring Power donates forklift to Triumph Industries

For The Recorder

Ring Power Corp. donated a custom-painted forklift to The Arc Jacksonville’s Triumph Industries, providing a significant boost to the nonprofit’s fulfillment center.

Triumph Industries employs more than 45 individuals with intellectual and developmental differences (IDDs), supporting their ability to participate meaningfully in the workforce. The donation will help Triumph Industries continue fulfilling its annual production of more than 4 million boxes for Johnson & Johnson Vision’s contact lens shipments.

The presentation of the forklift took place Wednesday, Oct. 2, at The Arc Jacksonville’s downtown location.

“We are incredibly grateful to Ring Power Corp. for this donation, especially during National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” said Kari Bates, president and CEO of The Arc Jacksonville. “Their support will help ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental differences can continue to thrive at Triumph Industries. Triumph Industries not only provides employment but also creates a sense of purpose, belonging and achievement for our participants, allowing them to thrive.”

Employment at Triumph Industries empowers individuals with IDD to develop valuable skills and earn competitive wages. The supportive work environment not only celebrates their abilities but also fosters personal growth through comprehensive wrap-around



Contributed photo

Pictured from left, The Arc Jacksonville President and CEO Kari Bates, Ring Power Corp. CEO David Alban, Ring Power Corp. Shop Lead David Floyd, Franklin (The Arc Jacksonville Triumph Industries participant), The Arc Jacksonville Board Member Bernadette Moran, Ring Power Corp. Vice President and General Manager Robert Burkhead, The Arc Jacksonville Chief Programs Officer Meghan Deputy and The Arc Jacksonville Director of Workforce Innovation Sarah Troup.

services, including mental health support and recreational activities.

“We were honored to contribute to The Arc Jacksonville’s mission by donating this forklift to Triumph Industries,” said David Alban, CEO of Ring Power Corp. “At Ring Power, we believe in supporting our local community and empowering individuals with differences. We hope this donation will enhance the incredible work being done at Triumph Industries and further their impact.”

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WEEKDAYS AT 11AM | NBC12

Donations sought for holiday meals

This Thanksgiving, Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM) and St. Vincent de Paul are uniting to make a difference for families living paycheck-to-paycheck by providing Thanksgiving baskets filled with essentials for a holiday meal. Last year, more than 700 baskets were distributed, and this year, BEAM aims to collect 800 by Nov. 20.

With food prices rising sharply across Florida, more families are struggling to put nutritious meals on the table. Many are forced to rely on less healthy, cheaper options, leading to increased health issues such as high blood pressure and diabetes. These challenges make the need for community support greater than ever.

“As you help a family in need this Thanksgiving, you're doing more than providing a meal,” said Jeff Winkler, Executive Director of BEAM. “You're giving hope, connection and the chance for families to create their own moments of joy and togetherness during tough times. It's an opportunity for all of us to reflect on our own blessings and extend kindness to those who need it most.”

BEAM and St. Vincent de Paul are calling on the community to donate nonperishable food items or sponsor a Thanksgiving basket through BEAM's website, jaxbeam.org/thanksgiving. Each basket includes essential items like instant mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, canned vegetables, stuffing, cranberry sauce and a \$20 grocery store gift card so families can choose their preferred main course, such as turkey or ham.

You can make a lasting impact by dropping off baskets at St. Paul's Father Murphy Hall on Nov. 18-20 or by sponsoring a basket online at jaxbeam.org/thanksgiving. Families within BEAM's service area can sign up at jaxbeam.org/thanksgiving to receive a basket and pick up their meals on Nov. 21, 22, 23 or 25 at Father Murphy Hall in Jacksonville Beach.

Churchmen luncheon

At the monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing are, from left, Charles Cooke, National Review; John Ekdahl, chair; Rich Reilly, vice chair; and Peter Karpen, treasurer.

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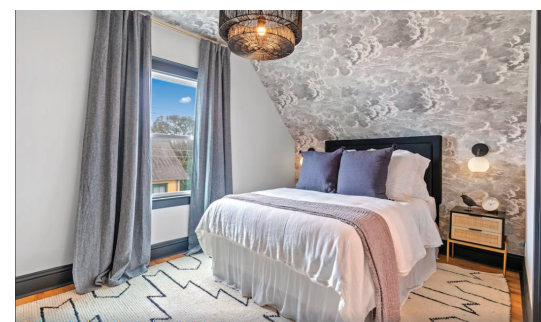
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Mobility Week is Oct. 25 through Nov. 2

Florida is celebrating its ninth annual statewide Mobility Week from Oct. 25 through Nov. 2.

Mobility Week is a statewide cooperative effort with the Florida Department of Transportation and its partner agencies to promote awareness of safe, multimodal transportation choices. During Mobility Week, counties, cities and transportation agencies host events and offer special promotions to encourage Floridians to try new transportation options.

St. Johns County Council on Aging (COA) will offer Sunshine Bus Company Giveaway Days during Mobility Week.

The Sunshine Bus Company will be offering multiple giveaways, including:

- 1 Adult Bicycle
- 1 Children's Scooter
- 1 Annual Pass
- 1 Monthly Pass

To view Sunshine Bus schedules, go to www.sunshinebus.net or ask your driver. For information, call customer service at 904-209-3716.

Also, COA Paratransit, the paratransit option in St. Johns County, is offering free fare no co-payments for all paratransit trips during Mobility Week. To view St. Johns County mobility options, go to www.coasjc.org/transportation. Two portable grocery carts will be given away with seating.

For questions regarding transportation in St. Johns County, contact customer service/reservations at 904-209-3710 or go to www.coasjc.org/transportation.

For more information on Mobility Week, go to www.MobilityWeekFL.com.

Ocean Palms honors outstanding staff

The teachers and staff at Ocean Palms Elementary have spoken, naming this year's standouts — Stacy Crouch, Brianna Sweeney and Jennifer Dean.

Crouch, named Teacher of the Year, is a pre-kindergarten teacher who has been at the school for the past four years. As a pre-kindergarten teacher, she loves how she gets to begin laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning for her students and enjoys engaging them as they grow and learn.

Sweeney, Rookie Teacher of the Year, is a varying exceptionalities teacher. New to OPE this year, her knack for creating a nurturing environment that creates a love for learning and willingness to make mistakes to learn and grow is an important part of her teaching philosophy. She believes it's about the small wins each day.

Finally, Dean, School-Related Employee of the Year, is the school's LEA clerk. From assistance in classrooms, to office help, to anything the school needs, Dean has been instrumental in the day-to-day happenings at OPE over the past six years. She enjoys working with the amazing staff and getting to interact with the students. That said, she believes the only way to do great work is to love what you do.



Contributed photo

Ocean Palms Elementary's standout staffers include School-Related Employee of the Year Jennifer Dean, Rookie Teacher of the Year Brianna Sweeney and Teacher of the Year Stacy Crouch.

Franklin earns inaugural Executive Alumnus of the Year Award

For The Recorder



Earnie Franklin

Earnie Franklin, chief operating officer for VSP Vision, was selected to receive the inaugural Executive Alumnus of the Year Award from the Davis College of Business and Technology at Jacksonville University.

"We're pleased to recognize an accomplished business leader with our first executive alumnus award from the Davis

College of Business and Technology," said Barbara Ritter, Davis College dean. "Earnie exemplifies all that our graduates can achieve and all that they can become. His impact on the business world and his willingness to give back to the community make him a role model for our current and future alumni."

This award aims to celebrate the exceptional accomplishments of Davis College of Business & Technology alumni who exemplify leadership and have made meaningful contributions to their professions and communities. Some of the selection criteria includes professional achievement and societal impact as well as professional achievement.

"JU has been a blessing to our family," said Franklin, "My EMBA degree from the Davis College of Business was a catalyst for my growth as an executive. It's an amazing honor to be recognized by my peers and fellow graduates."

Franklin, a Ponte Vedra Beach resident, earned his executive master's degree in business administration from JU. As COO for VSP Vision, a health-centric company that combines eye care insurance, high-quality eyewear, customized lenses, ophthalmic technology and connected experiences to strengthen the relationship between patients and their eye doctors, he leads the organization's supply chain strategy and operations, while driving integration and alignment across the entire global organization.

A leader for more than two decades, Franklin's focus has been on making business strategy a reality through the successful execution and transformation

of technology and business operations. In 2018, he joined VSP Vision from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, bringing with him expertise in health care and technology that spans from core-business capability platforms to front office and customer relationship management tools.

Previously, he led IT and information security efforts at Triserv Alliance LLC, a start-up focused on helping health care companies bid on Tricare contracts. He was instrumental in leading a growth strategy at Incepture, a former, wholly owned subsidiary of Florida Blue, which provided health care staffing, consulting and managed solutions. During his tenure at Incepture, Franklin helped deliver 400% revenue growth in a five-year period.

In the community, he's an active participant in PanCan's Purple Stride events to help raise funds to find a cure for pancreatic cancer. And, as a long-time supporter of type 1 diabetes research, Franklin was named the 2020 One Party Gala honoree by JDRF of Northern California for his dedication and passion to help find a cure.

The JU Davis College of Business and Technology is the only triple-accredited private college in all of North Florida and South Georgia, with AACSB, ABET and AABI accredited programs. Its mission is to empower students to achieve sustainable career success with a high quality, relevant and applied educational experience that is delivered by faculty committed to advancing the individual development of each student.

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GUEST COLUMN

Fighting ageism makes businesses, communities stronger



Linda Levin

By Linda Levin

As this year’s national elections have sparked many discussions around the issues of age and cognitive abilities, the broader issue of age discrimination extends far beyond politics and into our workplaces and everyday lives.

AARP reports that one in four workers age 45 and older have encountered ageist remarks at work, and three in five have witnessed or experienced age-related discrimination on the job. However, despite evidence debunking stereotypes about older workers, age discrimination persists.

To combat this, stronger advocacy and innovative thinking are essential to protect older employees and promote workplace inclusivity. ElderSource is a local nonprofit that works in our community to provide resources to support older adults, including those facing age discrimination in their professional and personal lives.

By 2030, one in every three people in our Northeast

Florida community will be older than the age of 65, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Ageism is likely to continue growing unless we recognize that older adults have built resilience and strength during their lives through successes, failures, joys and difficulties. Businesses and communities that recognize and celebrate this are stronger.

While ageism can be subtle and difficult to identify in our daily lives, a recent survey by the National Center to Reframe Aging showed 81% of participants reported witnessing ageism in their workplace. Asked if their company had effective policies to address age discrimination, 52% said they were not confident. These numbers show a clear need to create more age-inclusive work environments. Stronger advocacy and new ways of thinking are needed to address illegal age-related discrimination.

