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December 23, 2015
Volume 45, No. 51
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Not your average newspaper, not your average reader



Decking the chairs

Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach helps to light up the night. Page 4



GIRLS SOCCER
Lady Sharks
match Clay 1-1 **Page 30**



BOYS SOCCER
After an emotional tribute,
Sharks mercy Pedro **Page 29**

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INSIDE

Community News

Page 4

One of Us

Page 6

Calendar

Page 10

Puzzles

Page 44

Send us your news

We welcome submissions of photos, stories, columns and letters to the editor. Let us know what's happening. If you have hard copies of photos you want us to feature, feel free to bring them to our office — we'll scan them and hand them right back. E-mail submissions to pvrecorder@opcfla.com or bring them by our office at **1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach.**



Visit our brand new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

Plus, find the Recorder on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder

Merry Christmas!

The Ponte Vedra Recorder office will be closed on Thurs., Dec. 24 and Fri., Dec. 25 for the Christmas holiday. We will resume normal hours starting 9 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 28.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

H	A	T	C	H	O	H	M	M	U	M	S
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5	7	9	8	4	3	2	6	1			
1	4	6	7	2	9	3	5	8			

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.



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What's this?



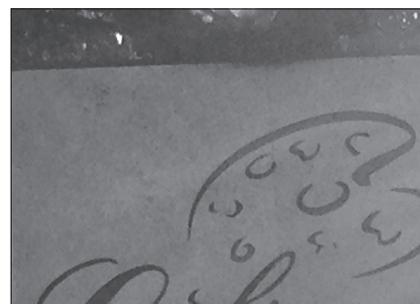
Do you know what this is?

Email your answer to kelly@opcfla.com by Tuesday at 5 p.m.

We'll throw all the correct answers in a hat and choose the winner with a random drawing. If we receive no correct answers, we'll award four Jacksonville Zoo tickets (two adults, two children) to the best wrong answer we receive.

Jules Bohanon was randomly selected from the people who correctly identified the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach sign. Jules, please pick up your zoo tickets!

Better luck this week, guessers! And don't forget — incorrect but entertaining guesses might also be rewarded with a trip to the zoo.



Adoptable pets at the St. Johns County Pet Center

CAT OF THE WEEK

Hi there! My name is Caramel and I am a 2 year old male cat who is looking for a new loving 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. 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. Come visit us today here at the Pet Center! #28549



DOG OF THE WEEK

Oh boy! Hi there! I'm a 10 month old male puppy. I was brought back to the Pet Center because my family could not care for me. I love to go on

walks and nothing makes me happier than playing fetch out in the yard with my puppy pals. 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. Come visit us today here at the Pet Center! #23602

All cat adoptions at the Pet Center are \$20 for males and \$30 for females. Dog adoptions are \$35 for males and \$50 for females. The fee includes neutering/spaying, rabies vaccinations and shots. The Pet Center is located at 130 N. Stratton Road. Hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. **For more information, call (904) 209-6190.**

2016

Celebrate Noon Year's Eve at the Zoo.

Ring in the New Year and have a wild time with some real party animals — *all before bedtime!*

December 31, 2015
10 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Great Lawn
Free with Zoo Admission



- Live Entertainment
- Party Favors
- Giveaways
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- Special Kid-Friendly Activities -
Face Painting, Caricatures, Strolling Magic and More!

Apple juice toast at the strike of noon!



Visit jacksonvillezoo.org for tickets.

Chamber Board tours Jax Chamber offices



Photo provided by St. Johns County Chamber

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Board members toured Co-Work Jax and the Jax Chamber last week. The St. Johns County Chamber hosts joint chamber meetings with the Jax Chamber throughout the year. To learn more, visit www.sjchamber.com and www.myjaxchamber.com.

SHORT TAKES

Chris Bohjalian visits Neptune Beach

New York Times bestselling author Chris Bohjalian will be at The BookMark on Wednesday, Jan. 6 at 7 p.m. to talk about and sign copies of his new book *The Guest Room*. It's a spellbinding tale of a party gone horribly wrong: two men lie dead in a suburban living room, two women are on the run from the police, and a marriage is ripping apart at the seams.

When Richard Chapman offers to host his younger brother's bachelor party, he expects a certain amount of debauchery. What he does not expect is this: bacchanalian drunkenness, a dangerously intimate moment in his guest room, and two

naked women stabbing and killing their Russian bodyguards. In the aftermath, Richard's life falls apart, and the women from the guest room is being hunted by the police who want to question her and gangsters who want to kill her.

The *Guest Room* is a captivating, chilling story about shame and scandal from the bestselling author of *Close Your Eyes*, *Hold Hands*, *The Sandcastle Girls*, and *Midwives*, among others. Chris Bohjalian's work has been translated into more than 30 languages, and three of his novels have become movies. He lives in Vermont with his wife and daughter.

The Bookmark is located at 220 First Street in Neptune Beach.

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Veronika Wilson **904.864.6759**
VWilson@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



Coastal Oaks at Nocatee

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This beautiful move-in ready home is perfect for entertaining guests with a large screened lanai overlooking the water. MLS 804041

Contact us today

Rhonda Gummerman **904.994.1721**
RGummerman@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



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With Matt Montoya, Nicole Montoya and David Grimm of Beaches Rotaract at Jacksonville Beach Seaside Pavilion



Bruce Barber With Enora Rogers and Rotary Club of PVB President Will Montoya



Rotary and Rotaract join to Deck the Chairs

Kelly H. McDermott
The Recorder

Beaches Rotaract and the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach banded together with help from Sally Corp. this year to transform a lifeguard chair into a bedazzled nautical-themed light display as part of the 2015 Deck the Chairs celebration.

Deck the Chairs is an annual lighted sculptural exhibit using the iconic red chairs of the American Red Cross Life Saving Corps. Each year, chairs are sponsored by local businesses and organizations and then decorated by regional artists and volunteers. The exhibit stays on display in Latham Plaza

at downtown Jacksonville Beach for the month of December.

Deck the Chairs supports the Jacksonville Beach Volunteer Life Saving Corps -- and all proceeds from the event go to help supplement funding provided by the American Red Cross and the City of Jacksonville Beach. Funds are used for training and outreach programs, as well as maintenance of the oceanfront lifeguard facility.

This year the Sea Walk Pavilion Area -- adjacent to Latham Plaza between First Street N. and the beach -- is home to the iconic 24-foot handcrafted Deck the Chairs tree, the Beaches Winter Playground with a 28-foot Deck the

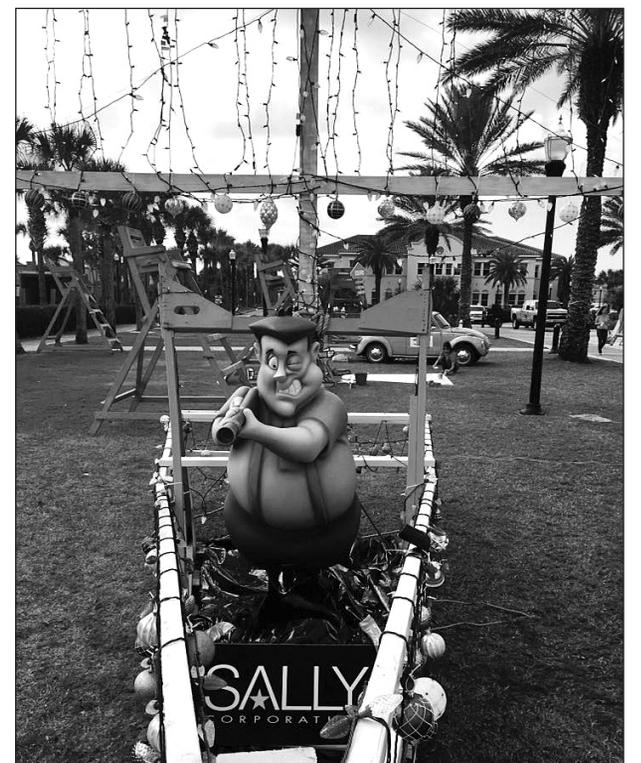
Chairs seashell slide as well as activities for kids, six oversized decorated displays and holiday shows and performances throughout the month.

On Dec. 13, visitors were surveyed and the Deck the Chairs design committee selected its favorites. Winners included: Best in Show: Beaches Episcopal School; The Great Decker: Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens; Best Lighting: Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach; Best Creativity: Four Points by Sheraton; The Griswold: BRASS and Judges Favorites: Beaches Car Wash and In The Pink.

Deck the Chairs will be on display through Jan. 2, 2016. For more visit www.facebook.com/deckthechairs



Sally Corp. staff loaned special props and a character for the Rotary Deck the Chairs display, which was awarded Best Lighting.

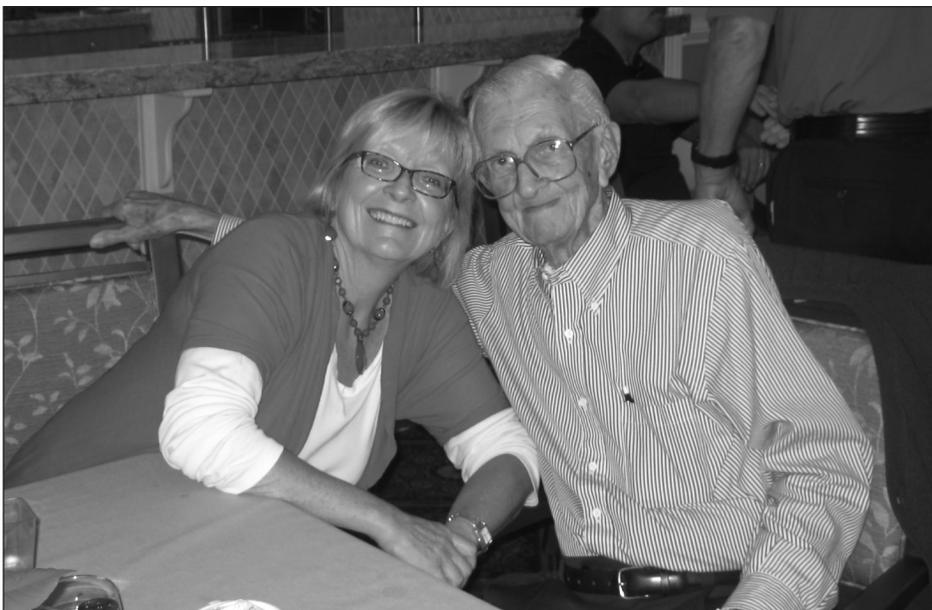




Helen Tandy



Patricia Keates and daughter Susan Garz



Abby Vega and father Robert Damesyn



Mr. and Mrs. Bud Dalton



Father Daniel DePascale

Photos by Kay Tober

Ring in Christmas at Palms at PV

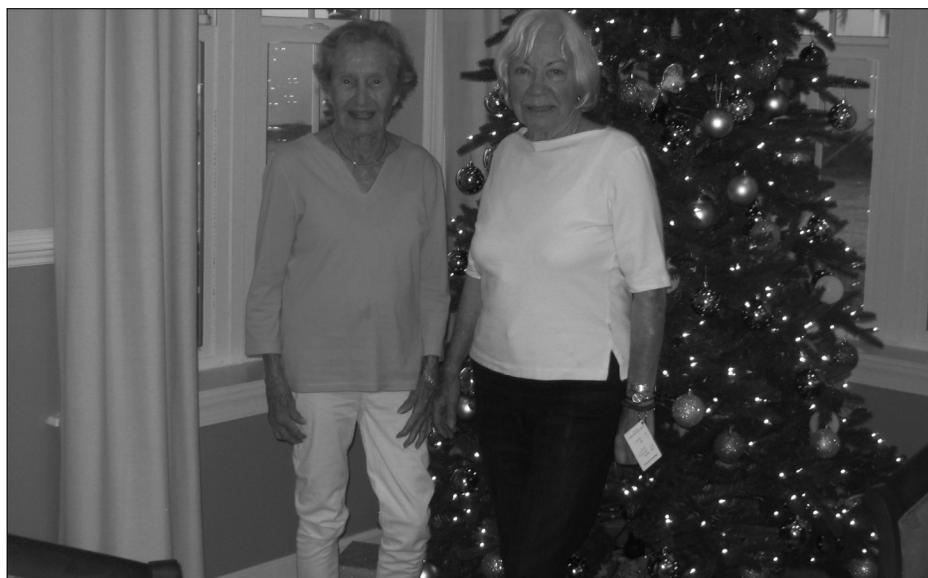
More than 100 friends and families of the residents of The Palms at Ponte Vedra gathered this month to celebrate the holiday.

Festivities included great music and food prepared by Culinary Director, Steve Brice. Santa Claus also made a special appearance.

The Palms at Ponte Vedra would like to thank all the

volunteers from the area churches, schools, local businesses and residents who have donated their time by enriching the lives of our seniors during this holiday season.

The Palms at Ponte Vedra is an assisted living and memory care community located at 405 Solana Rd. Doors opened to residents on October 7, 2015.



Patricia Hack and Mary Gressett

Mattress Sale!

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King Sets Starting at \$299

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DASHER: *“You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen...” Or so the song goes! How much do we really know about the crew that helps Santa each year? Rudolph tends to stay in the spotlight throughout the holiday season -- but here at The Recorder, we wanted to know more about the hard-working reindeer who make up the rest of Santa’s team.*

That’s why we caught up with Dasher the reindeer, who carved out a little time during the week before the big day to tell us more about what it takes to pull Santa’s sleigh.

