

Ponte Vedra Recorder

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

June 29, 2017
Volume 47, No. 26
75 cents

PonteVedraRecorder.com



Hogwarts comes to Ponte Vedra

Page 12



Connections

Pages 13-28



Shift into summer

Pages 34-37



First Coast Fourth of July activities will include fireworks displays from Jacksonville to St. Augustine. Read more on page 10.

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INSIDE

One of Us

Page 6

Calendar

Pages 8-9

July 4 Activities

Pages 10-11

Business Weekly

Pages 29-33

Send us your news

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



Visit our website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

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

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

G	R	E	A	T	A	H	A	D	I	B	S	
R	A	N	G	E	B	O	P	S	A	R	A	H
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Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

WHAT'S THIS?

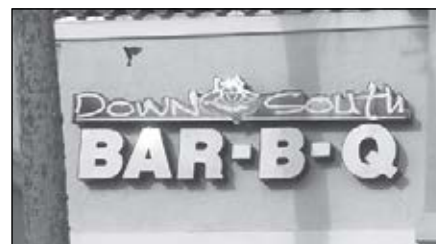


Do you know what this is?

Email your answer with your first and last name to jonb@opcfla.com by Monday at 5 p.m.

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

Seven readers correctly identified last week's photo as Down South BBQ. The winner of the random drawing was **Tara Warnock**.

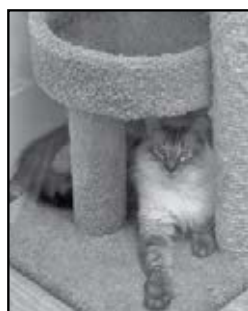


Congratulations, Tara – you may pick up your prize at the Recorder office during normal business hours.

ADOPT A PET

CAT OF THE WEEK

My name is Simon, and I am a 5-year-old male cat who is looking for a new home. 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. Please come visit me today here at the pet center! #38444



DOG OF THE WEEK

My name is Nellie, and I am a 1-year-old female dog. I was brought to the pet center by my family because they could no longer care for me. Please come visit me today here at the pet center! #38444



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.

St. Johns County Pet Center

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



Susan Griffin

Publisher
susan@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3938

Jennifer Logue

Managing Editor
jennifer@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3943

Jon Blauvelt

Reporter/Production
Coordinator
jonb@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3939

Samantha Logue

Reporter
samantha@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3945

Rob Conwell

Circulation Manager
rob@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3936

Ed Johnson

Senior Account Executive
ed@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3940

Kristin Flanagan

Account Executive
(904) 285-8831

April Snyder

Sales Assistant
aprils@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3937

Leigh Mitchell

Cary Howard
Page Designers
pagedesign@theitem.com

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Fire damages Nocatee home during storm

A home in Nocatee's Addison Park is significantly damaged and no longer habitable after a fire erupted there Monday night during severe storms.

St. Johns County Fire Rescue and Jacksonville Fire and Rescue extinguished the flames in the home at 161 Paradise Valley Drive before the fire spread to any adjacent structures. No injuries were reported. Initial reports stated that the home was struck by lightning during the storms, but the official cause of the fire remains

under investigation.

The American Red Cross has been contacted to provide assistance to the affected family. If you'd like to help, Red Cross officials suggest calling their Jacksonville office at (904) 358-8091.

A GoFundMe page has also been created to support the affected family: <https://www.gofundme.com/addisonparkfamily>.

OBITUARIES

Charlotte Ruth Wilcox

Charlotte Ruth Wilcox, 95, of Ponte Vedra Beach, died June 19, 2017. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

J. Tylee Wilson

J. Tylee Wilson, 86, of Ponte Vedra Beach, died June 21, 2017. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

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Nestled in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach, this stunning home offers generous sized rooms that have recently been updated, kitchen with stainless steel appliances, master suite on the 1st floor and great room that opens to the screened lanai. MLS 878534

Carol Cantalupo 904.614.4598
CJCantalupo@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



TWENTY MILE VILLAGE

\$559,900

Enjoy the Nocatee lifestyle in this David Weekly residence with access to the communities amenities including water park, nature trails and more. The interior features an open floor plan with four bedrooms, an oversized kitchen, personal study and covered lanai. MLS 872802

Linda Ostoski 904.422.1098
LindaOstoski@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



OCEANSIDE 932

\$725,000

Watch the sun rise on the ocean as you enjoy your morning coffee from the wrap around balcony of this spectacular condo. Inside boasts three spacious bedrooms, a chef's kitchen, open living room with a fireplace and sitting area with direct access to the balcony. MLS 878535

Murray & Elise Beard 904.465.2784
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Message from the editor

By Jennifer Logue

One of the benefits of serving as editor of a local weekly paper is the opportunity to meet an awful lot of awfully nice people.

From the Rotary Club and the chamber of commerce to local churches, businesses and nonprofit groups, a local editor has a chance to interact with a wide cross section of residents: adults, children, senior citizens; artists, environmentalists, small business owners – the people who together make up the very fabric of a community.

These are the interactions that I will cherish most as I complete my time as editor at The Ponte Vedra Recorder and

prepare to begin a new communications role at JEA.

During my tenure as Recorder editor, my small editorial staff and I have worked diligently to provide thoughtful, intelligent coverage of the important issues facing Ponte Vedra. Traffic. Development. Taxes. Public safety. At the same time, we tried to highlight the positive and uplifting things happening in our community. From art exhibitions and charity fundraisers to ceremonies honoring veterans and local heroes, the Recorder has endeavored to, in the words of one very kind reader, “capture the essence of our community.”

Rest assured that commitment will continue. Beginning next week,

Recorder reporter Jon Blauvelt will assume the position of editor. Those of you who have had an opportunity to meet Jon or read his articles in the Recorder know that he is a gifted writer and talented reporter, and I have every confidence that he will continue to bring readers top-notch coverage of what’s happening in Ponte Vedra.

And forgive me if I take pride in sharing that my daughter, Samantha Logue, will be assisting Jon by filling his former reporter’s position. Having previously contributed articles and photographs to the Recorder and First Coast Register, Samantha will now cover Ponte Vedra and the Beaches as a member of the Recorder staff. I

look forward to reading both Jon and Samantha’s reporting as a dedicated Recorder reader.

When I first became editor of The Ponte Vedra Recorder, I wrote a message to you, our readers, expressing my belief that serving on the staff of a local community paper was both a great privilege and a great responsibility. I now pass that privilege and responsibility to others, secure in the knowledge that they will uphold the tradition the Recorder began nearly 50 years ago as the paper of record for Ponte Vedra and the Beaches. It is a tradition worth preserving and supporting, and I thank all of you who made my time at the Recorder so rewarding.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Every year we have attended the county administrator’s budget workshop with his staff. Last year was difficult, as needs were great and money very tight. Despite that, three of the five county commissioners refused to put a sales tax on the ballot to begin paying for deferred maintenance and other vital needs.

This year, after attending the workshop, I fear it is much worse. There is nothing left to cut without really lowering more standards and cutting services even more.

We who attended these workshops recommend an added sales tax of one cent, over 40 percent of which will be paid by tourists and none of it shared

by other entities.

I predict things will get worse, especially since the powers in Tallahassee are offering an additional \$25,000 homestead exemption that no one will vote against. So, another \$10 million will be gone from our depleted coffers. Things will be getting worse, if that is possible.

The commissioners will be forced to raise property taxes if this is not stopped. Therefore, I want the commissioners to allow you and me to vote on the state of our finances. It is our money and our living standards; we must be allowed a say or part in this

serious financial decision. We all have a right to be part of the decision.

Our administration has done a splendid job in budgeting our money. But even they cannot create money out of dross. We have a source available; allow us to choose to use it. Now.

It is the right thing to do. It is not only a choice of cutting services or paying more taxes. There is a third choice.

I want the right to vote for that choice.

Mary Kohnke
Ponte Vedra Beach

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Beaches Rotaract Club installs new officers

Club recognizes Rotarians who serve as mentors to young professionals

By Jennifer Logue

The Beaches Rotaract Club installed its new officers for 2017-2018 last week at a celebratory dinner held in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach.

Held June 22 at Marsh Landing Country Club, the dinner included the presentation of plaques and awards to those who served during the past year as officers and board members of Rotaract, the Rotary Club for young people ages 18 to 30. New officers installed by Rotary District Governor Marshall Butler included Charlie Flynn, president; Magda Cichon, president-elect; Rachael Daven, vice president; Catalina McEachern, secretary; Rachel Hiar, director of finance/treasurer; Hunter Bradshaw, sergeant at arms; Sarah Rose Stewart, director of community service; Jonathan Daguilh, director of club service; D'Arcy Hubbard, director of international service; and Jenni Williams, director of professional development.

Also honored at the ceremony was outgoing club President Matt Montoya, who received his Immediate Past President pin from his father, Will Montoya, immediate past president of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach.

"To watch your son grow up and have the opportunity to become a leader of a very special organization is really special," Will Montoya said. "People can say what they want about young people today, but when you see the caliber of people in this Beaches Rotaract club, it gives you a lot of faith in our young professionals."

Mentor program

As part of the ceremonies, Rotaract members thanked those members of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach who served as their mentors during the previ-



Photo by Jennifer Logue

The Beaches Rotaract Club installed its new officers and board members June 22. Front row (from left): Sarah Rose Stewart, Rachel Hiar, D'Arcy Hubbard and Catalina McEachern. Middle: Rachael Daven, Charlie Flynn, Magda Cichon, Matt Montoya, Hunter Bradshaw and Rotary District Governor Marshall Butler. Back: Jenni Williams and Jonathan Daguilh.

ous year. Through the mentorship program, Rotarians are paired with a Rotaract member with whom they meet throughout the year, offering guidance, advice and support.

It's a relationship, club members said, that can open their eyes to new possibilities. Rotaract member AJ Hall, for example, admitted that when he was first paired with mentor Chuck Day, he wasn't sure how the acclaimed local author could assist him in his sales career. After meeting several times with Day, however, Hall rekindled his own interest in writing.

"It was such an amazing thing to sit down with Chuck," Hall said. "You never know how much that relationship is going to do or where it's going to go."

District Governor Butler credited Rotarian Kelly Sastre, who serves as district

Rotaract chair, for spearheading the efforts that have grown the Beaches Rotaract Club from seven members to 54 members in just three years. He also praised Rotarian Joni Zwick for her role as advisor to the Beaches club – a commitment, he noted, that required countless hours of volunteer service and support.

"Joni had the vision to integrate Rotaract into your (Rotary) club," said Butler. "Thank you for pouring your lives into these young people as mentors."

Those sentiments were echoed by Hall, who encouraged more Rotarians to serve as mentors to the next generation of community leaders.

Said Hall: "You really can make an impact in someone's life."

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As the new chair of the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition, Lisa Johnson Cook works with representatives from the community's homeowners' associations to address issues of local concern. An artist who also represents the works of others through her company, Cook Fine Art, she lives in Ponte Vedra Beach with her husband, Dan, and their two sons.

Lisa Johnson Cook

By Jennifer Logue

Tell us about Cook Fine Art.

I established Cook Fine Art over 15 years ago and it has been an evolving business model ever since then. The website has provided me with various platforms, depending on what project I was working on at the time. When I was working for an art publishing company, I would use the site to assist with sales on the secondary market. Locally, I have represented various artists, and Cook Fine Art was a good way to showcase and market their talents. I have also posted my pottery and jewelry, with the hopes of a possible sale!

How did you first develop an interest in art?

