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Senior Living
Page 17

Thursday, February 13, 2025

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VOLUME 56, NO. 15 \$1.00

Local family featured in ad during big game

St. Johns County potato farmer DeLee Parker, 5, and her family were featured in a commercial broadcast during the third quarter of the Super Bowl on Sunday, Feb. 9. The commercial, titled "The Little Farmer," was produced by Frito-Lay for its Lay's Potato Chips brand with the tagline "Lay's are made from real potatoes, and our potatoes come from real farmers."

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair Krista Joseph recently visited with local farmers to discuss creating a new Agriculture Advisory Board for the BCC.

"For generations, our local farmers have grown agriculture in St. Johns County, and on Sunday, this heart-warming commercial will grow the world's attention to the responsible farming happening in our community," said Joseph.

According to the National Football League, last year's Super Bowl had more than 123 million viewers.

The 60-second commercial concludes with a photo of DeLee holding two potatoes from the family's Parker Produce in St. Johns County. That transitions into a photo collage of her dad, Jeffrey, his dad Jeff and his dad's cousin Scott, along with their multiple generations of farmers in the family

LOCAL continues on Page 10

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PVHS theatre embraces mix of fun, intensity with 'Sweeney Todd'

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra High School production class is preparing to put on "Sweeney Todd School Edition: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street a Musical Thriller," during a five-night showcase Thursday, Feb. 27, to Monday, March 3.

It is the first time the class has performed "Sweeney Todd," but director and Ponte Vedra High theatre teacher Jason Nettle believes this group of students has what it takes to perform such a challenging production.

"I always think about who my actors are, and I'm always trying to challenge them," Nettle said. "This seemed like the perfect show to push them past what they would be comfortable with. Last year



Photo by Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra High School production class is preparing to put on "Sweeney Todd" during a five-night showcase Thursday, Feb. 27 to Monday, March 3.

THEATRE continues on Page 41

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Briefs

Continued from 2

Fishing Pier Gift Shop Closing Temporarily

The St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier Gift Shop, 350 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine Beach, has closed for renovations. The pier itself remains accessible for sightseeing and fishing in the meantime. The gift shop is estimated to reopen in mid-March.

Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

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

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

U.S. Attorney: Restaurant owner pleads guilty to immigration law violations

U.S. Attorney Roger B. Handberg has announced that Hua Yao Ke, 38, of Jacksonville has pleaded guilty to establishing a commercial enterprise for the purpose of evading a provision of the immigration laws. Ke faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled.

According to the plea agreement, Ke owned and operated the Kamiya 86 Sushi and Thai restaurant located in Ponte Vedra Beach, where he employed workers who were unlawfully present in the United States. Contrary to federal law, Ke did not require the workers to provide documents to establish that they could legally work in the United States, according to a report from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida.

Ke also owned a residence at which he provided free housing to the undocumented workers, and he provided the workers with free transportation between the house and the restaurant, the report said. He also paid the workers in cash and did not withhold taxes and other payments from the workers' wages, the report said.

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

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OBITUARIES

**Melissa Jane Nicandri**

Melissa Jane Nicandri passed away on January 29, 2025, at the age of 28 years in an airplane crash in Washington, D.C. At the time of her death, she was living in Brooklyn, New York.

Melissa was born on March 10, 1996, in Jacksonville, Florida to Peter & Stacie Nicandri. They often called her Pumpkin throughout her life. She had a younger brother, Michael, who called her Sissy when they were very young.

Melissa attended school in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida and graduated from Ponte Vedra High School in 2014 in the top ten of her class. She attended Vanderbilt University, became a member of the Tri Delta sorority, and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in

Economics in 2018. While attending Vanderbilt, Melissa spent summers interning in Washington, D.C. and living with her Uncle Paul and Aunt Andrea. During one of those summers, she met her longtime boyfriend and current best friend, Ben Shtuhl, and they were living together in New York at the time of her death.

After graduating from Vanderbilt, Melissa worked in Washington, D.C. for Booz, Allen & Hamilton before returning to school and obtaining a Master's Degree in International Economics and Finance from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in 2022. She began work with Moody's Ratings in July 2022 and was enjoying her work and a successful career there.

Melissa had a wide circle of friends from Ponte Vedra Beach, Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins, and her work. Her friends have said she had a gift for connecting her various friend groups and helping people make new friends. She grew up loving Harry Potter books and movies and visiting Disneyworld. She loved attending concerts, including a number of Taylor Swift concerts dating back at least a dozen years. She spent a semester in Barcelona, Spain while at Vanderbilt and used the opportunity to travel extensively throughout Europe. Melissa also visited several countries in Central and South America. She maintained her love of travel and spirit of adventure with Ben and her friends until her death.

In New York, she loved to walk the Brook-

lyn Heights Promenade, see Broadway shows, and explore the New York City food scene. She was excellent at trivia, enjoyed yoga and pickleball, and rooted for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Throughout the years, she volunteered at various places, including Ronald McDonald House and Habitat for Humanity.

Melissa is survived by her parents, brother Michael, grandparents Eugene and Lois Nicandri and Bonnie Lynch, Uncle Paul and Aunt Andrea Nicandri, Uncle Mark and Aunt Alea Nicandri, Aunt Cathy Lynch, Uncle Dave and Aunt Alice Lynch, and a number of cousins. She was predeceased by three Corgis — Lily, Bella, and Buster.

Melissa was smart, beautiful, funny, generous and kind to everyone. Her family and friends will miss her terribly but will make sure that she is forever remembered. A Memorial Service to celebrate Melissa's life will be held on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, the family is going to develop a scholarship in her name as soon as possible. Please visit her online Tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com.

Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Funeral Home, Jacksonville Beach, FL.



Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre
3600 Third Street South, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
Phone: 904.249.1100 Fax: 904.241.7554

DEATH NOTICES

Albert Anthony Bertani

Albert Anthony Bertani, 92, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 2, 2025. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery — 904-285-1130 — www.pontevedravally.com

Claire Marceline Daly

Claire Marceline Daly, 68, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Feb. 4, 2025. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, Jacksonville Beach, 904-249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com

Earnest Eugene Franklin, Jr.

Earnest Eugene Franklin, Jr., 61, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 2, 2025. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Blanchette Jones

Blanchette Jones, 90, of Orange Park, Florida, died Feb. 8, 2025. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, Jacksonville Beach, 904-249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com

Nesti Laska

Nesti Laska, 63, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Feb. 4, 2025. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery — 904-285-1130 — www.pontevedravally.com

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OBITUARIES



Ursula “Suzi” Miller

Ursula “Suzi” Miller, age 82, passed away peacefully on December 25, 2024, with family at her side. It was fitting she chose Christmas, as it was her favorite day of the year, to embark on her heavenly journey.

Those who were fortunate to cross paths with Suzi can take comfort in shared memories with a compassionate, generous, funny and determined soul. While Parkinson’s robbed her of many things she remained ferociously independent and optimistic to the very end. She will be missed dearly by her family and friends.

Suzi was preceded in death by her par-

ents Gregory and Ursula DeVine, her husband Joe and her brother Barry F. DeVine (Karen). She is survived by her daughter Susan “Sudi” Kouvaris (Gust) of Troy, Michigan; her pride and joy grandchildren Gust Jr. and Katy, and her brother Jon DeVine (Karen) of Cary Illinois; and many loving nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 12 p.m., Friday, February 28, 2025 in St. Paul’s Catholic Church, in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, followed by a committal service at Ponte Vedra Valley Cemetery in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Suzi’s life will continue to be celebrated from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Fleet Landing in the Johnson Hall located at 1 Fleet Landing Blvd., Atlantic Beach, FL 32233.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to: The Michael J. Fox Foundation online at <https://tribute.michaeljfox.org/>. Search for “Suzi Miller” on the Tribute Page. Or to The Foundation of Community Hospice & Palliative Care, 4266 Sunbeam Road, Jacksonville, FL 32257, or give online at thefoundationcares.org/give.

Please visit our online tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com/obituaries/ursula-miller.



DEATH NOTICES

John W. Love, Jr.

John W. Love, Jr., 90, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died Feb. 7, 2025. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, Jacksonville Beach, 904-249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com

Bipinkumar P. Patel

Bipinkumar P. Patel, 79, of Saint Johns, Florida, died Feb. 1, 2025. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, Jacksonville Beach, 904-249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com

Dolores Martinez Santeiro

Dolores Martinez Santeiro, 90, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Jan. 31, 2025. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery — 904-285-1130 — www.pontevedravalley.com

Mary J. Smith

Mary J. Smith, 83, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died Feb. 4, 2025. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

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Debra Mixon Holliday is a printmaker and longtime member of Butterfield Garage, known for her nature-inspired collagraph prints. Her latest series, "Once Around the Sun," explores Florida's flora and fauna through a yearlong artistic journey.

Debra Mixon Holliday



Contributed photo

As told to Holly Tishfield

Tell me about your background as an artist.

I have been a working artist for a while now. I have a visual arts degree from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg since I'm originally from the Gulf Coast. As a child in the Gulf, I pretty much had free rein. I could wander the farm and go all over. I was always an observer, a looker, and I've just always been interested in the outdoors, the creatures and the environments. That's the inspiration for my work, and it goes back to those childhood wanderings.

How did you get into the medium of artmaking that you currently use?

When I was in school, I had an instructor who was a printmaker, so I ended up becoming really interested in printmaking. Printmaking can be very technical and process-oriented, and it can also

entail using some not-so-great chemicals, so a while back I started doing some exploring and I discovered a method of what's called collagraphs. It's the marriage of two words: collage and graph. In traditional printmaking, you use a metal plate, you etch into the metal and you transfer the image to paper using ink. With collagraphs, I essentially create a plate out of low-tech materials and I build up textures to score into the board, and then I transfer that image to paper using my artist press.

How long have you been working with the Butterfield Garage and how did you achieve Artist of the Month?

I've been a member at the Butterfield for probably about eight years, maybe a little longer. I'm a board member. It's become my hometown art community. Every month, people typically create new art for a chance to be Artist of the Month. The gallery supports its artists by

doing press releases and such, and then your opening is on the First Friday Art Walk. The reason that I was selected for Artist of the Month is because I received the Arts for All grant from the St. Johns Cultural Council. Part of my grant was to create this body of work called "Once Around the Sun," and that was what I showed at the Butterfield for Artists of the Month back in July.

Tell me more about your "Once Around the Sun" series.

I wanted to explore the idea of featuring local flora and fauna for each month of the year. There are 24 pieces and I'm revising a few, but the bulk of this series is completed. Each month has a large piece, an 18-by-24, and a smaller piece to go with it. For example, January has a piece that features robins. For February, I chose squirrels. Every month has a representative image inspired by the local, native flora and fauna.

Would you say this is your favorite series you've worked on?

Yes, definitely. I was not active for a couple of years recently, due to being a caretaker for my mom, and then I had a health concern of my own. So, returning from that, I really needed a boost, and doing this series has been a bridge for me. What I do is a little obscure, but I've enjoyed focusing on what I'm interested in and not getting distracted.

Looking ahead to 2025, do you have any goals that you're working towards?

I'm just revising some of the images from my series and just kind of gathering my thoughts on how I want to proceed forward with what I learned from it. I'm going to return to teaching a little bit, too. I have ideas for a workshop in my brain, but I don't have a formal commitment yet. I have lots of things percolating.



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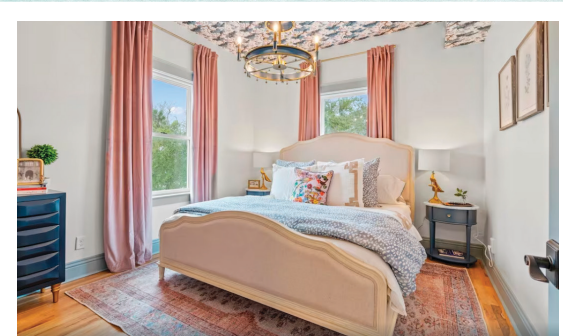
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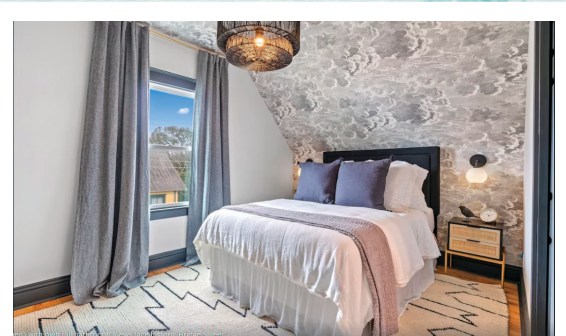
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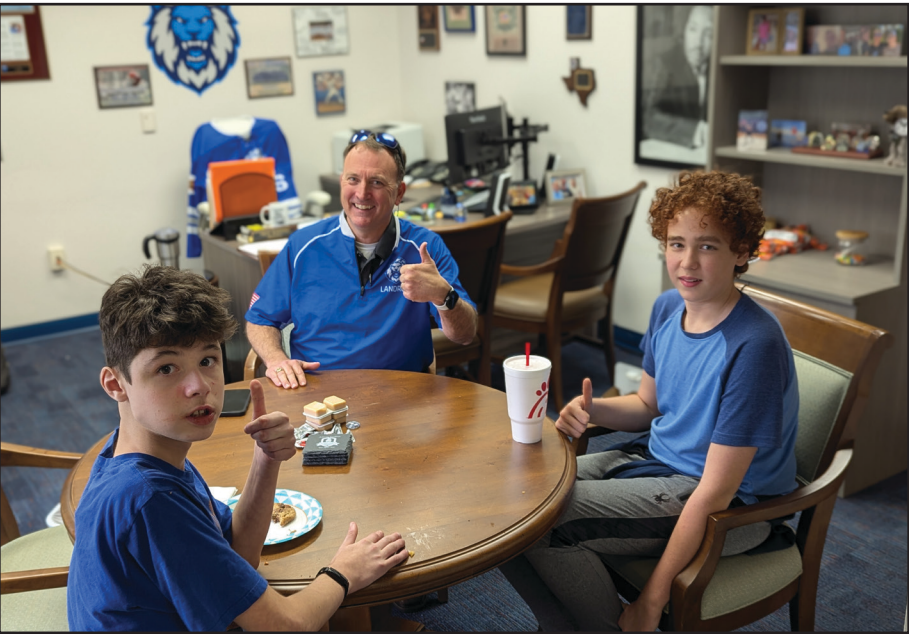
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Contributed photo

Landrum honors January students

Landrum Middle School continues to recognize exceptional students through the “Students of the Month” program. This initiative celebrates students who demonstrate outstanding character, academic success, effort and resilience. For January, the honored students were Elle Pirris (grade six, not pictured), Asher Reams (grade seven) and Carson Cowan (grade eight). Each month, recognized students enjoy a celebratory lunch with Principal Troy Kasting in his office. Chick-fil-A Marsh Landing provided food for the celebration.



Photo by Laura Evans

Episcopal students commit to colleges

On National Signing Day, Episcopal celebrated 23 student-athletes who committed to play at the next level. Signees include: **Baseball:** Dominic DeLoreto, Northwestern University; Jack Ottesen, College of Central Florida; Matthew Devine, Barry University. **Football:** Carter Trobaugh, Hampden-Sydney College; Sam Perkins, Macalester College; Alexander Hillyard, University of British Columbia. **Basketball:** Bailey Harris, University of West Florida. **Girls Lacrosse:** Bella Vitulli, Kennesaw State University; Maeve O’Neil, George Washington University. **Boys Lacrosse:** Tre Carter, Hampden-Sydney College; Jackson Soud, Berry College; Colton Augustine, Berry College; Joey Roberts, Centre College. **Triathlon:** Lucrezia Gowdy, University of Denver. **Track and Cross Country:** Jake Officer, U.S. Naval Academy. **Girls Soccer:** Ava Galani, University of Memphis; Rivers Carney, Sewanee; The University of the South; Charlotte Ritter, Austin Peay University. **Softball:** Riley Applebee, Valdosta State University. **Diving:** Laurel Coppedge, Davidson College. **Beach Volleyball:** Caelan Chesser, University of North Florida; Elle Steiger, Stetson University. **Water Polo:** Sawyer Weakland, Siena College.

