

Recorder

December 22, 2016
Volume 46, No. 51
75 cents

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PonteVedraRecorder.com



Residents to vote on golf course plan

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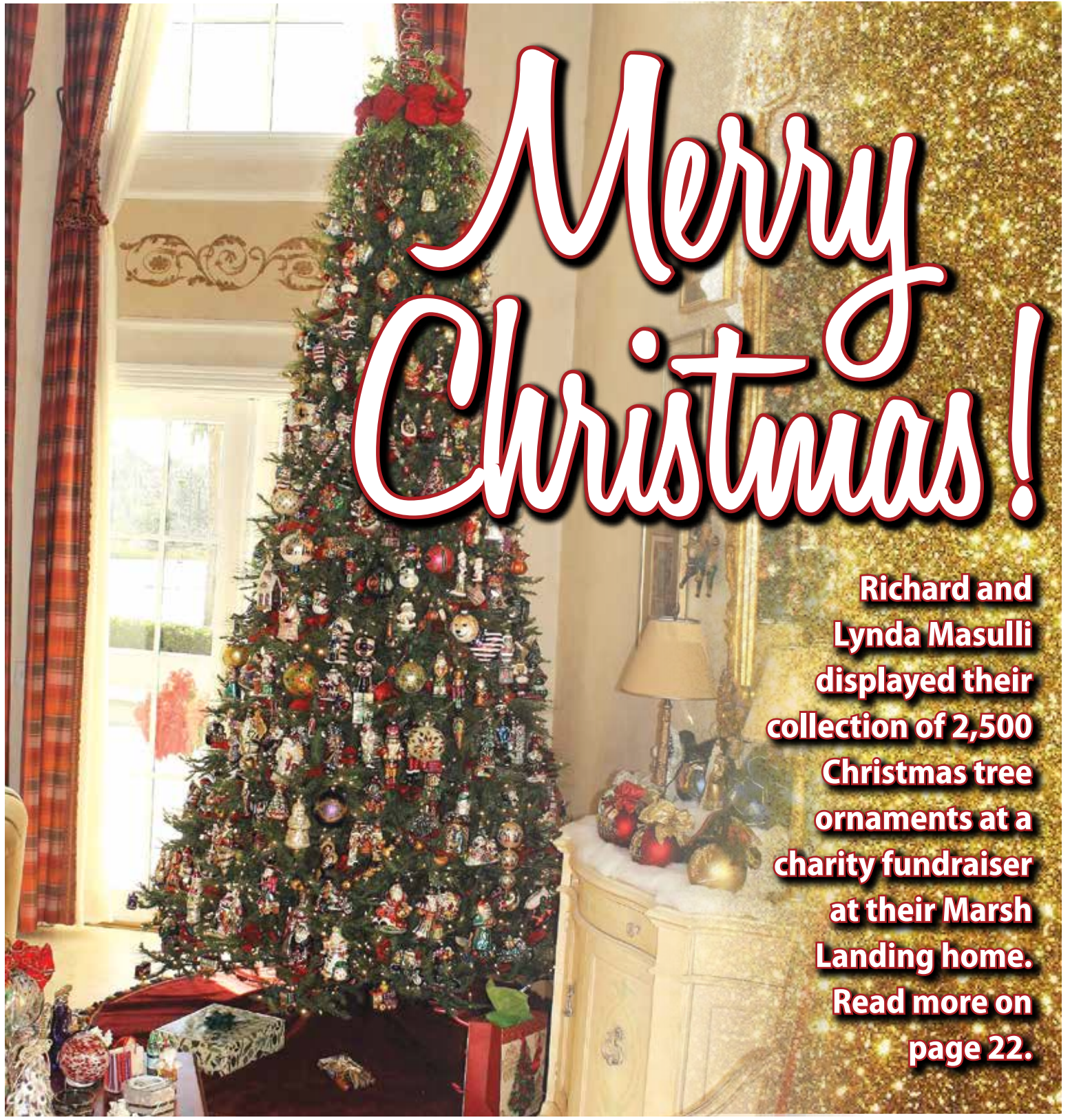
FHSAA violation costs Panthers wins

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The Spirit of Christmas

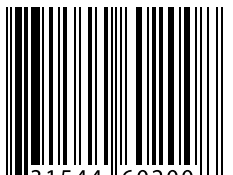
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Richard and Lynda Masulli displayed their collection of 2,500 Christmas tree ornaments at a charity fundraiser at their Marsh Landing home. Read more on page 22.

Photo by Jennifer Logue

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PV3-LV3825

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Send us your news

We welcome submissions of photos, stories, columns and letters to the editor. Let us know what's happening. E-mail submissions to pvrecorder@opcfla.com or bring them by our office at **1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach.**



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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

NOVEL	SAC	CHAP						
OPINE	HUH	AROSE						
STATS	AGE	BELIE						
	SLEIGH	SNOWMAN						
	ROE	STUD						
SKA	NEAT	TERESA						
LOST	UNIX	SADHU						
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EARWIG	USER	NOR						
	NEAP	LEE						
FLANNEL	SLOPES							
LEVEE	IMP	PORCH						
IVIED	BAA	EDGAR						
TODD	INN	NESTS						

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

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

WHAT'S THIS?



Do you know what this is?

Email your answer to jennifer@opcfla.com by Monday at 5 p.m.

All correct entries will be entered into a random drawing to win tickets for two adults and two children to the Jacksonville Zoo. In order to allow as many families as possible to win, participants are only eligible to win a ticket prize pack once every four months.

Virginia Braschel correctly identified last week's photo as the Rip Curl logo on the Surf & Skate shop in Jacksonville Beach. Congratulations, Virginia! You may pick up your prize at the Recorder office during regular business hours.



Don't forget — incorrect but entertaining guesses might also be rewarded with a trip to the zoo.

ADOPT A PET

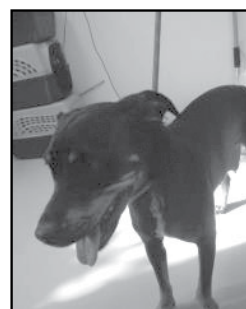
CAT OF THE WEEK

Hi there! My name is Jupiter and I am a 3-year-old female cat who is looking for a new home to call my own. I was brought to the pet center as a stray. As this animal was a stray there may be some traits that are unknown at this time. Come visit us today here at the pet center! #34979



DOG OF THE WEEK

Hi there, my name is Brownie and I am a 3-year-old female Rotti/Doberman mix who is looking for a new home! I was brought to the pet center as a stray because I was all alone with nobody to care for me. As this animal was a stray there may



be some traits that are unknown at this time. Come visit us today here at the pet center! #35570

Any new pet being introduced to a new home will need time to adjust to their new environment. Please reinforce house-training and behavioral training and be mindful of interacting with other pets.

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Cat adoptions at the St. Johns County Pet Center are \$30 for males and \$40 for females. Dog adoptions are \$45 for males and \$60 for females. Adoption fees include microchipping, neutering/spaying, rabies vaccinations and shots. The pet center is located at 130 N. Stratton Rd., off US 1 between County Road 210 and International Golf Parkway. Business hours are Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center is closed to the public on Sunday. On Monday, the office is open by appointment only to claim a lost pet. For more information, please call the **St. Johns County Pet Center at (904) 209-6190.**



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PV2-LV33872

Golf course owners, HOA committee reach proposed agreement

Sawgrass Players Club residents to review, vote on plan to sell 40 acres of golf course

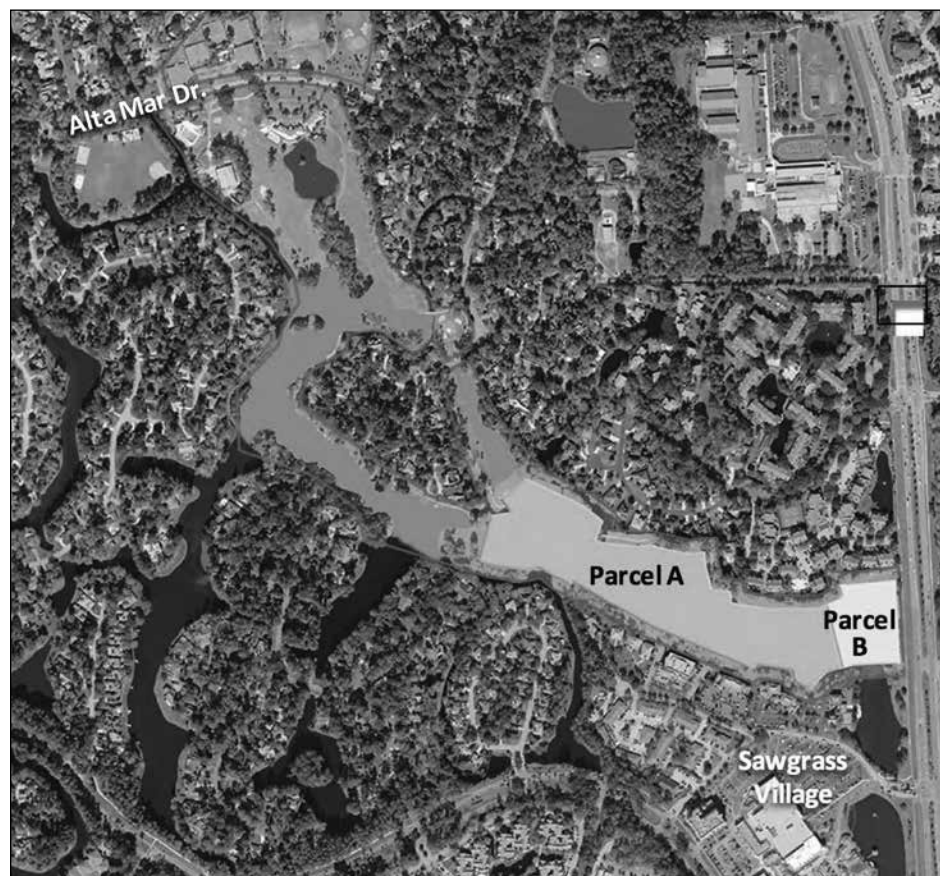
By Jennifer Logue

Forty acres of The Oak Bridge Club golf course would be sold in exchange for a deed restriction that would guarantee the remaining golf course stays undeveloped for recreational purposes until 2057 under terms of a proposed agreement reached between the club's owners and an ad hoc committee representing Sawgrass Players Club residents.

Community residents received a postcard from the Sawgrass Players Club Association Board of Directors earlier this week notifying them that the ad hoc committee established to review and negotiate with golf course owner Alta Mar Holdings had reached a proposed agreement. The mailing alerted Players Club residents that they would receive a copy of the agreement by mail in January, along with a proxy ballot. Residents may mail in their ballot by Jan. 30, 2017 or vote in person on the proposed agreement at a special meeting to be held Feb. 6, 2017.

"The Association will be legally bound by your decision," the postcard states. "Your vote is critical!"

While residents will receive copies of the complete proposal – which will also be posted online at the Sawgrass Players Club resident website – parties involved in the negotiations say the major points include agreeing to Alta Mar's desire to sell the back nine holes of the golf course. Once the property is sold, \$2 million of the proceeds would be put into escrow and earmarked solely for improving the remaining 12 holes, which would include a nine-hole course and a three-hole practice loop. The proposed agreement also includes several points aimed at protecting the views of Players Club residents who live along the golf course as well as a commitment that



Sawgrass Players Club residents will soon vote on a proposed agreement that would sell 40 acres of The Oak Bridge Club golf course (parcels A and B) for development as a continuing care retirement community and a cultural center.

new traffic from the proposed development will not have direct vehicular access inside the community's gates.

Alta Mar's David Miller thanked the ad hoc committee members for investing several months of time and effort in reviewing and negotiating on behalf of the community's residents.

"The community came to realize how much is at stake here," he said. "If the golf course closes, that would lower property values on homes around the golf course.

That, in turn, would affect the real estate comps, lowering property values throughout the Players Club."

Miller pointed to the improvements made to The Oak Bridge Club – formerly known as the Ponte Vedra Golf Club – in the past year, including a reported \$65,000 in upgrades to the driving range, major renovations to the club house, the opening of the new 3 Palms Grille restaurant and the installation of 10 Har-Tru tennis courts at a cost of \$500,000.

"We have a very robust tennis membership," Miller said. "The tennis leagues have really added a vibrancy on both sides of the street, as players come over (to the clubhouse) for a drink or lunch afterwards."

Moving forward

Under the proposed agreement, the sections of the golf course to be sold would be developed as a continuing care retirement community and a cultural center. That plan has drawn criticism from some residents both inside and outside of Sawgrass Players Club, who don't want the property to be developed. One such group plans to hold a public town hall meeting in January to propose that residents purchase the property and preserve it as a community park and botanical garden (see related story on page 5).

David Miller said that while he is not opposed to that suggestion, he believes it is premature to discuss what will happen to the 40 acres prior to receiving a vote by Sawgrass Players Club residents on whether to lift the current deed restrictions, thereby clearing the way for the property to be sold. He also noted that should Players Club residents vote in favor of the agreement, Alta Mar must then send the project on to the county, where he estimated it would take at least six months to move through the review process.

At that time, Miller said, local residents would have an opportunity to voice their opinions on the project. In the meantime, he hopes that the improvements Alta Mar has made to The Oak Bridge Club will reassure Players Club residents that the golf club project is in good hands.

