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SERVING PONTE VEDRA, ST. AUGUSTINE, THE BEACHES AND GREATER ST. JOHNS COUNTY



**Business Weekly**  
featuring *Dollars & Sense*  
Page 27

Thursday, January 2, 2025

PonteVedraRecorder.com

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## Helping after Helene

*Local resident paving gravel driveways in storm-hit area*

By Holly Tishfield

Nearly three months ago to the day, Hurricane Helene ravaged western North Carolina, leaving thousands of people displaced and taking the lives of hundreds more.

The massive storm made landfall in Florida's Big Bend region as a category 4 hurricane. It continued moving north, joining forces with an already-stalled front in North Carolina's mountain region to create what many people call a "freak geological event."

With as much as 30 inches of rain pouring down in some parts of rural North Carolina, residents were completely unprepared for the massive devastation that struck the region.

"When we have hurricanes in Florida, they make a mess and we clean it up, but we still have roads and we still have the same topography of the land. In North Carolina? The topography has totally changed. The mountains slid down and the creeks have moved," said Natalie Perry, who calls both Florida and North Carolina home. "I don't know how to express how truly horrible it is."

Perry divides her time between her home in Ponte Vedra Beach and her

HELENE continues on Page 20



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## PGA TOUR Studios goes live, redefines approach to content creation, production

As the PGA TOUR's Opening Drive kicks off the 2025 FedExCup Season this week at The Sentry, the organization on Wednesday, Jan. 1, unveiled PGA TOUR Studios, a state-of-the-art production studio that will redefine and energize how the TOUR creates and delivers content to golf fans across the globe.

First conceptualized in 2017 leading into media rights negotiations, the 165,000-square-foot building broke ground in 2022 and tested its capabilities throughout the fall of 2024.

The opening of PGA TOUR Studios is a pivotal next step of golf content productions in an ever-changing media landscape and one that will fuel exponential growth in the TOUR.

To commemorate the official opening



Broadcasting from the new PGA TOUR Studios

Photos by Chris Condon/PGA TOUR

STUDIOS continues on Page 8



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## BRIEFS

### County to recycle Christmas trees

St. Johns County Parks & Recreation is hosting its free Treecycling program, which allows residents to recycle their Christmas trees into mulch for county parks. All trees brought to Treecycling stations must be real and free of holiday decorations.

This annual event's goal is to keep real Christmas trees out of landfills and utilize them in a way that benefits St. Johns County even when they're no longer lighting up our homes. Treecycling will run from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Jan. 6 at the following locations:

- Ron Parker Park, 607 Old Beach Road
- Mills Field, 1805 Racetrack Road
- Davis Park, 210 Davis Park Road
- Tillman Ridge Transfer Station, 3005 Allen Nease Road

• Stratton Road Transfer Station, 250 North Stratton Road

For more information, contact the St. Johns County Parks & Recreation Department at 904-209-0333.

### Club plans Gatsby Gala

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club is planning its Great Gatsby Gala, to be held 6-10 p.m. Feb. 22 and featuring The Chris Thomas Project. Doors open at 5:45 p.m.

The annual gala is the club's biggest fundraiser of the year with a goal of raising \$50,000 for local women's and children's charities. This year's gala will be held at The Yards Greenhouse, 254 Alta Mar Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Travel back a century to the Roaring Twenties — with a modern twist. Break out your 1920s-style wardrobe and get ready for a night of glitz, glamour and giving back. There will be dancing, live music, auctions and delicious food and drink.

Tickets are available at Eventbrite. Club members can purchase tickets without Eventbrite fees by going to [pontevedrawomansclub.com](http://pontevedrawomansclub.com).

Attendees must be 21 years of age.

### County notes \$15.1M developer-funded parkway widening

On Dec. 19, St. Johns County held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Longleaf Pine Parkway

Widening project. This \$15.1 million project widened more than four miles of roadway from Roberts Road to Veterans Parkway and included a new traffic signal at Shetland Drive.

This project was entirely paid for by developer funding and was completed before the planned development was added to the area, according to the county. Officials say this marks a major step forward in holding developers in St. Johns County accountable.

"The developer's contribution demonstrates a model partnership, one that aligns with our county's vision for responsible growth and development," said Commissioner Christian Whitehurst.

In addition, only 1% of the cost of this project was spent on change orders due to proper design and planning by the county.

Speakers included Whitehurst and Greg Caldwell, director of Public Works.

England-Thims & Miller (ETM) was the civil engineering team on the project, with C.W. Matthew Contracting Co. Baker Division leading construction.

### 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.

### Bolles senior's app wins congressional district contest

U.S. Rep. John H. Rutherford recently announced the winner of Florida's Fifth Congressional District's 2024 Congressional App Challenge. Eesh Majithia, a senior at The Bolles School in Jacksonville, earned first place for his app, "Notecandy," which provides a variety of notetaking services to users with various learning styles.

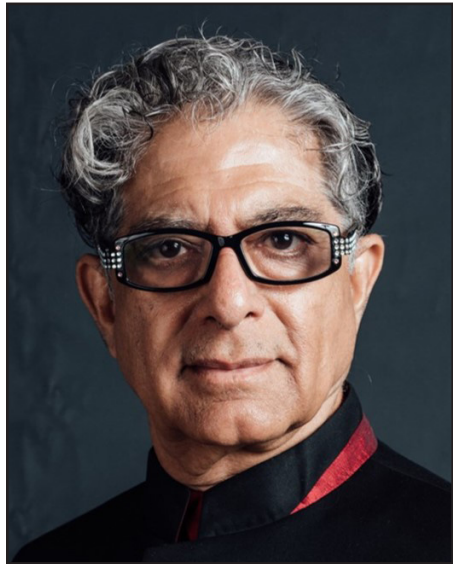
Notecandy was inspired by Neil Fleming's visual, auditory, reading and writing, and kinesthetic (VARK) model of learning preferences, which was introduced to Eesh by his health and wellness teacher. Notecandy was designed to accommodate each of these

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

S	A	M					S	E	A	T
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6	5	9	1	4	8	7	3	2
8	7	3	2	5	6	9	1	4
9	2	4	8	7	5	3	6	1
7	3	6	9	1	4	8	2	5
5	1	8	6	2	3	4	9	7

# Deepak Chopra to speak Jan. 15



Deepak Chopra

The Florida Forum Speaker Series, presented by The Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital, will welcome physician, author and world-renowned pioneer in integrative medicine and personal transformation Deepak Chopra on Jan. 15. The program begins at 7 p.m. at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts. The moderator is Jacksonville Jaguars team owner Shad Khan.

Chopra is the founder of The Chopra Foundation, a nonprofit entity for research on well-being and humanitarianism, and is a world-renowned pioneer in integrative medicine and personal transformation. He is a clinical professor of family medicine and public health at the University of California, San Diego,

and serves as a senior scientist with Gallup Organization. He is also an honorary fellow in medicine at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.

He is the author of more than 90 books translated into more than 43 languages, including numerous New York Times bestsellers. For the last 30 years, Chopra has been at the forefront of the meditation revolution. His 95th book, “Digital Dharma: How AI Can Elevate Spiritual Intelligence and Personal Wellbeing” was published Sept. 17. TIME magazine

has described Chopra as “one of their top 100 most influential people.”

Chopra’s presentation is the second of three events offered by the Florida Forum Speaker Series. The final program of the Florida Forum Series will feature Floridian, journalist and novelist Carl Hiaasen on Feb. 12. The series is made possible by long-time partners and sponsors Landstar, Wells Fargo and Florida Blue.

CHOPRA continues on Page 14

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# 'Future is bright' after local State Farm agent attends Women's Conference

By Anthony Richards

State Farm agent Edie Williams of Ponte Vedra Beach recently attended the 2024 Women's Conference of Florida in Tampa on Dec. 13.

The conference was held at the Tampa Convention Center where a diverse range of national-level speakers, breakout sessions, panel discussions and exhibits took place designed to empower Florida women of all ages and backgrounds.

"As a staunch advocate for supporting and investing in the next generation of female leaders, we established the College Women on the Rise program to benefit young women who, despite their unique circumstances, have persevered and remained dedicated to their future success," said Arlene DiBenigno, founder and CEO of the Women's Conference of Florida.

Now in its eighth year, the event attracted roughly 1,500 attendees, including Williams, who was there for the first time.

"I was not sure what to expect but was overwhelmed with the grand production of it all and the drive in these young women," Williams said.

Topics during the conference included



Contributed photo

State Farm presented \$1,000 educational scholarships to 15 women attending college during the 2024 Women's Conference of Florida.

financial literacy, leadership and networking. "These are things you might assume people get but its also something that has to be taught as well," Williams said. "The ability to learn is a special thing. I am fortunate that I work for a company like State Farm that allows me to do things like this."

According to Williams, the energy level throughout the convention center was evident and something that could be felt throughout.

She felt this energy especially in the conversations she had with others while working at the State Farm vendor booth during the conference.

"It wasn't just business majors either, but I even talked to someone going into dentistry," Williams said. "The future is bright, and to have a team of people around you and supporting you during this conference means a lot."

As part of the conference, State Farm, who was one of the sponsors for the event presented \$1,000 educational scholarships to 15 women attending college to help with the paths they are pursuing.

The scholarship winners were chosen through an essay contest that college students throughout the state took part in.

**2024-2025**  
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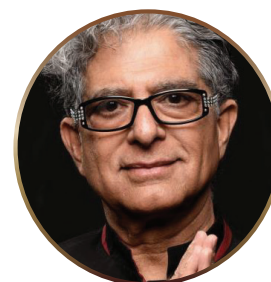
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Moderator:  
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Moderator:  
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Novelist/Journalist/Floridian

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Moderator:  
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- 7625 Founders Way - \$1,999,000
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*A dedicated advocate for heart health, Stephanie Faul turned her personal experience with a rare postpartum heart attack into action, raising awareness and funds as a 2024 Leader of Impact with the American Heart Association.*

## Stephanie Faul

### As told to Holly Tishfield

#### Tell me about your background.

I was originally born and raised in Ohio. After I graduated from Ohio State, my husband and I moved down to Florida because he started working at CSX, so a couple years after being down here I began working as a teacher at Palmer Catholic Academy in Ponte Vedra. After I had my first child we bounced around to Boston and then back to Ohio until we eventually came back down here because we missed it so much. Right now, I'm a stay-at-home mom with my three kids.

#### You're involved with the American Heart Association. How did that come about?

After my third child, when I was five weeks postpartum, I experienced a SCAD (spontaneous coronary arterial dissection) heart attack. They're rare and they typically happen to postpartum women in their late 30s. I had no prior heart issues, so it came out of nowhere. I experienced a heart attack in Target and the ambulance ended up taking me to Mayo Clinic, where I had emergency open heart surgery for a double bypass. Afterwards, I became passionate about heart health awareness, especially for women, because my symptoms were atypical. I met another woman in Atlantic Beach who'd had the same kind of heart attack, and through mutual friends she introduced me to the American Heart Association.

#### What type of work do you do for the American Heart Association?

After joining them for a while, they asked if I would be a 2024 Leader of Impact in their campaign to raise money for heart health awareness. I was absolutely floored and just floored by the response of the community and friends and family. It was a fundraising competition where five or six of us leaders in the Jacksonville area raised money specifically for the Northeast Florida American Heart Association branch. I set up tables in the community to fundraise and hand out pamphlets, to get out there and make people aware. Together, the First Coast Leaders of Impact Nominees raised almost \$23,000 in lifesaving funds.

#### What have you enjoyed the most about volunteering with the American Heart Association?

They truly care about people. They really do. The people that I worked with were so passionate about reaching out and getting their resources from this nonprofit to our community, and that really resonated with me. They're really passionate about the impact they have on our local community, and like I said, that really spoke to me.