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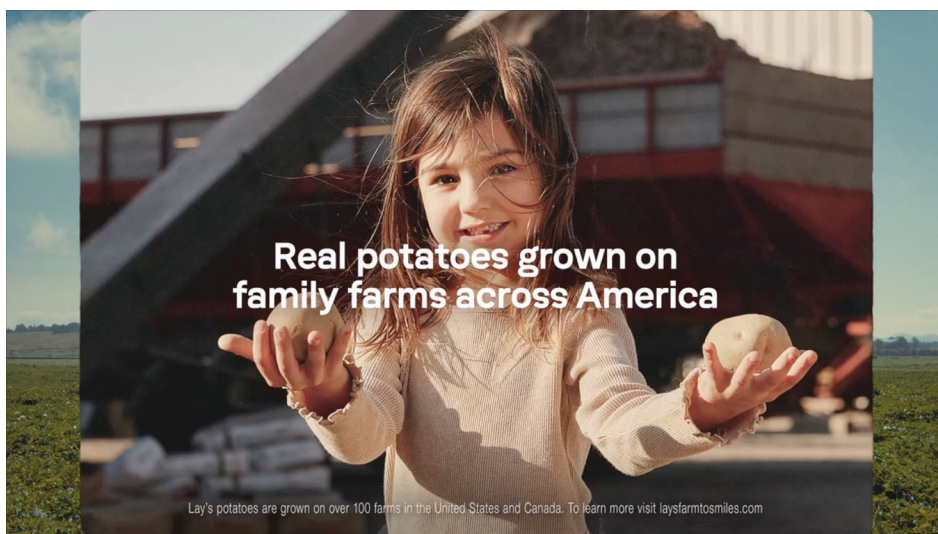
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TURN TO THE EXPERTS



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An image from the conclusion of the ad.

Local

Continued from 1

photo.

Two other farming families from the area are featured in the collage at the end of the commercial. They are Wesley Smith of Smith Farms, Steve Singleton his wife April and their three sons.

“Our family is happy and honored to be chosen by Frito-Lay to be in this commercial,” said Jeffrey Parker. “Our farm has contracted with them to provide quality potatoes since 1964. Our family has been farming in St. Johns County since 1937. We are proud fourth-generation farmers,

and DeLee will carry on that tradition.”

The Florida Farm Bureau has profiled Parker Produce in their County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES) program. It promotes agriculture’s role in protecting Florida’s natural resources. The program recognizes the farmers and ranchers who have taken voluntary action to preserve the land for the next generation. Exemplary practices of farmers and ranchers statewide conserve water quality and protect wildlife habitat and the state’s natural resources.

Joseph added, “These farmers supply food to Florida and the entire country from here in St. Johns County, Florida!”

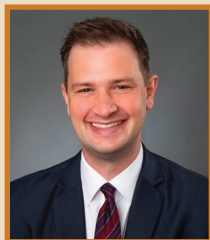
“The Constitution is the Solution” series kicks off on Saturday, February 22 at 11:30 AM

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Keynote Speaker Adam Brandon is an attorney with Florida’s premier conservative law firm, Lawson Huck Gonzalez. He is also a Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve who prosecuted terrorists in Iraq and deployed to Guantanamo Bay. Active in the Federalist Society, he is the past President of the Jacksonville Lawyers Chapter.

You will not want to miss this presentation hosted by We Can Be Heroes Foundation and the John Birch Society. For more info, call 904 373-8817.



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Leek files legislation addressing animal cruelty

State Sen. Tom Leek (R-Ormond Beach) recently filed legislation related to animal cruelty offences that further defines the term domestic animal and provides additional criminal punishment.

Senate Bill 502 states that if the offender is convicted of the primary offense and the primary offense is a crime of animal cruelty toward a domestic animal, the subtotal sentence points are multiplied by 1.25 under the Florida Criminal Punishment Code.

“Abuse against helpless animals is one of the most heinous acts that can be committed, and punishment for a perpetrator should be swift and severe,” said Leek. “I am proud to continue my work in addressing animal cruelty in the state of Florida by strengthening penalties for those who prey upon domestic animals.”

State Attorney R.J. Larizza of the 7th Judicial Circuit has expressed his full support, stating, “This bill will hold those accountable who choose to torture and abuse animals.”

Concurrent with that measure, Leek has also filed Senate Bill 494, which provides access to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement’s database of those who have committed crimes against animals. Most notably, such access is critical to animal adoption organizations to ensure that perpetrators are disqualified as recipients of animals seeking placement.

As a member of the Florida House of Representatives in 2018, Leek served as the prime sponsor of House Bill 473, which revised classifications of certain animal cruelty offences and authorized courts to prohibit violators from owning animals. Known as “Ponce’s Law” the measure honored

the 9-month-old Labrador retriever puppy named Ponce who was found beaten to death in Ponce Inlet.

“Thank you to Sen. Tom Leek for filing Senate Bill 502 and Senate Bill 494, which will further advance our shared mission in giving a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves,” said Debbie Darino, president and founder of The Ponce Animal Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. “This legislation will rightfully increase punishment to those who dare to mistreat our beloved animals.”

In addition, Leek filed in January SB 234: Criminal Offenses Against Law Enforcement Officers and Other Personnel, known as the “Officer Jordan Raynor Act,” in honor of Daytona Beach Police Department officer Jason Raynor who was killed in 2021 in the line of duty, and this week, SB 466: Florida Museum of Black History in furtherance of Florida’s Museum of Black History by creating a board of directors to oversee the commission, construction, operation and administration of the museum. The Florida Museum of Black History Task Force selected St. Johns County as the preferred location for the museum.

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Exhibit showcases legacy of Holocaust survivors

The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services (JFCS) is presenting “Histories in Hand,” a new exhibit in its Frisch Family Holocaust Memorial Gallery. The exhibit examines the powerful connection between personal objects and the stories they carry, inviting visitors to reflect on memory and survival.

“Histories in Hand” features belongings passed down from Holocaust survivors to their children and grandchildren. Ordinary items such as a spoon or a candlestick hold extraordinary significance. They serve as tangible links to the past, preserving stories of endurance and hope.

The exhibit also highlights a universal truth: objects often hold deep emotional value, especially for those who have survived tragedy. JFCS sees this firsthand in the foster care system, where children form similar attachments to meaningful possessions. A jacket or stuffed animal can provide comfort and familiarity, acting as an anchor to identity and stability.

Objects carry stories that bridge generations. JFCS invites the community to reflect on these narratives, explore the meaningful objects in their own lives and consider how history can inspire greater compassion and understanding.

The Frisch Family Holocaust Memorial Gallery, 8540 Baycenter Road, Jacksonville, is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Admission is free.

For more information, go to JacksonvilleHolocaustMemorial.com.

Museum offers Black History Month tours

Contributed photos

“I Lived Here, As Well” is back for its fifth season at the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum, located on Aviles Street in St. Augustine. Step back in time to a world of untold stories.

Guests will be immersed in the eagerly awaited fifth chapter of “I Lived Here, As Well.” This time, witness the unfolding narratives of both familiar and new characters, adding depth and intrigue to our ever-evolving tale.

For those stepping into this enchanting narrative for the first time, prepare to meet a diverse ensemble of characters from various eras, each embodying distinct roles in the house's storied history.

Over the 226-year history of the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum, many have come through the doors. Weary travelers were welcomed through the proper front entrance, guests enjoyed the luxuries of home with a touch of Florida style, and the ill healed amidst warm sunshine and clean sea breezes.

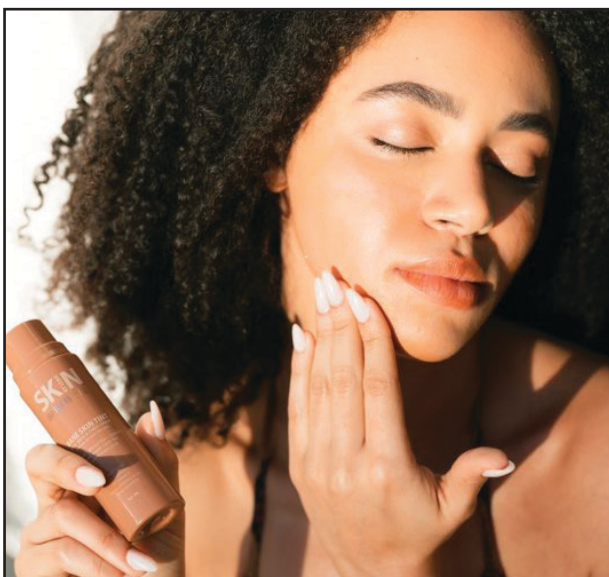
However, some passed through the doors unseen — those who may have used the front door but went unnoticed, and others who rarely left or never did. They lived there as well, but their stories are not as widely known. At the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum, the time has come to share their story.

The specialty tour is available at 10 a.m. every Friday and Saturday from now through March 1. Cost is \$25 per guest. Reservations can be made online at ximenezfatiohouse.org or at The Fig Tree Gift Shop on the historic property, 20 Aviles St., St. Augustine.





Contributed Photos
Natasha Ingram, Captain Sandy Yawn and Leah Rae Yawn.



Bare Skin Tint is a multipurpose product meant to hydrate, brighten and correct redness.



Natasha Ingram and Leah Rae Yawn, the founders of Bare Skin Tint.

Skin by Leah partners with Bare It All to launch new skincare product

By Holly Tishfield

When Leah Rae Yawn was first introduced to Bare It All during an appearance on Bravo's "Watch What Happens Live," she had no idea she was embarking on a life-changing journey that would fulfill her dream of developing skincare products.

Yawn, a seasoned medical esthetician with more than 30 years of skincare experience, lived and worked in Orange County, California, and Denver before moving to North Florida. She spent time as a celebrity makeup artist and skin care specialist while touring as a gospel singer. She recorded more than five albums as a professional recording artist, and eventually met her wife, Captain Sandy Yawn from the popular Bravo series "Below Deck Mediterranean."

Yawn was guest bartender on the Andy Cohen-hosted "Watch What Happens Live" alongside Captain Sandy when Priscilla Distasio, the show's makeup artist, used the Golden Hour Body Creme from Bare It All on her chest, neck and arms.

"As an esthetician and a woman in her 40s, I had an 'a-ha' moment. I'd been looking for something like this for myself and for my skincare clients. I hadn't seen anything else like this in the market," said Yawn.

Yawn not only became a devoted user of the Bare It All products (the line treats skin issues and helps the appearance of sun damage, hyperpigmentation, blemishes, and problem areas with clinical grade ingredients), she reached out to its creator and founder Vancouver-based Natasha Ingram.

After Yawn got in touch with Ingram and the two established a skincare kinship, she approached her fellow entrepreneur about creating a similar treatment/cosmetic-based face product.

"I've always been passionate about skincare and routines," said Ingram, who began research and development on her products after noticing a gap in the market for body-based skincare. "I wanted to create a signature method and add-on products that would target the body."

"It was perfect timing and a perfect fit," said Yawn. "We're two confident, good women who are passionate about what we do. It's a perfect collaboration and partnership."

Ingram and Yawn worked with their chemist for more than a year to formulate Bare Skin Tint: Face, Neck & Chest Crème, a multipurpose product that's packed with vitamin C, hyaluronic acids, peptides and niacinamide, leaving skin with a glass-like finish and glow. The product is meant to hydrate, brighten and correct redness while leaving skin with a hint of sheer color.

Bare Skin Tint is meant to encourage users to feel comfortable "baring it all," no makeup necessary, but the product can still be worn under makeup for an added glow. It's meant for all skin types, all ages.

One of the new product's first and biggest fans is Captain Sandy Yawn, who typically eschews makeup but wears Bare Skin Tint on and off screen. Last year, Yawn and Captain Sandy settled in Northeast Florida. In August, Yawn opened Skin By Leah in Ponte Vedra Beach, a skin studio where she puts her passion for skincare and years of experience into treatments and regimens for clients.

Three decades into her skincare journey, Yawn stands as a powerful example that it's never too late to achieve your dreams. She hopes her success story inspires other female entrepreneurs to take bold, "bare" steps no matter where they are in life.

"The Bare Skin Tint is an exclusive collaboration with Leah and an exciting addition to the line as our first skincare product for the face, neck and chest," Ingram said. "It's a first-of-its-kind in a new category: a daily-use, tinted, serum-moisturizer hybrid formula. It's made for the woman on the go who wants to look glowing and gorgeous without a full face of make-up."

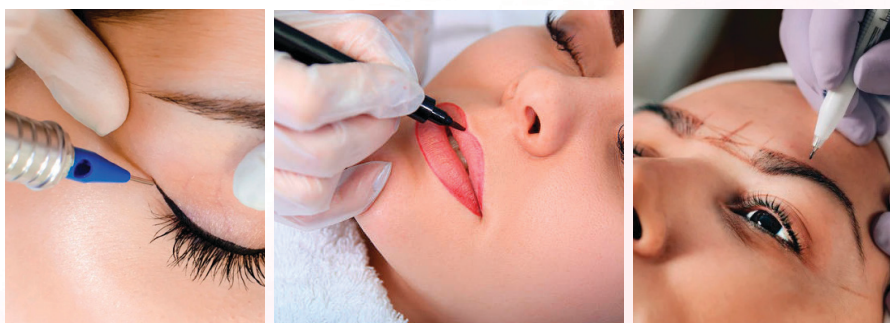
The two trailblazing women say their business partnership has been an unbeatable pairing, with Yawn putting a face to the brand and Ingram using her experience in marketing to spread word of the product.

Bare Skin Tint: Face, Neck & Chest Crème recently launched on the Bare It All and Skin By Leah websites, but is also available for purchase at SKINBYLEAH.com and BiaSkin.com. Skin by Leah is located within Prim Salon in Sawgrass Village.

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Skin Spa offers a fresh approach to both skin and hair care

By Holly Tishfield

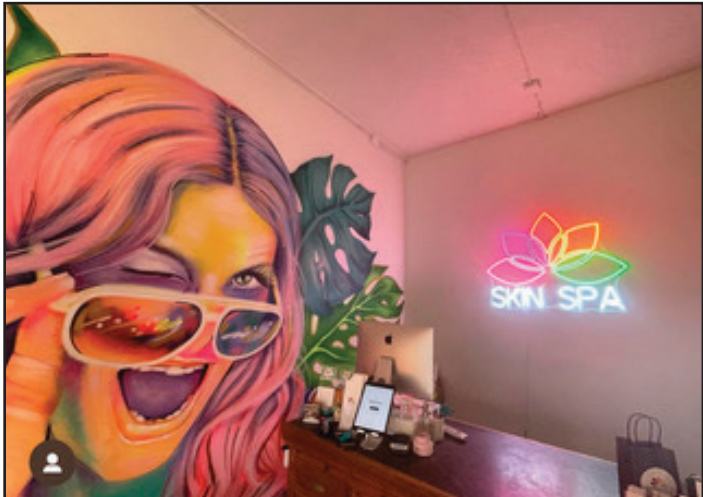
Med spas are all the rage these days, with treatments designed to rejuvenate and enhance natural beauty through advanced skincare and wellness therapies, though they can sometimes feel formal and intimidating. Luxury facial treatments at resorts and spas can provide a warm and relaxing space for guests to unwind, but the feathery treatments can lack genuine skincare results.

That's where Skin Spa enters the playing field – a combination of the skincare treatments that guests love at med spas and the soothing sessions that guests expect at a resort spa.

Opened in 2013, Skin Spa is the culmination of owner Casey Lee's decades of esthetician experience and genuine passion for achieving skincare results that allow guests to grow their confidence.

Lee spent her early teenage years struggling with severe acne, which led to an extensive knowledge of skincare products and working ingredients at a young age. She graduated from the Florida College of Natural Health in 2003 and started a journey to change the lives of people who struggled the way she did.

"My experience developed into a deep-rooted need to help people who are suffering from skin conditions and wanting to help them restore their confidence," Lee



The welcome area of the Skin Spa invites guests for a unique experience .

said. "Fast forward to the Skin Spa and our main emphasis is on not only achieving results but providing an exceptional guest experience."

Skin Spa is comprised of a tight-knit team of Lee and her estheticians who tailor skincare treatments to meet a guests' unique needs. Dermaplaning and Oxygen Glow facials are among the spa's most popular treatments, but guests can also choose from a long list of peels, facials and advanced skincare treatments.

Recently, Lee expanded Skin Spa, known for its skincare and facials, to introduce a new venture, Head Spa—an

innovative concept dedicated to scalp and hair care. The spa doesn't offer traditional salon treatments such as haircuts or styling, but instead focuses on the aspect of hair care that shares similarities with skincare.