"We have lifted this community asset out of the ground," Miller said. "Seeing is believing."

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Recorder offices closed for Christmas

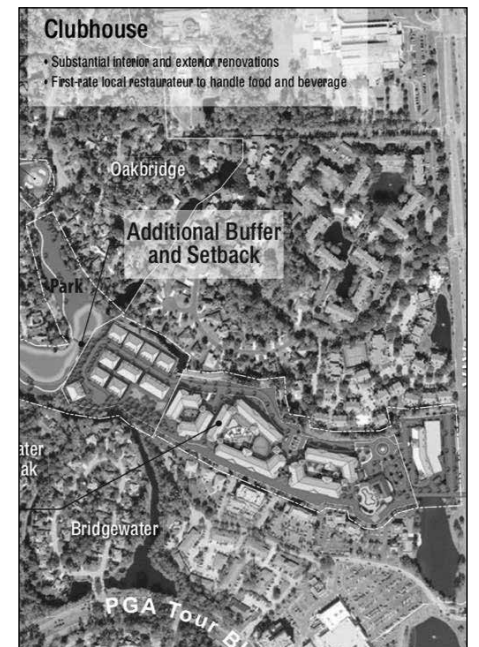
The Ponte Vedra Recorder's offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 23 and Monday, Dec. 26 for the Christmas holiday. The Recorder will re-open

Tuesday, Dec. 27.

The Recorder wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah.



Photo by Jennifer Logue



Dr. Frank Levene stands in the back yard of his Hidden Oaks home, which overlooks the back nine holes of The Oak Bridge Club golf course. Levene is leading efforts to buy the land and preserve it as a community park and botanical garden to save it from proposed development.

Local residents propose buying, preserving golf course land as park and botanical garden

By Jennifer Logue

As Sawgrass Players Club residents prepare to vote on whether to approve lifting deed restrictions that would allow The Oak Bridge Club's owners to sell the back nine holes of the golf course for development, another group of local residents has organized to try and raise the funds to purchase and preserve the property as a community park and botanical garden.

Ponte Vedra Beach's Hidden Oaks neighborhood is not part of Sawgrass Players Club – but many of its homes abut the portion of the golf course Alta Mar Holdings proposes selling for development as a continuing care retirement community and a new cultural center.

"We just want to push 'pause' on this plan," said Dr. Frank Levene, whose Oak View Circle home overlooks the golf course. "Just give us a crack at raising the money."

A native of England who became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1997, Levene has owned a home in Hidden Oaks since 1992. His children attended Landrum Middle School and Nease High School, and while international business interests now find him dividing his time between Ponte Vedra and England, the 70-year-old executive said he had planned to retire soon to his home here.

It wasn't until Levene returned from business abroad in the fall that neighbors informed him of the plans to develop the golf course behind their homes.

"We were very offended, frankly, by their plans," said Levene, who stressed that his opposition to the land's development goes beyond his own personal interests as an abutter. "I've tried to step back and focus on what's the best solution for all of Ponte Vedra, not just me or the Players Club. This is one of the last significant pieces of undeveloped land in this part of Ponte Vedra. There must be a better plan."

One alternative, Levene and his supporters say, would be for local residents to raise the funds needed to purchase the property from Alta Mar and preserve it as a community park and botanical garden. The group has created a website – www.sawgrassvillagepark.com – and Facebook page where residents can sign up to show their support and offer to help raise awareness and the funds needed to purchase the property. The group also plans to host a public town hall meeting in early January to present the park and garden proposal to the community.

Sawgrass Players Club Master Association Board President Gerard Klingman acknowledged that Levene had called him about the park proposal, but said he

immediately referred him to Alta Mar, which owns the property. Klingman stressed that the master association has had no meetings or seen any formal presentations about the suggested park.

"We are currently in negotiations with the Millers," he said.

David Miller said that while he was open to considering the park proposal, he felt the timing was premature.

"If the community were able to raise the funds (to purchase the property for a park), I'm open to that," said Miller, adding that regardless of how the property is eventually developed, a vote to remove the deed restrictions is still required.

"This vote in no way will affect the community's opportunity to acquire the property in the future."

Miller questioned whether the park proponents have the ability to raise the millions of dollars that would be required to purchase the property. Levene, however, said he is confident his group could raise the money needed to purchase the land. Already, he said, the group has reached out to the North Florida Land Trust for counsel and advice, and secured an attorney to assist them in their cause. Levene also said several backers have pledged a significant portion of the money needed to jumpstart a fundraising campaign.

Park proponents stressed that they are not trying to derail the agreement between the golf club owners and Players Club residents, but merely gain the time needed to put together a viable proposal that would benefit all concerned.

"If we can offer the same amount of money (as commercial developers), the garden would obviously be a much better option," said local Realtor and Hidden Oaks resident Jake Bestic. "This is an opportunity to do something good for the community and leave a legacy we can all be proud of."

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A fateful meeting at an airport baggage claim changed the course of Kathy Moran-Clarson's life, bringing the interior designer to the First Coast. The president of KMC&A Design is enjoying life at the beach with her husband, Ric Clarson.

Kathy Moran-Clarson

By Jennifer Logue

What services does KMC&A design provide to its clients?

KMCA is a full-service hospitality design firm with offices in South Jacksonville Beach. We specialize in the interior design of four and five-star hotels and resorts. KMCA's approach is every property has its own unique setting and story. Our job is to capture its past and enlighten its future by creating beautifully designed interiors that reflect its locale and often historical surroundings. Through design, we enhance the guest experience, inspire exploration and help drive repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

How did you come to specialize in hospitality design?

After completing my degree in interior design, I began my career as an associate designer with a large design firm in Dallas that had multiple offices across the country. My initial projects concentrated on the Hyatt Hotel brands. I created environments aimed at an attentive and sophisticated traveler that functioned properly for guests and maintenance staffs, and most importantly, for the owner's bottom line. During that career phase, I completed 11 Hyatt hotel renovations. Now, two decades later, those principles are still what drives KMCA: creating inspiring, world-class design while maintaining strong business and financial practices.

How many hotel interior design projects have you completed?

We've completed more than 50 hotels, including a mix of renovations and new builds. In the Northeast Florida area, KMCA is currently designing the new Renaissance San Marco in St. Augustine, a new luxury seaside boutique hotel in Fernandina Beach, and the renovation of the Sawgrass Marriott great room and lobby. We're in the running for a new Daytona Beach project as well. We're also working in state on hotels in Orlando, Tampa, Coral Gables and Boca Raton, and out-of-state with two projects in Rochester, New York, and one in Norfolk, Virginia. I've also done design work for hotels including Hilton Times Square in New York City; Hilton Torrey Pines in La Jolla, California; the Enchantment Resort in Sedona, Arizona; and the Grand Hyatt in San Francisco.

Describe the process of designing hotel interiors. What do you enjoy most about that process?

I love all phases of design. Transforming a vision into an impactful and memorable reality is exhilarating. Our process starts with listening to our client and understanding their vision for the hotel. We conduct extensive research regarding the area, which spawns ideas and inspiration from our findings to create interiors that showcase the region, the history, the culture and the lifestyle. This is emulated in color schemes, indigenous materials, local art and meaningful artifacts. For a design to be successful, a sequence of design phases must be followed to ensure we stay within budget, documentation is accurate, and schedules and deadlines are met.

Different hotels have different "personalities." How do you reflect that personality through interior design while remaining consistent with the hotel's brand?

We have a saying at KMCA: "On Time, On Budget, On Brand." That is our ultimate goal. It is a balancing



Photo by Jasmine Marshall

act, however, to meet the demands of both ownership and the respective hotel brand. In the past, hotel brands requested designers to design for a consistent scheme, color or style. They wanted guests to immediately recognize a hotel by its interior, with design consistency across the hotel brand. You see this in limited service hotels like Hampton Inn or Courtyard Marriott, and even in upscale properties.

But times and tastes have changed. Hotel guests are demanding more from their experiences, particularly Gen X and Millennial travelers. Why not stay at a uniquely designed hotel with seamless technology at your fingertips, and also have a "sense of place" while traveling for work or pleasure? Our job as designers is to be fluent with all brand standards but also recognize what's in vogue with cultural trends and styles, and design the hotels to reflect its locale. More and more upscale brands now look for diversity in design and ties to the local area – which KMCA delivers – versus brand consistency.

Which presents a greater challenge – designing a new hotel or redesigning an existing one?

Both require the same discipline in regards to business strategies and design phases, so our focus remains on delivering a high-end design with exceptional quality and durable performance. What sets them apart is the blank canvas a new hotel project provides, which opens up endless opportunities to make your own mark in interior design. It sparks a different mindset in creativity when there are no existing conditions to maneuver around.

Renovations, however, allow KMCA to take something that is typically worn and dated to a new level of luster, style and opulence. Both are challenging in their own way, and require different approaches, but our "On Time, On Budget, On Brand" goal is the same.

What brought you to the First Coast?

My wonderful husband, who is a second-generation native of Jacksonville. Divine intervention brought us together a little over four years ago. We met in the Palm Springs, California airport at baggage claim, though neither of us checked a bag. God at work! I'm originally from Pennsylvania, and after spending summers in college working at the Jersey Shore, living the beach life became a dream. After 30 years in Dallas and raising two beautiful children and honing my skills as an interior designer, fate gave me the opportunity to move to the First Coast, remarry, start my own design firm, live close to the ocean, and live that beach life. Ironically, in many ways I feel like I'm back at home.

How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I can't get enough of time on the beach. I love walking, running, cycling and we have two paddle boards. I get to a weekly yoga class or two, but this area is just incredible for the outdoors. My husband and I enjoy exploring the First Coast, and there is no shortage of cool and fun things to do. We have a townhome in Dallas we enjoy going back to, but the sun- and moonrises out of the Atlantic Ocean are hard to beat.

Local children weigh in on meaningful gifts

By Jasmine Marshall

Sawgrass Village's recent "Oh What Fun!" Christmas celebration afforded a local children's author a chance to learn what gifts children truly cherish.

Rhonda Goodall recently published her debut children's book, "Frizzle," about a fuzzy blue creature trying to find his place in the world of Happytown, USA. The author has two more books awaiting publication, and with Christmas quickly approaching she decided to hold a contest asking young readers what was the nicest thing they could give someone that didn't cost any money.

The prize: the chance to appear as a character in one of her upcoming stories.

"I thought to myself, 'it'd be so wonderful to see what children want to give to people,'" said Goodall, who launched the Frizzle Holiday Contest at Peterbrooke Chocolatier during the Sawgrass Village event.

Goodall was so touched by the children's responses, however, that she couldn't bring herself to choose just one. With answers running the gamut from hand-drawn pictures to emotional pleas for others, the contest entries revealed the children's thoughts on gifts that capture the true spirit of Christmas.

A boy named Matthew, for example, would share the gift of "enthusiasm." Abigail would give "friendship and love," while Caroline would give "joy" and Lauren "Memories!"

A girl named Cara said she would "do anything to help (her) friend Carl and his family through his heart transplant," while Addison and Sophie shared a similarly personal gift:

"We would give our aunt, Caw, a book. She is fighting cancer and the book will remind her to keep moving forward. In the book, (we) would include positive thoughts and draw happy pictures."

Goodall said she intends to reward every child who entered with a character in Frizzle's next book, tentatively titled "Frizzle's Holiday Treasures," which she has planned for 2017's holiday season.

"What's so nice about this contest is that

the answers – they're so innocent and so pure," she said. "When you ask kids things like this you really understand how ... the commercialization of the season is the doing of the adults. For children, it's so simple. It's just the act of giving."

DAVID YURMAN

PURE FORM



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Photos from Jon Blauvelt

Brad Wester, Kitty Switkes and John Cellucci were sworn in as new MSD board trustees Dec. 12.

New trustees sworn into MSD board as dune restoration efforts continue

By Jon Blauvelt

After Kitty Switkes, Brad Wester and John Cellucci were sworn into office as Municipal Service District (MSD) board trustees at the MSD meeting Dec. 12, their first order of business was certainly not a new project. But, it definitely wasn't one they anticipated when they campaigned just a few months ago.

The three new members were elected to the board in August, just five weeks before Hurricane Matthew wreaked havoc along the coastline, washing away miles of protective barrier dunes. It was the first major hurricane to hit the First Coast in more than 50 years.

"There's always something going on in the MSD," Switkes said. "There's always a reason why we're there to help the residents. But, the hurricane wasn't on my list. That wasn't even in the equation then."

With dune restoration and Hurricane Matthew recovery at the top of the MSD meeting agenda for the past three months, it's certainly in the equation now, and Switkes, Wester and Cellucci will have the opportunity to address and resolve it over the next four years.

To help them in doing so, the MSD board hosted St. Johns County Public Works Director Neal Shinkre and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) representatives Alex Reed, Celora Jackson and Carla Gaskin Mautz at the meeting in the Ponte Vedra Beach Library to review county and state dune restoration plans and answer residents' questions.

Reed is the administrator of the beaches funding program. She said the DEP is drafting a hurricane recovery plan for the Florida Legislature to review so the state can decide where to allocate funding for beach nourishment programs.

Reed said DEP funding is issued to areas that are listed as "critically eroded" shorelines, meaning they have demonstrated long-term erosional trends over time rather

than one dramatic erosional event. To the uneasiness of meeting attendees, she said the MSD's beaches have not been historically designated as "critically eroded."