Ending such discrimination is not limited to needed workplace changes; it must include individuals reframing our daily thoughts and actions. We can all be better at looking for and recognizing each person’s circumstances holistically, and not letting unfair stereotypes affect our perceptions of older adults. That crucial paradigm shift requires conscious effort to recognize our own implicit biases. We can all do things in our daily lives to appreciate and be aware of older adults

around us.

Simple things like considering some of the words we use daily can be an important part of the needed change. Rephrase how we identify older adults, like not using the term “elderly” and avoiding using stereotypes to define and describe older adults.

Know that as our population ages, our regular daily encounters at grocery stores, banks or on the road can be met with greater understanding and patience. Encourage officials and businesses to adopt age-friendly practices that improve the quality of life for everyone.

Recognize and tout all the benefits offered by older adults. Help neighbors see aging as a strength. Support family caregivers who are often carrying the responsibility of helping loved ones age well.

ElderSource has many resources to help older adults live and age in their homes and community with independence and dignity. This includes battling ageism. Some of the resources we provide can be found on our website at MyElderSource.org. For additional information, call the Helpline at 1-888-242-4464.

Linda Levin is CEO of Jacksonville-based nonprofit ElderSource, celebrating its 50th year as the Area Agency on Aging and Aging and Disability Resource Center for Northeast Florida.

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EnterCircle opens up opportunities for businesses

Community impact leader shares enthusiasm for Entrepreneurship Week

By Keeli Scarlett, for the link

Excitement is building for EnterCircle Entrepreneurship Week 2024, North Florida's premier event for entrepreneurs, innovators and changemakers. With a packed five-day schedule, this year's event promises to deliver fresh perspectives, networking opportunities and actionable strategies for business growth and community impact. From Social Enterprise Day to Kidpreneurs Day, EnterCircle offers something for entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey.

A key highlight is Social Enterprise Day, where business leaders will discuss how to drive profits while creating positive social impact. Susan B. Towler, executive director of corporate social responsibility at Florida Blue and the Florida Blue Foundation, is among the featured speakers. Known for leading initiatives that benefit communities, Towler is eager to contribute to the Florida Blue Foundation's mission to inspire innovation by collaborating and merging ideas with local community-focused organizations to create a greater impact.

"[EnterCircle] has a lot of energy, and there's a desire to accomplish a mission," said Towler. "It all goes back to collaboration and partnership ... In Northeast Florida, we have a rich history of nonprofits and organizations that address the needs of our citizens. Events like this educate and make people aware of new opportunities and open to plugging in to collaborate. We are stronger together."

Joining her on Social Enterprise Day are Gregory Grant, administrative director of Jacksonville's Small and Emerging Business Program; Sondra Fetner, director of placemaking at the Jessie Ball

duPont Fund; and representatives from The PGA Tour, Jacksonville Jaguars, the Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida and more.

Social Enterprise Day will also feature a business expo, allowing attendees to engage with local companies. This expo provides businesses a platform to showcase their products and connect with like-minded entrepreneurs and community leaders.

In addition to Social Enterprise Day, EnterCircle will host a variety of events designed to empower entrepreneurs. Women's Day will celebrate the achievements of women in business, offering practical advice on leadership and work-life balance. The Youth Symposium will inspire local high school students with stories from successful entrepreneurs. Attendees can also look forward to the Ponte Vedra Best of the Best Celebration, Cocktails for a Cause Charity Networking Night and multiple expos, ensuring ample opportunities for engagement and growth.

EnterCircle 2024 is the perfect opportunity for entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes to gain valuable insights, network and make a lasting impact. Whether you're a startup or an established company, this summit offers the tools and connections you need to succeed.


This year's event is sponsored by Hyundai of St. Augustine, St. Johns County, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, St. Johns County School District, the Ponte Vedra Recorder, Hire-Local and Unlocked. Their contributions ensure that EnterCircle continues to be a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in the region.

Companies interested in sponsoring or increasing their reach at EnterCircle 2024 can contact sales@thelink.zone for sponsorship opportunities.

For more details on the schedule, tickets and expo tables, go to www.entercircle.zone.

EnterCircle is a 5-Day summit dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship in North Florida.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2024 · PAGE 19 www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

GUEST COLUMN

Murphy's Kittens helps to meet needs of cat population

By Adrienne Arnone of Murphy's Kittens

Murphy's Kittens 501C(3) came into existence in 2019 as an adoption organization but was quickly overwhelmed with the abandonment of cats as COVID-19 spread across the state. I joined in 2021 to assist with fundraising and re-homing the exploding feline population. As the virus ebbed, a disproportionate number of cats were returned as folks headed back to the office or extended holidays. We realized we were in a double bind; COVID drove cats into shelters as incomes dried up or homes were lost and then, on the back end, many that had been adopted over those 18 months were back in our care.

Recognizing that re-homing unwanted cats, without a way to stop the flow of kittens, does not address the root of the problem so we decided to move in another direction.

An overhaul of our mission statement has led us to the closure of a physical location so that we can dedicate all



Contributed photo

A kitten needing to be bottle fed.

our resources to TNR and to keeping owners with their cats. The traditional view of trap and release envisions feral communities where a carer is willing to feed and monitor a colony. Yet, our foray into this area has forced us to expand that limited definition. All too often, we are summoned to help in situations where there are ferals, semi-ferals, friendlies and indoor cats all in one location. Desexing only some of these populations seems futile so we have adopted the position that "we are here to help" no matter the way in which the cats are categorized.

Recently, we rushed to the aftermath of a mobile home fire where the caretaker was feeding about 25 cats after the owner was unable to secure the attention of any of the well-funded local shelters. Some of the felines were his, some had been dumped, some had multiplied and others had wandered into the fray for a free meal. Locating a safe place to which the cats could be moved was our first priority, but afterwards we grappled with having

MURPHY'S continues on Page 21



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GUEST COLUMN

Keep pets safe this Halloween

By Jennifer Dew

To keep all of our furry friends safe this Halloween, here are some helpful tips to avoid any spooky mishaps and ensure your pet enjoys a safe and calm holiday.

Pet ID: The ultimate costume

No tricks here — keeping your pet's ID tag and microchip info up to date is the best way to ensure a treat if they get spooked and slip out during Halloween festivities. A collar with your contact info is a must!

Candy isn't pet-friendly!

We all know candy is off-limits for pets, especially chocolate and xylitol (found in sugar-free treats). But even candy wrappers can be a hazard! After Halloween, do a quick sweep to pick up any sneaky wrappers that could lead to an upset stomach or worse.

Glow sticks are for humans, not pets!

Glow sticks and glow-in-the-dark jewelry can be fun accessories for the family, but pets may find them

too irresistible. Keep them out of paw's reach — while not highly toxic, the liquid inside can cause irritation and discomfort if chewed on.

Beware of trick-or-treat mayhem

The doorbell ringing nonstop can make even the calmest pets nervous. Consider setting up a cozy, quiet retreat away from the commotion so your pets can relax while the trick-or-treaters make their rounds.

Keep pets safe indoors

Halloween can bring unexpected scares for outdoor pets — loud noises, strange costumes and pranks can startle them. Keep your pets safely indoors to avoid any frightening escapes or accidents.

From our 9 to 5 Pets family to yours, we wish you a Happy Halloween filled with fun, laughter and safe snuggles! Let's keep our pets safe from tricks and spoil them with only the best treats!

Jennifer Dew is founder and owner of 9 to 5 Pets.



GET YOUR PET READY FOR HALLOWEEN

Dressing up for Halloween is one of the more enjoyable ways to celebrate the spooky season. It's not uncommon for people to be planning their costumes well ahead of Halloween, and seeing as the pop-up retailer Spirit Halloween starts taking over vacant properties beginning the middle of August, it's never too early to begin thinking about the thrills, chills and candy to come.

Pet owners often choose to include their companion animals in Halloween festivities. Data from a 2022 PetSmart national survey unveiled that more than 75 percent of pet parents planned to dress their pets up for Halloween and other fall occasions. Some city-dwelling individuals even planned to match their pet's fall attire to their own.

Rubies, the largest manufacturer of pet costumes in the U.S. and Europe, shared these statistics in 2022, many of which will stay consistent this year.

- Vermont, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Utah, and Maine are the states most likely to have dress up their pets.

- A pumpkin, hot dog and bat are the three most popular pet costumes. Star Wars-themed costumes also are favorites year after year.

There are plenty of costumes and pet clothing designed for pets, but not all of them are recommended by humane organizations or vets. Those who choose to include pets in Halloween festivities should keep these tips in mind when selecting costumes.

- **Can the pet move properly?** Check to see if the clothing item is sized appropriately so that it is not restrictive. Make sure the pet can walk properly, jump, groom, and relieve itself. Do not leave pets in costumes for too long, as they may affect the animal's ability to control body

PET continues on Page 21

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Pet

Continued from 20

temperature.

• **Is your pet stressed?** Look for behaviors that may indicate the pet is stressed by wearing the costume. Pets feeling anxious may groom excessively or make more noise than usual. Dogs may pant a lot or yawn. If a pet is pawing or pulling at the costume, it might be making the animal uncomfortable. Dogs tend to be more tolerant of costumes than cats, though each pet is unique.

• **Can body language be relayed?** Pets use body language to communicate with other animals. Costumes could interfere with that ability. If the pet will be wearing the costume indoors and not in proximity to other animals, it may be fine. Pets who will be walking outdoors and come into contact with other companion animals might act differently and other animals may act aggressively when faced with a pet in a costume.

• **Is it safe?** Choose costumes that do not impede the pet's vision or its ability to walk. Select materials that are fire-retardant and nontoxic.

Pet costumes are quite popular on Halloween, and pet parents can have fun celebrating while also keeping pets' comfort and safety in mind.



Cats rescued from home fire.



A hungry kitten

Murphy's

Continued from 19

to desex, address illness and injuries and find long-term homes for these animals.

One sunny afternoon, we were called because a bevy of abandoned kittens needed relocation. Upon arrival, we were "gifted" the babies and then arranged to have the Good Samaritan's own cat tested, desexed and inoculated.

Our countless rescues reveal that one

size does not fit all, so we tailor each response to meet the needs of the cats and the people caring for them. Unfortunately, resources are the greatest impediment to saving more lives, but garnering funding seems next to impossible. We do not have a flashy building or financing for swanky galas; we just have our director, two great volunteers and me — none of whom are paid. Consequently, other than what we need to care for the many cats in our custody, we have no overhead.

