

Business Weekly Featuring Meet Your Eye Doc & Love Your Smile - Who's Who in Dentistry Page 13

Thursday, August 10, 2023

PonteVedraRecorder.com

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St. Johns County tentative tax rate set

By Shaun Ryan

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the tentative property tax rates for fiscal year 2024 at the board's meeting Tuesday, Aug. 1. The rates can be reduced prior to public hearings in September toward adoption of the final millage, but from a practical standpoint, they cannot be increased.

The first budget hearing is set for 5 p.m. Sept. 5.

The recommended budget is \$1.19 billion, compared to last year's \$1.55 billion.

In addition to the regular expenses

TAX continues on Page 9

A team full of dreamers

Gator Bowl. Dreams Come True announce 2023 squad

By Anthony Richards

Thirteen local children became part of a team Aug. 7, thanks to a partnership between the TaxSlaver Gator Bowl and Dreams Come True.

A press conference was held just outside the Gator Bowl headquarters in the shadow of EverBank Stadium in downtown Jacksonville, where the children were announced and signed their certificates to officially be a member of the group.

"With this starting seven years ago, I've been able to see this thing really grow and the opportunities that we've been able to offer locally by taking advantage of the Gator Bowl being here," Gator Bowl Sports Chairman Alan Worley said.

Each member of the team is battling or has battled various forms of illness and their families were in attendance to share in the moment.

The 2023 "Dream Team" consists of Willie Barber, 10; James Clarkson, 9; Jack



Sammy Macauley and James Clarkson hold up their signed certificates during the 2023 Dream Team signing day press conference Aug. 7.

Coleman, 15; Savannah Gainey, 8; Blake Hunter, 9; Makenna Jobes, 17; Sammy Macauley, 16; Chase Seguin, 10; Jaxon Taylor, the youngest at 6 years old; Mary Taylor, 16; Shane Taylor, 7; Jasel Williams, 17.

The team has been going on as a marquee program for Gator Bowl Charities since its inception.

According to Dreams Come True Executive Director Sheri Criswell, the dream

team initiative is one of her favorites each year since its formation in 2017.

"One of the reasons I love this so much, is because so many of the things we do are very individualistic, but this allows these kids to really have this synergy together amongst the team," Criswell said. "It really serves as a little support group with those who can also relate, which is great. We've

DREAMERS continues on Page 21











INSIDE

One of Us Page 6

Business Weekly Pages 13-18

In the Arts Pages 19-20

Sports Page 21



Hugh Osteen COO/VP hugh@osteenmediagroup.com (904) 285-8831

Susan Griffin Publisher susan@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 686-3938

Shaun Ryan Editor shaun@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1202

Anthony Richards

Reporter anthony@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1207

Don Coble

Contributor don@claytodayonline.com

Amber Anderson

Page/Graphic Designer amber@pontevedrarecorder.com

April Snyder

Sales Assistant april@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1204

Kristin Flanagan

Account Executive kristin@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1206

Adele McGraw

Account Executive adele@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1208

Chris Ratliff

Multimedia Specialist chris@osteenmediagroup.com (704) 640-8408

Joe Wilhelm

Circulation Manager joe@osteenmediagroup.com (904) 300-5374

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BRIEFS

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Family seining program at GTM Research Reserve

There will be a guided family seining activity from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 12, at the GTM Research Reserve Guana Dam, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Learn about the animals and their roles in Guana Lake by pulling a seine net and collecting species of fish, crabs and other marine life.

The event is free, but parking is \$3 per vehicle. Waders and boots will be provided. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended.

To register, go to secure.lglforms.com/ form_engine/s/SM6ob8y0g2yB-Q4W_ GTZLg?t=1666719764.

Cutest Pet Contest under way

The Jacksonville Humane Society's (JHS) Cutest Pet Contest is back. The virtual contest raises money to support JHS pets while naming one dog or cat the Cutest Pet in Jacksonville. Submissions and voting opened Aug. 1. The final day to submit your dog or cat is Aug. 27, with the final day to vote for the pet you think is the cutest being Aug. 31.

The winner will be featured on digital billboards across Jacksonville, have a professional photoshoot and win a prize pack from JHS and Subaru of Jacksonville. Runners-up will be featured on the JHS website and win JHS and Subaru prize packs. A donation of \$10 is required to enter and every \$1 counts as one vote, with a minimum of 5 votes.

For more information on the contest's guidelines, how to enter and other prizes, go to jaxhumane.org/ photo.

Resume writing workshop planned

The Savvy Job Hunters Ministry of Christ Episcopal Church will host a free Zoom workshop, "Resume Writing," from 10:30 a.m. to noon Aug. 18. The workshop will be presented by Audra Larsen, University of North Florida career counselor and professional resume writer. Email pottesen66@gmail.com to register.

Winning Mega Millions ticket bought in **Neptune Beach**

The winner of the Aug. 8 Mega Millions jackpot bought the ticket in Neptune Beach. A single ticket matching all six numbers plus the Mega Ball won the estimated \$1.58 billion jackpot. The numbers were: 13-19-20-32-33. Mega Ball: 14.

Woman's Club announces September meeting

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will hold a general meeting from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Sept. 19 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. The cost for the dinner buffet is \$30. Registration is open at pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php.

Repticon Jacksonville is Aug. 12-13

Repticon is coming to Jacksonville with a mixture of vendors and breeders. Guests can shop for a new family pet among the hundreds of reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, arachnids and small exotic animals. This event will be held at the Greater Jacksonville Agricultural Fair & Expo Center, 510 Fairgrounds Place.