"It's basically a facial for your scalp," Lee said. "The philosophy is that healthy hair grows from a healthy scalp."

The Head Spa specializes in treating red, flaky, itchy and sensitive scalps through steaming scalp massages, detox treatments and hair baths. Every package comes with a thorough scalp and hair analysis using a scalp scope that allows

guests to view the condition of their scalp.

Since opening her business on 9th Avenue North, Lee says that she's felt incredibly empowered by other small businesses in the community.

"The small business climate in the Beaches is a really supportive group of like-minded entrepreneurs who want to help each other," she said. "It's been a really positive experience."

Services at both Skin Spa and Head Spa are meant for guests of all ages and all skin types, from those with severe acne or scalp issues to individuals with naturally clear skin.



Casey Lee, owner and founder of Skin Spa.



A treatment option with the Head Spa.

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How about a romantic **Valentine's Day** dinner?

Valentine's Day is a popular time to eat out. Here are some options from area restaurants.

SAWGRASS MARRIOTT GOLF RESORT & SPA

There are six primary restaurants here, each with its own personality. For information or to book a table at one of the restaurants, go to marriott.com/en-us/hotels/jaxsw-sawgrass-marriott-golf-resort-and-spa/dining.

Two of the restaurants are planning special Valentine's Day offerings:

Valentine's Day specials at 1912

1912 Ocean Bar & Rooftop will serve Valentine's Day specials from 4 to 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 14, including:

- Imperial oysters with scallops, shrimp, crabmeat, parmesan and mozzarella and panko breadcrumbs (\$36)
- Lovers Paella with chicken, octopus, shrimp, fish, chorizo, saffron arborio, peas and tomato paprika coulis (\$48)
- Sweet endings for two with espresso macarons, crème brûlée and chocolate-covered strawberries

The restaurant's full menu will also be available during this time.

For details and to make reservations, go to 1912oceanbarandrooftop.com/events.



Valentine's Day dinner at Vernon's

On Friday, Feb. 14, Vernon's will serve a special Valentine's Day prix fixe menu from 5 to 10 p.m. (last seating at 9 p.m.), with highlights including:

- Aperitivo with Aperol Spritz and cod croquettes
- Kale and orange salad with grape leaves wrapped and grilled feta cheese, orange segments, crunchy pepitas and orange peels/Agave vinaigrette
- Saffron and ricotta cavatelli with mussels, chorizo and blistered tomatoes

- Ruby red grapefruit and basil granita with goat cheese

- Hard seared scallops and carved beef tenderloin with carrot butter, mushrooms risotto, roasted Brussel sprouts and beef au jus

- Sweet Treats with croquembouche (cream puff cake) and long-stem chocolate-covered strawberries

To make reservations, go to opentable.com/vernons-restaurant.

Pricing: \$75 per person (plus tax and gratuity)

ARGYLE

Argyle, located at 254 Alta Mar Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, is planning its Valentine's Pre-Fixe Dinner from 5 to 10 p.m. Feb. 14.

Chef Jon Blackford's pre-fixe menu celebrates love and exquisite flavors for

a special evening or indulgent night. The price is \$99-plus.

To make reservations for the four-course meal, go to exploretock.com/argyle-ponte-vedra-beach or call 904-395-3114.

For more information about Argyle, go to argylepvb.com.

PRATI ITALIA AND TOWN HALL

CuliVino Hospitality Management and Consulting has announces its Valentine's Weekend specials, available at Prati Italia and Town Hall on Friday, Feb. 14, Saturday, Feb. 15, and Sunday, Feb. 16. Prati Italia at the St. Johns Town Center and Town Hall in historic San Marco are the Jacksonville restaurant concepts led by two-time James Beard nominee Chef Tom Gray.

On Friday and Saturday, Feb. 14-15, Prati Italia is offering a Four-Course Chef's Tasting Prix-Fixe menu from 4:30 to 11 p.m. The menu will feature Gray's greatest hits, holiday specials and a complimentary toast of bubbly. Suggested wine pairings, featured cocktails and Prati Italia's full wine and cocktail lists will be available. The cost is \$85 per person. The pricing does not include tax or gratuity. Prati Italia's a la carte menu will not be available during Valentine's Weekend dinner hours.

On Sunday, Feb. 16, Prati Italia is offering Valentine's and Galentine's Brunch Service from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with \$5 Mimosas and Bellini's and a full a la carte menu.

DINNER continues on Page 15



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Dinner

Continued from 14

Town Hall is offering Valentine's Weekend dinner service from 4:30 to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 14-15. Enjoy a Four-Course Chef's Tasting Prix-Fixe menu featuring a collection of holiday specials with a choice of wine pairings. Town Hall's full wine and cocktail lists will be available. The cost is \$135 per person. The pricing does not include tax or gratuity. Town Hall's a la carte menu will not be available during

Valentine's weekend dinner hours. On Sunday, Feb. 16, Town Hall is featuring Valentine's specials and 20% off select bottles of bubbly all day. Town Hall's full a la carte menu will be available. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (brunch) and 4:30 to 9 p.m. (dinner).

For Prati Italia reservations, call 904-998-9744 or go to pratiitalia.com. Prati Italia is located at the St. Johns Town Center at 4972 Big Island Drive in Jacksonville.

For Town Hall reservations, call 904-398-0726 or go to townhalljax.com.

Town Hall is located at 2012 San Marco Blvd., Jacksonville.

NINETEEN

This restaurant at TPC Sawgrass is popular all year round, though Valentine's Day may be an excellent time to make a reservation for dinner. For further information, go to tpc.com/sawgrass/dining.

THE RITZ-CARLTON, AMELIA ISLAND

Dining at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, is varied among the five venues here: Salt, Coast, Tidewater Grill, The Lobby Bar and Coquina. Tables must be

booked in advance at the first two. For information or to make a reservation, go to ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/jaxam-the-ritz-carlton-amelia-island/dining.

Other popular restaurants suitable for Valentine's Day dinner include: Barbara Jean's On The Water (barbara-jeansonthewater.com), Poppy's Italiano (poppys-italiano.webflow.io), Chophouse at Nocatee (chophouseent.com), Trasca & Co Eatery (trascaandco.com) and many, many more.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

8 unique Valentine's Day gift ideas

Gift-giving is a key component of Valentine's Day celebrations every February 14. Valentine's Day is a mere month-and-a-half after the holiday season, so ideas for more thoughtful gifts may be in short supply. Let these Valentine's day gift ideas serve as inspiration.

1. Custom painted portrait: Many local artists paint beautiful portraits from photographs. Find an image you like and have it made into an even more impressive work of art.

2. Doll likeness: The well known Funko POP! brand known for its pop

culture figurines enables customers to create likenesses of themselves or loved ones. You can have custom dolls made in your sweetheart's likeness.

3. Preserved roses: While fresh roses may only last a few days to a week, preserved or "eternity" roses are treated and specially packaged so they can endure and serve as lasting, welcome reminders of Valentine's Day love.

4. Journal or scrapbook: A decorative scrapbook or journal enables your special



someone to keep track of moments spent together and key milestones.

5. First date map: Gift a framed picture of a map marked with the specific location of your first date, whether it was a restaurant, park or museum.

6. Birthstone jewelry: Jewelry is a popular gift on Valentine's Day. Make gifts even more special by finding pieces that include your special someone's birthstone. The American Gem Society offers

a handy chart at www.americangemsociety.org/birthstones/.

7. Experiential gifts: Experiential gifts may be just what is needed this Valentine's Day. Some options include a couple's cooking class, tickets to a sports game or concert, a vacation to a romantic locale, or a day or night out on the town.

8. Prepare a favorite recipe: Learn what your loved one enjoys eating the most and then recreate the recipe as a thoughtful gift and dinner at home.

This Valentine's Day, people can consider these unique thoughtful gift ideas.

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Race raises funds for Wolfson Children’s Rehabilitation

Contributed photos

The 16th annual Wolfson Children’s Challenge returned to downtown Jacksonville on Jan. 25 with a fresh new course and venue. The 2025 race featured a 5K across the Acosta Bridge and a one-mile fun run, both starting from the Winston Family YMCA on Riverside Avenue.

After passing over the Acosta Bridge, the 5K route featured a turnaround at the front entrance of the Borowy Family Children’s Critical Care Tower at Wolfson Children’s Hospital, where patients, families and team members watched from the windows and cheered on runners.

More than 1,000 runners participated in the race, which raised more than \$200,000 in donations. The proceeds benefit Wolfson Children’s Rehabilitation, which offers comprehensive therapy for kids with sensory, movement, feeding and communication difficulties.

“We’re grateful to see so many runners, volunteers and sponsors come together for this year’s Wolfson Children’s Challenge in support of our rehabilitation program,” said Allegra C. Jaros, president of Wolfson Children’s Hospital. “Events like these not only bring our community closer but also play a vital role in helping us provide top-decile care to our patients on their journey to recovery. Together, we’re building strength, resilience and hope for everyone in need of rehabilitation services.”

The top three finishers of the 5K race were:

- First place: Chris Chen
- Second place: Kristopher Croome
- Third place: Marcus Giles

The race also featured a team element, with teams running together and each individual’s time calculated into the team’s overall race time. The top three teams were:

- First place: WCH Code Runners
- Second place: Team Kraton



Chris Chen wins first place.

- Third place: Warren Warriors
- Other winners from Saturday’s race were:
- Strength in Numbers Award (awarded to the largest team): Kallum’s Krew

Raising funds and hope

Jessica Osiadacz, chief girl experience officer of The Girl Scouts of Gateway Council, served as chair of the Wolfson Children’s Challenge this year.

“This year’s Wolfson Children’s Challenge was about more than running — it was about bringing our community together to support children and families on their journey to recovery,” said Osiadacz. “With a new course and more inclusive race options, we’re proud to see so many runners and volunteers join us in raising funds and hope for our rehabilitation program.”

In addition to the race events, participants and mem-



Runners compete in the Wolfson Children’s Challenge.

bers of the public enjoyed family-friendly activities and entertainment provided by the Jacksonville Jaguars D-Line and Jaxson de Ville, Jumbo Shrimp’s Scampi, Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council, the 501st Legion of Star Wars and more.

More than a race

Each year, the event also honors 55 current and former patients, known as the “Wolfson 55,” who represent the wide range of services Wolfson Children’s offers to children of Northeast Florida, South Georgia and beyond.

Held earlier, the Wolfson Children’s Challenge Telethon at WJXT raised more than \$81,375 through community donations for Wolfson Children’s.

To date, the Wolfson Children’s Challenge has raised more than \$4 million through the annual event.

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CELEBRATES VIBRANT LIVING
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....AND MORE INSIDE!

GUEST COLUMN

Managing Aging Parents' Finances: What to Know in 2025



By Christopher Thompson

Making financial decisions takes time, attention and energy at any age. In the case of elderly adults, it may become increasingly difficult to manage finances, particularly if their health is declining or they're experiencing a cognitive issue. If you're providing support to aging parents — or plan to in the future — here are some tips on how to handle the situation and prepare for what's to come.

Don't wait to start talking about money. While it may be uncomfortable to ask your parents to discuss their finances with you, it's essential that you are familiar with their intentions for future care and what plans they have in place. The first time you broach the subject, emphasize that you are looking for only a high-level overview so that you can have more peace-of-mind that your parents will be well cared for. This initial conversation can help set the groundwork for future discussions.

Create a contact list. If your parents experience a sudden change in their health that affects their ability to manage their own affairs, it's important to have a game plan for what happens next. If you anticipate stepping in to pay bills, make insurance claims and handle other financial tasks, start by asking your parents

for a list of contact information for the professionals they work with and where their accounts are held. Keep in mind that you may need to be an authorized user or power of attorney to be allowed access to certain accounts. Consult a lawyer to talk through what permissions may be necessary for you to step in if the need arises.

Build a support network. Talk with siblings or other trusted family members about what a possible care plan could look like for your parents. While this conversation can be tough to initiate, know that it's often easier to bring everyone together while your parents are still healthy and in good mental capacity. Discuss who can realistically provide support — and in what way and at what cost. Proactively deciding who can drive your parents to doctor appointments, manage financial affairs, care for their home and handle other tasks can help avoid a strain on your time and energy down the road.

Anticipate future lifestyle changes and challenges. Even if they aren't yet needed, explore the options and costs of various assisted living and memory care services. Check your parents' insurance policies to see if and how services might be covered. You may also want to explore whether their home or yours could be modified to provide additional space or comforts, such as wheelchair access. Knowing what choices exist and how your parents feel about each one can help you make future decisions with more confidence.

Know your rights at work. The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) allows covered employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to provide care for a family member with a serious health condition.¹ Consult your Human Resources department to learn what your company's policies are for employees who are caring for a parent and how to initiate a claim if you need to. Many employers have access to resources and support groups to help you manage your responsibilities at home and at work.

Maintain momentum on your own financial goals. It's understandable to



want to provide your parents with as much support as you can. It's prudent to look at your finances to see how much support you could provide, if that is needed, without jeopardizing your own retirement and future health care needs.

It's hard to imagine — let alone talk about — what caring for an ill or aging parent may look like. For additional support in having family conversations, evaluating financial options and creating a plan for your parents, contact your financial adviser and lawyer. These experts work day-in and day-out with families in similar situations and can help you take the steps necessary to feel more confident about your own plan.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor: The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/laws-and-regulations/laws/fmla>)

Christopher Thompson, CFP®, CRPC®, CMFA® is a Private Wealth Advisor 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 32 years. To contact him, www.ameripriseadvisors.com/christhompson, 904-380-2290, 818 A1A N Suite 301, Ponte Vedra Beach FL. Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board) owns the CFP® certification mark, the CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ certifica-

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Contributed photos

On Jan. 24, Cypress Village Retirement Community honored individuals who have embraced and contributed to the community's multi-dimensional approach to wellness.

Cypress Village celebrates vibrant living with the inaugural LIVE VIBRANT Awards

Cypress Village Retirement Community marked a milestone in its commitment to wellness and active aging with the first-ever LIVE VIBRANT Awards, a celebration of residents who exemplify a culture of engagement, vitality and well-being. The event, held on Jan. 24, honored individuals who have embraced and contributed to the community's multi-dimensional approach to wellness.

Cypress Village Executive Director Ty Morgan opened the ceremony by reaffirming the community's dedication to fostering a culture of wellness.

"Wellness at Cypress Village is more than just fitness; it's about creating a lifestyle that embraces movement, engage-

ment and purpose. Our residents prove every day that vibrant living has no age limit."

Deb Goin, fitness coordinator, highlighted the achievements of the 2024 LIVE VIBRANT wellness initiatives, which included Nordic Pole Walking, Water Walking, the Take the Stairs Challenge, Pump It for Parkinson's Day and even adventurous outings like ziplining and hiking. A significant milestone was the relocation and expansion of the fitness center, featuring state-of-the-art Technogym equipment.

"Our residents continue to inspire us," said Goin. "When we move, we engage. When we engage, we connect. And when

we connect, we thrive. This past year demonstrated that physical activity is the foundation for overall wellness."

Awards were presented to residents who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in wellness. "These individuals exemplify what it means to live vibrantly," said Ashley Miller, wellness & resident services director. "Their passion, energy and commitment to health inspire us all."

Cypress Village is already setting ambitious goals for 2025, with new programs designed to encourage movement and engagement.

The event concluded with a powerful message from Morgan encouraging resi-

dents to reflect on their wellness journeys and set goals for the future.

"Living vibrantly means embracing each day with intention. Whether through physical movement, intellectual curiosity or acts of kindness, we all have the power to create a life filled with meaning, connection and joy."

Cypress Village is a premier senior living community in Jacksonville, offering a range of services including independent living, assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing. Cypress Village is committed to enhancing the quality of life for its residents through exceptional care, innovative programs and strong community partnerships.



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Contributed Photos



Joey Jennings at his store, Mother Holistic.



Mother Holistic opened in 2018

Mother Holistic offers alternative healing for body and mind

By Holly Tishfield

Jacksonville Beach small business owner Joey Jennings opened his store, Mother Holistic, not only to educate the community about the healing properties of hemp but also to offer an alternative to commercial pharmaceutical drugs.

Mother Holistic opened its doors in 2018, a few short years after Jennings left his corporate job as a financial adviser and embarked on a holistic healing journey across the world.

"I was using pharmaceutical drugs for many years to manage my pain, which started to affect me not only physically but mentally," Jennings said. "I reached a

point where I realized I couldn't continue living life like this. So, I knew I needed to make a change."

