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The Register
INSIDE

Thursday, February 20, 2025

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Area housing inventory rises

As 2025 progresses, the Northeast Florida housing market continues to follow seasonal patterns.

In January, the market saw a decrease in closed sales, which follows annual trends, since most homeowners urgently settled into their new homes in December before the year ended. Meanwhile, pending sales plummeted in January, reflecting the typical lull in sales this time of year that was expected for the beginning of 2025.

Interestingly, sales price is up a bit from this time last year, while dollars per square foot is down, which usually means it's bigger houses that are selling right now. New listings are up quite a bit, giving buyers plenty of options for homes to purchase.

The median sales price for single-family homes in Northeast Florida's six-county region decreased by 5.8% compared to December, falling to \$376,990. Fortunately, this brought

HOUSING continues on Page 31

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SHARKS TWO WINS AWAY FROM REPEAT STATE TITLE

By Anthony Richards

The hopes of repeating as girls soccer Class 5A state champions is within reach after the Ponte Vedra Sharks defeated the Tallahassee Chiles Timberwolves 1-0 to advance to the state final four for the second straight season.

"We're just really excited to have this chance to go back-to-back, and it's been pretty surreal to be honest," senior defender Natalie McCann said.

The Sharks (15-3-2) were the aggressors to start the match as they did an excellent job of gaining possession and putting pressure on the Timberwolves (16-3) as Katie DeVincentis and Lily Morse each had good looks and fired shots on goal that required Timberwolves goalkeeper Gracie



Photo by Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra High girls soccer team defeated Tallahassee Chiles High 1-0 in the regional final on Wednesday, Feb. 12.

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The Gift of Giving - Local Nonprofits
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BRIEFS

Ribault Garden Club holding open house

Ribault Garden Club will hold an open house 10 a.m. to noon Thursday, Feb. 20, at 705 Second Ave. North, Jacksonville Beach. The topic is “Protecting our Backyard Birds” and the guest speaker is Elizabeth Filippelli, who currently serves as conservation director on the Duval Audubon Society Board. Open to the public. There will be refreshments, door prizes and a raffle. Admission is free.

Free tax prep help offered

United Way of St. Johns County is offering free tax preparation services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Available to eligible individuals and families in St. Johns and Putnam counties, this initiative provides vital support during tax season, ensuring taxpayers receive all eligible credits and deductions.

Certified tax preparers will assist community members in navigating the tax filing process, helping them maximize refunds and alleviate financial burdens. This effort aligns with United Way of St. Johns County’s mission to empower individuals and families to thrive.

VITA locations include: St. Johns County Health and Human Services, VyStar Credit Union – St. Augustine, United Way of St. Johns County, St. Johns River State College – St. Augustine, St. Johns River State College – Palatka, Hawthorne Community Center, Melrose Public Library, Interlachen Public

Library and Palatka Public Library.
United Way of St. Johns County encourages eligible residents to take advantage of this resource. This service is available by appointment only and can be scheduled online at unitedway-sjc.org/freetaxprep or by calling 904-222-6609. Appointments are available through April 15.

12 couples tie the knot on at group wedding

On Valentine’s Day, 12 couples tied the knot during a group wedding at The Carriage House in downtown St. Augustine. St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court Brandon Patty said the successful event highlights his office’s commitment to serving the residents of St. Johns County.

One couple, who met at a YMCA gym program for cancer survivors, became fishing buddies who later fell in love. After Rebecca Reese attended a family event with her beau, Darrel Hubbard, Jr., she knew he was the one. The couple, who is currently fighting cancer together and supporting each other along the way, says getting married on Valentine’s Day is a dream come true.

Another couple who got married during the group ceremony met during a humanitarian mission in the Philippines. The dual-military Navy couple said they wanted to seal the deal with their spouse during the special event in

BRIEFS continues on Page 3

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Briefs

Continued from 2

historic downtown St. Augustine. The ceremony was officiated by the Honorable Judge Howard O. McGillin, Jr.

Beach cleanup is Saturday

The Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM) will conduct a beach cleanup from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. Meet at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Participants will be directed to a specific beach for cleanup. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended.

Email Candace.Killian@FloridaDEP.gov to participate.

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.

Football field to be renovated

The Solomon Calhoun Community Center, 1300 Duval St., St. Augustine, will see two phases of renovations made to its existing facilities. The project’s construction contract was approved by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting on Feb. 4.

The first phase includes replacement of the football field’s natural grass turf with artificial synthetic turf and improvements to the associated drainage system.

“This is another improvement to

our parks and public facilities that will really enhance the quality of life for our residents and the athletes who compete on our fields,” Board of County Commissioners Chair Krista Joseph said.

\$2.1 million is budgeted for construction. Work is estimated to begin in the spring and be completed by the fall.

Woman’s Club plans social event

The Ponte Vedra Woman’s Club is planning a “Purely Social Happy Hour” from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. March 4 at Lynch’s Irish Pub, 514 1st St. North, Jacksonville Beach. Register at pontevedrawomansclub.com.

New veterinarian joins Palm Valley Veterinary Center

Dr. Holly Wolfe has joined Palm Valley Veterinary Center. She’ll be seeing patients Monday through Thursday. Originally from Ohio, she most recently practiced at Main Street Veterinary Clinic in Texas.

Call Palm Valley Veterinary Center at 904-789-8387 to schedule an appointment with Wolfe, Dr. Aaron Thivierge (Mondays and Tuesdays), Dr. Kelley Pampalon (full-time) and Dr. Aeon Fogt (full-time).

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival early bird special expires soon

The fifth annual St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival has announced that its 2025 early bird discount tickets special will expire Feb. 28. The festival named “One of Florida’s Top 10 Food & Wine Festivals” by USA Today takes place on Florida’s Historic Coast, May 7-11.

The St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival is presented by Publix, and will once again be a showcase of culinary, beverage and culture that highlights regional and local chefs, celebrity guest chefs and winemakers, beverage experts, live music and artisans, along with renowned wine, spirits and beer brands from around the globe. There will be a wide variety of events for all tastebuds and budgets, from large-scale tasting events to intimate learning experiences.

The festival has just announced new VIP Private Tastings Lounge Tickets and Discount VIP Package Tickets available for 2025. Guests can save up to 25% on select festival tickets for a limited time. Go to staugustinefoodandwinefestival.com/tickets.

The festival events take place throughout historic St. Augustine, World Golf



File Photo

The St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival will be held on May 7-11.

Village and Vilano Beach. World Golf Village is located 20 minutes north of downtown and is the host location site for Smoke on the Walk, the Grand Tasting and the new al fresco/covered tent, Mother’s Day Jazz Brunch on the Lawn

as the perfect festival finale.

The River Walk Tastings event takes place once again in St. Augustine’s historic district at San Sebastian Winery. The Hyatt Place, St. Augustine/Vilano Beach, is the new host location for the

Harvest Awards & Tastings, which is sponsored by The Recorder and St. Johns Food Service.

The festival is made possible in part by support from St. Johns Cultural Council, Florida’s Historic Coast: St. Augustine/Ponte Vedra and a 2025 St. Johns County Tourist Development Grant.

The festival’s primary official charity partner is Vilano Beach Main Street, a local St. Augustine non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. The festival donates a portion of ticket sales and 100% of the Main Event’s silent auction proceeds donated directly to Vilano Beach Main Street, with more than \$100,000 in donations made possible from the festival’s own foundation, The Adfish Group/Culinary Festivals Foundation since 2022.

First Coast Technical College is also a festival charity partner. The most up to date festival information is available on the website: staugustinefoodandwinefestival.com, and the festival’s social media channels: facebook.com/StAugustineFoodWine and instagram.com/staugustinefoodwine.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Operation Christmas Child says thanks

To The Editor:

The overwhelming generosity of the people of Ponte Vedra Beach, helped provide joy to children in need through Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts this season. Across the U.S., the Samaritan's Purse project collected 10.5 million shoebox gifts in 2024. Combined with those collected from partnering countries in 2024, the ministry is now sending over 11.9 million shoebox gifts to children worldwide.

Shoebox packers brought joy and hope to children around the world through fun, full, personalized gifts. For many children, this is the first gift they have ever received. Each shoebox gift is a tangible expression of God's love, given to children in need around the world. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 232 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

Across the region, shoebox packers often shop for deals on shoebox items throughout the year, and many serve at a deeper level by becoming a year-round volunteer. Information about ways area participants can get involved year-round can also be found at samaritanspurse.org/occ.

Although local Ponte Vedra Beach drop off locations for shoebox gifts are closed until Nov. 17-24, 2025, anyone can still be a part of this life-changing project by conveniently

packing a shoebox gift online in just a few simple clicks at samaritanspurse.org/buildonline.

These simple gifts, packed with love, remind children around the world that they are loved and not forgotten.

Sincerely,
Molly Miller
Samaritan's Purse



Recycle 'Recycling Recyclables'

To The Editor:

Reduce, reuse, recycle: a well-known slogan from the 1970s on Earth Day, its main purpose is to try and offset the harmful effects of pollution on the natural world. Maybe you have heard it from your parents, your teachers, or even the internet, and you took it for granted. But have you thought if it works? Have you ever researched if it benefits the environment? Reduce and reusing are self-explanatory, if you use less plastics or use the same plastics repeatedly, surely it would help the environment one bit at a time. But, what about recycling, salvaging old products and converting them into new? Before, I recycled plastic water bottles, cardboard and other recyclables, thinking that I was doing something for the environment. Surely, I was ... right?

Well, it doesn't, at least not to a high degree. Let's do

some math. (I promise it'll be fast). The average family household living in the United States produces 4.5 lbs. of waste material, of which 1.46 lbs. are recycled, meaning that the average household recycles around 32.5% of their waste. In 2023, there were 131.43 million households (and the number is still growing to this day), meaning that there are around 191,887,800 lbs. of "potential" recyclables! However, 174,616,898 lbs. of recycling (91%) end up in landfills or are incinerated, contributing to carbon emissions! Recycling is not leading us to anything.

So, is recycling useless? Do we live in a simulation? Is anything real? These questions are difficult to answer. How did time start? Does 1+1=2? Look, I cannot answer with certainty whether recycling is useless, but we should try to refuse plastics and increase reducing and reusing your recyclables instead of recycling them. It is not too late to start. I am just a student at Mandarin High, and I intend to increase reducing and reusing. I believe that everyone, no matter what age, should intend to reduce and reuse more. I challenge you to increase reducing and reusing what you can, because everybody can! You can reuse glass containers, or you can email your shopping receipts instead of printing them. There are many ways to reuse and reduce, we just have to adapt to those ways. We must ensure to educate us and others about reducing and reusing, for the sake of the Earth!

Om Patel

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Patrick Caulfield grew up in Jacksonville and has called the First Coast his home for some time. He has volunteered at THE PLAYERS for the past 41 years and has become a staple in the media center for the event.

Patrick Caulfield

As told to Anthony Richards

Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

I was born in New York City and raised in Jacksonville. I attended Englewood High School but graduated from Terry Parker High School.

I attended Florida Junior College for my freshman and sophomore years and then went on to the University of North Florida for my junior and senior years where I majored in health science.

I served in the United States Marine Corps for four years and the vast majority of my working career was with the U.S. Treasury Department.

I retired after 32 years in 2011, and my wife and I reside in Green Cove Springs. We have two sons and a daughter and eight grandchildren. Our family is made complete by Sparky our cavapoo dog.

What led you to volunteering at THE PLAYERS and how many years have you been doing it?

I first got interested in volunteering at the PGA when a gentleman from there offered to sponsor the Multiple Sclerosis 150-mile bike ride in which I took part.

We discussed volunteering opportunities for THE PLAYERS, and I soon signed on and have been working as a volunteer for 41 years now.

What are some of the ways you have helped as a volunteer over the years?

I have been chairman of the media center at the PGA for 35 of my 41 years with the organization.

It's been interesting to be a part of the many changes that have taken place over the time. When I first started, the media room was located under the old clubhouse, and we were involved with less than 100 reporters.

In time, we outgrew the space, and a new million-dollar media center was built to accommodate our expanding needs and 48 to 52 volunteers.

Media needs were supported by a bank of eight to nine phones that fielded hundreds of daily calls and copy machines that ran 110,000 to 125,000 copies of pertinent information consisting of interviews, stats and other information. Then along came technology; fax machines, computers and cell phones changed our world.

In 2024, we had seven volunteers, and our bank of phones has been replaced by individual cell phones and information is largely disseminated via computers.

This is also reflected by the fact that we now only make about 1,000 copies a week, and our involvement has expanded to hundred of reporters from more than 16 countries.

It has been an interesting experience to witness the changes over my 41 years.

Will your duties change at all with the introduction of the PGA Tour's new production facility?