Thanks to our partnership with the Hu-

mane Society and Southeast Veterinarian Hospital, we have spayed and neutered more than 75 cats this year alone and covered bills for broken legs, infections and other curable maladies. Additionally, we purchase food, litter and medical supplies to ensure that folks can keep their kitties when money gets tight. Murphy's Kittens is honored to assist whenever we can but without sustained funding, the current situation is not tenable. We look to our community to help us help them!

Learn more at murphyskittens.org.

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1,200 take part in DONNA 5K at TPC

For The Recorder

Last weekend, The DONNA Foundation hosted the 17th running of its annual DONNA 5K at TPC, wrapping up the 2024 Fearless Series. The event took place Oct. 12 on the “back nine” of THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass.

The sold-out event brought together more than 1,200 runners, walkers and friends, including nearly 100 survivors, honoring Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The pinnacle race of the 2024 series saw 150 official finishers awarded with a 2024 DONNA Fearless Series medal, commemorating their participation in all three DONNA Signature events (including DONNA Marathon Weekend, ICE DONNA Mother’s Day 5K and the DONNA 5K at TPC).



To date, the race has raised \$41,521, including a \$10,000 matching gift from THE PLAYERS Championship and a major gift from top fundraising team Noc’n Out Breast Cancer, who presented a check for \$20,000 to the foundation before the start of the race.

Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan, founder of The DONNA Foundation, participated virtually from London with an eight-mile run in Hyde Park, accompanied by her husband Tim and London-based fitness motivator Rey Smart. Smart recently visited Jacksonville for the first time in early October, leading a community shakeout run with local run clubs beginning their 2025 DONNA Marathon Weekend training.

Photos by Jennifer Perez/PGA TOUR

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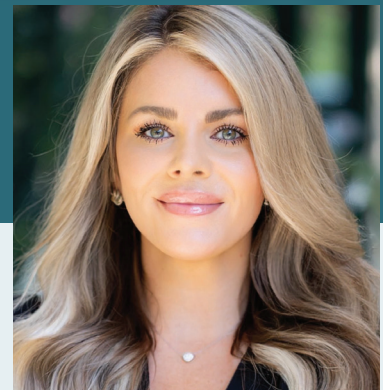
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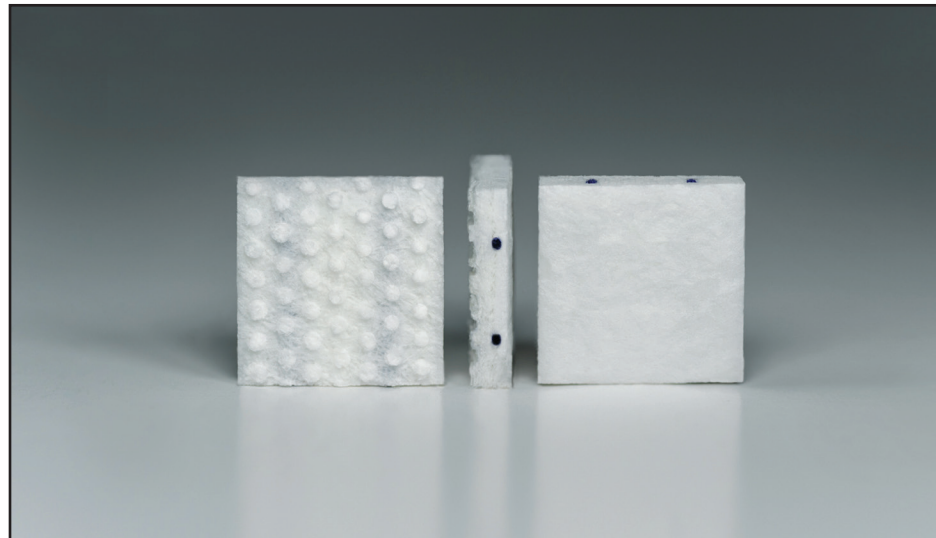
Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside offers innovative brain tumor therapy

For The Recorder

Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside has performed its first procedure utilizing GammaTile, an innovative treatment specifically designed for use inside the brain. It is a Surgically Targeted Radiation Therapy (STaRT) that is designed to delay tumor regrowth for patients with brain tumors while protecting healthy brain tissue.

"St. Vincent's Riverside is on the forefront of advancements in medical care," said Scott Kashman, president and CEO of St. Vincent's Riverside. "The addition of GammaTile will help meet the growing health needs of our community, providing brain tumor patients with an effective treatment option. This care approach extends and improves their quality of life after surgery."

More than 200,000 patients are diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor in the United States each year. They tend to be resistant to current treatments and have a high likelihood of recurrence. GammaTile is for patients with newly diagnosed malignant brain tumors and recurrent brain tumors. The postage-stamp-sized



The postage-stamp-sized device is implanted after tumor removal.

device, which is embedded with small radiation sources, is implanted in the last five minutes of brain tumor removal surgery. The radiation immediately begins targeting tumor cells in the area where the tumor is most likely to recur. Over time and after the radiation has been delivered, the tile naturally resorbs. GammaTile Therapy is shown to improve local tumor

control, which can extend a patient's life.

"GammaTile is a game changer in surgical care for our patients with brain tumors," said Dr. Aristotelis Filippidis, a neurosurgeon with subspecialty in neurosurgical oncology with St. Vincent's Riverside. "The highly targeted therapy at the tumor cavity after resection, the area that is needed most to delay recurrence, is delivered while patients go about their everyday lives, reducing their hardship after surgery."

Current practice for patients with operable brain tumors is surgical removal of the tumor followed by adjuvant therapy, including radiation and chemotherapy. Traditional radiation is delivered in as many as 30 treatments extending over a period of several weeks. This causes a substantial burden of treatment for patients and their caregivers with multiple appointments, delays and transfers from rehabilitation facilities.

With GammaTile, for indicated cases, patients receive treatment starting the day of their surgery and continue as they go about their daily lives. While a therapeutic dose is delivered to the area most likely to have a recurrence, healthy tissue



Contributed photos

is spared. As a result, most patients avoid losing their hair during treatment.

St. Vincent's Riverside was named a Best Regional Hospital by the U.S. News and World Report's Best Hospital Rankings for 2024-25. St. Vincent's was also named a top 15 health system in the country for 2024 by Fortune and PINC AI.

For more information on neurosurgery at St. Vincent's Riverside, go to ascension.org.

Ascension St. Vincent's, based in Jacksonville, operates four hospitals and more than 90 other sites of care and employs more than 5,300 associates.

In fiscal year 2023, Ascension St. Vincent's provided more than \$87.7 million in community benefit and care for persons living in poverty. Ascension is a faith-based health care organization dedicated to transformation through innovation across the continuum of care.

As one of the leading nonprofit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable.



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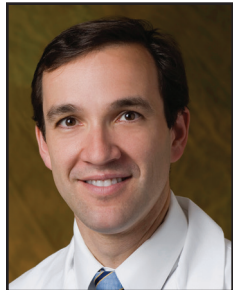


GUEST COLUMN

6 signs of a heart attack – before it happens

By **Anthony Magnano, M.D.**,

Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside



Did you know that you could have warning signs of a heart attack a month or more before it happens? While some heart attacks can present as sudden and intense events, other times they are more gradual, and our bodies can give us subtle clues weeks or more in advance. Unfortunately, many of us are not aware of the signs and symptoms.

Remember that the longer you wait to seek treatment after symptoms begin, the greater your risk of significant damage to the heart muscle, which can lead to heart failure, dangerous arrhythmias or even death. Now is the perfect time to review the symptoms of a heart attack — before it happens.

1. Chest Discomfort or Heaviness

Whether the onset of a heart attack is gradual or sudden, chest discomfort is one of the primary signs. It can feel like

radiating chest pain, although it often presents as more of a dull, heavy pressure that may spread to the arms, neck, jaw, back or upper abdomen.

2. Heart Palpitations

Heart palpitations are a feeling that your heart is fluttering, racing, pounding or skipping a beat. While palpitations are common and normal, particularly during times of stress, calmness or exertion, it is important not to brush off this symptom, particularly if you notice a change. In addition to being a warning sign of a heart attack, heart palpitations can also be a sign of atrial fibrillation (AFib), a common heart rhythm condition that can increase the risk of stroke.

3. Shortness of Breath

Shortness of breath can occur when your heart can't pump enough blood to meet your body's needs. Your body responds by breathing faster in an effort to provide more oxygen for your body. Shortness of breath can be normal during heavy exertion, but increasing shortness of breath on minimal exertion or at rest is a concern.

4. Lightheadedness or Dizziness

When combined with shortness of breath or chest discomfort, lightheadedness or dizziness can signal a drop in blood pressure or decreased blood flow to the brain.

5. Cold Sweats or Sweating Excessively

Your heart has to work harder to pump blood through clogged arteries, so your body may start to sweat more to try and keep your body temperature down during the extra exertion. Cold sweats can also be due to your body's "fight or flight" response that activates in times of stress. This can happen suddenly when a heart attack occurs.

6. Unusual Fatigue

Many of us might write off feeling worn out or tired as due to stress or poor sleep. But fatigue is a common symptom of heart attack, especially in women. A decrease in blood flow to your heart causes the heart to work harder to pump blood throughout the body. This may lead you to feel more tired than normal.

Other Symptoms

It is important to remember that some

heart attacks can present without chest pain as the main symptom, especially in women or the elderly. Other possible heart attack symptoms to be aware of include nausea or abdominal pain and an uncomfortable sense of danger may also be present.

If you notice heart attack symptoms, call 9-1-1.

Don't take any chances. Call 911 when you first suspect a heart attack, stroke, or any other heart emergency. Acting fast could save your life or a loved one's. Don't assume it's "nothing" — while some heart attacks can happen suddenly, do not ignore a more gradual onset of mild discomfort. Listen to your body and call 911 if you feel any discomfort in the chest or upper body, experience shortness of breath, break out in cold sweats or have nausea or lightheadedness.

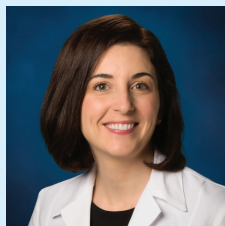
Dr. Anthony Magnano is a Ponte Vedra resident and chief of cardiology at Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside in Jacksonville. For more information on Dr. Magnano and his specialty in treating Atrial fibrillation, visit Healthcare.ascension.org or call 904-388-1820.

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UF Health St. Johns opens urgent care centers

For The Recorder

UF Health St. Johns has announced the opening of two urgent care centers in St. Augustine, expanding access to fast, comprehensive care for patients and families in MuraBella, near World Golf Village, and on the UF Health Flagler Hospital campus.