Do you feel like Rudolph hogs the spotlight?

Of course not! No, you should think of Rudolph as the face of Santa’s reindeer. He’s the PR guy because he’s got the name and he’s got... well, the nose. If we didn’t have a representative, we’d be scattered around the world all season giving interviews and posing in photo ops. Rudolph has earned all the attention he gets. He’s a real work horse! Er, work... deer...

Is the North Pole chaotic this close to Christmas?

Not at all. It’s like the calm before the storm. We have 364 days a year to prepare for Christmas Eve, and we’ve all been doing this for so long that the whole affair runs like a well-oiled machine. We spend the day resting, eating well, warming up.

What is your specialty as a part of Santa’s team?

I’m true to my name – I help the team work on speed.

Is speed an important component of your job delivering gifts?

Absolutely. We’re never late and we never miss a house – but it’s not just speed. I can’t take all the credit. Training speed is just one part of how we prepare. I have the guys and gals running sprints during the training season. Vixen gets us into shape with strength training and Comet keeps us doing endurance.

What does the team do when you’re finished with your duties on Christmas day?

Sleep!

No, we tend to get back to the stables and crash for a while, but we celebrate Christmas together too. For the past few years, the elves have thrown an incredible block party for everyone at the ‘Pole. We have a big potluck and Mrs. Claus was in charge of setting up a bonfire last year. We work hard and play hard – but making time for our families and friends is really important this time of year.

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- Access to practice facilities (range balls included)



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at team's and pro's discretion
- Offers year-round tennis privileges
- Access to tennis and dining only



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**TO SIGN UP CALL
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Nocatee Happenings: new neighborhood, town center, amenity updates



Geri Price
Nocatee Realtor/
Builder Relations
Manager

Here it is December already. Thanksgiving Holiday was beautiful except for that little “noreaster”. But I still have my sandals on. I am living the Florida lifestyle while helping all Realtors with everything they need to sell the Nocatee Lifestyle. If you don't have what

you need, please contact me. Nocatee is ever-changing and I am here to assist that you keep up with all the changes and growth. Happy selling in Nocatee, let's finish off this year strong!

Neighborhood Updates

Standard Pacific Homes has officially sold out the Greenleaf areas, Greenleaf Village and Greenleaf Lakes. David Weekley Homes' model in Greenleaf Lakes is open and they have 16 new home opportunities remaining. David Weekley Homes is also finishing up their presence in Greenleaf Village with only 2 homesites remaining. Providence Homes' model in Greenleaf Lakes is open as well with 9 building opportunities available. Providence Homes has a 3,239# inventory home in Greenleaf Village, shown here, ready now, priced at \$489,900.

The Crossing at Twenty Mile has gotten off to a great start with 11 sales to date. Grand opening for the models is anticipated for the end of January 2016.

Lakeside, Addison Park and Siena, all at Town Center, are bustling. With eight models to see in these town center neighborhoods, you're sure to find what



Providence Homes option in Greenleaf Village

your customer is looking for in an urban, walkable lifestyle.

David Weekley Homes in Lakeside at Town Center has two models and is selling in all phases of Lakeside. One of those models is Lakeside phase four, which features quaint homesites and large porches. The Preservation model, shown here, is located on the same street as the original Lakeside model where you will find Cindy, Mike and Aaron, site agents, there to assist you. It is fully decorated and is open every day. These models are located on Palm Breeze Drive in Lakeside, and along side David Weekley Homes' Addison Parks' two models. Mattamy Homes' Lakeside model is also open seven days a week.

Builder Update

Standard Pacific Homes is gradually



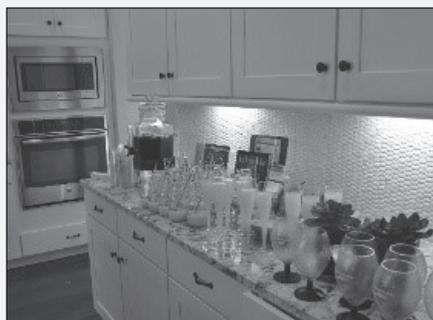
Lakeside model on Palm Breeze Drive in Lakeside by David Weekley Homes

transitioning to a new company. Ryland and Standard Pacific Homes have merged to create a new company, CalAtlantic. Standard Pacific Homes, currently a highly successful NE Florida homebuilder, together with Ryland Homes forms America's Fourth Largest Homebuilding Company.

Logos from both companies will be

displayed on most marketing pieces for at least the next year. For the time being current communities will remain branded as Standard Pacific Homes with some possibly transitioning over to the CalAtlantic brand sometime in the future. So whether you see a Standard Pacific Homes sign

UPDATES continues on **Page 9**



The NEFBA Sam Tram in Nocatee brought two buses of Realtors to Nocatee neighborhoods this month.

Waypoint Church to open in Nocatee

Groundbreaking celebration scheduled for Jan. 16

Waypoint Church, the second congregation of Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church (PVPC), will soon join the landscape of community worship in Nocatee. PVPC has been a part of the Ponte Vedra community for 26 years and is well known for their annual Bethlehem visit, an 8,000-square-foot recreation of the city of Bethlehem, as well as their Sunrise Easter Services held at Mickler's Beach.

The 20-acre campus of Waypoint Church is located behind Valley Ridge Academy in the Greenleaf community of Nocatee. Through the extravagant generosity of the PVPC congregation, over \$2.1 million have been given to start Waypoint Church, with an additional \$1.5 million pledged.

This campus will also be home to

Promisestown Preschool of Nocatee. Promisestown Preschool of Ponte Vedra Beach has a strong reputation for nurturing young children in a grace-centered environment. The preschool will open in August 2016.

Waypoint Church will be led by Jim Huster. Huster, also known as the surfing church planter, is originally from Jacksonville. He became a Christian as a 16 year old at a Young Life camp in North Carolina. This served as a catalyst for some wonderful adventures, including youth ministry in the Carolinas for 14 years, and church planting in San Diego. He loves spending time at the beach with his wife, children and friends.

Waypoint Church is a gospel-centered group of followers of Christ, who

are committed to living in authentic fellowship with the sole purpose of glorifying God. As a congregation in the Presbyterian Church of America, Waypoint Church celebrates the authority of Scripture, the need for the gospel, and the call to share the Good News.

Until Waypoint Church's first service, Nocatee residents and the community in general is invited to join PVPC for their Sunday weekly services at 9:00 and 10:30. Christmas Eve services are at 4:00 and 5:30. PVPC is located at 4510 Palm Valley Rd. Ponte Vedra Beach.

For more information, visit WaypointNocatee.com, email Jim@waypointnocatee.com or call (904) 654-3021.



Timeline

- Groundbreaking Celebration – January 16, 12:00 to 2:00pm
- Waypoint Church Launch Team gatherings begin at PVPC – March 6, 12:00-1:30
- Promisestown Preschool Opens – August 2016
- Waypoint Church First Service – September 2016

Preschool provider announced for Nocatee

The Learning Experience, one of the nation's fastest-growing academies of early education for children six weeks to five years old, announced last week that it will soon be opening a location in Nocatee.

According to Rick Ray, President and CEO of The PARC Group, Nocatee's master developer, "Nocatee's success lies in its unique lifestyle, which blends a coastal location with world-class amenities and top-ranked schools."

The addition of The Learning Experience within the master-planned community will provide Nocatee's nearly 4,000 residents with access to early childhood education, expanding the available educational offerings beyond K-12 grade to include infancy through preschool.

With 90 percent of a child's brain developing within the first five years of life, The Learning Experience places a prominent focus on programs that advance scholastic and social preparation, including its one-of-a-kind L.E.A.P. (Learning Experience Academic Program) curriculum and enrichment programs, which have been developed from more than 30 years of experience in the early education industry.

"At The Learning Experience, we provide early education in a way that enables students to learn, play and grow while they build foundational blocks for lifetime learning and accomplishment," said Amy Alvarado, Director of Operations of Northern Florida for The Learning Experience. "Additionally, we have incorporated the advent of technological advancements into our platform for an even greater emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math."



The Learning Experience's well-rounded approach to early learning has proven to dramatically impact the lives of young children, producing the following results:

Early literacy programs at The Learning Experience have more than 95 percent of its preschoolers entering Kindergarten already reading.

Sign language programs for infants and toddlers that have proven to increase a child's IQ 10 to 12 points higher than a child who didn't learn to sign at an early age.

Social programs at The Learning Experience that cover topics such as manners and etiquette (Manners Matter) allow students to practice positive decision making and build self-confidence.

A proprietary philanthropy-focused curriculum at The Learning Experience teaches the core tenets of selflessness, generosity and giving at a young age and encourages children to apply such values in the classroom, at home and in the community. The Learning Experience's unique philanthropy curriculum is believed to be the only nationwide curriculum of its kind.

For more information about TLE centers and programs, please visit www.thelearningexperience.com.

Updates

Continued from 8

or a CalAtlantic Homes sign you know you are working with an industry leader with nearly 100 years of home-building experience.

New Nocatee Additions

The planning process for new St. Johns County schools is now underway. Recently, the St. Johns County School Board confirmed plans for three new schools in northern part of the County, including a K-8 school in the Nocatee community [to open for 2017-18 school year]. The school site in Nocatee has not been finalized, but is expected to be identified early 2016. The County's schedule of a Spring 2016 construction start date was also announced.

School zoning is reviewed every fall, before the school year begins, and many Nocatee students are expected to attend the new school. This school is the second K-8 school to join the

community in recent years. Valley Ridge Academy opened its doors for the 2014-15 school year. To learn more about the schools current residents attend, stop by the Nocatee Welcome Center or call 1-800-NOCATEE.

Meet Kerry Hinote, Welcome Center Representative

Kerry has lived in Jacksonville for 20 years and considers the First Coast home. She attended Florida State University and graduated with a degree in Business. For the past three years, Kerry has been volunteering with middle and high school students, and it is something she is very passionate about. In her spare time, Kerry loves to explore all that North Florida and Nocatee have to offer, dive into a good book, and cheer on the Noles! Stop by the Welcome Center and welcome Kerry to the Nocatee Team.



KERRY HINOTE
WELCOME CENTER
REPRESENTATIVE

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SHORT TAKES

Yonder Mountain String Band and Guests Trout Steak Revival to perform at the PV Concert Hall

The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, in partnership with Jax Live, present Colorado-based bluegrass ensemble Yonder Mountain String Band with special guests Trout Steak Revival on Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2016.

Tickets for the standing room only

show are on sale now. Tickets are \$27 in advance; \$32 day of show. Doors open at 7 p.m.; show starts at 8 p.m.

Tickets are available for purchase at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall and St. Augustine Amphitheatre Box Offices, ticketmaster.com, all Ticketmaster outlets and by phone at (800) 745-3000.

For more information, visit www.pvconcerthall.com.



Photo by Ed Johnson

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Holiday time at the Ponte Vedra Wellness Center

The Ponte Vedra Wellness Center hosted a holiday party and toy drive benefitting BEAM on Dec. 17. Pictured from left to right are Ashton White, Ellice Mae Sanchez, Dr. Erika Hamer, Dr. Lauren Preis and Michael Rogers. The Ponte Vedra Wellness Center is located at 100 Corridor Rd. S., Suite 220 in Ponte Vedra Beach. Visit www.pontevedrawellnesscenter.com for more.



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Sweet treats, historic beats

Annual tour in Amelia Island showcases signature cookies, inns and holiday décor

Carrie Resch

The Recorder

The Amelia Island Bed and Breakfast Association Annual Cookie Tour was hosted on Sat., Dec. 12 from noon-5 p.m.

The self-guided tour featured six inns located within a six-block area in the downtown historic district.

Attendees could visit the inns in any order they wish. Each inn featured a signature cookie for attendees to sample, as well as the cookie recipe card as a keepsake.

The association chooses a local charity to donate a portion of the proceeds to each year.

This year, the chosen charity is the Friends of the Fernandina Beach Public Library.

The cookie tour coincided this year with the inaugural "Dickens on Centre" festival. The 10-day festival took place Dec. 4-13.

Historic downtown Fernandina Beach, which earlier this year was designated a Florida Main Street community, was transformed into a Victorian-era Christmas scene, complete with street vendors, carolers, stage performers, a window



Photos by Susan Griffin

HOYT HOUSE

TOUR continues on Page 13

IN REMEMBRANCE

Robert A. Cucuel, Sr

Robert A. Cucuel, Sr a loving caring Husband, Father, Brother, and Grandfather; who had recently lived in State College, Pa. and Ponte Vedra, Fla.; died at Paoli Memorial Hospital, this past Saturday morning. Predeceased by his loving wife Mary F. Cucuel, he was the son of Arthur Cucuel and Ethel Ward Cucuel, of Greenwich, Connecticut.

Robert is survived by his two children Robert A. Cucuel, Jr. of Haverford, PA and Kathy Cucuel Lautensack of Berwyn, PA and his younger brothers Kenneth Cucuel, of Hanover, NH and Gary Cucuel, Williamsburg, VA. He was born in Greenwich, Connecticut and lived there until graduating from Greenwich High School, in 1948. He then travelled to Germany, serving his country in the Army. He played Basketball all throughout Europe, for the Army.