I grew up enjoying art and it has always been a part of my life. I attended Scripps College in Claremont, California and majored in fabric design. After college, I worked at an art gallery in Santa Monica and later moved to Houston to work for an art publishing house. I then had the amazing opportunity to open an art gallery in Manhattan. The majority of my focus was sales, marketing and management, so I really learned both the wholesale and retail sides of the art business. Since my last position with art publishing, I have been more focused on supporting local artists, volunteering and wanting to create my own art. I have been making jewelry, working on clothing design and enjoying my pottery wheel and kiln. I am very excited to start an online Masters of Art program this fall and would love to eventually teach.

What brought you to the First Coast?

My husband grew up in Jacksonville and his immediate family is still local, so it was a very easy decision for us to move down here from Manhattan. We love the lifestyle that this beach community offers for a family.

What is your favorite part of living in Ponte Vedra Beach?

I love the year-round weather and the relaxed, beach lifestyle. Our beach community is comprised of locals and people from all over the U.S., and I believe this makes for a great blend. I love the beauty of the landscape and having both the ocean and the Intracoastal in our backyard.

You were recently elected chair of the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition. What are some of the key issues you anticipate the coalition exploring or addressing in the coming year?

I am very excited to be part of the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition. It was first established in 1993, and for 24 years, has been a valuable asset to our community. Founding members are still heavily involved and provide the vital foundation to build upon. I started working with the coalition when we were battling the billboard industry and their inclusion of LED digital billboards to our sign ordinance. I learned then what a wonderful group of people we had volunteering their time on our behalf. Currently, we are striving to keep our members informed of the various projects slated in our community. We are following issues such as the PV traffic study, the Oak Bridge development, the TPC development on County Road 210, the Gate/Outpost development, etc. We have also been discussing the county's 2018 budget



Photo by Jennifer Logue

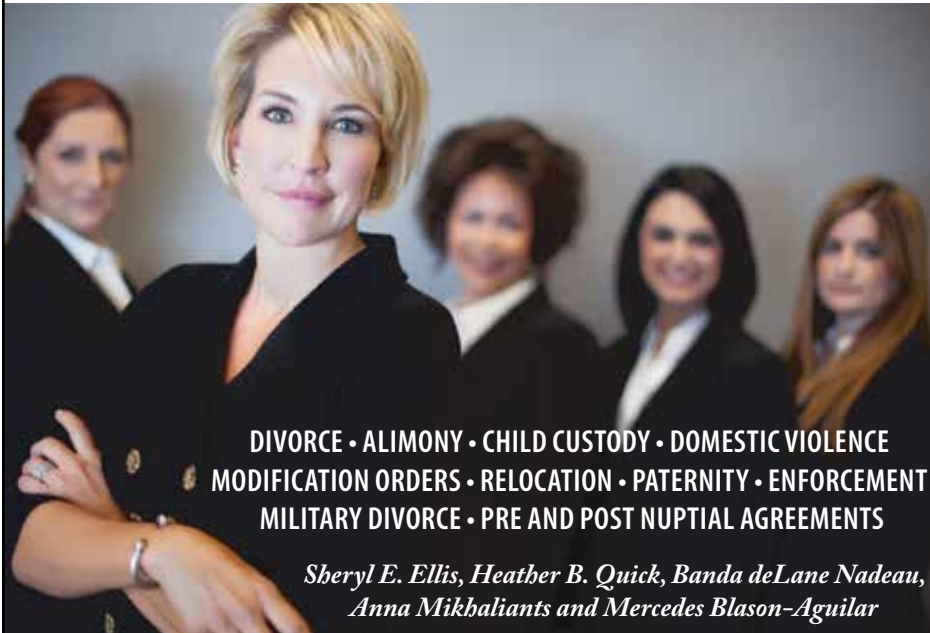
and the possibility of raising our sales tax for an additional revenue source. We are also considering following in Flagler's footsteps to raise the bed tax to the 5th cent for assistance with beach/dune restoration.

How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I mostly enjoy spending time with my kids! They are

growing up entirely too quickly. Free time is limited, but I do enjoy making jewelry and pottery. I volunteer at the children's schools and various organizations in our community. And I love beach walks, but wish I was better at spotting shark's teeth! Also on my list, I want to take my violin out of the closet and re-learn how to play!

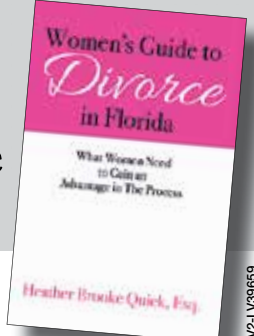
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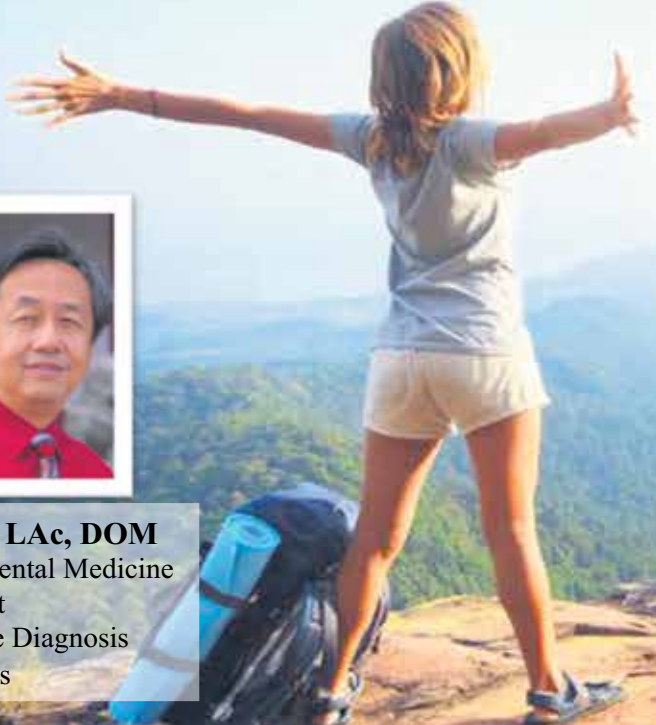
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Thursday, June 29	Friday, June 30	Saturday, July 1	Sunday, July 2
<p>Concerts in the Plaza St. Augustine's Plaza de la Constitución will host the oldest city's summer-long concert series, "Concerts in the Plaza." The series will provide free concerts featuring local musical entertainment every Thursday night at 7 p.m. On June 29, Big Pineapple will perform the sounds of the Hawaiian Islands. All of the "Concerts in the Plaza" shows are free to attend and visitors are encouraged to bring lounge chairs for seating. Picnic dinners are allowed, but alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the plaza.</p> <p>Headache and Migraine Workshop Dr. Sharyl Truty, MD and Dr. Nick Scotto PT will discuss natural ways to heal migraines and headaches in this June 29 workshop. The event will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. at 115 Professional Drive, Ste. 104, Ponte Vedra Beach. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$20 at the door. Seating is limited to the first 20 registrants. For more information, contact Balanced Physician Care at membership@balancedphysiciancare.com or call (904) 930-4774.</p> <p>Adult Coloring at the Library As part of their Adult Summer Reading program, the Ponte Vedra Beach Public Library will host an adult coloring event on June 29 from 1 to 4 p.m. Guests are invited to relax and de-stress as they color their own "Build A Better World" coloring journals. Attendance is free and supplies will be provided. The library is located at 101 Library Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>'Synthesize: Art + Music' Jacksonville's Museum of Contemporary Art recently introduced a new exhibit to its gallery space. "Synthesize: Art + Music" presents a blend of visual and aural pieces comprised of video, sculpture and light installation. The exhibit, which calls to mind references of film and pop culture, combines the work of French composer and artist Céleste Boursier-Mougenot with artists James Clar, Rashaad Newsome, Farrah Karapetian and more. The museum is located at 333 N. Laura St. in Jacksonville.</p>	<p>Youth Production of 'Ragtime' The Summer Musical TheatreCamp will present its production of the musical "Ragtime" this weekend. To be presented at Flagler College's Lewis Auditorium, the show will feature teens from across the First Coast in this musical production of the book by E. L. Doctorow. Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 30 and Saturday, July 1; and at 2 p.m. Sunday, July 2. Admission is \$15, and tickets will be available at the door. The Lewis Auditorium is located at 14 Granada St. in St. Augustine's historic district.</p> <p>Live Music at Table 1 Table 1 at 330 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach will host live music starting at 7:30 p.m. In addition to the entertainment, guests can enjoy bar bites starting at \$7 and 2-for-1 well drinks, domestic drafts and house wine by the glass.</p> <p>PV Professionals Networking Group The Ponte Vedra Professionals Networking Group meets Fridays at 9 a.m. at Watson Realty Corp., 615 Highway A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, visit www.pvpng.com or email pontevedrapng@gmail.com.</p> <p>Coastal Wine Market Wine Tasting Coastal Wine Market hosts Friday wine tastings from 6 to 8 p.m. at 641 Crosswater Parkway, Suite B, Ponte Vedra Beach. Taste six wines for \$10. For more information, call (904) 395-3520.</p> <p>Moonlight Movie Head to the Seawalk Pavilion in Jacksonville Beach June 30 for a 9 p.m. showing of the 2016 live-action remake of Disney's "The Jungle Book." Hot dogs, beverages, Italian ice and popcorn will be made available by various vendors. Movie-goers are encouraged to bring blankets and chairs. Arrive early for the best seating. The Seawalk Pavilion is located at First Street North in Jacksonville Beach.</p>	<p>NASA at the Library Both adults and children elementary school-age and up are invited to join NASA Solar System Ambassador Bharath Muthyala at the Ponte Vedra Beach Public Library July 1 for a discussion of the upcoming total solar eclipse. Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about the August 21 solar eclipse as well as participate in an outdoor view of the sun through safe filters and a telescope. The event will take place from 10:30 a.m. to noon at 101 Library Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>GTM Research Reserve Hike Join the Guana Tolomato Matanzas Research Reserve the first Saturday of every month from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. for a guided exploration hike. Learn about the cultural and natural history of the Guana Peninsula. Topics include the native peoples' use of estuarine resources, the European plantation lifestyle and current efforts to conserve resources. Meet at the GTM Research Reserve's Trailhead Pavilion, located at 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach, wearing comfortable, closed-toe shoes. Parking is \$3 per vehicle. For more information, call (904) 823-4500 or visit www.gtmnerr.org.</p> <p>Book Signing at the Pirate Museum The St. Augustine Pirate & Treasure Museum will host a book signing with author Baylus Brooks in the courtyard of the museum from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 1. Brooks is a noted maritime historian and conservator and is a graduate of East Carolina University's Maritime Studies Program. He has authored several books, including the historical novel "Heirloom: Fountain of Hope," "Pirates & Slaves: Making America," "Quest For Blackbeard" and "Blackbeard Reconsidered." The museum is located at 12 S. Castillo Drive in St. Augustine. Admission to the museum is not required to participate in this event. For more information, visit www.thepiratemuseum.com.</p>	<p>Katz 4 Keeps Adoption Event Join Katz 4 Keeps July 1-2 for an adoption event helping cats and kittens find their forever homes. The event will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Katz 4 Keeps facility located at 935B A1A North in Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information about this event or organization, call (904) 834-3223 or email info@katz4keeps.org.</p> <p>Turtles, Tortoises & Terrapins Stop by Jacksonville's Museum of Science & History (MOSH) for this informative presentation. Learn the difference between these three members of the Testudine family and meet residents of MOSH's Living Collection. The presentation will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, July 2 in the Florida Naturalist's Center. The MOSH is located at 1025 Museum Circle in Jacksonville. Hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$12.50 for adults and \$10 for seniors, youth and military; children 2 and under are free. For more information, visit www.themosh.org.</p> <p>Two-for-One Zoo Admission In honor of Independence Day, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens will offer two-for-one admission July 2-4. Guests who buy one general admission ticket will receive one general admission ticket of equal or lesser value for free. (The special offer cannot be combined with already discounted admission, coupons or Zoo Value Tickets.) Located at 370 Zoo Parkway in Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends. General admission is \$17.95 for adults, \$15.95 for seniors, \$12.95 for kids 3-12 and free for children 2 and under.</p>