No, our duties will not change. Often times we do have several changes but this year I don't expect any. Of course, things could change overnight

What do you enjoy most about volunteering?

Volunteering at THE PLAYERS has given me a chance to meet some incredible volunteers and PGA staff personnel.

Some of these friendships have lasted several decades, and I have enjoyed this aspect very much.



Photo by Anthony Richards

Patrick Caulfield has volunteered at THE PLAYERS for the past 41 years and has plenty of memories during that time.

Are there any fun memories you have from over the years?

I have so many great memories. I have met some of the greatest golfers in the world and have had the opportunity to talk and interact with many of them.

A lot of this interaction between me and the players occurred when we transported the players out for photo shoots. It gave me an opportunity to talk with them about their love of the game and outside interests as well.

The funny thing is most of the players are now on the Champions Tour. I guess that must mean I'm getting older.

Have you gotten involved with the Furyk & Friends tournament at all?

Yes, I have gotten involved with the Furyk & Friends tournament. I've been the media chairman there since the first year. This will be my fifth year.

It's a great group of people and the entire staff does a fantastic job. Tom Hyde is my assistant and is also one of the assistant chairmen with THE PLAYERS.

Are you a fan of golf?

I initially got interested in golf when a co-worker at the Treasury Department asked me if I would be interested in playing golf. I said no, but he encouraged me to consider it.

He was a five handicapper, and he sold me his complete set of clubs, balls, gloves, etc. for \$50, and I became a golf fan and player after that.

I did find out that the clubs and balls he sold me weren't very good because the first time I played I scored about 110. Yep, naturally I blamed my score on his clubs.

What do you enjoy most about living in the North Florida area?

My wife and I are both retired so we have a lot of free time. We love Florida weather, people, beaches and state parks.

We enjoy traveling and have several trips planned over the next few months. I am also involved with the North Florida Officials Association, volunteer at the Mayo Clinic and I am a member of The Elks.



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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

Getting ready for spring

"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." — Audrey Hepburn



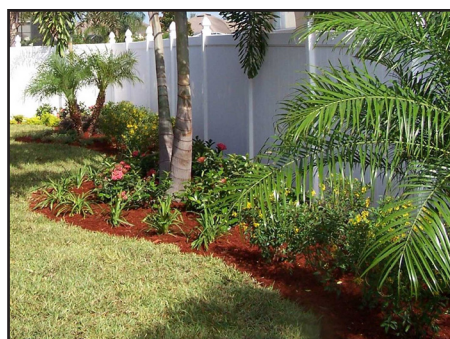
By Kathy Esfahani

As temperatures start to warm up, we are reminded that spring is almost here and energized to begin tending to our gardens and landscapes!

February is an ideal

time to plan your spring projects and prepare for planting. Keep these tasks in mind:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture divides the country into planting zones (also known as growing zones). This classification provides guidance for what plants and trees are most suited in the various climates across the nation. Here in Northeast Florida, we are part of the 9A zone. For the most success, select plants that are recommended for zone 9A when adding to your landscape.



New mulch is an instant refresh for your landscape!

- Begin your spring preparations with a full clean up! Clear any mounds of plant debris that may be in your garden beds, including any annuals you failed to remove last fall.

- February is also suitable for transplanting any plants or trees you've been planning to relocate. Remember to check for sunlight amounts in different parts of your yard as you move plants.

- As long as temperatures remain above freezing, plan for pruning in the coming weeks or early March. Prune plants down

to where you see new green growth. This trimming will help your plants produce maximum growth in the next few months.

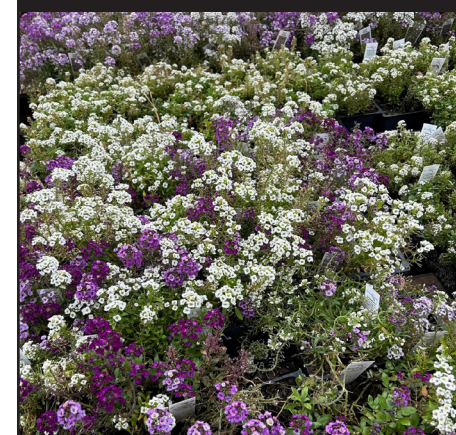
- Fertilize flowers, plants and trees before higher temperatures are here to stay. Select fertilizers specifically designed for your plants, palms and/or citrus trees. Be sure to follow the instructions on the package.

- Prepare your lawn for the coming season but wait a few more weeks before mowing. Use warm days to check your irrigation system for broken or misdirected sprinkler heads. Once temperatures will remain above 65 degrees for four to five days, it is important to apply a pre-emergent weed killer to your lawn. Note: pre-emergent is not a "weed and feed" fertilizer; it is solely a weed treatment to help control weeds in your lawn throughout the coming season. For best results, it is important to time this application just as temperatures warm up!

- Weed landscape beds and add new mulch to refresh the appearance of beds and help the plants prepare for spring.

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Flower of the Week



Alyssum

Mulch discourages weeds, moderates the soil temperature and creates cohesion throughout your yard.

- Clean and update your gardening tools for spring projects. Purchase new items for planned projects and refresh any tools you already have. Now is also a good time to sharpen any tools with blades.

Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Alyssum

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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Jacksonville Symphony celebrates \$3M in donations

The Jacksonville Symphony recently announced that \$3 million in generous donations have been received from longtime supporter Ann Hicks, and couple Michael Ward and Jennifer Glock. These gifts will strengthen the Symphony’s endowment, ensure continued artistic excellence and enhance music education and community engagement programs for generations to come.

Hicks’ \$2 million gift honors Music Director and Conductor Courtney Lewis’ 10th anniversary season. Hicks is a Jacksonville native and life-long supporter of the Symphony. She has made significant contributions to the Symphony through her philanthropy and leadership, with her more recent contributions supporting the purchase of a Steinway concert grand piano, in addition to key artistic initiatives including the establishment of the David M. Hicks Piano Series.

“It is very gratifying to be able to celebrate Courtney Lewis’ decade with the Jacksonville Symphony,” said Hicks. “Under his leadership, the orchestra has reached new heights, elevating it to the level that Jacksonville deserves.”

“Ann’s gift is an incredibly meaningful way to mark my 10th anniversary,” said Lewis. “Celebrating a decade with the Jacksonville Symphony alongside such a generous gesture reinforces the journey



Photo by James Gilbert / Jacksonville Symphony

The Jacksonville Symphony performs *Symphonie Fantastique* on June 7, 2024, at the Jacoby Symphony Hall. Recent donations totaling \$3 million will help the symphony continue to serve the community with high-quality performances.

we’ve taken together. Her support honors not only the past but also the future we are building for this orchestra and for Jacksonville.”

Ward and Glock’s \$1 million gift includes continued support of the Jennifer Glock Endowed Clarinet Chair, underscoring their legacy of sustaining the Symphony’s artistic excellence. Over the years, the couple has championed several initiatives, including a \$1 million donation for COVID-19 relief efforts, which were

used to keep the Symphony thriving during the challenges of the pandemic.

“Jacksonville is our home, and we believe that supporting the Symphony is an investment in the heart of our community,” said Ward. “In addition to enriching lives through music, this organization plays a vital role in strengthening our local economy by bringing people downtown and creating a vibrant cultural scene.”

Their commitment goes beyond the love of music — it reflects a deep belief in the

Symphony’s role as a cornerstone of the community.

“We are proud to support the Jacksonville Symphony,” said Glock. “Music has a unique way of bringing joy and hope to life. It is our hope that this gift will inspire others to support the Symphony in the same way.”

“These gifts reflect a shared belief in the Symphony’s mission and its impact on our community,” said Steven B. Libman, president and CEO. “Their generosity exemplifies a passion for strengthening our community through the power of music. These contributions will have a lasting impact on both our artistic endeavors and our educational outreach.”

“For our musicians, donations are not just financial contributions — they represent the community’s belief in the Symphony’s value and its ability to enrich lives in our community and beyond,” said Lewis. “I must add my personal thanks to Ann Hicks and Jennifer Glock and Michael Ward for their continued generosity and outstanding support of the Symphony.”

With these transformative gifts, the Jacksonville Symphony is poised to continue its legacy of artistic excellence, inspire future generations of musicians and enrich the cultural life of Jacksonville for years to come.





Contributed photos

Fourth annual 7 Creeks Fest set for March 8

The fourth annual 7 Creeks Fest, a celebration of Jacksonville's expansive 7 Creeks Recreation Area will be held March 8. The free, family-friendly event is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and includes activities in multiple parks that comprise the 7 Creeks Recreation Area, spanning more than 30 miles of trails and waterways.

Timucuan Parks Foundation, the City of Jacksonville, Florida State Parks, North Florida Land Trust and Visit Jacksonville partner each year to host activities throughout the parks to showcase the 7 Creeks Recreation Area to the community and lead an exploration of the natural spaces.

All activities are free and open to the public. Visitors can check in at the Fest Welcome Hub at Betz-Tiger Point Preserve at 13990 Pumpkin Hill Road and then choose an adventure. There will



be guided hikes, birding hikes, native plant hikes, archaeological hikes, a Hike into History at Cedar Point, kayaking in Pumpkin Hill Creek, canoeing at Cedar



Point boat ramp, a camping clinic and dip netting.

Explore Bogey Creek Preserve and take a selfie at its selfie stations. There will also be a youth fishing clinic for ages 6 to 17 (registration will be required), environmental exhibitors, live music, food trucks and more.

Sponsorship opportunities are available and range from the \$10,000 7 Creeks Presenting Sponsor level to the \$1,000 Sandhill level. Those interested should contact fest@timucuanparks.org or call 904-374-1107. Support of the event contributes to preserving healthy natural environments, deepening the community's connection to public lands and making it possible for the Fest's educational and transformative



engagement activities to be available for all for free.

All the details can be found at 7creeks-fest.org.

The 7 Creeks Recreation Area is 5,600 acres of contiguous parklands in northeastern Jacksonville. It includes Betz-Tiger Point Preserve, Cedar Point Preserve, Cedar Point, Jim Wingate Preserve, Bogey Creek Preserve, Pescatello Island and Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park.

The 7 Creeks Recreation was made possible by the partnership of park agencies and supportive nonprofits working together to expand access and recreational opportunities for park visitors.

Seaside Estate in Ponte Vedra Beach on the Lagoon

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The Florida Man Games set for March 1

A Florida Man or Woman is always a wild card in his or her own right. But at this year's The Florida Man Games, like a perverse swamp version of "The Price is Right," at least one team will be plucked from the audience to become the ultimate The Florida Man Games Wild-card Team. Pete Melfi, commissioner and founder of The Florida Man Games, announced his plans on the Going Ring-side Podcast with Scott Johnson. For teams that just couldn't quite get off their lawn couch to make a submission video, they've got another shot at the red gator skin belt ... oh, and \$5,000 cash.

"There were so many people who attended and wanted to take part in the competitions that we're going to give them the chance to do it this year," said Melfi. "We might pick teams from a bucket; we might just ask the crowd who wants to do it and start picking from the people with their hands up. Since it's only year two, we don't have hardline rules yet on how to do a competition like this, so we're gonna have some fun experimenting."

The absolutely bonkers events at The

Florida Man Games are pulled straight from the headlines. During the Evading Arrest Obstacle Course, contests chuck a gator through a drive-through window, inspired by the viral 2016 story about a 24-year-old who threw a 3.5-foot gator through a Palm Beach County Wendy's drive-through. It takes true legends with Florida Man knowledge to cover these events. That's why returning host Josh Robinson will be joined this year by new co-host Kevin Flynn, known for his prolific @FloridaMan Instagram page.

New this year will be high-stakes lawn mower races with a notable racing heritage. Jefferey Earnhardt, driver in the NASCAR Xfinity Series and member of the storied Earnhardt racing family, will host the event.

"There's fun, and then there's Florida Man Games fun," said Earnhardt. "When I saw this event in the news, I told my team I wanted in! Not only will I be there to mingle with the fans and enjoy some cold beverages, there's a damn good chance I'm gonna be participating in a few of those events. Come join me on March 1, and let's do some Florida Man

stuff."

Earnhardt will be on hand to sign autographs and take photos with fans. Earnhardt is a professional stock car racing driver and a fourth-generation NASCAR driver, continuing the legacy of his racing roots — his great-grandfather, Ralph Earnhardt; his grandfather, NASCAR Hall of Famer Dale Earnhardt; and his uncle, Dale Earnhardt, Jr.

In 2007, Earnhardt was named Most Popular Driver by the Busch East Series. When he took the track at the Daytona 500 in February 2017, Earnhardt made NASCAR history by becoming the first-ever fourth-generation driver to compete in the Daytona 500.

Also, this year, a TV show based around the games is in the works.