His basketball talents were recognized and he was recruited by one of his superiors to attend Loyola University, in Baltimore Maryland. He Captained Loyola Basketball 1954-55 team which finished second in their conference. He was instrumental in helping to establishing the legacy of the Loyola basketball program, that continues on today.

He earned his MBA from New York University and worked diligently for nearly 25 years in the brass and copper industry, for Olin Corporation. Robert

and his family lived in Greenwich, Conn., Frontenac, Mo., Lake Forest Ill., and Fairfield, Conn. He then later moved to State College, PA in 1980, where he eventually retired. In retirement he enjoyed playing Golf, watching Penn State sports, and was an active volunteer for the special Olympics. He was a devout Catholic and volunteered time at the Campus Ministry at Penn State. In more recent years, he enjoyed his winters in Ponte Vedra, Florida and continued to play golf and enjoy spending time with his late wife and friends on the beach. After the untimely death of his beloved wife, Robert in the last year spent more time with his son, daughter and his three grandchildren, Robert A. Cucuel III, Michel V. Lautensack, and Bridget A. Lautensack.

A Memorial Mass was celebrated Friday December 18, 2015 in St. Mary's Church, Greenwich, CT

In Lieu of Flowers the Family would ask for donations to the Catholic Campus Ministry Serving Penn State University and Community. Send to: Catholic Campus Ministry, 117 E. Park Ave., State College, Pa. 16803 (checks payable to; Faith Center Building Fund) (814) 865-4281.

Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas



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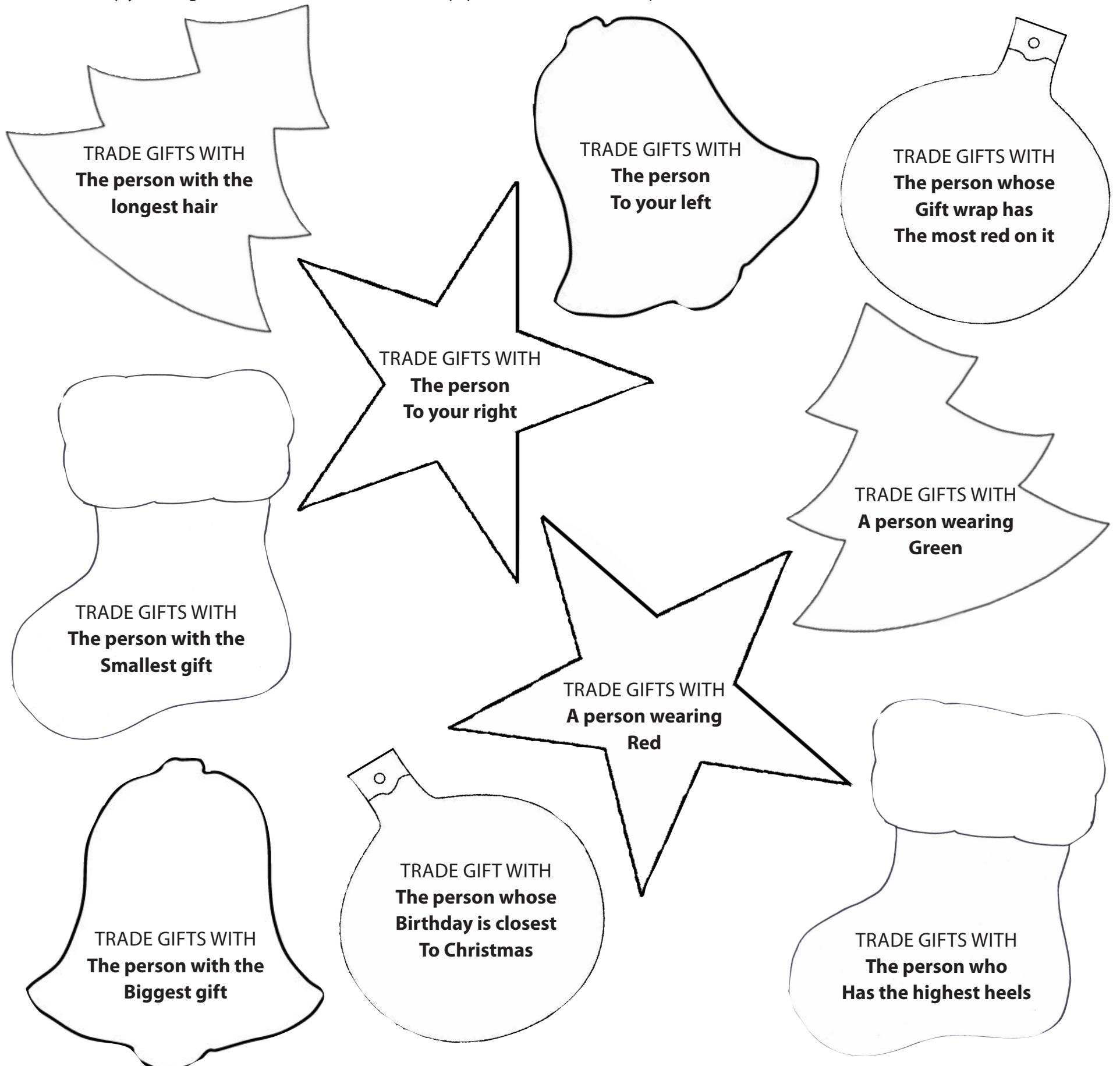
If you are having a gift exchange for work, a church group or family, here's a new way to exchange gifts. The Recorder staff used this method this year at our annual Christmas party White Elephant gift exchange, and it was a huge hit!

Instead of simply drawing numbers for who

goes first, second, etc., cut out these tags, fold them in half, and place them in a container. Everyone starts with the wrapped gift they brought for the gift exchange and sets the gift in front of them.

Choose one person to go first, and have them draw one paper from the bucket. That person will

read the card aloud and proceed with the prompt. Then the next person will draw a card and do the same. Continue around in a circle until everyone has taken a turn. We hope you have as much fun as we did, and we wish you a very happy holiday!





BLUE HERON INN

Photos by Susan Griffin



FAIRBANKS HOUSE

Tour

Continued from 11

decorating contest, visits from Saint Nick and readings of "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

For more information about Dickens on Centre, visit www.ameliaisland.com/things-to-do/Festivals/Amelia-Island-Dickens-On-Centre. For more about the Amelia Island Bed and Breakfast Association, visit www.ameliaislandinns.com.

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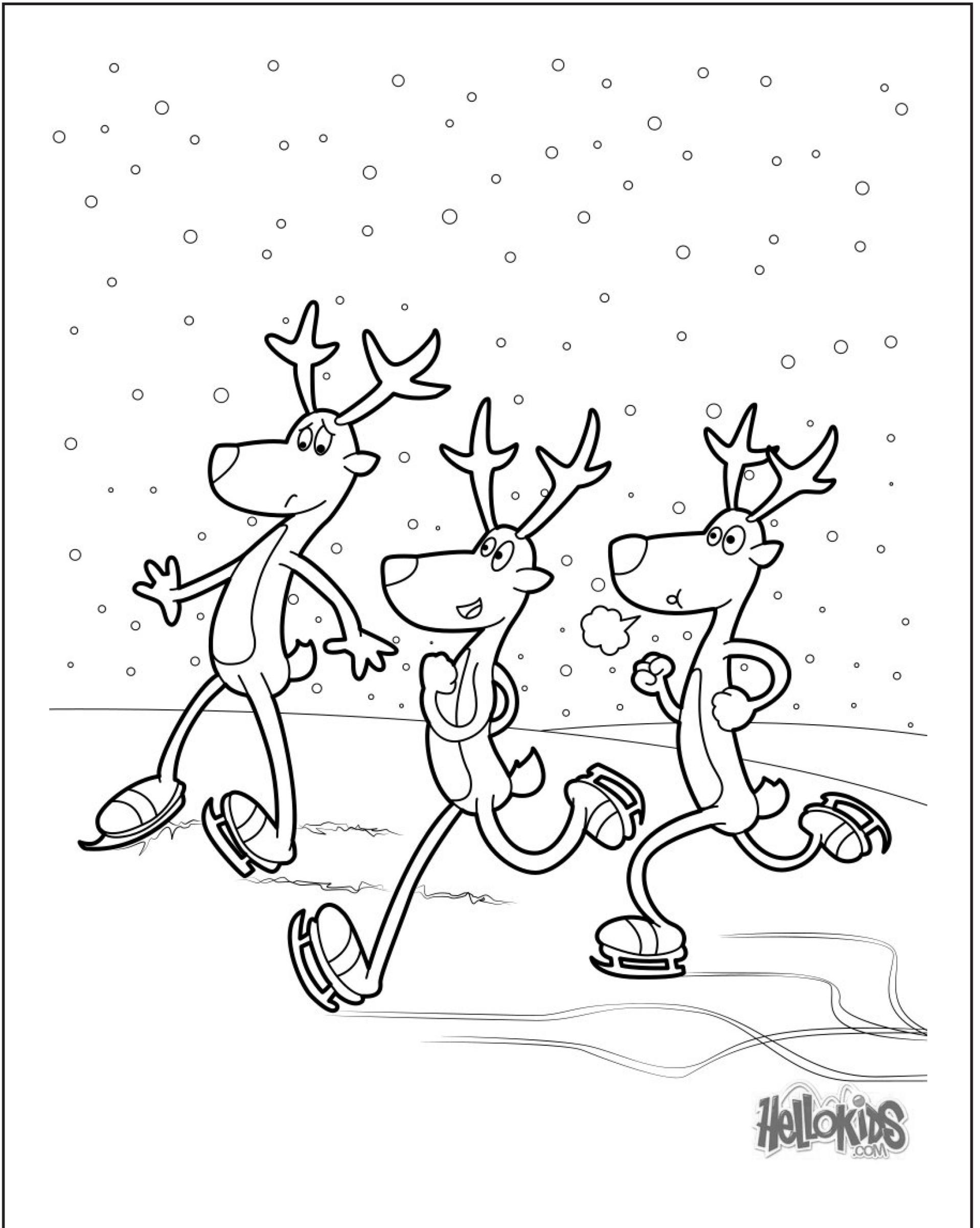
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K9s For Warriors receives donation from Advanced Disposal

Carrie Resch
The Recorder

During the season of giving, Advanced Disposal, supporters of K9s For Warriors, presented a check for \$12,500 to the organization on Thursday, Dec. 17.

“Advanced Disposal is a company committed to clean communities and being a strong corporate citizen. Even though we are in the business of picking up, we are proud to be able to give back to such a worthy and inspiring organization, such as K9s for Warriors,” Advanced Disposal CEO Richard Burke said in a news release. “Many of our team members are also veterans and we recognize and believe in the impressive work they are doing with veterans and their canine companions.”

Both K9s For Warriors, an organization that pairs service dogs with military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual assault, and Advanced Disposal, a solid waste company that provided integrated, non-hazardous solid waste and disposal services to residential, commercial, industrial and construction customers across 18 states and the Bahamas, are headquartered in Ponte Vedra.

In addition to Advanced Disposal’s financial support of K9s For Warriors, the company also sponsors the shirts given to all graduates of the K9s For Warriors programs, and employees have donated in excess of 100 hours of time as volunteers in support of K9s For Warriors’ mission. The company also sponsored one of the Christmas trees for the K9s For Warriors Christ-



mas tree decorating party that took place Monday, Dec. 14 at the K9s For Warriors facility, dubbed Camp K9. Over a dozen trees were decorated by local businesses and organizations as a fundraiser for K9s For Warriors. Tree sponsorships were \$5,000 per tree. Participants in the tree decorating event competed for first place and the right to name a future service dog.

“A staggering number of veterans returning from combat suffer from PTSD – the invisible wounds of war,” K9s For Warriors Founder and President Shari Duval said in a news release. “To date, we’ve been able to help over 200 military heroes by pairing them with a service dog that has been trained for their specific needs. We are so grateful for the generous support from Advanced Disposal;

this sponsorship helps our organization provide comfortable polo training shirts for our warriors and further

empower these veterans to return to civilian life with dignity and independence.”

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More from the 2015 Christ Church Nutcracker performance

This year marked the 20th annual performance of the Christ Episcopal Church Nutcracker ballet. The Nutcracker, featuring a cast of over 300 performers ranging in age from two and a half to 90-year-olds, was performed Saturday, Dec. 12 at the Lazzara Performance Hall at the University of North Florida. Each year, the production, which also includes fundraising events leading up to The Nutcracker performance, benefits children in need – some with life-threatening conditions. Beneficiaries include Dreams Come True, Community PedsCare and the Amistad Orphanage in Bolivia, among others.



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Photos by Susan Griffin

Celebrating the season at Nocatee Farmer's Market



On Dec. 19, Nocatee hosted its annual Farmer's Market Christmas Festival at the Town Center. The day included visits with Santa, live bluegrass band Big Cypress, petting zoo fun, free facepainting by Chet's Creek Church, a bounce house and local shopping from more than 80 local vendors for last-minute Christmas gifts.