UF Health Urgent Care's two locations are intended to be residents' new go-to clinics for reliable, high-quality care on their schedule — designed to get patients seen, cared for and on their way quickly by doctors and nurse practitioners with world-class expertise.

Providers can treat a wide variety of conditions, from allergies, headaches and cold symptoms to nose bleeds, sprains and minor fractures. Both locations offer on-site diagnostics so patients can receive X-rays and EKGs conveniently in the same facility, along with other important preventive health and health screenings for conditions like strep, COVID-19 and STIs.

"Urgent care facilities fill an important need in the community," said David A. Cabezas, M.D., medical director of urgent care for UF

Health St. Johns. "Our teams care for those who are ill and can't wait to be seen by their general practitioner, or for those with non-life-threatening injuries who need care for conditions such as fractures, burn or lacerations immediately. Our team of dedicated health care professionals are prepared to help each patient who walks in the door and provide effective and evidence-based care to meet to their needs."

Both the UF Health Flagler Hospital and MuraBella locations are open now and accepting patients, including for initial primary care and preventive health services. The urgent care practices are open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

"Our goal is to bring responsive, compassionate care to patients in St. Augustine and nearby regions so they can get back to good health in less time," said Jon Cooper, chief strategy officer for UF Health St. Johns. "These urgent care offerings are another step toward ensuring access to comprehensive care for every member of our community."

Go to StJohns.UFHealth.org/urgentcare to learn more.

Ascension St. Vincent's offers innovative weight-loss procedures

For The Recorder

St. Vincent's is now offering patients a suite of outpatient weight-loss procedures with Bariendo, a leading obesity treatment company. By integrating advanced endoscopic procedures and a personalized care approach, St. Vincent's and Bariendo aim to enhance patient outcomes and quality of life through effective, minimally invasive treatments. These procedures will be available at St. Vincent's St. Johns County.

"We are excited to give our patients the most effective and personalized treatment options for their weight-loss needs," said Jody Young, Ascension Florida regional vice president of bariatric and general surgery. "Obesity is one of the most common diseases in America, contributing to heart attacks, diabetes and cancer. We look forward to this enhancement of our ability to treat this critical health issue and improve the lives of our patients and the health of our community."

Bariendo's Endoscopic Sleeve Gastroplasty (ESG) Stomach Tightening is a fast, outpatient treatment with proven long-term results. Invented by Bariendo co-founder and Harvard professor Dr. Christo-

WEIGHT-LOSS continues on **Page 27**

October is "Sudden Cardiac Arrest" awareness month.

Know the SIGNS:

- ▶ Loss of consciousness/fainting
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Weight-loss

Continued from 26

pher Thompson, the one-hour endoscopic procedure reduces stomach size by 70%, leading to average weight loss of 18-20%.

A recent study shows that the procedure is effective for at least 10 years for most patients, with low complication rates. Additionally, a recent Journal of the American Medical Association study

found ESG to be almost four times more cost-effective than GLP-1 medications, while delivering superior weight loss results.

The partnership also includes other weight loss interventions such as Gastric Balloon. This 15-minute procedure involves placing a medical balloon in a patient's stomach via endoscopy, helping patients feel full sooner and stay full longer. After six months, the balloon is removed through another endoscopy, with average weight loss totaling 13.2%.

St. Vincent's and Bariendo will also offer enhancements to previously offered bariatric surgeries. Nearly 40% of patients regain weight after bariatric surgery due to stomach stretching and returning hunger.

Endoscopic procedures like TORe+ and SIS retighten the stomach, allowing patients to resume their weight loss. These procedures take less than 45 minutes and result in weight loss of up to 15% for TORe+ and 12-15% for SIS.

Patients who undergo these proce-

dures must also make permanent positive changes to their diets and exercise routines to help ensure long-term success. Weight-loss management is a step-by-step process. St. Vincent's supports patients through every step of their journey. The team of surgical weight-loss specialists includes a surgeon, nurse navigator, bariatric dietitian, exercise physiologist and behavioral health support.

To learn more or schedule a consultation, call 904-425-5996.

Movember changes the face of men's health

Studies have found that men might be more tight-lipped about their health than women. According to Kaiser Permanente, men sometimes don't talk about their health because of cultural attitudes, fear or pride. As a result, men may not be able to catch illnesses at their earliest stages, which can reduce their life expectancy.

The Movember movement was established as an effort to raise awareness about men's health and wellness. Movember gets men involved in their personal health in a fun way: by growing mustaches.

The Movember movement began in 2003 as a way to champion men's health. Since its inception, Movember has helped

fund more than 1,320 men's health projects around the world, including changing the way health services reach and support men. Travis Garone and Luke Slatery devised the idea for Movember when they met up for a beer in their native city of Melbourne, Australia. Since mustaches had all but disappeared from men's grooming trends at the time, the two friends felt that growing a mustache would be a way to spark conversation. Thirty men took up the challenge to grow mustaches and promote men's health in the initial Movember effort.

Today, Movember

has expanded exponentially and internationally.

The main focus of Movember (beyond growing a mustache) involves significant issues affecting men: mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer. Participants are urged to be more physically active and host fundraising events to raise awareness about the effect

these issues have on men. Much like Breast Cancer Awareness Month in

October serves to spur more women to get mammograms and take breast health seriously, Movember is a chance for men to make doctor's appointments and discuss key issues like prostate health. In fact, the Prostate Cancer Foundation is an official beneficiary partner with Movember for their U.S. campaign. To date, Movember has donated more than \$56 million to PCF to support innovative prostate cancer research.

From humble Australian beginnings, Movember has grown into a global movement working with many different organizations united by a commitment to change the face of men's health one mustache at a time.



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Professor gets grant to study muscle atrophy

For The Recorder

A University of North Florida biology professor has been awarded a prestigious four-year National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant totaling more than \$720,000 to study the functional role of an enzyme called dual-specificity phosphatase 4 (Dusp4) in skeletal muscle atrophy.

Dr. David Waddell's NIH-funded research project will help contribute to knowledge about skeletal muscle atrophy associated with neuromuscular disorders, neurodegenerative diseases and aging.

Skeletal muscle atrophy is a decrease in muscle mass that occurs when protein degradation exceeds protein synthesis. This study will aim to characterize the role of Dusp4 in modulating the molecular mechanisms that regulate muscle size and strength and determine how Dusp4 may contribute to changes in muscle mass.

The project's successful completion will demonstrate for the first time that Dusp4 acts as a regulator of skeletal muscle mass through modulation of the mitogen activated protein (MAP) kinase signaling pathway. If the findings of this investigation demonstrate that Dusp4 participates in

the neurogenic atrophy cascade by acting as a direct or indirect modulator of muscle wasting, then inhibition of this dual-specificity phosphatase could prove beneficial in the treatment of certain types of skeletal muscle atrophy.

Waddell is an expert in the molecular, cellular and genetic mechanisms of skeletal muscle atrophy. He has authored numerous peer-reviewed papers, presented at international research conferences and contributed to a number of grant-funded research studies about skeletal muscle wasting.

He received his Ph.D. in molecular cancer biology from Duke University and then changed research focus during his post-doctoral training to study the molecular underpinnings of skeletal muscle atrophy at the University of California, Davis.

His interest in skeletal muscle and the mechanisms by which muscle responds to physiological stimuli has continued at UNF where he has identified and characterized more than a dozen novel genes that are differentially expressed in response to neurogenic atrophy, including Dusp4.

Baptist Jacksonville recognized

For The Recorder

Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville has received the NRC Consumer Loyalty Award for providing exceptional patient-centered care and experiences. This is the second consecutive year Baptist Jacksonville was ranked by NRC Health as one of the top 100 health care organizations in the country for patient loyalty.

The award underscores the trust the community has in the quality of care and service received at Baptist Jacksonville. With access to advanced technologies, specialists at Baptist Jacksonville provide tertiary-level, comprehensive medical and surgical care. Among the hospital's specialty areas are heart, cancer, behavioral health, high-risk obstetrics, orthopedics and neurosciences, including critically needed services that would

not otherwise be available locally.

Recipients of the consumer loyalty awards are the 100 top-scoring health care organizations in NRC Health's Market Insights online survey of more than 310,000 households across the country. Ratings are based on a combination of three metrics:

- Net Promoter Score, which measures consumer loyalty and how likely they are to recommend the organization to others.
- Brand Perception, which measures how consumers view the organization's overall image and reputation.
- NRC Health's proprietary Human Understanding Metric, which measures how well the health care organization understands and meets the needs and preferences of its consumers.



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Marsh Landing 'goes for the gold' with member tournament



Marsh Landing Country Club held its annual member guest golf women's golf tournament on Oct. 16 to 18. The following photos are from the VIP party that kicked off the tournament, as this year's theme was "Go for the gold," in honor of the recent Summer Olympics in Paris. Members dressed up to represent the countries they were chosen to play for and also took part in a putting contest during the event sponsored by The Floyd Group with One Sotheby's International Realty.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Crisp-Ellert Art Museum welcomes Peruvian artist

For The Recorder

Flagler College welcomes Seattle-based Peruvian born artist and independent curator Rafael Soldi as the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum's (CEAM) Artist-in-Residence from Nov. 16 through Nov. 30. An artist talk with Soldi will be held at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 22 at Flagler College's Ringhaver Student Center Virginia Room, 50 Sevilla St., St. Augustine.

This event is free and open to the public.

Soldi is an artist and curator based in Seattle, Washington, who utilizes video, photography, installation, text and performance. Soldi blends personal history with collective memory to explore how gender expectations are deeply embedded in language and childhood games — and how they can be destabilized. His recent works implicate a type of masculinity that favors violence and erases the necessity of intimacy and connection.

During his residency, Soldi will work on his upcoming book and engage with students and faculty through class visits, student critiques and public programming. Soldi's text-based works focus on the fluidity and dissonance of the bilingual experience, revealing the gendered power structures integrated into language. He analyzes this state of in-betweenness,



Contributed photo

"Entre Hermanos" by Rafael Soldi

providing nuanced insight into immigrant identity while also offering a rich metaphor for queer experience.

The CEAM Artist Residency, in collaboration with Flagler College's Department of Art & Design, is a regular program of artists-in-residence to engage in themes of place-making while collaborating with some aspect of St. Augustine's local community, the city's significant and varied roles in American history, or

its rich natural environment.

A goal of the residency is to foster diverse perspectives on these aspects of our local community, and artists and scholars in a range of fields are invited to integrate and collaborate between the areas of fine art and broader fields of inquiry, such as curatorial practice, performing arts and creative writing.

A grant from the Dr. JoAnn Crisp-Ellert Fund and The Community Foun-



Photo by Carina Skrobecki

Rafael Soldi

ation for Northeast Florida backs the CEAM Artist Residency. CEAM programming is also supported by the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council, the St. Johns Cultural Council and voco, an IGH hotel.