"The Florida Man Games will be televised," said Melfi. "There has been a lot of interest in making this a TV series;

producers and studios have been calling since the day after the first event. I'm still getting calls from major production companies, on average, probably twice a month at least. We're close to a deal with one of the best production companies around, with popular recent specials on Netflix, ESPN and more; they're the real deal."

The Florida Man Games is scheduled for Saturday, March 1, at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds, 5840 State Road 207 East in Elkton. The Florida Man Games will benefit the Jimmy Jam Community Outreach, a local 501(c)(3) that helps residents in need. General admission tickets are \$45, and VIP tickets are \$145, but remaining tickets are limited. RV tailgating spaces are currently sold out. For more information, to purchase tickets or to be a sponsor or vendor, go to thefloridamangames.com.



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Contributed photos



Albannach



Clover's Revenge

St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival to be March 8-9

The St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival celebrates Celtic culture, honoring St. Augustine's legacy as America's Oldest Celtic City and home to the original St. Patrick Parade.

The festival features Highland Games, the St. Patrick Parade, Celtic artisans and vendors, food, drink and activities. A highlight of the festival is the best Celtic performers from the United States,

Canada, Ireland and Scotland.

The St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival will be held on March 8 and 9 at Francis Field, 25 W. Castillo Drive in St. Augustine.

"We've been extremely fortunate to attract some of the best Celtic performers in the world," said Pat Syeles, St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival organizer and member of Romanza's

Board of Directors. "And they keep returning because they love the energy and atmosphere of this festival. The legendary Dublin City Ramblers and PBS and CNN stars Seven Nations have appeared every year since our first festival in 2011, and six more top Celtic touring bands join them for 2025."

The Main Stage is emceed and hosted by Chad Light and features performances

from Albannach, Clover's Revenge, Dublin City Ramblers, Screaming Orphans, SYR, Jamison, Seven Nations and Mudmen. The Second Stage is emceed and hosted by Sharon Foy Baird with performances by Captain Mayhem, Bill Mullen, Mickey Sweeney, Blue Lotus World Dance Company, John Miles and

FESTIVAL continues on **Page 14**



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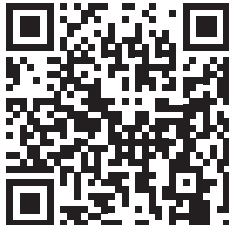
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Festival

Continued from 12

First Coast Highlanders.

Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased online at celticstaugustine.com/tickets, in-person at Ann O'Malley's Irish Pub and at the gates on March 8 and 9. General admission tickets are one-day tickets and are \$25. Children 12 and under, active duty and retired military personnel will be admitted free.

VIP All-Weekend tickets include two-day festival admission, two free beers or wine, a free festival T-shirt, VIP tent seating with a VIP bar, exclusive VIP seating in front of the Main Stage, and VIP air-conditioned restrooms. VIP All-Weekend tickets are \$120.

Whiskey tasting tickets are not included in the VIP All-Weekend tickets and are sold separately. Whiskey tasting tickets include seven top-tier whiskey and scotch tastings and a gift bag. The tasting is on Friday, March 7, and tickets are \$75.

Athlete registration is also open for the Highland Games at \$35 per athlete at celticstaugustine.com/highland-games. It includes the weekend competition, free festival admission, free lunch for the day(s) of participation and a free Games Clinic on Friday, March 7.

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KATE AMATO FOUNDATION UNITES
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BETTY GRIFFIN CENTER BREAKFAST
TO BE HELD MARCH 3
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...AND MORE INSIDE!



Dreams Come True marks 40th anniversary, 5,000th Dream

Dreams Come True, Northeast Florida's only locally based dream-granting organization dedicated to fulfilling the dreams of local children battling life-threatening medical conditions, celebrated three monumental milestones during its Royal Ball Gala: its 40th anniversary, raising \$1 million and granting its 5,000th dream.

As guests stepped through the grand entrance of TPC Sawgrass on Jan. 17, they were transported into a royal ball setting — complete with elegant décor, shimmering chandeliers and music that echoed the timeless charm of a fairytale celebration. The evening honored past and current dream recipients and community partners and celebrated the organization's rich history and its future filled with more dreams to be granted.

"Celebrating our 40th anniversary by raising \$1 million and granting our 5,000th dream is a testament to the incredible community of volunteers, donors and supporters who share in our mission and vision," said Anna Valent, executive director of Dreams Come True. "Every dream granted is a reminder of the resilience of our amazing Dreamers and their families and also the power of our First Coast community."

Lee Smith, executive director of THE PLAYERS Championship, joined Dreams



Lee Smith, executive director for THE PLAYERS Championship, surprises John Bertram Lancaster and his family at Dreams Come True's 40th Anniversary Royal Ball with a dream trip to Lake Tahoe. John Bertram's dream is Dreams Come True's 5,000th dream fulfilled. THE PLAYERS Championship sponsored John Bertram's dream. Smith was joined by other members of THE PLAYERS Championship staff and Red Coats for the surprise reveal.

Come True in announcing the 5,000th dream during the organization's Royal Ball. Dreamer John Bertram Lancaster, 10, from St. Simons Island, Georgia, was surprised with a trip to Lake Tahoe, California, for his Snow Dream, which is being sponsored by THE PLAYERS Championship.

"Being part of this incredible milestone with Dreams Come True is a true privilege," said Smith. "As we celebrate John Bertram's dream and reflect on the remarkable impact Dreams Come True

has had over the past 40 years, we're reminded of the power of community support. THE PLAYERS is honored to support such a meaningful organization, and we're deeply grateful to the Northeast Florida community for putting us in a position to make a lasting impact. Together, we're fulfilling dreams and offering hope to children and families facing life's toughest challenges."

John Bertram was referred to Dreams Come True after being diagnosed with stage four kidney cancer at the age of 2. Along with his parents, Charlotte and Micah, and his sister, Elizabeth, John Bertram would travel this month for six days and five nights to Lake Tahoe, with special accommodations at The Village at the Palisades. Activities during their dream trip will include snowmobiling, sledding, skiing, night tubing, skating and a dog-sledding experience.

During John Bertram's medical journey and while he was deciding on the perfect dream, Dreams Come True continued to support him and his family through various activities.

In 2018, John Bertram was one of 50 Dreamers that took part in Dreams Come True's Dream Day Celebration at PRI Productions. He was also a special guest of THE PLAYERS Championship in 2020, where he was able to meet various players inside the ropes on the 17th green.

"Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to our mission and inspired by the dreams we have yet to fulfill," added Valent. "The stories of courage and hope we witness every day motivate us to continue making a lasting difference for children and families here in our community."

Dreams Come True currently has nearly 600 children dreaming of their one true dream and receives an average of 25 new qualified referrals every month for children with life-threatening medical conditions who live in the seven counties of Northeast Florida or who are treated in Northeast Florida by medical partners.

For more information about Dreams Come True and how to support its mission, or details about upcoming events, go to www.DreamsComeTrue.org.



Contributed photos

More than 20 Dreamers (current and past Dream children) walked the blue carpet at Dreams Come True's 40th Anniversary Royal Ball. Many of the Dreamers were joined on the blue carpet by top donors from Dreams Come True.



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Photos by Susan Griffin



The ninth year for the annual event.



A festive wine tasting event will take place at the Casa Marina Hotel courtyard following the race.



The event is expected to sell out.

Chemo Noir moves marquee event to spring

By Anthony Richards

The annual Chemo Noir One Mile & Wine Tasting event is earlier on the calendar than it ever has been as it has moved from summer to spring and is scheduled for April 19.

“I’ve always wanted to do the event in the spring, but it’s tricky because it really is like two events in one, and spring is really wedding season, so it can be tough to find the available space,” said Kat Casey, founder of Chemo Noir.

Chemo Noir is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and it will be the ninth year of the run and wine tasting, which according to Casey, has really established itself as the marquee event for the nonprofit.

“We do galas and partner with groups and ever dollar we raise is so special to the cause, but this event has definitely become our signature event,” Casey said.

The event always has a fun atmosphere surrounding its unique format that has led it to being known as the classiest one-mile fun run event locally.

However, this year it has an even more special meaning with it being the 10th

anniversary of the organization, and the theme of event will be “cheers to 10 years,” and will include a tribute video being played at some point.

According to Casey, it has been such joy to watch the support from the community grow throughout the years and as a result the number of people battling cancer that they have been able to help provide much needed financial support has continued to increase as well.

“This past year we were able to help fund 80 people, which was the most we’ve ever done, and to still remain completely local is very important to me,” Casey said. “What we do is heavy at times, but it feels very rewarding when you can give back like that.”

After her own battle with cancer, Casey knew she wanted to give back and that was the idea behind Chemo Noir’s creation.

“We’ve been a resource to social workers when they have nowhere else to turn, which is something I didn’t expect when we started this, but it’s been a big help for them,” Casey said.

The run will begin near Jacksonville Beach Pier on a course that will be half a

mile out and another half a mile back to the start/finish line.

As has been a tradition for years now, the half mile turn will be dedicated to Tara Newton Richardson, who was one of the very first Chemo Noir supporters and friends, and it will include a cheering section and water station known as “Tara’s Turn.”

There will be a festive wine tasting event along with sponsor vendors,

live music and raffles at the Casa Marina Hotel courtyard, and medals from the race will also be handed out.

The race check-in will begin at 8 a.m. with the race set to start at 9 a.m. followed by the tasting event from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

Anyone interested in being part of the race can register by going to www.chemonoirrace.com to register and for more details.



This year’s Chemo Noir One Mile & Wine Tasting event is scheduled for April 19.



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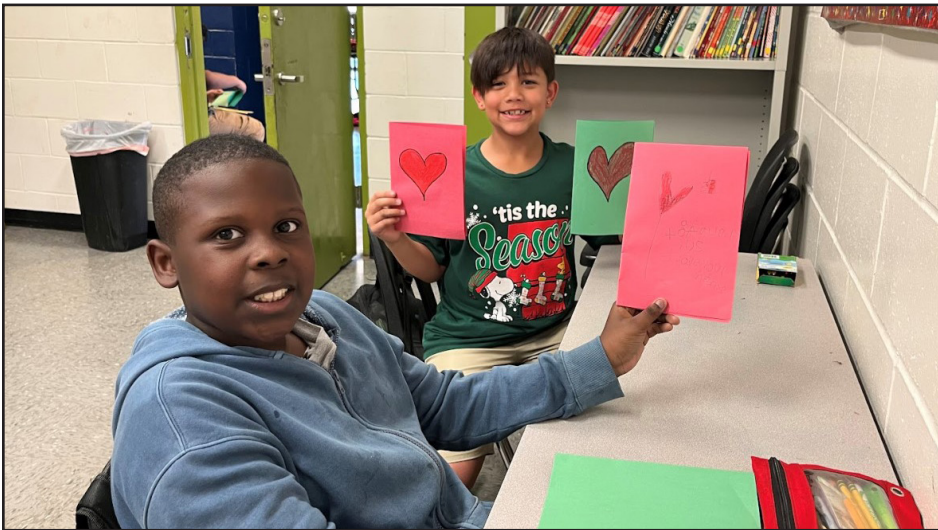
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MaliVai Washington Foundation hosts annual serve-a-thon

By Anthony Richards

The serve-a-thon community service projects have been a vital part of the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation since its inception in 1997. The initiative is designed with the goal of building crucial life skills such as compassion, teamwork and helping others in need by involving students in the various community programs. Many of the students with the foundation come from low-income back-

grounds and the serve-a-thon allows them to learn the role that community plays in supporting them and alike individuals in need. “Help the community so it can help you when you need it,” said Melanie, a fourth grader. Each project is designed to expand their perspective and build confidence by completing simple services such as creating Valentine’s Day cards for police and firefighters, picking up litter from a local park, or even making dog treats

with simple ingredients. “Doing community service makes people’s days brighter and creates change,” 11th grade student A’lon said. The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation strives for each of its students from kindergarten through 12th grade to complete at least one project in the serve-a-thon time frame, which takes

place from Martin Luther King Jr. Day to President’s Day each year. Teens in the program complete slightly more advanced community service projects, such as joining projects with the local Riverkeeper organization to collect trash near waterways or spending time playing bingo with members of local senior living communities.

Photos courtesy of MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation



Hannah and Kayden at a park cleanup.



Making sandwiches for the homeless.



Students drop off soap dogs to local senior citizens.



Packing snack bags for the homeless.

Hometown Hero: Best Buddies honors Chris Shee

Empowerment, friendship, job security, communication, skill building, support and independence — it's what Best Buddies is all about.

Best Buddies is an international nonprofit that serves individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. IDD is a community of 200 million people worldwide, including those with Down syndrome, autism, Fragile X, Williams syndrome and other undiagnosed disabilities.