#### Looking towards the future, what are your plans for working with the American Heart Association?

They have their annual Heart Ball in March at the Sawgrass Marriott, and that's a big event that I'll be attending. I'd love to continue working with them. They're wonderful people, passionate about health, passionate about the community. I don't know if going and speaking about my experience is the best way to do it, but however I can be helpful to them and get



Photo courtesy of the American Heart Association

this message across to the community, I want to do it. It could happen to you, happen to your family, and I think it's important to use these resources that are in our community.

#### Why do you feel it's so important for people to stay on top of their health, especially their heart health?

In my personal experience, I was healthy. There was nothing wrong before this, no prior issues, and I wasn't aware that it could even happen to me. I'm very, very lucky that I was at Target, that I was able

to reach out for help. So, I think it's about educating ourselves about our health and realizing that life is very fast paced right now, and it's only getting faster. It's so important to slow yourself down and take care of yourself, because you want to enjoy life and not miss it. I have kids, and that's so important to me, but also my community, my friends, my family, all of that — I just want to slow down and enjoy and not miss it. I really hope that everyone slows down and takes care of themselves so that they can enjoy life.

# Families gather for tree lighting, toy drive



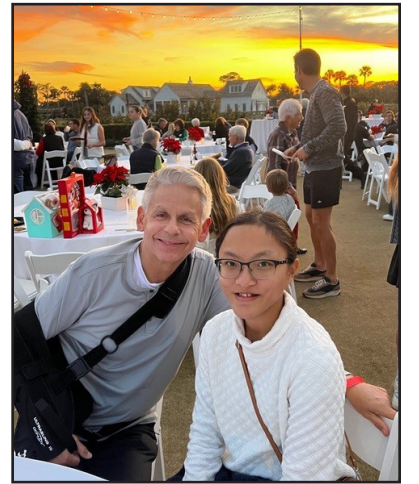
On Dec. 8, the Ponte Vedra Community Association's member families gathered at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club's croquet lawn for the association's annual Tree Lighting & Toy Drive. Local firefighters brought Santa and Mrs. Claus to the event on their fire engine, and families donated unwrapped gifts for the firefighters' annual toy drive.

The families enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner that included chili, macaroni and cheese, hotdogs and other treats, and as the sun set, the Christmas tree was set alight marking the beginning of the holiday season.

The association has been in existence for more than 75 years and promotes a sense of community in its membership by providing two annual social events: the Tree Lighting & Toy Drive in December and the Sweetheart Dinner Dance in February.

For more details about the association, including how to become a member, go to [pontevedraca.org](http://pontevedraca.org).

Contributed photos



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Photo by Chris Condon/PGA TOUR via Getty Images

The exterior of PGA TOUR Studios



Photo by Chris Condon/PGA TOUR

One of the PGA TOUR Studios

# Studios

Continued from 1

of PGA TOUR Studios, the PGA TOUR created the first original content from its virtual set in Studio 1A featuring Tiger Woods (see the content at [pgatour.com/studios](http://pgatour.com/studios)). Thursday, Jan. 2, sees the first round of The Sentry broadcast on PGA TOUR LIVE on ESPN+ produced from Studios.

PGA TOUR Studios now houses all PGA TOUR media operations, including live production of PGA TOUR Champions, Korn Ferry Tour, more than 5,000

hours of PGA TOUR LIVE on ESPN+, as well as the TOUR's expansive roster of more than 50 original, social and digital media platforms.

PGA TOUR Studios is also home to the largest library of golf content in the world, featuring more than 170,000 videos totaling 223,000 hours of content, with the earliest being a film transfer from 1920.

"PGA TOUR Studios is a landmark step in golf media, signaling a tangible investment to more deeply connect with our fans through energetic, compelling content that brings them further inside the ropes and closer to their favorite stars," said PGA TOUR Commissioner Jay Monahan. "Ev-

ery new technology and forward-thinking innovation we introduce is about serving our fans and meeting them where they are, and the creative capabilities of PGA TOUR Studios will help us further that mission while showcasing the beauty of our sport."

With hardware and space to accommodate both current and future standards, PGA TOUR Studios enables the TOUR to produce creative content — even beyond the world of golf — while giving its creators freedom to experiment with the latest cutting-edge technologies.

At launch, PGA TOUR Studios features eight production rooms, eight audio

control rooms and seven LED-outfitted studios, including a 270-degree LED display in Studio 1A.

The studios are capable of monitoring and displaying thousands of video and audio feeds, all capturing action from up to 144 cameras or live feeds.

Other unique attributes of PGA TOUR Studios include a custom-built video review center with access to all camera feeds for live, on-air rulings, a 34-seat theater to screen all the latest TOUR content projects, studio-specific booths for podcasts and, coming in 2026, PGA TOUR

STUDIOS continues on Page 9

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# Studios

Continued from 8

Radio. PGA TOUR Studios also houses Pro Shop, the PGA TOUR's preferred partner in Hollywood dedicated to creating premium content at the intersection of golf and culture.

"With PGA TOUR Studios now live, our team can deliver for fans new, dynamic productions that chronicle the incredible stories of our athletes in a new era of golf media," said Rick Anderson, PGA TOUR chief commercial officer. "This production studio will help usher in the next chapter for the PGA TOUR as fans around the world further guide our decision-making through their valuable feedback to our Fan Forward initiative."

As previously announced, PGA TOUR Studios will soon deliver a new World Feed, produced and curated exclusively for international TOUR media partners and their viewers with a customized graphics package and specific cameras focused on international golfers.

This live broadcast will feature weekly on-site reporters and include up to six dedicated cameras at select FedExCup events, all providing greater coverage of international players, which also allows the TOUR to curate and distribute enhanced content across its social and digital platforms.

Following its debut at THE PLAYERS,



Photo by Chris Condon/PGA TOUR

**Behind the scenes at PGA TOUR Studios, broadcast professionals can monitor many different cameras and live feeds at once.**

the World Feed will be produced for all remaining events on the 2025 schedule. Launching the World Feed is the first step toward producing localized live feeds specific to certain countries, with native language announcers and graphics, in the coming years and a major step toward improving the international fan experience.

The three-level PGA TOUR Studios sits adjacent to the 187,000-square-foot PGA TOUR headquarters, which opened in 2021. The completion of the campus helped the TOUR achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) BD+C Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council due to its sustainable design and operation with specific approaches to energy conservation, water-use reduction and enhanced

indoor air quality.

The previous PGA TOUR Entertainment facility in St. Augustine was the home for TOUR productions since November 1997, and with the growth in popularity of professional golf came the increasing need for more technical resources to deliver a better overall experience.

Current production calls for more on-course TV cameras, on-course microphones and additional graphics systems, which led to the TOUR outgrowing the

capabilities of the previous building, located 22 miles from the TOUR's current campus.

PGA TOUR Studios is built to support the growing production demands and will allow for greater collaboration and efficiency between the creative groups and business operations across the TOUR.

PGA TOUR Studios was designed through collaboration between Foster + Partners, which also designed PGA TOUR headquarters, and architect of record HLW International. The general contractor was Gilbane Building Co., which utilized Procore software as a construction management solution, with RocaPoint Partners serving as owner's representative.

Systems integration of PGA TOUR Studios was provided by NEP Group.

The PGA TOUR thanked St. Johns County for its many years of interest and support.

The overall annual economic impact of the PGA TOUR exceeds \$1 billion in Northeast Florida, according to third-party research firm RKG, with the estimated benefit of PGA TOUR Studios expected to net an additional \$112 million total impact.

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# World renowned cycling race to host event in St. Augustine

By Anthony Richards

The Giro d'Italia is one of the most prestigious professional cycling races in the world and has been taking place annually for nearly as long as the Tour de France.

And for the second straight year the race's Ride Like a Pro USA event will make a stop in St. Augustine, making its return to the United States' oldest city January 18 and 19 at the World Golf Village Renaissance Hotel.

The event's inaugural race in St. Augustine last year saw much success with more than 350 cyclists take to the scenic roads of Florida, and the organization is hoping for an even grander showing this year.

Cycling enthusiasts across Florida and the nation are gearing up for the unique event, designed to bring the spirit of the legendary Giro d'Italia to the local community.

Its goal is to build excitement for cycling locally and in America as well as connect people across the globe to the history that surrounds the Giro d'Italia.

As part of this promotion, the iconic Giro d'Italia Trophy, which is introduced to the winner of the official race, will be touring Florida and make a stop in St. Augustine.

"We're thrilled to bring the Giro d'Italia Ride Like a Pro USA back to St. Augustine," said Lars Graff, event organizer and owner of the U.S. event sanction. "After



Contributed photo

For the second straight year the Giro d'Italia's Ride Like a Pro USA event will make a stop in St. Augustine on January 18 and 19.

such an incredible response in 2024, we're looking forward to welcoming even more cyclists to experience the challenge, camaraderie, and beauty of this world-class event."

The 2025 edition promises an exhilarating weekend of cycling for riders of all levels, with routes designed to capture the

spirit of professional racing while offering an inclusive community experience.

Participants can expect scenic vistas, expert race organization, and the electric atmosphere of the Giro d'Italia's timeless tradition.

With cycling's popularity on the rise in Florida, the event also aims to highlight St. Augustine's growing reputation as a premier destination for active and adventure tourism.

As a result, both seasoned pros and casual riders looking to challenge themselves are invited to be part of the opportunity to ride like a pro and be part of the global

phenomenon.

Participants can choose from 33, 60, and 86-mile loops, and there will also be a four-mile children's race to ensure young cyclists are included.

The Tour of Italy Expo Village on site is a pivotal part of the event, offering participants a taste of a major professional event like the Giro d'Italia. It will serve as the official packet pick-up location and features leading brands in sports, fitness, health and Italian-themed vendors.

Anyone interested in more details about registration and the event can go to [giroridelikeapro-usa.com](http://giroridelikeapro-usa.com).

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# St. Vincent's hosts two Santa's Workshop events



In December, Ascension St. Vincent's held two holiday events that were free and open to everyone in the community. Santa's Workshop at St. Vincent's Arlington was held Dec. 7 at St. Vincent's Emergency Care — Arlington, 9820 Hutchinson Park Drive, and Santa's Workshop at St. Vincent's St. Johns County was held Dec. 14 at St. Vincent's St. Johns County, 205 Trinity Way, St. Johns. Families enjoyed music, arts & crafts, games and much more.

Contributed photos



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# Clerk's Office reflects on 2024 successes

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's office celebrated a year of growth and impactful achievements in 2024, fulfilling more than 1,000 statutory duties directly benefiting residents.

"This year has been full of surprises, but our team rose to the occasion," said John Rundgren, clerk designee. "While Clerk Patty served overseas with the Navy, our team remained dedicated to our mission — protecting taxpayer dollars and delivering exceptional customer service. I'm proud of our accomplishments and

look forward to building on this success in the coming year."

Key highlights include:

## Expanding Services and Resources for Residents

- Customer Care Call Center: Launched on April 22 and staffed by five full-time clerks, the call center delivers live, timely and knowledgeable assistance to residents. In 2024, clerks handled 62,986 calls, averaging 7,909 monthly calls.

- Family Law Workshop Series: In partnership with St. Johns County Legal

Aid and the Law Office of Nancy Harrison, this monthly series provided residents with the resources and expert guidance needed to navigate complex family law matters.

- Passport Guide: Designed to provide clear, step-by-step instructions for residents inquiring about passport applications and renewals.

## Enhancing Recording Services

- Recording Division: The division processed 12,478 passport applications, registered 12,148 residents for property fraud alerts and performed 2,205 marriage ceremonies.