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Monday, July 3	Tuesday, July 4	Wednesday, July 5	Thursday, July 6
<p>Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp The Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp will take on the Mobile BayBears July 3 starting at 7:05 p.m. at the Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville. Fans can stick around after the game for a special Independence Day fireworks display. The Jumbo Shrimp will also be giving away patriotic Jumbo Shrimp caps to the first 1,000 fans through the gates. Tickets start at \$5. The Baseball Grounds are located at 301 A .Philip Randolph Blvd. in Jacksonville. For more information, visit www.milb.com or call (904) 358-2846.</p> <p>Savory Faire Food & Wine Tasting Savor and sample the flavors of the Ancient City on this three-hour tasting tour through St. Augustine. Participants will travel through the historic city stopping at local restaurants to enjoy dishes created by the chefs especially for the tour. Offered July 3-4, the tour begins at 1:30 p.m. at the City Walks office, located at 4 Granada St. Admission is \$59 per person. Visit www.staugcitywalks.com or call (904) 825-0087.</p> <p>Fireworks and a Movie Celebrate the Fourth a day early at the World Golf Hall of Fame. Check-in will take place from 5 to 6:30 p.m. for a 7 p.m. IMAX 3D showing of "Transformers: The Last Knight." Following the movie, a fireworks display will begin at around 9:30 p.m. The fireworks will be free to view, but there will be a \$10 parking fee. Movie ticket packages will be available for purchase at a cost of \$15 for Movie Club members and \$20 for the general public. Food and beverages will also be available for purchase. The World Golf Hall of Fame is located at 1 World Golf Place in St. Augustine. For more information, call (904) 940-4123 or visit www.worldgolfhalloffame.org.</p> <p>'Friends for the Arts' Get involved in the arts by joining a team of fellow art supporters at the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach. Help develop and support fundraising projects and help initiate special projects to benefit and promote the Cultural Center and the arts in our community. For more information, visit www.ccpvb.org/friends-for-the-arts.</p>	<p>Celebration Run 5K Start off the holiday at this patriotic run/walk beginning at 7:30 a.m. Free food will be provided, as well as American flags for participants to wave while running. The event will take place at 3931 Baymeadows Road, Jacksonville. For registration and additional information, visit www.1stplacesports.com.</p> <p>Pirate Ship Black Raven Celebrate Independence Day pirate-style with a moonlight cruise aboard the Black Raven. View the impressive fireworks display from the deck of the pirate ship on this adults-only cruise. Admission is \$75 per person. The cruise departs at 8 p.m. from the St. Augustine Municipal Marina near the Bridge of Lions and returns immediately following the fireworks display. Visit www.blackravenadventures.com for more information.</p> <p>Fireworks in Jacksonville Beach The City of Jacksonville Beach's annual fireworks display will begin at 9 p.m. July 4 at the fishing pier. Bring a blanket and chairs to the beach and watch as the fireworks soar over the coastline.</p> <p>Fireworks Over the Matanzas The Ancient City will kick off its annual Fourth of July celebration at 6 p.m. with a two-hour concert at the Plaza da la Constitución. The free concert will feature the big band music of The All Star Orchestra, and attendees are encouraged to bring their own seating. At 9:30 p.m., the festivities will conclude with a 20-minute fireworks display over Matanzas Bay, choreographed to a soundtrack of popular patriotic hits.</p> <p>City of Jacksonville Fourth of July Celebration From 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on July 4, the City of Jacksonville's annual Fourth of July celebration will be underway. Throughout the evening, Jacksonville Landing will offer live music and food and drink specials. Then starting at 9:45 p.m., partygoers can view the fireworks as they are launched from two barges on the St. Johns River – one in front of the Landing, and the other located east of the Main Street Bridge.</p>	<p>Annie at The Alhambra The classic Broadway musical "Annie" continues its run at the Alhambra Theatre & Dining. The Alhambra's summer family show, "Annie" tells the story of a Depression-era orphan who is chosen to live with a millionaire for a short time. A three-course dinner will be served starting at 5:30 p.m., and the curtain will rise at 7:30 p.m. The show will run through Aug. 13. The Alhambra is located at 12000 Beach Blvd, Jacksonville Beach. For tickets and additional information, visit alhambrajax.com or call (904) 641-1212.</p> <p>Toastmasters Club Toastmasters Club #5199 of Ponte Vedra Beach meets every Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. at the Players Community Senior Center. These meetings will help attendees improve public speaking and gain leadership skills. The senior center is located at 175 Landrum Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach. Email Carmen at carmenjsardinas@gmail.com for additional information.</p> <p>First Wednesday Art Walk Produced by Downtown Vision, Inc. (DVI), Art Walk will be held from 5 to 9 p.m. July 5 throughout Downtown Jacksonville. On the first Wednesday of every month, more than 60 venues participate in this cultural exhibition, including Hemming Park, galleries, museums, cultural and educational venues, restaurants and bars, downtown businesses and more. July's theme will be "Palette to Palate." For more information, visit www.jacksonvilleartwalk.com.</p> <p>Music by the Sea Concert Series The "Music by the Sea" concert series returns to the St. Johns County Pier for its 15th year, bringing free weekly concerts in a variety of genres from 7 to 9 p.m. every Wednesday. Visitors are encouraged to bring a chair or blanket. Dinner is offered for \$10 or less beginning at 6 p.m. The July 5 concert will feature Chillula. The St. Johns County Pier is located at 350 A1A Beach Blvd. in St. Augustine Beach. For more information, visit www.sabca.org.</p>	<p>Harry Potter Trivia Throwdown "Harry Potter" fans ages 8-12 are invited to partake in this trivia challenge July 6 at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. From 2 to 5 p.m., kids will have the opportunity to showcase their knowledge of the Harry Potter book series in a game of Harry Potter Trivial Pursuit. After the game, there will be a showing of "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" on the library's big screen with surround sound. Kids are encouraged to wear their favorite Hogwarts House colors.. Children age 10 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library is located at 101 Library Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>Fluidity & Nature's Beauty, Life's Pleasures Exhibit Fluidity & Nature's Beauty, Life's Pleasures Exhibit will be on display at the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach through July 7. Created by Sharon Goldman, Doug Gerhart and Judy Gerhart, the exhibit's works combine bold, bright colors and scenes of relective water to create an artistic tribute to summer. The artwork is on display in the Main and Community Galleries and can be viewed Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. The Cultural Center is located at 50 Executive Way in Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, visit www.ccpvb.org or call (904) 280-0614.</p> <p>Concerts in the Plaza St. Augustine's Plaza de la Constitución will host the oldest city's summer-long concert series, "Concerts in the Plaza." The series will provide free concerts featuring local musical entertainment every Thursday night at 7 p.m. On July 6, Doug Carn and the Lincolnville Brass Band will perform street parade jazz. All of the "Concerts in the Plaza" shows are free to attend and visitors are encouraged to bring lounge chairs for seating. Picnic dinners are allowed, but alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the plaza.</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 Samantha@opcfla.com, post online at www.pontevedrarecorder.com using</p>

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By Samantha Logue

The First Coast knows how to celebrate Independence Day. Get a jump on the festivities by checking out these local Fourth of July activities.

July 1 Red, White and Brew Run

The “Red, White and Brew Freedom Run 5K” will be held Saturday, July 1 at the Riverside Arts Market. The race will run along the Riverwalk, and participants will be able to stop for refreshment at the “Halfway Bacon Station.” The event will include live entertainment, food trucks, beer stations and an artisan market that will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Awards will be presented to the top finishers, and the event proceeds will benefit local charities “Warfighters in Arms” and “K9s for Warriors.”

Registration will take place from 7 to 7:50 a.m. at 715 Riverside Ave, Jacksonville. The race will begin at 8 a.m. For additional information, visit www.jaxfreedomrun.com.

July 2 Two-for-one zoo admission

In honor of Independence Day, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens will offer two-for-one admission July 2-4. Guests who buy one general admission ticket will receive one general admission ticket of equal or lesser value for free. (The special offer cannot be combined with already discounted admission, coupons or Zoo Value Tickets.)

Located at 370 Zoo Parkway in Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends. General admission is \$17.95

for adults, \$15.95 for seniors, \$12.95 for kids 3-12 and free for children 2 and under.

July 3 Fireworks and a Movie

Celebrate the Fourth a day early at the World Golf Hall of Fame. Check-in will take place from 5 to 6:30 p.m. for a 7 p.m. IMAX 3D showing of “Transformers: The Last Knight.” Following the movie, a fireworks display will begin at approximately 9:30 p.m.

While the fireworks will be free to view, there will be a \$10 parking fee. Movie ticket packages will be available for purchase at a cost of \$15 for Movie Club members and \$20 for the general public. Food and beverages will also be available for purchase.

The World Golf Hall of Fame is located at 1 World Golf Place in St. Augustine. For more information, call (904) 940-4123 or visit www.worldgolfhalloffame.org.

Savory Faire Food & Wine Tasting

Savor and sample the flavors of the Ancient City on this three-hour tasting tour through St. Augustine. Participants will travel through the historic city stopping at local restaurants to enjoy dishes created by the chefs especially for the tour. Offered July 3-4, the tour begins at 1:30 p.m. at the City Walks office, located at 4 Granada St. Admission is \$59 per person. Visit www.staugcitywalks.com or call (904) 825-0087.



Photo courtesy of St. Augustine VCB

Fireworks Over the Matanzas

The Ancient City will kick off its annual Fourth of July celebration at 6 p.m. with a two-hour concert at the Plaza da la Constitución. The free concert will feature the big band music of The All Star Orchestra, and attendees are encouraged to bring their own seating. At 9:30 p.m., the festivities will conclude with a 20-minute fireworks display over Matanzas Bay, choreographed to a soundtrack of popular patriotic hits.

July 4 – Independence Day City of Jacksonville Beach Fourth of July Fireworks

The City of Jacksonville Beach’s annual fireworks display will begin at 9 p.m. July 4 at the fishing pier. Bring a blanket and chairs to the beach and watch as the fireworks soar over the coastline.

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Photos by Jennifer Logue

Pirate ship Black Raven

Celebrate Independence Day pirate-style with a moonlight cruise aboard the Black Raven. View the impressive fireworks display from the deck of the pirate ship on this adults-only cruise. Admission is \$75 per person. The cruise departs at 8 p.m. from the St. Augustine Municipal Marina near the Bridge of Lions and returns immediately following the fireworks display. Visit www.blackravenadventures.com for more information.



St. Augustine Lighthouse

The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum will host a special viewing of the July 4 fireworks from the top of the light station at 9 p.m. on Independence Day. Admission is \$40 for adults and \$35 for children 12 and under. Guests are asked to check in by 8:45 p.m. Tickets sell quickly; for reservations or more information, visit www.staugustinelighthouse.com or call (904) 829-0745.