On Nov. 16, Best Buddies held its annual Champion of the Year event, uniting and honoring individuals in the community who champion inclusion. These leaders raise funds for Best Buddies and advocate for their mission throughout the year.

One of the honorees is Chris Shee, who received the Hometown Hero Award.

"I was introduced to Best Buddies in 2002 by a great friend of mine, whose daughter has Down syndrome," said Shee, founder of MasterCraft Builder Group. "Her happiness and celebration of life was so magnetic to me, and seeing their family blessed by Best Buddies was something I didn't want to turn away from."

Shee is also the owner and operator of Heritage Farms' Tringali Barn, located on a 54-acre property next to Matanzas State Forest. He founded the farm as a legacy to his family and for use as a wedding venue and venue for raising funds for charities.

Shee's local business as a successful home builder has enabled him to make significant investments in the community. Besides his annual dedication and support of Best Buddies, Shee hosts multiple fundraisers for other local organizations. His annual charity events, Clays for a Cause and Concerts for a Cause, have raised more than \$1 million in the last 10 years for more than 30 charities that benefit children and families in need — including Best Buddies.

"The Hometown Hero Award is a newer recognition, acknowledging an individual who has gone above and beyond to support our programs this past year," said Sarah Jeter, area director for Best Buddies North Florida.

This year, Heritage Farms hosted Best Buddies' annual Friendship Ball, donating the Tringali Barn to create an even more special experience for teens with IDD.

"It's like a free prom for our school

program participants," Jeter said. "This event was the largest we have had, hosting over 400 students from four counties. Because of this donation, we were able to allocate funds and provide transportation for more schools to attend."

With the help of champions like Shee, Best Buddies is able to create unique and everyday opportunities for their community.

"Best Buddies North Florida is able to thrive because of volunteers and the community support," Jeter said. "We are grateful to all who donate, volunteer, or spread the word about inclusion."



Contributed photo

Chris Shee receives the Hometown Hero Award.



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Jacksonville Golf & Country Club

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Local United Way raises \$295K with Givers Gala

United Way of St. Johns County hosted its eighth annual Givers Gala on Jan. 24 at the Embassy Suites St. Augustine Beach Oceanfront Resort, raising \$295,000 to support local programs that empower individuals and families across St. Johns and Putnam counties.

The evening, themed “Venetian Masquerade: Unmasking Our Mission So All Can Thrive!,” was an elegant celebration of generosity, community and leadership, and was hosted by First Coast News anchor Jessica Clark.

The event was made possible thanks to the generous support of The Hutson

Companies, the presenting sponsor and exclusive event sponsor, and Ring Power CAT, the platinum sponsor and exclusive cocktail hour sponsor. Their dedication to the community ensured the success of the gala and helped bring together supporters of United Way’s mission, organizers said.

The evening commenced with a cocktail hour overlooking a Florida winter sunset, featuring performances by magician Bill Abbott and fire artist Tokyo Moreno. Guests, donning Venetian masks, enjoyed the spectacular atmosphere, setting the tone for an unforgettable evening.

table evening.

United Way of St. Johns County also recognized four individuals for their contributions to the community:

- Cyndi Stevenson and Travis Hutson were presented with the Chair’s Award for their unwavering commitment to supporting United Way’s mission and our local community.

- Sgt. Michael Clark received the Nancy Burns Trailblazer Award for his innovative leadership in addressing community challenges.

- Tim Forson, superintendent of schools for the St. Johns County School

District, was honored with the John & Peggy Bailey Community Leadership Award for his lifelong dedication to education and community service.

United Way of St. Johns County extended its thanks to all the event sponsors and contributors who made the evening possible. All proceeds from the evening’s event will go directly to support United Way of St. Johns County’s work in the areas of healthy communities, youth opportunity, community resiliency and financial security — ensuring that resources continue to reach those who need them most.

Jacksonville Humane Society’s Mutt March returns after hiatus

The Jacksonville Humane Society (JHS) has announced the return of Mutt March, Northeast Florida’s largest pet-friendly walk in support of homeless animals. Mutt March will take place on April 5 at the University of North Florida’s Hodges Stadium.

Mutt March is a family and pet-friendly event in support of the dogs and cats at JHS. Attendees can choose to participate in a quarter mile or full mile walk around

the UNF Athletic Complex, then shop a market of local vendors, bid in a silent auction and enjoy music and activities for the whole family. Mutt March has not taken place since 2019, and JHS looks forward to reenergizing the event with the community’s support.

Mutt March is Northeast Florida’s largest pet walk and festival with a fundraising goal of \$100,000. All proceeds from this event benefit the more than

8,500 animals who come to the Jacksonville Humane Society every year.

“We are looking forward to celebrating the return of Mutt March with our friends in the Jacksonville community,” said Lawrence Nicolas, JHS CEO. “Mutt March is a day of fun for people and pets alike, all in support of our mission to save the lives of dogs and cats in Jacksonville. We can’t wait to see you there!”

Registration is open now at jaxhumane.org/muttmarch. The community is also encouraged to create a Mutt March walk team to raise funds and support the animals at JHS. The first 400 registrants receive a free Wag Bag full of swag from JHS partners.

For questions regarding registration, contact the JHS team at info@jaxhumane.org. Interested sponsors or vendors can contact Marin Haffner at mhaffner@jaxhumane.org.



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St. Johns Housing Partnership received a donation from last year's event.



The putting contest.



Boys & Girls Clubs is one of the beneficiaries of the event.

Vested Metals Charity Golf Tournament is April 28

When the new year kicked off, Viv Helwig and his team started preparing for their annual charity golf tournament in memory of colleague John Mark Leach. It didn't take long for them to realize that the event had grown faster and larger than they originally thought possible.

This year, Helwig's company, Vested Metals International, a specialty metals and steel supplier based in St. Augustine, unveils The Southeast Coil Classic. The Southeast Coil Classic, held on April 28 at Marsh Creek Country Club in St. Augustine, will continue to celebrate the legacy of John Mark Leach and the passion he had for helping others.

"For the past two years, we've raised

money for nonprofits that benefit youth and their families," explained Helwig, founder of Vested Metals International. "The first inaugural tournament took place in March 2023 and raised more than \$60,000. Last year, we had more than 200 supporters and raised over \$70,000."

Part of Vested Metals' mission is helping the next generation, with a core value of "People Are Forever." It drives their generosity, where 100% of the tournament's proceeds from sponsorships, ticket sales and additional donations go to their beneficiaries, which include United Way of St. Johns County, Adaptive Superstars, Flagler College, Safe Families for

Children, K9s For Warriors, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Boys & Girls Clubs.

"Our company is passionate about service, with the goal of achieving a \$1 million donation milestone by 2033," shared Helwig.

He and his team are thrilled to build upon the momentum of the past two years, and this year are calling for sponsors to make an even bigger impact. Sponsorship starts at \$1,500, with more than a dozen more opportunities and a top presenting sponsorship at \$10,000.

For more information, see their 2025 Vested Metals Golf Sponsorship Packet (drive.google.com/file/d/17OSTjZFTR

[NPu6rZYaAhas4nL3cxWbpvS/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17OSTjZFTR)) or email golf@vestedmetals.net.

The event will kick off at noon with a shotgun start. The 18-hole, four-person scramble features the chance to win a car with a "Hole-in-One," and there's also a Longest Drive contest and complimentary on-course snacks and beverages.

At 5 p.m., there will be a post-event reception (complete with live music and a cigar roller) to announce winners, present contest prizes, recognize beneficiaries and honor the Leach Family.

Tickets can be purchased at vestedmetals.net/golf, and donations are welcome for those who cannot attend.

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We use the term "Citizens" because our participants are empowered members of a community where they are loved and respected for who they are and who God has created them to be.

As a non-profit, 100% of proceeds return to help create a bright future for adults with special needs.

Jax Hope plans event to address various conditions

Jax Hope Inc. will host a health symposium on May 3 to discuss Parkinson's, dementia, Alzheimer's and other neurological conditions.

Speakers will include local neurologists, movement disorder specialists and more. There will also be musical entertainment and exercise demonstrations. Lunch will be provided.

Go to Jaxhopeinc.org for registration. This event is free, but seats are limited.

Location: Sullivan Hall, 7190 U.S. 17 South, Fleming Island.



Starting time is 9 a.m.

For questions and sponsorship information contact Gregg, community@jaxhopeinc.org or call 808-313-0966.

To find out about local Parkinson's Support Groups, go to jaxhopeorg.org, or the Facebook page Jax Hope for People with Parkinsons.



Contributed photos

Service dog trainers at the gala

Gala raises \$1.1M for K9s For Warriors

K9s For Warriors hosted an impactful event Friday night, Feb. 7, raising a record \$1.1 million to pair future warriors with life-changing service dogs. Hundreds of Ponte Vedra locals and visitors attended the 2025 Salute to Heroes Gala hosted by K9s at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa.

"We are immensely grateful for the supportive community that came together for our warriors and their service dogs," said Lindsay Grayson, chief revenue officer at K9s For Warriors. "Our donors have made our mission possible for the last 14 years."

This year's mission focus was the rescued service dog. By rescuing most of its dogs, K9s For Warriors saves two lives — a dog and a veteran. The harsh reality is more than 1,000 dogs a day are euthanized in shelters. The goal of K9s For Warriors is to save as



The silent auction

many lives as possible.

"Just because a dog has a rough past doesn't mean it shouldn't be loved," said K9s Director of Procurement & Placement Dan Clavel during his speech. "Our goal is to help the dog rebuild its trust and faith in humanity and begin its journey toward becoming a confident, life-changing service dog for a veteran in need."

Women Build Habitat planned for March 7-8

On Friday, March 7, and Saturday, March 8, Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County (Habitat St. Johns) joins Habitat International affiliates around the world in hosting Women Build days. Female volunteers will work on houses being constructed in the Volusia Woods neighborhood on Josiah Street in West Augustine.

This year's sponsors are FPL and the Raintree Restaurant. Volunteers will receive a Women Build T-shirt and a catered lunch.

On Friday, a smaller volunteer crew is expected. On Saturday —

International Women's Day — 30 female volunteers will be working on three houses. The build hours for both days are 7:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. Habitat St. Johns provides tools and training.

"Each year the Women Build community shows up to help more women overcome the gender barriers to homeownership," said Executive Director Malinda Eversen. "Over 60% of Habitat's future homebuyers are women. At Habitat St. Johns, we know that stable affordable housing is transformative for all families."



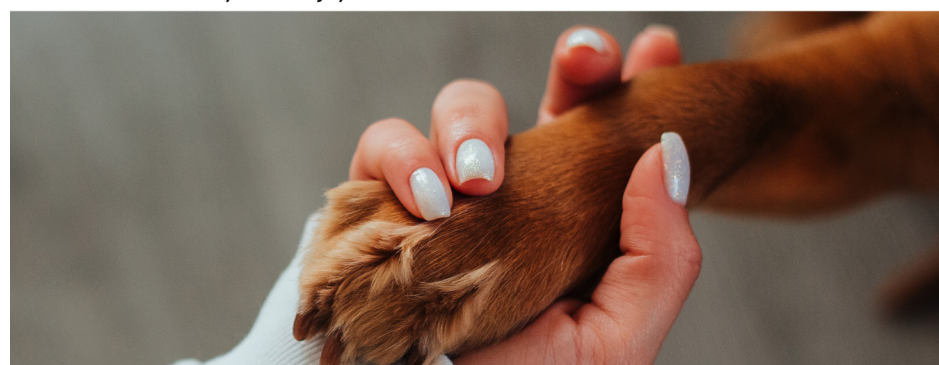
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Sexton to receive 'Rock of the Community Award'

Jacksonville Jaguars broadcaster Brian Sexton will receive the 2025 "Rock of the Community Award" at the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach's annual Mineral City Celebration.

Sexton will be honored for his work in the community through his role with the Jaguars and as a community leader who has volunteered with numerous local charities.

"Each year, the Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club honors a deserving individual to thank them for their civic contributions and inspire others to embrace a spirit of service," club President Beverly Flanagan said. "Since becoming the 'Voice of the Jaguars' more than 30 years ago, Brian Sexton has become an integral part of our First Coast Community. We are thrilled to honor him as the 2025 Rock of the Community."

Over his more than three decades with the Jaguars, Sexton has become one of the most sought-after speakers



Brian Sexton

and emcees in North Florida, lending his time and support to a variety of organizations and causes such as Emergency Assistance Ministry at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, The Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation, The Ronald McDonald House, The Women's Help Center and various efforts within the

Diocese of St. Augustine.

To be held April 5 at the Northeast Florida Regional Airport, the Mineral City Celebration is the signature annual fundraising event for the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach. Proceeds from the event have benefited dozens of local nonprofit organizations and charities, including the Beaches Dial-a-Ride program, Mission House, BEAM, HEAL, K9s for Warriors, United Way of St. Johns County, the Council on Aging and more.