Show hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 12, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 13.

Tickets are sold online only and range in price from \$6 to \$15. To purchase tickets or for more information about the show, go to repticon.com/ florida/Jacksonville.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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Vilano Beach renourishment project gets under way

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began mobilization Monday, Aug. 7, for the Vilano Beach Coastal Storm Risk Management Project.

The project contractor will start with mobilizing equipment to the Surfside Park staging area. A significant section of the parking area has been closed and fenced off to ensure public safety throughout the duration of the beach renourishment, which is scheduled for completion in March 2024.

The contractor will use the Surfside

Park staging area to store equipment and materials; it will remain an active work zone. Public access to the beach will remain open in this area along with use of the restroom facilities. The public is urged to exercise caution while accessing the beach area as heavy equipment will exit and enter there.

Additionally, the contractor's crew and Corps staff will use a parking lot off Euclid Avenue specially for parking and storing worker vehicles during construction. Caution in this vicinity is urged.

The dredge, which will deliver offshore sand for placement along Vilano Beach, is expected to arrive on or about Aug. 17, and beach fill operations will start shortly thereafter. Sand placement will proceed from north to south along the length of the project area. The contractor will close off active placement sections of the beach measuring approximately 1,500 feet in length with orange safety fencing as they progress southward. As beach fill is completed, the safety fencing will be removed and those sections will be reopened for public use.

Construction will be ongoing 24 hours a day, seven days a week to expedite operations during hurricane season. USACE Jacksonville will begin

publishing weekly progress maps to its social media channels as operations get under way to inform residents and visitors of the location of active construction zones. Links may be found at saj. usace.army.mil/StJohnsVilanoCSRM.



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Judge Woolsey welcomed to the bench

St. Johns County's newest judge offers views on new role

By Shaun Ryan

On Thursday, July 20, the investiture was held at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall for St. Johns County Court Judge Casey L. Woolsey, who was elected in 2022. Retired Judge Charles J. Tinlin administered the oath of office and Woosley's family took part in the program.

The Recorder reached out to Woolsey to learn a little bit more about her. Her responses follow.

As you take on this new role, what do you want readers to know? How have your experiences prepared you?

My legal and non-legal experiences have all helped with my transition to my new role as County Court Judge. My legal experience in criminal, civil and family law provided a strong foundation in legal knowledge and critical thinking. My experience with local nonprofit boards has cultivated my ability to empathize with different perspectives and acknowledge the human side of each legal dispute. Most importantly, my role as a mother to four young boys constantly requires conflict resolution skills and lots and lots of patience! Surprisingly, there is a lot of overlap in what's required to be a Judge, and a Mom!

Do you have an overarching philosophy regarding the law that you'd like to share?

As a County Court Judge, I handle cases involving monetary disputes under \$50,000, criminal misdemeanor charges, evictions and other criminal and civil matters. Many of the plaintiffs and defendants in my courtroom do not have legal counsel, and it's important to me that the justice system remains accessible to everyone, including those who cannot afford or choose not to hire attorneys. I try to keep the procedures and rules simplified to allow individuals to present their cases, even when they have no legal experience.

Do you have some things you hope to achieve during your tenure?

Our community is one of the safest in Florida, but we are experiencing rapid growth, and as a result, our County and Circuit will experience a lot of change throughout my time on the bench. As our community grows, I plan to implement



St. Johns County Court Judge Casey L. Woolsey speaks during her investiture ceremony on July 20.

case management techniques to maintain efficiency despite the rising number of cases due to population growth. I hope to maintain the public's trust and confidence in our judicial system and implement procedures and practices to keep the legal process accessible and understandable to everyone in our community.

Who are some of the people who have inspired you?

Having practiced in Northeast Florida for over a decade, I'm proud to call many of our County and Circuit Judges my mentors. We have an excellent bench and legal bar in our community, and I'm proud to be part of it.

What would you tell young people considering a career in the law?

I would encourage young people interested in a career in the law to reach out to a local attorney who practices an area of law they are interested in and ask to shadow or intern with them. Volunteering with local nonprofits, charities and legal aid is also a great way to understand the type of needs our community has, and to explore ways the legal system can help meet those needs.

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New dates, venues decided for Inn & Club development meetings

By Anthony Richards

A fresh date and location have been determined for the Ponte Vedra/Palm Valley Architectural Review Committee meeting pertaining to the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club's plan for development and renovations.

The meeting will now take place Sept. 6 at the Sawgrass Marriott beginning at 5 p.m.

The rescheduling was prompted after it was realized that the Ponte Vedra Pub-

lic Library was too small of a venue for the crowd that showed up for the July 26 meeting.

The Sawgrass Marriott is expected to be a sufficient space to house those residents that show up as opposed to the line of people that weaved through the library and into its parking lot resulting in the cancellation of the first attempt.

However, this was not the only change that St. Johns County officials made, as they also changed the dates of the other three committees and boards

<image>

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that the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club must present to as part of the approval process.

When the Ponte Vedra/Palm Valley Architectural Review Committee meets on Sept. 6, it will not be the first time the presentation will have been heard by the public, as the changes have led to the St. Johns County Planning & Zoning Agency Board will be the first to hear it on Aug. 17 at the St. Johns County auditorium.

The planning and zoning agency will begin its meeting at 1:30 p.m. with the county stating that the designated time for the item to be discussed being 3 p.m.

By moving to Sept. 6, the Ponte Vedra/Palm Valley Architectural Review Committee will now be the second of the boards in the review process.