City of Jacksonville Fourth of July Celebration

From 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on July 4, the City of Jacksonville's annual Fourth of July celebration will be underway. Throughout the evening, Jacksonville Landing will offer live music and drink and food specials. Then starting at 9:45 p.m., partygoers can view the fireworks as they are launched from two barges on the St. Johns River – one in front of the Landing, and the other located east of the Main Street Bridge.



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Library hosts 'Houses of Hogwarts' event



Photos by Samantha Logue

Aidan Killian wears the sorting hat.



Local children play Gringotts checkers at the library event.

By Samantha Logue

Children dressed in varying shades of red, green, yellow and blue gathered at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch of the St. Johns County Public Library June 22 for a Harry Potter-themed “Houses of Hogwarts” event.

Four tables – one for each Hogwarts house – were set up around the room with various activities. After the talking Sorting Hat had “sorted” them into their proper houses, kids traveled around the room, visiting each table as the feature film “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” was projected on a screen.

At the red table, Gryffindors battled one another at “Wizard’s Chess” and “Gringotts Checkers.” The green Slytherins, meanwhile, played “Harry Potter” versions of the classic board games “Clue” and “Trouble.” At



Youth Services Assistant Suzanne Egelin (right) helps children make magic wands.



Anne Crawford and Kayla Bond-Cashen

the blue table, Ravenclaws played a “Harry Potter” card game, while the yellow Hufflepuff table was designated for arts and crafts.

“I haven’t been sorted yet, but I’m kind of hoping to be in Slytherin,” said a boy in green, as he rushed off to make a magic wand. Hufflepuff Kayla Bond-Cashen, however, decided to make a Hungarian Horntail dragon.

“I’m a very big fan of ‘Harry Potter,’” Bond-Cashen said. “I’ve been in love with the books since I was about 8. Ever since I read the first book, I magically fell in love with [the series]. And it’s not about magic, it’s about, like, friendship and trust, and even though if you’re being hunted down by a crazy lady, or a guy who wants to kill you, never give up.”

Part of the library’s summer reading series, the get-together was arranged specifically for local “tweens” ages 8 to 12.



Photos by Samantha Logue

Youth Services Librarian Anne Crawford and Dylan Towner

“Tweens are a very interesting demographic to try to get a handle on,” said Assistant Branch Manager Anne Crawford, who also serves as youth services librarian. “They’re not old enough to really do the teen stuff, they’re too old to do the kiddie stuff, so finding something that lights them up is always an interesting challenge. But we thought, well, what better thing than Harry Potter? Who doesn’t love that?”

Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, “Houses of Hogwarts” will not be the library’s last Potter-themed event this summer. On July 6, the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch will hold a “Harry Potter Trivia Throwdown” and viewing of “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them” from 2 to 5 p.m.

“We’re big Harry Potter fans,” said Crawford, who will host the July event. “Harry Potter never goes out of style.”

Connections

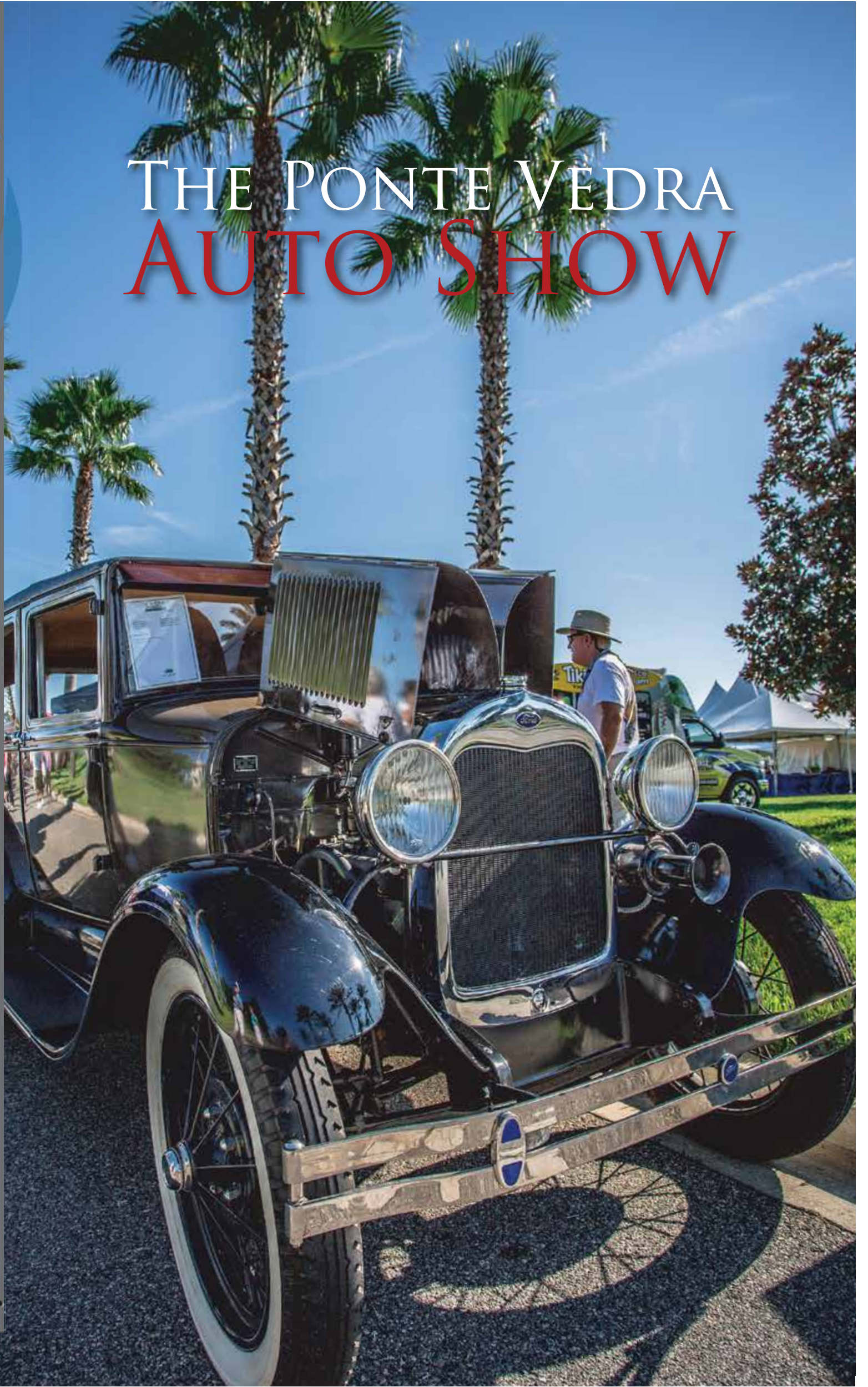
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Message from the Director

The season has arrived for summer backyard barbecues, beach days and fun in the sun. This time of year, we start to see lots of new faces around our favorite restaurants and retail spots, reinforcing the simple fact that our county continues to be ranked at the top when considering vacation and leisure activities.

A big part of why we continue to be at the top is the quality of life and strong businesses around our county. The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce understands that in order to have a strong economic environment, you must also have a strong sense of community. As the new director for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division, I am constantly reminded of just how blessed we are to have leaders, business owners, educators and citizens who realize that we all share in the responsibility of creating economic success within our community.

One of the ways we celebrate those individuals in Ponte Vedra Beach is during our Annual Membership Appreciation Awards. This after hours event held at Sawgrass Country Club continues to be the way we take a moment to thank our members for their commitment to the Chamber.

I want to acknowledge our recipients:

The Crushing It Award is given to the member who utilizes their membership and who has worked to grow their business: Matt Price, Regions Bank.

The Going the Distance Award is given to the member who has attended numerous events in both the St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra areas: Victoria Long, United Way of St. Johns County.

Key Contributor Award is given to the member who has stepped up at the last minute on countless occasions to assist and promote chamber events and initiatives: Felicia Cox, Iberia Bank.

Rookie of the Year Award is given to the member who shows great initiative in networking and promoting their business: Carla Miles, Mainstream Boutique.

2017 Dedicated Service Award is given to the member that never says no and can be consistently depended on for sponsorship of chamber events: Tom McDonough, Flavor Palette.

The Spotlight Award is given to the member that has had the most fun, and well attended before hours or after hours event: Cutter & Cutter Fine Art.

Our Board Member of the Year went to Sarah Alexander with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services. Sarah is the first to lend a hand and help in a variety of situations, whether it's out and about or during board meetings.

The Jeff Jenkins Community Service Award is given to a member who goes above and beyond in their service to our community: Advanced Disposal.

The Pat Morgan Outstanding Member Award is given to the member who goes above and beyond in their commitment to expanding and im-

proving our division: Rob Schlingmann, The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach.

Congratulations and thank you to all of our winners for your continued commitment to the chamber and our mission.

Another way we are continuing to grow business in St. Johns County is by working to enhance the visitor experience here in Ponte Vedra Beach. Isabelle Rodriguez, CEO of the SJC Chamber and I have been working alongside The Nichols Tourism Group/National Laboratory of Tourism, an eCommerce team retained to undertake a strategic planning assignment that would help us create a three-year plan for the Visitor Information Center in Ponte Vedra Beach.

This initiative directed by Dr. Daniel Fesenmaier of the National Laboratory of Tourism housed at the University of Florida was conducted to assist us in identifying new tourism product development opportunities. The results of their findings have been finalized and will be presented at the next Tourism Development Council Board meeting. It is our hope that we will receive the support needed to move forward to cultivate a stronger tourism base here in Ponte Vedra Beach.

In addition, mark your calendar for the 15th annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show presented by Fields Auto Group at Nocatee Town Center, on Sunday, Sept. 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. You don't want to miss it!



Toni Boudreaux
Director PVB Division, St. Johns
County Chamber of Commerce

Since becoming the Ponte Vedra Beach Division director, I have had the opportunity to work alongside our dedicated board members, who all share the same vision and commitment necessary to grow our business community. We are working collaboratively to build solid partnerships with our members throughout the county. As an advocate for business, we strive to create a healthy economy while simultaneously preserving the quality of life we all enjoy.

Recurring St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Events

Chamber Before Hours: Held the second Wednesday of the month, this networking event introduces a new host business at each gathering.

Chamber at Noon: Held on the third Wednesday of the month, the event begins at 11:30 a.m. with registration. Members then have the opportunity to network before enjoying lunch. Each Chamber at Noon event includes an educational component, such as health care reform. The event also provides time for the sponsoring company to be recognized before a captive audience. It is a cost-effective way to get your company known among members and guests.

Chamber After Hours: Chamber After Hours events are held every fourth Wednesday of the month, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Each month has a different host location, making for a lively and enjoyable event. Most After Hours are free, or a nominal fee is charged

to members and guests. Chamber After Hours is the perfect way to showcase your business location and amenities!

For more information about chamber events, visit www.stjohnscountychamber.com and click on the Upcoming Events link.

Power Networking Luncheon (PNL): Held on the second Tuesday of every month, this business-to-business networking luncheon program allows participants to introduce their business to all attendees. Remember to bring a small gift or door prize to promote your business. The event is open exclusively to chamber members, and seating is limited to the first 50 respondents each month.

Chamber Business Councils

Agricultural & Environmental Council: Meeting on the fourth Thursday of every other month, this council aims to promote, educate and provide a forum to

advance agricultural and environmental issues and show how these industries contribute to our quality of life. Council programs focus on our agricultural heritage and the economic contribution that this industry brings to the county. Environmental programs focus on promoting and addressing issues associated with our natural and environmental resources, sustainable development, permitting, conservation and eco-tourism.