For tickets or more information, go to www.mineralcitycelebration.com.

Walk to Defeat ALS set for April 12

Hundreds of people will rally to support people living with ALS at the 2025 Walk to Defeat ALS Jacksonville presented by Duval Ford on April 12 at the UNF JB Coxwell Amphitheater. Registration for the 2025 Walk to Defeat ALS is now open.

Every 90 minutes, someone is diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurodegenerative disease affecting nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord; it is also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS robs people of the ability to walk, talk and eventually breathe. Through an extensive network, the ALS Association is on the ground in all 50 states providing support for people living with ALS and their loved ones by ensuring they have access to critical care programs and services.

Walk to Defeat ALS is the world's largest signature event focused on supporting people living with ALS and their families. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the annual Walk to Defeat ALS. Through Walk to Defeat ALS fundraising efforts, the ALS Association has been able to dramati-

cally accelerate the fight against ALS by funding the development of new ALS treatments, by discovering new ALS genes, by creating new global research collaborations and by significantly expanding access to ALS care.

Walk to Defeat ALS events are more than fundraisers. This is a movement that unites the community in support of those affected by ALS. Many who participate have a loved one battling ALS while others participate in memory of a loved one who has lost the fight. Some participate simply because they want to make ALS a livable disease for everyone, everywhere while we search for a cure.

The walk begins at 10 a.m. April 12 at UNF JB Coxwell Amphitheater, 1 UNF Drive, Jacksonville.

Participants are encouraged to raise funds to advance the fight against ALS. Registered participants who raise \$100 or more will receive a commemorative T-shirt. To learn more, to register or donate, go to www.als.org/WalkJacksonville.

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Kate Amato Foundation unites fundraisers for day of giving

The Kate Amato Foundation (KAF) has announced an unprecedented event for 2025 — Three sports, two events, one epic day! The KATE KUP Triples Tennis Tournament and the rescheduled KATE KOMBO Golf and Pickleball Tournament will take place together on Saturday, April 19, at The Yards in Ponte Vedra Beach.

This combined event brings together two of KAF's signature fundraisers for an unforgettable day of competition, community and philanthropy, raising critical funds for pediatric cancer research. Players, sponsors and volunteers are needed to make this day a success.

While Hurricane Milton may have forced the postponement of KATE KOMBO, it also paved the way for something even bigger — a full-scale takeover at The Yards. This event will mark the sixth year of the annual KATE KUP Triples Tennis Tournament and the second year for the KATE KOMBO Golf and Pickleball Tournament.

Over the past several years, these events have gained tremendous popularity, attracting more participants, sponsors, volunteers, spectators and community support than ever before. While these two signature events will share the same date, each will maintain its distinct identity, ensuring an engaging and seamless experience for players, volunteers and attendees.

"These events are more than just tournaments — they're a celebration of Kate's spirit and a testament to the power of coming together for a cause," said Lisa Amato, founder of the Kate Amato Foundation. "We are determined to reach \$1 million in research funding this year and by coming together for KATE KUP and KATE KOMBO, we can take a huge step toward achieving that goal and changing the future of childhood cancer treatment."

Jacksonville Beach residents Lisa and



Jeff Amato lost their daughter Kate at the young age of 11 in November 2016 after a long and difficult battle with cancer. Through her journey, she became the inspiration for the foundation. During Kate's illness, her parents discovered how severely underfunded research is for pediatric cancer and witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of outdated, toxic treatments and the severe lack of funding for pediatric cancer research. Determined to honor Kate's life and advocate for other children, they established the Kate Amato Foundation to continue the fight against childhood cancer.

Making a Difference

All proceeds from KATE KUP and KATE KOMBO directly benefit the Kate Amato Foundation, whose mission is to fund innovative, non-toxic treatments for childhood cancer.

Since its inception, KAF has awarded \$775,000 in grants to cutting-edge pediatric cancer research projects at some of the leading Immunotherapy and Cancer Genomics research labs in the country, including: Duke University, Dana Farber Cancer Institute at Harvard Medical School, UCLA, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), The University of Colorado, Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Cancer Research Hospital and The University of Buffalo

and Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

These grants are predominantly funded by KATE Signature events: KATE KUP Triples Tennis Tournament, KATE KLASSIC Golf Tournament and KATE KOMBO Golf and Pickleball Tournament. Additional foundation programs include KATE'S KINDNESS PROJECT, which provides immediate direct support to local children hospitalized with cancer, and KATE KLUB, a school-based program where students can get involved with service projects and volunteering.

Registration Details

Registration for both KATE KUP and KATE KOMBO opened Feb. 7.

Those wishing to participate in the KATE KUP Triples Tournament are strongly encouraged to register promptly, as this event sells out quickly each year. Registration for tennis triples teams is \$750 and includes team play, gift bags, lunch and awards after-party.

All levels of play are welcome.

Players previously registered for the KATE KOMBO Golf and Pickleball Tournament in October will be automatically re-registered and do not need to take further action to secure their spot.

There are still golf foursomes and pickle pair spots available.

Registration is \$1,200 for golf foursomes and \$300 for pickleball pairs and includes team play, gift bags, lunch and awards after-party. All levels of play are welcome.

EVENT SCHEDULE & FORMAT

KATE KUP Triples Tennis Tournament
KATE KUP will kick off at 8 a.m. April 19 at The Yards Tennis Center in Sawgrass. Triples Tennis is a fast-paced, three versus three tournament where a feeder feeds a ball to one side of the tennis court

to start the point. After every point, each player rotates clockwise. At 11 points, the teams swap sides, giving each team a chance on the feed side. The goal is to be the first team to 21 points (winning by two).

KATE KOMBO Golf & Pickleball Tournament

KATE KOMBO starts at 11 a.m. at The Yards Golf Course and Pickle Garden. Twenty golf foursomes will play a shotgun start, 15-hole course, culminating in a shoot-out for the top teams. Simultaneously, 36 pickleball pairs will compete on 12 courts in a waterfall format, combining round robin and single elimination.

Following the conclusion of the competitions, all tennis players, golfers and pickleballers will gather at The Yards Greenhouse for even more fun at the awards after-party. Spectators are welcome to attend both events to cheer and heckle throughout the day. Tickets are available for spectators for \$50 to attend the awards after-party.

Join the Fight Against Childhood Cancer

KAF extends its sincere gratitude to their current sponsors whose generous support and commitment has helped make these events a continued success. They invite all businesses and organizations to join them in supporting their mission to find safer, more innovative, treatments for childhood cancer.

Sponsorship opportunities are available at multiple levels, offering unique brand visibility and community engagement benefits. Businesses and organizations are invited to be part of this impactful event.

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, volunteer or learn more about participating, go to KateAmatoFoundation.org.

Betty Griffin Center Breakfast to be held March 3

People can support Betty Griffin Center and learn more about the agency's mission while they hear testimonials from survivors of domestic and sexual violence during the second annual Betty Griffin Center Breakfast on March 3 at The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach, located at 101 Plantation Drive.

Doors open at 7:15 a.m. in advance of the 8 a.m. breakfast and program. Tickets are \$80 and are available now at Eventbrite (eventbrite.com/e/betty-griffin-center-2nd-annual-breakfast-tickets-1109274793769).

Proceeds from the breakfast will provide additional funding for emergency and support services, including an emergency shelter, rape care services at two local hospitals, transitional housing, counseling, legal assistance, financial literacy and preventive education programs.

Speakers this year include Florida Partnership to End Domestic Violence CEO Amanda Price, along with two

survivors who will share their journey of healing. Guests will also hear from Betty Griffin Center's CEO Kelly Franklin, board members and other community leaders.

"Last year, our guests heard from St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick and an inspiring story from Madison Schemitz, the teenager who survived a stabbing attack by a former boyfriend in Ponte Vedra," Franklin said. "We were also joined by Kristin Paul, a two-time award-winning author who spoke about the difficulties women experience when it comes to domestic violence. This year, we expect the same inspiration from those taking part in the event."

The event is sponsored by the Horschel Family Foundation along with Pearmid Properties LLC, KeHE Cares, The Shee Family, Women's Care Foundation and Cisco Systems, Inc.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact development director Kenlie Herring at kenlieh@bettygriffincenter.org or call 904-808-8544, extension 207.



Contributed photo

Madison Schemitz speaks at the 2024 breakfast.

Hubbard House plans domestic violence awareness walk

Hubbard House's 16th annual Stand Up & Stride Domestic Violence Awareness Walk has been set for March 29. About 1,500 people attend this free, family-friendly event to raise awareness about domestic violence and Hubbard House resources, uplift the strength of survivors and celebrate the community of support.

As the certified domestic violence center serving Duval and Baker counties, Hubbard House provides free, confidential support for survivors of domestic violence and their families. Life-saving, life-changing services include emer-

gency shelter, children's services, housing help, counseling and more. Hubbard House's 24/7 Hotline is 904-354-3114.

In its 48-year history, Hubbard House has served nearly 160,000 survivors of domestic violence and children each year, including 4,574 last fiscal year.

The event is 8 a.m. to noon March 29, with the walk beginning at 9 a.m. It will be held at 330 E. Bay St. (former Duval County Courthouse site).

Event sponsorships are available. More information is available at hubbardhouse.org/sponsor-the-walk.

It is free to form a team for the walk. Gather together some friends or colleagues and sign up at hubbardhouse-walk.com. However, there are incentives for fundraising:

- Raise/donate the cost of a night of shelter and services for a survivor (\$75) and get a free event T-shirt (while supplies last).
- Raise/donate \$250 and be entered in a drawing for prizes.
- Top fundraising teams and individuals will be recognized on stage before the start of the walk.

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For more information and to learn about how you can get involved, visit:
www.stfrancishelter.org



Principal Troy Kasting, Judy Manley, Payton Manley and Lilly Ritchie getting ready to head to Wolfson's



Contributed photos

Dropping off all the PJs and teddy bears at Wolfson's

Landrum students conduct PJ and teddy bear drive

The students of Landrum Middle School made Valentine's Day extra special for children at Wolfson Children's Hospital by collecting and donating more than 200 brand-new pajamas and more than 200 teddy bears. This heartwarming initiative, designed to bring comfort and joy to young patients, was a tremendous success thanks to the generosity of the

Landrum community.

To help spread the word, Landrum's Engaged Citizenship students created eye-catching posters that promoted the initiative, encouraging their peers to participate and contribute to the cause. Their efforts played a key role in the overwhelming support received from the school community.

The donation was personally delivered to the hospital by Landrum Middle School Principal Mr. Kasting, along with Judy Manley and 8th-grade students Payton Manley and Lilly Ritchie. The hospital staff was overjoyed by the incredible response and the outpouring of kindness from Landrum students and families.

"This initiative is a wonderful reflection

of the compassion and generosity of our students and families," said Principal Troy Kasting. "Knowing that we were able to bring a little extra comfort to children in the hospital is truly rewarding."

Landrum Middle School extended its gratitude to everyone who participated in this effort.

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BRAVE Summit for teen mental health scheduled for March 26

The fifth annual BRAVE Summit, a vibrant event dedicated to dismantling the stigmas surrounding teen mental health, will take place March 26 at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre. Organized by UF Health St. Johns, the event is free and open to all high school students across Florida.

Attendees can enjoy free food and drinks, enter to win prizes and giveaways, pose in a photo booth, explore art and poetry displays and play interactive games, among other activities.

The summit will feature performances by musical artist Paul Russel, along with inspiring presentations from prominent mental health advocates Emma Benoit and Charles Clark. Additionally, students from

St. Johns County can earn four hours of community service for participating.

“Each year, it’s heartening to see the important work being done at the BRAVE Summit to create a welcoming and safe space for teens to discuss mental health,” said Kerry Watson, interim CEO of UF Health St. Johns. “Creating a path for a generation that prioritizes mental health as a vital aspect of overall well-being supports our commitment in creating healthier communities.”

The summit offers students a safe environment to openly discuss mental health topics alongside their peers and mental health professionals. By fostering these conversations, BRAVE strives to normalize conversations about mental wellness

and empower students to seek help and support when needed.

“Last year, we welcomed almost 2,000 high school students from 21 school districts participate, and we are eager to enhance this year’s summit even more,” said Paige Stanton, the founder of the event and executive director of UF Health St. Johns Care Connect. “Our focus is to reach as many teens as possible and raise awareness about the mental health resources available to them. It’s incredibly rewarding to help them understand they’re not alone in facing these challenges; many of their peers are navigating similar experiences.”

The BRAVE Summit is a centerpiece event of the BRAVE program. BRAVE,

which stands for Be Resilient and Voice Emotions, was founded in 2019 and has already made significant progress in connecting high school teens to mental health resources.