Despite that fact, the DEP is working with St. Johns County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to collect and analyze pre- and post-storm data that illustrates what happened during the storm, where sand was lost and where the priority for sand placement will be. Once the department has that analysis, Reed said, it can determine whether the shoreline in the MSD should be designated as "critically eroded" and included in the hurricane recovery plan as eligible for state assistance. The DEP is hoping to arrive at a conclusion on this in March or April.

Shinkre also promised progress from the county over the next few months. In addition to working on the pre- and post-storm data with the Army Corps of Engineers and DEP, he said county officials are meeting with FEMA representatives in early January for a kickoff meeting to review Hurricane Matthew recovery plans. After the meeting, Shinkre said, the county will have 60 days to produce a document that outlines the impacts of the storm and the projects that FEMA should consider for reimbursement. The public works director said the county is hiring an engineering consulting firm to help navigate through these DEP and FEMA processes.

After Shinkre and the DEP representatives discussed their plans with residents, MSD Vice Chairman John Wegl asked the question that other residents in the room feared to ask.

"It certainly is good to hear there are a lot of things that are going on right now," said Wegl. "But hurricane season starts again in about five months, and I think that what I'm hearing is all of this is going to take a lot longer than five months. Right?"

Wegl's rhetorical question elicited nods of agreement from the county and state officials sitting around the room.

Compared to the raucous reactions from residents that characterized November's MSD meeting, attendees seemed to be more accepting of their new reality.

"What I've been hearing throughout all of this is the county does have this holistic problem," resident David Delaney said. "They have to look at a lot of places that are quite frankly in probably much greater need than a bunch of homeowners in Ponte Vedra that want their dunes restored."

"I think we have to accept the fact that if you have a home on the beach here, you're way down on the totem pole in terms of what the county is going to worry about. I think the homeowners are kind of on their own to solve their own problems, or they're going to be waiting a long time through a lot of hurricanes to try to get anything they're not going to pay for themselves."

Shinkre assured meeting attendees that government officials are moving as quickly as they can.

"I know it doesn't seem like something is happening, but there's tremendous work that's being done daily" said Shinkre. "The goal is to get sand and protect the homes. But there is a process. There's a methodology. It cannot happen right away."

For residents that voluntarily decide to pay for dune restoration projects, the question of whether FEMA will reimburse them remains unanswered. Reed suggested that residents contact the agency as soon as possible to find out and start any necessary paperwork. Celora Jackson, who is the state coastal armoring permit manager for the DEP, said residents can extend permits for these projects if needed.

MSD Chairman Gary Jurenovich said the board will continue to address dune restoration at future meetings. The next MSD meeting will be held Jan. 9 at 6:30 p.m. in the small conference room of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library.

MSD installing new street signs, poles

By Jon Blauvelt

The Dec. 12 MSD meeting also featured the announcement by Gary Jurenovich that the MSD would install new street signs and poles by Christmas.

According to the MSD board chairman, 55 to 60 new street signs – including stop signs – and approximately 55 new speed limit signs will be installed. The project, which began four years ago, will cost \$104,000.

The board has contracted with Addresses of Distinction, a sign manufacturer in Atlanta, to perform the work.

Jurenovich said the former street signs and poles are 35 years old. Many, he said, are rusted and bent due to years of exposure to salt and wind.

"I'm trying to keep the MSD the premier community it is," he said. "It's a project that needed to be done."

The new poles are aluminum-based and grounded within a concrete cylinder foundation to ensure stability.

The new signs feature the same color and font as the previous signs. Jurenovich said he is most excited about what he calls the "combo signs" that adjoin the street signs and stop signs to one pole.

Until now, separate poles have been used. Crosswalk signs are not included within the scope of work of this project.

Jurenovich said the MSD board next plans to install new signs for the beach accesses as well as new dune walkovers.



Photos from Gary Jurenovich

A rendering of the new signs and poles that MSD Board Chairman Gary Jurenovich said will be installed throughout the MSD by Christmas

Rotary Youth Exchange to send 21 students abroad

Local students learn which country they'll visit as part of 10-month foreign exchange program

By Jennifer Logue

Ponte Vedra High School junior Audrey Coleman walked to the front of the auditorium and accepted the small box placed into her hands by another student.

As she opened the box, Coleman's eyes lit up and her face broke into a wide grin as she removed a small card bearing a green, white and red-striped flag.

"Italy!" she exclaimed.

Coleman was one of 21 high school students who learned last week which country they will visit next year through the Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) scholarship program. Selected through a rigorous application process, the students from across North Florida will spend 10 months living in another country and learning about its culture while fostering goodwill and understanding. Students are sponsored by local Rotary Clubs; in addition to Coleman – who is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach – Nease High School students Gabriela Gallardo and Grace Schneider will be sponsored by the Ponte Vedra Sunset club. PVHS junior Nikki Packo will be sponsored by the Coastal St. Johns Rotary Club.

"Each year (Rotary) sends approximately 9,000 students around the world through the Rotary Youth Exchange program," said Jeff Hart, RYE district chair for local Rotary District 6970. "The primary mission is to work for peace and understanding throughout the world, one exchange student at a time."

The program also brings students from other countries to America. Currently, Hart said, 21 students from 19 different countries – or "inbounds" – are visiting the First Coast area, while 26 local outbound students are abroad in 16 countries.

Prior to departing on their international adventure, local students will participate in two, three-day orientations. Upon their return, the students will be honored at a welcome home banquet where they will share what they learned and experienced through their exchange.

"Rotary Youth Exchange is a once-in-a-lifetime, life-changing experience," said Paula Roderick, RYE outbound chair for District 6970. "It's not where you go; it's what you do with the opportunities you're given."

At the "big reveal" event held Dec. 14 at Westminster Woods in Mandarin, parents waited as anxiously as their children to learn which nation would be welcoming their son or daughter for the 2017-2018 school year.

"I wake up in the middle of the night and think, 'What have I done?'" confessed Stuart Harbison, mother of RYE student Will Harbison. A junior at Bishop Kenny High School, Harbison was one of the last students to receive his country assignment, waiting patiently as each student was called in random order to the front of the room

to receive the small box bearing the flag of their host country. One by one, each student opened the box and announced their destination.

"France!"

"Belgium!"

"Sweden!"

"Croatia!"

Finally, it was Harbison's turn.

"Taiwan!" he said to loud applause from both his parents and the audience.

For some students, traveling abroad is a familiar experience. Steve Coleman, father of Audrey Coleman, noted that his daughter had visited many countries traveling with her family.

"She's been away before – she's very mature," said Coleman, who attended the announcement with his wife, Jenny, and Audrey's older sister, Grey.

Rotary officials acknowledged how important the support and involvement of parents is to the success of the exchange program.

"We'd like to thank you, Mom and Dad, for allowing your student to go on an exchange," Hart said. "When they come home, you will be so amazed to see how they've grown and represented the U.S. as an ambassador for Rotary Youth Exchange."

Audrey Coleman said she is looking forward to her 10-month sojourn in Italy, even though she will have to repeat her senior year when she returns.

"When I first heard about (RYE), I wasn't really that interested – but it kept lingering in my mind until I decided to apply," she said, adding that the experience was worth an additional year of school.

Fellow Ponte Vedra High School student Nikki Packo, who will visit Finland, agreed.

"What you get from it," she said, "you can't replace."



Photos by Jennifer Logue

Ponte Vedra High student Audrey Copeland (left) with mother Jenny, sister Grey and father Steve



Student Will Hoover displays his excitement upon learning he will visit Hungary for 10 months.

RYE participants

Students who will participate in Rotary Youth Exchange during the 2017-2018 school year through Rotary District 6970 include: Gabriella Ashton, Pedro Menendez High School, who will visit Spain; Gage Ashton, Pedro Menendez, Taiwan; Anna Barrientos, P.K. Yonge (Gainesville), Germany; Silvia Barry, Santa Fe (Gainesville), France; Delaney Buckler, Fleming Island, Finland; Audrey Copeland, Ponte Vedra, Italy; Cynthia Dinh, University, South Korea; Vivianne Everington, Ridgeview, Sweden; Colson

Fairchild, Pedro Menendez, Brazil; Gabriel Fox, Pedro Menendez, Denmark; Destiny Gabriel, Pedro Menendez, Poland; Gabriela Gallardo, Nease, Belgium; Sydney Garrison, St. Augustine, Norway; Will Harbison, Bishop Kenny, Taiwan; Will Hoover, Eastside (Gainesville), Hungary; Lauren Maines, Creekside, France; Nikki Packo, Ponte Vedra, Finland; Anne-Marie Rementer, Creekside, Thailand; Robert Ricard, St. Augustine, South Korea; James Gunnar Schmidt, Creekside, Brazil; and Grace Schneider, Nease, Croatia.

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Pak's Ponte Vedra photo

Paks Ponte Vedra celebrates historic season

Paks Ponte Vedra's competition team competed in three tournaments this year, winning a combined total of 21 awards in forms and sparring competitions. Those wins consisted of 16 first place awards, three second place awards and two third place awards.

Competing on this year's team were Danielle Vogt, Breanne Beaver, Reid Norteman, Paden Pinder, Kayla Shreve, Morgan Shreve, Seth Relampagos, Erin Orlando, Ethan Orlando, Caleb Hobbs, Bryce Walker, Grayson Rigby, Jayden Sennholtz, and Dominic Tindall.

"It is so rewarding watching and coaching a student during a competition," said instructor Bill DeGrafft. "Seeing the focus, nerves and perseverance as they go through their rounds is inspiring. Seeing the happiness in their faces when they finish their competition is one of the greatest feelings in the world.

"While we know that each competitor has his or her eyes on the ultimate prize, we put our focus on the sense of camaraderie of the competitors," he continued. "(We focus) on the fact that they are doing something that few people dream of doing, much less attempting it."

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Petco Foundation invests in K9s For Warriors

By Jon Blauvelt

The Petco Foundation awarded a \$90,000 grant to K9s for Warriors at the nonprofit's most recent graduation, held Dec. 15 at the organization's training facility in Nocatee.

Five veterans graduated from the K9s for Warriors training academy following the presentation of the Petco Foundation donation, which derives from its annual Helping Heroes fundraising campaign conducted in partnership with Natural Balance Pet Foods. During the campaign each October, Petco invites customers to donate in stores across the country to support service and therapy animals and affiliated organizations. Karen Meader, Petco Foundation regional program manager, said K9s for Warriors stood out as a deserving organization.

"They're training these dogs that are going to be able to impact the lives of service members all over the country," said Meader. "It's a huge service they do, and we were proud to invest in them."

The Ponte Vedra-based organization trains and pairs rescued service dogs with military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma as a result of military service post-9/11.

To date, K9s for Warriors has matched 267 veterans with service dogs. Through a three-week training program, veterans join with other veterans to learn how to become dog handlers and readjust to civilian life. The goal is for warriors to graduate from the program and return to their lives with newfound dignity and

independence.

"They're getting up, they have a routine, they're going out, and they're going back into the public," said Shari Duval, founder and president of K9s for Warriors. "They're learning they can do that with their dogs where they wouldn't do it before. It's like hitting a light switch. All of the sudden, the light is on. We call it giving them a new leash on life."

The nonprofit plans to use the Petco Foundation grant to help support a class of veterans and their service canines in completing the organization's training academy. The funds will also help pay for the dogs' medical care.

"We will use it directly for dogs and warriors," said Rory Diamond, executive director of K9s for Warriors. "It's not going to anything else. It's going directly to the program to get more dogs through the door and to pair them with more warriors that need them."

Duval said the investment also provides the organization with added credibility.

"It's huge," she said. "To be associated with such an amazing company of such stature means they know our work is good, or they wouldn't have even looked at us. We're so grateful for the money."

Duval started K9s for Warriors in 2011 after her son Brett – a bomb dog handler – returned home from Iraq with extreme PTSD. With 22 veteran lives being lost each day to suicide, she recognized that there was a need to treat the epidemic, and she also noticed that Brett was only comfortable around dogs. Duval surmised that service dogs may be the treatment these



Photo by Jon Blauvelt

K9s for Warriors Founder and President Shari Duval, and Executive Director Rory Diamond receive a \$90,000 grant from Petco Foundation Regional Manager Karen Meader.



Five veterans graduated from K9s For Warriors' three-week training program Dec. 15.

Photo by Jennifer Sefton/K9s For Warriors

veterans need. What started out as an idea developed into a passionate nonprofit organization committed to saving the lives of rescue dogs and military heroes alike.

Diamond said the Petco Foundation grant will allow them to push forward strongly in this effort.

"We know that service dogs work," he said, "and we are proud that Petco is joining us in our commitment to saving animals in need – which are often homeless or on the brink of euthanasia – by giving them a new purpose in life in a loving home."

Nease Navy JROTC victorious at Terry Parker Drill Meet

Nease Navy JROTC's varsity drill team finished in first place at the Terry Parker Drill Meet Dec. 10 in Jacksonville, extending its winning streak in Navy Northern Florida drill championships to eight over the past four years.

"We brought in seven alternates to fill in for this meet, as many seniors were taking the ACTs," said cadet Jesse Gatewood, who was the winner of the individual knockout drill medal. "But taking a page from the New England Patriots' 'next man up' philosophy, we barely missed a beat."

In addition to claiming the top overall trophy, Nease picked up first place trophies for personnel inspection, academics, athletics, armed exhibition drill, pushups and sit-ups. Several Nease cadets received individual medals during the competition.