Historic St. Augustine Council: Held on the second Friday of every month, council meetings are designed to bring members the most current information on tourism trends. The sessions also spotlight local and state initiatives that have economic impact on business in the historic district and work to make the nation's oldest city a better place for residents and visitors.

Small Business Council: Held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, this council works to sup-

port small businesses throughout St. Johns County. The council also strives to increase commerce while educating and serving as a resource to small business owners and their managers.

South Beaches Council: With meetings on the third Thursday of every month, the South Beach Council is designed for chamber members with a professional or general interest in the South Beaches area. The council is characterized by its dedication to the community and advocacy for local business issues.

Tourism & Hospitality Council: Meeting on the first Wednesday of every month, this council aims to further enhance the abilities of St. Johns County tourism businesses to provide first-class service to their visitors. The council aims to achieve this by being a resource for industry-specific training and educational opportunities.

Chamber gears up for 15th Annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for its 15th annual Ponte Vedra Auto Show.

To be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 10 at Nocatee Town Center, the auto show will feature up to 150 classic and new collectors' cars, which will compete for trophies in more than 30 categories. This year's event will also commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Camaro and the Shelby as well as the 70th anniversary of the Ferrari.

"The Ponte Vedra Auto Show is one of our most anticipated events of the year, with over 3,000 attendees annually," said Toni Boudreaux, director of the chamber's Ponte Vedra Beach Division. "We are excited this year to bring back food trucks, music and a vintage motorcycle display."

Presenting sponsor of the Ponte Vedra Auto Show will be Fields Auto Group.

"We welcome any opportunity to support the local 'car culture' and to mingle with other automobile enthusiasts," said Bran-

don Starks, general manager of Porsche of Jacksonville.

Starks noted that Fields Auto Group will have Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, Land Rover, Jaguar and Porsche vehicles on display at the 2017 Auto Show. Product specialists will also be on hand to discuss the cars and answer questions.

"We are thrilled to have Fields Auto Group return for its second year as the presenting sponsor for the Auto Show," said Isabelle Rodriguez, president and CEO of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. "The chamber is looking forward to providing for the 15th year this free event to residents and those who are visiting St. Johns County and Ponte Vedra Beach."

For more information or to register an automobile in the auto show, visit www.pvauto-show.com or call (904) 285-2004.



St. Johns County Chamber photos

Upcoming Chamber of Commerce events

Ponte Vedra Beach Division Joint Luncheon w/Jax Chamber Beaches Division

Thursday, July 13
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Sawgrass Golf Club
10034 Golf Club Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach
Speaker: Mike Linnington, CEO, Wounded Warrior Project
Cost: \$25 for chamber members, \$30 non-members

Chamber at Noon

Wednesday, Aug. 16
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Speaker: Richard Goldman, president and CEO, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau
Tourism in St. Johns County remains remarkably healthy, accounting for nearly one-third of all employment. Our speaker will preview things to come – new hotels, restaurants, galleries and more – while also discussing what's being done about controversial issues such as traffic and parking.
Cost: \$25 for members, \$30 non-members

PVB Division welcomes new ambassadors

The Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce welcomes its newest chamber ambassadors.



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First Coast Magazine



Scott Rains
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Morning on the Farm: EDC quarterly breakfast

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Council (EDC) held its quarterly breakfast Feb. 24 at Blue Sky Farms in Elkton.

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam served as the event's featured

guest. He discussed his priorities while in office, including fostering the growth and diversification of Florida agriculture and expanding access to Florida's fresh produce and seafood.

In addition to his keynote

speech, event attendees enjoyed networking opportunities, an array of breakfast items, including primavera quiche, potatoes and fruit salad, as well as the many sights and sounds at Blue Sky Farms.



Farmer Jeb Smith brought his Florida cracker cattle to the event for attendees to see.



Photos by Susan Griffin

Victor Raymos, Adam Putnam, Isabelle Rodriguez and Jeb Smith at the EDC quarterly breakfast at Blue Sky Farms.



Bill McClure & Elizabeth Granite

Chamber of Commerce PVB Division 'After Hours' celebrates opening of State Farm Insurance office

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division held a ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 22 for State Farm

Insurance, which recently opened an office in Nocatee Town Center at 466 Town Plaza Ave.

In addition to the ribbon cut-

ting, the chamber hosted an "After Hours" social gathering at the State Farm office, which provided members with the opportunity to

network and enjoy an evening of complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.



State Farm Insurance staff and St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division representatives at the ribbon cutting ceremony



Photos by Susan Griffin

State Farm Insurance employees Robert Gibbs, Danielle Miller, Brittney Bess, Candice Reed and Jonathan Gibbs

Morris offers sobering fiscal message at Ponte Vedra economic development breakfast

By Jennifer Logue

County Commissioner Jay Morris offered a sobering fiscal message to local business and community leaders March 1, when he predicted that St. Johns County will run out of reserves by 2021 and possibly as early as 2019.

At an economic development breakfast organized by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Council held at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse in Ponte Vedra Beach, Morris told more than two dozen business leaders that the

county will soon face difficult financial times if its leaders don't take action in the form of new revenue sources, such as an increase in the sales tax.

"The county is not financially viable going forward," said Morris, noting that while St. Johns County is the 35th fastest growing county in the nation, it was the second lowest in the state of Florida in terms of taxation.

"You get a very good deal here for what you have in St. Johns County for what you pay for it," Morris continued.

"That is going to come to a screeching halt. There really isn't any more you can cut out of the budget."

The commissioner then offered attendees a recap of the county's funding history, noting that today's budget is \$60 million less than it was in 2007, when the recession hit. In addition, the costs incurred in the clean-up of Hurricane Matthew have depleted the county's reserves, he noted.

Morris was critical of his fellow county commissioners, who voted in 2015 against putting a measure on the

ballot that would have increased the sales tax half a cent. Had the commissioners let the voters make that decision as they did with the increase for the schools, he contended, the county would not be facing the financial problems that will reach a critical point in the next few years.

"A decision is going to have to be made," said Morris, who noted he will not be running for re-election at the conclusion of his current term of office. "You can't continue to kick the can down the road."



Victor Raymos addresses attendees at the Ponte Vedra EDC breakfast



Declan Reiley, County Commissioner Jay Morris and SJC Chamber of Commerce CEO Isabelle Rodriguez



Chuck Schoonmaker and Anna Washington of the Hilton Garden Inn



Jennifer Belisario and Bill Hughes
Photos by Susan Griffin

SJC Chamber of Commerce PVB Division celebrates opening of Pivot CPAs Nocatee office with ribbon cutting ceremony

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division held a ribbon cutting ceremony Feb. 28 for Pivot CPAs to celebrate the opening of its Nocatee location.

Formerly known as The Griggs-

Group, the public accounting and business consulting firm's new office is located at 466 Town Plaza Ave. Suite 340 in Ponte Vedra. Pivot CPAs is headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach and has an additional office in Gainesville.



Photo by Susan Griffin

Members of the Pivot CPAs staff join with representatives of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach Division to mark the opening of the firm's new Nocatee location with a ribbon cutting.

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FirstAtlantic Bank hosts chamber 'Before Hours'

FirstAtlantic Bank welcomed local business and community leaders March 8, when the bank hosted a "Before Hours" networking get together for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to networking, the event showcased the complete makeover of the bank's financial center and featured a drawing for gift baskets as well as breakfast catered by KC's Kitchen.



Photos by Susan Griffin

FirstAtlantic Bank staff members join Ed Mercel (right), chairman of the board of directors for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce PVB Division, at the "Before Hours" social gathering March 8.

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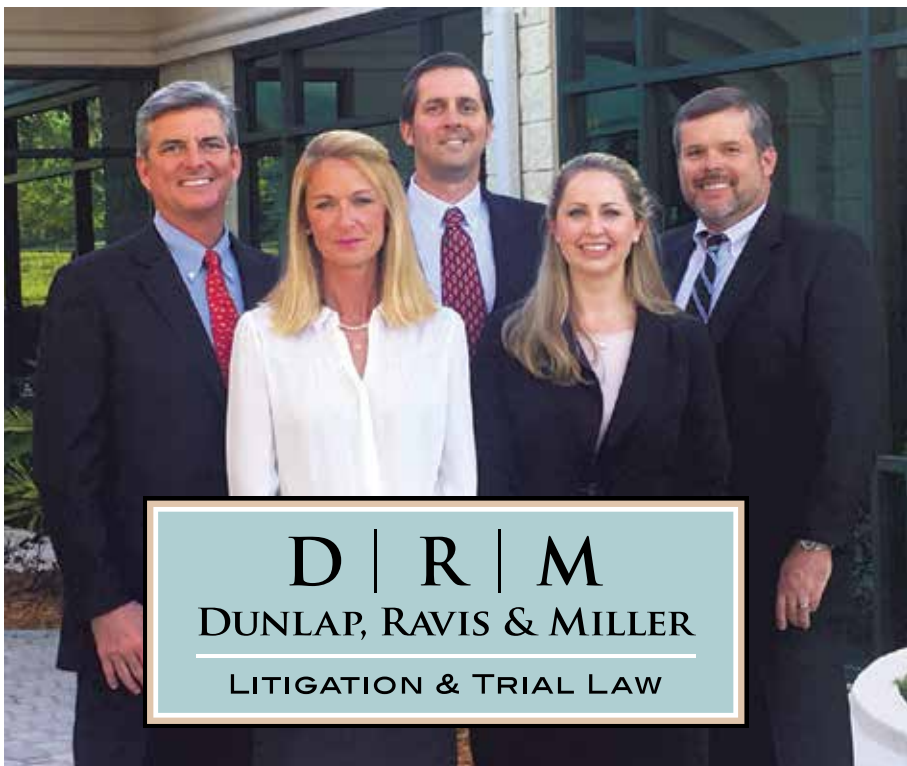
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Jumbo Shrimp owner discusses power of branding at SJC Chamber annual breakfast

By Jennifer Logue

Ken Babby knows the importance of branding and marketing.

When Babby purchased the Akron Aeros in 2012, he soon changed the minor league baseball team's name to the RubberDucks and implemented a family-friendly marketing plan that boosted attendance nearly 30 percent. So perhaps it shouldn't have been a surprise when Babby – who

purchased the Jacksonville Suns in 2015 – decided to change the team's name a year later to the Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp – a change that initially drew a strong negative reaction from fans.

Babby, however, has established a record for taking branding risks, and he shared some of what he's learned with attendees at the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's annual membership meeting. Held March 9 at the Renais-

sance World Golf Village Resort in St. Augustine, the event offered chamber members a chance to learn more about Babby's creative approach to building successful brands.

In addition to changing the Suns' name, Babby has invested more than \$1.8 million in upgrades to The Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville. And as he did in Akron, he said he has focused on making a trip to see the Jumbo Shrimp an af-

fordable family-friendly outing.

The former chief revenue officer and general manager of digital for The Washington Post, Babby, 36, is the youngest multi-team professional sports owner. In January 2016, he was named one of Sports Business Journal's 2016 "Forty Under 40" recognizing excellence and innovation in sports business careers.



