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Mother's Day Gift Guide
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Thursday, May 1, 2025

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Yom HaShoah a time to remember

Community gathers to observe Holocaust Remembrance Day

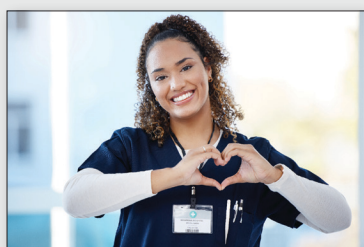
By Holly Tishfield

On Wednesday, April 23, community members gathered at Beth El the Beaches Synagogue for an evening of remembrance and worship to recognize Yom HaShoah, also known as Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The program brought together members and clergy from multiple organizations in the area, such as the Jacksonville Jewish Center, the Jewish Federation & Foundation, the Etz Chaim Synagogue and The Temple, for a moving ceremony.

"Tonight, we remember the Shoah, the millions of people murdered," said Rabbi Benjamin Dyme of Beth El the Beaches Synagogue during opening

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Nurses Appreciation Week
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Flower show puts unique spin on classic game

By Anthony Richards

The Ribault Garden Club hosted its annual district flower show on April 25 and 26 and this year's theme was "Monopoly."

"Every year it's a different theme, and it always brings out different design types," show chairwoman Carolyn Stevens said. "For some reason Monopoly just seemed like a good fun theme. Thinking up a new way to fit that theme is part of the fun."

The show has become a staple of the club, having been going on for decades.

There were several divisions that made up the show, including one that focused on design aspects that used flowers through placement as a form of artwork,



Photo by Anthony Richards

The Ribault Garden Club in Jacksonville Beach hosted its annual district flower show April 25 and 26.

FLOWER SHOW continues on Page 8

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BRIEFS

Ponte Vedra Community Association plans annual meeting

The Ponte Vedra Community Association will hold its annual meeting at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 4, in the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club ballroom. Special guest will be Commissioner Krista Joseph, who will discuss county topics of interest and take part in a Q&A.

Meeting topics will include: a review of financials, a vote on the approval of new board members and an open discussion forum.

Members and nonmembers are welcome.

Anyone interested in becoming a board member should contact Lori Wells at loripvb@yahoo.com.

Sweet Art Gallery to celebrate anniversary

Sweet Art Gallery, 310 Front St., Unit 875, Ponte Vedra Beach, will celebrate its first year anniversary from 4:30 to 7 p.m. May 10. An RSVP is appreciated at 904-686-2787. The website for the contemporary fine art gallery is thesweetartgallery.com.

St. Johns County to host live surplus auction May 17

St. Johns County will host a live surplus auction on May 17 at 2416 Dobbs Road, St. Augustine. Access to the auction is free and

open to the public. The early preview day will be on Friday, May 16, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The in-person auction day will be on Saturday, May 17, with another preview time of 8 to 10 a.m. and a start time of 10 a.m. Great Expectations Auction & Estate Services is organizing the public auction. The terms and conditions of the auction and details of the vehicles available for purchase are available at geauction.com/st-johns-co-surplus-auctions.

The surplus auction will include vehicles, trailers, equipment and more.

‘Minorcans in Florida: A Brief History’ set for May 8

Historian Sandie Stratton will speak of “Minorcans in Florida: A Brief History” under the sponsorship of the St. Augustine Jewish Historical Society at 4 p.m. Thursday, May 8, at the St. Johns County Public Library Main Branch, 1960 N. Ponce De Leon Blvd., St. Augustine.

Stratton, who earned a master’s degree in American/European history from the University of North Florida, will provide a foundational understanding as local Jews and Minorcans seek together to discover their overlapping origins in the Balearic Islands off the Mediterranean Coast of Spain over the past 10 centuries. Minorcans, those with and without Jewish roots were recruited to establish New Smyrna Beach and came to St. Augustine during the 1770s.

All are welcome to this event. There is no charge. No advance arrangements are necessary. For best directions call the Main Library at 904-827-6940 or go to sjcpls.org For further information about the St. Augustine Jewish Historical Society, go to sajhs.com or call 804-914-4460.

Guana volunteer orientation planned

Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve will offer a new volunteer orientation from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, May 2. Interested volunteers will learn about the background and history of the reserve, volunteer opportunities and the benefits of volunteering at GTM.

Meet at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor

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Briefs

Continued from 2

Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. After completing the volunteer application at gtmnerr.org/volunteer, contact volunteer coordinator Abby Kuhn at Abigail.Kuhn@FloridaDEP.gov to ensure that it was received.

Grief support group to meet

A grief support group meets on the third Wednesday of every month at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Room 107 of the Family Life Center, 578 First Avenue N., Jacksonville Beach. The group is for men and women grieving the death of a family member or friend. The next meeting will be 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 21. For information, call Kathy at 904-553-8933.

Beach exploration planned

Join volunteers at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve for a guided exploration hike from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, May 3.

Learn about the Guana Peninsula's natural biodiversity, expansive cultural history, vital estuarine resources and current efforts to protect these resources.

Meet at the GTM Research Reserve Trailhead Pavilion (west of Guana Dam), 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

The event is free but parking is \$3 per vehicle. Wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are also recommended.

Register at gtmnerr.org/calendar.

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.

Nature journaling event planned

Join nature journaling instructor Elaine Bergstrom at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas (GTM) National Estuarine Research Reserve to explore the wonders at the reserve from 9:50 a.m. to noon Thursday, May 1.

If you are new to nature journaling, this

Introduction to Nature Journaling class will help you sketch and record observations and curiosities to reconnect with nature. Drawing and noting any piece of nature is an opportunity to slow down and enjoy the moment!

Online registration is required. To register, go to gtmnerr.org/calendars.

Meet at GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Wear comfortable closed-toe shoes. Hat, insect repellent, water, sunscreen and binoculars are recommended.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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A remembrance sign at the entrance to the synagogue.



Community members participating in a candle lighting.



Program books and yarmulkes for attendees

Remembrance

Continued from 1

remarks. “Let us meditate on how we can make the world better in their honor.”

Mariam Feist, CEO of the Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida, also shared remarks before Melissa William, a Holocaust educator at LJD Jewish Family & Community Services introduced the next speaker.

Daniel Ostfeld, a third-generation Holocaust survivor, shared his family’s account of Holocaust survival by recounting his grandfather’s journey.

“I’m very honored to be here and very honored to call my grandfather my grand-



Holocaust survivor and generational stories lined up around the synagogue.

Photos by Holly Tishfield

father,” Ostfeld said. “His life could be the story and plot of many books. It’s the story about how, when he was just 15 years old, he went to Hell and came back.”

Following Ostfeld’s testimony, six survivors and generational survivors came up one at a time to light six candles in remembrance of the 6 million Jewish victims lost during the Holocaust.

After the six candles were lit, the floor was opened to other community members in attendance who could come to the podium and speak the names of loved ones impacted by the Holocaust.

The evening was marked by heartfelt prayers, a strong sense of community and solemn remembrance of those present in spirit.



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Madelen Salter

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me about Office Images

At Office Images we create an experience. We know we've been successful if there is something we have uncovered or brought to life in [the client's] space or within the culture of their organization.

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We work in industries like health care, education, hospitality, clubhouses and restaurants and lounges and things like that — anywhere the public is.

How does it work?

We are educated interior designers, and we partner with interior designers, architects, general contractors, commercial real estate brokers and clients to develop spaces that they might also be working on.

We have a sales team, an interior design team, project coordinators, project managers, installers. So, when a need arises — maybe an architect or a designer or the client comes to us — then we partner with them to do the design services; we literally specify every single piece of furniture unique to that client.

It's not like an Amazon, where it's like, "Oh, I'm going to grab a chair." We are uniquely designing through our main manufacturers and specifying furniture. Then, we order, procure, monitor, ship, receive and install.

There's not an office too small, and there's not an office too big. We can do something as simple as workstations.

What brings clients to you?

Some of them want to work on spaces because they're taking less or more space, or they need the space to do something different. Or, they have the opportunity to be in a different part of town. Or, the way they engage with clients needs to be different as part of their brand.

Most interesting, I would say, sort of post-COVID, people are coming back into the office. But people are recognizing that, even pre-COVID, their office environments were rather stale, and they had not invested in them because there was really no need to spend that capital.

But now there's this opportunity to reimagine who they are as a culture.

The office is not going to be the only thing that gets people to work there, but it can be used as a tool to retain employees, retain talent, but also recruit them.

I also see a lot of care and thought taken in higher education, how college students engage with their space. I think those students coming into their young professional careers are sort of expecting that the spaces they are going to work in will be more innovative and pique their curiosity and their interest.

How do people find out about you?

Clients that have had an exceptional experience with us will recommend us, and we are affiliated with a very large manufacturer — the name of that is Haworth — so people know us that way. And we're seen as a thought leader in the industry. Our relationships with key businesses and the work that we do in the community also helps us.



Contributed photo

Madelen Salter

How can potential clients contact you?

They can email or call us. The website is officeimages-inc.com.

[Her email address is msalter@officeimagesinc.com. Her office phone number is 904-398-9761.]

How big is your team?

There are 31 of us.

Tell me about your background.

I grew up in a very small town in Alabama. I went to school at Auburn University and studied interior design and human sciences and have an international minor in French.

I spent a good bit of time traveling, studying abroad and just fell in love with the connectivity of space; just how you feel in a space became something really interesting to me.

I came to Jacksonville to do my internship with a very old architectural firm.

I was operating CAD, which is computer-aided drafting and space planning, and I realized very early on in my career that I wanted to be able to interact with people in a different way than I was able to in that particular role. So, I switched and stayed in the design industry in different capacities. And then, I worked in real estate for maybe six years.

Then, the recession happened, '08. Our industry was on pause.

At that time, I realized that I just really loved the art of

selling.

I thought: Where can I get a really good, solid sales experience and training? So, I had an almost 10-year career in medical sales. I focused mostly on cardiology sales.

Then, I tripped back into this industry. ... My predecessor was retiring and asked me to come here and run the business, so here I am.

How long have you lived here?

I have been in Jacksonville since '01. I lived in Duval County and then my husband and I married, and we've been in St. Johns County since. ...

What do you like best about living here?

What I love about Jacksonville is there are so many hidden gems and pockets and places ... There's such a neat opportunity for us to continue to evolve and innovate and better all of these little areas. So it just continues to be interesting.

And we have so much around us — the water and the parks and all that.

It's a friendly place. It's a friendly place to do business. It's a friendly place to build relationships and raise a family.