Cadets Erin Sass, Lilly Short, Krista Ecker, Teagan Pettit, Ian Kleiber, Jacob Hunt, Brian Swicegood, Christopher Oliver, Jesse Gatewood and Lucas Pels received individual medals in athletics.



Photo courtesy of Nease NJROTC

Nease NJROTC's Unarmed Exhibition team performs its routine during the Terry Parker drill championships on December 10 in Jacksonville.

Cadets Dane Barber, Scott Cummings and Eduardo Evans received medals for academics.

"I've been doing this a long time –

13 years," said Nease's Naval Science instructor, Gunnery Sergeant Duane Hanson. "These young men and women always seem to step up to the chal-

lenge."

Other top schools in the competition were Mandarin High School in second place, Cross Creek High School in third place, Orange Park High School in fourth place and Fleming Island High School in fifth place.

Nease won the Mandarin NJROTC Drill Meet earlier this fall. In 2013, 2014 and 2015, Nease swept both the Mandarin and Terry Parker Drill Meet Championships, beating out 11 other NJROTC challengers from North Florida and the state of Georgia in each competition.

With its earlier victory at Mandarin, Nease has already secured a spot in the 16-team Navy Area 12 Drill Championships to be held March 4 in Georgia. Before the championship, the team will travel to Tallahassee next month to compete at the Florida A&M University NJROTC Drill Meet.

Nease is currently the No. 1 NJROTC unit in Area 12 and has been for five consecutive years. In 2015, Nease was the No. 1 JROTC program in the nation.

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Thursday, Dec. 22	Friday, Dec. 23	Saturday, Dec. 24	Sunday, Dec. 25
<p>Yoga for Survivors at the Y Share a restorative experience as an experienced yoga instructor certified by the Christina Phipps Foundation guides cancer patients, survivors, caregivers and others with range of motion and pain limitations through a gentle and safe yoga practice. This free event is open to the community. Call (904) 202-5376 or visit www.baptistjax.com/ymca to reserve a spot. The event will take place at the Y Healthy Living Center in the Ponte Vedra YMCA at 170 Landrum Lane. Class begins at 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>COA Annual Christmas Luncheon Celebrate the holidays with a Christmas luncheon at River House hosted by the Council on Aging Thursday, Dec. 22 at 11:30 a.m. Festivities begin at 10:30 a.m., with entertainment, singing and Santa Claus. Reservations are required for lunch and a \$6 donation is requested. For more information, call (904) 209-3655 to RSVP. The community is invited to this event.</p> <p>Complimentary Vision Screening Vision is Priceless, a community resource for improving the health of First Coast families, will provide complimentary vision screenings at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center on Thursday, Dec. 22 from 9 a.m. to noon. For additional information, contact Darlene Mahany or Marian Ashton at (904) 280-3233, or visit the Council on Aging website www.coasjc.com. THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center is located at 175 Landrum Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p>	<p>Downtown Dazzle The Jacksonville Children's Chorus (JCC) will present its second annual holiday celebration by illuminating the outside of its 225 East Duval St. office with lights synchronized to recorded songs of the season performed by JCC. Holiday, Christmas and Hanukkah songs will be broadcast on 94.5 FM radio. Downtown Dazzle continues through New Year's Eve. Each night, 12-minute presentations run from 6 to 9:30 p.m. The synchronized lights are designed by Darren Hufty, who, along with Miller Electric, brings the building and the downtown block to life. For more information, contact Carolyn Audije at carolyn@jaxchildrenschorus.org.</p> <p>Coastal Wine Market Wine Tasting Coastal Wine Market will host a Friday wine tasting from 6 to 8 p.m. at 641 Crosswater Parkway, Suite B, Ponte Vedra Beach. Taste six wines for \$10. For more information, call (904) 395-3520.</p> <p>Enchanted Christmas Village The Keeler Property will be alight with Christmas through Dec. 31 with the opening of the Enchanted Christmas Village. Featuring more than one million Christmas Lights, the village brings together an immersive holiday experience for First Coast families. Guests can visit several attractions on the property, including a nativity scene, Santa's vacation home, ice sculptures, Santa's workshop and more. To learn more and to purchase day passes or event tickets, visit www.jacksonvillechristmas.com. The Keeler Property is located at 17255 Normandy Blvd in Jacksonville.</p>	<p>December in the Park The Beaches Museum and History Park will host "December in the Park," throughout the month. The buildings of the History Park will be lit and the tree is decked. The Foreman's House, the Historic Chapel and its newly opened Oesterreicher-McCormick Cabin will take visitors back to Christmas of an earlier time with period décor. There will also be a model train display in the Mayport Depot transformed into the "Polar Express" with a seasonal layout. For more information, visit www.beaches-museum.org.</p> <p>ZooLights Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' ZooLights returns for the holiday season with thousands of LED lights, moving sculptures, lighted treats and animal silhouettes. This show includes work by student-artists from the University of North Florida, a fairy village and a lighted train in addition to carousel rides and a 4-D theater. ZooLights runs from Dec. 16 through Jan. 7. The event will not be open Christmas Day. To learn more about show times and ticket prices, visit www.jacksonvillezoo.org/zoolights.</p> <p>Deck the Chairs Deck the Chairs returns to Jacksonville Beach's Seawalk Pavilion for its third year in support of the Volunteer Life Saving Corps of Jacksonville Beach. This holiday celebration features lifeguard chairs aglow with Christmas lights in addition to the festivities, music and food trucks the pavilion is known for year-round. This year's Shine Hope & Peace Light & Music Spectacular features programmed music, animated lights and projections across the pavilion stage every Friday, Saturday and Sunday on the hour from 6 to 9 p.m. No show will be featured on Christmas Day.</p>	<p>Azurea Christmas Brunch and Dinner One Ocean Resort and Spa's Azurea will host a special Christmas brunch and dinner menu created by Chef Jay Mendoza. On Christmas Day, offerings will include an à la carte brunch from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. followed by Christmas favorites served from 2:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Among the dishes featured are Rutabaga Bisque, Telicherry Crusted Harris Ranch Beef Tenderloin, Pan Crusted Diver Scallops and Egg Nog Bodino. Reservations are required and must be confirmed through open table at www.opentable.com/azurea-at-one-ocean</p> <p>Night of Lights The historic city of St. Augustine comes to life yet again with its famed Nights of Lights celebration. More than 3 million lights will illuminate the city through Jan. 31, alongside holiday music and the lighting of the city's own Christmas tree. For information about shuttles and parking visit www.floridashistoric-coast.com/nights-lights.</p> <p>Jax Illuminations Jax Illuminations continues a local holiday tradition with a drive-through illuminated Christmas display featuring more than half a million LED lights animated in time to classic Christmas songs. This mile-long stretch of lights opens every night through Jan. 1 from 6 to 9:30 p.m. The cost of entry is \$20 per car for up to seven passengers and \$2.50 for each additional passenger. Vehicles taller than seven feet cannot be accommodated. Jax Illuminations is located at 3800 St. Johns Bluff Rd. S. in Jacksonville. For more information, visit www.jaxilluminations.com.</p>



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Monday, Dec. 26	Tuesday, Dec. 27	Wednesday, Dec. 28	Thursday, Dec. 29
<p>Operation: Kidsafe O'Steen Volkswagen will present an "Operation Kidsafe" event Dec. 26-31 free for families on the First Coast to receive a lifetime Safety Bio document for their children. Parents will receive a digital fingerprint and photo of their child assembled on a printout that they can provide to law enforcement anywhere in the world to aid in an investigation should their child go missing. This event will be held at O'Steen Volkswagen located at 11401 Philips Highway in Jacksonville. Operation Kidsafe will be available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.</p> <p>Travel Training Program The Council on Aging's Travel Training program is designed to assist seniors in learning to ride the Sunshine Bus. Residents interested in expanding their transportation options or who would like to increase their confidence as a bus rider can receive assistance from trained volunteers in navigating routes, reading time tables and making transfers. Contact the mobility manager at the Council on Aging at (904) 315-6505 or email Katie Arnold at karnold@stjohnscoa.com.</p> <p>Dressing of the Palms Vilano Beach will be aglow with the "Dressing of the Palms" through Dec. 31. In true coastal style, see palm trees adorned with lights and holiday trimmings thanks to the talent of locals businesses, artists, residents and organizations. This event is free and be seen on Main Street in Vilano Beach.</p>	<p>St. Augustine Alligator Farm Camps The St. Augustine Alligator Farm is offering one-day camps featuring a fun-filled day at the zoo including zoo tours, animal encounters, shows, arts and crafts and games among other attractions. Held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the cost of the camp is \$40 per child per day for members and \$50 for non-members and includes lunch. Camps are available for kids in grades K-5 and will take place Dec. 22-23, Dec. 26-30 and Jan. 2-4. Registration is required and can be completed at www.alligatorfarm.com. Space is limited. The St. Augustine Alligator Farm is located at 999 Anastasia Blvd. in St. Augustine.</p> <p>Tapas Tuesday The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens presents Tapas Tuesday at the Cummer Café. Every Tuesday from 5 to 7:30 p.m. take in the sunset on the Cummer Café patio while listening to local musicians with beer, wine or artfully inspired tapas for sale at the Café. Reserve your table by calling (904) 899-6022. For more information, visit www.cummermuseum.org. The Museum is located at 829 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville.</p> <p>Sunset Rotary Club Meeting The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach Sunset meets Tuesdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn. Community leaders are welcome to attend. For more information, call club President Janeene Hart at (904) 412-5409 or email jwhart1208@gmail.com.</p>	<p>Life Enrichment Group This group is designed for those with memory changes who want to remain mentally, physically and socially active, while giving caregivers and loved ones some free time for themselves. This program is offered daily, serving the Jacksonville Beach and Ponte Vedra area. For more information call: 904-417-7354 or email life_enrichmentgroup@yahoo.com</p> <p>Well-being Wednesday During and after the Mid-Week Market in Bull Park, free well-being classes will be held at the Adele Grage Cultural Center. Qigong classes, including Tai Chi, are now available Wednesday mornings at the Adele Grage Center from 9:30 to 10:30 am. Instructors and speakers are encouraged to contact the department of recreation and special events at (904) 247-5828 for more details about providing the community with Well Being information and classes.</p> <p>Hanukkah at the Adele Grage Community Center Jacksonville Beaches' Hanukkah celebrations will receive a boost this year on Wednesday, Dec. 28. At the Adele Grage Community Center, a fast-paced hour of family Hanukkah fun will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by the lighting of a nine-foot menorah at 6:30 p.m. This special event will be accompanied by warm latkes, music, free raffles and more. Featuring crafts, fresh latkes, dreidels for the children and Hanukkah music, the entire community is invited to this event. For more information, call Chabad at the Beaches at (904) 543-9301.</p>	<p>Volunteers Needed Ponte Vedra Therapeutic Adult Day Health Care at 1050 A1A North is in need of a volunteer any weekday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This volunteer will help participants in activities such as games, music, chair exercises and simple arts and craft projects. Certified pet therapy dogs are also welcome. Call (904) 209-3686 or email aleach@stjohnscoa.com for more information.</p> <p>Life Enrichment Day Retreat Arbor Terrace Ponte Vedra hosts a Life Enrichment Day Retreat every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Arbor Terrace Ponte Vedra, 5125 Palm Valley Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. The group is designed for those with memory changes who would like to stay active mentally, physically and socially. For more information, call (904) 834-7578 and ask for Ilene Thrasher or visit www.at-pontevedra.com.</p> <p>MOCA Winter Art Camp: Pop Art MOCA Jacksonville will host a Winter Art Camp Dec. 29 from 1 to 5 p.m. Children in kindergarten through fifth grade will learn skills, history and technique from experienced art educators as part of the museum's winter break art camp series. This session will feature a lesson on the pop art movement, wherein students will learn pop art practices and techniques to create their own vivid pieces of art. The half-day class is \$25. To register, visit www.mocajacksonville.unf.edu/events/Winter-Art-Camp--3-D-Mixed-Media. MOCA is located on 333 N. Laura Street in Jacksonville.</p>

Free calendar listings for community groups and nonprofit organizations are published at our discretion on a space-available basis. Send your event at least 10 days before publication. Submit events to jasmine@opcfla.com, post online at www.pontevedrerecorder.com using the automated form or call (904) 686-3939.



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Give Hope Bring Smiles partners with Blessings in a Backpack

The trio of Julington Creek moms who founded Give Hope Bring Smiles recently partnered with First Coast Blessings in a Backpack to provide food for 175 children with a holiday food drive Dec. 10.

Meeting their goal of collecting at least one item for the children to eat

each day over the winter break, Renee Johnson, Amy Macey and Kristin Westberry delivered the bags of food Monday, Dec. 19.

Each contains 17 different items of food including macaroni and cheese, ramen noodles, soup, peanut butter, crackers, applesauce, fruit cups and

canned goods.

The items will benefit the children of Crookshanks Elementary School, a full-service Title 1 school in St. Augustine. First Coast Blessings in a Backpack currently feeds more than 3,000 students in St. Johns' and Duval County's public schools.



Photos provided by Renee Johnson


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BLOCK PARTY

Ponte Vedra couple's holiday request creates wall of personalized art



Photos by Jennifer Logue

Fuller and Judi Tresca display their wall adorned with blocks decorated by friends and family.