Before BRAVE’s implementation in St. Johns County Schools, only 35% of students who were referred to mental health providers were seen by a medical professional. With the BRAVE program, that rate has increased to 90%. Since its founding and despite the pandemic, BRAVE has expanded into 10 school districts across the state, with the ability to assist nearly 300,000 students.

Go to bit.ly/BRAVESummit2025 to learn more or register for the BRAVE Summit.

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025

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GUEST COLUMN

Pay yourself first, take time for your financial well-being checkup

Written by/for Wells Fargo
Advisors

The beginning of a new year is often a time when we look at the progress we've made toward our goals and set or reset goals so we can continue to see improvement. Physical well-being tends to top the list of resolutions, but financial well-being is just as important.

As you're considering your goals and developing new money habits, think about ways to pay yourself first. This is about prioritizing your long-term financial well-being. Here are four actions that can help you define this strategy in a way that works best for you.



Contributed photo

1. Determine your "money jobs" — what you want your money to do

"Money jobs" are the things we want to accomplish with our money. They can be short-term, like buying a car or home, or long-term, like funding retirement.

Michael Liersch, head of Advice & Planning at Wells Fargo says, "When we align what we want to accomplish in life with our money, it can clarify whether money is truly working hard for us to get us to where we want to go. But that requires us to be intentional about what we want in our life [and] the jobs we want money to do for us."

Once you assign a purpose to your money, you should have a better understanding of why you should pay yourself first. You might even consider naming different accounts after specific money jobs: New Car Fund, New Home Fund, etc. With a clearer purpose, you may better prioritize your spending and giving to help ensure your

overall investment plan is on track.

2. Keep down or pay off debt

A clear next step for how you pay yourself first is chipping away at any debt you may have. Over time, this should free up more funds to save or invest toward your money jobs.

There are two approaches to paying down or paying off debt: logically or emotionally.

Logically, it makes sense to apply the "avalanche method" by first tackling debts with the highest interest rates or heaviest tax implications, such as credit card debt or loans against a 401(k) plan. The amount you'll stop spending on interest is extra money in your pocket.

Another logical approach is the "snowball method," when you give yourself a quick win by paying off the smallest debt first and then adding that payment amount to the next debt in line to keep the momentum going.

3. Take small actions

Simple changes to your spending habits could make a big difference as you work toward your goals. For example, it can help to review all of your subscriptions (streaming services, magazines, the gym, etc.) and cancel the ones you don't use or don't really love. Paying attention to your habits when it comes to small purchases can be like giving yourself a bonus every month after you cancel.

4. Invest for your future, even amid challenges

Unexpected financial events happen to everyone, whether it's a change in your kids' activities or education suddenly getting pricier or a parent having a big health-related expense they can't handle.

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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Ocean Links open houses planned

Local real estate agents from competing brokerages will be joining forces and hosting collaborative open houses in the Ocean Links Condominium Community on Saturday, Feb. 22, from noon to 2 p.m. Interested buyers can visit a variety of units including one, two and three bedroom floorplans ranging from 795 to 1,400 square feet and offered between \$265,000 and \$364,000. Signage will direct interested buyers to the condominiums participating in the event.

"Realtors are notoriously eager to share, whether it is expertise, advice, referrals, or in this case customer traffic," said Stacey Johnson, a Realtor with eXp Realty. "What may interest one buyer may not appeal to another, so why not work together to get more eyeballs on a property?"

Buyers start with 900 Ironwood Drive No. 917. Other addresses include: 200 Ironwood Drive No. 214, 100 Ironwood Drive No. 114, 300 Sandiron Circle No. 333 and

400 Sandiron Circle No. 421. More addresses may be added.

Ocean Links Condominiums, 310 Solana Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, offer residents a coastal lifestyle with its resort style amenities and proximity to the beach, shopping, area restaurants, golf courses and other outdoor activities.

For details, contact Stacey Johnson, eXp Realty at stacey.l.johnson@exprealty.com or 720-280-9531.

Florida Water Tours to offer spooky, stargazing cruises

Florida Water Tours is launching a spooky, stargazing cruise along St. Augustine’s bayfront.

The Moonlit Mysteries Night Cruise takes passengers across the Matanzas Bay to the bayfront, combining narrated stargazing, ancient navigation and intriguing, spooky tales of the historic city after dark.

Founded by Jessica Jadick in 2016, Florida Water Tours is a family-owned and operated ecotourism company based in St. Augustine. Her captains and crew are passionate environmental advocates who specialize in fun and educational

boat tours for vacationers and locals alike, highlighting the beauty — and ghostly spirit — of St. Augustine’s Intracoastal Waterways and maritime ecosystem.

“We love sharing our passion for nature and wildlife with every guest that comes aboard,” said Jadick. “Whether it’s narrating the stars above our beautiful coastal waterways or sharing the spooky lore of our hometown, it’s a dream to offer these immersive and fun experiences.”

Starting Thursday, Feb. 27, The Moonlit Mysteries: Stargazing and Haunted

History Boat Tour takes passengers on the water as the sun begins to set. Departure times vary with the season, ranging from 6:30 p.m. in the winter and 9:30 p.m. in the summer. The crew narrates special celestial events, like shooting stars, full moons and planetary alignments.

This 90-minute tour is available Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and is geared towards adults and teens age 13 and older. Tickets are \$39 per person and include a complimentary beverage from the bar onboard.

Florida Water Tours is located at Wind-

ward at Camachee Cove Yacht Harbor at 107 Yacht Club Drive, St. Augustine (just north of downtown). There is plentiful free parking, and the vessels are just a short walk away, located at docks A-23 and A-24. Check in for your boat tour directly at the boat or at the shop, The Salty Boutique, which hosts an array of local, handmade goods and everything you need for the sand, sun and salt.

Tours can fill up fast, but with a live calendar online, people can book a cruise with ease. For more information and more tour options, go to floridawatertour.com.

WHAT DOES A REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY DO?

The complexities of the law can be challenging to those outside the legal profession. An attorney on one's side can help individuals ensure their assets and livelihoods are protected, and even help people avoid costly mistakes.

Investing in real estate is a wise but often expensive endeavor. With so much money riding on real estate transactions, having a professional real estate attorney in one's corner is wise. Recognition of what these professionals can do underscores how valuable they can be.

Roles of a real estate attorney

The main job of a real estate attorney is to ensure the legal transfer of property from

a seller to a buyer. Real estate attorneys will prepare and review documents, ensure that a home title is clear, and facilitate the transfer of funds between parties, according to the online financial resource NerdWallet. Real estate attorneys will identify any unpaid loans, liens, litigation or other claims against the property, uncover deed restrictions and covenants, and any breaks in the chain of title.

In addition to these services, attorneys guide their clients through searches for obligations like taxes, utility charges and homeowners association fees, according to Bankrate. Real estate attorneys also will prepare settlement statements showing the charges to all parties and how the funds

will be allocated, including commissions, attorney's fees, underwriting fee, title search fee, taxes, and more.

A real estate attorney can work for those looking to buy or sell a private home, an investment property, a commercial business, or even guide grief-stricken relatives through the process of selling a deceased loved one's home to settle estate obligations.

Who do real estate attorneys work for?

If the real estate attorney is representing a client's interests only, that lawyer will be an advocate to the client and work in his or her best interests. Various attorneys tend to be involved in real estate transactions.

One will represent the buyer and another the seller. A lawyer may represent the mortgage lender if financing is involved. Another could potentially represent the title company.

Cost of real estate representation

Certain real estate attorneys will charge a flat fee that encompasses a specific series of jobs, including the preparation of closing documents. Others may charge an hourly rate, particularly if the issue is more complex and involves litigation.

When individuals are selling or investing in property, real estate attorneys can ensure the process goes smoothly and protect their clients if complications arise.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN LOOKING FOR AN ATTORNEY

Various situations call for working with a lawyer or an attorney. Having a skilled, experienced legal advocate in your corner in such situations can be advantageous and increase the likelihood of a favorable outcome.

When searching for legal representation, individuals may realize that there's no shortage of legal firms. That can make it more challenging to find the right law-

yer or attorney. The vetting process is an important part of finding legal representation, and the following are some questions individuals can ask as they look for a lawyer or attorney.

Are you a lawyer or an attorney?

The terms "lawyer" and "attorney" are not interchangeable. The employment search engine Indeed notes that attorneys

can represent clients in court and other legal proceedings while lawyers cannot. That's a subtle yet significant distinction that individuals must take into account when looking for legal representation.

What level of experience do you have in cases like mine?

Though each legal situation is unique, many are not one-of-a-kind instances. So

individuals should ask about an attorney's experience with cases like their own and take note of the breadth of that experience.

What are the potential outcomes of my case?

Even the most experienced and skilled attorney cannot say with absolute certainty

ATTORNEY continues on Page 31

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Community First Credit Union opens new Beachwalk branch

Community First Credit Union has officially opened its newest expansion branch at 525 Beachwalk Shore Drive in St. Johns County. The credit union's Beachwalk Branch is the credit union's 23rd branch and its third branch location in St. Johns County.

More information on grand opening events can be found here info.communityfirstfl.org/beachwalk-celebrations.

Community First's full-service Beachwalk location is an outparcel to the retail center at Beachwalk. The location features a 3,150-square-foot full-service lobby and drive-through, two ATMs (drive-up and walk-up) and Community First's signature tower feature.

Community First purchased the land for the branch in November 2023. The branch was designed by TTV Architects and was built by Auld & White Constructors.

Designed with Community First's modern branch concept, the Beachwalk Branch has an open floor plan, upgraded digital technologies and a historical mural depicting the history of eastern St. Johns County. The branch will serve the nearly 4,000 Community First members living within five miles of the retail



Contributed photos

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the new Beachwalk branch of Community First Credit Union.

center.

"St. Johns County has been growing rapidly, and we've been strategically building our network to serve even more members with neighborhood branches," said Sam Inman, president and CEO of Community First Credit Union. "We look

forward to serving our members where they live and being an integral part of the Beachwalk community."

Community First's new branches enhance member service through updated spaces that provide a modern retail experience. Members can access all financial

services at the branch location including banking/checking, loans, mortgages and investment services.

Community First is expanding its branch network across the region with five branches in the works or newly opened. It is currently building a new branch in the Town of Callahan that will open this summer. It has also purchased property for future branches in the Treaty Oaks community in St. Johns County, Wildlight in Nassau County and in Green Cove Springs in Clay County.

Celebrating 90 years of service in 2025, Community First Credit Union of Florida is a state-chartered credit union based in Jacksonville serving anyone who lives or works on the First Coast.

Community First is one of the largest credit unions in Florida with \$2.8 billion in assets and serving 180,000 members. Community First has 23 locations and more than 450 employees. A not-for-profit, Community First is a full-service financial institution offering banking, loans, mortgages and investments for consumers and businesses across the First Coast.

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

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Housing

Continued from 1

the Home Affordability Index up to a score of 68, a 4.6% increase from December.

“Additionally, the ‘arctic freeze’ that found its way to Jacksonville also kept many folks in the warmth of their homes instead of outside looking for their next home, so it’s not surprising that days on the market trended up and pending sales trended down,” said 2025 NEFAR President Mario Gonzalez.

In January, closed sales for single-family homes fell significantly by 39% month-over-month, totaling 1,114 transactions, while pending sales also saw a decline of 14.9%, sitting at 1,092. New listings rose 53.6 % from December to January, recording 3,340 homes.

Since December, the active inventory of single-family homes increased by 14.7% to 7,556 properties. However, this is a drastic increase from the previous year, as the number of properties has skyrocketed by 72.6% since January 2024.

This rise in inventory from 2024 is a welcome development for buyers, providing a wider range of options. The median number of days on the market increased to 53 days, a 3.9% increase from December, indicating slightly slower turnover as the market adjusts to seasonal conditions.

“Sellers are acting early here in 2025 and stimulating the market with fresh listings,” said Gonzalez.

In St. Johns County, the January 2025 median price for single-family homes decreased by 2.1% from December 2024 to \$535,000. The market pace

slowed, with median days on the market falling 8.1% from December to 63. Closed sales decreased by 44.4% to 271, and pending sales experienced a decline of 16.8% to 242. New listings rose by 88.9% to 801, while active inventory increased by 16.3% to 1,903 homes, representing a seven-month supply. The Home Affordability Index remained the same at 48, as St. Johns County continues to be one of the most expensive areas in the region.

In Duval County, January showed a 5.6% decrease since December in the median price of single-family homes, now at \$318,000. Sales of homes decreased in January, with the median days on the market rising 2.3 % to 45 days. While closed sales fell 40.2% to 583, pending fell by 20.8% to 555. Notably, new listings rose 42.7% to 1,757. Similarly, there was a 15.9 % climb in active inventory, now at 3,733 homes — a 6.4-month supply. The Home Affordability Index increased since December by 3.9% to 80.