For further information on CEAM programming, go to www.flagler.edu/ceam or contact interim director Helena Rodriguez at 904-826-8530 or crispellert@flagler.edu.



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St. Francis House revisits the '80s for a good cause

St. Francis House celebrated its 40th anniversary at Celebration Hall at St. Anastasia Catholic Church on Sept. 21.

With an “’80s Prom” theme — neon lights, leg warmers and nostalgic music — attendees came together in the spirit of giving to help those in need. The evening included delicious food, beverages, a video game arcade, a silent auction, lots of dancing and fun!

The star of the night was the annual star auction led by board member Drew Clukey. All proceeds from the auction, ticket sales, donations and the silent auction, totaling more than \$55,000, go directly to providing food, shelter, case management and vital services. This will offer a brighter future for the homeless men, women, youth, families and growing homeless 65-plus population in our community.

Contributed photos





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Business Weekly

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Rising inventory, affordability signal opportunities

For The Recorder

As we enter the cooler months, the Northeast Florida housing market continues to show promising opportunities for buyers. The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) Market Statistics report for September highlights increasing affordability and a stabilizing market.

Across Northeast Florida's six-county region, the median sales price for single-family homes saw a modest increase of 1.8%, reaching \$389,945. At the same time, the Home Affordability Index rose by 1.4%, reaching a score of 70, signaling improved buying power for potential homeowners.

"Our market continued to see a significant decline in sales even as the average market price increased slightly from August," said 2024 NEFAR President Rory Dubin. "The Home Affordability Index increased as well due to our area pricing being more competitive than any other major metropolitan area in the southeast-

ern United States."

Closed sales across the region saw a dip of 17.7% month-over-month, with 1,526 transactions completed. Pending sales dropped significantly by 32.7%, coming in at 1,134, while new listings fell 8.2% to 2,835, indicating a tightening of available new inventory on the market.

However, buyers will be encouraged by the active inventory of single-family homes, which rose 4.2% to 7,695 properties. This represents a substantial year-over-year jump of 74.1% from September 2023, reflecting a much-needed boost in available housing options. Additionally, the median number of days on the market remained steady at 46 days, signaling consistent selling conditions.

"Our area is an excellent location for home buyers and investors to purchase residential properties with inventory nearing 8000 units," said Dubin. "The monthly supply of inventory is now about five months, indicating that market equilibrium between buyers and sellers

in Northeast Florida. The current market makes it critical for all buyers, sellers, renters and investors to utilize the expertise in their transaction provided by a Realtor."

In St. Johns County, the September median prices decreased 1.3% to \$550,000 for single-family homes. The median days on the market increased 0.9% to 59. Month-to-month, closed sales dropped 20.1% to 417, pending sales sank 31.7% to 287 and new listings declined 0.7% to 664.

Active inventory increased 0.9% to 2,091 homes, a 5.0-month supply. The Home Affordability Index rose 4.2% to 50; St. Johns County remains the most expensive place to live in the region.

In Duval County, the September median price of single-family housing was \$334,750, a 0.3% increase from the month before. The median number of days on the market in September was 38, 9.5% shorter than in August. Month-to-month closed sales fell 18.2% to 753, pending sales decreased 34.9% to

553 and new listings fell 9.8% to 1,522 homes.

Active inventory for the county increased 7.5% to 3,664 homes, a 4.9-month supply. In September, the Home Affordability Index reached 82.

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

A higher number of means greater affordability. This index measures affordability factors for all homebuyers making a 20% downpayment. An index of 100 is defined as the point where a median-income family has the exact amount of income needed to purchase a median-priced existing home. An index value greater than 100 means that the family has more than enough income, while a value lower than 100 means that a family doesn't have enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan.

Benchmarks of Success

A look at major career developments in the area



Beaulieu joins real estate business

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty has announced the addition of Janine Beaulieu to its team of real estate professionals. With a focus on luxury homes in the Nocatee area and expertise in assisting first-time home buyers, Beaulieu brings a unique blend of enthusiasm and dedication to her clients.

A graduate of Plymouth State College and Lesley University, Beaulieu holds a bachelor's in elementary education and a master's in education. This academic background, combined with her passion for helping people, allows her to guide clients through the complex real estate process with ease and confidence.

You can contact Beaulieu at Janine.Beaulieu@FloridaNetworkRealty.com or 603-860-7756 JBeaulieu.FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

The Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office is

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

Wahby named to Forbes list

Robin Wahby from the Jacksonville New York Life has been listed on the 2024 Forbes Top Financial Security Professionals Best-in-State list. The individuals named to this list of distinguished professionals were chosen based on many criteria considered by an independent research firm.

A New York Life agent for more than 30 years, Wahby received this recognition for helping her clients in a world in which wealth preservation and protection matter more than ever.

"We are honored that Robin appears on this prestigious list," said Bill Grub, managing partner of the Jacksonville general office. "New York Life has known for quite some time what a valuable asset Robin has been to our family and to many families and businesses in our community."

Wahby, founder and CEO of Wahby

Financial Group, helps families and businesses identify opportunities that increase their financial position and enjoy a better quality of life. As a fiduciary in her investment advisory work, Robin is a financial adviser who believes that the one thing everyone has in common is the desire for financial security.

Ability Housing adds new positions



Debra Grise



Jeremy Smith

Ability Housing has announced the expansion of its real estate team through the creation of two new positions. Debra Grise has been appointed the organization's real estate development director and will lead all real estate development efforts; Jeremy Smith has been promoted to the new director of asset management role and will ensure the ongoing mission-aligned operations of the rental portfolio.

This expansion positions Ability Housing to achieve its goal of develop-

ing more than 2,200 units of affordable housing across Florida by 2030 while simultaneously maintaining its portfolio of properties at the highest level.

These new appointments, coupled with the recent launch of the nonprofit's Affordable Housing Fund, demonstrate progress toward a critical goal outlined in the organization's current strategic plan: to elevate the organization's workforce and operational capacity for optimal performance.

"It's important for us to have experts throughout our team who not only understand the scope of work their roles entail, but who also truly understand and believe in our mission," said Shannon Nazworth, president and CEO of Ability Housing. "With Debra and Jeremy's leadership, we are even more equipped to address Florida's housing needs as quickly as we can in a strategic manner. Building new communities and preserving the quality of the ones we already have are equally important to this goal. I am grateful they have chosen to support our mission in building flourishing communities where everyone has a home."

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

Photos by Anthony Richards



Amelia Island Cookout features breathtaking tastes, views

By Anthony Richards

The Second Annual Amelia Island Cookout was held on Oct. 19 on the oceanfront lawn at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island.

The event featured a perfect combination of both a mixing of tastes and beautiful

sights with award-winning chefs from across the country and breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean with a simple turn of the head.

A large part of the lineup this year was once again several local restaurants and breweries, such as Salt, The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island's restaurant, Wicked Bao,

Mocama, Manifest Distilling and Aardwolf Brewing.

Attendees walked around and grab sample plates from the various vendors, which included a low-country soul bowl from Holy City Hogs; Texas Wagyu "burnt ends" empanadas with Poblano Mole Verde sauce; and Yukon Gold

potato bisque with bay scallops, smokey bacon and leeks from Burlock Coast and The Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale.

The progression was seen from the inaugural event to year two, both in the layout and presentation of the event but also with the amount of people that took part in the culinary showcase.



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The current location of Michael's.



Hyatt Place St. Augustine, Vilano Beach



Michael's interior seating

Michael's announces move to new coastal dining space

After nearly two decades of crafting high-quality cuisine in downtown St. Augustine, the acclaimed Michael's is fully embracing its Spanish coastal roots and moving to a brand-new beach location.

Michael's will finish service at 25 Cuna St. on New Year's Eve and plans to open in February 2025 at its new location in the Hyatt Place St. Augustine, 117 Vilano Road, located in the quaint oceanside hamlet of Vilano Beach, less than four miles away.

"Honestly, it's a move I'm incredibly excited about," says Michael Lugo, executive chef and owner at Viva Hospitality, the restaurant group that Michael's and Chef Lugo's other two restaurants are under. "Occupying a historic building comes with its own set of unique challenges. The Hyatt Place is brand new, so I can focus more of the efforts and budget

on projects that fine-tune the dining experience. The new location also has more space for our extensive wine library, a brand-new kitchen and a luxurious section for our refined chef's table experience. It will be an adjustment, but I truly believe this will be a transformative change for the restaurant, our staff and our diners."

Michael's opened as The Tasting Room in 2006 at its original Cuna Street location. It has graced "Best Of" lists time and time again, most recently earning a prestigious Best of Award of Excellence from "Wine Spectator."

Over the years, as the restaurant grew,



Chef Michael Lugo

Contributed photos

so did the struggles of the location. Lugo has dealt with persistent and, at times, devastating flooding, infrastructure issues, power outages and an increasingly difficult parking situation.

In a stroke of fate, he was presented with a solution in the form of his newest venture,

Pesca Vilano. This fun and fresh concept, centered around the Puerto Rican dishes of Lugo's home, was perfect for the expansive rooftop at the Hyatt Place on Vilano Beach, with its warm breezes and ocean views, but it didn't suit the bespoke dining room on the hotel's first floor.

Lugo and his management concluded

that the space would be perfect for an even more refined version of Michael's. The new space offers intimate dining areas, plentiful parking, a more comfortable seating arrangement and more space for the carefully curated wine library, a hallmark of the Michael's experience. Expanded kitchen space and refrigeration will allow Lugo's team to introduce a wider variety of fresh seafood, like oysters.

Michael's will continue to offer its signature five-star experience at 25 Cuna St. during the busy Nights of Lights holiday season through Dec. 31. Viva Hospitality will maintain a downtown presence with its French restaurant, La Nouvelle. Pesca will continue to offer Latin flavors and creative cocktails at its rooftop location at the Hyatt Place St. Augustine / Vilano Beach.



Michael's outside seating



Michael's fare is popular among local diners.



Dining at Michael's is popular among locals.

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GUEST COLUMN

After the storm: Make your disaster-relief donations count

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

When disaster strikes, many Americans want to help by donating to organizations that provide aid to those in need.

“Constant media coverage is now part of the aftermath of any catastrophe, so individual donors are much more aware of what each affected community needs,” says Deborah P. Lauer, senior wealth planner at Wells Fargo Advisors. “Donors have the opportunity to be more effective with their responses.”



Contributed photo

Build giving into your long-term investment plan

The urge to help others is powerful, but it’s worth developing deliberate philanthropic goals so your giving is part of your overall investment plan.