- Records Management Division: Dedicated to improving transparency and providing access to public records, the division responded to 1,242 public requests in 2024.

## Supporting Judicial Partners and Court Services

- Civil Division: Provided case management support for 4,995 small claim cases, 1,627 circuit civil cases, 1,554 county civil cases, 406 mental health cases and 748 probate cases.

- Criminal Division: Processed 8,924 cases and entered 355 pieces of evidence, ensuring seamless judicial proceedings.

- Family Division: Provided case

management support for 2,245 domestic relations cases, 458 motions for contempt and 702 injunctions for protection. The division also introduced the Hope Card Program, which provides verification to law enforcement that a victim is protected by court order.

- Traffic Division: Processed 19,749 traffic citations, cleared 4,985 suspensions and assisted 543 residents with reinstating their driver's licenses.

## Internal and External Functions in Supporting the Office Mission

- Communications Division: This division played a key role in expanding awareness of the Clerk's Office's mission, publishing 24 newsletters, issuing 26 press releases, engaging in 59 media interviews and leading 11 community outreach presentations.

- Human Resources Division: Onboarded 23 new hires and managed benefits for 125 employees, supporting a well-engaged workforce.

- Information Technology Division: Resolved 4,330 support tickets and processed 1,090 registration agreements for Benchmark, providing residents with 24/7 access to court records.

- Support Services Division: Stream-

OFFICE continues on Page 14

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## Chopra

Continued from 3

Subscriptions for the Florida Forum events start at \$170 each for general seating, \$235 for preferred seating, \$300 for one reserved bronze-level ticket, \$600 for two reserved bronze-level tickets, \$1,500 for two reserved silver-level tickets and \$3,000 for four reserved gold-level tickets. The purchase of a silver or gold ticket package includes invitations to the private receptions honoring the speakers following the lectures.

Patrons younger than 30 may purchase Young Subscriber tickets for \$100 each. To purchase tickets, go to [thefloridaforum.com](http://thefloridaforum.com), call 904-202-2886, or email [womensboard@bmcjax.com](mailto:womensboard@bmcjax.com).

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

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

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

For more information, go to [womensboardwch.com](http://womensboardwch.com).

## Office

Continued from 12

lined operations by fulfilling 204 work orders, providing refreshments to jurors and onboarding seven new volunteer Clerk Ambassadors.

### Ensuring Financial Accountability and Transparency

- Finance Division (COC and BCC): Managed more than \$31 million in investments and earnings, processed more than 50,000 invoices and oversaw payroll for 1,652 employees. The division also produced the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and the more accessible Popular Annual Financial Report.

- Minutes and Records Division: Recorded minutes for 26 Board of County Commission meetings, processed 875 petitions for property value assessments with the Value Adjustment Board, and facilitated the enactment of 61 ordinances and 574 resolutions — setting a new record.

- Office of Inspector General: Investigated 22 new fraud, waste and abuse complaints, closed 27 cases and trained 295 employees in 2024.

### Internship Program Impact

The 2024 Internship Program fostered innovation, with a notable contribution from a Florida State University student. The intern proposed a policy change for injunction cases, amending the information sheet to include social media accounts, helping to prevent service evasion. This policy change was adopted by the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office to streamline injunction proceedings.

For more information, go to [stjohnsclerk.com](http://stjohnsclerk.com).

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Renowned eye surgeon Dr. Arun C. Gulani, left, speaks with St. Johns County Sheriff Robert Hardwick during the event. Hardwick was recognized with one of the Gulani Luminary Awards.



Contributed photos

The First Anniversary Gala of the Gulani Vision Global Foundation was held on Dec. 12.

# Gulani Vision Global Foundation celebrates first anniversary

*Event included iBall Gala, Visionary Awards, World Record Recognition*

**For The Recorder**

A night of inspiration, generosity and celebration marked the First Anniversary Gala of the Gulani Vision Global Foundation on Dec. 12.

Held in a stunning ambiance, the event brought together an intimate gathering of more than 100 guests from across the nation and world, from various walks of life — from visionaries in the medical field to philanthropists and community leaders — all united by a shared passion for making a global difference.

The foundation, established by world-renowned eye surgeon Dr. Arun C. Gulani, has become a beacon of hope for

countless individuals worldwide. Dedicated to advancing eye care, access to futuristic, vision-restoring treatments and championing innovation, the foundation’s impact over its inaugural year has been profound.

“Tonight is not just a celebration of a year gone by; it’s a celebration of lives changed, barriers broken, surgeons inspired and the incredible potential we all hold to create a brighter future,” said

Gulani during his keynote address.

The evening began with moving video testimonials from patients whose lives were transformed through the foundation’s initiatives. These patients represented numerous others and had sent in their videos from all over the world including Boston, California, New York, Nigeria, Poland, Kenya and South Africa.

**GULANI** continues on **Page 17**



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# Gulani

Continued from 16

Their stories underscored the importance of the foundation’s mission to deliver cutting-edge solutions to the most complex eye conditions.

Gulani was recognized by the United Nations for his futuristic eye surgical techniques and educational impact on the world of eye care. He was recently inducted as a fellow of the exclusive World Forum of Eye Surgeons while being recognized for having fostered a world-record level of medical tourism, having served patients from more than 100 countries from here on the First Coast.

During the gala, Gulani, founding president of the Gulani Vision Global Foundation, captivated the audience as he shared his “crystal ball for the future of vision,” unveiling his vision of continued breakthroughs in eye care. His forward-thinking ideas offered hope for even more groundbreaking advancements in vision correction, ensuring a future where “every eye, no matter how complex, can see its brightest potential.”

The evening culminated in the elegant and joyful iBall, a ballroom dance that brought attendees together to celebrate unity and the beauty of lives illuminated by clear vision. A patient from Canada whose vision was restored presented Gulani with a self-portrait, artistry and performances that symbolized vision and clarity, resonating deeply with the audience.

The evening was further highlighted by presentation of the Gulani Awards Celebrating Champions:

- Gulani Visionary Award: Dr. Pradeep Kadambi, dean and CEO of UF Health
- Gulani Luminary Awards: Sheriff Robert Hardwick (St. Johns County) and Joan Teofilo, CEO of The Energy Authority
- Gulani Beacon Awards: President Moez Limayem of UNF, Dr. Arthur “Buster” Browning and Raghu Misra

Looking ahead to the future of his foundation, Gulani an-



Contributed photo

**Dr. Arun C. Gulani spoke about the future of eye care during the First Anniversary Gala of the Gulani Vision Global Foundation.**

nounced plans to expand partnerships with national and international organizations, launch new research initiatives and enhance accessibility to advanced eye care for all.

The Gulani Vision Global Foundation is dedicated to revolutionizing eye care by providing state-of-the-art treatments, empowering education and fostering a global network of innovation. The foundation’s work spans across continents, impacting lives and redefining what’s possible in vision care.

# Briefs

Continued from 2

styles of learning for students as they take notes in class. Eesh was selected as the winner by a panel of IT specialists.

The app will be featured on the Congressional App Challenge website and is eligible to be displayed in the U.S. Capitol, alongside other national winners.

The Congressional App Challenge is a nationwide competition designed to encourage student participation, providing an opportunity to develop valuable technical skills in computer science and coding regardless of prior experience. Student participants compete against their peers to create an application or “app” for mobile, tablet or computer devices.

The 2025 Congressional App Challenge opens for student submissions on May 1.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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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**

# Celebrate the New Year with flowers!

*"The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written."*

— Melody Beattie



**By Kathy Esfahani**

Happy 2025! With the arrival of the new year, we make many fresh starts in our lives.

Be sure to include flowers in your plans! Many blooms symbolize luck or new beginnings and are, therefore, perfect for centerpieces, decorations, or just new additions to your home.

- Orchids represent luck, wealth, abundance, luxury, and beauty. They are available in a variety of colors and make a thoughtful gift. An Orchid prefers a bright environment, but not direct sunlight, and requires little maintenance other than proper watering.

- Daffodils are traditional symbols of new beginnings or rebirth. Although many associate these blooms with spring, they are also a popular gift for the new year - just be sure to give more than one as some believe a single

Daffodil bloom symbolizes bad luck!

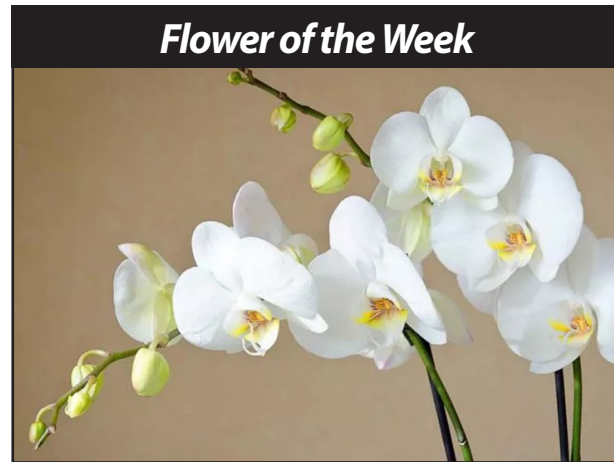
- Lotus flowers submerge into the water and mud around them at the end of each day but blossom again the following morning as a beautiful bloom above the water. Their waxy petals do not hold the mud, producing a clean, bright bloom each day. For these reasons, a Lotus flower is a symbol of rebirth and purity, but they also represent wealth, peace, grace, and devotion.

- Calla Lilies symbolize youth, purity, and new beginnings. Their name comes from the Greek word for beauty, and the blooms have silky, elegant petals. The white Calla Lily is most recognizable and often used in wedding bouquets. However, these flowers are available in a variety of colors including yellow (meaning friendship), black (meaning mystery), and purple (meaning royalty).

- Alstroemeria represents fortune, prosperity, and wealth. It is also known as the Peruvian Lily and features a trumpet shaped bloom. These flowers are wonderful additions to arrangements as they can last up to two weeks when cut.

- Hyacinth flowers are signs of new beginnings and change, but they are also used in Christian churches

Photo provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery



**Flower of the Week**

**Orchid**

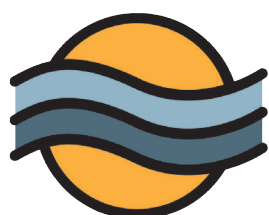
to symbolize joy and love. A Hyacinth plant has long leaves and one to three spikes full of purple/blue flowers. They have a pleasant scent but contain oxalic acid that can cause skin irritation (be sure to wear gloves if working with the blooms!).

- Peonies represent prosperity, innocence, dignity, and compassion. Red blooms in particular are symbols of good luck and, therefore, often seen in gifts or decorations around New Years. Peonies produce large blooms in a variety of colors.

Happy New Year!

**Flower of the Week: Orchid**

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



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After paving a gravel driveway



Before putting down the gravel



A crumbling road in Avery County, North Carolina

# Helene

Continued from 1

two farms in Avery County, North Carolina. The hurricane hit while Perry was staying in Ponte Vedra, but after hearing how terrible the destruction was in her home county, she quickly loaded a truck with supplies and made her first run back to North Carolina just three days after the storm hit.

“I don’t think anybody could have ever been prepared for what happened,” Perry said, reflecting on the sheer level of ruin. “Someone who used to live in the forest now has a wide-open view, because the trees are just gone.”

Residents fled up mountains and onto rooftops as small, winding creeks morphed into wide, angry rivers, eating everything in their path. Roads and bridges were washed away, leaving residents stranded even in the aftermath



Contributed photos

### Gravel driveways allow residents easier access to their homes

of the storm. Some small North Carolinian cities were completely wiped off the map.