When I moved to Jacksonville, I remember coming in that night; it's so beautiful when you come into the city at night, all the bridges and the lights reflecting off the water — it's just really gorgeous. We take it for granted.

So, I love it. I'm almost certain that I'll never leave.

Golf event fights ALS with every swing

By Anthony Richards

ALS is a disease that takes away one’s ability to perform physical activities such as playing golf, so the Ring of Honor Golf Classic was established as an annual event that not only remembers those who have lost their lives to ALS but to fight along with those currently faced with it.

According to the ALS Association, which is the world’s leading organization dedicated to ALS, someone is diagnosed with the disease every 90 minutes.

The disease is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord and takes away a person’s ability to walk, talk and eventually breathe.

It is also commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease, in honor of the hall of fame baseball player who died from the disease and is known for his farewell speech at Yankee Stadium as the disease forced him to retire, and he famously said, “Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.”



The Ring of Honor Classic has become a distinguished event by the ALS Association and a major fundraiser that brings together business and community leaders from across Northeast Florida looking to do their part to provide support.

Funds raised by the golf tournament will go towards continued help for those fighting with ALS and their families through assistance with patient care, advocacy, and the continued efforts to find a cure with further research, as currently there is still no known cause or cure for the disease.

Through an extensive network, the ALS Association has a presence in each state.

The event will begin at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 5 at Marsh Landing Country Club in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The event will include a live auction hosted by local sports anchor Dan Hicken as part of the fundraising efforts.

To learn more about the tournament, sponsorship opportunities or to sign up to golf, people can go to www.als.org/RingofHonor.

Harvest Awards set for May 8

By Shaun Ryan

The fifth annual St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival, set for May 7-11, will feature a special event on Thursday, May 8.

Harvest Awards & Tastings, presented by St. Johns Food Service and The Ponte Vedra Recorder, will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Place, Vilano Beach/St. Augustine, 117 Vilano Road, St. Augustine. The festivities will feature live music from Tony Scozzaro.

This will be an opportunity to taste fare from some of Northeast Florida’s best fine-dining restaurants. A curated group of restaurants has been invited to participate in this event.

Professional culinary judges will officiate as the restaurants compete for a celebrated Harvest Award. One critical component is that each tasting dish is

required to incorporate the use of a local ingredient.

Guests in attendance will receive a wine glass to enjoy tasting wines and the festival’s official beverages, located throughout the Hyatt Place Vilano Beach ballroom.

Celebrity guest judges include Chef Jeff, Jordan Wilkerson of First Coast Living, Jesse Blanco of Eat It & Like It, Leigh Cort of the Women’s Food Alliance, Susan Griffin of The Recorder and Craig Smith of Alhambra Theatre & Dining.

Tickets are \$105 per person and are limited in number as the space has restricted attendance. Attire is business/casual. Must be 21 years old or older to attend.

For tickets and further information, go to staugustinefoodandwinefestival.com/events/harvest-awards.

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The advertisement features a dark blue background. On the right side, there are two headshots: a woman with blonde hair (Tammy Long) and a man with brown hair (Doug Benefield). Below the photos, their names and titles are listed: "Tammy Long, CPA and Doug Benefield, CPA". The company name "ElevatedCPA" is prominently displayed in white and purple text. A list of services is provided on the left, and contact information is at the bottom.

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The advertisement has a red background. On the right side, there is a large, circular portrait of Jonathan A Gibbs, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is smiling. The State Farm logo, consisting of three interlocking ovals, is located at the bottom left. The text "Create a Personal Price Plan™" is at the top in white, followed by "Call, click or stop by for a home & auto". Below that is the agent's name and contact information.



Susan McCormick was one the first-place winners at the show with her artwork called “Pacific Peek-a-boo.”

Flower show

Continued from 1

while horticulture and youth were a couple of the other divisions on display with 48 designs featured in this year’s showcase.

According to Amy Wilson, the club’s horticulture chair, exploring the options and seeing the creativity that is used to match the theme is one of the things that

always amazes her.
“Sometimes I think of something, and I think well everyone’s probably going to do that same thing, but then I’ll end up doing it and no one thought of it, so it just shows how everyone sees things differently,” Wilson said.
There were many clubs throughout the district and surrounding counties that had members who took part in the competi-

FLOWER SHOW continues on **Page 9**



Photos by Anthony Richards

Flowers were used and represented in a variety of ways at the show.

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Guests can expect floral fun at the DIY bar during Moms Night Out.



Celebrating well-deserved moms at The Social Society.

The Social Society to host Moms Night Out

By Holly Tishfield

The Social Society is inviting moms to come celebrate everything that makes them extraordinary during the new “Moms Night Out: Sip. Create. Bloom” event, hosted at Nocatee’s one-stop-shop for all things party-related.

On Thursday, May 8, from 7 to 9 p.m. moms from the area can grab their friends for a well-deserved night out filled with a fun craft, a stunning flower bar and bottles of bubbly prosecco.

Since its opening in September, The Social Society has hosted a variety of community-centered events at its colorful storefront and plans to continue expanding these events in the future, starting with its first-ever Moms Night Out.

“This is a special night out for moms,” said Seri Kertzner, founder and owner of The Social Society. “The particular craft was sent to me by one of my customers and I thought it was absolutely genius.”

The craft in question? One of today’s most popular at-home trends: bedazzling.

More specifically, bedazzling a book.

Kertzner said guests can either bring their own books or purchase one of the many book/notebook options available at The Social Society for 10% off. Other supplies will be provided.

“This is such an easy craft; you need no experience,” said Kertzner. “You need nothing but friends, wine and a good time.”

The Moms Night Out is unique for The Social Society as it will be the first time an event includes a DIY flower bar,

where guests can create a dazzling bouquet to take home.

There will also be light snacks and mini charcuterie cups, which is a distinctive touch for the event at The Social Society.

Tickets are now on sale for the “Moms Night Out: Sip. Create. Bloom” event. Anyone is welcome to attend, but guests must be 21 and older.

To purchase a ticket, go to thesocialsociety.com and toggle over to the “events” tab.






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Mother's Day Gift Guide

By Holly Tishfield

With little more than a week until Mother's Day, it's time to start thinking about that perfect gift for the special women in your life, if you haven't already. Mothers appear to us in many ways, from the woman who raised you to the woman who helped raise your own children, and all deserve to be recognized. What better way to say "I love you" or "thank you" than to shower Mom with one of these beautiful gifts or experiences that'll leave her a little misty-eyed?



Contributed photo

The Social Society has dozens of perfect gifts tailored specifically for Mom.

The Social Society

The Social Society's got your back with dozens of perfect gifts tailored specifically for Mom or your mother-adjacent figure. Pick up one of the beautiful, inspirational books, such as "All the Love You Carry" by Charis Ed, to remind Mom how much you love her. Grab a Pink Ceramic Cow Girl Boot Vase to house that bouquet of a dozen roses you'll drop off on Sunday morning. The Mama Bear Hook Pillow is there to both beautifully adorn her couch and also let her know you're always thinking of her. There are the Mischief Candles with labels that say things like "Hot Mama" and "Cool Auntie" for the new moms and bestest aunts that you know or the Strawberry Aluminum Picture Frame ready to display your latest adorable family photo.

Underwood Jewelers

Celebrate Mom with a little extra sparkle from Underwood Jewelers. From dazzling rings and jewel-encrusted pendants to timeless Rolex pieces, you'll find something as special as she is. Underwood's is a proud member of the

American Gem Society, in which only the most ethical, educated and consumer-protective jewelers are qualified to join. Not sure where to start? Let one of Underwood's expert associates help you pick the perfect gift to show your love.

Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa

Treat Mom to an afternoon at the Spa at Sawgrass with treatments from massages to facials, body wraps to CBD enhancements, manicures to pedicures, reflexology and more. The Spa is currently running a Mother's Day Gift Card Promotion that offers customers a voucher for future use when they spend \$75 or more on gift cards purchased at the Spa. After a relaxing morning of pampering, take Mom to Vernon's First Coast Kitchen, located in Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, for a Mother's Day Tea complete with a complimentary flower bar for children and families to create bouquets for the mothers and mother figures in their lives. The event is ticketed and takes place on Saturday, May 10, from 1 to 3 p.m. On Sunday, May 11, there's another opportunity

for indulgence with a Mother's Day Brunch at Vernon's First Coast Kitchen at Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa. Reservations are needed, so be sure to grab your spot while there's still time.



Contributed photo

St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival

St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival

Gather the whole family and head to the St. Augustine Food + Wine Festival, a showcase of culinary, beverage and culture that highlights celebrity guest chefs, celebrity winemakers/proprietors, local chefs, artisans and local craft spirits/

GIFT GUIDE continues on Page 13

Argyle plans Mother's Day brunch

Reservations are being accepted for a Mother's Day brunch, to be held 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, May 11, at Argyle, 254 Alta Mar Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach. Chef Jon's Brunch Buffet will feature live music. The price is \$80-plus for adults and \$25-plus for children.

Reservations may be made at exploretock.com/argyle-ponte-vedra-beach. The phone number for Argyle is 904-395-3114. The email address is info@argylepvb.com. The website is argylepvb.com.



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Vernon's offers Mother's Day Tea, brunch buffet

From 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 10, Vernon's First Coast Kitchen & Bar celebrates mom with an exclusive Mother's Day Tea, including a complimentary flower bar for children and families to create bouquets for the mothers and mother figures in their lives.

The afternoon tea service will feature sweet and savory treats including assorted mini quiches, sandwiches, deviled eggs, lemon meringue tartlets, mini cakes, house-crafted seasonal fruit scones and more.

Price: \$50 per adult, \$30 per child, plus taxes and fees.

On Sunday, May 11, Vernon's First Coast Kitchen at Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa will offer a Mother's Day brunch buffet as special as mom is. Menu highlights include a seafood station, prime rib action station, banana French toast casserole,

soups, salads, desserts and more.

Price: \$90 per person, with complimentary parking via validation. Note the restaurant will be open for brunch service only on this date.

Highlights include:

- Seafood Station including crab and jumbo shrimp; chilled mussels escabeche; oysters
 - Prime Rib Action Station with potatoes, gremolata and beef au jus
 - Banana French Toast Casserole with root vegetables, tomato stew
 - Drunken Peaches Hummingbird Cake
 - Soups, salads, desserts and more
- Vernon's First Coast Kitchen & Bar is located at Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, 1000 PGA Tour Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach.