He took a leave of absence, traveled to countries in Central and South America, and participated in plant-based medicine retreats to help find a solution for his pain. When Jennings discovered CBD, it was as if a whole new world of possibilities unfurled before him.

"I was familiar with cannabis, but I didn't think there was a non-psychoactive side to it," he said. "I was intrigued and went down the rabbit hole, studying about cannabis plants and the compounds in the plants."

After more than six months of immers-

ing himself in the holistic healing properties of hemp, Jennings decided to turn his exploration of healing into a business that could help others.

Mother Holistic specializes in products that treat stress, sleep and pain. There are products with non-psychoactive properties, for the customers who want relief but don't like the euphoric feeling often associated with THC, and there are also products with psychoactive properties at varying levels. Although technically considered a dispensary, Mother Holistic does not sell marijuana, and therefore customers do not need a medical marijuana card.

Mother Holistic offers a diverse range

of products across different categories, from infused chocolates and CBD flower to topicals and skin care. The topical treatments are best suited for relieving aches and pains all over the body, good for overall wear and tear, or extreme pain relief. The store also sells CBD products for dogs, just as effective on four-legged friends as it is on humans.

"I named my company Mother Holistic because I believe you have to take a holistic approach to living a happy and healthy life," Jennings said.

Customers can schedule a free consultation at Mother Holistic, where Jennings will personally guide them toward a holistic solution tailored to their needs.

Benefits gap for older adults being studied

The National Council on Aging (NCOA), the national voice for every person's right to age well, has received a \$250,000, one-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to examine what contributes to high enrollment rates of older adults in benefits programs in Miami-Dade County, Florida, and Duval County, Texas.

Through this work, NCOA seeks to understand what is working in two counties that enroll exceptionally high percentages of older adults in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicare Savings Programs (MSP):

SNAP

- Miami-Dade County: 50%
- Duval County, Texas: 43%
- National rate: 30%

SSI

- Miami-Dade County: 90%
- Duval County, Texas: 83%
- National rate: 49%

MSP

- Miami-Dade County: 79%
- Duval County, Texas: 100%
- National rate: 46%

"It's heartbreaking to see that millions of eligible older adults who could really use this help are not enrolled in these programs," said Ramsey Alwin, NCOA president and CEO. "We want to see what these two counties have done to generate such high enrollment rates, so other counties and states can replicate their success together with local providers and federal policymakers."

SNAP helps participants afford food, SSI provides monthly cash assistance for older adults and people with disabilities

and the MSPs help people with Medicare pay for their health care costs. Often, these programs can be the difference between an older adult having to choose between food or medicine each month.

NCOA will produce and disseminate a best-practices report with recommendations for county, state and federal policymakers as well as community-based organizations, which they can use to help more older adults enroll in public benefits programs.

NCOA's Benefits Participation Map, an interactive tool that shows county-level data for enrollment in these key programs, reveals wide variations across counties when it comes to how many eligible older adults are receiving these valuable benefits. Nationwide, almost 9 million eligible older adults are not enrolled in SNAP, 2.3 million are not enrolled in SSI, and almost 5.8 million are not enrolled in MSP.

The map shows that St. Johns County

has a SNAP participation rate of 19.5% and 6,273 eligible nonparticipants. It's SSI participation rate is 33.6%. It's MSP participation rate is 26.8%, with 4,673 eligible nonparticipants.

The map shows that Duval County has a SNAP participation rate of 44.4% and 22,505 eligible nonparticipants. It has a 44.2% SSI participation rate with 6,988 eligible nonparticipants, and it has a 56.8% MSP participation rate with 12,550 eligible nonparticipants.

"The effectiveness of the social safety net in reducing hardship depends to no small degree on adequate outreach and the simplification of enrollment," said Katherine Hempstead, senior policy adviser, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "We are excited to support NCOA in its effort to lift up best practices to increase take-up of important benefits among older adults."

Learn more at www.ncoa.org and @NCOAging.



Nicole Gouly Greco celebrated her 104th birthday with her great-grandson Nicholas.



Greco celebrated her 104th birthday as part of the February birthday celebration for residents at Ponte Vedra Gardens Memory Care Community.



Photos by Anthony Richards
Cake was enjoyed by all who attended the party.

Ponte Vedra Gardens resident turns 104

By Anthony Richards

Nicole Gouly Greco celebrated her 104th birthday as part of the February birthday celebration for residents at Ponte Vedra Gardens Memory Care Community.

Over her 104 years she has quite a story to tell.

She was born in Melun, France, a suburb of Paris in 1921, and her family home was occupied by the Germans during World War II.

As a result, the family fled to Brittany in Northern France and eventually returned to their home after the war.

She also met her husband of 61 years, Francesco Greco, during that time in France, as he was serving in the U.S. Army.

Her husband wound up serving in three wars, with her devoted support along the way.

She moved to the United States in the late 1950s, and while initially very uncomfortable with her new country, she learned to truly love America and all that it had to offer.

Year later, she still vividly remembers her friends in France asking her why she

wanted to move to America because there were no trees there.

According to her daughter-in-law, Sheila Greco, she still will joke about it from time to time about how America does indeed have trees.

Once moving to the U.S., they lived in New York and Massachusetts before moving to Florida in the mid-1980s to be closer to their older son and family. They have two sons, Louis and Michael; three grandchildren, Elaina, Robert and Joshua; and two great-grandchildren, her namesake, Nicholas, and newborn, Isaac.

She was able to celebrate her birthday

with Nicholas who attended the party. He is 4 years old, which makes it a 100-year-old difference between the two of them.

Greco's favorite pastimes include cross-stitching and collecting sharks' teeth during her daily beach walks in the past, as well as having a love of baking.

She and her husband were also passionate about serving those in need, especially the Meals on Wheels program.

Her secret to longevity is everything in moderation, including a little daily glass of red wine, and she ultimately fiercely loves her family and is ardently patriotic about the U.S.



February is Heart Month – Take Care of Your Heart! ❤️



Did you know? Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., but the good news is that it's preventable with healthy habits! Here's how you can show your heart some love:

- ✓ Eat a heart-healthy diet full of fruits, veggies, and whole grains
- ✓ Stay active—just 30 minutes a day can make a difference
- ✓ Manage stress and prioritize self-care
- ✓ Keep an eye on your blood pressure and cholesterol
- ✓ Quit smoking and limit alcohol consumption

Join us this February in spreading awareness and making heart health a priority! Your heart matters—take care of it today for a healthier tomorrow. ❤️

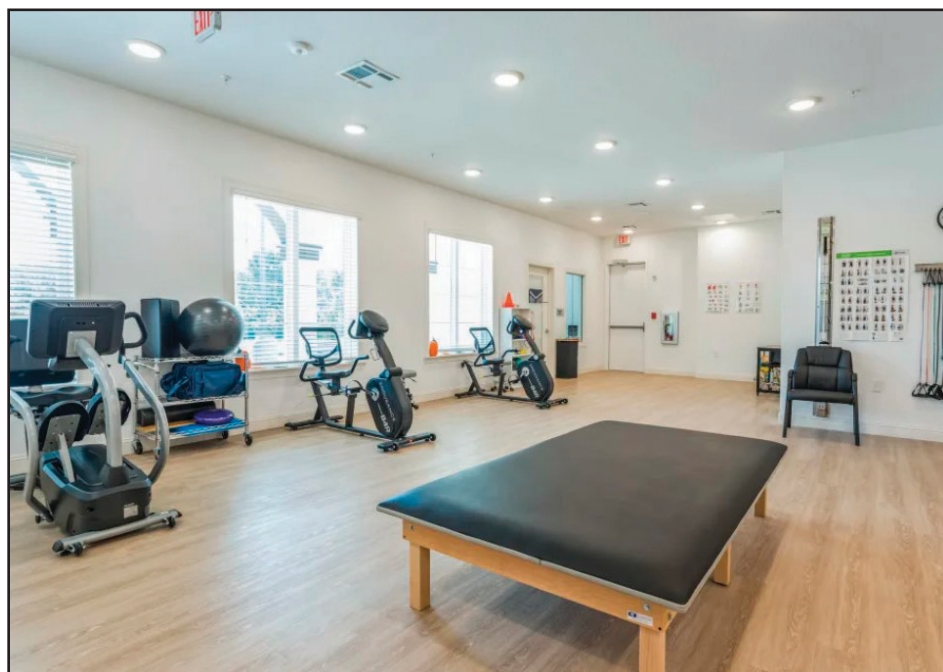
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#HeartHealth #HeartMonth
#LoveYourHeart ❤️

Photos courtesy of The Blake at St. Johns



Courtyards feature lush landscapes and are ideal for group exercise or quiet reflection.



There are plenty of ways to stay active at the campus.

The Blake at St. Johns offers options for any lifestyle

By Anthony Richards

The Blake at St. Johns is a family-owned local senior living community in St. Johns with the goal of serving assisted living and memory care residents through industry-leading health care and support services.

Everything that was developed and

went into the thought process behind the construction of its campus and living areas was designed to offer a blissful and inviting setting to pursue the various passions residents may have.

Courtyards feature lush landscapes and are ideal for group exercise or quiet reflection, while hallways and entrance ways are made to be both attractive and

easy to navigate, so residents can enjoy every inch of the community with ease.

The senior living community strives to provide a luxury experience for all those who decide to call it home, and they do this through a unique combination of commitment to hospitality and a focus on personal wellness.

The community is located near Cimarone Golf Course and SilverLeaf at 2430 County Road 210.

Retirement is something so many look forward to, even to the point of counting down the days until they reach that point on a calendar.

That anticipation is not forgotten at The Blake at St. Johns and the staff at the facility understand that one's retirement years should be all about freedom and that every resident deserves just that.

That freedom includes the ability to explore and enjoy retirement life to its fullest. The community seeks to achieve this by offering a variety of activities, events and classes can take part in.

The social calendar at The Blake at St. Johns stays jam-packed throughout the year with lively community gatherings and innovative dining experiences that will attempt to bring out the inner foodie in each resident.

From the modern accommodations and concierge service to the coffee and ice cream cafe, full-service bar, theater room, The Blake at St. Johns has tried to think of everything to create the ultimate community that anybody will love.

Part of creating the perfect environment includes offering communities that cater to a person's specific lifestyle and level of need, whether that is assisted living, memory care or respite care.

Whichever care a person chooses, The Blake at St. Johns wants to provide the same exceptional service, care and quality of living.

Assisted living ensures that each resident gets the extra care they need thanks to an excellent resident-to-staff ratio and

THE BLAKE continues on Page 23

What sets Ponte Vedra Gardens apart from other communities?

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Ponte Vedra Gardens goes beyond merely making our residents safe and comfortable. It starts by learning everything there is to know about those entrusted in our care – their passions, achievements, careers, family, hobbies and interests. This allows our staff members to develop an individualized plan of care designed around their specific life story, creating moments of delight, wonder and meaning for the residents in their care each and every day.



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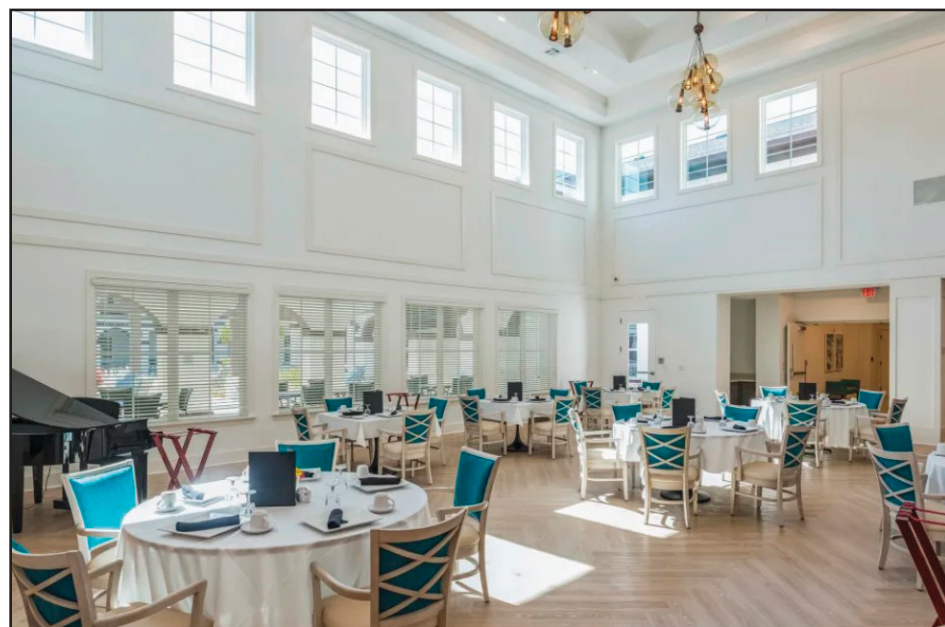
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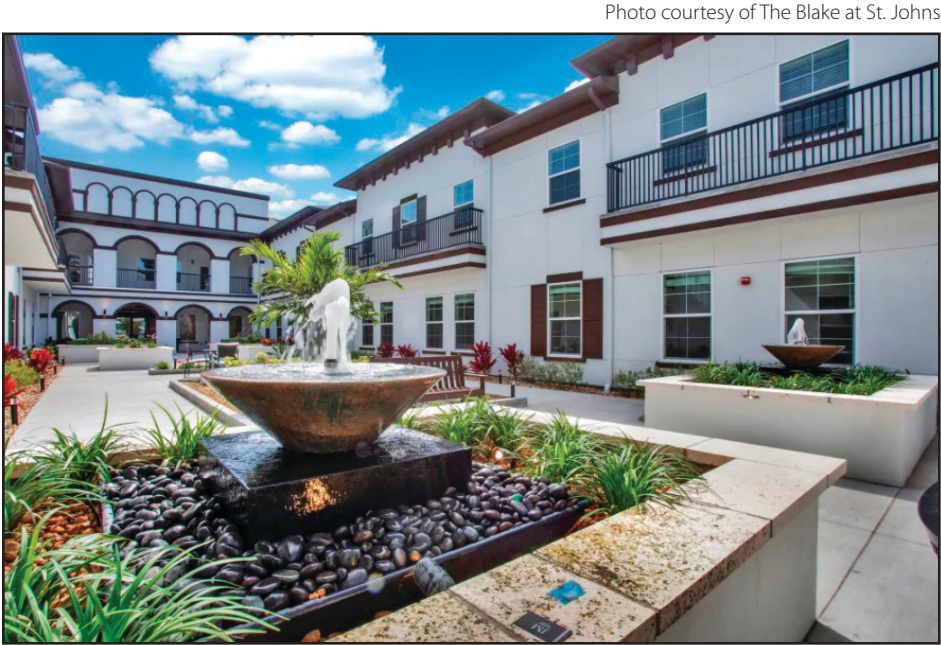
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The dining hall.



The Blake at St. Johns is located near Cimarrone Golf Course and SilverLeaf at 2430 County Road 210 in St. Johns.

The Blake

Continued from 22

each resident receives a personalized care plan.

The Blake at St. Johns uses the innovative iN2L touchscreen system for its memory care residents, which allows for a unique profile documenting a resident’s interests to connect them with thoughts, ideas and images of interest to them.

Respite Care at The Blake at St. Johns provides short-term coverage with all the services, support and care provided to full-time residents. It is also a good option to allow seniors to try out one of the communities before transitioning into a senior living community fully.

For more information about all that The Blake at St. Johns has to offer and leasing options, go to www.qmlm-seniorliving.com/senior-living/fl/st-johns/county-rd-210.

Open house for memory enhancement program Feb. 21

St. Johns County Council on Aging (COA) will hold an open house for its Integrative Memory Enhancement Program, IMEP, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at Fruit Cove Baptist Church, 501 State Road 13, Fruit Cove. The open house will feature an overview of the IMEP program, sample class activities and exercises, and an opportunity for questions and answers. Light refreshments will be served.

IMEP is an original, research-based program designed to minimize the progression of memory loss and dementia and boost cognitive reserves. Presented by trained facilitators in a light-hearted atmosphere, each class integrates mind, body and brain connections through mental agility activities that support memory, reasoning, flexible thinking, problem solving and other brain functions.

Small group classes provide humor, peer interaction and authentic dialogue, allowing participants to experience connection and acceptance while

building self-esteem.