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OLATE DOGS WINNERS OF AMERICA'S GOT TALENT JANUARY 11	MOON TAXI FEBRUARY 2	CHARLES BRADLEY & HIS EXTRAORDINAIRES FEBRUARY 24	FLORIDA CHAMBER MUSIC PROJECT PRESENTS BEETHOVEN & MENDELSSOHN APRIL 10
TROMBONE SHORTY & ORLEANS AVENUE with NEW BREED BRASS BAND JANUARY 15	UNDER THE STREETLAMP FEBRUARY 5 & 6	RICHARD MARX FEBRUARY 27	AMY HELM APRIL 12
THE COLLEEN & JOSH SHOW JANUARY 21	YONDER MOUNTAIN STRING BAND with TROUT STEAK REVIVAL FEBRUARY 9	THE ZOMBIES FEAT. COLIN BLUNSTONE & ROD ARGENT MARCH 3	RYTA WILSON APRIL 15
FLORIDA CHAMBER MUSIC PROJECT PRESENTS DAVID BRUCE & MOZART JANUARY 24	ROBERT RANDOLPH & THE FAMILY BAND with PARKER URBAN BAND FEBRUARY 11	ROGER MCGUINN MARCH 4	ONE NIGHT OF QUEEN APRIL 19
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Thursday, Dec. 24	Friday, Dec. 25	Saturday, Dec. 26	Sunday, Dec. 27
<p>Palms Presbyterian Services Palms Presbyterian Church, 3410 S. Third St., Jacksonville Beach, is holding several Christmas Eve Services. Services are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 p.m. - service for children & families • 7 p.m. & 9 p.m. - candlelight service with choir and JSO strings • 11 p.m. - a community candlelight services with harp and JSO strings <p>Nursery will be provided at the 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. services. For more information, call (904) 246-6427 or visit www.palmschurch.org.</p> <p>Christmas Eve Service An Inter-Demoninational Christmas Eve service with seasonal music and worship will take place Thursday, Dec. 24 from 5-6 p.m. at the Sawgrass Marriott. The service is presented by The Chapel at Sawgrass.</p> <p>Christ Church Christmas Eve Services Christ Church is holding several Christmas Eve services at their Ponte Vedra Beach location, San Pablo location, Serenata Beach Club and Vicar's Landing. The schedule is as follows: Christ Church at 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 p.m. - traditional service • 4 p.m. - contemporary service • 6 p.m. - children's service & pageant • 8 p.m. - traditional service • 10 p.m. - Festival Christmas Eve service <p>Christ Church San Pablo, 2002 San Pablo Road, Jacksonville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 p.m. - Family Christmas Eve with pageant <p>Vicar's Landing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 p.m. - Vicar's Chapel <p>Serenata Beach Club:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 p.m. - Christmas on the Deck <p>For more information, call (904) 285-6127 or visit www.christepiscopalchurch.org.</p> <p>'Christmas Carole' at The Alhambra Beginning Tuesday, Nov. 24, Bruce Allen Scudder's "Christmas Carole" will be performed at Alhambra Theatre & Dining. The play will be performed through Dec. 24. The theatre is located at 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (904) 641-1212 or visit www.alhambrajax.com.</p>		<p>Fourth Saturday Family Seining Event Join GTM Research Reserve guides on the fourth Saturday of every month (Dec. 26) from 8:30-10:30 a.m. for a family seining activity. Visitors pull a seine net through Guana Lake, collecting species of fish, crabs and more, and then learn about the animals and their roles in the habitat. All necessary gear, including waders and boots, will be provided. There is a \$3 per vehicle parking fee. The event is free. Please meet the guides at Guana Dam Recreational Area. They will be located at either the north or south boat launch, depending on the tide. For more information, call 904-823-4500. Space is limited, so please reserve a spot online at https://gtmresearchreserveexplorations.eventbrite.com. If the space is completely filled, you are encouraged to sign up for the waiting list.</p> <p>ZOOLights Thousands of LED lights will be on display at the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens for ZOOLights, Dec. 11-13 and Dec.18-Jan. 2 (closed on Christmas Day). The zoo closes at 5 p.m. and reopens for ZOOLights 6-9:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 6-10 p.m. Friday-Sunday. The cost is \$10 for non-members; \$8 for members. Other activities such as warm weather "ice" skating, train rides, s'mores kits and the 4-D Theater ride featuring "The Polar Express," are offered for an additional fee. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.jacksonvillezoo.org.</p> <p>'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever' "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" will be performed on stage at the Limelight Theatre Dec. 11 through Jan. 3, 2016 with a special preview night Thursday, Dec. 10. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. There will be no performances Dec. 24-25. Limelight Theatre is located at 11 Old Mission Ave., St. Augustine. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (904) 825-1164 or visit www.limelight-theatre.org.</p>	<p>Butch Trucks & The Freight Train Band Butch Trucks and The Freight Train Band with guests Bonnie Blue will perform Sunday, Dec. 27 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, 1050 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach. Tickets are \$49.50 for the first eight rows; \$39.50 for all remaining rows. VIP tickets which includes the best seats and a VIP meet and greet are \$124.50. Doors open at 7 p.m.; show starts at 8 p.m. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall or St. Augustine Amphitheatre box offices or visit www.pvconcerthall.com.</p> <p>Collection Tour Join the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens us on Sundays for a guided tour of our permanent collection. The tour is free with the cost of admission. The museum is located at 829 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville.</p> <p>Practice with Purpose at Big Fish Yoga Practice with Purpose is an all-level yoga class offered on Sundays from 4-5 p.m. at Big Fish Power Yoga. The fee for the class is a \$5 cash donation that goes to the charity that Big Fish Power Yoga has selected for the quarter. Big Fish Yoga has relocated to the South Beach Regional Shopping Center in Jacksonville Beach at 3852 South 3rd St. For more info. call (904) 372-0601.</p> <p>Depression Support Group A Depression/Bipolar Support Group meets Sundays from 6-8 p.m. in the Azalea Room at Baptist Beaches Medical Center, South, 14550 Old St. Augustine Rd., Jacksonville. The support group is free and open to the public. For more information, call (770) 403-4991 or email whitneybat76@gmail.com. The group is facilitated by: Georgia State Certified Peer Specialist.</p> <p>Annual Activity Member Become an Annual Activity Member at The Players Community Senior Center! There are so many reasons to become a member: discounts on fee-based classes, designated events and Coastal Travel, complimentary participation in a wide variety of scheduled activities, to name a few! Please call Darlene Mahany at 280-3233 for all the details.</p>

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Monday, Dec. 28	Tuesday, Dec. 29	Wednesday, Dec. 30	Thursday, Dec. 31
<p>Operation Kidsafe Safety Event In conjunction with Operation Kidsafe Safety Events happening all across the U.S. and Canada, O'STEEN Volkswagen will host an Operation Kidsafe Free Child Safety Event at their location on 1401 Phillips Highway in Jacksonville from Monday, Dec. 28 through Saturday, Jan. 2. Children can get fingerprinted and photographed for free and will go home with a safety bio document with their information on it for parents to hand to law enforcement in an emergency. Safety tips to start a family safety action plan are also included. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. For more information, call (904) 322-5100 or visit www.osteenvw.com/Operation-Kidsafe.</p> <p>Small Objects Holiday Art Sale The annual Small Object Holiday Art Sale takes place from Dec. 4-28 at the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, 50 Executive Way, Ponte Vedra Beach. Over 30 local artists will be displaying and selling their small hand-crafted art including handcrafted jewelry, glass work, paintings, pottery and more. All items are priced between \$25-\$350. For more information, call (904) 280-0614 or visit www.ccpvb.org.</p> <p>Caregiver Support Group The Players Caregiver Support Group meets every Monday 12:00-1:00 p.m. at The Players Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach. Kimberly Weir of Heartland Hospice facilitates a weekly discussion of current concerns and issues of caregivers. It is a great opportunity for caregivers to share resources and ideas. For more information, call (904) 280-3233.</p> <p>Life Enrichment Group The Life Enrichment Group is a program designed for those with memory changes who like to stay active mentally, physically and socially while allowing caregivers and loved ones some free time for themselves. This program is offered weekdays from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Ashford Court, 1700 The Greens Way in Jacksonville Beach. For more information, call (904) 568-8174, or email life_enrichmentgroup@yahoo.com.</p>	<p>Sunset Rotary Club weekly meeting The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach Sunset meets Tuesdays from 6-7:15 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn. Community leaders are welcome to attend. For more information, call Club President Ron Mott at (904) 460-7092 or email HOJRON@aol.com.</p> <p>Palm Valley Farmers Market The Palm Valley Farmers Market takes place every Tuesday from 1:30-5:30 p.m. at the Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>SPLASH at PVPC Tuesday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m. the Singles Ministry SPLASH (Single People Loving and Serving Him) gather at Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church, 4510 Palm Valley Road, Ponte Vedra. All single adults in the community welcome for fellowship, discussions on applying the Bible in our everyday lives along with a light dinner provided by KC's Kitchen. Mission and social opportunities as well. For more information, email julie@pvpc.com or call (904) 285-8225.</p> <p>Habitat for Humanity volunteers Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County is currently seeking qualified homeowners. Habitat does not give away homes for free. Instead, homeowners pay an affordable monthly mortgage payment and we help build them a simple, decent place to live. If you know someone who might benefit from Habitat homeownership, please refer them to our website. To find out more about how you can donate, volunteer, or qualify visit habitatstjohns.org.</p> <p>For The Love of Driving Volunteer drivers are needed to assist seniors in achieving their mobility goals in St. Johns County. Transportation needs range from trips to the grocery store and classes to spousal hospital visits or social activities. If you are interested, please contact the Mobility Manager at the Council on Aging, 904-315-6505, or email Katie.Arnold@stjohnscoa.com.</p>	<p>Donna the Buffalo The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall welcomes Donna the Buffalo Wednesday, Dec. 30. General admission tickets for the standing room only show are \$22. Doors open at 7 p.m.; show starts at 8 p.m. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is located at 1050 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall or St. Augustine Amphitheatre box offices or visit www.pvconcerthall.com.</p> <p>PV Professionals Networking Group The Ponte Vedra Professionals Networking Group meets every Wednesday from noon-1 p.m. at Mulligans, 43 PGA Tour Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, call Gloria at (904) 635-6103, visit www.pvpng.com, or email pontevedrapng@gmail.com.</p> <p>Ponte Vedra Toastmasters The Ponte Vedra Toastmasters Club offers opportunities for developing your leadership and communication skills. Join us on Wednesdays at The PLAYERS Community Center at 175 Landrum Lane. The meeting starts promptly at 7:30 a.m. and lasts one hour. Want to know more? Contact Lucy Reep at 904-607-3695 or contact-5199@toastmastersclubs.org</p> <p>Christina Hope exhibition Artwork from Christina Hope is currently on display at the J. Johnson Gallery, 177 Fourth Ave. N., Jacksonville Beach. The exhibition will run through Jan. 21, 2016. For more information, call (904) 435-3200.</p> <p>Travel Training Program The Council on Aging announces a Travel Training program designed to assist seniors in learning to ride the Sunshine Bus. If you are curious about expanding your transportation options or you would like to increase your confidence as a bus rider, let one of our trained volunteers assist you in navigating routes, reading time tables and making transfers. If you are interested, please contact the Mobility Manager at the Council on Aging, (904) 315-6505, or email Katie.Arnold@stjohnscoa.com.</p>	<p>Noon Year's Eve at the Zoo Kids can enjoy a special "Noon Year's Eve" event Thursday, Dec. 31 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens. Festivities include live entertainment, party favors, giveaways, prizes, a live performance by Dalton Cyr and special kid-friendly activities including face painting and caricatures. An apple juice toast will take place at the strike of noon. The party will take place on The Great Lawn; the party is free with zoo admission. For more information, visit www.jacksonvillezoo.org.</p> <p>Beach Blast Off 2016 Ring in the New Year at the St. Augustine Beach Pier Thursday, Dec. 31 from 5-10 p.m. The annual fireworks display set to music will begin at 8:30 p.m. The free event also includes a kid zone area with face painting, a mechanical bull, rock climbing wall, balloon twisting, and more. There will also be food vendors on site, beer and wine for sale and a photo booth. For more information, visit www.sabevents.com.</p> <p>New Year's Eve at The Landing The Jacksonville Landing is hosting a New Year's Eve Celebration Thursday, Dec. 31 from 4 p.m.-2 a.m. with live music all night long and a fireworks display at midnight. Admittance is for ages 21 and up, those with a military ID or a TaxSlayer Bowl patch only. The Jacksonville Landing is located at 2 Independent Drive, Jacksonville. For more information, call (904) 353-1188 or visit www.jacksonvillelanding.com.</p> <p>Arbor Terrace Life Enrichment Group The Life Enrichment Group Day Program takes place every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m.-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) 497-4346 or visit www.at-pontevedra.com.</p> <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 carrie@opcfla.com, post online at www.pontevedrarecorder.com using the automated form, or call (904) 686-3939.</p>

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For complete information on our dining and social events, visit our website at <http://www.tpc.com/sawgrass-dining>.
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Jax Symphony plans toast to 2016

The Jacksonville Symphony will celebrate New Year's Eve with conductor Nathan Aspinall, soprano Barbara Shirvis and tenor Eric Barry with a selection of opera arias on Thursday, Dec. 31 at 8 p.m. *Andiamo Brindisi*, which in Italian means 'let's toast' is also a line from the opera *La Traviata*.