The Ponte Vedra Zoning & Adjustment Board will have its meeting five days later on Sept. 11 at the county auditorium with an 11 a.m. meeting start time and the item slated to begin being talked about at 1 p.m., according to the county.

The final step in the process will be at the Board of County Commissioners' Nov. 7 meeting which will take place at the county auditorium at a time yet to be set by the county.

Once all is completed, the review process will have taken a little less than three months to complete with the commission expected to decide the plan's future during the Nov. 7 meeting.

The rescheduling of the July 26 meeting caused a chain reaction with the other dates and as a result it will be November before a final decision is made instead of the initial schedule which had the Commission being presented it during its Sept. 19 meeting.

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John Aguilera is VP for business development at TruTechnology, which helps companies align their IT with their business goals, increase day-to-day efficiency and ensure they are protected against cybersecurity threats.

John Aguilera

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me about TruTechnology

We're the IT team who take care of everything (also known as an IT managed service provider or MSP). We can be your full-time IT department, or we can collaborate with your existing team. We do everything from a 24/7 help desk to providing strategic advice as your chief information officer. We've got networking experts and auditors. We're thorough, we're dependable and we're here to make business IT life more productive and secure.

We're proud to be a part of the Jacksonville community for over 20 years, and we're committed to helping businesses and nonprofits in the area succeed. We know that IT can be a challenge, but we're here as a reliable, trusted partner. We have a hometown team and feel. We're here to help your organization succeed and allow you to focus on what you do best.

What are some of the advantages for your customers?

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We also have a world-class help desk that can resolve any IT issues quickly. When prospective clients hear about the results that we've achieved for our existing customers, they're excited to partner with us.

There are many businesses that are accepting a level of IT that is just not good enough. They are settling for a five or six out of 10, when they could be getting a 10.

It sounds like it would be worth at least checking out.

There's no risk in letting us evaluate your IT infrastructure. We will do a consultation, which includes an IT engineering survey. This allows us to do a deep dive into how your company is currently leveraging technology. Once we have a complete understanding of your current IT landscape, we will compile our findings and propose what we believe could be better through strategy and partnership. We simply want to help you get the most out of your IT investment.

Are the services customized to the individual customer?

Yes, every customer is unique. We understand that no two businesses are alike, and that is why we customize our services to each individual client. We want to make sure that you get the exact support you need to succeed.

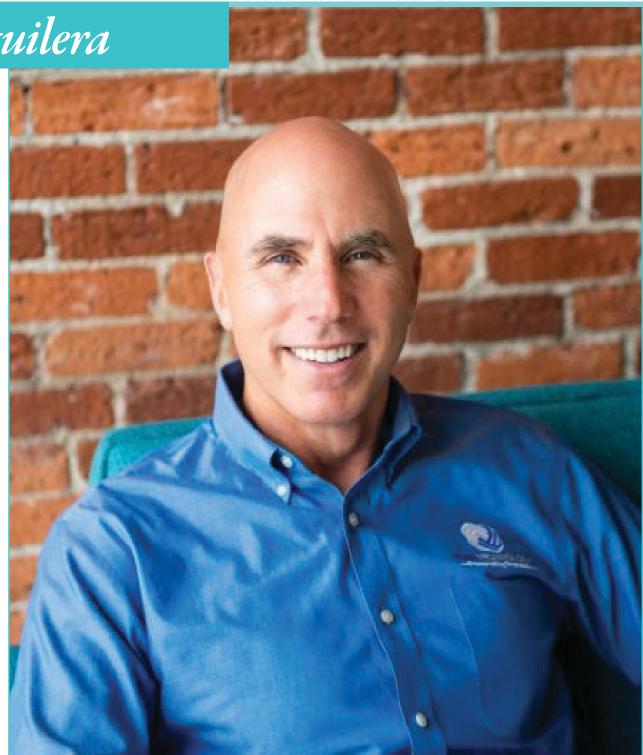
We will take the time to get to know your business, listen to your concerns and work with you to develop a plan that is right for you. We will provide support and guidance as you grow and evolve.

What are your responsibilities in the company?

I am the VP of business development. I meet with prospective clients and show them how our services can help them grow their businesses. I love building relationships with clients, and I'm always looking for new ways to help them succeed.

Tell me a little about your background.

I came to Jacksonville in 1991 after graduating from Boston University and flight school in Pensacola. I was stationed at Naval Air Station Jacksonville as a carrier-



John Aguilera, VP for business development at TruTechnology, manages the company's sales and marketing department.

based helicopter pilot, and I quickly fell in love with the area. After eight years of active duty, I transitioned to a civilian career in sales starting at Johnson & Johnson companies, and I eventually started my own business.

That combination gave me experience in a variety of business models from government, large corporations, small businesses and business ownership.

I believe that TruTechnology has the right combination of size and expertise to make a real difference for our clients. We are small enough to know you, but we are large enough to transform your business! I believe that we can make a real difference in the lives of our clients and the community.

What do you like best about life on the First Coast?

I have lived in the Jacksonville/Northeast Florida area for 30 years, and I've seen many changes in that time. I recall the day when the NFL announced that we would be getting the Jaguars. I've seen the city grow and prosper, and I've seen the quality of life improve. It is a wonderful place to raise a family, and I am proud to call it home. The beaches are beautiful, the restaurants are amazing, and there is always something to do. I love living in Ponte Vedra Beach and visiting the historic districts of Avondale, San Marco and St. Augustine.