By Jennifer Logue

Judi and Fuller Tresca held a “block party” of sorts at their Ponte Vedra Boulevard home recently to unveil a work of art that was nearly a year in the making.

The party marked the “unveiling” of a wall in the Tresca’s home decorated with 104 wooden blocks, each of which was personally decorated by the couple’s friends and family members.

“It was our ‘gallery opening,’ Judi Tresca quipped. “It was a lot of fun. Nobody had seen the wall.”

The project began a year ago, when Judi Tresca distributed five-inch wooden blocks to family and friends during the holidays and invited them to decorate and return them.

“I got the idea after visiting the downtown library and seeing its ‘Imagination Wall,’” she said. “I asked people to decorate the blocks in a way that related to them, so when I looked at it I would immediately associate it with them. They could do anything.”

The Trescas’ friends took Judi at her word, returning a colorful collection of blocks as distinctive and unique as their creators, who include everyone from childhood friends and fashion designers to two-star generals.

Throughout the year, the blocks trickled in and were added to the wall; in November, the block party gave all of the contributing artists a chance to see how their block added to the overall display.

“They’re basically from all over,”

Fuller Tresca noted, pointing to blocks that depict desert visits, beach scenes and even two blocks from Liverpool, England that include references to the Beatles.

Some of the blocks include historical references personal to the Trescas: In addition to a block from Judi’s oldest friend that shows a photograph of the them when they were 5 years old, one block depicts Capt. Frederick Tresca, a 19th-century ancestor of Fuller, who is a sixth-generation Floridian.

Another block bears a PLAYERS Championship logo and the dates 1983 and 2007, commemorating the years that Fuller and later his son served as chairman of the golf tournament.

Other blocks reflect the interests and

talents of the creator.

“Jennie (Veal) is an avid cross-stitcher, so her block features cross stitch,” Judi said, pointing to the block.

“Some of my bridge club friends did blocks related to that. It’s a little bit of everything.”

Some contributors turned the blocks over and created miniature dioramas, she added, while others decorated the front and included objects hidden in the back. And with each block comes a story of family and friendship for the Trescas.

“It’s really come together better than I ever expected,” said Judi, noting that she continues to receive and add blocks to the display honoring a lifetime of friendship and memories. “It’s never too late to be added to the wall.”

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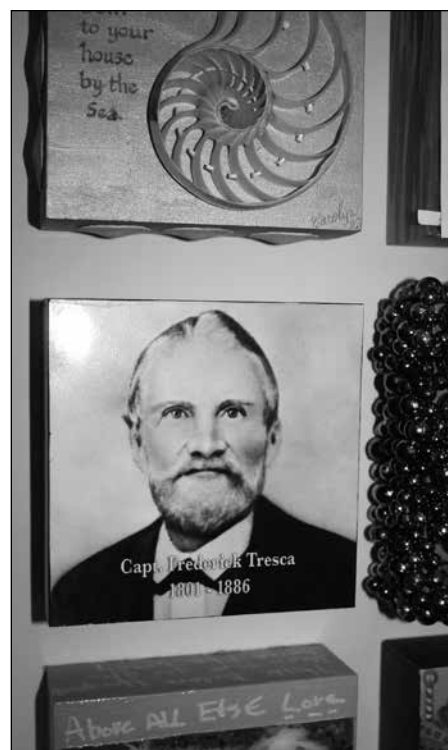
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Fuller Tresca’s ancestor, Capt. Frederick Tresca



One block commemorates the years that Fuller Tresca and his son served as chairman of THE PLAYERS Championship.





Photos provided by Vickie Pappas

ABOVE: Vickie Pappas with Popitto LEFT: Vickie Pappas (center) with fellow volunteers Sis Van Cleve Miller (left) and Jessica Pelot

Ponte Vedra woman experiences true meaning of Christmas on mission trip to Dominican Republic

By Jasmine Marshall

As First Coast shoppers filled town centers and big box stores in the final weeks leading up to the holiday season, Ponte Vedra resident Vickie Pappas was some 1,082 miles away at Hogar de Niños orphanage in the San Cristóbal province of the Dominican Republic, where children and teens gathered in a communal cafeteria with crayons and coloring books.

Though it's been awhile since her last visit, Pappas was no stranger to the orphanage as she joined them for a Christmas celebration. The residence lacks many of the "modern" necessities of a traditional home, such as running water and constant electricity, but its festivities are no less heartfelt. Over candy, song and dance, they celebrated the upcoming holiday with the simplest components of Christmas: togetherness, Christ and the spirit of giving.

The residence sees assistance through its sister organization, the Homeless and Orphans Outreach, Inc. (HOOI) based out of Lake Placid, Florida. Hogar de Niños is one of the eight schools, churches and orphanages that has been supported by the nonprofit, all-volunteer organization throughout its 23-year history, powering through barriers proposed by language and distance to form relationships that connect the children who call it home with its network of volunteers in Lake Placid and mission trip participants throughout the country.

A transformative experience

On the First Coast, Jacksonville's Episcopal School routinely visits the orphan-

age on trips led by Director of Community Service Sis Van Cleve Miller in partnership with the Global Christian Outreach. It's a journey she has spearheaded for more than 10 years at the school in keeping with Episcopal's mission to inspire students to dedicate themselves to services wherever they can, and one that often changes the lives of those involved.

Pappas first accompanied her son on one such trip years ago at a time when she said she believed she was being called upon by her faith. Through what felt like a dance of fate, Pappas was contacted by Miller in November asking if she'd be interested in returning. Welcoming the opportunity to take her eyes off of the more self-indulgent aspects of stateside Christmas preparations, Pappas departed with Miller from Orlando for a four-night trip from Dec. 7-11.

"Five years ago I went with Trey on this mission trip ... and when we returned, I made a promise to be more aware, more grateful, more caring and (simple)," she said. "I know God realized that I had slowly and selfishly slipped back into 'the world,' and guided me back to the orphanage."

She and Miller joined other volunteers from the HOOI community on the trip with Christmas gifts in tow – among them shoes, watches, candy and backpacks with school supplies donated through drives run by Episcopal School of Jacksonville and Lake Placid's volunteers.

Pappas reconnected with a young man named Popitto, whom she'd met in 2011 during her first visit. Like several of the children at Hogar de Niños, Popitto had resided there for years before heading to

college in Santo Domingo. He now regularly returns to mentor at the faith-based orphanage and preaches twice a day every Saturday in San Cristóbal.

"Through the experience and seeing him again I've realized the best thing you can give is your time and your love," she said. "It's not about expensive material things, but the importance of reaffirming relationships, of giving love."

The true spirit of Christmas

Though Pappas went to be of service to the children of the orphanage, she received as much as she gave from Hogar de Niños's residents, who she says embody

the spirit of Christ in their own actions.

"The children are deeply religious, and they pass that spirit unto others," she said. "In serving others, you try to be the hands and feet of Christ, no matter what background you come from or what situation you're in."

Pappas said the children of Hogar de Niños never forget the true meaning of Christmas.

"Now especially is a time to look for grace and kindness and compassion with everyone you meet – you're in service for Christ not by what you say but by what you do," she said. "These kids reflect that and I feel blessed having witnessed it."

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A dazzling display



Photos by Jennifer Logue

The towering tree bedecked with Christopher Radko ornaments is popular with visitors to the Masulli home.

Event spotlighting Marsh Landing home's 20 Christmas trees raises \$33,000 for Ethiopian orphanage



Photo courtesy of Lynda Masulli

Richard and Lynda Masulli

By Jennifer Logue

The true meaning of Christmas was on full display Dec. 11, when a Marsh Landing couple hosted a holiday gathering that raised more than \$33,000 for an Ethiopian orphanage.

As in years past, the centerpiece of Richard and Lynda Masulli's annual December event was the 20 Christmas trees that adorn the couple's 10,000 square-foot home on Bristol Place. Guests strolled throughout the home to view elaborately decorated trees that together feature more than 2,500 collectible ornaments. The gathering also featured a silent auction that included homemade cakes baked by Lynda Masulli — whose business, A Beautiful Cookie, specializes in homemade sweet treats — as well as the chance to host a dinner party for 12 at the Masulli home.

As part of the event's fundraising focus, guests had an opportunity to sponsor a child at Lantu's Home of Hidden Treasures, an orphanage in Ethiopia started last year by 20-year-old Ponte Vedra Beach resident Suzanne Scheuble. By the end of the evening, all 18 children had

found at least one sponsor.

"This is the most we've ever raised," said Richard Masulli, noting that this is the second year the orphanage has been the beneficiary of the popular holiday event. In previous years, the party benefited organizations such as the JT Townsend Foundation and Beaches Community Kitchen.

"We started tying it in with charity," he said. "If you're going to go through all this work, it might as well be for a good cause."

Labor of love

The Masullis' multiple Christmas tree tradition began simply enough in 1990, Masulli said, when his wife suggested that family members seeking Christmas gift ideas give her a Christopher Radko ornament for their tree. Family and friends were happy to oblige and after a decade, the couple had collected some 450 Radko ornaments.

They soon began adding other well-known ornament designers to their col-



The Twelve Days of Christmas tree features artificial pears and ornaments depicting the legendary items listed in the holiday classic.



Snow White and Dopey are among the ornaments adorning the Disney tree.



The White House ornament tree already has an ornament to reflect President-elect Donald Trump.

Dazzling

Continued from 22

lection, including Patricia Breen – whose collectible ornaments can cost hundreds of dollars – and the Polish artist Mia. As the collection grew, so did the number of trees required to display them all.

The decorating process begins in October, Masulli said, as he sets up each tree and starts the meticulous process of decorating each one.

“Each ornament is catalogued and stored in acid-free paper in special containers,” he said. “I store them in collections, so I can pull out a whole theme at one time.”

The giant tree in the home’s living room, for example, is decorated exclusively with Christopher Radko ornaments. Other trees feature color themes: A tree with blue ornaments graces the couple’s bedroom, while a tree bearing traditional red and green ornaments is Masulli’s personal favorite.

Also on display are trees with topical themes: One tree, for example, features official White House ornaments – plus the new addition of a “Make America Great Again” ornament – while another displays ornaments illustrating “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” Snow White and Dopey, meanwhile, are among the ornaments hanging on a Disney-themed tree stationed outside the in-home theater.

As their passion for collecting ornaments has grown, the Masullis have picked up a few smaller collections along the way, including a selection of colorful tree toppers and German candy containers shaped like Saint Nick.



Amelia Island Santa by Patricia Breen

Ready to downsize

So popular has the Masulli’s Christmas tree display become with family, friends and neighbors that it was with a twinge of regret that Richard Masulli acknowledged this year may be the last time the entire collection is displayed at one time. After 16 years in the home they built, the Masullis have decided to downsize and have put the home up for sale. It is currently listed for \$4,295,000 with Susan Froman of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Florida Network Realty in Ponte Vedra Beach.

“I’m trying to avoid thinking about it,” said Masulli. “We may have fewer trees and just pile more ornaments on them.”

Wife Lynda Masulli, however, insists that wherever the next chapter in their journey takes them, the Christmas tree tradition will continue.

“Absolutely,” she said. “Without a doubt!”



Richard Masulli’s personal favorite tree features the traditional Christmas colors of red and green.



A blue-themed tree adorns the Masullis’ bedroom.



The Masullis’ collection also includes numerous Christmas tree toppers.

To view color photos of the Masullis’ decorated Christmas trees, visit www.pontevedrarecorder.com.

25 Ways In 25 Days: Church helps all put Christ back in Christmas

By JeaNette Smith

Special to the Recorder

Traditionally a count-down to Christmas focuses on receiving gifts. Whether you’re wishing for five golden rings or two turtle doves, the 12 Days of Christmas turn our minds to what we might receive.

Spencer and Zoe Smith wanted their children to focus more on giving than receiving, so they took their children up and down the block and helped them pull all the neighbor’s trash cans in from the curb. They got the idea from the website, www.mormon.org. Created by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “25 ways in 25 days” is designed to help people think more of Him whose birthday Christmas was designed to commemorate.

On Dec. 1, the website began offering a slew of creative suggestions for turning our minds toward Jesus Christ. Each day until Christmas the website shares fun, new ideas for serving our fellow man.

Every day highlights something Jesus did during his ministry, and encourages

readers to do something similar. Christ healed the sick, so participants in “25 days” might want to give blood. Since Jesus fed the hungry, we are encouraged to donate food to a food bank or invite someone over to dinner.

The Smiths enticed their young children to participate in “25 days” with a traditional advent calendar. Because it’s a little difficult to get young children to focus on anything other than they want from Santa Clause, Spencer Smith motivated his two children with chocolate.

“It’s working great,” he said. “We tell the kids what the service will be for the day, and at the end of the day if they performed their service they get to open the advent calendar and eat the candy for that day.”

Added Zoe Smith, “Their motive to serve like Jesus serves might not be entirely altruistic, but it’s a good start to getting the kids thinking about someone besides themselves and what they want for Christmas.”



Photos courtesy of JeaNette Smith

To commemorate the day “Jesus visited the lonely,” for example, their mother took the children to a nursing home to visit the residents there.

The website offers three ways each day to show Christlike behavior. The ideas are not always elaborate. Some are as simple

as praying with your family, sending somebody a scripture to cheer them up or making a real person-to-person phone call.

People who participate in “25 ways for 25 days” say it is such a good way to keep their minds on Christ, they want to do it every year.