Andiamo Brindisi! Is a greatest hits of the opera world program. Favorites such as *O Mio babbino caro* from Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Puccini's *La Boheme* highlight the first half of the program. After intermission the program turns to Rich-

ard Strauss' *Rosenkavalier Suite*, Johannes Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No. 5* and Johann Strauss *Radetzky March*.

Symphony Assistant Conductor Nathan Aspinall will be leading the orchestra. Joining him will be soprano Barbara Shirvis who has appeared several times with the Jacksonville Symphony singing *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Brahms' *Requiem*. She began her career at the New York City Opera.

Tenor Eric Barry has sung for companies including Amarillo Opera, Opera Memphis, Pittsburgh Opera and Wolf Trap Opera.

He has a Master of Music degree and Artist Diploma from the School of Music at Yale University.

After the performance, there will be an After-Party with entertainment in the Uible Gallery provided by the Marc Dickman Jazz Quintet. Guests will be able to see the Jacksonville New Year's Eve Fireworks over the river at midnight. Each guest receives two glasses of champagne for the Midnight Toast. There will also be a cash bar open all evening.

The \$125 VIP Package includes reserved

concert seating, valet parking and reserved seating at the After-Party. The \$75 Reserved Package includes reserved concert seating and general admission to the After-Party. There is also a \$45 General Admission Concert Seating only with no admission to the After-Party.

For more information visit jaxsymphony.org. Tickets may be purchased at jaxsymphony.org, by calling the box office at 904-354-5547 or visiting the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts ticket office which is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Dear loyal readers,

We work very hard throughout the year to keep you informed with the latest news that matters most to you. Local information is of significant importance because it concerns the various subjects that affect you as well as the projects of the people we have elected, our school commissions, the local economy and the businesses in our area.

As your local newspaper, it is our mission to inform you and we are very proud to be the local resource for news and information in this community. We sincerely thank you for making our newspaper what it is today. Your loyalty means the world to us.



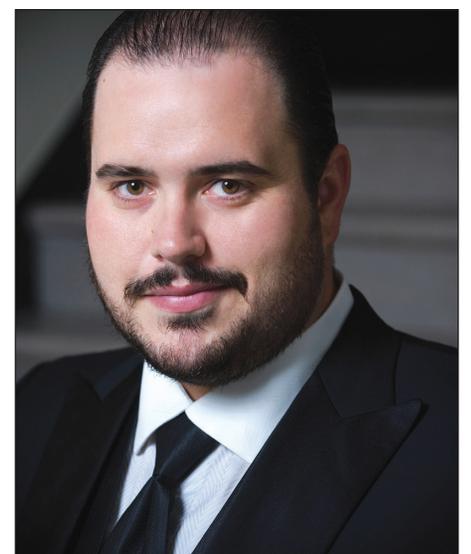
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Not your average newspaper, not your average reader.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year filled with joy and happiness.

THE PONTE VEDRA RECORDER STAFF
 Susan, Rob, Kelly, Ed
 April, Kristin, & Carrie



NATHAN ASPINALL



ERIC BARRY



BARBARA SHIRVIS

Seasons Greetings



Carol Burns, Denise McPherson, Lauren Spiller, Sandy Evans and I thank you for your support and loyalty. We wish you Peace, Happiness and Good Health!



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The Lisa Barton Team would like to wish you and yours a peaceful holiday season. We'd also like to thank you for your support during 2015. Your referrals helped us close almost \$20 million dollars in real estate this year! We're looking forward to working with you in 2016.

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Photos by David O'Brien

Rotary Club of PVB celebrates holidays

Kelly H. McDermott
The Recorder

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach celebrated the Christmas season and the spirit of fellowship with its annual holiday meeting on Dec. 17. Each year, Rotarians in the club are invited to bring their loved ones for a morning of entertainment and a special visit from Santa.

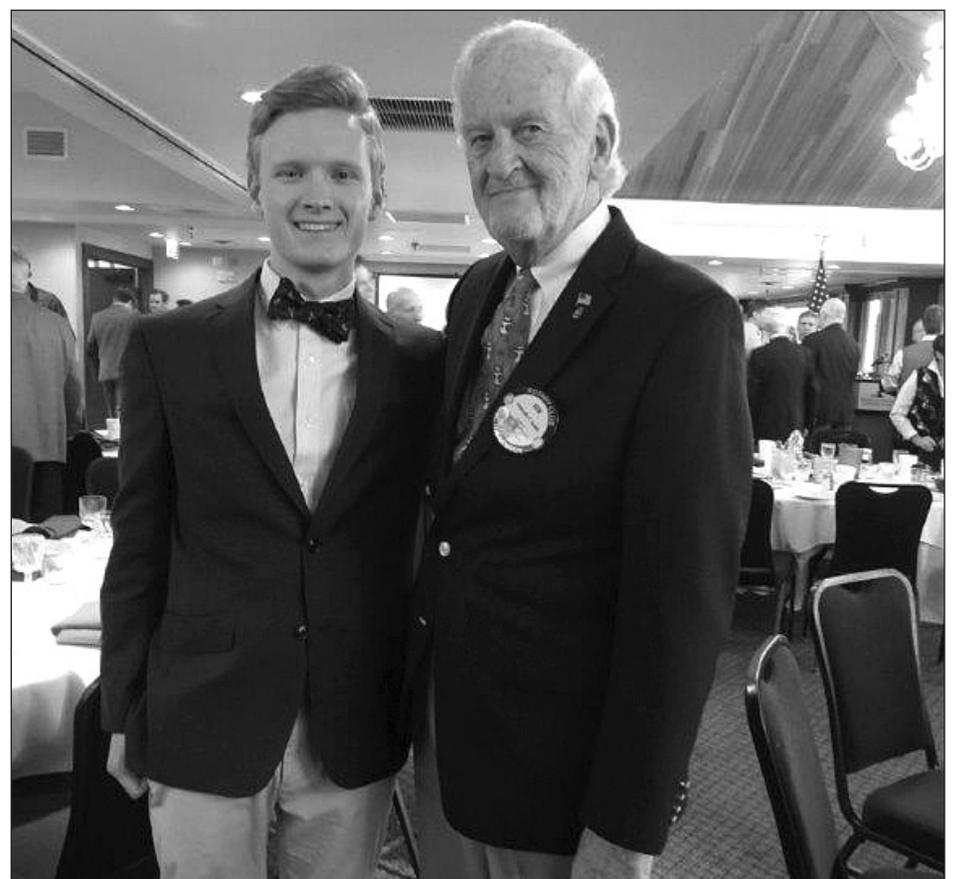
The program was announced by Kevin Flanigan, and featured a special thank-you to the Marsh Landing Country Club dining staff, who serve

breakfast to the club every Thursday morning.

Top photos: Rotarians and their families were entertained by a group of carolers from the Palmer Academy of Ponte Vedra Beach.

Middle Right: Former Ponte Vedra Recorder sports reporter Turner Street joined his grandfather, Ken Smith, for the meeting.

Bottom: From left to right, pictured are Bruce Barber, club president Will Montoya, Michael Bruce and Shelley Morgan.



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Bolles Ponte Vedra Beach Campus singers jingle

Jan Olson
Community submission

It was a holiday wonderland on the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus on Friday morning as students in all grades took their singing and jingling to the Ponte Vedra Hall stage for two holiday concerts. Led by music teacher Stacey Posick, students performed songs from many cultures and let their holiday spirit shine. The two concerts were the final Bolles Fine and Performing Arts shows for 2015, concluding several weeks of music, chorus, band and visual arts events during the month of December on all four Bolles campuses.

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Ease holiday travel stress

An estimated 94.8 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home for the holidays, according to AAA.

To help ensure holiday cheer, the travel experts at Extended Stay America have partnered with the ultimate holiday traveler, Santa Claus. Who better than the “Official Hotel of Santa” to offer some great holiday traveler tips?

Picture Perfect Packing

Not everyone has the luxury of a reindeer powered sleigh and a magical satchel to effortlessly transport gifts. Here are some foolproof packing tips.

- Make a list and check it twice.

Separate your essentials from your desirables, and be realistic with luggage limitations.

- For travelers that belong to a frequent flyer program, take advantage of perks like free first checked bags or discounted early boarding rates. Use program discounts to transport multiple gifts at a flat rate or to ensure that more expensive items that you'd prefer to carry on have ample space in the airplane's overhead bin.

- Save gift-wrapping for once you've reached your destination to avoid extra TSA scrutiny.

'Home' for the Holidays

Avoid overstaying your welcome at relatives by lodging at a home-like space of your own. An extended-stay style hotel with affordable nightly rates means family fun instead of family feud. Unwind in a spacious guest room and enjoy upgraded amenities, including free in-room Wi-Fi to stay connected to those far away and flat-screen televisions with premium channels to watch holiday favorites.

On-site laundry centers allow for light packing on long trips and fully-equipped kitchens with full-size refrigerators provide the option to dine in or reheat leftovers.

Bring us a Figgy Pudding

Don't let being away from home limit you to store-bought dishes for holiday potlucks. If you're staying at an extended-stay style hotel, take advantage of an in-room kitchen to whip up a savory course or no-bake sweet treats, like drop cookies, fudges and cereal bars.

Seasonal Savings

Santa enlists the support of helpers to ensure his big travel day is stress-free. Holiday travelers should



do the same. Consider the help of rewards programs to relieve budget stress.

Many point-based loyalty programs require significant time and investment before you see any benefit. For valuable savings, enroll in one offering instant rewards, coupons and discounts at national retailers, rental car companies, restaurants and more.

Avoid Cabin Fever

Budget-friendly activities keep holiday spirits high. Enjoy winter festivals, ice skating, caroling, a friendly game of your favorite sport, or a car ride through the area's most festive neighborhoods.

'Tis the Season for Giving

Spread a little charitable cheer to those less fortunate. This time of year lends itself to many service opportunities, so identify an organization or give back on your own with a special project. Simple gestures to spread goodwill include anonymous gifts, over-tipping for services or packing stockings for the homeless.

More holiday travel tips and information can be found at ExtendedStay-America.com.

Don't let holiday travel be a source of stress. With smart strategies, an affordable and joyous holiday travel experience is possible.

— StatePoint

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SHORT TAKES

Jason Isbell to perform at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Award-winning Americana singer-songwriter Jason Isbell and special guests Shovels & Rope will perform at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre on Saturday, March 5, 2016. This concert date is Jason Isbell with Shovels & Rope's only Florida date. Tickets for Jason Isbell with special guests Shovels

& Rope are on sale now.

Tickets range in price from \$29.50-\$49.50. Doors open at 6 p.m.; show starts at 7 p.m.

Tickets are available at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre and Ponte Vedra Concert Hall box office, as well as online at www.ticketmaster.com, at all Ticketmaster outlets or by phone at (800) 745-3000. For more information, visit www.staugamphitheatre.com.

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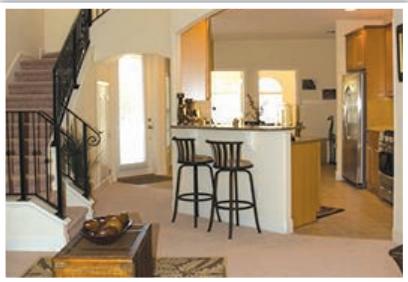
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7 SECRETS *for a successful* New Year's Eve party



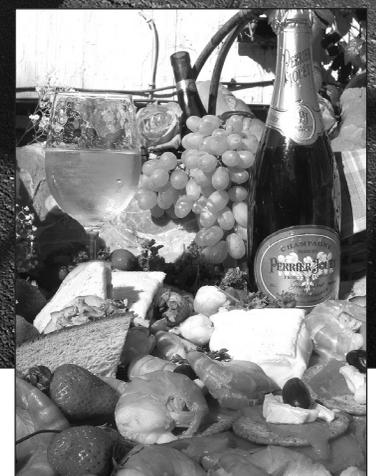
Anne Urban | Centerstage Entertainment & Event Rentals

Many party throwers believe a memorable New Year's Eve event is to invite a million of your closest friends. Perhaps that's what happens in New York City while watching the ball drop in Times Square and then heading to a sophisticated lounge or elite nightclub for the Over 21 crowd.

Partying in Miami takes on a unique luster that oozes tropical lavishness ~ with a sleek, pulse-pounding extravaganza in a mega-club or private

residence. And it's always about the glitz ~ the Miami-Swank way.

Somewhere between these two partying metropolis cities and a Party for Two where you cuddle up with a loved one on the sofa with a bottle of Champagne ~ it's possible to host a New Year's Eve party and usher in the New Year with your own party style. It's all about having fun while attending to your guests too!



At Centerstage, we live by the “7 Secrets of a Successful Party.” New Year’s Eve is a perfect time to adopt a few of the following:

1. The rule of thumb in party planning is to change it up every 30-45 minutes. Why not use lighting? Use LED lights that change colors with the touch of a remote. Change the look of your event within seconds.

2. Invite different types of entertainment to surprise your guests throughout the evening. Strolling performers to greet your guests. Live instrumentalists playing during cocktail hour/dinner then add the rest of the band to kick up the dancing for after dinner play. A living table is a unique way to hand out party favors or glasses of champagne.

3. Vary the seating to allow for different styles of dining — try high cocktail tables, assorted sizes of dinner rounds, even distinctive furniture groupings that create conversation zones away from loud music.