Perry mentioned that independent organizations such as Samaritan’s Purse and the Cajun Navy have done their best to keep residents fed and cared for, but there’s not as much assistance in helping residents get reestablished in their homes.

“I realized after going up there that people needed roads and driveways because even if their actual house didn’t get swept away, they couldn’t get in and out of the property. They’d have to park their car or ATV and hike,” Perry said. “So I recruited the help of a local friend, an excavator, to help with the work and recruited a friend in Ponte Vedra to help me fundraise.”

The excavator in Avery County volunteered his time and manual labor at no cost to residents, so long as Perry could fundraise the money to purchase gravel.

Perry reached out to fellow North Floridian Chip Davis, the tournament director of the Flounder Pounder Fishing Tournament, to propose a fundraising initiative at his October 2024 event. Davis agreed, and with support from Ponte Vedra residents, Perry successfully raised nearly \$10,000 to purchase gravel.

In the time since this fundraiser, Perry has revisited Avery County many times

to assist with the excavation of driveways for local residents.

“Right now in the mountains, three months later, there are still cars upside down on the sides of the road. Every time I go and see it, I still can’t believe it,” Perry said.

The towns of western North Carolina continue efforts to reopen grocery stores, post offices, restaurants and rebuild homes. The massive storm left many residents grieving the loss of loved ones and entire livelihoods.

With winter setting in, many residents without homes are seeking refuge in temporary shelters, enduring the harsh conditions. Determined to help her small town regain a sense of normalcy, Perry is offering gravel driveways at no cost to those in need.

If you’d like to support Perry’s efforts, all donations will go directly toward purchasing gravel for these driveways. Contact Perry at ncj001@gmail.com.



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# 'Santa Paws' visits K9 crime fighters

This holiday season (and for the past eight years), 13-year-old Emma Johnson, also known as "Santa Paws," spread joy to four-legged crime fighters across the First Coast.

With the help of community donations from her Amazon Wish List, Emma and her mom, K9s United's President and Founder Debbie Johnson, delivered more than 80 indestructible dog toys on Christmas Eve to seven North Florida law enforcement agencies to brighten their holidays, including the sheriff's offices for Jacksonville and St. Johns, Baker, Clay, Flagler, Nassau and Putnam counties.

Contributed photos



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# Walking path dedicated to memory of Mike Parrish



St. Johns County School District representatives attended the Parrish Storybook Path ribbon-cutting event on Dec. 11.

On Dec. 11, the Ocean Palms Elementary community, both new and old, gathered at the Parrish Storybook Path ribbon-cutting dedication in memory of Mike Parrish, the first principal of the school who went on to serve 15 years in the role. The newly installed walking and running path, which features 17 storybook signs where students can read a book as they travel down the path, bears his name and a dedication sign in his honor.

Ocean Palms principals, teachers and staff, PTO presidents and board members, district representatives and families from the beginning of OPE, to the present, shared in this dedication.

“From the day the doors first opened in 1996, until his retirement in 2011, Mike Parrish poured his heart and soul into making this school a place where every



The fifth-grade student ambassadors at Ocean Palms read the first book that will be featured along the path, “Who You Were Made to Be” by Joanna Gaines, aloud to guests.

student felt seen, valued and inspired to learn,” said Principal Tiffany Cantwell. “He didn’t just know names, he remembered dreams.”



Current staff that worked at Ocean Palms when Mike Parrish was principal, stand alongside guests at the event.

She further shared memories from families at the school during his tenure. For example, he was well-known for his ability to remember every child’s name at OPE. Staff members noted how he was like a father figure to them. Finally, Jeremy Parrish spoke on behalf of his father.

The school’s honor choir performed “Big Dreams” and “Hold on to Your Dreams” for guests, and attendees walked the storybook path together where the school’s fifth-grade student ambassadors read the story “Who You Were Made to Be” aloud at each stop.

As Cantwell said in her speech, “His leadership set a foundation that continues to guide us today ...”

The tremendous outpouring of so many, with representatives from 1996 to present, was a true testament to exactly that — a path walked alongside community.



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The Honor Choir at Ocean Palms Elementary sang at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in honor of Mike Parrish, opening principal of the school who served in the role for 15 years.

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Arik Armstead and his wife Mindy help fill backpacks during a backpack stuffing event on Dec. 17.



Foye Oluokun helps children shop for Barbies during the Eighth Annual Shop with a Jaguar event.

# Jaguars spread holiday cheer by giving back

Jacksonville Jaguars players and staff have shown their festive side throughout the Christmas season and done so in a variety of ways, all with the goal of helping the Northeast Florida community and making it a merry time of year for all.

As a result, more than 250 volunteers have donated more than 760 hours of service and nearly \$135,000 that has helped 375 children and families in recent weeks.

Some of the highlighted events this year included:

## Holidays with Travon Walker at Neighborhood Heroz

The Travon Walker Foundation hosted its inaugural Huddle Up for the Holidays with Travon Walker at local barbershop, Neighborhood Heroz on Dec. 16.

This special event was designed to spread holiday cheer and create lasting memories for 10 deserving teenagers—five boys and five girls—who are members of the Boys & Girls Club and have military ties.

The evening featured a true barbershop talk experience, where the teenagers not only received haircuts and manicures, but also had the chance to engage in meaningful conversations with Walker and others in a relaxed, community-driven environment.

Each participant also received holiday gifts and a meal, ensuring they felt celebrated and appreciated during the festive season.

## Arik Armstead Backpack Stuffing

The families of Jaguars defensive lineman Arik Armstead and general manager Trent Baalke joined representatives from Lakeside Elementary School in Orange Park and packed backpacks filled with healthy foods at the Miller Electric Center on Dec. 17.

As a result, 40 students were sent home with multiple bags of food to help them over the holiday break.

Backpack Stuffing helps supplement meals for the students over the weekends

and holiday breaks when they do not have access to school breakfast or lunch.

Through the Armstead Academic Project, Armstead and his wife Mindy donated \$20,000 to the school to start this program to help students experiencing food insecurity by providing food-filled backpacks to take home every Friday.

## Shop with a Jaguar

For the eighth year, Jaguars players helped 325 Jacksonville-area children with their holiday shopping for themselves and their loved ones.

Jaguars players Tyson Campbell and Walker shopped with 100 kids from Sponsored by Grace and MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation at Academy Sports + Outdoors on Dec. 17, while Foye Oluokun, DaVon Hamilton, Parker Washington and Ezezi Otomewo assisted 225 children from the Boys & Girls Club with their gift purchases at Walmart.

Each child at both locations received dinner, a shirt, Jaguars swag and a \$150 gift card for their shopping spree.

Additionally, Mac Jones and Devin Lloyd contributed funds to pay for the gift cards which were funded by participating Jaguars players.

## Four One For All Foundation Christmas Party

Josh Hines-Allen and his Four One For All Foundation hosted a Christmas party at Grove Park Elementary School in Orange Park for 10 pre-selected and deserving families on Dec. 17.

Each family enjoyed a catered dinner from True Food Kitchen, gingerbread house decorating, DJ Christmas music, met Santa and opened gifts from their wish lists.

## Ronald McDonald House with Jaguars Special Teams

Jaguars specialists Logan Cooke, Ross Maticcik and Cam Little joined team mascot Jaxson de Ville to visit children and their families at the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville on Dec. 18.

The players donated \$10,000 towards toys that were gifted to the children and their families.

The evening was full of excitement as the children opened presents, played games with the players and took pictures with them and Santa.

## 12 Days of Teal

This holiday season, the Jaguars Foundation gave back to the Northeast Florida


community with the 12 Days of Teal initiative from Dec. 18 to 29, in which the Jaguars Foundation and FIS donated \$60,000 worth of grants to 12 deserving nonprofits in the Jacksonville community, including Women's Center of Jacksonville, Angels for Allison and Sanctuary on 8th and others.

The grants are designed to assist and uplift organizations who work tirelessly to make Jacksonville better. Each organization was highlighted via Jaguars social media.



Ross Maticcik interacts with a child during a Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville toy gifting event.

Photos courtesy of Jacksonville Jaguars



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# St. Augustine Film Festival to feature 40 films

Filmmakers and actors will be in St. Augustine for the 15th annual St. Augustine Film Festival, taking place Jan. 9-12. Films will screen in Lewis Auditorium and Gamache-Koger Theatre, and in the Alcazar Room, part of City Hall in the historic Lightner Museum. Passes are on sale now at [staugfilmfest.com](http://staugfilmfest.com)

Forty films will play at the four-day event, featuring indie, international, local and regional filmmakers.

Some film highlights:

## “Queen Of The Ring” Opening Night Film on Jan. 10

The true story of Mildred Burke, a female wrestler in the 1930s that dealt with sexism, misogyny and corruption to become the first woman athlete to earn a million dollars. The film stars Emily Bett Rickards (“Brooklyn”) as Mildred; Cara Buono (“Stranger Things”) as her mom; Francesca Fisher-Eastwood (daughter of actress Frances Fisher and director/actor Clint Eastwood) as a fellow wrestler; Josh Logan (“Ford Vs Ferrari”), who discovers Mildred; Walton Coggins (“Justified,” “The Hateful 8”) as a promoter; Gavin Casalegno (“The Vampire Diaries”) as Josh Logan’s son, who falls in love with Mildred; and Tyler Posey (“Teen Wolf”) as G. Bill. Directed by Ash Avildsen.

## “Bob Mackie: Naked Illusion”

Showcases the six-decade career of award-winning costume designer, Bob

Mackie. And like his costumes, Mackie is wholly unique and unfiltered, which makes for a compelling and candid subject. The film examines his unique upbringing, those whom he has held dear within his inner circle, and the familial surprises in his life that have all contributed to the optimism and audacity present in his work, such as Cher and Carol Burnett.

## “The Shape Of Things: The Dick Brewer Story”

The story of the colorful and controversial, legendary surfboard designer and builder, Dick Brewer. The father of the modern-day surfboard, Brewer changed the design of surfing equipment not once, not twice, but three times in his 50-year career as a trailblazer. His invention of the tow board, a design innovation made in collaboration with early test pilots Laird Hamilton, Buzzy Kerbox and Darick Doemer, raised the bar of big wave surfing beyond the scope of what was envisioned possible. With archival footage, a retro soundtrack and great interviews with surfing legends such as Kai Lenny and Garrett McNamara, “The Shape of Things” has won several audience awards since its World Premiere at the Honolulu Surf Film Festival.

## “Here’s Yianni!”

Yianni and Plousia own a charming family diner by the beach in New Jersey, where Yianni is a convivial host. Lately,

Plousia has noticed that her husband of 40 years is not quite himself and is often wistfully distracted.

The film is a combination of comedy, drama and reality. The cast includes Joe Cortese (“Green Book,” “American History X”), Julia Ormond (“Sabrina,” “My Week With Marilyn,” “The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button,” “Smilla’s Sense Of Snow,” “First Knight”), Kevin Pollak (“The Usual Suspects,” “A Few Good Men,” “The Whole Ten Yards”), Rosanna Arquette (“Desperately Seeking Susan,” “Pulp Fiction,” “After Hours”), Eric Roberts (“Pope Of Greenwich Village,” “Star 80,” “Runaway Train”), and Sofia Vassilieva (“Medium,” and last year’s “Lissa’s Trip”).

## Who Will Be Here?

Filmmakers, actors and producers will be in St. Augustine in support of the films. More names will be announced in the coming weeks.

The 2025 St. Augustine Film Festival will include 40 films and parties each evening for passholders — at iconic and historic St. Augustine locations, including a harbor cruise during Nights of Lights (for the first 90 who RSVP as a passholder).