Contributed photo

I'm grateful to live in a place with so much to offer. Our area is truly special, and I am excited to see what the future holds.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I'm always doing something active. I am an avid golfer; I enjoy running and hiking and love to spend time with my family and friends. My fiancé and I enjoy traveling, cooking, sampling wines together, working out and spoiling our dog. I have two boys and a stepdaughter-tobe that I am proud of, one in the Honors program at FSU, one in high school who runs cross country and one in the hospitality industry.

In addition to my civilian life, I am a commander in the Navy Reserves. So, I am busy, but I would not have it any other way. I have a very fulfilling life.

County extends passport process with event

By Anthony Richards

Adventure outside the country is just a passport away, and the St. Johns County Clerk of Courts office is giving residents a unique opportunity by holding a passport Saturday event Aug. 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The event will take place at the Clerk of Courts office at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center located at 4010 Lewis Speedway in St. Augustine.

According to the Clerk of Courts office, the goal

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of the special one-day event is to give people that cannot get a passport during the office's weekly office hours due to their work schedule.

The office stated that they recognized the challenges working individuals encounter when trying to fit in applying for a passport during the week, so the weekend opportunity is one they hope many residents will take advantage of.

According to Julio Cruz, chief operations officer with the Clerk of Courts, the usual weekday hours for passport processing at the Watson Judicial Center is 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., which does not leave any time for people who get off work at the traditional 5 p.m. time.

The center's busiest times are from noon to 2 p.m., which means passport applicants can expect a longer waiting period during those two hours.

Unlike Julington Creek and Ponte Vedra Beach Annexes, where an appointment is needed prior to coming in to get a passport, there is no appointment necessary for the event Aug. 12.

Any passport applications are sent to the U.S. Department of State for issuance.

Passports are required for anyone looking to travel outside of the U.S., including infants, and everyone applying for a passport must appear in-person in order to be approved for their passport.

Because passports can take some time to process, the U.S. Department of State advises applying for a passport months before it will actually be needed.

It takes an estimated 10 to 13 weeks from the day the U.S. Department of State receives the application.



Once processed, a recipient can expect their passport to arrive at the address they filled out on the form.

An expedited service fee can be instituted, which would save a couple of weeks, which would equate to seven to nine weeks to receive applications.

Any additional questions about passports and the requirements they entail can be answered by calling the county clerk's office 904-819-3632 or by going to www.travel.state.gov or by emailing passports@ stjohnsclerk.com.

The phone number and passports email are ways of contact that remain the same and can reach both the Judicial Center and the two Annexes.

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Nease 2024 senior class paints panther paws

With the new school year about to start, seniors from Nease High School showcased their creativity by painting the panther paws in the parking lot in front of the stadium. It is a tradition at Nease and the first memory the incoming senior class can create.





Photos by Anthony Richards









Live It Up While Dressing Down Binge Night.

We wanted our place to be nice, because being together is our favorite pastime. We go out, dine, exercise and see our friends. (A lot of times, that's just right downstairs.) We're always glad to get home and relax. What's your idea of retirement? It's here, too. At Windsor Pointe. Jacksonville's premier Independent Living residence.



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The Recorder, Your Source for Community News!



Tax

Continued from 1

included in the budget — and multi-year capital and grant carryforwards from FY 2023 that will be added in September the board unanimously approved four special requests.

• County employees will receive a 7% inflationary adjustment, except in rare cases where that would be a detriment to the employee, costing a total of \$650,000.

• The addition of 18 firefighter positions toward National Fire Protection Association standards. This would result in nine engineers and nine lieutenants. It would cost \$1.9 million. (The tentative budget itself would create an additional 45 firefighter and five marine-rescue positions.)

• The Land Acquisition & Management Program, currently funded at \$500,000 per year, will receive an additional \$1.5 million in FY 2024. Those additional funds will be re-assessed annually and are not automatically reoccurring.

• Library branch hours will be restored to pre-2008 levels at a cost of \$290,000. Cutbacks were made 15 years ago in reaction to the recession and had not been reversed over that time. As a result, the Anastasia Island and Hastings branches will again be open on Mondays. All other branches, including the one in Ponte Vedra Beach, will again be open on Sundays.

Jesse Dunn, director of the county's Office of Management & Budget, spoke briefly about the \$59 million state appropriation that is included in the new budget. The appropriation is earmarked for transportation, land conservation and coastal protection.

Here is how some of those funds will be used:

• \$25 million for critically eroded beach restoration

• \$15 million for the County Road 2209 (St. Johns Parkway) and International Golf Parkway extension fourlaning

• \$6 million for the County Road 210A and U.S. 1 interchange

• \$6 million for State Road A1A intersection enhancements

One of the expenses to be included in the budget is the Ponte Vedra Beach Dune and Beach Restoration Project, but no millage has yet to be established for that yet. The project may actually commence in 2024 with millage being established in FY 2025.

This year, the county has seen a 16.5% increase in taxable value, which would generate \$43.6 million in incremental property taxes, unless the commission were to adopt the rolled-back rate instead. Should that happen, only \$12.6 million would be realized. The budget,

calculated according to tax revenue of \$43.6 million, would then have to be reworked with severe reductions.

Despite the increases in property values, owners of homesteaded properties will not see a 16.5% increase, due to the state's Save Our Homes provision. Dunn estimated that increases would be closer to 3%. Non-homesteaded properties are capped at 10%.

The tentative tax rate is \$6.83 per \$1,000 of taxable value. Of that, \$4.65 is for the general fund. That remains unchanged from FY 2023.

The rolled-back rate would be \$6.18 per \$1,000 of taxable value. The rolledback rate is the rate that, if levied, would generate the same revenue in terms of dollars as last year. However, this doesn't provide for inflation.