4. If budget allows, provide personalized gifts to guests as they leave OR as part of the party, monogram wine glasses to use throughout the event.

5. For outdoor entertaining, and an alternative to gas heaters, add a stone gas operated firepit with furniture for fun seating without the smoke.

6. Instead of a specialty liquor bar, consider a coffee bar with different flavors and liquors that can be coordinated for a late night twist

7. Sweet shops are the latest craze – with endless popcorn flavors, candy and baked goods that can be customized for a take-away box with a personal message. It’s a great dessert and a gift all in one!





Students promoted at Paks Ponte Vedra

Kelly H. McDermott
The Recorder

Paks Ponte Vedra recently evaluated and promoted a number of students at their Tang Soo Do training academy located in Panther Plaza Shopping Center, across from Nease High School.

Bill DeGrafft, owner and Head Instructor at the school, says that having scheduled promotional exams on a regular schedule helps students with goal setting, self-discipline, and focus.

“Students know when they need to be ready to test and we work

with them on their goal setting, monitoring their progress closely, to ensure they are ready to test on time,” DeGrafft said.

Tests are proctored by Senior Master Mitch Kramer and Senior Master Richard Sixkiller from the United Tang Soo Do Federation and well as by Grand Master Song Ki Pak, the President of the UTF. During testing, Grand Master Pak and Senior Masters offer advice to individual students and help set expectations for future tests. Students performed various forms, techniques, sparring and breaking

assigned to be promoted to their next rank.

At Pak’s Ponte Vedra, the testing cycle is complete when the students are presented their next belt, along with their assignments for the next test, at the Awards Luncheon held at the school.

DeGrafft said he likes the students to know exactly what they will test on and what level of proficiency is required for the next test. He believes that this is the only way for student to feel empowered

PROMOTED continues on **Page 31**

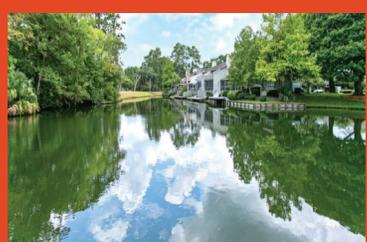


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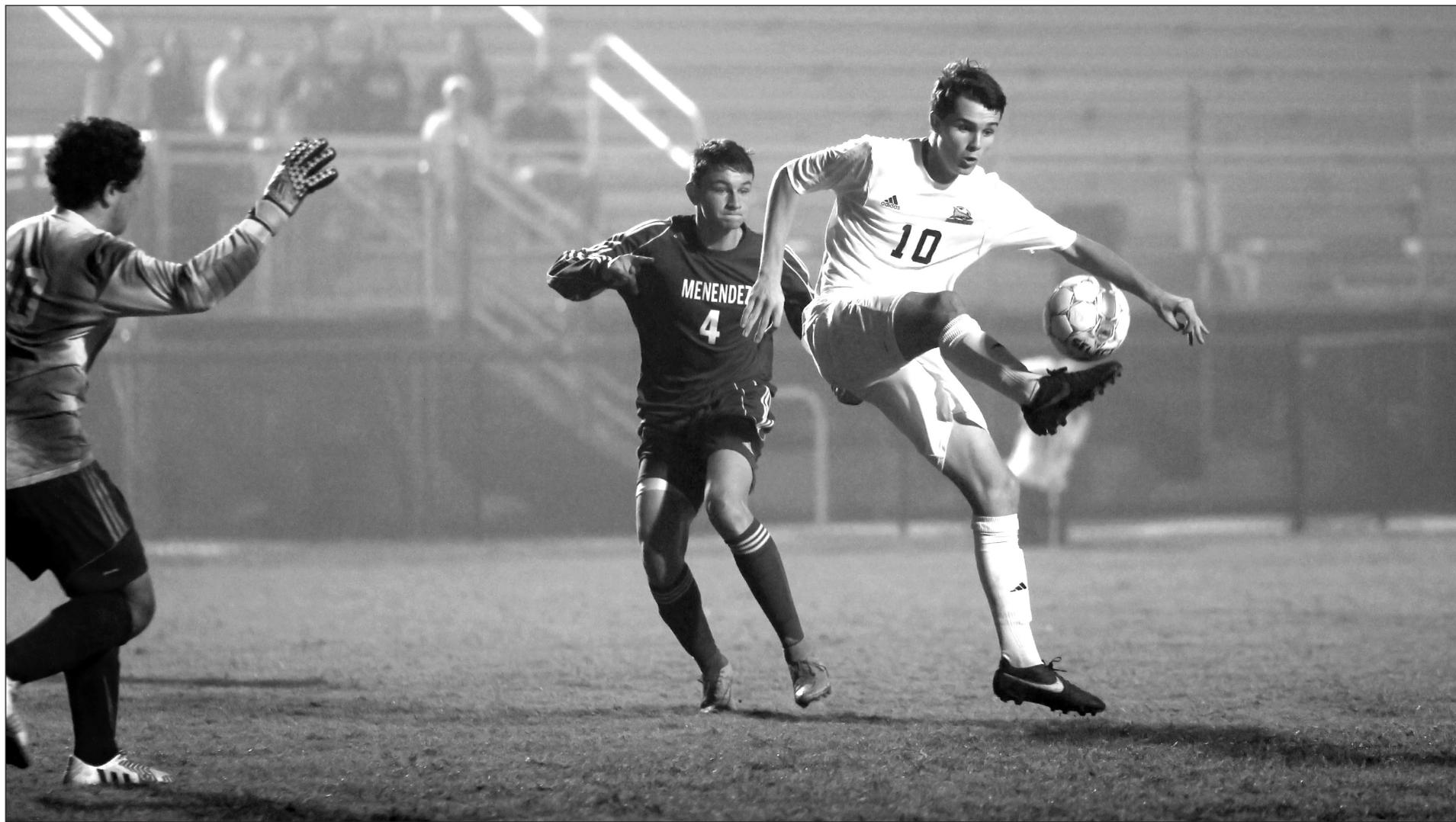


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Johnny Stephens kicks the ball past the Melendez keeper for the Sharks' first goal

After an emotional tribute, Sharks mercy Pedro

Jerry Norton

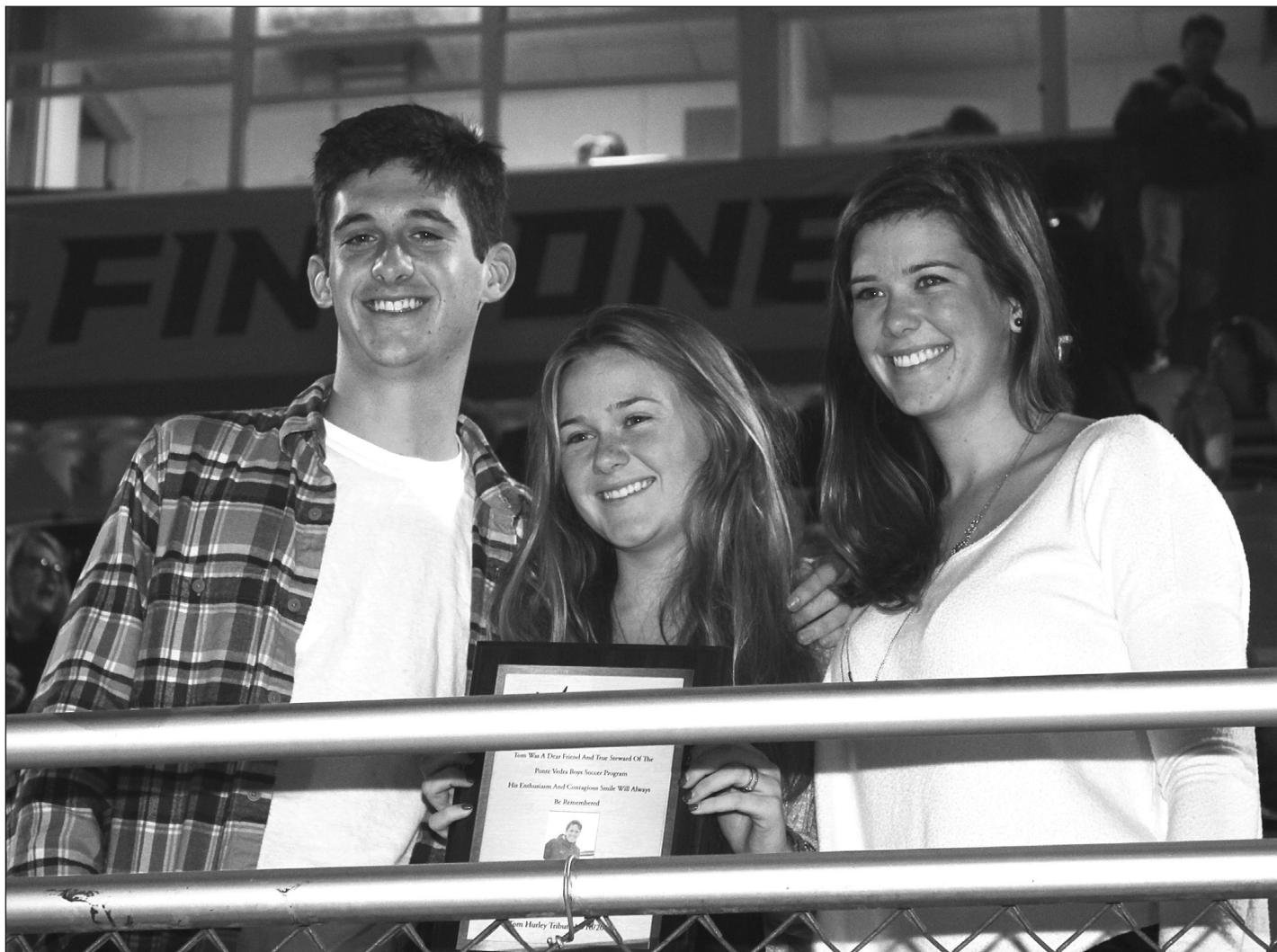
The Recorder

On a Wednesday evening featuring a half-time tribute to former Shark public address announcer and avid soccer dad, Tom Hurley, the Ponte Vedra boys' soccer team responded with an emotionally charged mercy win over Pedro Menendez 8-0.

Hurley, a fixture in the press box at the Shark Tank and a fervent supporter of the boys' soccer team for six years, passed away suddenly on November 23. His son Briggs played four seasons for Ponte Vedra before graduating in 2014. He is now a mid-fielder at Principia College in St. Louis.

During the half-time tribute, Shark seniors Munir Adamo, Matt Fishman and Johnny Stephens presented flowers, a plaque and a signed soccer ball to Tom's wife, Barbara and her three children, Lucy Jane, Briggs and Georgia-Mae who were all in attendance.

The Sharks, heavily favored in the match against Pedro, nearly ended the game before half time building a 7-0 lead in the first 40 minutes. Stephens primed the pump with a goal five minutes in. Two minutes



Photos by Chris and Jerry Norton

BOYS continues on Page 31

Briggs, Lucy Jane and Georgia-Mae Hurley display a plaque they received during a tribute to their dad, Tom, at Wednesday night's soccer game.

Lady Sharks match Clay 1-1



The Sharks' Abby Miller battles for control.

Photos by Chris and Jerry Norton



Callie Delany moves infield against Clay.

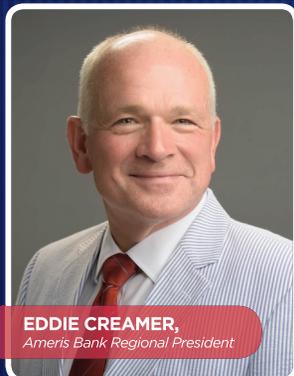


Ponte Vedra's Marissa Reinker is held by the Clay defender. The Sharks played to a 1-1 tie despite out playing Clay by a wide margin. Clay scored the tying goal in the second half on a controversial penalty shot.



Melissa Reinker drives a hard shot on goal for the Sharks.





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PV-based Scheidel Foundation supports Habitat For Humanity

Casey Schachner
Community submission

Habitat for Humanity St. Augustine/St. Johns County received a \$10,000 gift from the Scheidel Foundation this week to aid in the organization's general efforts to build safe and affordable homes for families in St. Johns County. As a 501c3 nonprofit organization, Habitat for Humanity is dependent on its partnerships with donors, including their ongoing partnership with the Scheidel Foundation. The Scheidel Foundation invests primarily in Jacksonville/St. Augustine, Florida; Sarasota, Florida, and Washington, DC area, promoting organizations that focus on economic empowerment of disadvantaged communities or organizations that help advance the practice of integrative medicine. The foundation was formed by the Scheidel family, who work very closely with the staff to make passionate decisions about where their money is invested in the community.

Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County has a special relationship with the Scheidel Foundation in that the organization has not only been the recipient of the Scheidel Grant in 2015, but also works closely with the foundation who provides the Scheidel Scholarship and funds the Prep Club program at the local Habitat affiliate. The Scheidel Scholarship, founded by Herb and Miyuki Scheidel in 2002, provides Habitat families of St. Johns County and Jacksonville Beaches with an educational scholarship. This is a unique opportunity that is only available to these two local Habitat affiliates as the Scheidel Foundation is based out of Ponte Vedra in north St. Johns County. The scholarship is valid at local colleges including the University of North Florida, St. Johns River State College, or Florida State College of Jacksonville.