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For more information about these works, the artists, or other works, contact Bob Nickerson at First Coast Artists at 904.280.8187.



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Photos provided by Zimmerman Agency

Justin Justice, Joe Pearce, Mike Merrill, Ana MacReynolds, Russ Girulamo, John Coogan and Jim Kleck display the check representing tips donated to veterans' groups by the TPC Sawgrass Storytellers.



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TPC Sawgrass Storytellers donate thousands in tips for charity

TPC Sawgrass Storytellers presented a donation of approximately \$25,000 to five local nonprofit organizations after combining all tips the volunteers earned in 2016.

The Folded Flag Foundation, Operation New Uniform, Wish for our Heroes, Ana's Angels and Florida Urgent Rescue were among the nonprofits benefiting from the donation.

The TPC Sawgrass Storytellers are a group of volunteers who work year-round to educate visitors on THE PLAYERS Championship and its history through guided

Kuchar designates President's Cup funds to Ronald McDonald House

Seven-time PGA Tour winner and Olympic bronze medalist Matt Kuchar recently contributed \$40,000 to Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Jacksonville.

Kuchar's donation was directed to support RMHC of Jacksonville's expansion campaign.

The contribution is a portion of the charitable proceeds generated from The Presidents Cup 2015, in which Kuchar participated as a playing member of the victorious U.S. Team. Presidents Cup players are not paid for their participation; instead, each competitor allocates their portion of the proceeds to charitable causes.

"We are honored Matt generously donated his President's Cup earnings to support our mission," said Diane Boyle, executive director at RMHC of Jacksonville. "Matt and Sybi Kuchar have been faithful supporters since 2010 and their commitment over the years has made a major difference for the families served by RMHC of Jacksonville."

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Arbor Terrace Ponte Vedra residents and staff participated in a holiday gift drive, donating and wrapping presents for a local family.

Photo courtesy of Arbor Terrace



Arbor Terrace 'adopts' local family in need for Christmas

One local family's Christmas will be brighter this year, thanks to a holiday gift drive organized by Arbor Terrace Ponte Vedra.

The dedicated memory care facility "adopted" a Ponte Vedra mother and her three children as part of the Arbor Company's "What Could You Do with \$1" initiative, which this year decided to eschew holiday cards and encourage its facilities to "pay it forward." The company challenged each facility to designate \$1 per resident and \$1 per employee and use the money to good purpose within the

local community.

"At Arbor Terrace Ponte Vedra...our staff, families, extended families and neighborhoods also got involved," Executive Director John Schaum said.

Arbor Terrace residents enjoyed participating in the holiday initiative, helping to wrap Christmas presents for the family.

"The outpouring of gifts was overwhelming," he said. "The generosity from our families and friends made a vision turn into a reality and as a result the true meaning of Christmas came alive in Ponte Vedra."



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Photo courtesy of The Alhambra

Three generations of Alhambra Theatre & Dining owners gather for a book signing marking the release of "The Alhambra Theatre & Dining: 50 Years of Memories." From left: Former owner and current director Tod Booth, current owner and Managing Partner Craig Smith, author Charles Day, and original owners Ted Johnson and George Ballis.

Alhambra kicks off 50th season with book signing

By Jennifer Logue

Three generations of Alhambra Theatre & Dining owners gathered at the theater for the first time last week to mark the release of a coffee table book celebrating its 50 years of entertaining local audiences.

Original owners Ted Johnson and George Ballis, former owner and current director Tod Booth, and current owner Craig Smith joined together to celebrate the legacy of the nation's longest continuously operating dinner theatre and the publication of "The Alhambra Theatre & Dining: 50 Years of Memories." Author Charles Day was on hand to sign copies of the book, which features 175 pages of history, photos and behind-the-scenes stories of the theater, its productions and the many celebrities who graced its stage.

"The Alhambra really is a treasure — it's an institution," said Day, adding that the challenge was condensing the theater's storied history into the space available. "We easily had enough material for another 50 to 75 pages."

Researched and written over 18 months, the book is broken into three chapters — or acts — each of which highlights a different era in the Alhambra's history. In

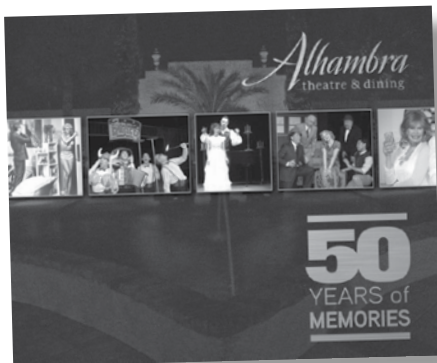
addition to interviews with the owners and staff, the book includes numerous anecdotes about the celebrities who appeared there — a list that includes everyone from Tony Curtis and Mickey Rooney to Loretta Swit, Barbara Eden and Mike Farrell. The Alhambra also is known as the scene of pin-up legend Betty Grable's final performance: In January 1973, Grable starred in a production of "Born Yesterday" that was so popular with Alhambra patrons that the original three-week run was held over an additional two weeks. Grable died of cancer in July of that year.

"Despite her illness," then-owner George Ballis said, "she never missed a show."

"The Alhambra Theatre & Dining: 50 Years of Memories" follows a scrapbook format, said Day, who praised designer David Parrish for capturing the key moments in the theater's history.

"David's grasp of what needed to be on display was near-flawless," he said. "This is truly a curated collection of archives, photos, history and elegance."

"The Alhambra Theatre & Dining: 50 Years of Memories" is currently on sale at the Alhambra for \$39.99. For more information, call the box office at (904) 641-1212 or visit www.alhambrajax.com.



Photos by Jon Blauvelt

Wyatt, Coleton and Cruse Ritch with Mr. and Mrs. Claus at the PVCA's annual Christmas party Dec. 7 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club golf course driving range



Mike and Jane Keohane with Robert Brown at the PVCA Christmas party



Fred and Sandy Owen and Carl and Barbara Bloesing enjoy the PVCA Christmas party. Fred Owen and Carl Bloesing previously served the PVCA as presidents.

Ponte Vedra Community Association holds annual Christmas party

By Jon Blauvelt

The Ponte Vedra Community Association (PVCA) hosted families Dec. 7 for its annual Christmas party at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club golf course driving range.

Event attendees enjoyed food and drink, music played by a DJ and the appearance

of Mr. and Mrs. Claus. The PVCA also collected unwrapped toys from members and guests that will be distributed to Firefighters for Families, a charity organization that helps families in need throughout St. Johns County.

The PVCA currently has 460 families that are members.



The Ream family at the PVCA Christmas party



Local gym owner partners with wife to help veterans with PTSD and their spouses

By Jon Blauvelt

Dressed in a grey, dri-fit T-shirt, blue Under Armor shorts and multicolored tennis shoes, Will Williams looks like a typical gym owner at first glance. Yet the owner of Willness Fitness in Ponte Vedra Beach is anything but typical upon further inspection, and it's what he does outside of the gym that sets him apart.

"I love helping people," Williams said. "I do my best to pave the way for them."

In addition to helping clients through private training at his gym, which recently celebrated one year of business, he is partnering with his wife Alison to build Operation Green Zone, a nonprofit organization that helps veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Founded by the couple in January 2016, the organization's mission is to provide veterans with fun-filled weekends away from home and ultimately a support system to help them persevere through the challenges of their everyday lives.

"We want it to be one big family you can depend on," he said.

As an Army veteran, Williams understands the challenges firsthand. After tours



Will Williams (center) recently celebrated one year of business at Willness Fitness in Ponte Vedra Beach with a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

Photo by Susan Griffin

in Iraq and Afghanistan, he suffers from extreme PTSD, and he has struggled to find the very family they're trying to build.

"We started Operation Green Zone because he has a best friend that has PTSD, and I noticed when they're together, it's not their main focus," said Alison Williams, who is the president of the organization.

In addition to providing a support system for veterans, she said, the nonprofit will organize separate retreats for their spouses, who are often forgotten.

"Spouses don't get that much help," she said. "There are things that us as spouses,

we don't say to our husbands or wives. They don't understand because we don't want to put more pressure on them, but we want to be able to speak freely."

The idea to include spouses, she said, originated from an encounter the couple had at lunch one day. A woman approached them and asked about Williams' service dog. She mentioned that her husband has PTSD, and Alison told her to call if she needed to talk.

"She came over to our house and started crying," she said. "Will didn't understand from our point of view. They have no idea

what we go through. We take a lot of the responsibility because there's only so much they can handle without triggering something."

After recently acquiring their official nonprofit designation, the Williams's are now navigating through the beginning stages of building the organization, including the management and acquisition of budgets, grants and sponsorships. They anticipate the weekends to include fun activities that align with participants' interests like fishing, fitness and trips to the beach, as well as activities like equine and art therapy. The goal, Alison Williams said, is to first hold these retreats every other weekend, and then shift to every weekend once the operation is up and running. The retreats, which they expect to include four to five people, will alternate between veterans and their spouses.

"You're with your brothers or sisters in arms, and you get to talk about the good times while you have a good time," he said. "You can let your guard down. This will be another place to call home."

The couple hopes to hold their first Operation Green Zone retreat in January or February.

MOVERS & SHAKERS



Tippins joins Berkshire Hathaway HSFNR

Clifton Tippins has joined the Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty.

TIPPINS

A Northeast Florida native, Tippins attended Georgia Southern University and later worked both in Augusta – at the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta – and at Christ Church East in Jacksonville.

"The skills that Clifton has learned working – community outreach, leadership, planning, and organization – will help him go far as a Realtor," said Kevin Waugaman, broker/manager of the Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office. "His desire to help others is a true asset, and I am excited to see him grow here at BHHSFNR."



PHAM

Pham wins BioFlorida 'Entrepreneur of the Year' award

Espero Pharmaceuticals Founder and CEO Quang Pham received the Weaver H. Gaines Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the

recent 2016 BioFlorida conference. The award recognizes an entrepreneur who has made "extraordinary contributions to the growth of life sciences" in the leadership of a company or institution. Pham, a Ponte Vedra Beach resident, heads Espero, which in June received FDA approval for GoNitro™, a short-acting nitrate in a stabilized crystal granule form for relief of an angina pectoris attack. It is the first product approved to treat acute angina in the United States in 20 years.



HARRIS-HENDERSON

One Ocean promotes Harris-Henderson to group sales manager

Leigh Harris-Henderson has been promoted to group sales manager at One Ocean Resort & Spa in Atlantic Beach. In her new role, she will be responsible for the corporate group market, handling all association, organization and high-tech group room business. She previously served as catering sales manager for the resort.

"We are more than confident in Leigh's abilities to serve as group sales manager," said Jeanne Bothwell, director of sales and marketing. "Having been with the resort since 2010, Leigh is a great example of the career development culture at One Ocean. I look forward to watching her flourish in this new posi-

tion, as she has in all of her previous positions."

JAGA elects new officers

The Jacksonville Area Golf Association (JAGA) elected its 2017 officers at its recent annual meeting, held at Marsh Landing Country Club. New officers elected include Fred Seely, president; Ron Jerin, vice president, administration; Jeff Adams, vice president, tournaments; Randy Nader, secretary; and Don Gilmore, treasurer. Reappointments included Barney Poston as executive secretary, Jack Morehead as assistant treasurer and Arch Copeland as JAGA webmaster.

An association of more than 40 golf clubs in Northeast Florida, JAGA promotes golf through tournaments and related events and activities. The association also manages a scholarship program that provides college funding for 26 students each year.

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St. Augustine Distillery Co-Founder and CEO Philip McDaniel welcomes event attendees.

Photos from Susan Griffin

St. Augustine Distillery partners with Old Town Trolley to host Nights of Lights tour

Local media and business professionals recently attended a special Nights of Lights tour of downtown St. Augustine that was organized by St. Augustine Distillery and Old Town Trolley.

Before embarking on the tour, guests enjoyed cocktails and food made by A1A Ale Works and music played by the Grant Paxton Band in the distillery museum. St. Augustine Distillery Co-Founder and CEO Philip McDaniel also addressed the crowd and thanked them for attending the event. Guests then hopped on the trolley to tour the Ancient City and its holiday lights and decorations, which lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The event concluded at the distillery with dessert, cocktails and port from San Sebastian Winery.



The Grant Paxton Band performs at the St. Augustine Distillery.



The Tini Martini Bar at the Casablanca Inn in St. Augustine



Barrels of bourbon at the St. Augustine Distillery

A war on Christmas... really?



Harry Pappas
Columnist

Whether we celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, both, or none, it is hard not to notice religion during this time of year. In fact, the so-called “war on Christmas” and the annual requests to “keep Christ in Christmas” has become as much

of a holiday tradition as Santa Claus, Christmas trees and the Menorah. Regrettably, the holiday cheer is often combined with repeated arguments regarding “Merry Christmas” vs. “Happy Holidays.” While I respect the tenacity of both sides, does it matter how we say it? What is most important is that we remember why we say it: the birth of Jesus.

While I am confident that Jesus would appreciate the commotion surrounding His birthday, I think He would not be concerned about the words or phrases used to celebrate His special day, as long as the message is about love, forgiveness and compassion. I also believe Jesus would be saddened with the commercialization of His birthday. Of course, there is beauty, truth, and joy during the festivities of Jesus’s birth, but I humbly suggest that much of it is concealed beneath the thick layers of wish lists, materialism and all-night retail extravaganzas. Therefore, for some of us Christians defending Jesus’s celebration by reminding others to “keep Christ in Christmas” can appear hypocritical, if our actions do not mirror our words.