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

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

Attorney

Continued from 29

what the outcome of a case will ultimately be. However, that does not mean they cannot study the details and provide an assessment to give prospective clients an idea of how the case will unfold. When vetting attorneys, individuals should prepare and be ready to discuss details that can help each professional provide the most accurate assessment of their case.

What will your representation cost me?

Expenses and attorney fees can be significant, so individuals should not hesitate to ask how much legal representation will cost them. Attorneys represent clients on a contingency basis in certain situations, such as when an individual is suing for damages. In those situations, individuals should confirm what percentage of damages the attorney will receive and if there are any costs they may be responsible for. In other situations, confirm if an attorney is charging a fixed amount for their services or an hourly fee. It’s also necessary to inquire about expenses and request that an attorney provide a reasonable estimate of what their fees will be while they’re representing you.

How will we communicate during the case?

It’s understandable that individuals want to be kept abreast of the details of any legal matter they’re involved in. Ask how that will unfold if you hire the attorney you’re vetting. Will an intermediary be calling with periodic updates or can clients contact the attorney directly via an email, phone call or text message?

The right representation can make all the difference in a legal situation. Asking the right questions can help individuals find an attorney they’re confident can deliver the best outcome.

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In the Arts



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Limelight to present 'The Drowsy Chaperone'

Limelight Theatre is in Season 33, presenting at least three straight plays each year and providing theatre education in St. Augustine for young performers.

Limelight audiences love thrillers, fast-paced comedies and musicals. "The Drowsy Chaperone" is up next, and the theatre says it is sure to be a riot. The show runs Feb. 21 through March 16.

The plot follows wealthy widow Mrs. Tottenham, who is hosting the wedding of the year. She gets a lot more than a write-up in the society pages!

This inventive piece of meta-theatre and playful, heartfelt parody of the 1920s musical comedy features a chirpy Jazz Age score by Tony-winning collaborators.

Director Lorraine Portman is an award-winning filmmaker, screenwriter and produced playwright. She has directed eight short films and a feature. Her newest short film is a documentary titled "Unlikely Mermaid," which is currently playing film festivals.

Portman said she is thrilled to return to Limelight Theatre. She directed "Duck Hunter Shoots Angel" in 2011. She has also directed a number of productions for The Flagler Playhouse, including "Once Upon a Mattress" and "Dixie Swim Club."

Notable awards include the Paul Schrader Best Screenplay Award for "The King's Inn," given by Cayman Interna-

tional Film Festival. The Bare Bones International Independent Film Festival recognized Portman in 2018 with the Lois Weber Legacy Award and The Indie Filmmaker Spirit Award in 2017. She was awarded The Denis Johnston Playwriting Award for her one-act play, "Small Animals."

Portman taught playwriting and screenwriting at Flagler College. She holds a B.A. in theatre from Smith College and a Master of Fine Arts in film from Florida State University.

She also attended the National Theater Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. She is a screenplay consultant for Los Angeles-based SAMUCO Films.

The cast for "The Drowsy Chaperone" includes: Sherrie Provence (The Drowsy Chaperone), Blake Osner (Adolpho), Bill Rains (Man in Chair), Jessica Alexander (Janet Van Der Graaf), Jimmy Alexander (Robert Martin), Heather Starling (Mrs. Tottendale), Clay Mitchell (Underling), Jeff Shaeffer (Gangster 1), Anthony Romero (Gangster 2), Collin James (Feldzieg), Joellie Tucker (Kitty), Joy Manning (Trix the Aviatrix), Kayla Alexander (Ensemble) and Ronald Foster (George).

Tickets are \$35. Go to limelight-theatre.org or call 904-825-1164.

Limelight Theatre is located at 11 Old Mission Ave., St. Augustine.

Creating realistic private investigator characters



George Cramer

Most mystery writers never cracked a case in their real lives. It's all fiction to them. But not to George Cramer. Before writing "New Liberty," a police procedural novel about the life of a young Hispanic police officer and members of two vicious gangs, Cramer spent 40 years in law enforcement and as a private investigator (PI). On Saturday, March 1, Cramer will share insider tips on creating authentic PI characters

and storylines with the Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime and their guests.

Cramer will address topics such as: licensing, firearms, going undercover, domestic cases, locations (bar crimes), police connections, records and sex.

Cramer is of Karuk descent and holds an MFA in creative writing from the Institute of American Indian Arts. His short stories and poems have been published online and in printed anthologies. He was the editor-in-chief of "Impressions," the Las Positas College 2015 anthology. His current work in progress is a second police procedural novel.

All writers and readers interested in the topic are welcome to attend. The meeting will be held at 11:15 a.m. March 1 at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library, 101 Library Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach, in the Friends of the Library (FOL) room.

Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime is a chapter of the national organization and serves mystery, crime and thriller writers and readers. Programs feature speakers in forensic science, psychology and law enforcement fields.

For more information, contact floridasistersincrime@gmail.com.

Jacksonville Symphony to present Beethoven's 'Emperor'

The Jacksonville Symphony continues its 75th Anniversary Season with the seventh Florida Blue Classical concert "Beethoven's 'Emperor'" on March 7 and 8. Led by Belfast-born Courtney Lewis, the symphony will perform with internationally renowned Belfast pianist Barry Douglas in a program of classical masterpieces, including Samuel Barber's Overture to "The School for Scandal," Jean Sibelius' Symphony No. 5 and Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor."

This program carries a subtle nod to Ireland, featuring Lewis and Douglas alongside Barber's Overture inspired by a play written by Irishman Robert Brinsley Sheridan.

The program starts with Barber's Overture from "The School for Scandal," a satire written by Sheridan in 1777. This witty play is about a man deciding which nephew to pass his fortune to, carrying a playful energy reminiscent of the recent HBO drama "Succession." The piece captures this energy combined with classic European romanticism for a short but vibrant orchestral display.

Next, audiences will experience Sibelius' Symphony No. 5, a three-movement piece with elements of folk themes drawn from Sibelius' Finnish background. The inspiration from nature and folk legends is evident in its sweeping and grand movements. During the program's Insight episode Lewis states, "The symphony's most famous moment is often interpreted as a musical depiction of this swan-sighting, the leaping theme from the opening transformed into something of magisterial power and beauty."

Beethoven's "Emperor" is a well-known masterpiece with a very recognizable melody and piano



Photo by Eugene Langan

Belfast pianist Barry Douglas

sound. Douglas, born in Belfast, joins the symphony for this work. Douglas has toured the world, performing with the London Symphony, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Russian National, Vancouver and Colorado Symphonies, the Halle Orchestra and many others. Douglas was also made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to music and community relations in the 2021 New Year Honours List.

To learn more about the pieces, watch Lewis' Insight episodes available at JaxSymphony.org and on the symphony's YouTube channel.

Tickets are available at JaxSymphony.org or by calling the box office at 904-354-5547. This concert is part of the Florida Blue Classical Series and the David M. Hicks Piano Series.

Photo credit: St. Augustine Art Association



Students attend the 2024 opening of the St. Johns All-County Middle School Art Show.



An artwork displayed at the 2024 St. Johns All-County Middle School Art Show.



An artwork displayed at the 2024 St. Johns All-County Middle School Art Show.



Students attend the 2024 opening of the St. Johns All-County Middle School Art Show.

Middle School Art Show showcases young artists

For more than a century, the St. Augustine Art Association (STAAA) has fostered excellence and honored the rich heritage of artistic creation. This mission is especially important for the area’s youngest creatives. The STAAA’s 15th Annual St. Johns All-County Middle School Art Show is a platform for students in grades six through eight to showcase their talents. The exhibit will be displayed at the St. Augustine Art Association, 22 Marine St. in St. Augustine, and online at staaa.org March 7-30. “The study and experience of art is

so critical to developing young minds,” said Jennifer Flynt, executive director of STAAA. “That’s why we’re thrilled to work with the St. Johns County School District to recognize the importance of art and foster creativity in its youth. Yes, art is an important tool for self-expression, but it also helps students develop critical thinking skills, communication and creativity. It also connects students with not just their culture and heritage but others as well. It’s a conveyance of history, experience and thought.”

The gallery is open noon to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays. The show will include works by students enrolled in art programs through the St. Johns County School District. This exhibit celebrates creativity and supports young artists by fostering an appreciation for art and recognizing the talented youth in the area. Its companion exhibit, the 20th Annual St. Johns All-County High School Art Show, debuts on April 4. The exhibit opens during St. Augustine’s First Friday Art Walk on Friday, March 7,

from 5 to 8 p.m. Gallery visitors can also enjoy the Spring Members Show, which runs concurrently. The 15th Annual St. Johns All-County Middle School Art Show is presented in partnership with the St. Johns County Schools. It and the Spring Members Show are also sponsored partly by grants from the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council, the St. Johns County Cultural Council, the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and the Benjamin & Jean Troemel Arts Foundation.

Gospel music legend Bill Gaither to perform

Multi-Grammy Award winning recording artist Bill Gaither will kick off the Love Like I’m Leaving Tour this spring, as he brings The Gaither Vocal Band to 16 cities. The first weekend of stops will take place in multiple cities throughout Florida, including the stop at 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23, at the Trinity Baptist Church, 800 Hammond Blvd., Jacksonville.

For nearly half a century, Gaither has been a musical trailblazer. Together with his long-time songwriter partner and wife, Gloria, the two have collectively written more than 900 songs and were named ASCAP Christian Songwriters of the Century. The couple’s reputation as performers, songwriters and mentors for newly discovered artists is known worldwide. Their beloved series of Homecoming CDs and DVDs continues to top the sales charts and attract an ever-increasing audience. Honors and accolades have flowed their way, including the most recent Grammy nomination for

Best Roots Gospel Album of the Year for the Gaither Vocal Band “Shine” recording, which also received the Dove Award nomination for Southern Gospel Album of the Year from the Gospel Music Association. Taking the stage with Gaither and the Gaither Vocal Band during the Love Like I’m Leaving Tour, featuring Wes Hampton, Adam Crabb, Todd Suttles and Reggie

Smith, will be popular female vocalist Ladye Love Smith, talented male vocalist Gene McDonald and newcomer phenom and The Voice winner Chris Blue, as well as Gaither’s musical entourage, comprised of Kevin Williams, Matthew Holt and Michael Rowsey. The 2025 tour affords Gaither the opportunity to continue to share the message

he has been proclaiming for nearly seven decades. Considered one of the oldest living musicians who is still actively touring, recording and performing, Gaither, who turns 89 in March, says it’s that desire to spread the message of hope through music that keeps the Indiana native thriving. To purchase tickets or learn more, go to www.gaither.com.



The Gaither Vocal Band

Contributed photo

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Sports

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025 • PAGE 34

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David Sanchez Barrera works out of a full-court press.



Alex Katsikas jumps to defend against an in-bound pass.

Sharks survive late rally to advance to regional final



Head coach Ben Wilson and the Sharks are one win away from the final four.



Noah Simmons handles the ball from his guard position.

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra Sharks boys basketball squad experienced one of the craziest quarters they will ever play as they hung on to defeat the Gainesville High Hurricanes 60-57 in the regional semifinals on Monday, Feb. 17.

Both offenses came alive, and the Sharks were out-scored by the Hurricanes 30-27 in the fourth quarter, a score usually reserved for what teams achieve over an entire half of play.

The Sharks held a 33-27 lead heading into the final quarter, but the game quickly switched from a defensive slugfest to an offensive and scoring clinic.

Although the Sharks were able to remain in front throughout the fourth quarter, they needed each of the 30 points they compiled during the frame to keep pace with a furious attack by the Hurricanes.

However, on each occasion the Sharks were up to the task and proved to have an answer to what the Hurricanes threw at them.

Senior David Sanchez Barrera led all scorers with 23 points, including knocking down three bombs from beyond the arc, as he was not ready for his high school career to come to an end on that night.

Each of his three-point shots came in the first quarter and were crucial in helping the Sharks cut the early deficit after the Hurricanes stormed out of the gate to a 15-11 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The only thing that kept Sanchez Barrera's night from being even bigger was some early foul trouble that he found himself in, which meant managing his minutes at times.

The Sharks asserted themselves in the game by grabbing the lead in the second quarter thanks to outscoring the Hurricanes 16-5 as both the offense and defense seemed to find their groove and feed off each other.

Maddox Palmer scored 15 points that was highlighted by a dunk that sent shockwaves throughout the Shark Tank and extended the Sharks lead to 10 points with



Photos by Anthony Richards

Maddox Palmer slams down a dunk.

roughly three minutes to play in the game.