Photos by Susan Griffin

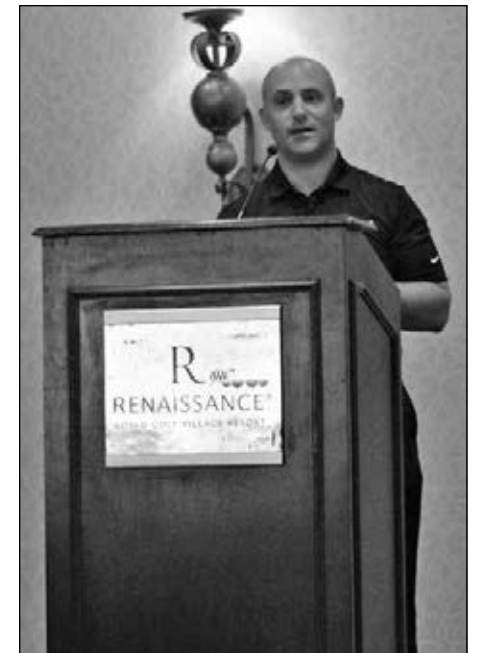
Sarah Alexander and Ed Mercel



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Dr. Erika Hamer and Dustin Vaughn



Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp Owner Ken Babby

Le Macaron holds grand opening

Le Macaron French pastry shop held its grand opening celebration March 11 with a family-friendly event featuring face painting, balloons, a mime and more.

Owners Stephanie Ebers and Reggie Thompson welcomed representatives from the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's Ponte Vedra Beach Division, who participated in the shop's ribbon-cutting ceremony. Located in The Shoppes at Ponte Vedra at 330 A1A North, Le Macaron offers naturally gluten-free macarons in a variety of flavors, along with chocolates, pastries and an assortment of French gelatos. The shop also features a breakfast menu of croissants, waffles, crepes, coffee, espresso and more.

Le Macaron French Pastries is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.



Rice: THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP a boon to local economy

By Jennifer Logue

THE PLAYERS Championship is more than just a world-class golf tournament, Executive Director Jared Rice told local business leaders at an April 13 chamber luncheon. It's an economic engine that pumps millions of dollars into the local economy while showcasing Northeast Florida to a global audience.

"This is extremely important for our community," Rice said at a joint meeting of the St. Johns County/Ponte Vedra Beach and JAX Beaches chambers of commerce held at Sawgrass Beach Club. "Five years ago, 60 percent of our ticket purchases originated from within the five-county area. Today, 55 percent originate from outside of the five-

county area. So, we are bringing quite a bit of out-of-town business to this community."

Rice shared some of the key pillars of THE PLAYERS' business plan, which include ensuring that the PGA Tour's "fifth major" offers the best field of competitors of any major tournament.

"Statistically, (THE PLAYERS) is

the best field of golf, period," Rice said. "It is the best of the best playing each other at TPC Sawgrass."

He also noted that over the past seven years, the tournament has generated nearly \$50 million for local charities.

"That is life changing giving and it is staying here in Northeast Florida," he said.



Photos by Jennifer Logue

THE PLAYERS Championship Executive Director Jared Rice addresses members of the Jax and St. Johns County chambers of commerce.



Tournament Chairman Kevin English discusses the critical role volunteers play in THE PLAYERS Championship.



Toni Boudreaux and Jennifer Belisario



Chris Goerge and John Miller

Business leaders meet new Ponte Vedra Beach chamber director



Photos courtesy of SJC Chamber

Ponte Vedra Beach Division Director Toni Boudreaux and Board Chair Ed Mercel

Local business and community leaders had an opportunity to meet the new director of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce March 27, when the Hilton Garden

Inn hosted an after-hours reception. New Director Toni Boudreaux met with guests and shared with them some of her plans to strengthen the PVB Division, drawing on her background in fundraising and

event management. Guests also had an opportunity to network with other business leaders while enjoying complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments.



Victor Raymos and Art Wildblood



Dr. Rob Karol, Isabelle Rodriguez, Toni Boudreaux, Ed Mercel, Carol Maurer, Ted Hayes, Kathleen Floryan, Anna Washington, Chuck Schoonmaker and Anette Saalman.

Arbor Terrace hosts 'Chamber After Hours'

Arbor Terrace Ponte Vedra hosted a "Chamber After Hours" event April 19 for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. Chamber members and guests enjoyed complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments while networking with other business and community leaders.



Ed and Cyndi Goldberg



Declan Reiley and Karen Everett



John Schaum and Ann Terrell

Photos by Susan Griffin

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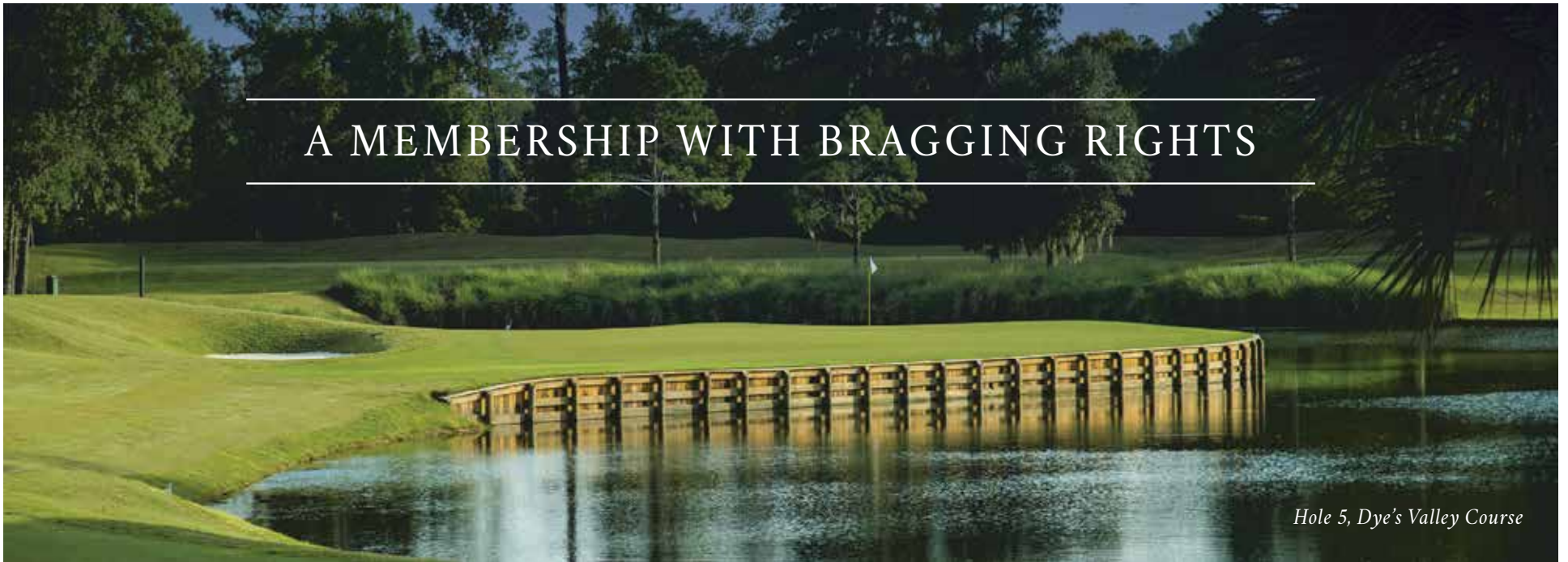
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Jacksonville, St. Johns chambers of commerce host 'After Hours at THE PLAYERS'

Members of the Jacksonville and St. Johns County chambers of commerce got a head start on the festivities surrounding THE PLAYERS Championship when the two

chambers hosted an "After Hours" event at TPC Sawgrass.

Held May 4 at THE PLAYERS Stadium Village, the event attracted an estimated 500 business and com-

munity leaders from across the First Coast. Attendees enjoyed refreshments provided by a number of local restaurants – including Blackfinn Ameripub, Gusto, III Forks,

Mulligan's Pub, Papa Murphy's Take-N-Bake, Seasons 52, Taziki's Mediterranean Café and Peterbrooke Chocolatier – while networking with other business representatives.



Randall and Karina Coryell



Jennifer Belisario, Susan Griffin, Victoria Crawford, Christine Ondek, Gloria Dongara and Carol Maurer



Jackie Smith, Clare Berry and David Smith



Marcia Karol, Dr. Robert Karol and Sandy Mackanos



Chris Guzewich, Scott Showalter and Kimberly O'Steen



Jeff Wyatt and Jennifer Belisario



Ina Gerville, Jared Rice, Paul Woods, Daniel Davis, Ashley Szczukowski, Greg Smith, Darnell Smith and Vince McCormack

Photos by Susan Griffin



Malcom Anthony and Victoria Crawford

EDC panel: Businesses should prepare now for hurricane season

By Jennifer Logue

With Hurricane Matthew a not-so-distant memory, local government and public safety officials say that now is the time for local businesses to learn from last year's major storm and prepare for this year's hurricane season.

Learning the lessons of Hurricane Matthew was the focus of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce's quarterly Economic Development Council breakfast. Held May 25 at the World Golf Village Renaissance Resort, the event featured a panel discussion during

which participants urged business leaders to take steps now to prepare for potential future storms. Panelists included St. Johns County Administrator Michael Wanchick, St. Augustine Beach Police Chief Robert Hardwick, St. Augustine Fire Chief Carlos Aviles and Marge

Cirillo of the Florida Small Business Development Center.

"I challenge you to prepare yourself and your business," Hardwick told attendees. "Prepare your business for an evacuation. Because there will be another storm. It'll happen again."



County Administrator Michael Wanchick and St. Augustine Fire Chief Carlos Aviles



Panelists Michael Wanchick, Chief Robert Hardwick, Chief Carlos Aviles and Marge Cirillo

Photos by Jennifer Logue

Chamber of Commerce presents Member Appreciation Awards

The Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce recognized its most active and engaged members May 24 at its annual Member Appreciation Awards.

Held at Sawgrass Country Club, the celebration recognized members who actively participate in chamber

events and initiatives. The 2017 Jeff Jenkins Community Service Award was presented to Advanced Disposal, while the Pat Morgan Outstanding Member Award went to Rob Schlingmann, general manager at The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach. The Board Member of the Year Award went to Sarah Alexander of Berkshire

Hathaway HomeServices.

Additional award categories and their recipients included: Crushing It: Matt Price, Regions Bank; Going the Distance: Victoria Long, United Way; Key Contributor: Felicia Cox, Iberia Bank; Rookie of the Year: Carla Miles, Mainstream Boutique; Dedicated Service: Chef Tommy

McDonough, Flavor Palette; Spotlight Award: Cutter & Cutter Fine Art.

Sponsors of the Member Appreciations Awards event included Sawgrass Country Club, Pivot CPAs, the Ponte Vedra Recorder, VyStar Credit Union, Clean Getaway Car Wash and Le Macaron, which provided refreshments.



Photos by Susan Griffin

Award recipients Felicia Cox, Len and Sonya Cutter, Sarah Alexander, Steve Carn (accepting on behalf of Advanced Disposal), Melissa Nelson (accepting on behalf of Victoria Long), Jamie McDonough (accepting on behalf of Chef Tommy McDonough) and Carla Miles.



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Michael Curet



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Michael Curet



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Suzanne Stephens



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Susan Fort or Tyler Ackland



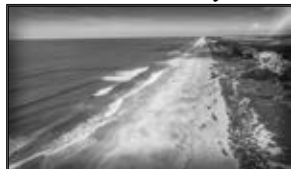
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Michael Curet



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Ponte Vedra resident launches business to help seniors maintain homes

By Jon Blauvelt

A Ponte Vedra Beach resident recently started a business to help seniors age safely and comfortably in their homes.

Dr. Rebecca Cooper, a Sawgrass resident who has been practicing pediatrics in the Greater Jacksonville area for 16 years, recently launched The Homestead Advantage, a company that provides seniors with regular maintenance of their homes to allow them to stay there for as long as possible.