For more information, or to book, go to opentable.com and search for Vernon's Restaurant.

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Gift Guide

Continued from 11

beers. The event takes place from May 7-11 in the beautiful and historic St. Augustine.

Espling Jewelers

This Mother’s Day, Espling Jewelers offers timeless gifts that celebrate the love and strength of moms everywhere. From vintage diamond rings to elegant pearl necklaces, their curated collection blends classic beauty with modern style. With a legacy of quality and personal service, Espling helps you find the perfect piece to show your appreciation. Shop online or in-store to find a gift she’ll cherish for years to come.

Spice up brunch this Mother's Day

Children commonly like to give their mothers a break from cooking on Mother’s Day. This recipe for "Wee Chicken & Waffles with Jezebel-Maple Syrup" from Denise Gee's "Southern Appetizers: 60 Delectables for Gracious Get-Togethers" (Chronicle Books) utilizes commercially available miniature waffles and popcorn chicken bites to create a chicken and waffles dish with a kick. Serve alongside mini muffins, deviled eggs, cheese and crackers, and other brunch dishes that are simple for youngsters and their little fingers to prepare.

Wee Chicken & Waffles with Jezebel-Maple Syrup

Serves 10 to 12, Three or Four Waffles Each

Jezebel-Maple Syrup

- 2 cups maple syrup
- 1/4 cup pineapple preserves
- 1/4 cup apple jelly
- 1 1/2 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- 3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

- 40 mini waffles from a 10.9-ounce package, lightly toasted
- 40 pieces cooked fried popcorn chicken

Finely chopped fresh Italian flat-leaf parsley or green onion for garnish (optional)
Hot sauce for serving

To make the syrup: In a large microwave-safe glass measuring cup with pour spout (one holding at least 3 cups) or a bowl, add the maple syrup, pineapple preserves, apple jelly, horseradish, pepper, and salt; whisk to combine.

Microwave the mixture on high for 35 seconds. (You also can heat it in a small saucepan on low until the mixture is warm.) Stir and taste, adjusting the flavor if desired. Set the syrup aside.

Place the toasted waffles on a large serving platter. Top each waffle with a piece of chicken. Drizzle the chicken-waffle bites with about 1 teaspoon of the syrup. Garnish with the parsley, if desired, and serve with the remaining syrup and hot sauce.

Jacksonville Symphony

Take Mom to the Jacksonville Symphony to witness “Cirque of Ice and Fire,” a thrilling and fantastic show filled with strong men, aerial flyers, contortionists and more as the Symphony creates the perfect soundtrack by performing classical masterpieces designed specially to elevate the senses. Guests can expect to witness world-record holders, former

Olympians and some of the most experienced cirque talent ever seen in a fusion of two breathtaking art forms.

Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

Get wild and wacky with a Mother’s Day trip to the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, the only walking safari in Northeast Florida. Discover the Earth’s wildlife through interactive and educational experiences, take a train ride around the zoo’s

breathtaking property or feed the giraffes as you witness the very best of the zoo’s animal wellness team. This Mother’s Day, moms can enjoy free general admission with the purchase of a child’s ticket by using the code ‘MothersBOGO2025’ at checkout. The ticket is only valid on May 11, 2025. Offer applies to one child ticket (ages 3-12). Children ages 2 and younger receive free admission. Tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable.

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A nurse's calling at UF Health Primary Care – Nocatee

By Holly Tishfield

Gregg Herrmann has always considered himself a caretaker. The kind of person to help when another is in need, the kind of person who values health in every capacity, the kind of person willing to answer the call of duty when it came knocking on his door.

When Herrmann was preparing to graduate high school in the '90s, he planned to attend UC Berkeley to study psychology. Around the same time, his father suffered a massive heart attack.

Herrmann's father survived, but the experience changed the course of Herrmann's life. He studied psychology at the University of North Florida instead, sticking close to home and relishing the time spent with family.

Herrmann's career in psychology didn't unfold as planned, leading him to pursue licensure in massage therapy instead. He spent nearly nine years as a massage therapist before reaching a turning point in his professional journey.

On a whim, a friend who worked at Wolfson's Children's Hospital asked Herrmann if he'd thought about nursing. He hadn't, but decided to take up a position as a tech on the respiratory floor at Wolfson's.



Gregg Herrmann, BSN RN

Contributed photo

"I really enjoyed nursing in a hospital, so I went back to school and got my degree in nursing," Herrmann said.

After attending Florida State College at

Jacksonville and the University of North Florida, Herrmann earned his title as a registered nurse with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

He worked the intensive care unit at Wolfson's for about 12 years and enjoyed every moment of it, expanding his knowledge of the field and taking in every experience that he could soak up.

During the pandemic, Herrmann switched to the emergency department to help with the influx of sick patients, staying for a handful of months before moving back to the pediatric operating room on a different level of the hospital.

When Herrmann relocated to Nocatee a few years ago, he reassessed opportunities for nursing and took a new position as a clinical nurse supervisor for primary care at UF Health Primary Care — Nocatee.

"I've enjoyed the ambulatory setting," Herrmann said. "I'm looking forward to finding out where the rest of my career goes. Being able to be there for the patients has always been my biggest hope and desire."

In terms of advice for future nurses, Herrmann encourages any who feel the pull of the career to listen to the call, just like he did.

"Nursing is a great field because it's so vast," he said. "There are so many things you can do. Do what's in your heart and the rest is going to find its way."

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Businesses celebrate nurses locally

By Holly Tishfield

National Nurses Week begins on May 6 and extends through May 12, a time to recognize the invaluable contributions of nurses worldwide and the real-life challenges they face every day. The first National Nurses Week was celebrated in the fall of 1954, though now we celebrate the week in spring and coincide the ending with Florence Nightingale's birthday, in recognition of the woman considered the founder of modern nursing. To support the incredible nurses in our community, we've compiled a helpful list of the best Nurses Week food and dining deals for nurses, including confirmed discounts and speculated discounts based on offerings from previous years. **Note that this list is not finalized. Please check with these restaurants before ordering as specials may be different this year than in the past.**

Food & Dining

- **Applebee's:** Free appetizer with the purchase of an entree at participating restaurants. Customers must mention the offer and show a valid badge.
- **Buffalo Wild Wings:** A predicted 20% discount with a valid ID.
- **BurgerFi:** Typically offers a 20% discount with a valid ID.
- **Chick-fil-A:** Oftentimes, local franchises will offer complimentary entrees or discounts. Check your local store for details.
- **Chicken Salad Chick:** A BOGO deal on large Quick Chicks on May 9.
- **Cinnabon:** In the past, nurses have received a free classic cinnamon roll or a Minibon roll at select locations.
- **Dunkin':** Historically offers a free medium hot/iced coffee on May 6 at select Dunkin' locations. No purchase necessary.
- **Insomnia Cookies:** Will likely offer nurses a free cookie (no purchase necessary).
- **Moe's Southwest Grill:** Potential eGift card deal with catering purchase.
- **Outback Steakhouse:** 10% off your entire check with a valid ID.
- **Panera Bread:** Spend \$200 or more in catering and receive 15% of your purchase with code SPRING.
- **Scooter's Coffee:** Historically offers nurses a free beverage with a valid ID.
- **Shipley Do-Nuts:** Previously offered a free half-dozen box with any purchase through their loyalty program.
- **Texas de Brazil:** Year-round 15% off dine-in dinner or lunch for up to four people with valid ID.
- **Tijuana Flats:** Be on the lookout for free entrees and discounts.
- **Zaxby's:** In past years, Zaxby's rewards members received a BOGO free boneless wings meal.

Ways communities can honor local nurses

- **Recognize nurses at public events.** Parades, high school sporting events, holiday tree lighting ceremonies, and other community-centric events draw large crowds. That makes these events the perfect time to honor local nurses and emphasize all the work they do to help their neighbors. Ask a local nurse or two to serve as grand marshal(s) in a holiday parade and/or let local nurses flip the switch at a tree lighting ceremony. Community dignitaries like a mayor or local police chief can explain who the honoree is once the crowd gathers.
 - **Support a nursing charity.** A community-wide campaign to support a charity that benefits nurses or causes important to nurses can be a great way to thank them for all they do. Various domestic and international organizations are linked to the nursing profession. Prior to introducing a campaign, community leaders can speak with local nurses to see if there is any specific charity or cause important to them. Some charities may provide job training in communi-
- ties where nursing shortages have made it hard for locals to access quality health care, while others may finance health care operations, including staffing of nurses, in underprivileged countries.
- **Publicize and support efforts to improve on-the-job safety for nurses.** Communities that want to express their appreciation for nurses can support efforts to ensure working conditions are safe for nurses and that nurses don't need to reach into their own pockets in an effort to avoid illness.
 - **Embrace public health efforts.** One of the most effective ways to honor local nurses is to take a little off their professional plate. Community leaders can urge residents to get their annual flu shots and update other vaccinations in an effort to keep hospital admissions low, which in turn makes nurses' jobs easier.
- Nurses are worthy of praise. Communities can do much to show these invaluable health care professionals how much their efforts and sacrifices are appreciated.

Could it be a hernia? 8 silent signs

Yes, women get hernias — but the signs are not always obvious. Most common is a bulge in the abdomen, but here are some other symptoms that you may be more likely to ignore:

- Pain in the pelvic area
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever
- Constipation
- Feeling full and bloated
- Heartburn
- Weakness and muscle fatigue in the upper leg or groin
- Pain when lifting or coughing

If left untreated, your hernia could grow, get more painful, or even become dangerous at some point. And a hernia won't go away on its own. The good news is today's minimally invasive hernia treatment options, including robotic-assisted surgery, can offer you fast recovery.



For more information or to request an appointment:
Visit BaptistHernia.com, call 904.202.2019 or scan the QR code.

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Nominations begin May 16



The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 56 years of community news excellence, will launch our seventh annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32081 & 32082.**

YOU, our valued readers, will have the chance to nominate your favorite businesses in various categories online. Online voting begins Friday, June 20 after nominations are complete.

**Don't miss this opportunity...
the last day to nominate is
Thursday, June 19th!**

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Cabbage, Potato, Bacon Festival returns

The Cabbage, Potato and Bacon Festival returned to Hastings Main Street on Saturday, April 26, and Sunday, April 27. The celebration of creativity and good old-fashioned fun featured a Spud Run, lawnmower races, a benefit dinner, cooking demos, a pageant and an artisan market.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Bolles teachers recognized for curriculum design

Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus French and Arabic teacher Sara Phillips-Bourass and Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus librarian and information specialist Christina Karvounis won the Institute for Global Learning’s annual Salomon Faculty Prize.