Trace Westercamp had an all-around night with 11 points, nine rebounds and three blocks for the Sharks.

With top-seeded Fleming Island High being upset by Tallahassee Leon in their regional semifinal, the Sharks will now host the Lions on Thursday, Feb. 20, at 7 p.m. with a trip to the final four on the line.



A corner kick is battled for in the air.

Sharks

Continued from 1

Gerteisen to make early stops.

The pressure eventually led to a golden opportunity for junior forward Izzy Whitaker who snuck past a pair of defenders into the box and lifted a shot over the head of a charging goalie, which settled in the back of the net after deflecting off Gerteisen’s fingertips and the right goal post.

Whitaker’s goal came with less than three minutes before halftime.

Playing from the lead in the second half meant a stiff test for the defense as

a desperate Timberwolves squad threw everything they had at them.

However, time and time again they proved up to the challenge and stood strong to turn every possible scoring chance they conjured away.

The back line defense of McCann, junior Grace Archer and sophomore Lulu Consunji worked well together to create a solid wall of defense in front of goalkeeper Abby Kennedy, who was there to smother any shots that made it through.

According to head coach Dave Silverberg, each team is different every year and this group is special because of the amount of success they have had with the number



Izzy Whitaker (No. 12) jumps for joy after scoring the game-winning goal late in the first half.

of young players and new starters it has on it.

“With this group we lost like 10 seniors from last year and then two of our players left early for college, so this year’s just been all about filling in the holes and everyone has been doing their job,” coach said. “They know that whether they’re playing 10 minutes or the whole game, they are a major part of this thing. It’s been really fun watching the young ones grow.”

Quinlee Irwin and McCann have provided senior leadership throughout the season, and both played their final game at the Shark Tank during the regional final.

“Our goal is to carry on that PV legacy

of trying to reach the final four every year,” Irwin said. “We’re definitely a very tight knit group here with so many inside jokes between all of us,” Irwin said. “Whether it’s practice or the game, we all just have the most fun time.”

The Sharks faced North Fort Myers High (21-2) in the state semifinal on Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the Lake Mrytle Sports Complex in Auburndale. The result of the contest was not official at press time. With a win, they would face Miami Lourdes Academy or Wesley Chapel Cypress Creek High in the state championship game on Saturday, Feb. 22.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Lily Morse passes the ball in the offensive zone.



The Ponte Vedra defense was relentless all game long.



Sharks' goalkeeper Abby Kennedy lines up a kick.

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Chris Shuman (left) and Matt Schlytter

Staff photo by Don Coble

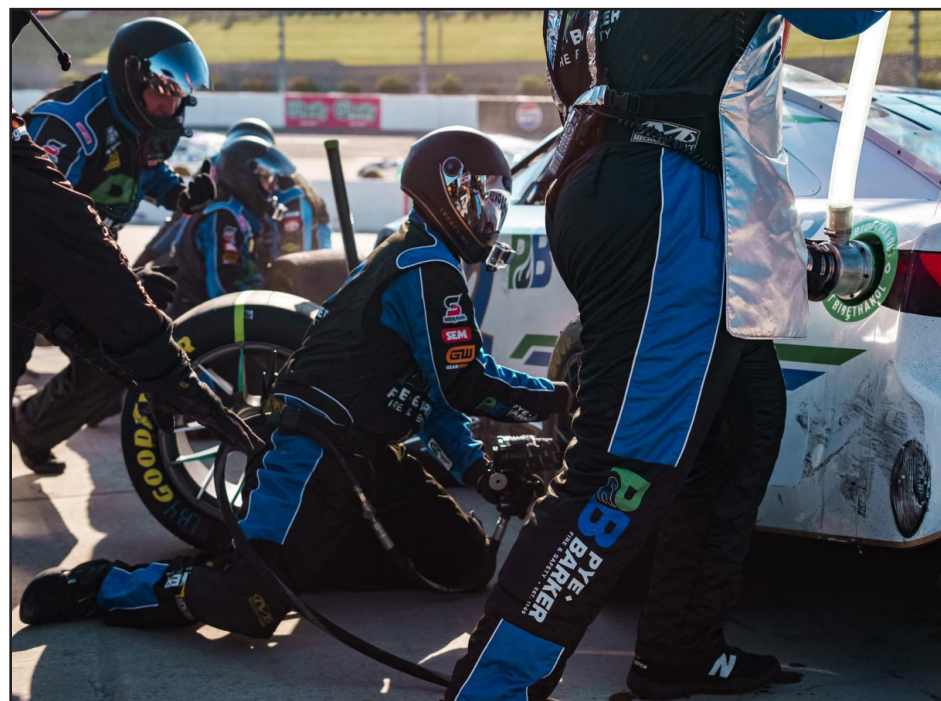


Photo courtesy of Legacy Motor Club

Chris Shuman drops to his knees and removes the single lug nut and tire, then replaces them with a new tire and lug nut — all in about four seconds.

Schlytter, Shuman thrive in NASCAR's fast lane

Former St. Johns residents on Nemechek's pit crew

By Don Coble
don@claytodayonline.com

DAYTONA BEACH — After being selected as the First Coast Swimmer of the Year in 2008, Matt Schlytter knew he couldn't face a future that required him to sit behind a desk.

He wanted to do something both athletic and challenging. He found it in 11-second bursts of adrenaline amid ear-shattering noise and choreographed precision.

"I was a student-athlete my entire life," Schlytter said. "I knew I wanted to get into NASCAR after I found out that this was actually a thing with being on a pit crew, my love for motorsports and being able to be physically active again. Being an athlete was just a merge of two loves, and it would be tough because I was starting over from scratch."

After learning skills at a pit crew



Photo courtesy of Legacy Motor Club

Matt Schlytter (in helmet) congratulates a teammate after a fast stop during practice at Legacy Motor Club.

school, Schlytter was selected from a group of other hopefuls. Last Sunday, he was the jackman when John Hunter Nemechek finished fifth at the season-opening Daytona 500.

The Nease High graduate joined another St. Johns County native, rear tire

changer Chris Shuman, on the No. 42 Toyota for Nemechek at Legacy Motor Club.

Shuman lived in St. Augustine and attended Mill Creek Elementary until his family vacationed in the area of Charlotte, North Carolina, to tour NASCAR race teams. His father took a brochure advertising a pit crew school from one. Months later, he moved the family to the Piedmont so he could chase his dream of being in NASCAR.

"Actually, my grandfather had a hand in building World Golf Village," Shuman said. "We moved to North Carolina when I was in fifth grade. He was a mechanic and got a tire carrier job for a couple of races, but it just didn't work out for him."

Shuman said he wanted to be like his father. He became a mechanic, and he also went to pit crew school. But he didn't want to be a mechanic. He tried to pit race cars.

"It worked out. I was in the right place at the right time," he said. "A coach found me from Michael Waltrip Racing in 2012, and that's where it all started."

When Nemechek's car screeched to a stop during Sunday's race at the Daytona International Speedway, both launched into action. They ran around to the right side of the car, where Schlytter used a specialty-made jack to hoist the 3,500-pound car off the ground. Simultaneously, Shuman dropped to his knees and hit the single-lug nut with an impact wrench. As the car lifted, Shuman pulled the tire off, and the tire carrier put a new one in place, ensuring the drive pins lined up before Shuman torqued the lug nut into place.

After that, both ran around the car and repeated the process on the left side of the car.

All in less than 11 seconds.

At a track like Daytona, one second lost on pit road translated to 100 yards lost on the track. For Shuman and Schlytter, there was an extra incentive to keep Nemechek upfront because they consider Daytona their home track.

Legacy hired full-time crews to service cars for Nemechek and the No. 43 for Eric Jones. When they aren't at the racetrack, they're either working out, perfecting their pit stop routines or doing odd jobs around the shop.

Schlytter said he thrives working when success is measured by tenths of seconds.

"You're not only a part of the group, but you're also having to oversee everybody else's position at the same time," he said. "You have to make sure all tasks are complete. Everything is tight there. There's a little bit of pressure there, but I like that."

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Docket No. NO24D0565DR
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court Probate and Family Court
Norfolk Probate and Family Court
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Canton, MA 02021
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

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

Legals

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

NOTICE OF AGENCY ACTION TAKEN BY THE ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Notice is given that the following permit was issued on 02/04/2025:
(Name and address of applicant) Baseball Park, LLC 823 1st St. Neptune Beach, FL 32266
permit# 164740-10. The project is located in St. Johns County, Section 4, Township 6S South, Range 29E East. The permit authorizes a surface water management system on 2.46 acres for IGP Commerce Lot 2 & 3 known as Baseball Park LLC. The receiving water body is St. Marks Pond Outlet.
A person whose substantial interests are or may be affected has the right to request an administrative hearing by filing a written petition with the St. Johns River Water Management District (District). Pursuant to Chapter 28-106 and Rule 40C-1.1007, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the petition must be filed (received) either by delivery at the office of the District Clerk at District Headquarters, P.O. Box 1429, Palatka FL 32178-1429 (4049 Reid St, Palatka, FL 32177) or by e-mail with the District Clerk at Clerk@sjrwm.com, within twenty-one (21) days of newspaper publication of the notice of District decision (for those persons to whom the District does not mail or email actual notice). A petition must comply with Sections 120.54(5)(b)4. and 120.569(2)(c), Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Chapter 28-106, F.A.C. The District will not accept a petition sent by facsimile (fax). Mediation pursuant to Section 120.573, F.S., may be available and choosing mediation does not affect your right to an administrative hearing. A petition for an administrative hearing is deemed filed upon receipt of the complete petition by the District Clerk at the District Headquarters in Palatka, Florida during the District's regular business hours. The District's regular business hours are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., excluding weekends and District holidays. Petitions received by the District Clerk after the District's regular business hours shall be deemed filed as of 8 a.m. on the District's next regular business day. The District's acceptance of petitions filed by e-mail is subject to certain conditions set forth in the District's Statement of Agency Organization and Operation (issued pursuant to Rule 28-101.001, Florida Administrative Code), which is available for viewing at www.sjrwm.com. These conditions include, but are not limited to, the petition being in the form of a PDF or TIFF file and being capable of being stored and printed by the District. Further, pursuant to the District's Statement of Agency Organization and Operation, attempting to file a petition by facsimile (fax) is prohibited and shall not constitute filing. The right to an administrative hearing and the relevant procedures to be followed are governed by Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, Chapter 28-106, Florida Administrative Code, and Rule 40C-1.1007, Florida Administrative Code. Because the administrative hearing process is designed to formulate final agency action, the filing of a petition means the District's final action may be different from the position taken by it in this notice. **Failure to file a petition for an administrative hearing within the requisite time frame shall constitute a waiver of the right to an administrative hearing. (Rule 28-106.111, F.A.C.).**
If you wish to do so, please visit http://www.sjrwm.com/nor_dec/ to read the complete Notice of Rights to determine any legal rights you may have concerning the District's decision(s) on the permit application(s) described above. You can also request the Notice of Rights by contacting the Director of Office of Records and Regulatory Support, 4049 Reid St., Palatka, FL 32177- 2529, tele. no. (386)329-4570.
Legal 114552 Published 2/20/2025 in St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper



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			1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		
	10	11						12					13	
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ACROSS

- Tropical Asian plant
- Yankees' slugger Judge
- Helps to preserve food
- Plant disease
- One who predicts
- Equally
- Burundian franc
- Pouch
- Arizona city
- Surround
- Hard, heavy timber
- Witnessed
- They __
- French river
- A way to drink
- Small constellation
- Peruse a written work
- Type of hound
- Plant of the goosefoot family
- Evade or escape
- A way to confine
- Volcanic crater
- Weekday
- Women's service organization (abbr.)
- Local area network
- Sensory receptor
- Posted
- Tibetan pastry
- Licensed for Wall Street
- Very willing
- Golf score
- Consume
- Touchdown
- Tends to remind
- In a way, smoothed
- Poke holes in the ground
- Herbaceous plants
- Taiwanese river

- Film for posterity (abbr.)
- Prayer
- Calculating machine
- Keyboard key
- Outburst
- Man-eating giants
- New Hampshire
- Type of sword
- Counting
- Pants style
- Political action committee
- U.S. government legislative branch
- Civil Rights Act component
- Contractors take one
- Spanish soldier
- A person's brother or sister
- Expressed pleasure
- Song of praise
- Shock treatment
- Patti Hearst's captors
- Counteract
- Goes over again
- Popular Dodge truck
- Male adult
- A part of a river where the current is very fast
- Rope used to lasso
- Become less intense
- Subway rodent
- Lead alloy
- Japanese honorific title
- Advise someone
- Famous NYC museum
- Ocean
- Cathode-ray tube
- Cologne
- It starts with these two

SUDOKU

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

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

- Body art
- Boxing's GOAT



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