Nevertheless, if we want to “keep Christ in Christmas,” I suggest the best way to accomplish this goal is to model Christ-like behavior. In other words, we should allow the happiness of the season to show in how we live our life. In Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol,” Ebenezer Scrooge pursues a personal war on Christmas. His nephew feels the impact of his uncle’s attacks year after year, but it does not stop him from wishing his humbug of an uncle a Merry Christmas and inviting Scrooge to Christmas dinner. Whether someone wishes us a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, Happy Hanukkah, Joyous Kwanzaa, or Season’s Greetings, let us find enjoyment and pleasure in his or her well wishes.

In closing, I am reminded that faith makes all things possible. Hope makes all things work. Love makes all things beautiful. May you have all three during the most wonderful time of the year!

*Merry Christmas,
Harry Pappas Jr.*

Jill Fuhrman
and Carla
Luigs

Photos by Susan
Griffin



Chamber conducts holiday food drive

The Markland Manor House was the setting for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's recent "Winter Seasonal Blend." Held Dec. 15 at the new community located on International Golf Parkway in St. Augustine, the event brought together business and community leaders from across the country for a cocktail reception featuring hors d'oeuvres, door prizes and entertainment by Stephen Hudson, CEO of Digital Mark Company, LLC.

Chamber members and guests were encouraged to bring non-perishable food and personal care items for donation to St. Francis House. Located in St. Augustine, St. Francis House is the only full-time emergency shelter between Jacksonville and Daytona.



Walter O'Shea and Isabelle Rodriguez



By Michael Hannon

Special to the Recorder

The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors recorded 33 residential sales in Ponte Vedra (32081) and Ponte Vedra Beach (32082) for the week ending Dec. 16, 2016. Residential listing inventory (supply) continues to shrink against current sales per month (demand). The ratio points to a "Seller's Market" condition.

RECENT SALES

Single Family Homes – 32081

\$260,500	21 Cypress Bay Dr	3B/3B
\$271,000	305 Garden Wood Dr	3B/3B
305,000	219 Woodland Greens Dr	3B/2B/1HB
\$312,211	148 Park Lake Dr	4B/3B/1HB
\$316,633	294 Paradise Valley Dr	5B/2B/1HB
\$329,687	406 Crestview Dr	3B/2B
\$332,954	333 Tavernier Dr	3B/2B
\$339,900	107 Bison Trail	4B/2B/1HB
\$340,104	173 Bison Trail	4B/2B/1HB
\$354,900	115 Bison Trail	4B/3B

\$396,263	339 Coconut Palm Pkwy	3B/3B
\$405,900	106 Pinewoods St	4B/4B
\$417,848	184 Whisper Rock Dr	4B/3B
\$419,900	886 Wandering Woods Way	3B/2B
\$423,553	141 Carnauba Way	4B/3B
\$439,900	290 Valley Grove Dr	5B/4B
\$459,997	130 Senegal Dr	3B/3B
\$465,000	387 Wingstone Dr	3B/3B
\$495,000	697 Cross Ridge Dr	5B/4B/1HB
\$533,625	116 Hatter Dr	3B/3B

Condominiums – 32082

\$260,000	128 Hidden Palms Ln	3B/2B
\$387,000	325 S Ocean Grande Dr 102	3B/3B

Single Family Homes - 32082

\$125,000	180 Marlin Ave	2B/2B
\$232,500	138 Solano Cay Cir	2B/2B
\$240,350	61 Sailfish Dr	2B/2B
\$400,000	41 Walkers Ridge Dr	2B/2B
\$500,000	120 N Roscoe Blvd	3B/3B
\$563,000	1 Walkers Ridge Dr	3B/2B/1HB
\$875,000	3273 Old Barn Rd W	4B/4B/1HB
\$912,000	1268 Fish Hook Way	5B/4B/1HB
\$940,000	809 Baytree Ln	5B/5B/1HB
\$1,832,250	2463 S Ponte Vedra Blvd	5B/4B/1HB

MLS reported +/- 20 sold real estate transactions this week. The list above illustrates representative sampling of reported sold transactions. Property information is not guaranteed. © 2016 MLS and FBS

Have real estate questions? Email them to have your question answered in a future column. Submit questions to mh@michael2020.com.

The Palms

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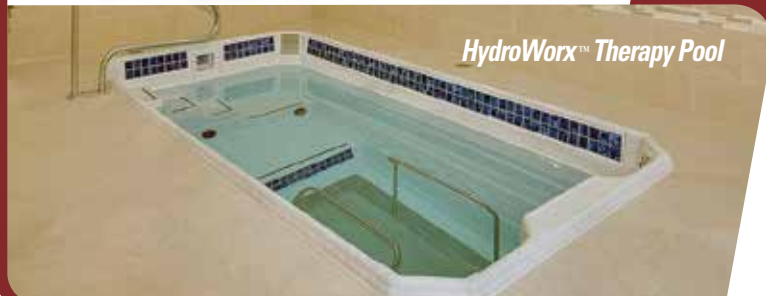
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BUSINESS BRIEFS



Photo courtesy of RMHC Jacksonville

MDM Commercial Enterprises CEO Steve Austin, Laurie Austin, Carol Kosla, RMHC of Jacksonville Development Director Carol Harrison, LG Electronics USA Vice President of Hospitality Sales Michael Kosla and RMHC of Jacksonville Executive Director Diane Boyle

Ponte Vedra company donates TVs, electronics to Ronald McDonald House

Ponte Vedra-based MDM Commercial Enterprises, Inc. and LG Electronics USA together provided nearly \$100,000 worth of equipment to Ronald McDonald House of Jacksonville recently.

The two companies provided and installed 52 LG TVs to the organization, a donation valued at \$45,000. The TVs were placed in guest suites at the newly renovated and expanded Ronald McDonald House. MDM Commercial also donated and installed a DirecTV Headend and Z-Band Distribution System, valued at \$50,000.

“We at MDM Commercial are grateful for the opportunity to partner with

LG Electronics USA in support of RMHC of Jacksonville,” said MDM Commercial Enterprises CEO and Owner Steve Austin. “Our organization values the RMHC mission of providing the comforts of home to families while they are caring for their children receiving life-saving medical treatments. We hope these outstanding products will bring them comfort in their time of need.”

MDM Commercial Enterprises, Inc. has equipped lodging and healthcare facilities since 1990. MDM is one of the country’s largest dealers of LG commercial displays. The company has supported RMHC of Jacksonville through donations and volunteer efforts for nearly 20 years. MDM Commercial previously provided 30 televisions for use in the existing guest bedrooms at the Ronald McDonald House.

Both companies were recently honored at the annual Ronald McDonald House Charities 2016 Awards for Excellence in Chicago.

“MDM Commercial and LG Electronics USA have been incredibly generous in helping us further our mission to provide the comforts of home to families in need,” said RMHC of Jacksonville Executive Director Diane Boyle.

“We are grateful to have the support of Mr. Steve Austin and LG as our community partners, and we appreciate that they share our dedication in providing comfort to our precious families.”



Photo courtesy of TLM Realty Corp.

Lucky's Market

Lucky's Market opens in Neptune Beach

Natural and organic food store Lucky's Market has opened in Neptune Beach Plaza, bringing the “Organic for the 99 percent” chain to the Jacksonville area.

TLM Realty Corp., which owns Neptune Beach Plaza, said Lucky's fit the vision the company had for redevelopment of the former K-Mart-anchored property.

“Neptune Beach is a wonderful location, so finding the right tenant for this community was my primary challenge,” said Ronald Oehl, CEO and president of TLM Realty. “Based on the conversations I had with folks in the community at (the) opening, we succeeded on all fronts.”

The first Lucky's Market opened in Boulder, Colorado in 2003. Since then, the company has expanded to 23 locations in 11 states.

In April 2016, The Kroger Co. announced a strategic partnership with

Lucky's Market, with Kroger making “a meaningful investment in Lucky's, which will significantly accelerate Lucky's Market's growth in new and existing markets.”

The new Lucky's Market is located at 580 Atlantic Blvd. in Neptune Beach.

NAI Hallmark Partners brokers sale of Penman Plaza

Also in Neptune Beach, Penman Plaza has been sold for \$6.6 million to a private investment group.

NAI Hallmark Partners represented the seller, Penman Plaza Associates, in the sale of the 60,269 square-foot shopping center.

According to NAI, the plaza is currently 100 percent occupied, with tenants that include Winn Dixie, Aaron's and Tire Kingdom.

“The Penman Plaza offering was extremely competitive and achieved a very aggressive cap rate in part due to its irreplaceable location in the high barrier to entry Beaches submarket and strong credit tenant profile,” said Keith Goldfaden, principal of NAI Hallmark Partners.

Added NAI's Jeff Conn, “Our client had the vision to renovate and modernize a dated yet well-located center while adding new traffic-generating tenants, including Ace Hardware, Bono's BBQ and VyStar Credit Union, which added to the attractiveness of the property.”

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Houston 21, Jacksonville 20



Photo by Rick Wilson/Jacksonville Jaguars

Former FSU star Jalen Ramsey (20) got his first career interception as a pro early in the second quarter of Jacksonville's game against Houston and returned it 35 yards.

Bradley out as Jaguars drop ninth game in a row, Marrone named interim coach

By Mike Bonts

The Gus Bradley head coaching era is officially over.

After blowing a 12-point lead against Houston Sunday, the Jaguars fired Bradley with just two games to go in the season following a 21-20 loss to the Texans.

"I thanked Gus Bradley for his commitment to the Jacksonville Jaguars over the past four seasons," Jaguars owner Shad Khan said. "As anyone close to our team knows, Gus gave his staff and players literally everything he had. Our players competed for Gus and I know they have great respect for him, as do I."

Jacksonville named Doug Marrone the team's interim coach. Marrone was the assistant head coach and offensive line coach for Jacksonville this season. He coached the Buffalo Bills from 2013-14, compiling a 15-17 record before opting out of his contract.

Texans backup QB Tom Savage replaced starter Brock Osweiler and paced a fourth-quarter comeback sending Jacksonville to a record-setting ninth straight regular season loss. The team's last win was Oct. 16, when the Jaguars defeated the Chicago Bears 17-16.

Jaguars receiver Marqise Lee trumped Nick Novak's second field goal of the game with a 100-yard kickoff return for a TD at the 6:50 mark of the third quarter to build a 20-8 lead. Novak kicked four field goals to keep the Texans in the contest.

"Today was not a good day for us," Lee said. "Defense did great once again, and offense ... messed it up. We've got to come together and figure it out. We say it every week, but we really need to figure it out."

Jacksonville QB Blake Bortles was 12 of 28 for a season-low 92 yards. He also ran for a one-yard score.

Bortles' only interception came with 61 seconds left on a pass



The Jacksonville Jaguars fired head coach Gus Bradley in the aftermath of their 21-20 loss to the Houston Texans on Sunday at NRG Stadium.

Photo by Nancy Beecher

Pirris returns sparks, Sharks in win over Matanzas

By Jim Moyes

Five games into the 2016-17 basketball season, Ponte Vedra's boys varsity basketball team was still wondering how successful this season could be when they could send their full complement of players onto the court.

That question may very well have been answered last Friday night with the return of five members from the Sharks' state finalist football team, three of whom were joining the varsity roster. After being surprised on Tuesday night with a 55-52 loss to district foe Menendez, the Sharks were a vastly improved team when they took the court three days later against a much improved Matanzas team.

Buoyed with the return of their top scorer from the 2015-16 season, J.D. Pirris, the Sharks bounced back with a hard-earned 70-64 win over the visit-

ing Pirates. Pirris tallied 23 points in his return to the lineup, 18 of those markers coming in the deciding second half.

Although Pirris was eligible to take the court as early as Tuesday night's contest with Menendez, coach Bud Beech was hesitant to use his all-area performer just three days after Pirris completed his 14th bruising game as a valuable contributor to the Sharks football team.

The Sharks are hopeful that with Pirris back in the starting lineup the results will be reversed when Ponte Vedra visits Menendez next month for a return engagement with the Falcons.

A frigid shooting third quarter doomed the Sharks in their loss to Menendez. The Falcons outscored the ice cold Sharks 20-6 in the period to take a commanding 13-point lead into the final quarter. The Sharks rallied to pull within three points

as the final buzzer sounded, but were unable to overtake the fired-up visitors.

The Sharks can certainly lay much of the blame on the surprising defeat to their poor shooting from two-point range, with many of their dismal 11 for 37 shooting coming from very close range.

The lone bright spot for the Sharks was the continued fine play of Eston Hensley. The 6'3" senior scored a game-high 16 points and pulled down a team-high 11 rebounds in the losing cause.

Friday night was a much happier ending for the locals against a talented Matanzas five. Pirris was understandably rusty with his shooting form in the first half after but one practice with his current teammates, but the JD of old came out smoking hot in the second half.

Effectively slashing to the basket, Pirris either made his driving layups, or

drew fouls in the process, with his forceful drives. In addition to his four second-half field goals, Pirris knocked down 11 of his 12 free throws in the stretch run.

Matanzas crept within three points of the Sharks midway through the final quarter before the Sharks went on a pivotal 6-0 run on baskets from Chris Tomacewski, Reese Russi, and Jack Johnson for their biggest lead of the game at 66-57. Forced to foul in the game's closing moments, the Sharks closed out the victory with Pirris making clutch fourth-quarter free throws.