Phillips-Bourass won the Salomon Prize for faculty curriculum design at the middle and high school level (grades 5-12), and Karvounis won the same award at the primary level (grades 1-4). The Institute for Global Learning announced the pair as prize winners during its annual Global Educators Conference, held April 3-5 this year in Miami. Both teachers were also featured in the organization’s magazine.

With almost 400 member schools around the world, Bolles Director of Global Learning & Engagement Allison Chandler said it’s incredibly unusual for two of the three faculty prizes to go to the same school.

“Sara and Christina have a unique ability to connect students with different cultures and perspectives and make learning a truly enriching experience,” Chandler said. “My admiration for them both

is a widely shared sentiment across our School community. It’s also important to note that these award-winning curricula were developed through Ottenstroer Fellowships, which brought Phillips-Bourass to Senegal and Karvounis to Japan last summer. These experiences enabled them to explore different facets of their teaching and bring unique global insight back to their classrooms.”

Phillips-Bourass’ curriculum design, “Local is Global: Connecting Jacksonville History to Francophone Studies,” gave students taking advanced French the opportunity to explore various perspectives related to several local historical sites and the ties between their local

community, Senegal and France. Students uncovered writings and primary sources, shared histories, perspectives and stories related to these sites, all using their French language skills.

Karvounis’ curriculum design, “Japanese Writing & Storytelling,” was a multi-grade initiative that introduced traditional Japanese Kamishibai storytelling, stories and writing as a way to engage students with Japanese language and culture during their time in the library. The initiative included hands-on activities and virtual exchange, helping these traditional art forms and literature come to life for lower school students.



Christina Karvounis partnered with The Keio School to develop her award-winning curriculum.



Sara Phillips-Bourass traveled to Senegal to connect Jacksonville history to Francophone studies.

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St. Augustine Giving Day is May 7-8, Habitat among hopeful nonprofits

Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County (Habitat St. Johns) is preparing for the upcoming St. Augustine Giving Day 2025 event. This competitive

fundraiser will take place from noon May 7 through 11:59 a.m. May 8.

This event is a fun, energizing way for the community to come together and sup-

port local nonprofits, including Habitat St. Johns. There are opportunities to help in big ways, like doing an online peer-to-peer fundraiser with your network of

family and friends, working with your contacts to help the nonprofit win one of the various prizes, and/or making a matching gift contribution to help double the donations made that day. You can also help by donating during the event and spreading the word among your network.

Some of the prizes are really fun, like being the very first person to make a donation at noon on May 7, having the donor from the farthest away (Do you know anyone in New Zealand who could donate even \$5?) and having gifts come in from donors located in the most United States or the highest number of countries internationally.

Each of these prizes could award Habitat St. Johns an extra \$1,000 each.

Habitat St. Johns, together with its donors, volunteers, homeowners and community partners, are building homes, community and hope in St. Johns County. Habitat St. Johns was incorporated in 1992 and has built 175 affordable homes in St. Johns County since 1993. Fundraising events like St. Augustine Giving Day have a huge and lasting impact; every dollar is a building block to help Habitat homeowners create a better future for themselves and their families.

St. Augustine Giving Day 2025 (givingday2025.com) is a 24-hour online giving event designed to empower every person to give back to their community by supporting local nonprofits and the causes they care about. The one-day event helps build awareness and support for nonprofits through a unique partnership.

In 2024, \$530,846 was raised through 2,434 donors benefiting more than 62 nonprofits. This year the Giving Day organizers (The Focus Group and Endless Summer Realty) aim to raise even more and partner with a larger number of nonprofits around the U.S.

Since its inception in 2019, this event grew from an idea to help local people give wisely, to a movement that has inspired a broad culture of community-wide giving. During Giving Day 2025, everyone has the opportunity to be a philanthropist; every dollar will make a difference.

Giving Day 2025 is made possible through a unique partnership — hosted by the John 1:16 Foundation and sponsored by Endless Summer Realty (ESR) and The FOCUS Group (TFG).

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A new home on Josiah Street in Volusia Woods



A new home on Helen Street in Volusia Woods



Helen Street, looking west

Habitat closes on more homes

Habitat St. Johns continues to make home ownership possible for many who might otherwise find it impossible. So far this year, Habitat St. Johns has closed on 10 homes in its Volusia Woods community. And it's on track to close on 18 by the end of June. There will be an additional 18 homes on McDonald Avenue, and all will be closed by the end of June 2026. At that point, Habitat St. Johns will have completed the Volusia Woods 36-home neighborhood within two years. Next up will be a 17-home community called Cypress Village.

This is all pending funding and home-



A view of Josiah Street in Volusia Woods

owners being able to secure USDA mortgages. With so much uncertainty about federal funding at this time, the organization is hoping people will support this much-needed cause. Toward that end is St. Augustine Giving Day, set for noon May 7 to noon May 8. Once again, there will be several awards based on fundraising efforts and prizes during different times throughout the event. More details will be announced soon. For more information on Habitat St. Johns and how you can help, go to habitatstjohns.org.



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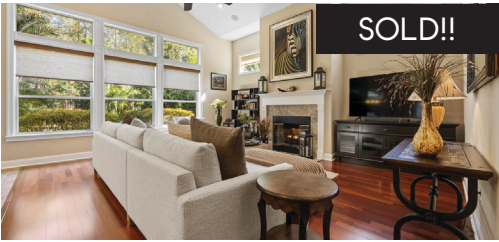
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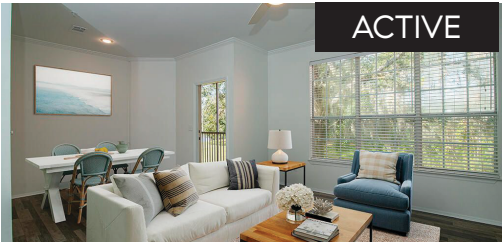
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Contributed rendering

An artist's rendering depicts the planned Field of Dreams Baseball concession and restroom building.

Disability-friendly baseball field OK'd for expansion

Field of Dreams Baseball, St. Johns County's disability-friendly baseball field located at Aberdeen Park (1401 Shetland Drive, St. Johns), is set to undergo a major expansion.

The project's \$1,513,800 construction contract was approved by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting on April 15. To celebrate the start of work on this project, a groundbreaking ceremony will be held at 11:30 a.m. May 3.

The baseball field will have its existing parking lot expanded, and a new concession building with ADA-accessible restrooms will be added. Saboungi Construction Inc. was awarded the contract.

The baseball field is home to the Field of Dreams (FOD) Baseball League, a sustainable voluntary organization that provides a safe, ADA-certified facility where children of all ages with mental or physical disabilities can play baseball for free and be an active part of a thriving athletic association.

The FOD Baseball League gives disabled children the opportunity to play baseball in an organized league, wear a uniform, have their names announced, participate in the singing of the National Anthem before each game and be a player on an athletic team.

Aberdeen Park also offers an all-inclusive, ADA-accessible playground.

Archaeologist to speak at Coastal Friends lunch

Coastal Friends will host Richard Eason, retired U.S. Foreign Service officer and well-known lecturer at UNF's OLLI program on history and archaeology, as their guest speaker at the May 7 luncheon.

Eason's popular adult education courses cover ancient discoveries such as the tomb of King Tut, Troy, Machu Picchu and others. He explains in understandable ways how the development of the use of science and technology can identify and date these treasures.

The luncheon runs from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and will be held at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach, and is open to members and guests, as well as the community. The menu will consist of caesar salad, chicken with lemon beurre blanc, rice pilaf and mixed vegetables, and chef's choice for dessert.

The cost to attend is \$25. Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible. The deadline for checks to be received is Friday morning, May 2.

Established in 1998, Coastal Friends is a social club comprised of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach, Jacksonville and the surrounding area, and St. Augustine. Some of the activities offered are: adventures and outings, book club, bunco, canasta, happy hour, lunch in, lunch out, mah jongg, samba and wine socials.

Luncheons are held on the first Wednesday of every month, except for July and August. New members are welcome throughout the year. Contact brookemeister@msn.com for more information on how to join.





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Atwater resident to offer next presentation in series

Contributed photos

“The Getting To Know You” resident speaker program at The Atwater at Nocatee has announced the guest speaker for 11 a.m. Tuesday, May 6. Residents, guests and the general public are invited to attend.

Chad Priesman is a happy man with a ready smile and a helping hand for anyone who needs it. And a ukelele!

Priesman’s first retirement came in 1998 when he retired from his job as a plant manager of an injection molding company in Plano, Illinois. After retirement, he and his wife, Mimi, moved to Pensacola, where Priesman enrolled in ministry school. He obtained his degree and became an ordained minister and wedding officiant with degrees in theology and practical ministry. He has done mission work in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

Priesman returned to Pensacola where he went back to work with an air pollution control company. He kept that position until 2024 when he retired again to help care for his wife in the last stages of her life. After her passing, Priesman’s grief was overwhelming and he didn’t quite know how to cope.

He moved to Jax Beach, where he embraced the beach scene and even took up the ukulele. He took lessons, watched tons of YouTube videos, bought first one then



Chad Priesman on the Beach.

two more ukuleles and was soon playing on the beach to an ever-expanding group of admirers.

While he was coping better with his grief, he knew the beach wasn’t his answer. He needed more stability, more people his own age and a need to find “his



Chad Priesman officiating at a wedding.

tribe.” After touring a number of apartment complexes, he walked into The Atwater at Nocatee and knew he was home.

Today, Priesman lives a rich and enriching life. He plays pool and poker, attends all the lecture series and is a rock star at karaoke.



Chad Priesman giving a presentation.

But all that pales in comparison to the wisdom, joy and kindness he brings to the Atwater community. Priesman says he found his “home” at The Atwater. In reality, residents feel he has brought the true meaning of the word “home” to the community.