Passes and individual film tickets are available at [staugfilmfest.com](http://staugfilmfest.com)

The St. Augustine Film Festival partners with the SJC Cultural Events Inc. and is supported in part by the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council and

the St. Johns Cultural Council.

Founding sponsors are Arnold and Barbara Grevior, annual patrons include Eileen and Jeff Schomberger, Jon Schwartz and Sheila Kolesaire, along with other business and private sponsors and supporters.

## The Passes

The St. Augustine Film Festival Passes are:

### The Lewis Badge, \$90

Provides admission to all films presented at Lewis Auditorium, Jan. 9-12. Most of the grander films will play at this venue.

### The All Film Badge, \$125

Provides admission to any film, any venue, which includes Lewis Auditorium, Gamache-Koger Theatre and The Alcazar Room. Other screening venues may come into play as well.

### The All Access Badge, \$275

Provides all the flexibility of the All Film Badge plus access to:

- The Opening Night Dinner, Jan. 9 at Asado Life
- The Friday Night Party, Jan. 10 at Casa de Vino 57
- The Saturday Night Party, Jan. 11 (TBA)
- The Wrap Party, Sunday, Jan. 12 at Markland House

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Berkley and Rigby Wiltfong learned about the need for better social media training for veterans transitioning into civilian life while attending the Onward to Opportunity program.

# Two Nease students help veterans with civilian job search

The new year means a new challenge for many area veterans: transitioning into civilian life. According to the Veterans Administration, about 200,000 service members transition to civilian life each year, and for many of them, finding a job is their biggest hurdle. This is why two Nease High School students have started offering free online workshops to help area veterans with their social media platforms.

Berkley Wiltfong and her brother, Rigby, say after volunteering to help a

neighbor with her job training veterans on practical workplace skills, they realized many veterans struggle to showcase themselves online to prospective employers simply because they've never had to before. That's when they decided to found a not-for-profit organization called "Content for Careers" that allows them to give free online workshops to veterans on things like creating strong LinkedIn profiles.

"Our slogan is 'Empowering Veterans, One Post at a Time,'" says Berkley.

"Rigby and I are fortunate to have parents who teach social media marketing for a living, so we're using that know-how and our years of experience as digital natives to help serve those who have served us in this country."

Currently, the Wiltfongs offer 30-minute workshops on weekends only because they have a heavy school load during the week in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Nease. However, they hope to expand their offerings to help more veterans in

the future.

"That's the plan," says Rigby. "We hope there isn't a need for expansion, but the reality is that many veterans struggle with their social media presence when looking for a job, so we'll be there as best we can."

If you or someone you know is a military veteran looking to transition into civilian life and would like help with a free online session at Content for Careers, go to [contentforcareers.org](http://contentforcareers.org) and sign up for a class.



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# Tournament raises \$585K for the Monique Burr Foundation

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children (MBF) has announced that its 2024 Dream Finders Homes Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament, presented by AT&T, Impact Landscaping and Irrigation, The Jahna Family, Jax Utilities Management, MJC Land Development and Perry Homes, raised a record \$585,000 to support the development and delivery of MBF Prevention Education Programs, which educate and empower children to protect them from abuse, bullying and other types of victimization.

Since 1994, the tournament has raised more than \$5.5 million for MBF.

During the 2024 Pairings Party (sponsored by Lennar Homes), MBF recognized longtime legacy supporters Club Car, Pepsi Co., Jacobsen and Southern Glazers Wine and Spirits, for supporting the event since its inception.

“I have often said that our impact and growth have exceeded my wildest expectations,” said Edward Burr, MBF founder and board chairman. “And this year, having honored our legacy supporters, I am filled with incredible gratitude for each and every one of our champions for child safety, the committed team at MBF, and all of our partners and supporters who enable us to realize our important mission daily.”

The annual tournament, benefitting MBF, offered corporate teams and individuals the opportunity to golf with professional golfers at The Palencia Club in St. Augustine.

“We continue to be so humbled and honored by the outpouring of support year after year,” said Tanya Ramos-Puig, MBF chief executive officer. “We are so grateful for the incredible generosity of all our commit-



Contributed photo

**The 2024 Dream Finders Homes Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament raised a record \$585,000 to support the Monique Burr Foundation for Children. Pictured from left are Garrison Burr, Ashle Fike, MG Orender, Cori Wilson, Sarah Garwood, Edward Burr, Tanya Ramos Puig, Julie LeMay and Austin Burr.**

ted sponsors, partners and friends, who serve as ambassadors and fuel our efforts to save lives. Together, we will continue to build a safer and brighter tomorrow for our youth across the nation and the around the world.”

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

Since their development, MBF programs have reached 16 million kids, yet there are still so many children that MBF needs to reach. To learn more about MBF’s com-

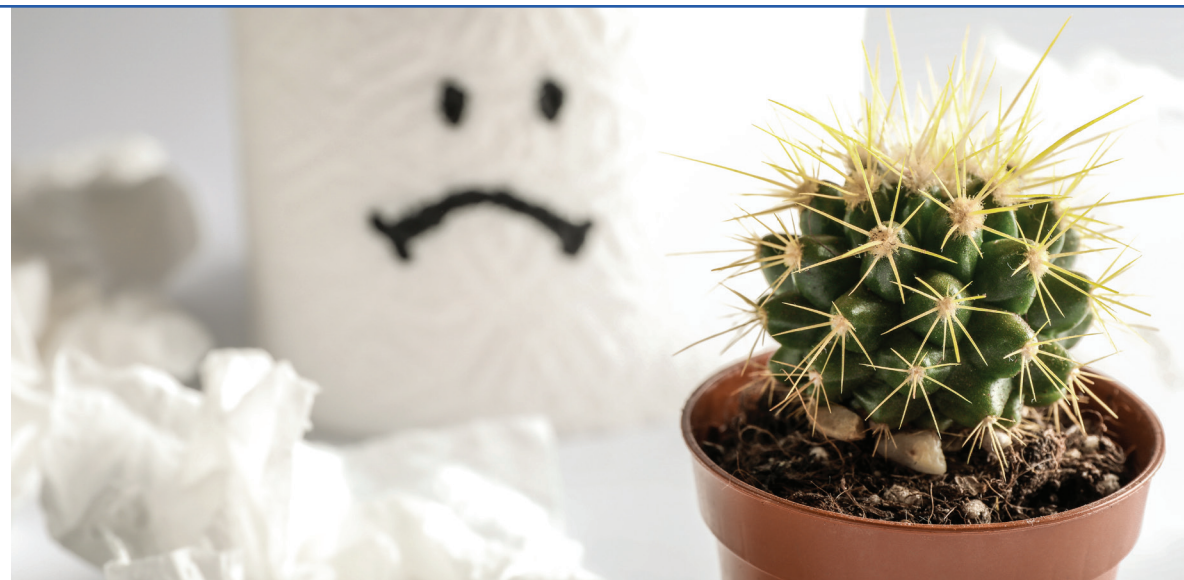
prehensive, evidence-based prevention programs, go to [mbfpreventioneducation.org](http://mbfpreventioneducation.org).

MBF expressed gratitude for the event sponsors. Without their support, the event would not be possible.

Sponsors included title sponsor Dream Finders Homes and presenting sponsors AT&T, Impact Landscaping and Irrigation, The Jahna Family, Jax Utilities Management, MJC Land Development and Perry Homes.

Other sponsors include Ahead, AndersonOrd Apparel, Auld & White Constructors, Barraco and Associates, Basham and Lucas Design Group, Blue Stream Fiber, Callaway Golf, Carlton Construction, Champion Brands, Clockwork Marketing, Club Car, Coastal Engineering Associates, Coastal Oak Wealth Advisors, Cotton and Company, Cross Lake Partners, Dennis and Becky Rosa, Doc Medics of Florida, Donna J. Feldman & Mo Krausman, Doumar Insurance, England-Thims & Miller (ETM), EW Consultants, Fiorentino Group, First Service Residential, FMSBonds, Foley & Lardner, GHG Insurance, GreenPointe Holdings, Hampton Golf, HEAL Foundation, Hill Ward Henderson, Interstruct, Invision Construction, Jacobsen Textron, James Hardie Building Products, K & G Construction, Kearney Companies, KPMG, Lee Mar Complete Site Preparation, Lennar Homes, Lucido and Associates, MasterCraft Builder Group, MJC Land Development, Pepsi Co, PRI Productions, Richmond American Homes, Rogers Towers, State Farm | Denny Doyle, Superior Construction, Sysco, Taylor Morrison, The Baldwin Group, The Palencia Club, THE PLAYERS Championship, Tito's Vodka, Vallencourt Construction, Vulcan Materials Company Foundation, Wells Brothers Construction, William Kappaz, Wrathell, Hunt & Associates and Yellow Dawg Striping.

## Tell hemorrhoids to butt out.



It's a common condition nobody wants to talk about. For some people, hemorrhoids have no symptoms, while others who suffer may be too embarrassed to seek treatment.

You're not alone if you're experiencing annoying hemorrhoid symptoms. About one in 20 Americans will experience symptoms at some point.

### When is it time to see a doctor?

If you're experiencing the following symptoms, it may be time to make an appointment with your doctor:

- Itching or irritation
- Swelling
- Blood in stools
- Pain or discomfort
- Bleeding

The good news is that you don't have to live this way. The Hemorrhoid Clinic at Baptist Beaches has nonsurgical and surgical options, including outpatient solutions, to provide the relief you deserve.

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GUEST COLUMN

## How much cash should I have on hand?

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

“How much cash should I have now?” It seems like a simple question, but the answer can be complicated — especially in times of market volatility. Apart from an emergency fund, the amount of cash or liquid assets you need depends on many factors, including the current state of the market and major life events.

“There isn’t really a general rule in terms of a number,” says Michael Taylor, CFA, vice president – investment strategy analyst at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. “We do say it shouldn’t be more than maybe 10% of your overall portfolio or maybe three to six months’ worth of living expenses.”

Taylor notes that the number could change depending on what’s going on in the economy and markets. “You should make sure your emergency fund and cash reserves can meet your current needs,” he says.

Taylor shares five events that should prompt a conversation with your financial adviser about how much cash to have on hand.

### 1. When the market is in flux

The state of the market can have an impact on how much cash you should have on hand, how long you decide to hold an asset as cash, or when to convert assets to cash. This can be especially true when you foresee a large discretionary purchase such as a vacation home or a luxury vehicle.

“Plan for those purchases or defer them so you don’t have to liquidate assets at a loss during market uncertainty,” Taylor says.

### 2. When your job status may change

If you’re contemplating a career move such as starting a business, retiring soon or facing a possible



Contributed photo

layoff, consider meeting with your financial adviser. “If you don’t have enough cash on hand during those transition periods, you might have to dip into an investment account or sell a stock at an inopportune time,” Taylor says. “That means you could end up losing money when you can least afford it.”

### 3. When your marital status is about to change

Getting married or paying for a wedding? According to “The Knot 2021 Real Weddings Study,” on average in 2021, couples spent \$34,000 total on their wedding, including ceremony, reception and engagement ring. Note that doesn’t include a honeymoon or the expense of setting up a household.

A divorce can set you back as well, thanks to legal fees, asset division and other costs. That means you need enough cash on hand to weather the transition from being single to getting married or vice versa. Talking to a financial adviser ahead of time can help you identify how much on-hand cash you need.

### 4. When your child is ready for college

According to projections by Wells Fargo Advisors based on the College Board’s “Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid,” the estimated cost of attending a private college for four years (including tuition, fees, and room and board) starting in 2023 is more than \$228,000.

“It’s important to plan so that you have enough liquidity to pay those tuition bills when they arrive,” Taylor says.