COMMUNITY NEWS 9

If the tax rate of \$6.83 is approved in September, the owner of a \$400,000 home with a homestead exemption of \$50,000 could expect to pay about \$2,390 in property tax next year. That's unchanged from FY 2023.

The public can view the Aug. 1 budget presentation at bit.ly/43UhBNU. Residents can participate in the recommended budget process by going to sjcfl.us/omb and accessing the FY 2024 Recommended County Budget Presentation link.

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Ponte Vedra Rotary installs new president



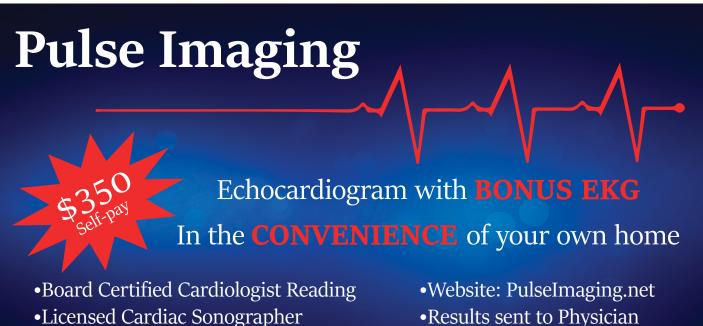
2023-24 President Josh Hull, left, stands next to John Tabor, Rotary District 6970 governor.

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra (in Nocatee) held its annual Passing of the Gavel Celebration and Installation Dinner on July 18 at Maggiano's. The event is organized by the club's Past Presidents Council.

Outgoing 2022-23 President Bob Wilfong recapped a very successful year. After presenting gifts to all of the outgoing board members, and proclaiming that they were all, "Rotarians of the Year," he also said, "It has been a real privilege to be your president this year."

He passed the gavel to 2023-24 President Josh Hull, who will become the club's sixth president. Hull, a charter member of the Ponte Vedra club, is the vice president of Vystar Credit Union's Nocatee branch.

On hand to celebrate and participate



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in the installation ceremony was John Tabor, Rotary District 6970 governor who is a wealth advisor with VyStar Investment Services and colleague of Hull. Rotary Club of Palm Valley Past President and Rotary mentor to Hull, Dave Howie acted as the installation officiant. Howie is a partner in the CPA firm of Masters, Smith and Wispy, PA.

Upon receiving his president's pin and gavel, Hull revealed goals for the upcoming Rotary year.

Hull said, "I want to add more fundraising events to support charitable projects; attract new members, while concentrating on retention of current members."

He added, "I encourage our club to plan for more social events, and to actively involve our Rotary Youth Exchange student in the life of our club. The student will arrive from Brazil in August and will spend the school year with host families in Nocatee.'

He also exclaimed, "I want us to have more fun in Rotary!"

The Rotary year begins on July 1, and Rotary clubs worldwide pass the gavel to new leadership. The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra, chartered in April 2018, is one of 64 Rotary Clubs in North Florida that comprise Rotary District 6970. The club meets on every other Tuesday morning at 7:15 a.m. at Treylor Park Restaurant in Nocatee Town Center.

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbors, friends, leaders and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves. For information: pontevedrarotary@gmail.com.

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COMMUNITY NEWS 11



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Grace Conservatory opens new facility

By Shaun Ryan

One year after breaking ground on a plot of land alongside Town Plaza Avenue in Nocatee, Kristina and Vaughn Robison celebrated the grand opening of Grace Conservatory's new facility.

On Thursday, Aug. 3, the 5,896-squarefoot studio was filled with excited young dancers who attended to see its many attributes. The new Grace Conservatory has 4,000 square feet of dance space, about three times what it had in its former location across the street.

It also has a dressing room with a couch and other amenities, a teachers' lounge with a full kitchen and two storage areas solid enough to serve as tornado shelters if needed. The HVAC system is designed to sense CO2 levels, so that if dancers are working really hard, it supplies more oxygen.

In addition, the facility has a large retail space that sells tap, ballet and jazz shoes, leotards and food and drink.

Perhaps the most notable feature is the construction of the dance floors. Sunken 4 inches into the concrete base, they have three interlocking layers of 1-by-4s made of hard wood over a layer of foam and topped by a layer of plywood over which has been laid a professional Marley floor, heat-welded to eliminate seams.

This is the same flooring found in the American Ballet Theatre and other major dance performance companies throughout the country. And it serves a very important purpose.

"Dancing — especially when you're jumping — has 10 times the impact of running on your knees, ankles, feet, joints," said Vaughn Robison. "And running has 10 times the impact of walking. So, when you're jumping, you're putting the equivalent of 20 times your body weight on your knees and ankles and joints."

Grace Conservatory offers classes in tap, ballet, jazz, contemporary and hip hop dance styles.



"We've expanded our ballet pre-professional program with the addition of Florian Rouiller, who came to us by way of the Florida Ballet, but he's danced on

five continents," said

Vaughn Robison.

Rouiller, a native of Geneva, Switzerland, trained in Germany at the famed John Cranko School. He will lead the conservatory's ballet program. "I danced in New York City, Chicago,



Photo by Shaun Ryan Kristina and Vaughn Robison are all smiles at the recent grand opening of Grace Conservatory's new home.

Washington, Venezuela, Sweden, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and now I'm here," he said. "I'm excited to take up this role to make the students shine."

He said the Jacksonville area needed a conservatory like this.

"To have a space like this with the right equipment, the right floor for the dancers, it's very exciting," he said. "You don't see that everywhere."