Events like hurricanes and tornados are often followed by a huge increase in donations to disaster relief organizations. While this outpouring of support is welcome, charities note that it’s more important to have the resources they need before disaster strikes.

Lauer supports this as a smart financial strategy as well.

“Planned giving helps charitable organizations prepare rather than react,” she notes. “And it also gives you extra time to find charities that support your family’s values and are delivering the best benefit on a dollar-for-dollar basis.”

Know why you donate

Giving throughout the year instead of focusing on year-end donations can also help your family manage its philanthropy as part of its general budget.

“Families have increased budget pressures at year-end with holiday travel, entertainment and spending on presents,” Lauer says. “Giving midyear can help avoid that cash crunch.”

The extra time also allows donors to consider strategies beyond simply writing a check. For instance, donating appreciated securities owned for more than 12 months can be a tax-efficient way to give: You may be able to deduct the full market value of the securities (subject to adjusted gross income limitations) while avoiding capital gains taxes on those assets. But the process takes time, and a late start in December could mean missing out on that year’s income tax deduction. Work-

ing with your tax adviser early in the year can help you determine your potential tax benefits.

Organize your giving

If philanthropy is important to you, use this opportunity to incorporate it into your overall financial strategy. At the beginning of the year, set a total for your annual charitable giving based on your budget and the causes you want to support. But leave a little aside for sudden catastrophes so that you know how much you can afford to give regardless of the time of year you make the donations. Your financial adviser can help you work through this process.

After you identify which organizations will benefit from your donations, conduct due diligence to ensure the group is likely to use your donation effectively and efficiently. The Internal Revenue Service provides Tax Exempt Organization Search, <https://www.irs.gov/charities-nonprofits/tax-exempt-organization-search>, a searchable web database of organizations designated as qualified charities. Verifying that your chosen group is on the list can help you avoid donating to a fraudulent organization.

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Vicious Biscuit raises \$1,000 for hurricane recovery

For The Recorder

Vicious Biscuit, the award-winning fast-casual breakfast concept and Southern-made originator of bold biscuit creations, announced it raised \$1,000 through a fundraiser from Oct. 9 to 16 to support Hurricane Helene recovery efforts.

The fundraiser centered around the purchase of its Pumpkin Bites (\$8) located on its fall seasonal menu. Two dollars from each of the 487 orders during this time was donated to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund. Six of the seven corporate-owned locations in Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina participated.

To paint a picture: A large pumpkin contains between 500-1,000 seeds. Each order of Vicious Biscuit’s Pumpkin Bites contains seven individual pumpkin fritters. During the one-week period, 3,409

individual bites were consumed, the equivalent of the number of seeds found in nearly five large pumpkins.

“First and foremost, our hearts go out to all of those affected by Hurricane Helene,” said Amanda Kahalehoe, COO for Vicious Biscuit. “Vicious Biscuit has a store in Boone that was impacted and thank goodness all our employees are safe and receiving the necessary assistance. As a business owner, it’s important we do what we can to support any disaster relief effort — especially in our respective area. We are small yet growing and are fortunate to have six other locations to harness support. We’re grateful to those guests who stopped in and ordered our Pumpkin Bites. Together, we’re making a difference for those who are recovering from this disaster.”

Go to www.viciousbiscuit.com for more information.

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Owner Pamela Keegan and gallery manager Lisa Cederberg



Village Arts Framing and Gallery

Village Arts open house Nov. 8 and 9

For The Recorder

Village Arts Framing and Gallery located in Sawgrass Village is celebrating 49 years in business. They will host their annual artist open house 4-6 p.m. Nov. 8 and 1-4 p.m. Nov. 9.

Visitors will find paintings by award-winning local and regional artists, and enjoy an art walk of local Florida-inspired

landscape art as well as still life, wildlife and floral pieces. This is a chance to chat with several of the artists while they demonstrate to learn more about the inspiration for their work and their medium techniques.

“Serving the Ponte Vedra Beach community has been an honor over these many years, and we have a loyal following of clients who come in to purchase

art as birthday and anniversary gifts for friends, family or for themselves,” said gallery owner Pamela Keegan. “Our gallery provides an intimate space for viewing art in small and medium sizes, but if you want a larger piece for over the fireplace or in an entry hall our artists are happy to work on those commissions, too.”

Keegan adds, “Our selection of frames

is one of the largest in Northeast Florida and our expert framing ensures that you will love your new artwork. We are here to help!”

Village Arts Framing and Gallery is located next to Trasca Eatery in the Sawgrass Shopping Center, with plenty of free parking.

For more information, phone 904-273-4925 or go to villageartspvb.com.

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Common giving scams and how to spot them

December is a season of giving, and that charitable spirit is evidenced by the uptick in donations over the final month of the year. Perhaps inspired by Giving Tuesday, which is celebrated annually on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving, donors tend to be especially generous in December. According to Donorbox, which provides an online fundraising platform to facilitate charitable donations, 31 percent of yearly charitable giving happens in December.

Nonprofit organizations undoubtedly recognize the spirit of generosity that surfaces each December, but criminals are likely cognizant of individuals' desire to give back during the holiday season as well. Indeed, a 2023 press release from the United States Attorney's Office in the Western District of North Carolina cited fake charities as one of the most common scams encountered by consumers during the holiday season. With that in mind, w

- **Fraudulent charities:** Criminals targeting people who want to donate during the holiday season may set up fraudulent charities in an effort to trick people into giving them money. The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs notes that fraudulent charities may feature impressive names or a name similar to one used by a reputable, well-known charity. Pay close attention to website URLs, email addresses and Facebook creation dates.

- **Phishing emails:** Phishing emails have been around for decades, and for good reason. Such scams are easy to implement and highly successful. The Federal Trade Commission reported receiving 358,000 reports of scammers contacting individuals via email in 2023, and the real number is likely much higher, as few consumers take the time to report such emails to the FTC. Phishing emails typically prompt recipients to click on a link embedded in an email. These emails may seem as though they're coming from an individual's bank or credit card company, while others may indicate recipients can win a prize if they open the email and click on a link within it. The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs warns consumers against sharing



Phishing emails are one charity scam individuals must learn to recognize, particularly during the giving season.

their credit card information in an email, even if the sender claims to be from a reputable charity.

- **Pressure tactics:** Seeking to capitalize on the spirit of giving that surfaces each December, some scammers will pressure prospective donors and potential victims into making donations over the phone or via links embedded in an email. Reputable charities do not pressure donors into giving over the phone or via email, so solicitations for immediate donations are a telltale sign of a charity scam. If prompted to make donations with cash or via gift cards or wire transfers, hang up the phone, as the FTC notes such payment methods are how scammers request donations.

- **Thank you messages:** Another com-

mon giving scam is to thank potential victims for past donations they never made. This is an attempt to trick generous individuals into thinking they have a past relationship with a charity they believe is reputable, which might make them less inclined to vet the person or organization thanking them. Scammers are banking on establishing that false sense of security

and trust, particularly during a notably busy time of year when donors may feel as though they don't have the time to research organizations they want to support.

Scammers prey on individuals' generosity each holiday season. More information about giving scams and how to avoid them is available at consumer.ftc.gov.

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In the Arts



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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

CONCERT REVIEW

Jacksonville Symphony celebrates the season with Britten, Sibelius, Elgar

By Matt Bickett

The Jacksonville Symphony ushered in Northeast Florida's season of sweater weather this past weekend with two concerts on their Classical Series. After a week with temperatures dipping into the 50s, the Symphony performed masterworks from even colder climates, including Benjamin Britten's "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra" and Edward Elgar's "Enigma Variations." The Symphony was also joined on stage by violin virtuoso Stefan Jackiw for a rendition of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius's "Violin Concerto."

Despite its title, Britten's "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra" proved appropriate for all ages. The audience experienced the unique strengths and skills of individual members of the Jacksonville Symphony through the work's cycle of variations focused on each instrument section. The work re-introduced even seasoned concertgoers to sections not often heard in isolation.

Of particular note, the unified sound of the basses in the eighth variation demonstrated the virtuosity of a section sometimes thought to play a supporting role. The work offered a condensed tour

through the orchestra in its concluding movement (called a "fugue"). The impressive speed and runs of the performance left some details lost in a mist, but the bigger picture remained recognizable with the clear return of the work's main theme played by the brass to close the movement.

The second work on the program brought us from the gray chill of the British Isles to the harshness of the snowy Finnish countryside. The violins set the scene with a wintry harmony depicting falling snow. Jackiw's commanding execution of Sibelius's opening violin solos brought attention to the loneliness of the work's first movement. Jackiw convincingly portrayed Sibelius's bleak portrait of man versus snowy nature.

The ensemble responded with a grounding earthiness in their tone, although with a sense of timidity sometimes at odds with the expansive landscape of Sibelius's score. Nevertheless, the collaboration solicited an enthusiastic response of applause following the first movement. Jackiw brought attention to an even more impressive sound in the slow second movement. A folk feeling accompanied the virtuosic leaps and very quick tempo of the final movement. While the soloist handled the faster pace with poise, I felt the ensemble

hurrying too quickly to leave the cold for the fireplace — an understandable instinct for Floridians facing Sibelius's harsh cold.

Following another appreciative response from the audience, Jackiw returned to the stage for a subtle performance of the Sarabande from J.S. Bach's Second Violin Partita. Jackiw left us wanting even more with his exceptional display of depth in an encore following such a monumental concerto. Guided to intermission by his sensitivity to meter and masterful bow technique, I couldn't help but wonder about his take on the Partita's famous Chaconne.

The concert's final work, Elgar's "Enigma Variations," offered warm comfort like a gathering of friends around the hearth. A set of variations depicting Elgar's circle of friends, the work rightfully positioned Elgar among the giants of the classical canon. Even without the specific context about each of the composer's individual friends, the Jacksonville Symphony's descriptive portrayals brought imagined characters to life in this music.

Music Director Courtney Lewis's pacing of the movements demonstrated his special affinity for, and mastery of, this British masterwork. Beginning with the second variation's playfully energetic

leaps, Lewis's conducting came into its own throughout the work. The thrilling energy of his interpretation in the seventh variation also garnered an unusually enthusiastic response from the audience with applause that did not feel out of place.

Lewis's interpretation captured a Victorian grandeur that reached its peak in the crowd favorite ninth variation, "Nimrod." The variation's climax played to the brilliance of the Symphony's sound with Elgar's broad swells to full ensemble. Just after, the expressiveness of principal violist Yun-Ting Kuo's solo in the 10th variation recalled the sensitivity with which she handled the solo in the sixth. Following from here, the Symphony continued to enthrall through the work's successive variations, handling the lightness, drama, then sincerity of Elgar's depictions. The Symphony's portrayal of Elgar's warm affection for his friends offered a comforting conclusion to the icy winter hinted at in the first half of the program, even if that winter may not reach Jacksonville.