### 5. When you receive a windfall

If you receive an inheritance, a large bonus or a generous financial gift, ask your financial adviser about investment options relative to the amount of cash you should have in your portfolio. If that money stays in savings or short-term CDs, it won’t decrease in value, but it also may not be able to earn to its full potential.

Your long-term goals, risk tolerance and spending and saving habits also affect how much cash you should have on hand. A financial adviser can help you strike the right balance.

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

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Managing Director

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GUEST COLUMN

# Got a kid in sports? Here's how to handle the mounting costs in 2025



By Chris Thompson

Anyone with kids enrolled in sports knows the cost of participation can be quite high. Whether money is needed for new equipment, fees or transportation getting to and from games and practices, the expenses quickly add up. Here are some things you can do to manage the financial impact.

**1. Evaluate the goal of sports in your family.** Every family has a unique relationship with sports. Understanding the place that sports has in your family and the goal it serves is a good place to start when determining how athletics will impact your finances. Is the goal of childhood athletics for your child to have fun or try something new? Is your child showing enough interest and talent to potentially pursue a scholarship or play in college? Understanding the goal can right size the cost you are willing to incur. For example, you may be more willing to pay for specialized equipment for your high schooler who is deeply passionate about basketball versus your fourth grader who may be trying it for the first time. Try balancing spending with your child's interest and skills to ensure you are allocating an appropriate amount of money to athletics.

**2. Set priorities.** As a family, determine the importance of prioritizing athletic expenditures in the context of your other goals. Think about the amount of money you are comfortable putting

toward athletics while also reflecting on the savings you would like to put toward other goals like family vacations and saving for college and retirement. Families with multiple kids may have each child pick one sport to focus on each season or select a singular camp to attend instead of saying yes to all opportunities. Prioritizing can mean having a conversation with your children about how you will support athletic opportunities. If your child has the talent or interest in attaining a college scholarship, have an age-appropriate conversation about the probability of achieving that goal and what it will take financially to make that happen. There is no denying that the cost of athletics can be steep, but putting thought behind what expenses are worth incurring is financially wise.

**3. Budget for the most common expenses.** Expenses can generally increase as your child gains age and expertise. Consider the common costs associated with participation in a sport and factor these into your budget: initial equipment,

uniforms, training camps and travel. As your child ages, keep in mind the cost of middle school and high school sports can increase to accommodate further transportation to games and team bonding events. Be proactive in understanding and planning for the current and futures costs of athletics.

**4. Prepare for the unexpected.** No one wants to think about their child being injured, but it is necessary to plan for the possibility. Consider the potential impact financially if your child is injured and needs health care — which could include everything from physical therapy to more comprehensive care. Review your health care coverage to see how it applies to walk-in treatment, emergency care and preventive costs. Broken bones, sprained ankles and repetitive stress injuries happen, and you'll want to be prepared for any out-of-pocket expenses. This is even more important if your child plays a contact sport.

COSTS continues on Page 29

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## Costs

Continued from 28

Many children learn valuable life lessons from participating in sports throughout their childhood. If participation in athletics is important to you or your child, take some time to consider the associated costs. A financial adviser can help budget for the expected and unexpected expenses of childhood sports, while making sure that you stay on track to meet your other goals.

**Chris Thompson, CRPC®, CFP®, CMFA® is a Private Wealth Adviser and Managing Director with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC in Ponte Vedra, Florida. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 31 years. To contact him, [www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson](http://www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson), 904-380-2290, 818 A1A North, Suite 301, Ponte Vedra, FL 32082. Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board) owns the CFP® certification mark, the CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ certification mark, and the CFP® certification mark (with plaque design) logo in the United States, which it authorizes use of by individuals who successfully complete CFP Board's initial and ongoing certification requirements.**

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# NAI Hallmark brokers \$8.35M sale of Blanding Town Center

NAI Hallmark, Jacksonville's largest locally owned commercial real estate brokerage and property management firm, has announced the sale of Blanding Town Center, located at 5014-5276 Blanding Blvd. in Jacksonville. Partner and Senior Vice President Daniel Burkhardt and Vice President, Retail Specialist Austin Kay represented the seller, TSG Realty. The buyer, Blanding Town Center LLC, acquired the property for \$8,350,000.

The property is a two-building, multi-tenanted, grocery-anchored neighborhood retail center encompassing approximately 83,069 square feet. The retail center is situated at the intersection of Blanding Boulevard and 103rd Street, two major thoroughfares on Jacksonville's west side. The location offers accessibility, with close proximity to I-295, U.S. 17, Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Cecil Airport and Cecil Commerce Center, which is home to major employers such as Amazon, Wayfair, Boeing and Stellar Energy.

For more information about the sale of Blanding Town Center or inquiries regarding investment real estate opportunities across Northeast Florida, contact Daniel Burkhardt at [db@naihallmark.com](mailto:db@naihallmark.com).

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Photo by Anya Cam

## Pirate Island Carts opens in St. Augustine Beach

Golf carts have come off the course and become a fun and leisurely way to get around. They've evolved into recreational vehicles that can be customized to reflect the owner's personality. Pirate Island Carts, located at 125 Pope Road in St. Augustine Beach, is a newly opened, locally owned dealership that offers a full range of services under one roof, including sales, rentals and service.

"We're excited to provide a complete golf cart experience for St. Augustine," said Aaron Moyer, co-owner of Pirate Island Carts. "Neighborhoods are becoming more cart-friendly, and we're seeing more family-friendly and affordable options. We love getting to know our customers and finding the perfect solution for them. We want them to feel valued and supported throughout their journey with us."

Pirate Island Carts carries a wide selection of high-quality golf carts from classic models to state-of-the-art carts. Pirate Island Carts has partnerships with industry-leading brands, including E-Z-GO, Club Car, Garia, Sierra, Alset, Kodiak and Gorilla. Whether looking for a new cart, a custom model with advanced features or a family-friendly option, there is something for everyone. The sales team can help choose from an array of upgrades, including touchscreen controls, sound systems, storage and other personalized features.

Once a cart has been purchased, the dealership provides expert service. Pirate Island Carts is authorized to service and repair a variety of golf carts. Their certified technicians are ready to handle everything from routine maintenance to more complex repairs.

For those who want to experience a golf cart without a long-term commitment, Pirate Island Carts provides rental options. Whether for a day, weekend or special event, customers can rent a high-quality cart and experience convenience and fun zipping around St. Augustine Beach without the cost of ownership.

"Anastasia Island has always had a more laid-back, tropical vibe," says Kevin Cannon, co-owner of Pirate Island Carts. "Golf carts fit right into that. There's something very relaxing about grabbing your family and friends and just cruising around the neighborhood. We've even created a custom map that shows the most golf cart-friendly roads. Swing by our beautiful showroom, meet our friendly staff, and let us help find the perfect model for you."

Pirate Island Carts is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays by appointment only. To schedule a sales or service appointment, call 904-201-3048.

Learn more at [pirateislandcarts.com](http://pirateislandcarts.com).

## Real estate business provides gifts, donations for children in foster care

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty recently announced that the company's Metro Offices of Avondale/Ortega and San Marco/San Jose were supporting Family Support Services of Duval and Nassau Counties' annual Be an Angel holiday drive, an effort to make the holidays extra special for First Coast children in foster care.

The company's "angels" buy gifts from a child's wish list or make a monetary donation so that the children receive holiday presents they would not otherwise be able to enjoy this time of year. The Metro Offices team collected and purchased gifts to make Christmas wishes come true for 50 children in foster care in Duval County.

For the fourth year, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty Realtor Kimberly Waterhouse managed the real estate firm's initiative. Additionally, Waterhouse secured a \$20,400 donation from the Gray Family Foundation to help fulfill Christmas wishes for additional children served by Family Support Services.

"As we celebrate our fourth year of providing Christmas for 50 children in foster care, we are filled with immense gratitude for the amazing team of Realtors at the Metro Offices of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty," said Waterhouse. "This holiday season, we come together with a shared purpose — to bring joy, love and hope to children who deserve to feel special and supported. Thanks to the generosity of our team and our community, we are able to make this holiday season brighter for these children, and we are deeply thankful for the opportunity to continue this tradition of giving."

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty is among Family Support Services' top donors supporting the Be an Angel campaign — the agency's largest giving program of the year.

"Our heartfelt gratitude goes to Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty and the Gray Family Foundation for



Photo by Cailin Smith Photography

**Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty provides holiday gifts to Family Support Services' Be an Angel holiday initiative. From left, Realtor Kimberly Waterhouse, Managing Broker Josh Cohen, Community Engagement Specialist Kayla Garza of Family Support Services, Administrative Assistant Norma Albano at the real estate business, Community Engagement Manager Leigh Ann Luttrell with Family Support Services and Realtor Nathan Gray.**

their unwavering dedication to supporting our community's children through Be an Angel," said Leigh Ann Luttrell, community engagement manager for Family Support Services Duval and Nassau Counties. "Their steadfast support brings joy to children in foster care during the holidays, and their partnership is vital to the success of our programs throughout the year."

"One of our greatest joys as a company is supporting charitable organizations that make a positive difference in the lives of many local children and families," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty President Ann King. "We are so proud of our Metro team and their support of the Be an Angel campaign to ensure more children can have a gift under the tree."

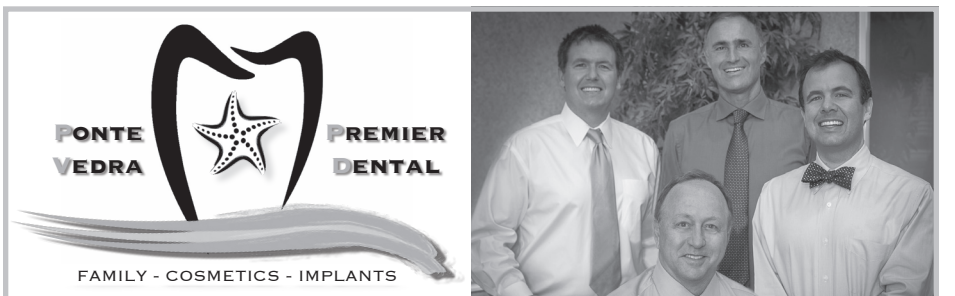
For more information about Family Support Services, go to [familysupport.org](http://familysupport.org). For more information about Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, go to [FloridaNetworkRealty.com](http://FloridaNetworkRealty.com) or [FLNetworkRealty.com](http://FLNetworkRealty.com).

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Justin Cook, division president of PulteGroup's Northeast Florida Division, and Kristin Keen, founder and CEO of Rethreaded



Justin Cook, division president of PulteGroup's Northeast Florida Division, and Shanté McCleod, location leader of Isaiah 117 House Duval County

# PulteGroup's Building Hope Golf Tournament raises \$170K

The Northeast Florida Division of PulteGroup's third annual Building Hope Golf Tournament at The Palencia Club raised more than \$170,000 for four charitable organizations — Rethreaded, Feeding Northeast Florida, Isaiah 117 House and Five Star Veterans Center.

"We enjoyed a fantastic day of golf, and we are thrilled to support four amazing local organizations that are dedicated to making a difference in our community," said Justin Cook, division president of PulteGroup's Northeast Florida Division. "Giving back is woven into our culture at PulteGroup. We ap-

preciate the unwavering support of our players, volunteers and generous event sponsors who made our third annual benefit golf tournament a success."

"We are so thankful to Pulte for using their business to change the lives of survivors of human trafficking," said Kristin Keen, founder and CEO of Rethreaded. "Pulte is an amazing example of how a company can use their platform to make a lasting impact in the community. We are so proud to be in partnership with them to make our community better."