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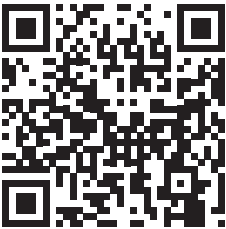
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- Wednesday, May 7 - River Walk Tastings, San Sebastian Winery
 - Thursday, May 8 - Harvest Awards & Tastings, Hyatt Place Vilano Beach
 - Friday, May 9 - Smoke on the Walk, Ancient City Farmstead *(VIP Lounge, Sold Out)*
 - Saturday, May 10 - Grand Tasting, Ancient City Farmstead *(VIP Lounge, Sold Out)*
 - Sunday, May 11 - Mother's Day Sunday Jazz Brunch, *(Sold Out)*



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St. Augustine History Festival features 40-plus events

Tour 30-plus historic properties in St. Augustine from May 7 to 11 during the St. Augustine History Festival — many of which will showcase special events. See event details and locations at staugustine-historyfestival.com

The St. Augustine History Festival was created by the University of Florida Historic St. Augustine Inc. and the Lastinger Family Foundation to showcase the history of America's oldest city.

The goal is to showcase every era of St. Augustine's long and storied past, from the founding in 1565 to the most advanced technology available to study history in 2025.

The St. Augustine History Festival takes place during National Historic Preservation Month, with 55 properties through St. Augustine and St. Johns County on the National Register of Historic Places.

"My favorite part of the event is two-fold: piecing together the History Festival each year is a tremendous rush for me, as I see our historic sites and venues coming together as one community," explained Roger Smith, director of the St. Augustine History Festival, adjunct professor at Flagler College and membership and outreach coordinator with the St. Augustine Historical Society.

"The best part, however, is attending as many programs and venues as humanly

possible during the five-day festival and listening to the comments of those in attendance. It's amazing how many people have said things like, 'We don't get downtown much because of the crowds, but this really piqued our interest!'"

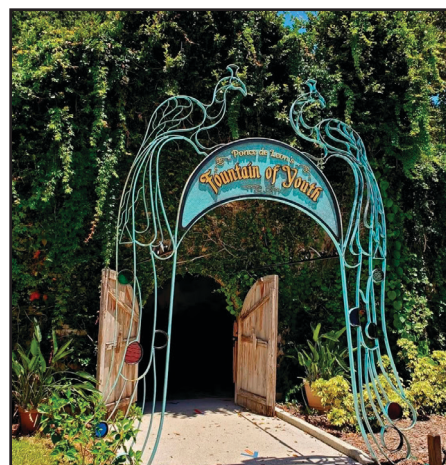
Forty-plus tours, lectures, family-friendly events, workshops and other happenings are on the schedule. In addition to historic attractions, the 2025 event will also feature historic houses of worship and historic gardens.

Sample of Events

- At the **Colonial Quarter** living history museum, festival participants can experience ongoing screenings of the PBS documentary "America's Untold Story" on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, May 7-9.

- On Saturday, May 10, guests can enjoy free colonial demonstrations, storytelling and colonial music. In addition, visitors can enjoy free tours of the **Gallegos House** at 21 St. George St., with a focus on historic preservation and colonial life.

- The **Castillo de San Marcos National Monument**, the oldest masonry fort in the continental United States, will feature "Blast from the Past" on Saturday and Sunday, May 10-11, with historic weapons demonstrations at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.



Contributed photos

- **St. Augustine Historical Society** events include Dr. Christine Miller of the UF College of Medicine, speaking about Spanish Colonial Medical Practices on Friday, May 9, from 4 to 5 p.m. at the Oldest House Museum Complex, 14 St. Francis St.

- **The Woman's Exchange of St. Augustine** will host two free talks on Thursday, May 8, at the historic Peña-Peck House that include "Whatever A Woman's Capable of Doing: The Extraordinary History of the Sisters of St. Joseph" and "Through the Eyes of Constance Fenimore Woolson."

- **Fort Mose Historic State Park** will hold multiple free events on Friday and

Saturday, May 9-10, including self-guided tours of the grounds, visitors center and exhibits, Fort Mose Militia re-enactments, African drummer performances and a free lecture by historian David Nolan.

Find all events and locations at staugustinehistoryfestival.com

"When you think of a festival in St. Augustine, big tents, music and kiddie rides at Francis Field come to mind," Smith said. "The St. Augustine History Festival is completely different. Historic sites and venues in town will provide additional programs, events, discounts and special talks to their normal routines."

Participating Venues

- Castillo de San Marcos
- Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine / Mission Nombre de Dios
- City of St. Augustine and Historic Preservation
- The Colonial Quarter
- Father Miguel O'Reilly House Museum
- Flagler College (Ponce de Leon Hotel)
- Florida National Guard Historic Barracks/Museum and National Cemetery
- Fort Matanzas
- Fort Mose Historic State Park and Museum

FESTIVAL continues on **Page 25**

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Betty Griffin Center Quarter Auction set for May 4

Betty Griffin Center is introducing a new and fun way to help survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the community — The Quarter Auction — set for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, May 4, at The Tringali Barn, located at 7310 U.S. 1 in St. Augustine.

A quarter auction is a fun mix of part raffle, part auction fundraiser.

All proceeds from this event will be used to support shelter operations, counseling, advocacy ... and all the other services the center provides to survivors in St. Johns County.

Tickets are available for \$20 per person to take part in the Betty Griffin Center Quarter Auction. Order tickets at universe.com/events/betty-griffin-center-quarter-auction-tickets-9VD63L?ref=universe-discover.

How the quarter auction works

Once you arrive at the event, you will receive a numbered paddle — and a corresponding numbered ball will be put into a drawing bin. Each round gives you an opportunity to bid on an auction item — with bids starting at one quarter.

Once the bid is announced, everyone has an opportunity to bid by placing one quarter (or up to four quarters) into their jar. Once all the bids are in and the paddles are raised, a randomly chosen number is called. If the person with that number

placed a bid, he or she wins that item.

Numbers will continue to be drawn until there is a winner.

Bring your rolls of quarters and bid on more than 60 auction items ranging from \$10 to \$100 in value. (Additional rolls of quarters will be on sale at the event.)

During the event, you can also enjoy drinks, including mimosas and beer, visit food trucks for lunch — and shop among local vendors.

If you're interested in volunteering, a vendor spot or donating an auction item for the event, contact Carole Sullivan at caroles@bettygriffin-center.org.

The Betty Griffin Center was founded in 1990 by concerned citizens and incorporated as the Safety Shelter of St. Johns County to develop plans to provide shelter for local victims of domestic violence and their children. Today, Betty Griffin Center serves more than 1,000 victims of domestic and sexual abuse annually, operates a 24-hour help line, emergency shelter, provides professional counseling for victims of domestic and sexual abuse, provides age-appropriate violence prevention training and operates two thrift stores at Julington Square and Anastasia Square to assist in funding the agency's ongoing operations.

For more information, go to bettygriffincenter.org.

Festival

Continued from 24

- Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park
- Governor's House Cultural Center and Museum
- Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center
- Marineland Dolphin Adventure
- Peña-Peck House
- Spanish Military Hospital
- St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park
- St. Augustine Historical Society / Oldest House Museum

Complex

- St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum
- The Treasure Chest Interactive Museum by See America

Tours

- UF Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience
- Villa Zorayda Museum
- Ximenez-Fatio House Museum

Historic Houses of Worship

- Ancient City Baptist Church
- First Congregation Sons of Israel
- Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine
- National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche
- St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine
- St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church
- Trinity Episcopal Church

Historic Gardens

- Father Miguel O'Reilly House Garden
- Flagler College Historic Gardens
- Fountain of Youth Historic Gardens
- Mission Nombre de Dios Historic Grounds and Gardens
- Pena-Peck House Historic Gardens
- Spanish Military Hospital Apothecary Garden



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THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025 • PAGE 26

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Tan Vita brings a healthy glow to Neptune Beach

Contributed photos

By Holly Tishfield

Tan Vita, which recently opened its doors in Neptune Beach, is a salon set on redefining the art of bronzing with luxury custom spray tans that both nourish the skin and leave it with an elegant, golden shine.

The salon is unique for its science-backed approach. Tan Vita's spray tan solutions are made with high-quality natural and organic ingredients, including plant and mineral extracts. Not only does the solution give clients a natural-looking tan tailored to unique skin tone, but it's also packed with non-toxic, skin-loving ingredients that nourish while they bronze.

The solutions are environmentally safe, reef-friendly and non-toxic — ideal for clients who prioritize both health and sustainability.

"After struggling with skin damage caused by UV exposure, I wanted to find



Inside of the Tan Vita salon in Neptune Beach



Owner Melissa Domingues



The line of Tan Vita luxury tanning products.

a way to maintain a healthy, bronzed look without compromising my skin," said Melissa Domingues, owner and founder of Tan Vita. "Spray tanning became my passion — one I approached with the same level of dedication and knowledge I brought to every other part of my career."

Domingues is a seasoned beauty industry professional whose career spans decades, states and sectors.

Originally from Rhode Island, Domingues spent years immersed in all facets of the beauty world. She owned salons and boutiques, educated for well-known brands, and worked alongside beauty distributors, beauty schools and trade shows. Her background also includes time as an agent and talent scout for runway, film, television and commercials

across all age groups.

Domingues' passion for the industry and her experience struggling with skin damage led her to develop Tan Vita, her custom-blend spray tan studio where skin health and beauty go hand-in-hand.

Each appointment begins with a consultation to assess the client's skin tone and desired glow, whether clients are prepping for a special occasion or simply searching for everyday radiance. Then, to prepare for the process, a barrier cream is applied to palms, knees, heels, elbows and nails to prevent over-absorption.

This is followed by a pH-balancing primer to prep the skin and a customized spray tan carefully blended to ensure an even, radiant finish. A talc-free setting powder is also applied for comfort. Finally,

clients spend one to two minutes in a stand-up dryer, which allows them to head right back to their day, whether that entails work, errands, picking up the kids or shopping.

To help clients maintain their glow long after their appointment, Domingues created the Tan Vita line of luxury tanning products, designed to extend the life of a spray tan or elevate an at-home self-tan routine. The collection includes a tanning lotion, bronzing body mist, face mist, anti-aging bronzing serum for the face and a spray tan eraser.

"I'm so pleased with the reviews I've received from these products," said Domingues. "It makes me so happy that my clients love them as much as I do."

You can visit Tan Vita salon at 2050 Kings Circle South, Ste. G, Neptune Beach.

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St. Vincent's Southside one of top maternity hospitals

St. Vincent's Southside has been recognized as one of America's Best Maternity Hospitals by Newsweek for 2024. The list illuminates which American hospitals are best equipped to provide some of life's most crucial care.

"Expecting mothers and their babies deserve quality care that is tailored to their individual needs," said Kevin Rinks, president and CEO of St. Vincent's Southside. "We're grateful that our approach to maternal care has been recognized and look forward to continuing to serve families across Northeast Florida, here in their own community."