Also, funded by the Scheidel Foundation is the Prep Club. This program is designed to provide incentives and educational support to students who live

in Habitat homes. This program awards students in grades K-12 for perfect attendance and good grades. The hope is that the students will learn the value and importance of education while also preparing them to enter college upon graduation from high school. To join the Prep Club, there is an application, questionnaire and the students must sign a Drug Free Pledge.

The students then submit their report cards to the Habitat office on a quarterly basis. Habitat St. Augustine/St. Johns County's Prep Club Coordinator Lindsey Rodea states, "Because of the Scheidel Foundation, Habitat families in our community are blessed not only with the opportunity of homeownership but also the opportunity for an education."

Beyond their efforts in education for Habitat families, the Scheidel foundation awarded Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County \$10,000 on Tuesday December 15th to be used towards general operating expenses of the nonprofit organization. This particular act of generosity is especially unique as most donors require specific projects for donations. What can go overlooked in a nonprofit agency, is the general operating expenses are typically more difficult to fund. General operating expenses can include program expenses directly related to carrying out the mission of Habitat for Humanity, administrative expenses including overall operations and management, and fundraising expenses including publicity and fundraising campaigns/events.

Thanks to the generosity of the Scheidel Foundation, Habitat for Humanity can look forward to starting the year of 2016 off with confidence that our efforts to create affordable housing are supported and appreciated in the community!

Donate, qualify or volunteer online with Habitat at www.habitatstjohns.org or call (904) 826-3252. For more information about the Scheidel Foundation, visit www.scheidelfoundation.org

Sharks a 4-0 lead. Carson King made the score sheet with a pretty kick on a waist high pass and Conor Brandon's goal put Ponte Vedra up by seven just before the half-time tribute.

Seven minutes into the second half Bennett's hat trick sent everyone home gratified if not happy.

Boys

Continued from 29

later Chris Howard scored the first of his two goals off corner kicks.

Michael Bennett then added the first and second goals of what would be a hat trick to give the



VRA wrestler takes gold

Creed McClafferty, a sixth grader at Valley Ridge Academy, recently took first place at the AAU Wrestling Lake Gibson Tournament, held in Lakeland, Fla.

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I'm baaaack! Hip, Hooray!

First, my sincerest appreciation to Editor Kelly McDermott for keeping my place warm until I could return from my forced sabbatical, or, in other words, my entry into the BWCPV...the Bionic Women's Club of Ponte Vedra. I had hip replacement surgery and am now recovering well. Five weeks out, though still restricted from certain moves and postures for fear of dislocation, I'm able to walk without a cane, climb the 18 steps from the street to my front door without help and driving as well. I've also discovered that Publix delivers straight to my kitchen. I give thanks!

I do have to undergo a second hip replacement when I am fully healed from this one, but at least now I know what to expect. For those of you who may be contemplating replacing your hip and are waiting for the right time or the right frame of mind, I'd like to encourage you to "just do it." I waited



Sheila Weinstein
Grow Old With Me

too long and compromised my body and my sense of well being as my hip deteriorated and no doubt made it more difficult for my surgeon. I shoulda, coulda, woulda done it sooner if fear hadn't stepped

into my decision making process.

My family was helpful to me both in the hospital and when I came home. My youngest daughter lives with me at present, and has been an incredible support. In order to make my recovery needs easier on her, (no one wants their child to be a caregiver) and the fact that she has a wonderful but intense and time consuming job, I had home health care both day and night

for the first two weeks and then only during the day for the next week. I had in home physical therapy as well. I learned how to dress using a 'grabber,' a long shoe horn, and a sock aid. I was wiser than I knew to purchase a walk in tub when I did some renovating of my condo after I moved back to Ponte Vedra. It has been of inordinate help to my compromised hips. And, when I returned from the hospital, I was able to quickly regain my cleanliness and godliness.

However, a strange occurrence, post surgery...the disappearance of my desire to eat a healthy diet. My appetite was non-existent until I discovered barbequed wings and mashed potatoes. And, that's what I ate for four weeks straight. My daughter tried to entice me with her excellent home cooking. Instead I asked for bbq'd wings from our local supermarket. Salads were out. Soup...in a pinch. A half sandwich...

depends. I stayed bewinged until the morning I woke up clucking.

My eldest daughter said she lost her appetite too after her hip surgery. She ate pop tarts and coke for weeks. There must be something in the anesthesia, we figured. Or kooky eating is in our DNA. I've not verified either, medically.

So, wish me well as I go down this bionic road to full recovery. And to all of you who are recovering along with me, I wish you a speedy return to life as you wish it to be.

I leave you as witness to: My gratitude to my surgeon and all those who helped him, the nurses and doctors and physical therapists in hospital and out who were and are dedicated to my well being, to my family and friends who fed me, sent flowers and cards, visited with me and drove me to my appointments. May you receive special blessings this holiday season.



Promoted

Continued from 28

to achieve the next rank promotion.

Testing for promotions were the following students: Maya Johnson, Amelia Wilhelm, Ryan Nunez, Bryce Walker, Riley McGowan, Caleb Hobbs, Julian Hardy,

Nick Salomon, Avery Sneed, Matt Accurso, John Deligero, Seth Relampagos, Sim Deligero, Isaiah Haire, Andres Maldonado, Ethan Brown, Alan Lovett, Breanne Beaver, Luke Hamilton, Sam Lewis, Brianna Niles, Matthew DeMarco, Hanna Morrill, Paden Pinder, Raven Weston, Josh Rio Deligero, Manu Nair, Reid Norteman, Sabrina Lewis, Aveline Hamilton, John Hamilton, Natasha Hamilton, Daniel Oswald,

Reef Hamilton, Morgan Shreve, Kayla Shreve and Ian Lilkendy.

"I am very proud of how hard the students worked to get ready for this test," DeGrafft said. "They did an awesome job and all earned their promotions. It was a very good test. Miss Leila and I want to thank students for their commitment to their training. We can't forget to recognize the parents and the key role they play in

making this such a success."

Recognized as the Best Martial Arts School in St. Augustine for 2015, Pak's Ponte Vedra is located in Panther Plaza Shopping Center across from Nease High School on US Highway 1 North.

Visit their website www.pakspontevedra.com or call (904) 829-8087 for more information about the school and the programs offered.

Making tough choices during the holidays

The holiday season is supposed to be an enjoyable time of year, yet it's often a particularly trying time for many marriages. While divorce filings typically dip in December, the opposite holds true for January – which is ominously nicknamed “divorce month” in legal circles.

The reasons for the January spike run the gamut. Some people wait because they worry about ruining the holidays for their children. For others, it might be a matter of a New Year's resolution. And for some, the final straw may even involve a spouse's bad behavior at a holiday party.

Whether one's spouse was a good or bad partner has little, if any, relevance under modern law. Since 1971, Florida has been a no-fault state, meaning that one merely will have to testify that his or her marriage is “irretrievably broken.”

If you are struggling through the holidays while harboring thoughts of divorce, consider a few things that might affect your decision:



Lawrence Datz
Guest Columnist

Reflect on Your Finances

Divorce is not only emotionally taxing, but also economically draining. Analyze your current and projected future financial circumstances, including income, expenses, assets

and liabilities. Then, contemplate life in separate households. If one spouse financially depends on the other, the dependent spouse should figure out how the bills will be paid. Meanwhile, the independent spouse should anticipate a portion of his or her income will be paid in the form of child support, alimony, or both. Divorcing spouses more frequently think in terms of alimony, but also they should consider whether the separation of their financial lives might be assisted with credit, whether its extra money to make the settlement

happen or something as simple as qualifying for a credit card. Consulting with an accountant or another financial advisor might be very beneficial.

Plan for Property Division

When people are married to each other, they accumulate “stuff,” which includes TVs, retirement benefits, houses and even credit card debts. In divorce, all or a portion of a couple's property will be divided depending on whether they are assets brought to the marriage (non-marital) or assets acquired together (marital). Typically, the marital stuff gets divided in half – at least in terms of value.

Consider Custody Issues

Under the current status of Florida law, the terms “custody” and “visitation” are no longer used. Instead, divorcing parents should have a “shared parenting plan” that includes “parental responsibility” (usually shared) for decision making, “timesharing” for the schedule of when children will be

with a particular parent, as well as other details required by statute. Timesharing is often the most difficult issue. Before you begin divorce proceedings, honestly evaluate what you believe to be in your children's best interest apart from any hostility you may feel toward your spouse. Also, because divorces tend to take an average of six to nine months to finalize, consider speaking to an attorney early on about creating a temporary parenting plan with timesharing order to put in place while the proceedings are ongoing.

Even if the above considerations are daunting, the goal of happiness still ultimately drives whether one divorces or not. Although divorce is a major life event, self-honesty, a sense of rationality and proper preparation can make a difficult time a lot easier.

Lawrence Datz is a partner at Datz & Datz, P.A. with more than 30 years of family law experience. He is Board Certified in Marital and Family Law, a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and a Master in the Florida Family Law Inn of Court.

Can I win back the lady who has rejected me?

Dear Neil,

I'm 28, and I fell in love with a 42 year old woman. She broke up with me after 6 months, saying it's not healthy for a woman her age to be have a relationship with a man my age. I'm not agreeing with her reasons to break up, and I know she loves me. Can I wait this out and win her love back?

— *Hopefully Trying*

Dear Hopeful,

Likely not. It sounds that she is saying that she doesn't think this is a good long-term fit for her, and she may have a host of reasons other than the age difference that she mentioned. But you could request an extremely honest conversation with her about her reasons, and see if any of them could reasonably be worked out or resolved. But don't hold your breath. A woman who says no to a relationship very likely means no, and you are unlikely to change her mind.

Dear Neil,

I have been in a year and a half relationship with a good man, who helps around the house and is good to my children. But I'm not into him like I used to be. I feel really bad leaving him, but my happiness is more important. What do I say to end this relationship without hurting him?

— *Wanting Something Else in Phoenix, Arizona*

Dear Wanting,

If this man has given you his heart, there is absolutely no way of breaking up with him that won't hurt him. There is simply no way around the fact that it hurts to be



Neil Rosenthal
Columnist

rejected by someone you care about and want. But you could be sensitive and compassionate when you tell him. It won't make him feel any better, but it honors the sweet and/or loving times the two of you shared together.

Dear Neil

This girl gets on the train at the same stop as I do, and gets off at the same stop as I do as well. I want to ask her her name and number, but I'm scared to. Can you suggest a way for me to get her attention?

— *Scared in Singapore*

Dear Singapore,

Every man (and a variety of women) face this same predicament. How do you start up a conversation and express interest in a stranger without feeling awkward and foolish, and without risking rejection? You are doing something that requires risk, and this kind of risk can feel very scary.

But not risking is even worse, because then you are guaranteeing that you won't succeed. In essence, you are rejecting yourself because you're fearful the lady will, so you're not even giving yourself (or her) a chance.

Here are a few ways you could break the ice: (The direct way): “You interest me. Could I invite you to lunch (or for a drink)?” (The less direct way): “I see you on the train a lot. My name is Harry. What

is your name?” (The indirect way): “We board the train at the same stop. We must live near each other. My name is Harry.”

Whatever you do, remember the saying: “Carpe diem.” Seize the moment. If you don't, some other guy will.

Dear Neil,

My husband of 3 years has been hiding his phone for the past 6 months. When asked why, he said that he likes his space, and he asked me to trust him. Our relationship has some issues, especially regarding our poor communication and our inability

to discuss issues or share with each other. So the distance has grown, and he stopped showing any interest in me physically.

One day he left his phone out. I opened it and learned he was having an affair. I am now in the situation where I either trust him again or leave him for good. Should I leave him or give our relationship a second chance? He has asked me for forgiveness, but has quit trying.

— *Needing Advice*

WIN continues on Page 34

CAN YOU HIT THE GROUND RUNNING?

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Win

Continued from 33

Dear Needing Advice,

There is something missing from your story. Your husband has asked you to trust him again, but you mention nothing about what he is doing in order to help you trust him again.

Has he ended the affair? How sure are you of his answer? What is his explanation for what happened? Listen very carefully to his answer and keep your BS detector on high alert so he doesn't attempt to gloss over what happened. "It just happened" is simply not an acceptable answer, because it gives you no real explanation of his behavior, and it gives you no reassurance that it won't happen again. What safeguards is he offering so you could be confident that this won't happen again?

"I like my space" does not go well with marriage when someone has had an affair. He will be able to use his "space" as an excuse to be able to do anything he wants--while telling you that what he does or who he's with is none of your business. That sounds like a recipe for the same thing happening to you again and again. Is he prepared to never again hide his phone, texts, emails and other forms of communication? Is he prepared to give you every password he uses for all his devices so you can feel convinced

that this won't happen again?

Nothing you describe makes me confident that he is genuinely sorry, or that he feels he has done wrong or has acted poorly. In order for you to feel safe with him in the future, there needs to be real repair work. You need to feel confident that your husband understands the gravity of what he has done, and is willing to go way out of his way to demonstrate and/or prove to you that it won't happen again. If he is not willing to do this, or if he does it very half-hearted, he isn't sincere, and this same scenario is very likely to happen all over again.