Matt Bickett is a musician and scholar living in Jacksonville. He currently serves as director of music ministries at Riverside Presbyterian Church and artistic director of the Friends of Music at Riverside.



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Mean girl 'Mac Beth' to be staged

Apex Theatre Studio presents Erica Schmidt's Mac Beth, a retelling of Shakespeare's classic set amongst a group of schoolgirls performing the play as an after-school ritual that turns dark and bloody at the black box theater at Apex Theatre Studio, located in World Golf Village. Thursday, Oct. 24, is student night. Other shows are: 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 25, and 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26.

MAC BETH continues on Page 41



Contributed photos

Tao joins the Jacksonville Symphony as artist-in-residence

For The Recorder

Acclaimed pianist and composer Conrad Tao will join the Jacksonville Symphony's 75th Anniversary Season as the artist-in-residence. Hailed by New York Magazine as "the kind of musician who is shaping the future of classical music" and praised by The New York Times for his "probing intellect and open-hearted vision," Tao's residency marks a thrilling addition to the Symphony's milestone season.

Following three consecutive seasons of remarkable performances in Jacoby Symphony Hall, including the electrifying renditions of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" and Sergei Rachmaninoff's Fourth Concerto in January 2024, Tao brings both extraordinary artistry and innovation to the city of Jacksonville.

"I'm very happy to be returning to the Jacksonville Symphony as an artist-in-residence this season. Between community events, performances and, of course, a brand new piano concerto to be premiered in the spring, this residency is a gratifying way to continue my years-long relationship with this wonderful

orchestra," said Tao.

As artist-in-residence, Tao will deliver several highly anticipated performances, including his debut in the Symphony in 60 Series on Thursday and Friday, Oct. 24 and 25, and the world premiere of his latest piano concerto on April 4 and 5. This piano concerto has been specially commissioned by the Jacksonville Symphony and will showcase Tao's versatility and passion for pushing boundaries. Tao will also provide enriching educational opportunities for local students including a masterclass and outreach efforts for Duval County schools.

During the 2024/25 Season, Tao has several other prestigious engagements with the world's leading orchestras and venues, including a recital at Carnegie Hall and performances with the San Francisco Symphony, Dallas Symphony and St. Louis Symphony. Recent works such as "Flung Out" proves Tao's bold compositional voice is deeply expressive and offers a fresh perspective that resonates with today's modern audiences.

Learn more about Tao and his upcoming performances in Jacksonville at JaxSymphony.org.

Mac Beth

Continued from 40

Originally produced by off-Broadway's Red Bull Theatre company in 2019, Schmidt's interpretation provides a fresh take on this tale of evil while keeping the original in text largely intact. The New York Times declared it "exuberant ... an adaptation of the Shakespeare play that with its all-female cast becomes a raucous, sometimes impish, very dark-edged revel."

"We have an October tradition of producing something to give folks a good scare," said Ian Mairs, managing director of Apex Theatre Studio. "This show makes Shakespeare accessible to anyone."

Teaching artist Laura Frye, who has worked professionally across the country

doing Shakespeare, concurs that "handing all the roles in the play to young women provides an interesting lens on the play. This group is more than up to the challenge."

The production features young artists in the advanced acting workshop at the studio, who are currently attending Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, Ponte Vedra High School and the Episcopal School of Jacksonville.

Running time is 80 minutes. The production is not recommended for children younger than 12.

There will be a special outdoor performance on Tuesday, Oct. 29, at the Hope Pavilion at St. Francis-in-the-Field in Ponte Vedra.

Tickets are \$15. For tickets and reservations, go to apextheatrejax.com/events.

Novel

Continued from 1

circumstances while using fictional characters.

"I did a ton of research on the Nuremberg Trials, and it really delves into the hunt for looted art and the cultural property and possessions that were taken by the Nazis," Stollenwerck said. "I read a lot of memoirs of men who were in the 42nd Infantry Division, who liberated the Dachau concentration camp. I even have a personal witness statement in it."

She wanted to make sure that even though it is historical fiction, that the history aspect of it was true and had the backing to support it.

"I think it's interesting in the fact that it's a contemporary novel with commentary themes relating to teenagers, but it really illuminates a part of World War II history that I think a lot of people are not as familiar with, and that is the cultural war that Hitler undertook," Stollenwerck said. "He wanted to confiscate and destroy what he labeled modern art, which was also a lot of Jewish artists at the time, and he started by looting their properties before expanding to academic institutions, museums and churches."

She believes it is important, especially for the younger generations to understand the history that came before them, and to realize that much of what was

once stolen has still yet to be recovered.

"At the end of the war, 500,000 pieces of art had been taken from various countries and were in Germany, which was over half of the art on the European continent," Stollenwerck said. "So that's when the Allied Forces were tasked with finding and turning that art back to original owners. A lot of these families to this day are still fighting to get their possessions back."

In fact, one of the comments printed on the back of the book is from Joanne Intrator, who wrote a memoir about how she tried to get back her family's building that was in Berlin before being seized by the Nazis.

"It was a 60-year battle, and she finally got it back, but there are many more still searching," Stollenwerck said.

According to Stollenwerck, there are still 30,000 pieces of stolen art that have yet to be found.

"There's like 10 complete masterpieces that they know that are in the marketplace somewhere, but they're sitting in a private collection somewhere, so these crimes are still ongoing," Stollenwerck said.

Those looking to purchase a copy of "Don't Let Me Down" can find it on Amazon.com.

The release of "Don't Let Me Down" coincides with the film rights to "Hello, Goodbye" having been sold, and it is currently in screenplay development.



KINGS RETURN

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VISUAL ARTIST: DENISE SAWYER-JOHNSON

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SUNDAY, 12/8 • 4:00 PM

VISUAL ARTIST: MICHAEL ARMANNO

Sponsored by A Friend of BFAS

"Their brilliant technique, their clear and convincing phrases gave their performance a logic and lightness that brought the listener into the music in a relaxed and enjoyable way. A magnificent ensemble!" (Jean-Pierre Mathez, Brass Bulletin)



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Kings Return	11/3	Isidore String Quartet	3/21
Spanish Brass	12/8	Alliage Sax Quintett	4/6
Clayton Stephenson	1/10		



Sports



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Panther Den turns pink for senior night



It was a busy Friday night at Nease High's Panther Den, and pink was a popular color, as part of the school's "pink out" theme. Students and players both wore pink as part of a breast cancer awareness initiative. The Panthers also celebrated senior night.

Photos by Anthony Richards





Vespo Latino and Liam Heffernan from Landrum, the 1st place winners.



The Landrum team unwinding after the meet.

Teams compete at Landrum cross country invitational

For The Recorder

The second annual Alice B. Landrum Cross Country Invitational brought together middle school teams from Liberty Pines Academy, Palm Valley Academy, Lake Asbury Junior High, St. John's Academy, Duval Charter School at Coastal and host Landrum Middle School. Despite a rainy start, the weather cleared for the exciting 3K races.

The event showcased impressive performances, with notable individual achievements from Vespo Latino (1st, girls' race) and Liam Heffernan (1st, boys' race), both from

Landrum.

In the girls' race, strong finishes included Hayden Warren (2nd, Liberty Pines), Lucy Lommel (3rd, Landrum), Audra Davis (4th, Landrum) and Micaela Simpson (5th, Palm Valley). In the team standings, Landrum secured 1st place, followed by Palm Valley, Lake Asbury, Liberty Pines, St. John's Academy and Duval Charter School at Coastal.

For the boys, standout finishes were from Louis Lyons (2nd, Liberty Pines), Collin Bovee (3rd, Landrum), Rafe Lommel (4th, Landrum) and Ben Kimber (5th, Landrum). The boys' team rankings had Landrum in 1st, Palm Valley

in 2nd, Lake Asbury in 3rd, Liberty Pines in 4th, St. Johns Academy in 5th and Duval Charter School at Coastal in 6th.

Support for the event came from Millie's Homemade Ice Cream & Coffee, which provided coffee and ice cream, and the Landrum PTO, which supplied fruits and water for the runners.

This event wouldn't have been possible without the hard work of Coach Speed and Coach Ross at Landrum as well as Eli and Kyle with JAC timing. Principal Mr. Kasting was also present to cheer on the athletes, making the day even more memorable.

Contributed photos



Runners from Palm Valley Academy.



Coach Speed from Landrum cruising around in his gator.



Landrum runner crossing the finish line.

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Super Girl Surf Pro returns to Jax Beach Nov. 8-10

For The Recorder

ASA Entertainment has announced that the U.S. Air Force Super Girl Surf Pro presented by Jersey Mike's will celebrate its fourth year at the Jacksonville Beach Pier and SeaWalk Pavilion on Nov. 8-10. The nationally televised festival is centered around the World Surf League (WSL) QS3000 women's competition and features live music and other events focused on empowering young women and showcasing their talents.

All competitions, concerts, classes and activities are free and open to the public.

Some of the biggest names in women's surfing are expected to attend, including 2023 Pipe Masters Champion Moana Jones-Wong, crowd favorite and two-time Super Girl Champion Sage Erikson, 2024 Super Girl Surf Pro San Diego Champion Eden Walla and defending Super Girl Surf Pro Jacksonville Champion Keala Tomodo-Bannert.

In addition to the world-class surfing, the event features an action-packed Festival Village at the SeaWalk Pavilion with 11 live concerts; an all-female DJ Competition; women's beach soccer,



beach volleyball and beach lacrosse tournaments; free classes in fitness, yoga, Zumba, wellness and dance; professional skateboarding and inline skating competitions; celebrity speakers; women's longboarding; panel discussions; female artists; social influencers; autograph signings; an adult beverage garden; food trucks; and more family-friendly activities.

New elements for 2024 include a women's flag football tournament and cheerleading competition. Combined with existing events, Super Girl Surf

Pro expects to attract more than 1,100 women competing across 10 sports at the festival. The festival organizers have reached an agreement to continue bringing the event to Jacksonville Beach for another four years.

The Super Girl Concert Series, which is part of the CELSIUS Essential Vibes Tour, will feature 11 artists performing free live concerts, including star acts like Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, CeeLo Green, The Expendables, Artikal Sound System, Hannah Wicklund and many more.

The event is part of the Super Girl Series, a mission-based platform that includes three annual women's action sports, esports and lifestyle events designed to promote female empowerment, inclusion and equality.

Each of the Super Girl events are centered around providing athletic, social, cultural, educational and entertainment opportunities for young women in traditionally male-dominated industries.