"We are incredibly grateful for the

support and generosity of those who participated in the third annual Building Hope Golf Tournament," said Shanté McCleod, location leader of Isaiah 117 House Duval County. "Their contributions allow us to continue providing a safe and loving environment for children during some of their most vulnerable moments. This event reflects the heart of our community coming together to make a difference. Thanks, Pulte, for choosing to partner with Isaiah 117 House and help change the way foster care begins."

Presented by PulteGroup, the Build-

ing Hope Golf Tournament sponsors included Vallencourt Construction Company, Castle Group, Simpson Strong-Tie, LP Building Solutions, Hard Rock Materials Inc., FirstService Residential, Carlton Construction Inc., ACS, Innovative Construction Group, Preferred Materials Inc, Schuman Electric Inc., Weyerhaeuser, Tier 1 Pools and Spas, Hampton Golf, Belgard, Kimley-Horn and England-Thims & Miller Inc.

For more information about PulteGroup's Northeast Florida Division, go to [pulte.com/jacksonville](http://pulte.com/jacksonville).

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# In the Arts

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Photo courtesy of the Jacksonville Symphony



Photo by James Gilbert courtesy of the Jacksonville Symphony



Photo courtesy of the Jacksonville Symphony

## Jacksonville Symphony to offer variety of performances in January

The Jacksonville Symphony will present six performances this month spanning the classical, pops, jazz, film and rock genres. Several guest artists and conductors will join the symphony for most of these performances, all of which take place in Jacoby Symphony Hall at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts.

### Pops: The Best of Phantom, West Side Story & More

When: 7:30 p.m. Jan. 3 and 4; matinee performance at 11 a.m. Jan. 3

The best of Broadway comes to Jacoby Symphony Hall as the symphony, powerhouse guest vocalists and the Symphony Chorus celebrate two dynamos of American theater: Leonard Bernstein and Andrew Lloyd Webber. Experience the most iconic musical theater moments from “Phantom of the Opera,” “West Side Story,” “Candide” and more all combined in one big show. For tickets, go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/webber-bernstein](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/webber-bernstein).

### Florida Blue Classical: Gershwin & Tchaikovsky

When: 7:30 p.m. Jan. 10 and 11

Jacksonville native Marcus Roberts is widely known as one of today’s eminent jazz pianists. His trio, including drummer Jason Marsalis, joins forces with the symphony and Music Director Laureate of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Robert Spano for Gershwin’s Concerto in F that blends classical, jazz and the blues in a unique American sound. Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony anchors the performance with the dramatic power that places it among classical masterworks. In a perfect pairing, Carlos Simon’s “Motherboxx Connection” tells the inspiring stories of African-American heroes. For tickets, go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/gershwin-tchaikovsky](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/gershwin-tchaikovsky).

### Symphonic Nights at the Movies: Star Wars: A New Hope in Concert

When: 7 p.m. Jan. 17 and 18

Luke Skywalker begins a journey that

will change the galaxy in “Star Wars: A New Hope in Concert.” Nineteen years after the formation of the Empire, Luke is thrust into the struggle of the Rebel Alliance when he meets Obi-Wan Kenobi, who has lived for years in seclusion on the desert planet of Tatooine. Obi-Wan begins Luke’s Jedi training as Luke joins him on a daring mission to rescue the beautiful Rebel leader Princess Leia from the clutches of Darth Vader and the evil Empire. For tickets, go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/star-wars-new-hope-2025](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/star-wars-new-hope-2025).

### Pops: 7 Bridges: The Ultimate EAGLES Experience

When: 7:30 p.m. Jan. 24 and 25

“7 Bridges: The Ultimate EAGLES Experience” is a stunningly accurate tribute to the music of the Eagles. Alongside the symphony, 7 Bridges faithfully re-creates the experience of an Eagles concert from the band’s most prolific period, featuring one brilliant hit single after another, includ-

ing “Hotel California,” “Take it Easy,” “New Kid in Town” and others. For tickets, go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/7-bridges-eagles](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/7-bridges-eagles).

### JP Morgan Chase & Co. Jazz: Local Vocals

When: 3 p.m. Jan. 26

Recognizing the legacy of vocalists in jazz, the Jacksonville Jazz Collective collaborates with the region’s three most regarded female jazz chanteuses: Linda Cole of the Nat “King” Cole family music dynasty, Jacksonville Jazz Festival “Hall of Fame” inductee Lisa Kelly and Bonnie Eisele of the Dynamic Les DeMerle Band. Singing from a repertoire of Great American Songbook classics to songs of American pop and Broadway, each artist will be featured and perform together in artful, original arrangements through interpretive styles of groovin’ swing, sensitive bossa nova, heartfelt ballads, light funk, bluesy shuffles, energetic bebop and more. For tickets, go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/local-vocals-jazz](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/local-vocals-jazz).

### Florida Blue Classical: Beethoven & Rachmaninoff

When: 7:30 p.m. Jan. 31 and Feb. 1

Internationally acclaimed guest conductor Michael Stern leads the symphony through a musical journey spanning diverse cultures. The emotional beauty of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony takes center stage with a spotlight on the beloved Allegretto movement. Rachmaninoff’s “Symphonic Dances” presents a dynamic fusion of Russian and American influences, and Connesson’s “Flame Writing” captures French classical music with its energetic and colorful character. For tickets, go to [my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/beethoven-rachmaninoff](http://my.jaxsymphony.org/overview/beethoven-rachmaninoff).

Tickets are also available at JaxSymphony.org or by calling the box office at 904-354-5547.

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Photos courtesy of the Jacksonville Symphony



The Marcus Roberts Trio



Carlos Simon



Robert Spano

# Marcus Roberts Trio featured in “Gershwin & Tchaikovsky” performance

The Jacksonville Symphony will present its fifth Florida Blue Classical concert of the 75th Anniversary Season with “Gershwin & Tchaikovsky” on Jan. 10 and 11, led by Music Director Laureate of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Robert Spano and featuring the Marcus Roberts Trio.

The program blends classical, jazz and the blues in a unique American sound with George Gershwin’s Concerto in F, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5 and

living composer Carlos Simon’s “Motherboxx Connection.”

The concert opens with “Motherboxx Connection,” a piece commissioned by the Sphinx Organization and the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra. It is the first movement of Simon’s “Tales: A Folklore Symphony,” a four-movement work inspired by African-American heroes. Simon will return for the season finale to present his world premiere of “Zodiac” on

June 6 and 7.

Then, the Marcus Roberts Trio, native to Jacksonville, will join the symphony for Gershwin’s Concerto in F. Known as a jazz concerto, it is full of syncopated rhythms and complex melodies with a “magical freshness” added by the group. This trio allows the music to take over, resulting in a dynamic collaboration between these three long-time friends and musicians.

The finale of the program is Tchai-

kovsky’s Symphony No. 5, a dramatic work full of crescendos and tempo shifts. The piece showcases the wind section with several solos, including its popular French horn solo in the second movement, which will highlight the symphony’s principal horn, Kevin Reid.

Tickets are available at JaxSymphony.org or by calling the box office at 904-354-5547. This concert is part of the Greta Challen Berg Artist Series.

## Upcoming Jacksonville Symphony Experiences

- **Gershwin & Tchaikovsky**  
January 10 & 11
- **Star Wars: A New Hope in Concert**  
January 17 & 18
- **7 Bridges: The Ultimate EAGLES Experience**  
January 24 & 25
- **Local Vocals**  
January 26
- **Beethoven & Rachmaninoff**  
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Music Director

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Rich Jones, WOKV

JaxSymphony.org  
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Cyclist Dottie Dorion



Dottie Dorion cycling in the 1996 Olympics.



Dottie Dorion cycling at the 1996 Olympic Torch relay.

# 'Beyond Triathlon' film wins People's Choice Award

Documentary to be shown at local film festival

**For The Recorder**

The inspiring documentary "Beyond Triathlon" featuring Northeast Florida

resident Dottie Dorion has received top honors with the People's Choice Award at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival. This film will be shown next during the St. Augustine Film Festival at 4 p.m. Jan. 12 at Flagler College's Gamache Koger Theatre.

Dorion's story resonated with audi-

ences during a world premiere week of the film, which showcases trailblazing triathletes such as Celeste Callahan who broke barriers in a male-dominated sport. Narrated by Sika Henry, the first black female professional triathlete, their combined stories showcase perseverance, community and the transformative power of sports.

"'Beyond Triathlon' is a wonderful history of the development of Master's Women's Sports as experienced firsthand by Celeste Callahan and me," said Dorion. "The theme and driving force was not to get accolades for our own sports achievements but to emphasize what it enabled us to do for others."

The film was produced by the award-winning production company Malkus Group. Directors Brian Bayrel and Chuck Malkus have captured how the journeys of Dorion, Callahan and Henry

resulted in early efforts that were firsts in sports.

The filmmakers share how their courageous efforts have led to additional advancements we see today.

"Our team of storytellers has been able to provide several unique perspectives," explains Malkus. "Pioneering women have helped make sports become something today which didn't exist a couple of decades ago. During the opening week premiere, audiences were spellbound, experienced joy and held back tears."

The film also includes renowned athletes such as Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan, three-time Olympic gold medalist Nancy Hogshead, Sarah Springman and Jane E. Hunt.

Advanced ticket purchase is recommended and may be found at [staugfilmfest.com](http://staugfilmfest.com).

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FRIDAY, 2/7 • 7:30 PM

VISUAL ARTIST: BARRE BARRETT

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 VISUAL ARTIST, ÅKE ARNERDAL

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**2024-2025 FULL SEASON SCHEDULE**

Clarice Assad & João Luiz	10/6	Nuovo Aspetto & Holger Falk	2/7
Cameron Carpenter	10/20	Zuill Bailey & Jason Vieaux	2/21
The Falconaires	10/22	Billy Childs Quartet	3/6
Kings Return	11/3	Isidore String Quartet	3/21
Spanish Brass	12/8	Alliage Sax Quintett	4/6
Clayton Stephenson	1/10		

\*All concerts except 3/6 are held at our home venue: St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 465 11th Ave. N Jacksonville Beach



Dottie Dorion in the 2015 Rowing Championship.



Dottie Dorion

Contributed photos

# Sports

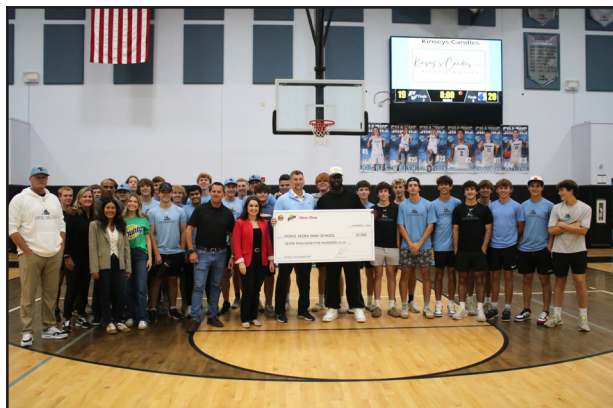


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Jaguars linebacker Devin Lloyd presented Ponte Vedra High athletic director Michael Harrison with a donation of \$7,500 for its baseball and softball programs.



The donation was made possible through the Tide and Bounty Neighborhood School Field Clean Up Campaign.



Lloyd chats with Ponte Vedra High baseball players prior to the presentation.

Photos by Anthony Richards

## Sharks receive \$7.5K donation for baseball, softball facilities

By Anthony Richards

Winn-Dixie partnered with Tide and Bounty to donate \$7,500 to Ponte Vedra High School to help boost its baseball and softball programs with needed equipment and facility upgrades.

The presentation took place following the first quarter of the Sharks boys basketball game against the Impact Christian Academy Lions on Dec. 17.