The school has a staff of 18, all certified in CPR and AED. It also has a \$4,000 defibrillator, something that was not required but that the owners wanted.

The Robisons opened Grace Conservatory at its original location in 2016. Kristina Robison is a graduate of the dance conservatory at Texas Women's University. She taught in San Antonio and later danced professionally in New York City.

The new facility is located at 445 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra, To learn more, go to graceconservatory.com or call 904-900-0909.



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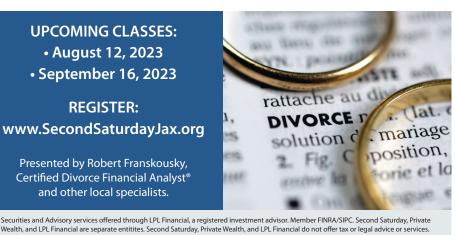
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Six priorities for the sandwich generation

By/for Wells Fargo Advisors

The "sandwich generation" — adults caring for aging parents as well as children — faces several stressful challenges that come from trying to juggle everyone's needs. One of those top stressors: finances, such as how to cover education and health care costs and still save enough for retirement. The demands often compete with one another — which is why setting clear priorities is so important.

Here are six tips for setting those priorities to help you deliver the support your loved ones need — without shortchanging



yourself.

1. Take care of your future first. Saving enough for retirement should be a top

priority. You have to take care of your needs before you help your parents and your children. 2. Create or update your investment plan. Create an investment plan that will help you balance your financial goals with the needs of your children and parents. Review your budget, analyze your expenses, and set savings targets to help you prioritize planning for an upcoming expense, such as college costs or longterm care for your parents.

3. Review your insurance coverage. Helping protect your assets is always a good idea, but it's even more important when you have two generations depend-

PRIORITIES continues on Page 15

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As if an ice pop pushcart was not unique enough, what makes King of Pops Ponte Vedra even more unique is that their pops are made with all natural ingredients and handcrafted.



Photos courtesy of King of Pops Ponte Vedra Carey and Javonn Wright are a husband-and-wife team that started King of Pops Ponte Vedra in April.

There's a new king in town...of ice pops

By Anthony Richards

Popsicles are such a classic treat and are a great way to beat the Florida heat, and there is a new business serving Ponte Vedra and the First Coast called King of Pops that are determined to take it to the next level.

Carey and Javonn Wright were originally from Jacksonville but moved back

to the area from New York and were looking to start a business of their own.

"Originally we thought of a doughnut cart but then we thought about how much we love Popsicles, and it just took off from there," Carey Wright said.

King of Pops Ponte Vedra opened in April and the couple owns several that have been making appearances at events throughout the months following.

"The look and feel of it is old-school with the pushcart and a rainbow umbrella over it," Carey Wright said. "Those were symbols of fun back in the day."

As if an ice pop pushcart was not unique enough, what makes King of Pops Ponte Vedra even more unique is that their pops are made with all natural ingredients and handcrafted, according to Carey Wright.

"You can definitely taste that difference," Carey Wright said. "Having a product like that has definitely been huge and we've done so much in just a short period of time. Our customers like that

POPS continues on Page 16



Priorities

continued from 15

ing on you. Make sure you have enough life insurance in case something happens to you to pay off your mortgage and other debt and to help cover the future living expenses of your dependents. And don't forget disability insurance.

4. Check in on your parents' financial health. Though it might seem awkward, talk to your parents about their wishes for the future and their financial health. What financial assets and expenses do they have? How do they plan to meet their financial obligations? Do they have a plan to cover the costs of long-term care? This conversation can help you determine how much financial support you may need to provide. Also, make sure your parents have done adequate estate planning, and ask for copies of their will or trust, durable power of attorney, health care power of attorney and advance health care directive. Make sure your own estate-planning documents are complete and updated as well.

5. Consider reducing financial support for grown children. Many parents still help their grown children with their finances sometimes even to their detriment. If you are paying for your adult kids' cell phone bill or car insurance expenses, for example, talk with them about the steps they can take to start becoming more financially independent. 6. Look for ways to help reduce your taxes. In some cases, you may be able to claim your aging parents as dependents. Also check with a tax adviser to see if their medical expenses qualify as a tax deduction.

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This article was written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Jamie Seim, CFP, Senior Vice President – Investment Officer in Ponte Vedra Beach at 904-273-7917.

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Gulani procedures restoring vision internationally

Dr. Arun C. Gulani recently broke his own world record, having consulted with patients from 98 countries. In addition, he has seen patients from dozens of states. His international reputation prompts people to travel for days just to access his procedures, some of which only require a few minutes to complete.

In fact, Gulani is responsible for a degree of medical tourism in the Jacksonville area.

His renown largely follows his innovative approaches to eye surgery. In the 1990s, Gulani was among the first in the world to not only perform LASIK surgery but also provide second opinions to American eye surgeons

years before they started performing LASIK. Always seeking a better way, Gulani eventually patented a no-cut, no-blade, no flap procedure called LaZrPlastique. He actually invented the awardwinning instruments and proprietary protocols used in the procedure, which employs an extremely precise invisible laser beam that painlessly shapes the cornea.

This addresses nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism and the need for reading glasses.

This is just one of more than 20 laser vision techniques he practices. He often helps patients who have been told by other doctors that they are not candidates for eye surgery.

Another innovation introduced by Gulani is LenzOplastique, a customdesigned, lens-based surgery for cataracts and similar maladies. Gulani's ap-

proach goes beyond ordinary cataract surgery to a level he describes as artistic. For more information about Gulani and the many procedures he offers, go to

gulanivision.com. The Gulani Vision Institute is located at 8075 Gate Parkway West, Suites 102 and 103, Jacksonville.