"We are thrilled to have such an exciting and diverse lineup of activities at the event in addition to world-class surfing," said Rick Bratman, CEO of ASA Entertainment, the event's producer. "To have legendary artists like Joan Jett and CeeLo Green performing and using their voices to help promote Super Girl's empowerment platform is incredible.

On the surfing side, the event is not only a showcase for the top-ranked surfers in the world, but also a springboard to help launch surf careers and provide unmatched mentorship between pros and the next generation of young rippers."

The event is supported by the U.S. Air Force, Jersey Mike's Subs, Florida Blue, CELSIUS, Essence Cosmetics, Atlantic Self Storage, Kroger Delivery, the SpringHill Suites Jacksonville Beach, Perfect Hydration, The Mayo Clinic, Brine Lacrosse, Vive Organics, Keel Farms, Eidon, Pura Vida and the City of Jacksonville's Tourist Development Council.

The surf portion of the event will run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at the Jacksonville Beach Pier from Nov. 8 through Nov. 10. The Festival Village at SeaWalk Pavilion will run from noon to 10 p.m. Nov. 9 and noon to 8 p.m. Nov. 10.

The event will be televised from Jan. 10 to March 31 on more than 30 broadcast partners, including FOX Sports, NBC Sports and Bally Sports, and will be streamed live from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 9-10 via eight digital partners, including at www.supergirljax.com and www.twitch.tv/supergirlseries.

For information on the concert lineup, surfing, classes, schedules, sports competitions and more, go to www.supergirljax.com.

NOMINATIONS END NOVEMBER 10TH

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.

Readers have the chance to nominate their favorite businesses in various categories online, such as auto & transportation, home & finance, food & drink and more! Online voting will begin once nominations are complete.

Give your favorite business the recognition they deserve, and nominate them as the Best of the Best in their category!

NOMINATIONS: Oct. 4 - Nov. 10
VOTING: Nov. 11 - Dec. 2
**WINNERS ANNOUNCED/
 WINNER'S CIRCLE PUBS: Dec. 26**

THE RECORDER
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www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestofbeaches2024

Red Bull Foam Wreckers surf event is Saturday

For The Recorder

Red Bull has announced that Red Bull Foam Wreckers, the anti-surf-contest where only soft-boards are allowed and anyone can win, is coming to Jacksonville Beach this weekend. Minimal rules and maximum fun, just bring yourself and some friends, boards provided! Register to participate at <https://participate.redbull.com/en/events/red-bull-foam-wreckers-usa-ds/2024>.

The event will feature local surfers of all skill levels, as well as surf stars like Ben Gravy, who will participate and emcee the event.

Red Bull Foam Wreckers is an event series from the mind of "freesurfer" Jamie O'Brien, produced by Red Bull and Catch Surf.

Before each surfer's "heat" they'll spin the "Wheel of Shred" to determine which Catch Surf soft-board model they'll be

using. Then, they'll paddle out with six to 10 of their closest new friends, all on different soft-boards, and proceed to stake their claim as the most "unique" soft-board surfer of the next 15 minutes.

Prizes are up for grabs for those that showcase the most creative, sportive moves throughout the day.

Male and female surf enthusiasts of all levels from Jacksonville and throughout the region will participate.

"Jacksonville is one the best surf towns in America," said Gravy. "Everyone is so stoked, and it's the perfect place to host Red Bull Foam Wreckers. This time of year can also make for some pumping surf, which is exciting. The most inclusive surf contest in the world in one of my favorite surf towns on Earth, it's a perfect recipe for fun!"

The event will be held 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26, on the south side of the Jacksonville Beach pier.

Ponte Vedra CLASSIFIEDS

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<p>Private Party Line Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$14.00 1 week • \$23.00 2 weeks • \$31.00 3 weeks • \$37.50 4 weeks <p>Add lines \$2.15 each (Couches, TV's, Beds, Household Items, Etc.)</p>	<p>Commercial Line Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$22.50 1 week • \$39.00 2 weeks • \$55.50 3 weeks • \$70.00 4 weeks <p>Add lines \$2.15 each (Animals, Cars, Renting or Selling a Home or to Advertise Your Business or Services)</p>	<p>Employment Spotlight/Real Estate</p> <p>1x2 (2"x2") \$40.50/1 wk • \$70.00/2 wks. • \$100/3 wks. 1x3 (2"x3") \$61.50/1 wk. • \$112.00/2 wks. • \$150.00/3 wks. 2x2 (4"x2") \$82.00/1 wk. • \$153.00/2 wks. • \$200.00/3 wks. 2x3 (4"x3") \$123.00/1 wk. • \$225/2 wks. • \$300/3 wks.</p>	<p>Business & Worship Directory</p> <p>1.5 x 2 \$55.00/month 1.5 x 4 \$96.52/month 1.5 x 6 \$149.52/month</p> <p>Rate Guide for: <i>The Recorder</i></p>
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Legals

LEGAL NOTICE

NexTower Development Group II, LLC intends to construct a communications tower and associated compound located at 3832 Valley Ridge Boulevard, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32081, approximately 950' east of the intersection of Valley Ridge Boulevard and Stone Mason Way in Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida. More specifically, the proposed action is to occur within Duval County Parcel ID # 168149-9900 at the approximate central coordinates of 30° 07' 29.46" north latitude, 81° 26' 03.49" west longitude. The proposed tower will be a 160' tall monopine design and no tower lighting is proposed. NexTower Development Group II, LLC is publishing this notice in accordance with Federal Communications Commission regulations (47 CFR Pt. 1, Appx. C, § V.C. and 47 CFR § 1.1307) implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. Parties interested in commenting on this Federal undertaking or with questions on the proposed facility should contact Terracon Consultants located at 8001 Baymeadows Way, Suite 1, Jacksonville, FL, or by phone 904-900-6494 or LPN. Comments@Terracon.com.
Legal 104698 Published 10/24/2024 in St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper

Auctions

REAL ESTATE AUCTION – Nov. 7 at 11 AM. Discover an extraordinary opportunity to own a piece of West Virginia's stunning natural landscape. 3,377± Acres located in Greenbrier and Monroe Counties are being offered in 21 tracts, ranging in size from 5 to 1,000 Acres. Several tracts are only minutes to the Greenbrier Resort. Online bidding is available. Visit woltz.com for details or call Woltz & Associates, Inc., Real Estate Brokers & Auctioneers. 800-551-3588. Jim Woltz, Broker (WVAL #1000). 5% Buyer's Premium.

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

Notice Under Fictitious Name Law Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of

the same, subject to ALL prior liens, if any, to the highest and best bidder for CASH IN HAND, the proceeds to be applied as far as may be to the payment of all debts and satisfaction of all

INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF JOHN JOSEPH TORICS A/K/A JOHN JOSEPH TORICS III, DECEASED, CHRIS UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF TORICS, U.S. BANK TRUST ASSOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE OF CAPITAL TRUST 1, STATE CLERK OF COURT, CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA, LISA ANN GRIFFIN SPOUSE OF LISA ANN UNKNOWN TENANT(S) IN COMMON WITH N/K/A LISA GRIFFIN, are hereby notified that the Clerk of the Court will sell the above described property to the highest and best bidder for cash at 10:00 a.m. on October 22, 2024, at the following address set forth in said Final

DEED BOOK Q, PAGE 10100. The sale is set forth in said Final

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MILITARY SERVICE WORD SEARCH

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

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

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| ACTIVE | DISCHARGE | LIEUTENANT | OPERATION |
| ARMY | DRILL | MARINES | QUARTERS |
| CHIEF | DUTY | MILITARY | RESERVE |
| COMMANDER | GUARD | NAVY | SERVICE |
| COUNTRY | INACTIVE | OFFENSE | TOUR |
| DEPLOYMENT | LIBERTY | OFFICER | VETERAN |

NOTICE

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1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10			
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16					17				18				
19				20	21			22	23			24	
25						26					27		
28					29					30			
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43					44					45	46	47	48
49				50					51	52			
53			54					55					
56		57				58				59			
60					61	62					63		
				64							65		

- ACROSS**
- 1. ___ Spumante (Italian wine)
 - 5. Highly impressed
 - 11. Pronoun to identify something specific
 - 12. Uttered in an impassioned way
 - 16. Outfits
 - 17. "Westworld" actor Harris
 - 18. Stewed game casserole
 - 19. Indignities inflicted on others
 - 24. Blood type
 - 25. Says beneath one's breath
 - 26. Taxis
 - 27. Transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm
 - 28. NFL great Randy
 - 29. Where college students live
 - 30. Brief Yankees sensation Kevin
 - 31. Condiment
 - 33. -frutti
 - 34. Polish city
 - 38. Astronomy unit of distance
 - 39. Romanian village
 - 40. Bears first overall pick Williams
 - 43. Irritated
 - 44. Clothing for sale has them
 - 45. One-time world power
 - 49. When you anticipate arriving
 - 50. Farm building
 - 51. Organize thoughtfully
 - 53. Detective
 - 54. One who reduces
 - 56. Nursemaids
 - 58. Partner to "Pa"
 - 59. World's longest river
 - 60. Commemorates
 - 63. Compound
 - 64. The Lannisters and Starks fought for one
 - 65. Email function
 - 5. Yemeni port
 - 6. Spanish doctors
 - 7. It cools your house
 - 8. Engine variant
 - 9. Makes more manageable
 - 10. Days (Spanish)
 - 13. Milliliter
 - 14. Spread out from
 - 15. With two replaceable hydrogen atoms
 - 20. Respectful title for a man
 - 21. Equally
 - 22. Scarlett's home
 - 23. Big Blue
 - 27. Subway dwellers
 - 29. One-tenth of a liter
 - 30. Central European river
 - 31. Distress signal
 - 32. Expression of sympathy
 - 33. Bar bill
 - 34. Football equipment
 - 35. Dance music
 - 36. Russian river
 - 37. Mary __, cosmetics
 - 38. Gym class
 - 40. Autos
 - 41. Fourth and honorable name in ancient Rome
 - 42. Defeats (abbr.)
 - 44. A way to color
 - 45. Planet
 - 46. Form of humor
 - 47. Taken without permission
 - 48. Go over again
 - 50. Auto parts manufacturer
 - 51. Detective's source
 - 52. Home of the Flyers
 - 54. Short official note
 - 55. Emit coherent radiation
 - 57. In the year of Our Lord
 - 61. Atomic #18
 - 62. Not from, but...

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

- DOWN**
- 1. Open-roofed entrance
 - 2. Japanese religion
 - 3. Dancer's garments
 - 4. Distributes

Level: Intermediate

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



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