“We are very excited to raise awareness about this innovative program with members of our community,” said COA IMEP Manager Susan Miller. “Whether you are starting to notice memory changes, have received a diagnosis of memory loss or dementia, or simply would like to be proactive about strengthening your memory, IMEP is an incredibly valuable resource.”

IMEP has been serving participants at several locations in St. Johns County for more than 15 years. The program is also being licensed and successfully implemented at other agencies and senior facilities throughout the United States.

To learn more about the IMEP program, go to imepprogram.com or call Susan Miller at 904-729-9535.

For more information on the comprehensive programs and services COA provides for older adults and caregivers in St. Johns County, go to coasjc.org, or call 904-209-3700.

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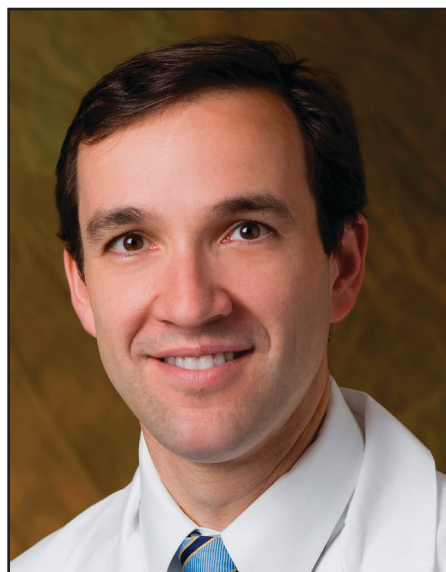
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GUEST COLUMN

Millions at risk for AFib by 2030: *How you can stay ahead*



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

February is American Heart Month, and it's a great time to learn about atrial fibrillation, or AFib, a condition that affects millions of people each year. AFib is the most common type of heart arrhythmia, and it can increase the risk of stroke by five times and double the risk of heart-related deaths. Unfortunately, many people don't even know they have it because AFib often doesn't show any symptoms.

Currently, between 2.7 million and 6.1 million people in the United States are living with AFib, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that this number will rise to 12.1 million by 2030. That's why it's so important to recognize the signs of AFib — for yourself and your loved ones. Early detection can make all the difference.

Recognizing the Symptoms of AFib

Not everyone with AFib has obvious symptoms. In fact, some people only discover they have the condition during routine screenings. However, if symptoms do appear, they can include an irregular or rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness or dizziness, shortness of breath, confusion, extreme fatigue and chest discomfort. If you notice any of these symptoms, it's important to consult a health care provider for further evaluation.

Understanding the Different Types of AFib

AFib comes in several patterns, each of which can require different approaches for treatment. Paroxysmal AFib occurs in episodes, starting and stopping on its own. Persistent AFib lasts longer than a week and typically needs medication or cardioversion (a procedure to reset the heart's rhythm). Long-standing persistent AFib lasts more than a year without interruption. Lastly, permanent AFib is continuous, and treatment focuses on controlling the heart rate rather than attempting to restore normal rhythm.

What Causes AFib and Who Is at Risk?

Several factors contribute to AFib, including aging and stress on the heart. Certain conditions increase the risk of developing AFib, including obesity, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, coronary artery disease and diabetes. Family history can also play a role. Lifestyle choices, such as smoking, excessive alcohol use and high stress can also increase the risk.

Treatment and Prevention: Keeping Your Heart Healthy

While AFib cannot always be prevented, there are several ways to keep your heart healthy and reduce the likelihood of developing it. Lifestyle changes, including maintaining a healthy weight, keeping alcohol intake at low levels (none or under one drink per day), treating sleep apnea, managing blood pressure, staying active and avoiding smoking can significantly reduce your risk.

For those diagnosed with AFib, treatments may include blood thinners to reduce stroke risk, medications to control symptoms and procedures like catheter ablation or cardioversion to restore normal rhythm. If you suspect you may be experiencing AFib, it's important to speak to your doctor.

This February, in recognition of American Heart Month, take the time to care for your heart and encourage your loved ones to do the same.

Dr. Anthony Magnano is a Ponte Vedra resident and cardiologist at Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside. For more information on Dr. Magnano and his specialty treating atrial fibrillation, visit Healthcare. ascension.org.

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Looking for something to do? Senior centers, library have the answer

There are always a lot of interesting things happening at the Council on Aging senior centers in St. Johns County and also at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Here's a look.

THE PLAYERS COMMUNITY SENIOR CENTER

175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach
Hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday
Phone: 904-209-3659

Lunch — Tuesdays: From noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance and fee required — \$5 per meal.

Lunch — Thursdays: From noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance and fee required — \$5 per meal.

Chair exercise: 9:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

Mexican Train Dominoes: 10 a.m. Tuesdays

Ask the Nurse: 10 a.m. Tuesdays

Canasta: 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

Bingo: 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays (Note: fee required)

Open Painting: 9 a.m. to noon Wednesday

days

Social Bridge: 9:30 a.m. to noon Wednesdays

Let's Play Board Games: 10 a.m. Wednesdays

Nintendo Wii Bowling: 10 a.m. Thursdays

Megan Wall of S.J.C. Legal Aid: 11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 27

Mahjong: 10 a.m. Fridays

Duplicate Bridge: Noon to 3 p.m. Fridays

COA CENTER AT UF HEALTH NOCATEE

351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra

To register for any program, email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or call 904-814-9407.

TUESDAYS

Stretch, Strengthen, Move & Groove (No Floor): Free and easily adapted to your fitness level. Can be done standing or sitting. Every Tuesday from 10 to 11 a.m.

Caregiver Support Group: All caregivers are welcome. The group meets from 1 to 2:30 p.m. every Tuesday. There is a trained facilitator present at every meeting

to guide the group.

Open Card Play: Bring your deck of cards and join others in playing the card game of your choice. No instructor will be present. This is a self-directed group. 1-4 p.m. every Tuesday.

Widows Meetup: Social group meeting the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Some meetings may take place outside the COA. A one-time registration to join the group is suggested to receive meeting updates.

Rain Garden Design & Plantings: Designing a rain garden in your home landscape is an excellent way to capture and filter runoff and is beautiful and environmentally friendly. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Feb. 18.

Stress Relief through Meditation: Participants will be guided through their unique energy-clearing session. Free weekly classes beginning Feb. 18 from 3 to 3:45 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS

Open Art: Bring your art or craft project to work on while socializing with friends. Meets every Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Mah Jongg Meet-up: Open play for experienced players. 1-4 p.m. Feb. 5, 12, 26; and 3-6 p.m. Feb. 19.

iPhone/iPad Class, The iOS Operating System: Attend to learn useful ways to take advantage of the newest upgrade. 10-11 a.m. Feb. 19. To register, go to <https://coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee>

Genealogy Group: The group meets the third Wednesday of each month. February's topic will be "Sharing Your Memories & Research of One Parent or Grandparent." 1 to 2:30 p.m. Feb. 19.

Exploitation of the Elderly & Disabled: Presented by Megan Wall, managing attorney of St. Johns County Legal Aid. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Feb. 26.

Caregiver Needs Assessment: Make an appointment with a qualified dementia care specialist who will set up a time to discuss your situation, one on one; develop an individualized education and needs assessment; support and guide; and empower you to find solutions for those needs. Call to schedule a free appointment on Tuesday or Wednesday, 904-814-9407 or email

CENTERS continues on Page 26



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Centers

Continued from 25

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RIVER HOUSE

179 Marine St., St. Augustine

Please note: River House will be closed on Monday, Feb. 17. For questions, call 904-209-3655 (Monday-Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org.

Classes That Require Registration

Registration is required for the following programs, and space is limited. To review course details and to register, go to <https://coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/river-house>.

Flexibility and Mobility: Monday, Feb. 24, from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

iPhone & iPad Tips! Monday, Feb. 24, from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m.

101 Ways to Transition to a Plant-Based Diet: Monday, Feb. 24, from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Balancing Your Blood Sugar and Preventing Diabetes: Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m.

Fishing: 9-11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 27.

Flexibility and Mobility: Thursday, Feb. 20, noon to 1 p.m.

Open Programs

Open programs are usually free and, where noted, may require registration. Go

to www.coasjc.org/river-house for more information:

AARP Tax Help: Free tax return preparation to anyone who needs it with AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers. Appointments available between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Feb. 24. Reserve a spot by calling 904-209-3655.

Container Gardening — Think Outside the Pot with Design in Mind: 9:15 to 11:15 a.m. Monday, Feb. 24. There will be a visual presentation and hands-on demonstration as participants venture into the world of beautiful and interesting concepts for container gardening. If you want to make your own container garden, bring a small container, soil and plants. Presented by St. Johns County Master Gardener Karen Doyle. Pre-registration is required at 904-209-3655.

Mahjong Open Play: Bring your mahjong game to play. 1-3 p.m. Mondays

Happy Hookers: A social group dedicated to crochet, knit, etc. 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays.

One-on-One Tech Help: One-on-one help for your smart phone, tablet, or laptop questions from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 18 and 25. Call 904-209-3655 to reserve a one-hour spot.

W.A.V.E. (Women Against Violent Encounters): This self-defense class for women focuses on situational awareness, verbal commands, assertiveness and physical techniques. Presented by local law enforcement, 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18.

(This is for women only)

Widow to Widow: A support group for widows by widows, 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Wednesdays

Open Game Play: Bring your deck of cards or your board game and socialize over a friendly game of your choosing. There are games available at River House. Every Thursday from 12:15 to 3:15 p.m.

Exploitation of the Elderly and Disabled: with Megan Wall of S.J.C. Legal Aid at 10-11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 28.

PONTE VEDRA BEACH BRANCH LIBRARY

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library has announced the following programs. For a complete schedule, go to sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch.

Sit and Stitch

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Feb. 19

Whether you're a seasoned crafter or just starting out, this is the perfect gathering for you! Bring your work in progress, share tips and tricks and enjoy the company of fellow crafters. This is not an instructor-led activity, but ideas and assistance can be shared among participants.

Senior Continuum of Care Lunch-N-Learn

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Feb. 20

This is an engaging panel discussion focused on critical issues surrounding estate planning, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, as well as local resources and support

groups through the Council on Aging. The expert panelists will share valuable insights on how to navigate the complexities of estate planning in the context of cognitive decline, offer practical strategies for caregivers and those living with Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, discuss the future of research for cognitive diseases and offer local resources to help families. This informative session aims to empower participants to make informed decisions for a secure and dignified future. Stay for a complimentary lunch to talk with panelists afterwards. RSVP required (904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org).

Ponte Vedra Writers Group

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Feb. 22

Calling all writers, future novelists and curious minds! Join this monthly program with engaging guest speaker Kevin Pettway discussing "Humor in Writing: How to create funny murders, monsters and romances, and why you should try." Brought to you by a partnership between the Ponte Vedra Writers Group, Florida Writers Association and the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Public Library.

Women's Singing Circle

5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Feb. 24

Join Ms. Jane, a singer and former music teacher, for a fun, informal evening of singing with other women who love to

CENTERS continues on Page 27



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Centers

Continued from 26

sing. She will lead participants in learning some rounds, partner songs and chants by ear, so no music-reading ability is necessary. All talent levels are welcome. For ages 16-plus. RSVP to 904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org.

Chef Warren presents “Irish Cuisine — It’s Not an Oxymoron”

5:30 to 6:30 p.m. March 5
People rarely put the words “Irish” and “cuisine” in the same sentence. Move beyond corned beef and cabbage and learn how this creative and healthy cuisine can be part of your diet beyond St. Patrick’s Day. Chef Warren will end the presentation with a cooking demonstration, preparing an entrée to share with the audience that anyone can replicate in their own home. Ages 14+ Please RSVP (904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org).

Free Tech Help with David

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. March 6 and 20. Walk-in
Are you feeling frustrated by technology, such as how to use your laptop or your phone? Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library’s tech volunteer David Ross is here to help. Please bring your device and your questions. David can help you one-on-one with your tech, including iPhone and An-



droid cell phones or tablets, PC and Mac laptops, and Nook and Kindle readers.

Empower Your Landscape with Native Plants

10 a.m. to noon March 8
Join a guest speaker from Native Plant Consulting to learn how you can use the power of native plants to support pollinators and other wildlife, reduce water usage and avoid using pesticides. You’ll learn how to begin a rewarding path to incorporate native plants in your landscape in a manageable way. This program will begin with an informative lecture, followed by a guided walk to identify plants in Bird Island Park. Ages 18+ Please RSVP (904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org).

St. Paddy’s Day Performance from the Mumford Academy of Irish Dance

3-4 p.m. March 8
Get in the St. Patrick’s Day spirit with a performance from the Mumford Academy of Irish Dance. Come for the dancing, learn a bit about Irish culture and leave with a jig to show to your family and friends. All ages welcome with adult supervision. Please RSVP (904-827-6950 or sjcpls.org).

Adult Coloring Club at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
11 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 11, 1-3 p.m. March 25

Find fun, laughter and creativity as everyone spends time coloring together. Supplies will be provided. Feel free to bring a snack.

Dr. Gerson Yessin Music Series Presents the Duque Collective

6:30 to 7:30 p.m. March 11
Immerse yourself in an evening of soulful rhythms and brilliance. Enjoy a mix of classic jazz standards as well as a few original compositions from the members of the band comprised of University of North Florida students.

Sit and Stitch

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. March 19
Whether you’re a seasoned crafter or just starting out, this is the perfect gathering for you. Bring your work in progress, share tips and tricks and enjoy the company of fellow crafters. This is not an instructor-led activity, but ideas and assistance can be shared among participants.

Ponte Vedra Writers Group

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. March 22
Calling all writers, future novelists and curious minds! Join this monthly program with engaging guest speaker Jamie Engle discussing “Rockstar Branding for Writers.” Brought to you by a partnership between the Ponte Vedra Writers Group, Florida Writers Association and the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Public Library. Come for the writing inspiration, stay for the literary magic and comradery.

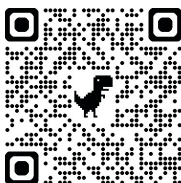
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The Recorder's garden columnist, Kathy Esfahani of Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, shares her tips for growing gorgeous gardens in Northeast Florida.

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Dianthus

"Love is like a flower — you've got to let it grow." — John Lennon



By Kathy Esfahani

Symbolizing admiration, happiness and love, the dianthus flower is blooming now, just in time for Valentine's Day! These fragrant plants make beautiful gifts on their own or combined with other flowers in colorful bouquets. They are wonderful as splashes of color in a planter or garden and useful as bright borders to outline a landscape bed.

Dianthus flowers are available in pinks, purples, reds and whites and have delicate blooms featuring five petals with fringed edges. These blooms can be a single color or multicolor. The blue-green leaves of dianthus are long and thin, almost like blades of grass. Dianthus grows in clumps and varies from small groundcover plants to stems 30 inches tall.

Although dianthus can tolerate partial shade, it is best to plant them in areas of full sun (at least six hours per day). Prepare for planting by digging a hole twice the

size of the plant's root ball. Space the plants at least 6 inches apart and use only a thin layer of mulch if any at all. It is important for the stems to have ample room for air circulation.

Dianthus prefers well drained soil, even bordering on slightly dry. Wait for the soil to feel dry to the touch before watering. Yellow leaves may be a sign of too much water! Remove old blooms and leaves to encourage growth throughout the season.

Dianthus blooms bring birds, bees and other pollinators to the garden — enjoy watching the hummingbirds and butterflies that dianthus may attract.

The leaves and stems of dianthus plants should not be ingested and can be mildly irritating to human skin. Be sure to wear gloves when working with these plants and wash irritated skin with soap and water. Dianthus can be toxic to animals if eaten, possibly causing nausea, vomiting or other digestive issues. Look for areas safe from roaming animals and children when planting dianthus.

However, when grown organically, the blooms of dianthus plants have both medicinal and culinary uses. They can be used as herbal diuretics or applied to the skin to treat infections or swelling.

Dianthus blooms are edible for humans and often used

Photo provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Flower of the Week



Dianthus blooms

as culinary garnishes. In ancient Rome, dianthus flowers were used to flavor oils and wine. Their spicy fragrance and taste can add interest to salads, cake decorations or syrups.

Whether decorating a romantic plate or starring in a beautiful bouquet, dianthus flowers are perfect for celebrating love!

Happy Valentine's Day!

Flower of the Week: Dianthus

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



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GUEST COLUMN

Why rebalancing can be so important

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

Imagine sitting in a rowboat and wanting to get back to shore. If you just sit there, the wakes from passing boats and the wind could cause you to drift further toward the middle of the lake — not where you want to be. Of course, they might actually move you toward the shore. Who knows?