The ranking is based on a nationwide online survey of hospital managers and medical professionals (regarding areas

like perinatal care and operative obstetrics) as well as publicly available data from hospital surveys addressing the patient experience (including topics such as cleanliness and communication about medication).

Data on hospital quality metrics — like the number of elective deliveries and level of personnel vaccination — was provided from several sources, including nonprofit hospital accreditation organization The Joint Commission, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration.

At St. Vincent's Southside Family Birth Place, families can find experienced OB-GYNs, certified nurse midwives and

an entire team dedicated to their care. Expectant mothers and their babies are supported with personalized care throughout their pregnancy, labor and delivery, as well as follow-up care.

The Family Birth Place at St. Vincent's Southside was honored with an Excellence in Maternal Care award by the Florida Hospital Association for 2024. St. Vincent's Southside was also recognized for patient safety excellence by Healthgrades for 2025.

For more information about the Family Birth Place at St. Vincent's Southside, go to healthcare.ascension.org/locations/florida/fljac/jacksonville-ascension-st-vincent-southside/departments/family-birth-place.



Contributed photos

Sylvan Learning Centers open in St. Johns County

Grand opening set for May 17

By Shaun Ryan

When New York natives Anil and Maila Singh decided to move their young family to Northeast Florida, they wanted to launch a business that would contribute something of value to their adopted community.

They discovered that, even in one of Florida's top-rated school districts, parents wanted additional learning support for their children.

"One of the reasons we moved here was because the families here value education and family," explained Anil Singh. "That's something we wanted."

The Singhs decided to do something in education. They explored their options and settled on opening a Sylvan Learning Center franchise at three locations in St. Johns County.

With a professional background in technology, Anil Singh was impressed with how Sylvan incorporates technology into its learning plans and curricula. In fact, all students begin their journey by taking a 60- to 90-minute computer-adaptive assessment that helps to identify areas that need attention and then customize a learning plan specific to each

individual child.

"You're going to get a bunch of questions, and as you're getting them right or wrong, the test is actually adapting to you and your personality and your strengths and weaknesses," said Singh.

This aspect puts Sylvan decades ahead of its competitors, some of which are beginning to follow its lead.

Sylvan also emphasizes the importance of motivation and building confidence. Even bright students taught by expert instructors can fail to achieve their potential if unmotivated. But research demonstrated to Singh that students in Sylvan programs tended to adopt constructive changes in attitude.

"They love doing their math, reading, writing, sciences," he said. "They want to try."

Contributing to this process is Sylvan's mandate to keep the teacher-student ratio low: typically, one to three, or one to four. Compare that to the ratio for Florida classrooms, usually 18 to 25 student per teacher.

Another factor that sets Sylvan apart is its choice of tutors.

"We don't use high school kids or college kids," Singh said. "All of our tutors are professional teachers. All are required to be certified, to have an active license or to have held an active license." The latter is in the case of retirees.



Singh hires St. Johns County teachers first, but if there are vacancies, he plans to add those from nearby counties. All tutoring is in person at the centers.

In keeping with the Singhs' commitment to community, their franchise donates 50 hours of tutoring to eight students associated with St. Augustine Youth Services.

"We want to be good stewards of our community," Anil Singh said. "This is where we live; this is where we play. This is where I want my kids to live and play. We want it to be a nice place. That's one

of the reasons we came to St. Johns. It's a beautiful community with a lot of beautiful people. Everybody's good-hearted at the end of the day."

While most students attend tutoring after school, homeschooling families typically schedule themselves for midday. Homeschoolers can use Step Up funds from the state of Florida or any scholarships specific to tutoring or homeschooling toward these lessons.

In addition, the centers offer SAT and ACT preparation for teens.

The Singhs opened their first center at 13000 Sawgrass Village Circle, Suite 15, Ponte Vedra Beach, about three weeks ago.

A fun-filled grand opening with ice cream, games, face painting, balloon animals, prizes and a surprise superhero will be held from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 17. Bonus tickets will be awarded for RSVPs made by May 3. RSVP to 904-373-0128 or hello@sylvanofstjohns.com.

The second center is located at 585 International Golf Pkwy., Suite 7, St. Augustine. A grand opening will be held Aug. 2. The phone number is 904-907-2721.

A third center will open later this year in Julington Creek.

For further information, go to sylvan-learning.com.

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The White Magnolia offers brides a unique dress shopping experience.



A few of the diverse dress choices at The White Magnolia.

White Magnolia celebrates 15 years helping brides

By Holly Tishfield

In 2010, Kerrie Hileman was living in Jacksonville, working as a certified public accountant, and planning a wedding with her then-fiancé.

She went through the standard notions of wedding preparation — dress shopping and venue searching galore — but found that her experience was lacking the pizzazz she had always imagined.

Hileman searched high and low for a more unique wedding dress-shopping experience but couldn't find any in Northeast Florida that quite fit what she was looking for. So, in 2010, she set out to change the game, and the very first White Magnolia boutique was born in the San Marco area.

Hileman grew up in Ponte Vedra Beach, a dancer who loved sparkly dresses and the bridal magazines peppered in grocery store checkout lines.

"Looking back, I feel like maybe bridal work was always in my future," she said.

This August will mark The White Magnolia's 15th anniversary in the Jacksonville community, though the bridal boutique has grown leaps and bounds since its humble days as a standalone boutique.

In 2013, three years after welcoming brides from across the state, Hileman finally heeded her clients' requests for another White Magnolia location. She opened a new store in Tampa that same year.

The following year, Hileman joined forces with her now-business partner Mallory Thorburn to open a White Magnolia boutique in Atlanta, Georgia, the business's first venture outside of the state.



Contributed photos

Kerrie Hileman, founder of The White Magnolia

The White Magnolia blossomed in popularity as Hileman and Thorburn opened more locations across the Southeast together every year. As of today, there are eight White Magnolia locations scattered across Florida, Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina.

"It's evolved into something larger and more impactful than I ever imagined," Hileman said.

What sets the White Magnolia apart and makes it such a beloved choice for incoming brides is the boutique's attention to customer service and cultivating a one-of-a-kind gown shopping experience for every customer.

Brides can expect private, 90-minute appointments with an experienced and knowledgeable stylist who takes the time to understand each bride's unique taste and guides them through the entire gown-shopping experience.

"We're very much experience-based," Hileman said. "It's such a special time for a bride, and many haven't been through this experience before, so we feel it's important that each bride who walks into our store has the opportunity to work with an educated stylist one-on-one."

In 2021, Hileman and Thorburn opened a sister brand to The White Magnolia named Magnolia Lane. The newer boutique still offers all the same classic styles and exceptional customer experiences, but this particular subset offers franchise opportunities to encourage women in business and entrepreneurship. There are currently seven Magnolia Lane locations.

As the business approaches 15 years of service, Hileman says she looks back with gratitude and a bit of stunned delight.

"It's very rewarding for me to look back and see that we've impacted so many brides on the most important day of their life," she said. "It's fun to be a part of that process and see the end result. It's really made this journey very enjoyable."

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Total Foot Care opening Jacksonville Beach Office

Total Foot Care and Wellness Clinic (TFC), Jacksonville's fastest growing and largest podiatry and wound health care provider, is making major moves opening a new clinic office at 630 Jacksonville Drive, Jacksonville Beach. The new TFC location replaces its current address at 14444 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville, and will open on May 6, providing its full complement of integrated podiatry and wound care services.

Founded in 2015 by the husband-and-wife team of Dr. Candice Kennedy and Alvin Kennedy, Jr., TFC provides expert

foot-and-ankle care with 13 providers. The practice was first established as a mobile podiatry and wound care service. Now with five locations throughout Jacksonville and mobile services for nursing homes and assisted living residents, TFC treats all below-the-knee conditions and custom orthotics, braces and shoes, sports injuries, surgical solutions and more.

In 2023, TFC introduced a new innovative diabetic foot management program called Physiologic Insulin Resensitization (PIR), a breakthrough treatment with the potential to transform patient outcomes.

The goal is to help patients improve renal function, neuropathy and insulin resistance while working to stabilize and even reverse diabetes-related complications and transform patient outcomes.

PIR treatments are currently offered at its 8021 Philips Highway, Jacksonville clinic. A second PIR clinic will be expanded soon at the Jacksonville Beach location, continuing to redefine comprehensive diabetic care.

"We are proud to advance innovation with a patient-centered approach to deliver the highest quality care for everyone

— specifically those with diabetes," said Dr. Candice Kennedy, TFC's founder and principal. "We have seen tremendous health benefits with PIR, and it's our goal to provide greater access for all those suffering from this debilitating disease. Our new location enables us to expand podiatry health to those we care for and through our mobile division in assisted living and nursing home communities."

The Jacksonville Beach clinic will be open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Learn more at TheTFClinic.com or call 904-323-0954.

Angelwood, Underwood Jewelers announce trunk show

Angelwood Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with developmental differences, has announced its continued partnership with Underwood Jewelers. This collaboration highlights the shared commitment of both organizations to supporting the Northeast Florida community.

Underwood Jewelers will host a trunk show at the Ponte Vedra Beach location on May 8, 9 and 10. A portion of the proceeds from this event will directly benefit Angelwood's programs, which provide essential services such as residential group homes, adult day training, respite care and supported employment for individuals living with intellectual and developmental differences.

Additionally, Underwood Jewelers is sponsoring an exclusive prize drawing to further support Angelwood's mission. The proceeds from ticket sales will contribute to Angelwood's efforts to empower families and individuals in need.

Diane Tuttle, Angelwood CEO, shared her appreciation for the partnership: "Underwood Jewelers exemplifies what it means to be a community partner.

Their unwavering support enables us to continue providing critical services that foster dignity and independence for those we serve. This event is a beautiful example of how businesses and nonprofits can work together to make a lasting impact."

John Rutkowski, manager of Underwood Jewelers in Ponte Vedra Beach, echoed these sentiments: "At Underwood, we believe in giving back to the community that has supported us for generations. Partnering with Angelwood allows us to contribute meaningfully to an organization that changes lives every day. We are honored to host this event and invite everyone to join us in supporting their incredible work."

Angelwood has been serving the Jacksonville area since 1993, responding to community needs with services that promote growth, and inclusion for individuals living with developmental differences. Underwood Jewelers, a family-owned business established in 1928, shares this commitment through its dedication to ethical practices and community involvement.



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GUEST COLUMN

Should you change investment strategies?