Jacksonville Jaguars linebacker Devin Lloyd was part of the celebration and presented the donation check to Ponte Vedra

High athletic director Michael Harrison.

“It definitely takes you back and just understand how privileged I am right now to have the opportunity to play in the NFL, and all that started in high school,” Lloyd said. “That’s where you build your foundation and where the love of the game starts.”

According to Harrison, the donation will go toward installing new foul poles at both the baseball and softball fields as well as replacing the netting around the batting cages.

If there is any money left over after

those projects, it will be used for general field maintenance.

The donation effort is made possible through the Tide and Bounty Neighborhood School Field Clean Up Campaign, where local students, parents, staff and supporters voted online for the school to be randomly selected as the winning recipient.

“This is our second year doing this, and it is really near and dear to our hearts, because we understand the importance of sports in school,” said Ryan Green, with the Proctor & Gamble Jacksonville team.

“All the things that sports promote will help you as you traverse life.”

Lloyd had some time before the presentation to speak with members of the Sharks’ baseball team who were on hand, and he knows the money will go a long way in helping out the program.

“When I was younger, I didn’t have too many opportunities to come face-to-face with someone who was in the NFL or any professional league, so it’s cool to be in this position to give back,” Lloyd said. “I’m excited to see what this can do for these guys.”

## JAGA introduces 2025 officers, season schedule

By Anthony Richards

The Jacksonville Area Golf Association elected its 2025 officers recently at its year end annual Meeting at Deerwood Country Club.

Duke Butler III of TPC Sawgrass was elected to a one-year term as president and will lead the organization in its 72nd year.

Butler replaces Cary Helton of San Jose Country Club, who served as JAGA president in 2024.

Butler will enjoy continuity among his fellow officers as four of them will be returning in the same capacity in 2025.

They include Jim Loftin of The Palencia Club, who returns as the vice president of administration for a second straight year; Jeff Johnstone of Sawgrass Country Club is the vice president of tournaments for the fourth straight year.

Meanwhile, Ryan Wharton of The Golf Club of South Hampton repeats as JAGA’s secretary.

While serving as president of JAGA in 2023, John Milton added the role of



JAGA 2025 officers (left to right) Jeff Johnstone, Duke Butler III, Jim Loftin, Ryan Wharton; Absent, and John Milton.

Photo courtesy of Jacksonville Area Golf association:

JAGA’s interim treasurer in April of that year when long-time treasurer Billy Walker passed away.

Milton was elected treasurer in December 2024 when his term as president ended and will serve as treasurer again in 2025.

JAGA also announced its schedule of events for 2025, which will include 11

tournaments involving men, women and junior golfers of all ages played at stroke play, match play and/or in team formats, plus the Celebration of Golf Banquet presented by Circle K.

A few notes about the 2025 venues:

• The JAGA First Coast Amateur presented by the City of Jacksonville will be played at Deerwood Country Club after

being held at Amelia National Golf & Country Club this past January.

• The Celebration of Golf Banquet presented by Circle K moves from Timuquana Country Club to TPC Sawgrass.

• The 34th Underwood Cup will be played Feb. 3 to 4 with Deerwood Country Club hosting for the first time. Timuquana Country Club was home to 32 of the first 33 Cup matches, with San Jose Country Club serving the host role in 2023.

• Four events in the middle of the schedule move to new locations with Spring Four-Ball to The Palencia Club; JAGA’s oldest event, the Senior Amateur to Marsh Landing Country Club; the First Coast Women’s Amateur to Sawgrass Country Club; the Jacksonville Amateur presented by Synovus to Timuquana Country Club for the first time; the Fall Four-Ball goes to Ponte Vedra Inn & Club – Ocean Course; and not played in 2024, the Club Team Championship returns to King & Bear at the World Golf Village.



Charles King (left) and the Clark/Gopel family were voted Best Dressed at the JAGA Family Championship



Axel and Billy Horschel showing off at the JAGA Family Championship



Bruce and Jamie Kanehl were the Family Net champions.

Photo credit: JAGA

# Billy, Axel Horschel highlight JAGA Family Championship

## 156 players turn out for JAGA's most popular, fun event

Family, food, fun and the Christmas holiday spirit were on full display at the seventh annual JAGA Family Championship, held at Jax Beach Golf Club on Dec. 21. Morning and afternoon waves of 80 and 76 golfers, respectively, many dressed in festive holiday outfits, competed in Family and Couples flights on a cool, windy but brilliant, sun-splashed first day of winter.

As a means of completing two waves of 18 holes on the shortest day of the year and accommodating players ranging in age from 5 to 85, the 18 holes were set up to play to a par of 58. There were 14 par 3s and four par 4s.

Headlining the day was the special appearance of PGA TOUR star Billy Horschel and his five-year-old son Axel. The Horschels teamed to finish second in the Family Gross division. In between the morning finish and the start of afternoon play, Horschel conducted a brief clinic that featured Axel. He then answered questions from the participants and posed for pictures with his son at his side.

The overall Gross team champions were Len Schonfeld II and Len Schonfeld III and Jeremy and Evan Raynor. Both teams recorded 5-under-par scores of 53.

The many other winners were:

Morning Play: Stephen & Gill Cox (Couples Gross, 1st); Tama and K.C. Caldabaugh (Couples Net, 1st); Len Schonfeld II and Len Schonfeld III (Family Gross, 1st); Billy and Axel Horschel (Family Gross, 2nd); Allison and Anderson Vogt (Family Gross, 3rd); Jamie and Bruce Kanehl (Family Net, 1st); Michael and Connor Mohr (Family Net, 2nd); Ed and Tom Long Jr. (Family Net, 3rd); Allison Vogt (closest on No. 4); and Bruce Kanehl (closest on No. 12).

Afternoon Play: Jeff and Kelly John-



Afternoon Family Gross winners Evan and Jeremy Raynor



Florida Times-Union golf writer Garry Smits (right) and stepfather George McKinney

stone (Couples Gross, 1st); Lou and Paul Tenarvitz (Couples Gross, 2nd); Joe and Hilary Watson (Couples Gross, 3rd); Paul and Sheila Brocki (Couples Net, 1st); Chris and Nina Sloan (Couples Net 2nd); Jeremy and Evan Raynor (Family Gross, 1st); Russ and Russell Libby (Family Gross, 2nd); Tad and Patrick Griffin (Family Gross, 3rd); Jackson and Jordan Bork (Family Net, 1st); Andy and Andrew Kokoska (Family Net, 2nd); Harrell and Hal Robinson (Family Net, 3rd); Sheila Brocki (closest on No. 4); and Zach Lee (closest on No. 12).

Longest Putt (85 feet) – Putting Green: Tim Pike (morning); Gary Lee (after-



PGA TOUR senior referee Stephen Cox and wife Gill took home JAGA Family Championship Couples Gross honors in the morning wave. Gill was also a co-winner in the Best Dressed category.



Tama and K.C. Caldabaugh win yet another JAGA trophy at The Family Championship

noon)

Representatives from all phases of Jacksonville-area golf were on hand. In addition to Billy Horschel, PGA TOUR referee Stephen Cox, PGA of America Board member Russ Libby, USGA Executive Jon Podany, North Florida Junior Golf leader Jack Aschenbach, Florida Times-Union golf writer Garry Smits, World Long Drive Champions Gerry and Justin James, JAGA scholarship winners Nancy Cox, Emma Wells, Hannah Stevens and more. Also, five kids from Moore-Myers Children's Fund, competed.

A 50/50 raffle was conducted, and it

generated more than \$2,000 to the JAGA Charitable Trust when raffle winner, Len Schonfeld II, donated his share.

The event was conducted by the Jacksonville Area Golf Association (JAGA) for the seventh year in a row and once again chaired by Duke Butler III of TPC Sawgrass and family members, wife Sheila, son Duke IV and daughter Sadie. Butler was elected 2025 president of JAGA at its Dec. 10 Annual Meeting at Deerwood Country Club. A Life Member of the PGA of America and a former PGA TOUR executive, Butler is the first PGA member to be elected JAGA president.

The Family Championship has the largest field of any tournament on JAGA's schedule and arguably is its most popular event. It joined the JAGA schedule with its new format in 2018, but its roots lie in two former JAGA events, the Father-Son and Couples tournaments. The Family Championship is a re-creation of the two, with the circle of family eligibility connections greatly expanded.

Dates for the 2025 Family Championship have already been determined. The event will return to Jacksonville Beach on Dec. 20, 2025.

## NEXT UP FOR JAGA

- Jan. 18-20: JAGA First Coast Amateur, Deerwood Country Club, Jacksonville
- Feb. 3-4: 34th Underwood Cup, Deerwood Country Club, Jacksonville
- Feb. 20: Celebration of Golf presented by Circle K, TPC Sawgrass, Ponte Vedra Beach
- March 17: JAGA Spring Four-Ball, The Palencia Club, St. Augustine
- April 6-8: 69th JAGA Senior Amateur Championship, Marsh Landing Country Club, Ponte Vedra Beach

The 2025 JAGA tournament schedule was announced on Dec. 17. Information on all tournaments can be found at [jaxareagolf.org](http://jaxareagolf.org).

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A. 25 20 17 2 20 17  
Clue: Waiter or waitress

B. 7 19 25  
Clue: Clean off table

C. 24 14 16 15 6 20 18  
Clue: Room for cooking

D. 13 17 4 20 17  
Clue: Choose meal

Answers: A. server B. bus C. kitchen D. order

## GUESS WHO?

I am an actress born in England on January 3, 1996. I began my career as a singer, posting song covers to YouTube. My siblings also are talented and are in the business, with my brother starring in the series "Game of Thrones." In 2021, I made my Marvel debut in "Black Widow."

Answer: Florence Pugh

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Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to food service.

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

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|-----------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| BAR-BACK  | DISH       | FRONT OF HOUSE | REGULAR     |
| BARTENDER | DOUBLE     | HAPPY HOUR     | RESERVATION |
| BISTRO    | DROP       | LINE           | RUN         |
| BOUNCER   | EARLY BIRD | ORDER          | RUSH        |
| COMP      | FILLER     | PARTY          | SEATING     |
| COVER     | FLATTOP    | POINT OF SALE  | TICKET      |

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## CROSSWORD

1	2	3						4	5	6	7		
8			9					10					
11								12					
13				14				15					
16							17						
18					19	20							
					21			22					
				23				24					
			25				26						
		27				28			29	30	31	32	33
	34								35				
36									37				
38										39			
40										41			
42											43		

### ACROSS

- Americans' "uncle"
- Chair
- Ancient kingdom
- Egyptian city
- Alaskan glacier
- One from Somalia
- Ancient alphabets
- Relating to vocabulary
- Small mongrels
- Natural settings
- Weekend entertainments
- Line from which light seemingly streams
- Your own private code
- Swiss river
- Satisfaction
- A person's brother or sister
- Folk singer DiFranco
- The Blonde Bombshell
- Kids' school project
- Bluish greens
- Classifying
- Cube-shaped
- Choo-choos
- Indian religious god of dissolution
- French department
- Leak into gradually
- Foundation
- Midway between south and southeast

- Glamorous city
- Japanese lute
- Makes law
- Informative book
- Animal's body part
- American playwright
- Blood poisoning
- Angels
- Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- Written account
- Unwelcome pest
- Saddle horses
- Type of gibbon
- Delta is one

- NE Massachusetts cape
- Soup cracker
- Yes vote
- Muddy ground
- Physics apparatus (abbr.)
- Type of drug
- German city
- Animal disease
- Martini ingredients
- Get away
- Spanish municipality
- Thrust a knife into

## SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

### Here's How It Works:

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

### DOWN

- Counterbalancing debt
- In slow tempo



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