On the other hand, you could use your paddles. It's more work, but it'll increase the possibility of your reaching your destination.

It's similar with your portfolio. If you neglect it, market activity may cause it to drift away — possibly far away — from where you want it to be.

Take, for example, a portfolio that starts out 60% stocks/40% bonds. If stocks were to have a particularly good year and bonds a bad one, the allocation could shift to, say, 70% stocks/30% bonds without the investor even realizing it. While this portfolio likely has better growth potential than the original, it could also take a bigger hit if stocks, which tend to be more volatile than bonds, turn around and have a bad year.



Contributed photo

To help avoid this, you should consider periodically “rebalancing” your portfolio. This involves looking at how you're diversified across different types of investments and considering selling some investments and buying others when necessary to bring your portfolio back to the asset allocation you originally intended. In the example above, you might think about selling stocks and buying bonds to get to 60% stocks/40% bonds.

All investing involves risk, including loss of principal.

Asset allocation and diversification are investment methods used to help manage risk. They do not guarantee investment returns or eliminate risk of loss including in a declining market.

Investments in fixed-income securities are subject to market, interest rate, credit and other risks. Bond prices fluctuate inversely to changes in interest rates. Therefore, a general rise in interest rates can cause a bond's price to fall. Credit risk is the risk that an issuer will default on payments of interest and/or principal.

This risk is heightened in lower rated bonds. If sold prior to maturity, fixed income securities are subject to market risk. All fixed income investments may be worth less than their original cost upon redemption or maturity.

Equity securities are subject to market risk, which means their value may fluctuate in response to general economic and market conditions and the perception of individual issuers. Investments in equity securities are generally more volatile than other types of securities.

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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The male monarch, right, has a pair of tiny black wing marks on the lines closest to his abdomen. The female does not. These butterflies were photographed in Peggy Campbell-Rush's yard.



Photos provided by Peggy Campbell-Rush
Peggy Campbell-Rush

Educator studies monarch butterfly migration in Mexico

Dream trip granted by Wish of a Lifetime from AARP

By Shaun Ryan

When Peggy Campbell-Rush was 6 years old, she became so enamored of the hundreds of monarch butterflies flitting around the family's cottage on Long Beach Island that her mother bought her

a net. She spent the day catching these winged wonders but was immediately faced with a decision: what to do with them. "I put them in our little, teeny bathroom," she said, laughing. "Then, my father came home, and he opened the door with a flourish, and all of them flew out!"

How many had she collected? Apparently, a lot. The family spent the next

four to five hours returning them to the outdoors. The experience launched a lifelong fascination with the monarch, one that found a home years later in Campbell-Rush's career as an educator introducing her kindergarteners to these brilliant creatures. "I would actually raise them and bring them into the classroom and have the children watch the caterpillars grow on the milkweed and then form a chrysalis

and then transform and metamorphose into the butterflies," she said. "Then, we would release them together." Raising monarchs means planting milkweed, which is necessary for the butterflies to lay their eggs and the larvae to eat, and nectar plants to attract mature members of their population. Campbell-Rush made her yard into a habitat and

BUTTERFLY continues on **Page 31**

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Ponte Vedra, Nocatee, the Beaches and throughout the First Coast.

TPC Guide Issue Date: March 6th
Deadline for Space Reservation: February 21st

To reserve your space, or request further information, email Susan at susan@pontevedrarecorder.com

THE RECORDER

Published by the Ponte Vedra Recorder, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida





Photo credit: Court Whelan/Natural Habitat Adventures

Millions of monarch butterflies take to the air in their annual migration.

Butterfly

Continued from 31

got it registered with Monarch Watch as a monarch waystation.

The monarch remained a constant interest for Campbell-Rush over the years — throughout her time as head of The Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus from 2014 to her retirement in 2020 and her battle with stage 3 breast cancer as a young woman.

But there was one great experience prized by butterfly lovers everywhere that eluded her: A visit to the overwintering site just as millions of monarchs prepared to take wing in one of nature’s grandest wonders, the annual 3,000-mile migration from Mexico to Canada.

Now, in her golden years, Campbell-Rush’s opportunity has arrived, thanks to Wish of a Lifetime from AARP.

Reading the AARP magazine one day at the beach, she discovered stories about people who had been granted lifelong wishes through the affiliate organization, Wish of a Lifetime. So, she applied, was interviewed and was granted her wish.

She has now joined a group comprised entirely of women on a scientific and photographic journey in the mountains of Central Mexico where the monarchs

winter among the oyamel fir trees, more than 7,000 feet above sea level.

“I cannot wait!” she exclaimed last week before departing. “This is just a miracle. ... Can you imagine doing this your whole life and then having this opportunity?”

“We love to see these wishes come true,” said Wish of a Lifetime’s Southeast Field Representative Natasha Hartsfield. Last year, her region granted 273 wishes. Nationwide, the organization has granted about 3,000 wishes since its founding in 2008.

“We grant experiential wishes for people 65 and older to bring hope and joy and to inspire others,” Hartsfield said.

Interested people can apply to the program at wishofalifetime.org. They can nominate themselves or someone else, but the wish must meet certain criteria. It must have a compelling story. It must impact lives.

For Campbell-Rush, it was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream, something that will enrich her mission to continue educating children and adults.

Today, Campbell-Rush advocates for at least three things: get a mammogram, something she said saved her life; plant milkweed and flowers to help monarchs in their migration; and “keep wishing, no matter how old you are.”



Photo credit: Court Whelan/Natural Habitat Adventures

There are so many monarch butterflies clustered together that you can’t even see the oyamel trees they cling to.

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Business Weekly

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Photos by Melissa Marcarelli



Michael's launches steakhouse concept in new location

After nearly two decades of crafting high-quality cuisine in downtown St. Augustine, the acclaimed Michael's has reopened for guests seeking a thoughtful, ingredient-driven dining experience. The new location is in the Hyatt Place St. Augustine, 117 Vilano Road, located in the quaint oceanside hamlet of Vilano Beach, just miles away from downtown St. Augustine.

"After many wonderful years in our original location, I began to notice shifts in the dynamics of downtown that made it harder for our loyal locals to reach us," says Michael Lugo, executive chef and owner at Viva Hospitality. "At the same time, ongoing infrastructure challenges — especially weather-related flooding — created operational difficulties that limited our ability to grow. Our kitchen

space was also constrained, making it increasingly difficult to execute the level of food production we aspired to. Moving to our new space in Vilano Beach was a thoughtful decision to address these challenges, providing a more accessible location, a stronger foundation for our operations and room to grow for years to come."

Michael's opened as The Tasting

Room in 2006 at its original location on Cuna Street in downtown St. Augustine.

MICHAEL'S continues on Page 36

Consortium announces new ownership of Winn-Dixie banner

A consortium of private investors spearheaded by the CEO and president of Southeastern Grocers Inc. (SEG), Anthony Hucker, and C&S Wholesale Grocers, has announced it has acquired Southeastern Grocers and its Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket banners from ALDI U.S.

ALDI U.S. previously purchased Southeastern Grocers in March 2024.

The agreement includes the acquisition of SEG grocery and liquor store operations under the Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket banners. This includes approximately 170 grocery stores in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida, as well as the existing Winn-Dixie liquor store business.

ALDI intends to complete its previously stated conversion plans with a total of approximately 220 Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket stores to be converted to the ALDI format over a multi-year conversion process that began in March 2024, and is expected to conclude in 2027.

"We are profoundly grateful and deeply honored to continue serving the communities we cherish," said Hucker. "Our culture and path forward are firmly grounded in our 100-year legacy — a legacy built on strong values and a shared purpose of caring for one another. Throughout this transformational journey, our commitment to thoughtful, purpose-driven growth remains strong and propels us forward with renewed momentum. As we reinvest in the store fleet, we are inspired by listening loudly to the voices of our customers, to elevate and revolutionize our customer experience and store offerings, so that each step we take will reflect our dedication to our people and our communities."

"This consortium continues C&S and SEG's longstanding partnership," Eric Winn, chief executive officer of C&S Wholesale Grocers, said. "For 20 years, we have worked together to feed our communities. C&S has remained steadfast in our commitment to our transformation

strategy, which includes being an industry-leading grocery wholesaler and retailer. Our unrelenting focus on long-term growth continues with an exciting opportunity for C&S to invest in and collaborate deeply with the retail market. C&S will leverage our best-in-class capabilities to provide value and quality to shoppers as we continue advancing our legacy of braggingly happy customers."

ALDI and SEG leadership will continue to work together closely to ensure a smooth transition, with dedicated leaders overseeing the store conversion and hiring process. SEG will continue to operate the remaining stores identified for conversion in the normal course of business, with the same level of care and focus on quality and service, up to and until each respective store is closed for conversion.

RBC Capital Markets, LLC served as financial adviser to the consortium. Foley & Lardner LLP and Sullivan & Cromwell LLP served as legal counsel.

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Baptist Health breaks ground on center for primary care and more

The Seven Pines community of Jacksonville will soon welcome a new Baptist HealthPlace campus, offering a comprehensive range of health and wellness services, including a new primary care practice, all in one convenient location. Baptist Health recently broke ground on the new center, which is expected to open in spring 2026.

The campus is located near Butler Boulevard and I-295, just east of St. Johns Town Center, within the master-planned community of Seven Pines. Situated between Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville, Baptist Medical Center South and Baptist Medical Center Beaches, and just down the road from Baptist & Wolfson Town Center Emergency Room, Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines is ideally positioned to function as a central outpatient hub for residents in need of both preventive health care and services to manage ongoing medical conditions.

There are currently around 1.25 million people living within a 30-minute drive of the new campus. By 2030, the population in this expanding area is expected to grow by 8.5%.



Contributed rendering

“We’re thrilled to be part of the Seven Pines community,” said Catherine Graham, senior vice president, clinical service lines and ambulatory business development for Baptist Health. “By situating the campus in this dynamic and high-traffic area of southeast Jacksonville, Baptist Health is making quality care conveniently available right where people live, work and thrive.”

Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines will feature two state-of-the-art medical office buildings. The first will house a new Baptist Primary Care practice, with offices for family medicine and internal medicine physicians, plus offices for cardiologists with Baptist Heart Specialists. It will also feature a wellness center offering health and wellness resources and programs, such as wellness coach-

ing, educational classes on preventive health care and talks with physicians and other local health experts.

Plans for the second medical office building include a potential ambulatory surgery center with imaging and laboratory services, designed with the flexibility to expand and adapt as the community’s health care needs evolve.

“With the capacity to expand services over time, Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines is an investment in the long-term health and well-being of this community,” said Michael A. Mayo, president and CEO of Baptist Health. “This approach underscores Baptist Health’s dedication to providing easy access to the exceptional care Jacksonville’s residents so rightly deserve.”

The new design of Baptist HealthPlace at Seven Pines is inspired by the architecture of the master-planned community with residential and retail properties. The combination of concrete block, metal and wood, paired with a fresh, contemporary interpretation of historic industrial architecture, ensures the medical buildings will blend seamlessly into the surrounding landscape.

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Nemours Children’s Health names North Florida president

Nemours Children’s Health, one of the nation’s largest multistate pediatric health systems, has announced the promotion of Aaron Carpenter to North Florida president. Carpenter most recently served as senior vice president, chief nursing and patient operations officer, Nemours Children’s Health, Delaware Valley.

“Aaron has proven himself an exceptional leader in nearly a decade at Nemours Children’s Health, and we look forward to the extensive experience he will bring to our North Florida team,” said Mark Mumford, enterprise chief operating officer for Nemours. “His clinical expertise and passion for excellence will help ensure we continue to meet the needs of our North Florida communities, and that our patients receive the highest



Aaron Carpenter

quality care.”

Carpenter, who joined Nemours Children’s Health in 2016, will replace previous North Florida Region President Michael Erhard, who retired in 2024, to lead the Jacksonville and Pensacola areas.

Prior to entering clinical and operations leadership roles, Carpenter served as a pediatric nurse practitioner in primary care and emergency medicine for more than 20 years. In previous leadership roles, he created leadership infrastructure and a leadership development program for advanced practice providers, led efforts to advance scholarly contributions in nursing and patient care services and created the only pediatric primary care nurse practitioner fellowship in the country, which launched in 2017.

He earned his bachelor’s degree from Sacred Heart University, a master’s degree from Yale University, a master’s degree from Trinity Anglican Seminary and a doctor of nursing practice degree from Robert Morris University. He is board certified in pediatrics through the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board.

“For two decades, I have spent time alongside children and their families facing some of the most difficult obstacles of their lives,” said Carpenter. “During these moments, I have seen firsthand the efforts of our teams at Nemours Children’s Health to provide best-in-class care that goes well beyond medicine. I look forward to partnering with the Nemours team in North Florida to advance this vision.”

New Baptist Beaches Cardiology Center opens

Residents in the beaches area now have access to Baptist Beaches Cardiology Center, a newly renovated 28,000-square-foot facility conveniently located on the hospital’s campus.

With the opening of the new center, patients have access to a full gamut of outpatient heart care. This includes appointments with cardiologists and advanced practice providers (APPs), outpatient cardiac testing, cardiac rehabilitation and wound care treatments, all under one roof.

“Providing high-quality cardiovascular care is at the core of what we do at Baptist Health,” said Baptist Health President and CEO Michael A. Mayo. “This new cardiology center strengthens our ability to serve the Beaches community today while also preparing for future needs. With room to expand, it not only enhances local access to expert cardiac care but also connects seamlessly with our comprehensive network of Baptist Heart Specialists across the region, ensuring patients receive the right care in the right place.”

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and in the



Contributed photos

The ribbon cutting for the new Baptist Beaches Cardiology Center.

Beaches community, where a fifth of residents are older than 65, the need for heart care services is growing rapidly.

According to SG2 Market Demand Forecast, the number of patients in the beaches area who will need hospital outpatient cardiac care is expected to increase by 35% during the next 10 years. During the same time, the number of office visits to cardiologists and APPs is expected to increase by 25%.

The new center was possible thanks to the philanthropic support of Tom and Debbie Frankland. As heart patients

themselves, the Franklands are passionate about expanding heart care services in the beaches area.

“We’re extremely grateful to the Franklands for their generous gift,” said Hospital President Jarret Dreicer. “We’re thrilled to open this expanded cardiology center, a true center of excellence, where heart patients can receive world-class care to keep living life to the fullest. This is a game-changer for heart health in our community.”

The renovated space increases the number and size of exam rooms from 18

to 24. The heart center has eight general cardiologists in addition to three electrophysiologists who treat patients with heart rhythm disorders.

The new center also features:

- Touch-screen interactive monitors in exam rooms where patients can learn about heart disease, watch procedure videos and view 3D anatomical hearts to better understand their condition and treatment.
- A full array of advanced non-invasive diagnostic testing, from nuclear stress tests to advanced heart imaging for quick and accurate diagnoses.
- A cardiac rehabilitation center, where physicians, dietitians and exercise physiologists provide patients information about heart health, physical fitness, nutrition and stress management.
- Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine — an outpatient treatment program for wound treatment, including hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which uses high-pressure oxygen to help wounds heal.

For an appointment at Baptist Beaches Cardiology Center, call 904-241-7147 or go to BaptistJax.com/heart.



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NEFAR holds awards and installation gala

The 2025 NEFAR (Northeast Florida Association of Realtors) Awards and Installation Gala took place Jan. 24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Jacksonville. More than 300 guests gathered to celebrate a year of accomplishments in 2024. Upon arrival, Realtors from all over Northeast Florida got to walk NEFAR’s blue carpet, take photos, mingle while enjoying cocktail hour and indulge in a three-course meal.

As the night went on, attendees

witnessed the graduation of the 2024 Leadership Academy candidates. These 18 individuals were presented with their Leadership Academy diplomas and pins by 2024 NEFAR President Rory Dubin, as they were recognized for their completion of the rigorous, yearlong program designed to train emerging leaders on how to make a difference within NEFAR and the real estate community.

Additionally, the evening was used to honor NEFAR’s 2024 award recipients.

These recipients were nominated by their colleagues for their achievements and impacts within the world of real estate, and their dedication to bettering NEFAR and their community.

These extraordinary candidates received their awards, presented to them by Rory Dubin and NEFAR CEO Glenn East as their accomplishments for 2024 were announced.