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

You may take a “set it and forget it” approach to investing. But, over time, life events, the timing of when you need the money and market events are likely to compel you to revisit your strategy. Here are some things to consider when they arise.

Dealing with life events

Events, both expected and unexpected, like the following could cause a change in your long-term goals and time horizon:

- Graduation
- Marriage, divorce, or remarriage
- Birth of child or grandchild
- Change in health status
- Job loss, retirement, or early retirement
- Death of a loved one

These types of events may prompt you to revisit your investment strategy, and in fact, they may be good reasons to make changes. Do you need to reprioritize your investment goals, spending or how much debt you need to pay down?

Before you reallocate your investments, remember to plan with the same careful consideration you gave



Contributed photo

to creating your original investment strategy.

Responding to market action

In addition to life events, you may want to revisit your investment strategy

when there's market volatility. Is that college tuition/mortgage/vacation payment nearer than you anticipated, making you realize that you may need to be more conservatively invested?

It is worth noting that your time

horizon for needing the money is the key factor here. Avoid making emotional decisions based on today's 24/7/365 news cycle. It can be tempting to react to the headlines when you might be better off simply riding out the volatility if you have a longer time horizon.

That doesn't mean you should never respond to market action. However, it's often a good idea to think long and hard before you change or, at the extreme, abandon your strategy.

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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UF Health signs agreement with United Healthcare

By Greg Harrison

UF Health officials have announced the signing of a new multiyear agreement with United Healthcare, effective May 5. UF Health hospitals and physicians will once again be in the United provider network for thousands of patients in Gainesville, Jacksonville, St. Johns County and Central Florida.

“This new agreement provides thousands of United patients continuous access to premier compassionate, academic-

quality health care throughout Northeast, North Central and Central Florida,” said Stephen J. Motew, president and system CEO of the UF Health clinical enterprise. “We appreciate the patience of our communities and are thankful for all the hard work our health care team has devoted to our tradition of excellence in caring for our patients.”

The new arrangement is designed to reduce administrative overhead, improve efficiency and enhance care management.

“The contract provides UF Health phy-

sicians and caregivers acceptable terms and relief from administrative obstacles,” said Marvin Dewar, chief executive officer and chief medical officer of UF Health Physicians. “We want to protect patients’ access to the expert care they know and trust, now and in the future.”

People enrolled in the following plans will have network access to all UF Health’s hospitals, facilities and physicians, beginning May 5:

- UnitedHealthcare employer-sponsored commercial plans

- UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Florida (Medicaid)

This agreement also restores network access to UF Health Flagler Hospital, facilities and physicians for people enrolled in UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage plans, including Dual Special Needs Plans.

All other UF Health hospitals and physicians throughout the state continue to participate in UnitedHealthcare’s Medicare Advantage network.

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St. Augustine's Romanza Festival returns May 2-18

St. Augustine's Romanza Festival of Music & the Arts returns May 2-18 with a full line-up of free and ticketed shows to inspire and entertain. The festival is comprised of more than 40 headline and partner events featuring music, dance, visual arts, theatre, spoken word and more. The calendar features many free events and select ticketed experiences held at venues throughout St. Augustine.

"St. Augustine has such an active and diverse arts community," said Albert Syeles, Romanza co-founder and president. "Romanza Festival is an opportunity to showcase the people, organizations and beautiful spaces dedicated to spreading joy through their art. We're very passionate about making culture accessible to all — that's why many of the shows are free, donation-only, or are as low-cost as possible. It's an opportunity for the community to experience what we have available in our own backyards."

Romanza Festival features events hosted at venues that include The Waterworks, Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church and Courtyard, Third Space Improv, R.J. Murray Middle School, Lewis Auditorium and more.

Performances and events are offered by the following groups: St. Augustine Art Association, Key of Seas, A Classic Theatre, The North Florida Women's Chorale, Third Space Improv, The Matanzas Vocal Artists, The 9B Quartet, Akia Uwanda & Taylor Roberts, Lisa Lockhart & Friends, The Tale Tellers, Echo Piano Duo, Drumming with Amber Hall, The Dunchoppers Band, David



David Pedraza

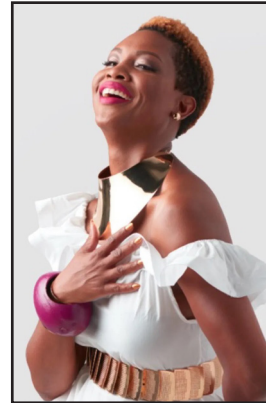
Ouellette, Yael and Gabriel, The Pinnacle Singers, Bold City Brass, St. Augustine Orchestra, FloArts Students, St. Augustine Community Chorus, Art Box 137, The Florida Storytelling Troupe, Kimberly Beasley & Brian Luckett, Kaleidoscope of Dance X, The Elite First Coast Flute Choir, David Pedraza, The Storytelling Sims, Dr. Jonathan Dotson, Deborah Dickey, Evan Anderson Quartet, Mama Blue, St. Augustine Concert Band, Shrink Rap, The Gainesville Brass Quintet and Robert Sims.

Romanza Festival has four headlining events: "An Evening with Mozart" with The San Marco Chamber Players; Svetlana and the New York Collective, performing their hit concert, "Night at the Movies"; The Beaux Arts Chamber Ensemble performing Piano Trios; and "Rach 2 by 6" featuring Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor.

Guests can save on tickets using the code ROMANZA. For more information and tick-



Dr. Keith Teepen performing in "Rach 2 by 6"



Akia Uwanda



Drs. Mimi Zhang and David Mach

Contributed photos

ets, go to romanzafestival.com/2025-events.

Since 2009, Romanza has worked to promote and produce cultural events that showcase St. Augustine's vibrant living culture, enhance the quality of life for residents, and create a positive, lasting impression of the Nation's Oldest City for visitors.

Romanza Festival is funded in part by the St. Johns County Tourist Development

Council and the St. Johns Cultural Council. Romanza produces the award-winning Romanza Festival, St. Augustine Celtic Music and Heritage Festival and St. Augustine's historic St. Patrick Parade, as well as Romanza Collage Concert Series and Romanza Gatherings. Learn more at romanzastaugustine.org and follow along on social media @RomanzaStAugustine.

Café Eleven to welcome blues guitarist

Four-time Blues Music Award Winner Sue Foley is bringing her brand of high energy, guitar-driven Texas blues to The Original Café Eleven in St. Augustine on Sunday, May 11. She will bring her band and will also perform a few solo acoustic songs from her latest album, "One Guitar Woman," released on Stony Plain Records.

"One Guitar Woman" was a 2025 Grammy Award nominee for Traditional Blues Album and is currently up for the Juno Award for the Blues Album of the Year and Blues Music Award for Acoustic Blues Album.

In addition, Foley is once again up for Traditional Blues Female Artist (Koko Taylor Award), which she won in 2020, 2022, 2023

and 2024.

True to her album's title, Foley performs all the tracks on a single acoustic guitar, a nylon-string Flamenco guitar that she bought from a master luthier on a 2022 excursion to Paracho, Mexico.

The music starts at 8 p.m. Café Eleven is located at 501 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine. Tickets are: \$30 (advance) or \$35 (day of show) for general admission. Reserved table seating is \$45. For advance tickets, go to originalcafe11.com/sue-foley-may-11-2025.

For further information about Foley and other performers appearing at Café Eleven, go to originalcafe11.com/upcoming-events.

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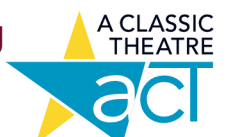


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A scene during "Southern Fried Funeral," which was featured at Alhambra Theatre & Dining earlier this year.



Photos courtesy of Alhambra Theatre & Dining

"West Side Story" is one of the famed shows that has graced the Alhambra stage.

Alhambra voted top in the nation

By Anthony Richards

Alhambra Theatre & Dining is a cultural landmark on the First Coast and a local icon and now it is in the eyes of the nation as well after it was voted the "No. 1 dinner theatre" in the nation according to the latest USA Today poll.

The poll ranked the top 10 dinner theaters across the United States and was voted on by readers nationally.

"We are honored and humbled to receive this incredible recognition," said

Craig Smith, managing partner at the Alhambra. "It's a testament to our dedicated staff and talented performers, and most importantly, the loyal Season Partners and guests who continue to support the Alhambra year after year. This award belongs to them as much as it does to us."

This is not the first time the Alhambra has held a prestigious national distinction as it also holds the title as America's longest continuously running professional dinner theater and it only continues to highlight the lengthy history that the es-

tablishment has developed over the years.

The list is part of an annual initiative by USA Today where 20 nominees were selected from around the country by a panel of experts in the travel, theater and culinary industries and then winners were then selected by a public vote.

The Alhambra stood out among a highly competitive field of theaters nationwide, which the theater credits its unique blend of Broadway-quality performances and three-course meals served in an elegant and intimate setting, for receiv-

ing the honor.

"This isn't just a win for the Alhambra," Smith said. "It's a win for Jacksonville and the entire Northeast Florida arts community."

Located in Jacksonville, the Alhambra has been entertaining audiences since 1967 with beloved musicals, compelling dramas and family-friendly productions. Recent shows have included "West Side Story," "The Addams Family" and the upcoming "My Fair Lady" will be the next show to hit the stage starting on May 15.

Flagler College Performing Arts Department wins awards at festival

The Performing Arts Department at Flagler College achieved remarkable recognition for its production of "Streetlight Woodpecker" at the prestigious Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. This outstanding production, penned

by Flagler's Professor Shawn Fisher, was one of only five selected from 11 states to perform at the regional festival in North Carolina.

Jackson Moser of St. Augustine, a theatre arts major, received the award for

Outstanding Performance in a Play or Musical.

Caz Miner of St. Augustine, a criminology major, received the award for Outstanding Stage Management & Distinguished Properties Design.

The production garnered 14 national awards, covering almost every award category, showcasing excellence in acting, directing, design, technology, management and departmental collaboration.

Flagler's Performing Arts Department was collectively awarded the Citizen Artist Award, recognizing programs in higher education using theatrical production to promote long-term societal impact, and the Outstanding Achievement in the Facilitation of a Brave Rehearsal Space, celebrating teaching artists who prioritize the well-being of their student artists.

Faculty members also received recognition for their contributions, including Outstanding Direction of a Play or Musical by Leah Page, Outstanding Scenic Design by Shawn Fisher and Outstanding Technical Director by Britt Corry.