<text><text>

(904)-296-EYES www.gulanivision.com

5 serious eye conditions patients over 60 should be aware of

By Amanda Kovacs, O.D.

Florida Eye Specialists

Most eye conditions can affect anyone, but those ages 60 and older are most at risk. Age-related eye conditions like macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts can cause severe vision loss and even blindness. Unfortunately, patients often don't notice the signs before vision loss occurs. That's why annual eye exams are crucial to diagnose conditions early and preserve vision. Watch for symptoms related to the following conditions and consult your eye doctor if you have questions.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is one of the most common degenerative eye conditions. There are several different types of glaucoma, but they are all generally caused by pressure buildup due to fluid in the eye. Known as the "silent thief of sight," you often won't notice any symptoms of glaucoma, but it can eventually lead to permanent vision loss. Regular eye exams are needed to catch this condition early and begin proper treatment, which may include eye



Amanda Kovacs, O.D.

drops or eye surgery to relieve pressure inside the eye.

Cataracts

Cataracts are a clouding of the normally clear lens of the eye, and they can begin to develop in your 40s and 50s. You may begin to notice symptoms such as blurred vision, sensitivity to light and glare, poor night vision and a fading or



yellowing of colors.

The good news is that cataract surgery is a quick and safe procedure to help you see clearly again — in fact, many patients see better after cataract surgery than ever before. That's thanks to advances in technology like laser cataract surgery and premium cataract lens implants. One of the newest options, the Light Adjustable Lens, allows you to adjust your prescription after surgery, just like you would with glasses or contacts.

Dry Eye

Dry eye occurs because the eye's tear glands do not produce enough moisture. Symptoms can range from itching and redness to painful burning. In some extreme cases, dry eye can even lead to vision loss when untreated. There are a wide variety of treatment options for every specific case, including artificial tears, medicated eye drops, Lipiflow thermal pulsation and more.

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes that can cause vision problems. Excessive sugar in your blood, also known as blood glucose, can damage blood vessels in your eyes, causing symptoms like eye floaters, blurred vision and vision loss. If you have diabetes or are at risk, it's important to receive regular screenings for this condition.

Pops Continued from 14

they can see our ingredients and make a proper nutritional decision based on that. You can feel good about what you put in your body."

An example of the natural ingredient approach at work is with its banana pudding pop, which is not just banana flavored, but instead has actual sliced bananas and cookie wafers inside the pop.

As franchise owners, the couple has access to more than 50 flavors, but they can only fit so many in their cart and they have found that the tropical flavors sell really well in Florida.

Strawberry lemonade and blueberry lemonade are among their top sellers and coconut lemongrass and patriot pop are seasonal examples that they have found also go well in conjunction with the summer.

They also offer vegan and gluten-free pops as alternative options.

Having multiple carts allows both Carey and Javonn to go to different events at the same time.

Macular Degeneration

Macular degeneration is the most common cause of age-related vision loss. It occurs when the center of the retina begins to deteriorate and causes symptoms like blurred or distorted vision, blind spots, reduced central vision and difficulty adapting to low-light levels. If untreated, this condition can lead to blindness. Thankfully, treatments like medications and eye injections are available that can help relieve symptoms and stall its progression.

Don't Skip Your Annual Eye Exam

Getting a regular eye exam is good practice for people of all ages, but it is especially important for patients ages 60 and older. At Florida Eye Specialists, our dedicated team of eye doctors has helped thousands of patients in the Jacksonville area improve their vision and detect serious conditions in early stages. Contact us today to schedule your comprehensive exam and protect your sight for years to come.

Amanda Kovacs, O.D., is a boardcertified optometrist at Florida Eye Specialists. For more information on Dr. Kovacs and her specialties treating cataracts, dry eye and glaucoma, go to FloridaEyeSpecialists.com or call 904-564-2020.

"We have gone as far as Pecan Road in Jacksonville, and our hope is to be known throughout the First Coast area one day," Carey Wright said.

Owning the business as a couple has allowed for the business to portray certain family vibes that they believe helps to build a strong foundation of family that customers appreciate.

"It really makes for some cool conversations with our customers, because we get to laugh with the kids and get to know the families," Javonn Wright said. "For some people, it has been years since they've had a Popsicle and many of them prefer to stand there and talk while they eat it."

Another thing they have found since bringing the business to the area is the fact that ice pops are something that so many people enjoy regardless of their age.

It is something the entire family can get crossing the generations within a family.

"It really does bring people together by bringing them back to their childhood," Carey Wright said. "It brings back memories for adults and creates new ones for kids."

What dental hygiene does for overall health

Brushing and flossing your teeth may save you extra sessions in the dentist's chair each year, but the benefits of dental hygiene do not end with pearly whites. In fact, there's a direct correlation between oral hygiene and overall health.

Dental hygiene matters because, without proper brushing and flossing, bacteria in the mouth can grow unchecked. Over time, that bacteria can infiltrate and break down the soft tissues in the gums and

9 common causes of toothaches

• Orthodontic appliances: The pain is most noticeable immediately after an orthodontic adjustment, but it may ease as the mouth grows accustomed to the wires or pressure.

• Tooth sensitivity: Despite being hard, teeth actually are porous. Certain conditions may cause the enamel on the outside of teeth to wear away. Exposure of the inner layer of the tooth, called dentin, to the air or foods and beverages may result in pain.