"I have a lot of skills in the building and construction field," said Cooper, a certified residential home inspector and general contractor who also has a law degree. "My bigger strength is dealing with people and making sure people feel comfortable with what they're doing. I think my medical skills translate really well into this company."

The Homestead Advantage, she explained, cares for its clients' homes just like a personal physician cares for a patient's medical health on a regular basis. The company conducts basic, monthly maintenance of homes, including changing filters and light bulbs, fixing dripping toilets and checking gutters to ensure they're clear of debris, among several other services. As part of the monthly visits, the business also provides evaluations in which clients receive recommendations for

proactive, preventative home care to avoid unpleasant surprises and the need for emergency repairs.

"We want them to still feel like they're managing their home but managing it with help," said Cooper, whose company is a membership service with subscription options starting at \$94 per month.

When more major work is required, the company can additionally provide its clients with consultations that include assisting in the planning of work, obtaining and evaluating project proposals from contractors and supervising the project to its completion. Consultations are an additional cost that depends on the project's scope of work.

Cooper was inspired to start The Homestead Advantage after buying her house in Ponte Vedra from an elderly woman named Millie who had lived in the home with her husband Mike for 20 years. After Mike died, Millie became too frail to complete simple tasks around the home, such as changing the air conditioning filter or the smoke detector battery. Her children lived several states away, her handyman had retired and she was unable to find a trustworthy replacement. As a result, her home suffered and became unsafe, leading her children to convince Millie to move to an independent living facility closer to them.



Photo by Jon Blauvelt

Dr. Rebecca Cooper, a Sawgrass resident, runs a new business that provides seniors with regular maintenance of their homes.

Cooper said this story is all too common for seniors, in which maintaining their homes becomes too big a burden to bear. The goal of The Homestead Advantage, she said, is to relieve that burden and help residents stay in their homes for as long as they want.

"I'm selling peace of mind," said Cooper. "I want to be there for these people."

Part of that peace of mind, she added, is for clients to see the same handyman every month so they can ultimately grow to trust that individual.

"The more important part is for us to get to know them and for them to get to know us," said Cooper, "so that when something sig-

nificant comes up, they don't have to worry about whether they will be cheated or not."

The Homestead Advantage is mainly serving Ponte Vedra and the Beaches, as well as other select areas in St. Johns and Duval counties. The company's office is located at 333 Fourth Ave. North in Jacksonville Beach. For more information, visit <http://www.homesteadadvantage.com/> or call (904) 999-9902.

"The recommendations that I make to people is not, 'let's tear everything down,'" said Cooper. "I'm going to adjust your home so that it's safe for you, but it's still going to be your home."

Crosswater Dental Care opens in Nocatee

By Samantha Logue

Crosswater Dental Care joined the growing list of businesses at Nocatee Town Center last week, furthering the progress of the community's ongoing development efforts.

The practice held a ribbon-cutting ceremony June 21 at its new office at 685 Crosswater Parkway to celebrate the occasion. With help from neighboring businesses M Shack, Pieology, Coastal Wine Market and The Loop, Crosswater Dental Care of-

fered attendees refreshments and surprise gift giveaways.

"We truly enjoy the Nocatee community and are very grateful to be a part of it," said Dr. Shruti Chopra. "I would love the opportunity to give back to our community."

Located next to M Shack, the practice's services range from routine cleanings to cosmetic dentistry. For more information, visit www.crosswaterdentalcare.com or call (904) 686-1400.



Photo by Susan Griffin.

Tijuana Flats opens Nocatee location

By Samantha Logue

Tex-Mex restaurant Tijuana Flats held a ribbon cutting ceremony for its new Nocatee

Town Center location June 23. Located at 41 Settlement Drive, the restaurant shares a building with the community's recently opened Starbucks.



SJC Chamber photo

Tijuana Flats held a ribbon cutting ceremony for its new Nocatee location June 23. The restaurant officially opened for business June 26.

Attendees at the event received several colorful gifts sporting the Tijuana Flats logo, including frisbees, cups, sunglasses, bracelets and drink koozies. The restaurant also presented a \$5,500 donation to the Ponte Vedra-based nonprofit K9s for Warriors. To raise the funds, the Tijuana Flats Just in Queso Foundation sold hot sauces and took donations in its Jacksonville area stores throughout the month of April.

“Supporting our military and veterans is a key component to the Tijuana Flats Just in Queso Foundation and we feel they are doing great work to support our warriors,” said Randy Stiel, executive director of the

foundation. “Overall throughout all of our stores company wide, we raised a total of \$25,000 that we donated to five different organizations.”

Tijuana Flats, which originated in Winter Park, Florida, now has more than 120 locations throughout multiple states. The Nocatee location is the chain's ninth restaurant to open in the greater Jacksonville area, and according to Tijuana Flats CEO Larry Ryback, the growing Nocatee community was a natural fit for the company.

“Our locations in North Florida are very successful,” Ryback said. “We look forward to expanding here.”

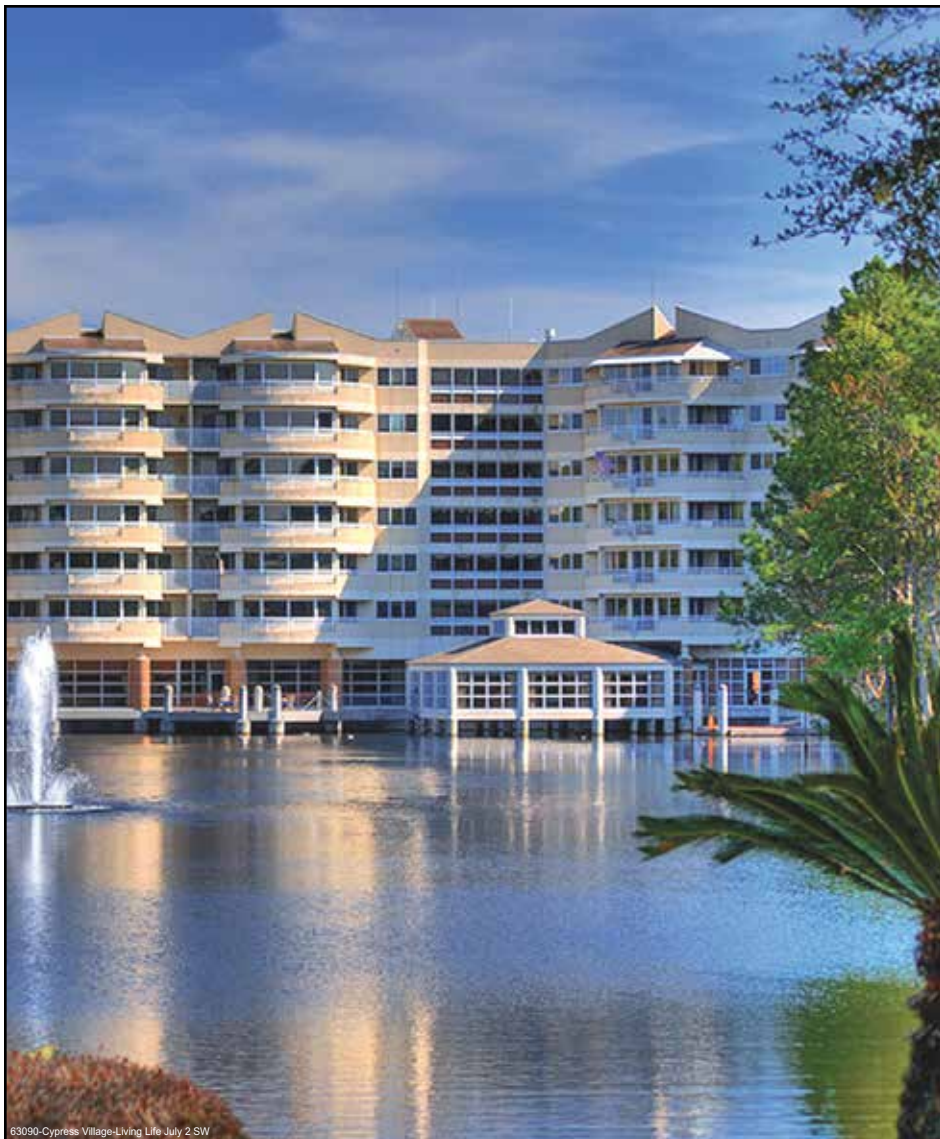
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New Gate station opens in Nocatee



Photos by Susan Griffin

The Gate station team members on opening day

Travelers filling up their gas tanks at the new Gate station in Nocatee received free coffee last week as part of the station's grand opening celebration.

Located at the corner of Palm Valley Road and Davis Park Road, the new station opened June 22. Opening festivities included offering free hot dogs, Tasty

Kake samples and the chance to spin the wheel and win such prizes as pizza, koozies, coupons and more.

In addition to the gas station and a car wash, the new facility offers Best Bean fresh-roasted coffee, Krispy Kreme doughnuts, Yobe frozen yogurt and more.

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Photo by Jennifer Logue

Mandy Ohorodnik of Ponte Vedra Beach models a Bo & Nic dress at Mainstream Boutique with celebrity stylist George Brescia.



Photo by Susan Griffin

Celebrity stylist George Brescia and Mainstream Boutique Owner Carla Miles



Photo provided by George Brescia

Broadway actress Kate Baldwin attends the Tony Awards in a custom gown designed for her with George Brescia's assistance.

Celebrity stylist shares fashion tips with local shoppers

By Jennifer Logue

Visitors to Ponte Vedra's Mainstream Boutique had a chance to be "styled" by a nationally recognized fashion expert last week, when celebrity stylist George Brescia traveled to the First Coast to help introduce the boutique's customers to the Bo & Nic line of apparel.

In addition to mingling with guests at a June 20 cocktail reception, Brescia signed copies of his book, "Change Your Clothes, Change Your Life" (Simon & Schuster), before offering personal style sessions to local shoppers throughout the following day.

While the visit was Brescia's first to the Jacksonville area, the fashion expert said traveling across the country is a regular part of his job as a stylist.

"I dress everyone from soccer moms to Oscar-winning actresses," Brescia told the Recorder, noting that he

recently helped Broadway actress Kate Baldwin ("Hello, Dolly") select a custom-made gown for the Tony Awards. "Women I've never met will fly me across the country to where they live."

Far from being a grind, however, Brescia said his travels help him keep his finger on the pulse of American fashion trends.

"Traveling around the country keeps me educated about what women want," said Brescia, who has appeared as a fashion expert on numerous television programs, including the TODAY show. "As a stylist, I'm always looking for something that will make my clients feel more special."

The Bo & Nic line does just that, Brescia said, because it features an exclusive collection of colorful prints not found anywhere else.

"These prints are so happy and fun," said Brescia. "The four-way stretch fabric is so flattering, and because the

prints are exclusive (to Bo & Nic), you won't see yourself coming and going."

The line also complements the fashion tastes of First Coast women. "The style here is more colorful than in other parts of the country," he said. "You feel a little bit of the beach vibe here, for sure."

Expert tips

So, what advice does Brescia have for First Coast fashionistas? The style guru offered three fashion rules of thumb:

- **Illuminate yourself:** When selecting outfits, take into consideration your skin tone, eye color and hair color. "You want to create a look that will 'pop the eyes,'" Brescia said.
- **Accentuate your assets:** "If you love your legs, play up your

legs," he said. "If you like your back, play up your back."

- **Accessorize your look:** "Accessories, accessories, accessories," Brescia said. "It's all about a great pair of earrings."

Brescia's book offers numerous other tips to help women create their own unique style.