You just deciding to trust him will not work without these safeguards. Do you actually buy his explanation about what happened? Are the two of you repairing your poor communication and inability to share with each other, the distance between you and his lack of interest in you sexually? A man who has quit trying sounds like an extremely poor risk to me. You don't want to be married to a man who doesn't want you.

Neil Rosenthal is a licensed marriage and family therapist in Westminster and Boulder, Colorado. His column is in its 24th year of publication, and is syndicated around the world. You can reach him at 303-758-8777, or email him through his website: www.heart-relationships.com. The second edition of his book: "Love, Sex and Staying Warm: Creating A Vital Relationship," recently hit the #1 best seller list on Amazon.

O Come All Ye Faithful

Bonnie Talley
Quiltlady

Musicians are such a giving group of people. The Jacksonville Symphony group and other musicians spend so much of their "spare" time entertaining the masses this time of the year. This morning, I got up very early to be at a Christmas service that started at 8:30. This feat may sound very ordinary to you, but for me and Precious, getting up early is not the usual thing. Precious, being my adorable 11 month old Havanese puppy, likes to sleep until 8:30. Since she and I are both retired, that is a good thing; however, this morning, I crawled out of bed a little before 7:00. She thought I had lost my mind, I am sure.

At that time I got her breakfast and a quick cup of yogurt for me, dressed hurriedly and I was out the door. By the time I arrived at the church, I was shocked to see that the whole parking area all around was packed. Had I missed the service? No, everyone except me knew that it would be very well attended this morning, and most likely they got up at 6:00. Mercy.

Having been an entertainer most of my life, I know how hectic this time of year can become. There are so many weddings during the holidays. I wish I had a nickel for every wedding I have played or sung for. I even married both times during the holidays. Christmas weddings are truly beautiful, but it can be very difficult to get

everything done, due to the crowds in stores and traffic on the streets. Even getting people flown in for the service or picked up at the airport is time consuming. I think I would rethink having a wedding in December.

My Christmas quilt is a small wall hanging that depicts both of my December weddings. It was a walk down memory lane just getting the things together for the construction of the quilt. Shopping for fabrics right now is not a fun thing when one has to "take a number" to get the yardage cut that one needs; then the checkout line is a bummer for sure. I stand in line to check out only 15 minutes. Any time longer than that, I just walk out of the store and come back later. I have never known why stores that have that kind of business -- don't plan ahead, hire more checkers, and get the new "scanner gizmos" that can speed up the procedure for getting checked out of the store in this lifetime.

I know that very few people are sewing today, Christmas Eve, so I shall say to you, "Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year of sewing and quilting!"

Plan on joining my Ocean Wave Quilters Guild in 2016. We meet the second Friday of every month at The Players Community Center on Landrum Ln. off CR-210, behind the Shell station from 10:00 to 12:00. You will love this group of ladies, I am sure!



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Tis the season to be gloomy?

The Christmas holiday season is supposed to be the most beautiful time of the year, as we surround ourselves with family and friends, amid cheerful songs, festive parties, gifts and good wishes. Regrettably, far too many folks do not agree with the traditional lyrics of Deck the Halls (“Tis the season to be joyful”), as they see it as “Tis the season to be gloomy.”

These people are lonely and sad for a host of reasons. Perhaps you are one of them, as I have been in the past, or maybe you know someone who does not look forward to the holiday season.

Nonetheless, I argue that these lonesome and dejected people might get the joy back into Christmas if they accept the “Golden Shoebox”, as depicted in the following heart-warming and inspirational story.

There was a man who worked exceptionally hard just to keep food on the table for his wife and five-year-old daughter, Lucy.

A few days before Christmas, Lucy’s father punished her for using the family’s only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper. The curmudgeon



Harry Pappas
Columnist

became more upset on Christmas Eve when he witnessed Lucy sneak more of the paper to decorate a shoebox that she placed under their Charlie Brown Christmas tree. It is worth noting that Lucy was not embarrassed about having the most pathetic looking tree in the neighborhood.

Perhaps it is best to hear it from Lucy; “The size and shape of my tree does not matter. It is a tree just like the others and it needs rescued so that it can have a home for Christmas. That is what matters.” Therefore, she cared for and nurtured the tree with all the love and attention that she could muster.

On Christmas morning, filled with excitement, Lucy presented the beautifully wrapped shoebox to her father and said, “This is for you, Daddy!” When he opened the shoebox, it was empty, and he

became annoyed. “Don’t you know that when you give someone a gift, there is supposed to be something inside the package?” With tears rolling down her cheeks, Lucy looked up to her father and whispered, “Daddy, it is not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full.” The father was devastated. He fell on his knees, put his arms around his only child, and begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary resentment. Lucy said, “Daddy, please don’t be sad. Of course, I forgive you. You are my dad, and I love you so much.”

During the spring of the following year, a car accident took Lucy’s life. Lucy’s dad became increasingly lonely and depressed. Although his daughter forgave him, he could not excuse himself for his deplorable behavior the fateful Christmas morning. One sleepless night, he kept thinking of Lucy’s beautifully wrapped golden Christmas shoebox.

The next morning, he asked his wife if she saved the shoebox. “Of course I did. It is in the attic. Would you like me to get it for you?” With tears pour-

ing from his eyes, he nodded his head, as he was unable to speak. Lucy’s father now keeps this old shoebox by his bed as a remembrance of Lucy and the undeserving forgiveness that his daughter gave him.

Whenever he becomes discouraged, angry, or needs to forgive someone, he opens the box, removes the imaginary kiss and remembers the unconditional love of his beautiful child. Lucy’s father lived the rest of his life, not as a curmudgeon, but as a joyful, grateful and understanding person.

If we stop and think about Lucy’s invisible gift, do we not already have the most precious invisible gift that is filled with kisses and unconditional love? The gift is from God, who loved the world that he gave us his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. However you choose to celebrate the season, may your holidays be merry and bright, and may all your wishes come true. Enjoy the fun, the frolic, the festivities and the friendships, because this really is “the most wonderful time of the year.”

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Keeping calm and putting it together

My oldest granddaughter is a freshman in college and loves everything about it. She's even enjoying the all-nighters spent in the library. But her father is wondering if she should stay out of college and become a Ms. Fix-It. Here's why.

A while back my Connecticut daughter and family made a trek up to the Hartford Ikea, which, for the teenagers, is a treat, because they usually return home with something cool for their bedrooms: a garbage pail, throw blanket, fake plants. The mission of the day: to get the middle child, Kallie, a badly needed dresser. They found the perfect, classic one, and after picking up a few more things headed home. They could have had an Ikea assembler put it together, but the wife decided the



Mims Cushing
By the Way...

husband could do it. Wife had forgotten the hideous times the husband sweated over putting together a crib, and many other things, like kid-die kitchens and doll houses --- an ordeal for every new father.

The gigantic box of disassembled dresser made it up the stairs to Kallie's room. The husband pried open the box—even that, no small task—and started dumping screws, nails, handles, and other bafflements on the floor. And he went to work. In one hour he steamrolled down

the stairs and said, "GOOD GOD! THAT THING IS A NIGHTMARE." He plopped himself on a couch to read the paper. Mackenzie said, "Let me give it a try."

And so, try she did. Spreading out the scattered dresser all over the floor, she hunkered down with the directions. She twisted and turned her sister's furniture parts as though it was a huge jigsaw puzzle. She paid close attention to the little images of men on the direction sheet, inserting this, nesting that, screwing in that over there, and pounding in this over here. After a couple of hours she was done. She danced downstairs. "Dad, I did it. Come see."

After the news got around the neighborhood that she had mastered an Ikea behemoth, one couple asked

if she could put together a crib, which she did. And then a coffee table.

Her father is thinking of having business cards made up with her name and FURNITURE MIDWIFE on it.

On a recent morning news show I heard the talking heads discuss this topic: "Who is better at assembling Ikea merchandise? Men or women?" Apparently, women read the instructions more, but men are faster and more accurate and there are fewer parts left over. (Boo hiss.)

Mackenzie says I should tell you she'll put furniture together for you if you'll fly her down here. It's too late for her to assemble your kids' toys for this Christmas, but keep her in mind for next year.

THEME: FINISH THE LYRICS

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ACROSS

- Southern cuisine pie
- French lake
- H or O in H₂O, e.g.
- "Tell ___ I love her"
- "A long, long time ___ I can still remember how that music..."
- Cast somebody there
- Misbehave
- St. Louis player
- First American-born saint, Elizabeth Ann ___
- "Blue jean baby, L.A. lady, seamstress for ___"
- "On a dark desert highway, cool wind in ___"
- Draft pick
- \$10,000, to a judge, e.g.
- "You ___ again"
- "You ___ me what I am today"
- Inventor's right
- Burden
- Color of a bruise
- "___ is a sound salvation... cleaning up the nation"
- Bumpkin
- "Get ___" (1965-1970)
- "Isn't it a ___. Isn't it a shame"
- What a taster does
- 41st or 43rd president
- 1970s hairdo
- Fireplace
- One-pot meal
- "I wanna be loved by you, just ___"
- "May the road ___ with you"
- Use a Singer
- "Get this party started on a Saturday night, everybody's waiting for me to ___"
- "Just a city boy born and raised in South ___"
- Killed, as in dragon
- Go a-courting
- Dome-shaped dessert
- "I'm sitting here, doing nothing but ___"
- Another word for Tokyo
- Did not go out to eat
- Radio genre
- "Losing My Religion" band
- Tears violently

DOWN

- Surveyor's creation
- Apiece
- Pleasingly pretty
- Dutch island in the Caribbean
- "I love the smell of ___ in the morning"
- Porcine fat
- American Gas Association
- Found in written series
- Between ports
- South American monkey
- Carbon monoxide doesn't have this
- "It's raining ___, Hallelujah"
- Finely cut masonry block
- Certain tides
- Chihuahua's cry
- "Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth, ___ I'm happy"
- "Cause, baby, you're a firework, come on, show'em what you're ___"
- Accustom
- Historic region in northeastern Africa
- "Your lips are movin', tell me do you think I'm ___"
- Spanish snack
- Enlighten
- TV's "___ Circus"
- "Cause uptown funk gon' give it ___"
- Tiresias in "Oedipus Rex", e.g.
- Formerly, formerly
- "So take ___ broken wings"
- "I've got the world on a ___"
- Charlie Sheen's diagnosis
- Man cave's necessity
- Waste water pipe
- What did Jessica Fletcher do?
- Aquarium organism
- "Iron horse" track
- Yamaguchi's court
- Accompanied by "gloom"?
- Bad sign
- Used when citing a reference
- Two equal a twenty
- Scholastic aptitude test
- ___ to Joy"

SUDOKU

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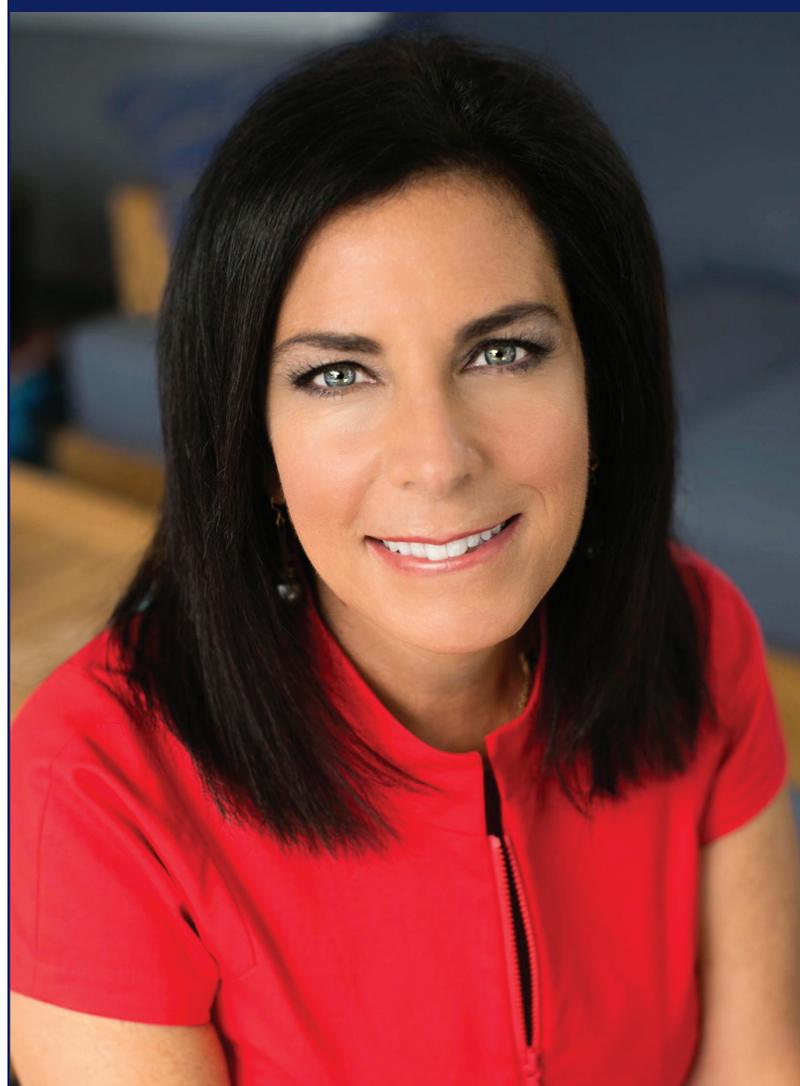


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