Following this past Monday night's road game at St. Augustine, coach Beech will now have a number of practices with a full roster before returning back to St. Augustine on Dec. 28 for three consecutive games in the St. Augustine Holiday Classic.

Jags

Continued from 32

picked off by safety Quintin Demps, killing any chance of a late-game score. Jacksonville's offense had 150 yards and nine first downs.

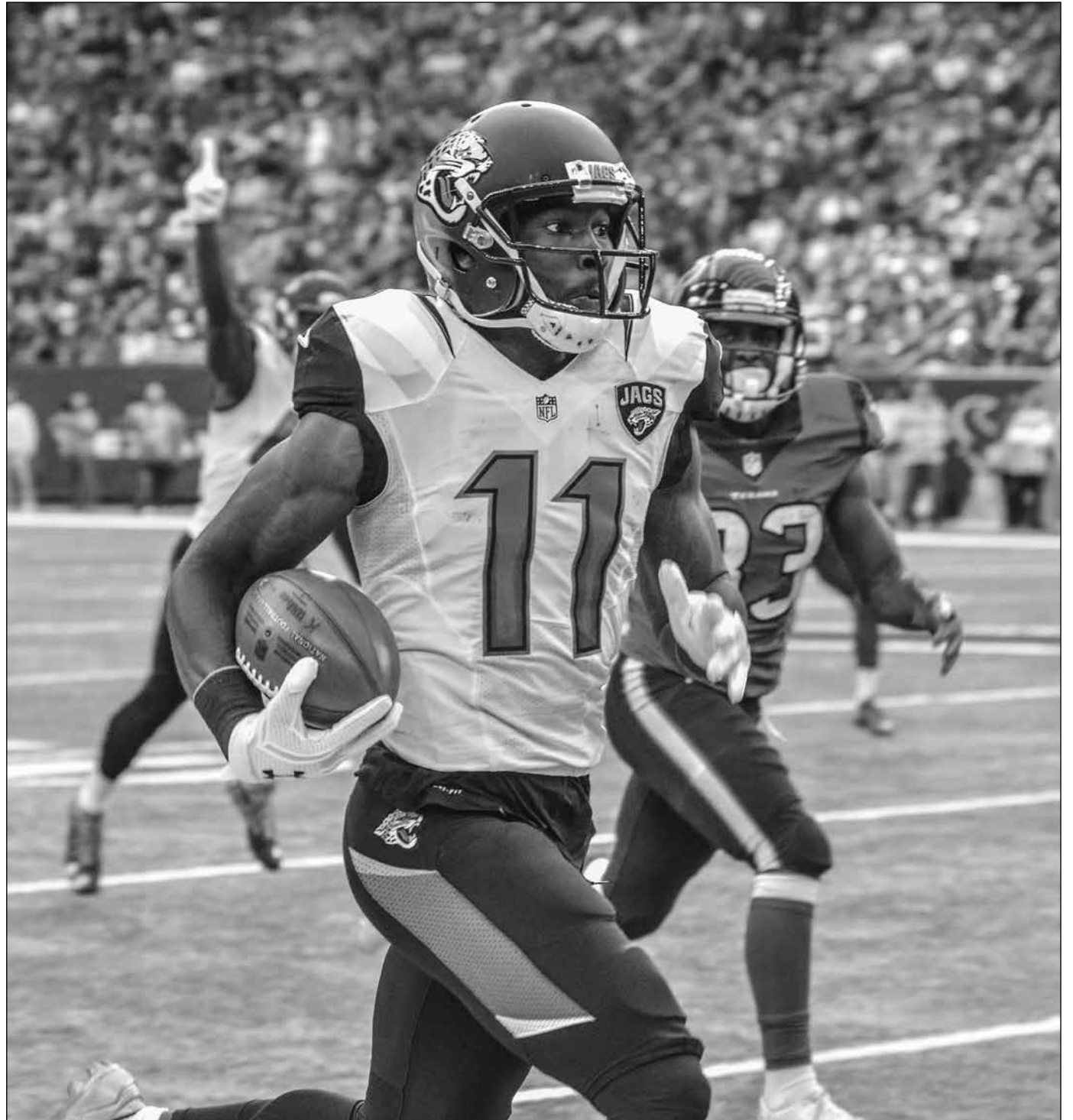
Jason Myers booted field goals of 26 and 50 yards.

After throwing two picks that were converted into 10 points, Oswiler was replaced by Savage. The backup led the hosts on an eight-play, 52-yard drive ending in a one-yard TD run by Lamar Miller with 2:51 to play. Novak converted the go-ahead point after for the victory.

Game notes: Texans defensive end Jadeveon Clowney posted five tackles, three for lost yardage, two quarterback hits plus a sack and a pass breakup... Jaguars safety Johnathan Cyprien recorded his 100th tackle of the season in the first quarter, marking his third consecutive year with at least 100 tackles. With his 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown in the third quarter, Marqise Lee delivered Jacksonville its first kick return for a score since Maurice Jones-Drew did so against the New Orleans Saints on Nov. 4, 2007.

Bradley file: Bradley, 50, finished 14-48 in three-plus seasons with the Jaguars. The club went 4-12 and 3-13 in Bradley's first two seasons as head coach before improving to 5-11 last year. He spent four seasons as defensive coordinator with the Seattle Seahawks (2009-12) and began his NFL coaching career as a defensive quality control assistant with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2006. Bradley worked for two seasons as Buccaneers linebackers coach.

AFC South: The Texans (8-6) remained tied atop the AFC South with the Tennessee Titans (8-6), who defeated the Kansas City Chiefs 19-17. The Indianapolis Colts (7-7) beat the Minnesota Vikings to remain one game back in the division title chase. The Jaguars face Tennessee Saturday at 1 p.m. at EverBank Field.



Marqise Lee's (11) 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown at the 6:50 mark of the third quarter gave Jacksonville a 20-8 lead.

Photo by Rick Wilson/Jacksonville Jaguars

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41. *Celebrity dancers
43. River of Hades
44. Door openers
46. Sad sound
47. Owl's cry
48. English or Irish canine
50. Type of word
52. Be nosy
53. Bridge site
55. Do this with hot drink
57. *Gordon Ramsay's turf
61. *Investors on "Shark Tank"
64. Gem State
65. East Coast time
67. Lumps of fuel
69. Andrea Bocelli, e.g.
70. Day before
71. Small island
72. Door fastener
73. Cuba Libre ingredient
74. Down and out

DOWN

1. Blu-ray precursor
2. De Valera's Ireland
3. *"The Goldbergs" narrator
4. Do like sirens
5. Legwear monger
6. Deal with it
7. Park or Fifth, e.g.
8. Wire prickles
9. Acid gritty-textured fruit
10. One algae representative
11. a.k.a. Xi'an
12. *Frequently belted out in "The Voice"
15. Organized persecution of ethnic group
20. Train tracks
22. Any doctrine
24. Russia's neighbor
25. *Family in "The Middle"
26. Foolish
27. Basketball foot maneuver
29. Army beds
31. 100-meter race
32. Impede
33. Bill de Blasio, e.g.
34. *Leslie Stahl's minutes
36. Collection agency's target
38. "Cogito ____ sum"
42. "Be quiet!"
45. SeOor in Portugal
49. Fish eggs
51. One of B-vitamins
54. Unkind look
56. Nonpoetic writing
57. ____ and kin
58. Creative spark
59. Sunbathing results
60. Karate blow
61. Kind of cell
62. Leafy supergreen
63. Downhill racer
66. *"Law & Order" acronym
68. Pig's digs

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Nease football forced to forfeit wins, pay fine for FHSAA violation

By Jon Blauvelt

The Nease football program must forfeit two of its wins from the 2016 season and pay a \$100 fine after dressing an ineligible player in seven games, which is a Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) violation.

According to Paul Abbatozzi, the director for school services for the St. Johns County School District, the student athlete is from outside the United States, where he accumulated enough school credit to technically complete high school based on that country's educational system.

This made him ineligible to participate on Nease's team or attend the school.

Consequently, the FHSAA, Florida's governing body for high school athletics, informed Nease in early November that it would be stripped of its wins against Pedro Menendez (Sept. 9) and Englewood (Oct. 27).

The FHSAA's letter of reprimand also stated that Nease must pay a \$100 fine and communicate to all impacted teams throughout the season.

Abbatozzi said the student athlete was immediately removed from the team once the school understood he was ineligible. According to Christina Langston, chief of community relations for the St. Johns County School District, he is also no longer a student at Nease.

When the student arrived at Nease, Abbatozzi said the school had not immediately received the requisite comprehensive documentation concerning his educational status and believed he was eligible to attend the school and play football.

"It was a discrepancy in the evaluation of the transcript," said Abbatozzi. "The information was very slow coming in."

Once Nease received the student's full transcript and other necessary documentation, Abbatozzi said the school realized he was ineligible and self-reported the infraction to the FHSAA.

"It's not something that's commonplace for our district," said Abbatozzi.

"Those athletic directors and the staff at the high school, they exhausted due diligence and made sure we're within the scope and sequence of eligibility."

Since the ineligible player did not dress for the Panthers' last game of

the season – a Nov. 10 win against West Nassau – the outcome of that game is unaffected, and Nease can keep the win.

Nease finished the season 3-6. The Panthers' record will now fall to 1-8 because of the FHSAA sanctions.

This is not the first time that Nease has been penalized by the FHSAA. In 2006, the football program was slapped with a \$20,000 fine and placed on six years of probation after two assistant coaches provided inducements to a player and his father.

The school's entire athletic program was also placed on five years of administrative probation.

At the time, Nease had already been serving administrative probation for violations committed by the baseball program in 2005.

Dear loyal readers,

As 2016 draws to a close, we'd like to thank you for your readership and continued support this year and every year since we became Ponte Vedra's hometown paper of record in 1969.

Being a community's source of local news and information is a great responsibility. Our staff works tirelessly to bring to you thoughtful, in-depth articles on important issues that matter to you and your neighbors. Along the way, we try to spotlight some of the inspiring and uplifting people, events and happenings that make Ponte Vedra and the Beaches such a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family.

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Trey Powers at the plate

Photo from Bryce Powers

Landrum Middle School's Trey Powers selected for 2016 Power Showcase home run derby

Landrum Middle School student Trey Powers has been named to the 11th annual Power Showcase Future Stars Team as a participant in the event's homerun derby.

Held in Miami at Marlins Park Dec. 27-31, the showcase features top amateur players from around the world and provides them an opportunity to demonstrate their skill-sets in front of top baseball evaluators during a live broadcast. Each player is selected for the event based on their abilities, power, scout references and showcase tourna-

ment performance.

A Ponte Vedra Beach resident, Powers plays catcher and first base for Landrum. At the Power Showcase, he'll represent Florida in the home run derby, which features top amateur power hitting prospects from around the country. He'll also represent the East during the All-American Game. The game highlights the five-day, all-encompassing educational experience staffed by top players and coaches, including an MLB scout day in front of all 30 organizations, a welcome dinner and jersey pre-

sentation ceremony, the home run derby and two mental strength sessions.

Powers is partnering with Landrum schoolmate and friend Jack Kerner and the larger Best Buddies organization as part of the community outreach portion of the Power Showcase.

Best Buddies is a global organization dedicated to ending social, physical and economic isolation of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Powers is dedicating his performance at the event and his first home run ball to Kerner.

KEEPING UP

By Barbara Boxleitner

Special to Ponte Vedra Recorder

Megan Piggott turned in quite a performance in only her second college basketball start.

The Ponte Vedra High School graduate was recognized as the Sunshine State Conference player of the week Dec. 12. She was cited after scoring a career-best 30 points for Nova Southeastern University against Lynn University, her second career start.

The sophomore scored in double figures a fourth time through nine games. Piggott added a season-high five assists.

More women's basketball

Freshman **Sydney Searcy** was a reserve through 10 games for University of Florida. The Allen D. Nease graduate averaged 4.9 points.

Men's basketball

Redshirt sophomore **Nick Grier** started the first 14 games for Santa Fe College. Previously at Bartram Trail, the forward averaged 8.4 points and 4.7 rebounds.

Men's golf

LaGrange College senior **Logan Lanier** was the USA South golfer of the week for the weeks ending Oct. 4 and 11.

The Bartram Trail graduate was recognized after tying for medalist honors at the Oglethorpe Fall Invitational, where he shot a 138 (68-70). He then was cited for finishing fourth at the Golfweek Fall Invitational, carding a 211 (70-71-70).

LaGrange College senior **Anthony Scolapio** was fifth among the Panthers at the Chick-fil-A Invitational. He shot a 159 (75-84). He competed for Ponte Vedra.

Elon University sophomore **Philip Loeb** tied for 11th in the Hummingbird Intercollegiate. The Ponte Vedra Beach resident was third among the Phoenix, carding a 145 (73-72).

Men's soccer

Principia College junior midfielder **Briggs Hurley** was named to the all-St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference second team.

The captain out of Ponte Vedra High started 14 of 17 games he played and finished with two goals and a team-high eight assists.

Millsaps College senior defender **Taylor Hayes** was an all-Southern Athletic Association honorable mention selection. Previously at Nease, he scored once – a game winner – and had two assists in starting 15 of the 17 games he played.

Send updates about area athletes to Barbara Boxleitner at bboxleitner@outlook.com.

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