"When you know what looks good on you, shopping becomes a very different experience," he said, adding that the goal is to learn the "secret language of clothing" that will spotlight the person, not the outfit.

"You want people to say, 'That dress looks amazing on you' – not 'That's an amazing dress.'"



Jacobsen discusses economic perspectives at Chamber at Noon luncheon

The current economic climate was the focus of the Ponte Vedra Beach Division's "Chamber at Noon" luncheon last week. Held June 21 at Sawgrass Golf Club,

the luncheon featured Edward Jones financial advisor Karsten Jacobson, who discussed timely market topics and potential investment strategies.



Karsten Jacobson, Sarah Alexander, Toni Boudreaux and Steven Beyer

Photos by Susan Griffin:



Toni Boudreaux, Karen Everett and Chloe Ryder

PVB Division hosts shower for Lucia Miller



Chamber of Commerce photo

Board members and ambassadors for the Ponte Vedra Beach Division of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce hosted a baby shower June 1 for chamber Tourism Coordinator Lucia Miller, who is expecting her first child. Front row: Felicia Cox, Dr. Erika Hamer, Frances King, Ilene Thrasher, Sarah Alexander, Lori Adams, Lucia Miller, Gloria Dongara and Kari Zerrahn. Back: Toni Boudreaux and Sandy Kavanaugh.

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Beaches girl stars in Alhambra's Annie

The Alhambra Theatre & Dining debuted its production of the popular Broadway musical "Annie" last night. Selected from an open casting call of more than 110 girls, Queen's Harbour resident Carly Julia Barnes is one of two young actresses chosen to portray the lead role of Annie.

Barnes, who attends the Discovery School in Jacksonville Beach, is joined in the title

role by Jena Simmons of Jupiter, Florida. For both girls, this will be their first appearance at the Alhambra. Simmons' previous credits include "Les Misérables" and "The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley Jr." at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre. She has also appeared on "Investigation Discovery" as well as various TV commercials for companies including hhgregg, Chrysler, and Universal Studios.

Although Barnes is new to live theatre, she has two short film credits for "Innocent Pact" and "Starling."

Set in Depression-era New York City, "Annie" follows the story of a young orphan who is selected to spend one week living in the mansion of millionaire Oliver "Daddy" Warbucks. The show is based upon Harold Gray's "Little Orphan Annie" comic

strip, with music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Martin Chamin, and book by Thomas Meehan. The original Broadway production of "Annie" opened in 1977 and ran for nearly six years. Among the musical's most popular numbers are "Tomorrow" and "It's the Hard Knock Life."

"Annie" will continue its run at the Alhambra through Aug. 13. Tickets start at \$35 and include a three-course dinner, the show and parking. The theatre is located at 12000 Beach Blvd. in Jacksonville. For show times and details, contact the box office at (904) 641-1212 or visit www.alhambrajax.com.



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\$2 million grant helps fuel Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' growth

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens recently received a \$2 million grant from the family of Dan and Brenda Davis that will be used to drive further enhancements and improvements throughout the zoo.

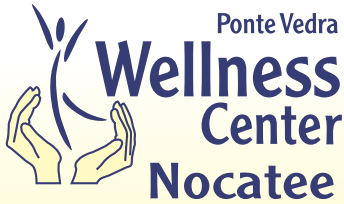
"The Davis Family has been inspirational in their dedication and devotion to the Jacksonville community," said Tony Vecchio, executive director of the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. "To be one of the organizations that they have chosen to invest in to make our community a better place is an honor. We are so grateful for their help, friendship and leadership."

The Davis family's generosity toward the zoo dates back to the early 1990s and has continued ever since. A nonprofit organization, the zoo relies on donations from community partners like the Davis family to further the zoo's mission of creating innovative and fun experiences that highlight education and conservation of wildlife. Over the past 35 years, more than \$55 million has been raised for the zoo, which is home to approximately 2,000 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants.



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Indoor golf facility uses technology to help golfers improve their game

By Jon Blauvelt

A new indoor golf facility has opened in Jacksonville Beach featuring simulation technology that provides golfers with highly sophisticated data analysis of their swing.

Located at 1380 Beach Blvd., Coastal Indoor Golf opened in late May, providing golfers of varying skill levels the opportunity to improve their game in a comfortable and fun setting.

The 3,000-square-foot facility features two TrackMan 4 simulators, which allow golfers to instantly analyze various pieces of data regarding each of their shots, including their club speed, club face and path relationship, ball flight and more. The simulators, which are surrounded by leather couches and TVs displaying the latest action in sports, also provide golfers with a video replay of their shots that enables them to see exactly what they may be doing incorrectly.

“You learn so much faster with TrackMan because you’re able to gather data on each shot,” said Coastal Indoor Golf Owner Brian Sherrill, a North Carolina native who previously worked at Rock Barn Country Club & Spa as an assistant professional. “You’re able to look at your swing on every shot and understand why the ball curved that way or went the direction it did.”

The TrackMan technology, which is used by PGA pros and coaches around the world, is paired with E6 simulation software that allows participants to virtually play at 84 world-famous golf courses, such as Pebble Beach and Torrey Pines. A PGA professional is also on site at the facility for club fitting and instruction.

In addition, Coastal Indoor Golf boasts a putting green, arcade games and a shuffleboard table. Participants at the facility can also enjoy snacks and drinks, including beer and wine.

Sherrill, a graduate of Campbell University’s PGA Golf Management program, noted that his facility mitigates a common headache for golfers: time. Whereas outdoor courses typically require several hours of play in sometimes uncomfortable conditions, he said, Coastal Indoor Golf provides participants with the ability to spend their time wisely, in a cool, laid-back environment. The time allotted for play is approximately one hour per golfer for 18 holes and 30 minutes for nine

holes. Because the technology provides instantaneous information and results, Sherrill said practice sessions also take less time.

Coastal Indoor Golf charges participants based on how much time they use the simulator. The rates are \$40 per hour before 4 p.m. and \$50 per hour after 4 p.m. The facility also offers 30 minute rates of \$25 before 4 p.m. and \$30 after 4 p.m. The maximum number of players allowed per simulator is four.

Sherrill added that the facility offers \$75 memberships that include various discounts at the facility. The business is also planning to start competitive leagues.

Coastal Indoor Golf provides rental sets of clubs and golf balls, but participants can bring their own if they prefer. Golfers interested in playing at the facility should make a reservation online at <https://coastalindoorgolf.com/shop/> or call at (904) 372-4518.

“What makes Coastal Indoor Golf unique is the technology we offer,” said Sherrill, who added the facility is also available for private lessons and corporate events. “We are the only facility in the area offering TrackMan 4 radar technology, paired with E6 simulation software. These tools provide highly sophisticated data analysis of your swing and can help you drastically improve your game.”



Brian Sherrill is one month into opening Coastal Indoor Golf.



Photos by Jon Blauvelt

Coastal Indoor Golf features simulation technology that can help golfers improve their game.



Coastal Indoor Golf Owner Brian Sherrill adjusts the course on the TrackMan simulator.



Coastal Indoor Golf Owner Brian Sherrill takes a shot using the TrackMan simulator.

Keep kids' minds active to combat summer learning loss



By Dane Gilbert
Special to the Recorder

Summer vacation is the highlight of most kids' year – the time when they get to sleep over at friends' houses, hang out at the pool and make memories

for a lifetime. It's important, however, to keep your child mentally stimulated this summer to prevent a serious risk to their education: summer learning loss.

What is summer learning loss?

Learning loss is a phenomenon in which children lose vital academic information from the previous school year during an extended break, resulting in them falling behind in the classroom and starting the next school year unprepared. According

to the National Summer Learning Association, students can digress two to three months in their academic skills during vacation, especially in the fields of mathematics, spelling and reading comprehension.

Learning loss can be particularly detrimental for young students because it puts them behind in their reading skills. From kindergarten through third grade, children are generally learning to read. From fourth grade on, they have developed their reading skills and are now reading to learn. Studies show that if students are not at reading level by fourth grade, they are four times more likely to leave high school without their diploma.

How your kids can continue learning

With a few simple activities, parents can keep their children's minds stimulated so that they not only avoid learning loss, but also enter the next school year more prepared than ever.

The most important step is to make time for learning in your schedule and your child's schedule. You don't need to build a set curriculum; instead, turn relevant, day-to-day activities into lessons. For example, ask your child to help with the measurements if you're baking, or read the morning paper together and use the news to talk about important topics.

If your child is interested in a specific topic – whether it's marine animals, rocket ships or a series of books – encourage it. Fun, educational activities like visiting a zoo or conducting at-home science experiments can motivate children to keep learning. Since reading is one of the most important skills students need to keep working on, go to the library or book store with your child and see if you can find an interesting book to read.

Another great way to encourage your child's interests is through summer camp. Whether it's a specialized camp or a longer program, your child can keep

learning while also interacting with peers. Many camps plan activities around school curriculum to keep important topics front of mind. Communities in Schools of Jacksonville has provided academically enriched summer camps for struggling students for more than 15 years, with certified teachers encouraging campers to engage in STEM subjects and improve their literacy.

Summer learning loss can affect most children, but it's easy to prevent by keeping them engaged and creative. Children inherently want to learn more – that's why they are always asking "why." Give your child the right tools and encouragement, and they will succeed.

Dane Gilbert is the director of case management at Communities in Schools of Jacksonville (CIS) and previously worked in public schools as a teacher and principal. For more information on Gilbert and his work, visit CISjax.org.

THEME: COMIC BOOK HEROES

CROSSWORD

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- ___ Tuesday
- Black and white treat
- Viola da Gamba, pl.
- ___ trip
- * ___ Thing, of the DC Universe
- Do like Etna
- Listening organ
- Front of cuirass
- *Bandana-wearer named for a painter
- *It bit Peter Parker
- Cash provider
- Mallet or saw
- Geological Society of America
- Heard more than once
- Ukraine's neighbor
- Opposite of riches?
- France's currency
- Excessive sternness
- Paella pot
- Run off to wed
- Dumpy establishment
- Teatro alla Scala performance
- ___ sack
- Iditarod ride
- Japanese mat
- By way of, for short
- Old age, archaic
- "The Sun ___ Rises"
- *"Rogue ___: A Star Wars Story"
- *Wonder Woman, e.g.
- *Captain ___
- Unimpressed
- Hole punching tool
- Helper
- Was violently angry
- #35 Across, sing.
- Bloodhound's clue
- #44 Across solo
- Chapter in history
- Sunrise side, pl.

DOWN

- Affirm
- Turkish currency
- Trend higher
- Top dog
- Posthumous type of tax
- "I ___ your pain"
- Agha, alt. sp.
- Body trunk
- Was in the hole
- Unpleasant road display?
- Dubai dignitary
- Operations or opportunities, for short
- *Popeye
- Mike holder
- Weasel-related onomatopoeia
- Capital of Ontario
- *"I am ___"
- Planktonic tunicate
- End of a shoelace
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Bruce Banner
31. Jar covers
32. Light-footed
33. Writer's opus
34. *Judge of Mega City One
36. Actress Gilbert
38. Moonfish
42. Erasable programmable read only memory
45. Dumbfounded
49. U.N. workers' grp.
51. Apprehension
54. Rabbit trap
56. ___ Kane of soap opera fame

57. Wing-shaped
58. New Testament sages
59. Between ports
60. #1 Across, sing.
61. Bad day for Caesar
62. Lincoln coin
63. A in B.A.
64. Women's undergarment
66. *"Captain America: Civil ___"

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Source: Real Value of Joining a Local Chamber of Commerce
Shapiro Group, 2012.

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