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Pacetti concert planned in Fruit Cove

Second Sundays at Stetson's Concert Series will present Sam Pacetti in concert at Beluthahatchee at 2 p.m. May 11. Tours of Stetson Kennedy's home are available after the concert.

Pacetti is a "finger-style guitar wizard, a deft songwriter" and popular performer.

This special event is sponsored by Lullaby of the Rivers Inc. and the Stetson Kennedy Foundation.

The music starts at 2 p.m. No reservations are necessary. A \$10 donation is suggested to help support the presentation of live local music.

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

To schedule a tour of Beluthahatchee call 904-549-9444.

For more information, contact sundaysatstetsons@gmail.com.

Svetlana & The New York Collective to headline Romanza Festival

Event brings music, theater, dance and art to life in the Nation's Oldest City

Romanza Festival of Music & the Arts welcomes acclaimed international performing artist Svetlana and the New York Collective. Taking the stage at Lewis Auditorium on May 11, the group will perform "Night at the Movies," an immersive program inspired by her chart-topping record of silver-screen hits, which soared to No. 1 on the Billboard U.S. Traditional Jazz Charts. Sultry and ethereal, with an effortless ability to convey the essence of a song, Svetlana and the New York Collective is a sure hit.

"We're incredibly excited to welcome such a talented group of performers to Romanza Festival," said Albert Syeles, Romanza co-founder and president. "Our goal is to give each audience an unforgettable experience. This program does that across generations and genres. 'Night at the Movies' touches everyone, whether you're a long-time jazz devotee or a small child who loves children's musicals."

"Nights at the Movies" invites listeners on a dynamic musical odyssey. It showcases innovative jazz interpretations of iconic movie soundtracks spanning American classics, French New Wave and European cinema, contemporary Academy Award-winners and beloved animated classics.

The program includes favorites from "The Wizard of Oz," "Sabrina," "Tootsie" and Disney favorites "Coco" and "The Princess and the Frog."

Presented by Svetlana's acclaimed New York Collective, the performance promises to captivate audiences with its blend of cinematic dreaminess and fiery musical virtuosity. Tickets begin at \$35 and may be purchased at eventbrite.com.



Contributed photo

Svetlana and the New York Collective

Romanza Festival of Music & the Arts is a 17-day festival beginning May 2 and featuring more than 30 events with talent from the world of music, dance, visual arts, theatre, spoken word and more.

The calendar features many free events, along with select ticketed experiences, held at venues throughout St. Augustine. Other headliner events are "Rach 2 by 6," featuring the world premiere of a unique ensemble arrangement of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2; The San Marco Chamber Players; and The Beaux Art Chamber Ensemble. These are anchored by shows featuring talented performers from across Northeast Florida, including The North Florida Women's Chorale, Akia Uwanda, Bold City Brass, The Florida Storytelling Troupe, and the St. Augustine Concert Band.

For more information, go to romanzafestival.com/2025-events.

Must-see performances!

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- **At the Ballet**
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75th Jacksonville symphony

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Sports

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The Ponte Vedra Sharks hosted the Bartram Trail Bears in a girls lacrosse regional semifinal on April 29.



Photo by Anthony Richards

Grace Raymond is cheered on by her teammates as she runs down the sideline.

Defensive slugfest defines rivalry, regional semifinal

By Anthony Richards

One of the best girls lacrosse rivalries currently resumed with its most recent installment as the Ponte Vedra Sharks hosted the Bartram Trail Bears in a regional semifinal matchup, the third meeting between the schools this year, and this time it was the Bears who finished on top.

The Bears edged out the Sharks 5-4 in a defensive battle with both goalies standing on their heads and making a great save after

great save throughout the night.

The Sharks (13-4) had been victorious in the two previous matchups during the regular season and are two of the best teams in the state, which was on full display.

Sophomore goalie Kaitlyn Lease was the MVP of the game as she made several stops during the game, especially during the second half and in the final minute when the Sharks made a furious push and threw everything they had at her offensively with

their state title hopes on the line.

However, she proved to be up to the task along with Sharks' goalie Lexi Rupp, also a sophomore, as both teams were held to a season-low for goals in a game.

The performances by Lease and Rupp showcase the young talent on both teams and that this rivalry is here to stay for years to come.

The Bears led the Sharks 4-2 at halftime and the Sharks came out pushing the pace

and getting some prime scoring chances as a result, and they eventually broke through as Grace Raymond fed senior Lamb Toole to cut the lead to one with 1:39 left in the third quarter.

Toole and the Sharks' faithful thought she tied up the game midway through the fourth quarter as well, but her goal was disallowed due to a penalty, and a couple of minutes later the Bears scored what wound up being the game-winner with 5:20 to play.



Giada Attenucci unleashes a shot in traffic.



The Sharks play tight defense.



Lamb Toole (No. 21) scores a goal.



Brooke Johnson maneuvers through traffic.



It was the third meeting between the two schools this season.



The Sharks' comeback bid fell short late in the contest.



Ashton Florida (No. 7) and Jameson Haughey (No. 14) attempt to block a shot at the net.



Beachside and Nease faced off in a district tournament semifinal matchup on Tuesday, April 29.

District championship on the line in boys volleyball

Ponte Vedra High School is hosting the boys volleyball district 2-2A tournament. The Sharks were joined by the Nease Panthers, Beachside Barracudas and Bartram Trail Bears, who all competed in semifinal matchups on Tuesday, April 29.

The top-seeded Panthers defeated the Barracudas in four sets 25-18, 22-25, 25-21, 25-17, and advanced to the district championship on Thursday, May 1 where they will play either the Sharks or the Bears, who competed in the other semifinal matchup, but the result was not available by press time.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Thor Gyulai strikes a shot.



Connor Crabtree fires a kill through a block.



Ponte Vedra head coach Andor Gyulai instructs his team.



Beachside players celebrate a point.



Ashton Florida hits a ball between two Beachside players.



Ashton Florida and Jameson Haughey reach for a ball at the net.



Rafay Bajwa (No. 20) and Connor Crabtree (No. 8) of Ponte Vedra.



C.J. McKenzie fires a pitch during game one of the regional quarterfinal series against Tallahassee Lincoln.



Senior Jack Brady holds a runner close at second base.

Photos by Lucy Miller

SHARKS CREATE CHANCES IN GAME ONE BEFORE BEING SWEEP

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra Sharks baseball season came to an end following a pair of losses on the road to Tallahassee Lincoln High as they got swept in the regional quarterfinal series April 23 and 24.

Sophomore C.J. McKenzie took the mound for the Sharks in game one and put forth a memorable performance pitching a complete game and giving the Sharks every chance to come out on top.

He allowed just two earned runs and scattered five hits along with four strikeouts and three walks over the six innings pitched, but unfortunately for McKenzie and the Sharks they could not take advantage of the runners they had on base during the contest.

The Sharks only scored one run despite outhitting the Trojans 10-5 and committing one less fielding error.

The majority of the Trojans hits came in the final inning, when they scored a pair of runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to break free of a 1-1 deadlock to that point en route to winning the game 3-1.

A sacrifice fly by sophomore Maddox Tepper in the fifth inning brought in the only run for the Sharks.

It turned out that game one was crucial to the Sharks extending the series and coming back home for a possible game three scenario, because they were shutout 7-0 in game two the next day as the Tro-



Sharks' coaches Brian Holcomb and Dennis Robinson.



Caleb Stanton sets up behind the plate.

jans wrapped up the series.

This time it was the Trojans who did the outhitting, 10-4, which eventually resulted in a four-run third inning and the Trojans never looked back, adding three more insurance runs in the innings that followed.

Of the Sharks' four hits, one was a double by Luca Candella, as Storm Lickliter suffered the loss on the mound.

The Sharks wrapped up successful season in many ways, including winning a district championship and finishing with a winning record of 15-11.







The Sharks celebrate getting out of an inning defensively during game one.

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Galen Harris v. Thomas Blackburn
To the Defendant:
The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Divorce requesting that the Court grant a divorce for irretrievable breakdown. The Complaint is on file at the Court. An automatic restraining order has been entered in this matter preventing you from taking any action which would negatively impact the current financial status of either party SEE Supplemental Probate Court Rule 411. You are hereby summonsed and required to serve Patrick K Burke, Esq. Burke Levy, PC, P.O. Box 959, Westborough, MA 01581. Your Answer if any 20 days from the return date of this Notice, May 15, 2025. 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: April 2, 2025
Register of Probate
Colleen Brierly
Legal 122338 Published 4/17/2025, 4/24/2025, 5/1/2025 and 5/8/2025 in St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper

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Legal 124711 Published 5/1/2025, 5/8/2025, 5/15/2025 and 5/22/2025 in St. Johns County Ponte Vedra Recorder newspaper

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60. Hogshead (abbr.)
61. Frameworks
62. Keyboard key
63. Greek goddess of the dawn
64. Influential Korean independence figure

6. Fruit preserved in syrup
7. Impediment to one's freedom
8. Nocturnal rodents
9. Earthy pigment
10. Relieved oneself
12. Golf score
14. Tech hub __ Alto
19. Sportscaster Andrews
23. Records electric currents
24. Popular Hitchcock film
25. Revolutions per minute
26. NY Giants legend
27. Sports radio host Patrick
28. When you hope to get somewhere
29. French seaport
34. Thai river
35. Rocker's accessory

36. Extra charge
37. Influential American president
39. Pain in the head
40. Great Plains people
41. Consumed
42. Soluble ribonucleic acid
44. Improves
45. Secret clique
46. Behind the stern of a ship
47. Dough made from corn flour
48. Fallow deer
51. Swiss river
52. Grayish white
53. Engrave
54. College's Blue Devils
58. Midway between south and southeast

SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

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

DOWN

1. A place to unwind
2. Helped (archaic)
3. Razorbill genus
4. Bleached
5. Continent



*Based on GM Lux2 SUV EV Segmentation. On a full charge. Actual range may vary based on several factors, including ambient temperature, terrain, battery age and condition, loading, and how you use and maintain your vehicle.

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A blue Ford Mustang convertible with a tan top, parked on a dark surface against a blue background. The car is shown from a front three-quarter view, highlighting its sleek design and multi-spoke alloy wheels.

A white Audi A5 sedan is shown from a front three-quarter view. The car is parked on a dark, textured surface. The background is a solid blue wall. The car's design features a prominent front grille with the Audi logo, sharp headlights, and a sleek roofline. The wheels are multi-spoke alloy rims with red brake calipers visible. The car is positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the blue wall occupying the upper half.



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