As the evening wrapped up, the 2025 NEFAR officers and directors were

installed into their positions, and the 2024 officers and directors were relieved of their duties as attendees celebrated their long year of hard work. See below for the list of 2025 Officers and Directors.

After the new officers assumed their roles, 2025 NEFAR president Mario Gonzalez revealed NEFAR’s theme for 2025: “Forward. Together. In Service.” This theme encompasses NEFAR’s goals and mindset for the association’s next year of growth and accomplishments.

New building for workforce education center

The Northeast Florida Builders Association (NEFBA) has announced the acquisition of a 43,024-square-foot building located at 4932 Sunbeam Road in Jacksonville’s Sunbeam neighborhood. This facility will serve as the new home of NEFBA and the NEFBA Workforce Education Center, marking a significant milestone in the association’s mission to strengthen and grow the construction industry’s workforce in Northeast Florida.

“For over 50 years, NEFBA has provided Northeast Florida with a high-quality, industry sponsored, construction trades apprenticeship program,” said 2025 NEFBA President Seth Kelley. “This new facility represents a transformative opportunity for our association to support the program and our apprentices, with a state-of-the-art facility while simultaneously expanding our program into additional workforce development areas.”

Since its founding in 1973, the NEFBA Apprenticeship Program has

graduated thousands of apprentices and currently trains 460 apprentices in four trades: electrical, HVAC, plumbing and carpentry. The program generates an impressive \$20 million in local economic impact annually, and apprentice wages have risen by 50% over the past decade, reflecting the growing value of skilled trades in the community.

To fund the renovation of the property NEFBA is launching the “Together We Build” Campaign. This initiative seeks to raise funds to create what will be crucial, hands-on educational spaces featuring construction labs, a dozen classrooms, a 300-person auditorium and administrative offices.

“We’re not just building a facility, we’re building for the future, for the benefit of our apprentices and the greater overall construction industry here in Northeast Florida,” added Kelley.

For information on how to participate and contribute, contact build@nefba.com.

Michael's

Continued from 33

Its new location redefines the classic steakhouse concept with modern interpretations of dishes like Steak Diane, Steak and Fries, and Smoked Tomahawk Ribeye. Nods to its coastal location can be found in the Poached Tiger Shrimp, Kaluga Caviar and Atlantic Swordfish.

The expanded dining area is perfect for the new Chef’s Tasting Menu, and the new wine library proudly showcases Michael’s exquisite wine list, already recognized by Wine Spectator with a prestigious Best of Award of Excellence.

The new grand piano is more than a conversation piece. Live performances by accomplished pianists provide an enchanting soundtrack that complements instead of overwhelms. Complimentary valet parking is included with Michael’s dining experience.

“The design of the new Michael’s is a reflection of our evolution — honoring the charm and character we’ve built over the years while embracing a fresh, forward-looking vision,” said



Photos by Melissa Marcarelli

Lugo. “We drew inspiration from the classic steakhouse, infusing it with a modern coastal feel, rich, warm tones and timeless elegance. Our goal was to create a space that feels both sophisticated and inviting, whether for a special occasion or an everyday dining experience. Thoughtful details, like the grand piano, pay homage to the golden era of fine dining, reinforcing Michael’s as a destination for exceptional hospitality and culinary excellence.”

Viva Hospitality will maintain a downtown presence with its French restaurant, La Nouvelle, located at 102 Bridge St., St. Augustine. Pesca Rooftop will continue to offer Latin flavors and creative cocktails just upstairs from Michael’s on the rooftop, both located at 117 Vilano Road in the Vilano Beach area of St. Augustine.

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Thompson Thrift to develop 312-unit luxury multifamily community at Nocatee

Resort-style amenities planned

Thompson Thrift, a full-service, nationally recognized real estate company and one of the nation's leading multifamily developers, has announced that it will develop Velara, a 312-unit Class A multifamily community in Ponte Vedra's Nocatee master-planned community. Construction begins this month, with the first residents expected to move in during summer 2026.

"Nocatee has been one of the country's fastest-selling master-planned communities, and there is significant demand for luxury multifamily living options," said Josh Purvis, managing partner for Thompson Thrift Residential. "We are excited that Velara will provide residents with a high-quality multifamily community that seamlessly integrates with the unique Nocatee lifestyle."

Sitting on just over 12.5 acres along Burbank Avenue near Nocatee's western interchange, the community will feature three-story buildings offering studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom configura-

tions.

Thompson Thrift is known for curating amenities and finishes that are on par with for-sale homes, and Velara will offer gourmet kitchens with quartz countertops, stainless-steel appliances and glass-top ranges; hardwood-style flooring; quartz vanity tops and undermount sinks; full-size washers and dryers; multiple smart home capabilities and many other designer touches.

Additionally, select homes will be enhanced with cabinetry with soft-close doors, a deluxe closet system with shelving, walk-in showers with full tile surround and advanced smart home capabilities. Patio, balcony, private yard and detached garage options will also be available.

Thompson Thrift will include several resort-style amenities specifically catered to the Nocatee lifestyle, such as a covered pool-deck patio, a poolside sunken fire pit and private golf cart garages. Additionally, Velara will provide many more high-end features, including a fully equipped 24-hour fitness center, thoughtfully designed courtyards, a billiards area, an outdoor gaming area,

a pickleball court, a dog park and a pet spa with a grooming station.

In addition to the on-site amenities, residents will also have access to the amenities of Nocatee, such as a kayak launch, two waterparks, a 75-acre community park, various fitness trails and Nocatee Town Center's restaurants and stores, including the largest Publix in Northeast Florida.

The land purchase was brokered by Tyler Nilsson, senior managing director of investments and Erik Bjornson, senior managing director of investments with IPA.

Thompson Thrift is a full-service real estate development company focused on multifamily, ground-up commercial and mixed-use development across the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest. For nearly 40 years, Thompson Thrift has invested more than \$6 billion into local communities and has become known as a trusted partner committed to developing high-quality, attractive multifamily, commercial and industrial projects.

The company continues to expand its footprint with several new residential developments targeted for 2025 in key

markets across the United States. Velara will be the company's 18th multifamily development in Florida. Thompson Thrift 2025 Multifamily Development, LP will provide equity capital for the development.

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In the Arts



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Contributed photos



Zuill Bailey



Jason Vieaux



Works by Åke Arnerdal

Celebrated musicians to perform free concert

Beaches Fine Arts Series will present cellist Zuill Bailey and guitarist Jason Vieaux in a concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 465 12th Ave. North, Jacksonville Beach. Doors open at 6:45 p.m. and seating is first come, first served. Admission is free.

An art exhibit follows at the reception with paintings and sculpture by Swedish artist Åke Arnerdal.

Zuill Bailey, widely considered one of the premiere cellists in the world, is a Grammy Award-winning, internationally renowned soloist, recitalist, artistic director and teacher. His rare combination of celebrated artistry, technical wizardry and engaging personality has made him one of the most sought after and active cellists today.

Bailey has been featured with symphony orchestras and music festivals world-

wide, has appeared in a recurring role on the HBO series "Oz" and has been heard on several NPR programs.

Grammy-winner Jason Vieaux, "among the elite of today's classical guitarists" (Gramophone), is described by NPR as "perhaps the most precise and soulful classical guitarist of his generation."

Sought-after for his extensive concerto repertoire, Vieaux has performed with a

long list of orchestras and has an extensive discography.

In 2011, Vieaux co-founded the guitar department at the Curtis Institute of Music (with David Starobin). He has taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music for 25 years.

Åke Arnerdal divides his time between Torsåker, Sweden, and Jacksonville. He has exhibited at various venues around the world.

Concert to feature music by Dvorak, Florence Price

The Florida Chamber Music Project (FCMP) will perform Florence Price's String Quartet in G Major (Unfinished) and Antonin Dvorak's String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106 at 3 p.m. Feb. 23 at the Beaches Museum Chapel. The concert is sponsored by Holly and Redgie Gutshall.

Florence Price is noted as the first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer, and the first to have a composition performed by a major orchestra (the Chicago Symphony). She has composed more than 300 works. Her training was steeped in the European tradition, but her music reveals her Southern roots. It's said she uses all of the instruments of the quartet well, especially the cello. This piece, String Quartet in G Major (Unfinished) is considered one of her most beloved pieces and shows the influence of Dvorak and other late Romantic composers formally and harmonically while bearing the distinct stamp of the African-American spiritual tradition.

String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106 by Antonin Dvorak was composed in 1895 and first performed in 1896. The piece contains four movements, beginning with a playful,



Contributed photo

The Florida Chamber Music Project consists of Susan Pardue, Patrice Evans, Ann Hertler and Laurie Casseday.

fluttering theme that's followed by a remote theme and counter melody. This quartet is defined by its lyricism and exciting rhythmic vitality. It's said that this piece conjures a dialogue along the lineage with the voices of Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms.

"Florence Price and Antonin Dvorak were alive at the

same time and were influenced by some of the same music," said FCMP Artistic Director Susan Pardue. "Florence Price admired the music of Dvorak, and the influence of that is audible in her music. Dvorak appreciated the music of African-American spirituals, even borrowing some of his material from the melodies of these spirituals. It is somehow fitting that Florence Price was from the community from which the music was borrowed and then she used some of it in her compositions as well."

Tickets are \$30 at the door or through 904TIX. Student tickets are \$10 and available only at the door.

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

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

For advance tickets online: fchambermusic.org.

Actor Tony Hale to speak on his career in comedy



Contributed photo
Tony Hale is known for his work in movies and TV shows and as a voice actor.

Many people know Tony Hale as Buster in “Arrested Development” or from his Emmy-winning performance in “Veep” with Julia Louis-Dreyfus. Younger generations cherish his character Forky in “Toy Story 4” and Fear in “Inside Out 2.” His children’s book, “Archibald’s Next Big Thing,” is now a popular Netflix series.

Now, area residents have an opportunity to meet Hale and learn how he does it all.

Limelight Theatre will present “A Conversation with Tony Hale: A Career in Comedy” at 7 p.m. March 2 at Lewis Auditorium, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine.

Limelight’s executive director, Sherrie Provence, wanted to hold this fundraiser at Flagler College to

offer students an affordable price. The first 200 Flagler students can attend this event free of charge. All remaining Flagler students pay only \$15 with ID.

Admission for adults is \$50. The student ticket price is \$15. The price for a family of four is \$100 (call the box office at 904-825-1164).

There is a special VIP after-party with drinks and dessert across the street at Casa Monica following the event. VIP party tickets include VIP seating at the Lewis Auditorium event. Those VIP tickets are \$300 per person or \$500 for two people.

Tickets can be purchased at limelight.ludus.com/index.php. Use the promo code PVRECORDER for \$5 off the ticket price.

The program is a fundraiser for

Limelight Theatre.

Limelight Theatre is in Season 33 and presents at least three straight plays each year in addition to five musicals. The education program provides classes for adults and children, producing five shows per season.

Limelight has cultivated loyal patrons and subscribers who enjoy Broadway on a small scale in St. Augustine. The talented visual and performing artists, directors and designers work around the clock to turn out riveting theatre.

Limelight students are able to hone their skills and grow their careers in professional theatre and film.

For more information, go to limelight-theatre.org.

First Coast Cultural Center’s President Guzzo to retire

Donna Guzzo has announced her retirement as president and CEO of First Coast Cultural Center beginning Feb. 28, and a replacement has yet to be named.

Guzzo took the helm at FCCC, a nonprofit organization, in 2017. She has worked tirelessly on her mission to bring the arts into the life of the community through education, exhibitions and outreach while honoring a donor-driven philosophy.

“In my eight years at the center, it has been exciting to be part of its growth,” said Guzzo. “Today, the center enjoys more public prominence, community involvement, programming and services to children with special needs — and as a result, more members and donors.”

In addition, she feels confident in her staff, saying they are “cross trained and highly capable.”

A well-connected leader, Guzzo began the Kick StART Afterschool Arts Enrichment Program in St. Johns County



Contributed photo
First Coast Cultural Center President and CEO Donna Guzzo has announced her retirement.

and provided opportunities for students from low-income families to participate. Additionally, FCCC was able to expand services to the community as a Certified Autism Center.

Another highlight for Guzzo, was moving FCCC into a two-story “forever home” in Ponte Vedra Beach after weathering the 2020 pandemic and relocating twice.

“This permanent location has afforded us with more space for larger cultural exhibits and programs, and involvement continues to grow,” Guzzo explained. She added that, with a supportive foundation and board leadership, “the center’s future will be brighter yet.”

Guzzo has always operated under the motto, “Success is imminent!” This has successfully propelled her through a career in banking followed by 30 years of leadership positions in non-profits.

In one of her earlier roles, she founded the nonprofit Language Exploration Enrichment (LEE) Spanish program

for St. Johns County students in 2003, and she was named Florida Foreign Language Most Valued Educator five times — being inducted into Florida’s Educator’s Hall of Fame in 2018.

A 2018 graduate of Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship, Guzzo’s other accomplishments include sitting on national boards for the American Cancer Society and United Way and on boards for the Arts and for World Languages. She has also been a featured speaker as an ambassador of the United Nations in New York City and taught and promoted sustainable development goals at Harvard University, Providence University in Taiwan, the United Nations in Geneva and the Vatican.

In 2019, Guzzo was recognized by the Association of Fundraising Professionals in Jacksonville, and she was the recipient of the 2021 Dr. Gail Pflaster ROWITA Award. She has been an active Rotarian for the last eight years.

A close-up image of hands sorting through a large pile of colorful LEGO bricks and minifigs.

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First Coast Opera celebrates 25th anniversary with gala

World-renowned composer performs at event

First Coast Opera marked its 25th anniversary with a dazzling black-tie gala held Feb. 1 at the Embassy Suites in St. Augustine Beach. With an ocean backdrop, the event brought together patrons and guests of the First Coast for a night of extraordinary music and celebration.

The evening's highlight featured world-renowned Spanish composer and musician Juan Antonio Simarro, who dazzled guests with his performance. Accompanied by a small instrumental ensemble, Simarro took the audience on a journey through his compositions, sharing the unique stories behind each piece. His performance included selections from his critically acclaimed “Symphony for a Better World,” as well as works that have garnered international praise, including his recent compositions for the 75th anniversary of UNESCO in Spain.

“I’m absolutely thrilled with how this extraordinary event came together,” said Kerry Fradley, president of



First Coast Opera. “Bringing in a world-renowned artist for such a festive evening exceeded everyone’s expectations. It’s the kind of performance that sets the bar for what we can achieve, and the team behind this event deserves all the credit for making it happen.”

In addition to Simarro’s performance, guests were treated to the fiery and dynamic sounds of St. Augus-

tine’s own ZaZa Flamenco. The group, known for its unique fusion of jazz, rumba, flamenco and contemporary music, provided entertainment that had attendees dancing late into the evening.

Maria Montoya, board member of First Coast Opera and event organizer, said, “This gala was a unique opportunity to bring world-class cultural experiences to the First Coast, and it’s been incredibly rewarding to see such enthusiastic support for the arts in our community. We are so grateful for everyone who helped make this night possible.”

First Coast Opera has become a popular cultural institution in St. Augustine and is known for its fully staged operatic performances and dedication to bringing world-class talent to the region. Fresh off the success of its recent “The Barber of Seville” production, the opera’s next offering, “The Magic Flute,” will begin rehearsals for performances in March.

For more information on First Coast Opera and upcoming performances, go to FirstCoastOpera.com.

Photos by Glo MacDonald





Photos by Anthony Richards

The production has a lot of intricate musical numbers throughout.

Theatre

Continued from 1

we did "Les Misérables," and they did great, so I wanted to see if they can take it one step further. Sometimes that's the only way you can grow, is when you're outside your comfort zone."

Oliver Carson and Lucy Roache are a pair of seniors who are looking to go out with a bang since being involved with theatre at the high school since freshman year.

According to Carson, the best word he could use to describe the production process for "Sweeney Todd" is intense, especially with the amount of intricate musical numbers it has.

"It's definitely the hardest show I've done," said Roache, who plays Mrs. Lovett. "It's very intense but there's also funny moments in it. It's been fun exploring the darkness in it while also finding those moments of light."

Roache and Carson worked together during the "Les Misérables" last year, so the chemistry they have on stage along with many of the others in the cast goes a long way and is something they believe will be reflective in the performance.

"You learn how you can play off of each other when you're on stage," Carson said.

Keeping character throughout a production is something that is always challenging, but "Sweeney Todd" adds even another dimension to that, which Carson is fully embracing, especially with his role as Sweeney Todd.

"It's different from what we normally do, so it's all about having to adapt and be able to just dive into that character and discover the deeper parts of the story and what it means to those characters," Carson said.

Both Carson and Roache caught the theatre bug early on when they were in middle school and performing in front of an audience and seeing all the hard work pay off when the lights come on is a feeling unlike anything they have experienced before.

"It definitely brings it to life a lot more," Roache said. "We always say that the show doesn't really come alive until we have tech week when you start adding



'Intense' was a popular word used by students to describe the musical.

all the lights, sound and fog. Having an audience definitely brings it up to another level and we can feel it on stage."

According to Nettle, there are many aspects that go into making such a production possible behind the scenes.

"I've got a tech class that's building the set, a student costume designer, lighting design and sound design," Nettle said. "There's a lot of trial and error involved but it's worth it to make it look effortless."

The show is choreographed by Reagan Kearney.

The only one of the shows that will not start at 7 p.m. will be Sunday, March 2, which will begin at 5 p.m. instead. The play is rated PG-13.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased through the Ponte Vedra High GoFan app.

Writers' meeting to focus on injecting humor



Kevin Pettway

Everyone needs a laugh, and it may sound funny, but adding humor to your writing can strike a positive chord with the reader. The question is knowing when to reach for a laugh, and Kevin Pettway has the answer.

Pettway will deliver a workshop on how to inject humor into your writing at the Ponte Vedra Writers meeting at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

In his workshop, "Humor in Writ-

ing: How to Create Funny Murders, Monsters, and Romances, and Why You Should," Pettway will discuss the different kinds of humor, when to employ it, and where to use it. He admits that "reaching for a laugh isn't always as easy as adding another point to your love triangle, but humor is critical no matter what genre you write in."

Pettway is the author of the "Misplaced Mercenaries" novels, a five-book series that kicked off the wider "Misplaced Adventures" expanded universe, currently boasting six additional series and going strong. He is featured in several anthologies, including "Last Night at the Jolly Chicken," which serves as an introduction to the entire "Misplaced Adventures" project. Pettway lives in the Riverside neighborhood of Jacksonville with his wife Lena, and his dog River, who is the real funny one in the family.

The Ponte Vedra Writers group is part of the Florida Writers Association, a statewide, membership organization dedicated to the support of both aspiring and published writers in any genre. The Feb. 22 meeting is free and open to members and non-members alike.

For information on FWA go to floridawriters.org.

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Sports

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Amateur team wins 34th Underwood Cup

By Anthony Richards

The Northern PGA Chapter Professionals had visions of another dramatic comeback in this year's 34th Annual Underwood Cup hosted by Deerwood Country Club in Jacksonville on Feb. 3 and 4, just as they had done a year ago.

However, their amateur counterparts were having nothing to do with a repeat of what transpired last year when the amateurs had a big lead only to watch their then 8 ½-3 ½ advantage slowly slip away during the singles matches on the final day as the pros completed a historic rally to claim the top prize by one point.

In the end this time around, the amateurs defeated the professionals by a score of 14-10, which gave the amateurs their 19th victory in the more than three-decade history of the Underwood Cup, which has a unique format, like the Ryder Cup, pitting the top Northern Chapter PGA professionals against a team of elite First Coast amateur golfers.

The amateurs got off to a quick start during the two-day tournament and grabbed a commanding 9-3 lead with stellar performances in morning four-some and afternoon four-ball competi-



Contributed photo

The amateur team won this year's Underwood Cup for the 19th time in the 34-year history of the event.

tions on the first day.

For the second year in a row, the professionals applied some early heat when Stephanie Connelly-Eiswerth, Hayes Farley and Michael Mattiace won three of the first four matches, convincingly –

5&4, 4&3 and 5&4, respectively.

“We had hope at that point,” said pro captain Mike Broderick, the head professional at Deerwood Country Club. “It was getting real. Stephanie set the tone for us, Mike (Mattiace) and Hayes (Far-

ley) won big matches. We were close in a lot of other matches. We thought it was possible.”

Connelly-Eiswerth was particularly impressive and motivational in her lead match versus the reigning Florida men's amateur champion, Jimmy Ellis of Atlantic Beach Country Club.

The 2024 PGA of America Women's Professional of the Year reeled off a string of birdies to get to eight-under and the match was called at the 14th green.

The twosome would play out the round with Connelly-Eiswerth adding two pars and two birdies on the last four holes for an unofficial round of 62 (10-under).

“At one point I was standing [where he could see three holes] and all I saw were the pros making birdies,” said amateur captain Mike Del Rocco. “They started out fast. We had guys playing well but they were playing better.”

Dean Grunewald, director of golf at The Plantation in Ponte Vedra Beach, has been named captain of the professional team in 2026 followed by Broderick in 2027. The amateur team has yet to select its next captains.

Sharks, Barracudas claim convincing basketball district titles

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra High and Beachside High basketball programs earned district titles and now eye a possible state title to go in the trophy case.

The Sharks' boys basketball squad defeated St. Augustine High 49-30 in an all-St. Johns County battle to claim the district 4-5A championship, while the Barracudas won the girls basketball crown defeating the Sharks with a convincing 73-34 victory.

It was the Sharks' defense that proved the difference in the boys championship as it was able to stymie the methodical Yellow Jackets' offensive attack and held them to their lowest point total of the season.

Maddox Palmer had a game-high four steals, as the Sharks had nine steals on the night and forced the Yellow Jackets



into 14 turnovers.

Palmer and David Sanchez Barrera both led the Sharks with 14 points and Trace Westercamp finished one point shy of posting a double-double with nine points and 11 rebounds.

It was the eighth straight win in their series against the Yellow Jackets.

The Sharks earned the No. 2 seed in region 1-5A and hosted No. 7 Pensacola Booker T. Washington High in the first round on Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 7 p.m. The score was not available by press time, but with a win, the Sharks would play either No. 3 Gainesville High or No.



6 Lake City Columbia at home on Monday, Feb. 17 at 7 p.m.

In the girls championship, the Barracudas proved time and again that they were clearly the best team in the district and that was reflected during the district tournament, when they won both their games by an average margin of 36.5 points, as they defeated Riverside High 60-26 in the district semifinal prior to their blowout win over the Sharks.

Senior Kendall Kane and junior Morgan Cremen both had a huge tournament scoring and proved hard to defend,

especially from long range.

Kane reached the 20-point mark in both games and was on fire against the Sharks, shooting 67% from the field on 12 shots.

Cremen tallied 16 and 19 points in the two games, respectively, and together with Kane the two combined for 13 three-pointers during the tournament.

Junior Anni Ament was a force rebounding and freshman guard had a breakout game against the Sharks in the championship with 15 points on a perfect night shooting, as she knocked down all six of her shot attempts.

As district champions, the Barracudas slot in as the No. 3 seed in region 1-5A of the girls basketball state tournament and will host No. 6 Orange Park High in the first round, while the Sharks make the playoffs as a No. 8 seed and will travel to take on top-seeded Pensacola Booker T. Washington High.

Both games will be played on Thursday, Feb. 13, and begin at 7 p.m.

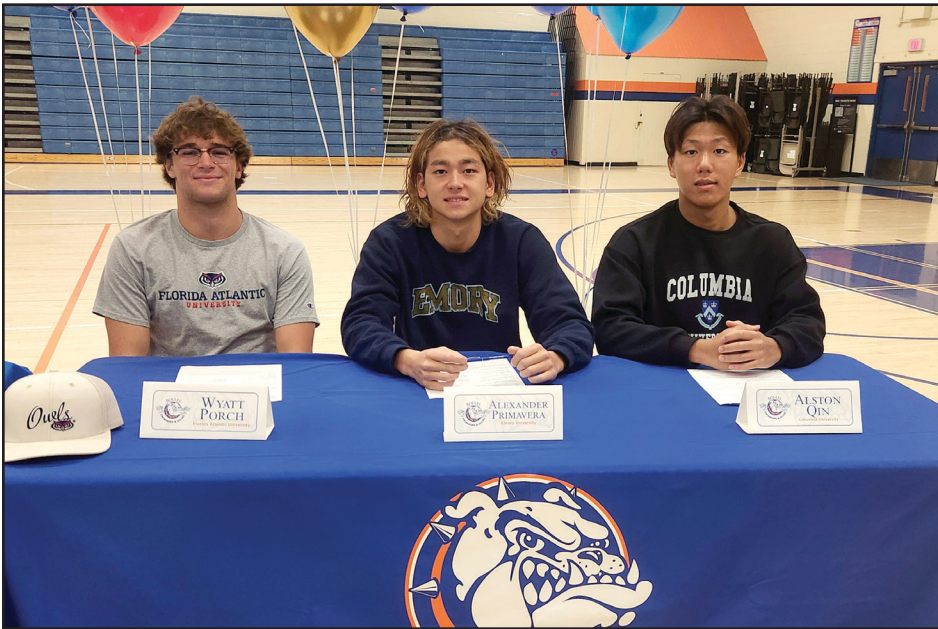
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Local Bolles students sign college athletic scholarships

Ponte Vedra residents Estella Bruneau and Emmett Grzebin joined Saint Johns residents Troy Holloway and Alexander Primavera, as well as Jacksonville Beach resident M.J. Jenkins were among 18 Bolles School student-athletes representing seven different sports who were honored on February 5 as they signed their college athletic letters of intent during a special ceremony in the school’s gym.

Photos courtesy of The Bolles School



Sporting JAX expands front office with key hires

Sporting JAX, the United Soccer League (USL) franchise group bringing women’s and men’s professional soccer to Northeast Florida, has announced the continued expansion of its front office team with the addition of Sara Garcia-Malone as senior manager of business operations and development, Henry Olivas as ticket operations manager and CRM analyst and A.J. Klimek as an account executive. These strategic hires reinforce the club’s commitment to its professional teams and the next phase of growth in the New Year.

“The continued expansion of our front office team marks the beginning of an exciting chapter for our organization,” said Steve Livingstone, president and CEO of Sporting JAX. “Sara, Henry and A.J. bring invaluable experience and expertise to these vital roles as we prepare for significant advancements with our pro women’s and men’s teams, along with our Sporting JAX Youth Academy. Their leadership will play pivotal roles to create inspiring experiences on and off the field in 2025 and beyond.”

Garcia-Malone will spearhead business development and partnerships, oversee day-to-day front office operations and drive strategic growth initiatives for the club. A seasoned leader with more than a decade of experience in large-scale event production, she has a proven track record of exceptional leadership, sponsorship acquisition and impactful marketing as the owner of a successful event production company for eight years.

Garcia-Malone, a former athlete with a master’s degree in coaching and athletic administration from Concord University Irvine and a bachelor’s degree in business management from Northwest University, brings a unique blend of operational expertise and passion for youth and women’s sports.

Olivas will support the ticket operations depart-



Sara Garcia-Malone



Henry Olivas



A.J. Klimek

ment for the women’s and men’s clubs, including ticket distribution and fan engagement. With broad experience in sports and entertainment, he joins Sporting JAX following impactful roles as box office manager for Live Nation and ticket operations coordinator for D.C. United.

Additionally, Olivas has played key roles in executing marquee events, including the Capitol One Orange Bowl, the MLS All-Star Game and the Premios Rolling Stone en Español. The Miami native also holds a master’s degree in global strategic communication and a bachelor’s degree in communication and media studies from Florida International University.

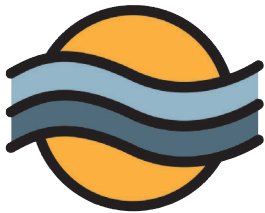
Klimek will also join the Sporting JAX ticket operations department, serving as an account executive to drive ticket sales and membership growth initiatives. His back-

ground includes sales roles with the Indianapolis Colts and the Fort Wayne TinCaps, and previous experience in the insurance and education sectors.

A former collegiate athlete, Klimek graduated from Trine University with a master’s degree in business administration and management and a bachelor’s degree in sports management.

These team additions follow recent Sporting JAX announcements of its partnerships with the University of North Florida to kick off the women’s pro team at Hodges Stadium this year, and its merger with Florida Elite Soccer Academy to create one of the largest youth-to-pro soccer pathways in the nation.

For the latest Sporting JAX news and club updates, follow @Sporting_JAX across all social media channels.



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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION
File No. CP24-879
Division 59
IN RE: ESTATE OF MARY ELAINE YOUNG, Deceased.

The administration of the estate of MARY ELAINE YOUNG, deceased, whose date of death was November 21, 2024, is pending in the Circuit Court for St. Johns County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, FL 32084. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

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

The personal representative has no duty to discover whether any property held at the time of the decedent's death by the decedent or the decedent's surviving spouse is property to which the Florida Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act as described in ss. 732.216-732.228, Florida Statutes, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under s. 732.2211, Florida Statutes.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is February 13, 2025

Attorney for Personal Representative:

/s/ James E. Bedsole
JAMES E. BEDSOLE, ESQ.
Attorney for Personal Representative
FL. Bar No.: 500194
2450 Old Moultrie Road, Ste. 104
St. Augustine, FL 32086
Tel: (904) 797-8701
service@bedsolelaw.com
Personal Representative:
/s/ John Lewin Young
JOHN LEWIN YOUNG
205 Towerview Drive, Apt. 3304
St. Augustine, FL 32092

Legal 113882 Published 2/13/2025 and 2/20/2025 in St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper

DIVORCE SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

Docket No. NO24D0565DR
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court Probate and Family Court
Norfolk Probate and Family Court
35 Shawmut Road
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Galen Harris v. Thomas Blackburn
To the Defendant:

The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Divorce requesting that the Court grant a divorce for irretrievable breakdown. The Complaint is on file at the Court. An automatic restraining order has been entered in this matter preventing you from taking any action which would negatively impact the current financial status of either party SEE Supplemental Probate Court Rule 411. You are hereby summonsed and required to serve Patrick K Burke, Esq. Burke Levy, PC P.O. Box 959, Westborough, MA 01581. Your Answer if any 20 days from the date of this Notice. If you fail to do so, the Court will proceed to the hearing and adjudication of this action. You are required to file a copy of your Answer if any, in the Register of this Court. WITNESS, Hon. Lee Peterson, First Justice of this Court.

Date: May 1, 2024
Register of Probate
Colleen Brierly

Legal 113276 Published 2/6/2025, 2/13/2025, 2/20/2025 and 2/27/2025 in St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper

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- Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
- A pituitary hormone
- Female sibling
- Monetary unit of Afghanistan
- Empowering
- Space station
- Disorder

- State of fuss
- Footwear for babies
- Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
- Droves
- Affirmative
- Male parent
- Utter obscenities
- Type of verse
- Unpleasant person
- One who settles down
- Founder of source-based history
- A way to snarl

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

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

DOWN

- Type of bomb
- Polynesian island country
- Heavenly body
- Hard workers



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SALE PRICE **\$20,988**
6 MILES | STOCK# PPP62517

A white Toyota Tundra pickup truck is shown from a front-three-quarter view. The truck features a chrome grille with the Toyota emblem, large headlights, and a chrome bumper. It has a single cab configuration and is parked on a dark, reflective surface. The background is a solid blue wall.

SALE PRICE **\$54,988**
52 MILES | STOCK# PG537974



SALE PRICE **\$21,460**
47,437 MILES | STOCK# NH422395

A white Jeep Wrangler is shown from a front-three-quarter view, parked on a grey surface against a solid blue background. The vehicle features a black roof rack, black side mirrors, and black door handles. It has large, knobby tires and a black front bumper. The Jeep logo is visible on the front grille.

SALE PRICE **\$13,180**
170,265 MILES | STOCK# GL144383

A blue Mazda Miata convertible car is shown from a front-three-quarter view. The car is parked on a grey surface against a solid blue background. It has a black soft top, silver multi-spoke wheels, and a small 'Miata' badge on the front fender.

SALE PRICE **\$12,880**
62,175 MILES | STOCK# 5LS54024

SALE PRICE **\$7,770**
128,711 MILES | STOCK# AS563165

SALE PRICE **\$26,380**
69,388 MILES | STOCK# LZ100839

SALE PRICE **\$11,960**
90.531 MILES | STOCK# ES576986

SALE PRICE **\$27,860**
26,228 MILES | STOCK# NF162174

SALE PRICE **\$31,480**
26.827 MILES | STOCK# MZ135744



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