• Sinus congestion: Pain that persists in the upper teeth only on both sides of the face may occur due to sinusitis. It often is preceded by nasal congestion.

• **TMJ:** Temporomandibular disorders can cause tooth pain. TMJ may result from injury or trauma to the jaw. Tooth grinding, also known as bruxism, can cause tooth pain.

• Impacted wisdom teeth: If there isn't enough space for them, wisdom teeth can teeth, eventually leading to decay and gum disease.

There's a high correlation between an unhealthy mouth and systemic diseases. Dentists who notice problems in their patients' mouths may be able to predict potential illnesses elsewhere in the body, advising those patients to seek consultations with other healthcare providers.

Here's a deeper look at some of the correlations between oral health and overall

cause crowding and pain. When molars do not fully erupt, the result is impacted wisdom teeth, which can be very painful.

• Damaged fillings or dental sealants: When fillings or sealants come out, vulnerable parts of the teeth become exposed. This can result in pain.

• Tooth damage: Dental caries, or cavities, can cause toothache, as can tooth abscesses and tooth fractures.

• Gum disease: Gum disease may start with mild inflammation and then become more severe if it is left untreated. The inflammation also may affect the ligament that attaches teeth to the socket in the jaw. This ligament has many nerve fibers. When inflamed, the nerves can get fired up and cause pain.

• Food: A kernel of popcorn wedged between teeth or a sharp piece of pizza crust that gets lodged behind a molar can cause pain if not addressed.

health, courtesy of the Mayo Clinic.

• Endocarditis: When bacteria or other germs from the mouth or another part of the body spread through the bloodstream, they can attach to certain areas of the heart. This causes an infection in the inner lining of the heart chambers or valves.

• Pregnancy and birth complications: Periodontitis has been linked to low birth weight and premature birth.

• Cardiovascular disease: While it's not fully understood why, clogged arteries, stroke and heart disease may be linked to inflammation and infection caused by oral bacteria.

• Pneumonia: Bacteria in the mouth may be pulled into the lungs, where it can lead to respiratory illness, such as pneumonia.

It's a two-way street with health and the mouth. Certain diseases can lead to issues in the mouth. HIV/AIDS may cause mucosal lesions in the mouth; those with osteoporosis may have weakened periodontal bone and tooth loss; and research has shown that diabetes puts gum health at risk.

Individuals should make oral health a priority, as it has a significant effect on their overall health and well-being.



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Businesses set to open at The Fountains at St. Johns

Cross Regions Group, a multifaceted company specializing in commercial real estate services, has announced the businesses that will open soon at The Fountains at St. Johns, a mixed-use medical and retail development located on nearly 100 acres at the northeast intersection of County Road 210 West and Interstate 95 in St. Johns County.

Dapper D's Cigar Lounge, H2 Health St. Johns physical therapy, Scenthound St. Johns and Salon Honey + Sage are planning to open this month. Businesses planning to open in September include Apex Krav Maga and 4Ever Young Anti-Aging Solutions.

They join The Dolly Llama Waffle Master, which opened in July, and Jax-Spice at St. Johns, which opened in May.

"The Fountains at St. Johns is strategically located at one of the most soughtafter sites in Northeast Florida," said Cross Regions Group President and CEO David Ergisi. "Our team's reputation for excellence and our development's best-in-class design and construction has resulted in significant demand for The Fountains at St. Johns."

Florida Eye Specialists and ENT Specialists of North Florida are under construction for opening in 2024. Construction is under way on Jacksonville University's location at The Fountains



Cross Region Group has announced the next phase of openings at The Fountains at St. Johns.

at St. Johns. Slated to open in 2024, the location will be used as an educational facility for Jacksonville University's health care sciences programs.

The development includes Ascension St. Vincent's Health Center — St. Johns on 34 acres. In process or under construction are a 141-room Home 2 Suites by Hilton hotel, 174 upscale apartments with 25,000 square feet of retail on the first floor, 276 apartments from Madison Capital, a 13,000-square-foot facility for Chappell Schools and a Town Square with 35,000 square feet of retail space and restaurants. Future plans include an assisted living facility and wellness Contributed image

center.

Cross Regions Group also is developing Duval Station, a medical and retail center in North Jacksonville, and Tyler Plaza West and Coastal Callahan, medical and retail centers in Nassau County.

For more information, go to crossregions.com.

The Recorder's garden columnist Kathy Esfahani of Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery shares her tips for growing gorgeous gardens in Northeast Florida.

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Outdoor Living: Creating Your Zen Space!

"Live in the sunshine, swim in the sea, drink the wild air." — Ralph Waldo Emerson



By Kathy Esfahani

Cooler weather is coming, and now is a perfect time to create a new outdoor living space at your home! Outdoor living spaces provide the opportunity to spend

Kathy Esfahani

time in nature — a proven way to reduce stress, blood pressure and muscle tension. A study by the National Institutes of Health found that time spent in nature can improve brain function and memory. Beyond these health benefits, spending time outdoors is a great way to bond with family and friends!

An outdoor living space can add value to your home and provide additional entertaining areas. These spaces



Outdoor Living

may include intentionally designed landscaping, fireplaces, pools, outdoor kitchens and more. They can feature seating arrangements, game tables, lighting and water features. Outdoor living spaces are both functional and relaxing!

Pavers are an easy way to create patios, benches, fireplaces, outdoor kitchens and walls. They can be a hardscape to highlight landscaping or surround a pool. Pavers come in many shapes, colors and patterns to accent your home.

Be sure to consider the following details when planning your new outdoor living space:

- Size and shape to fit your yard
- Colors and patterns to complement your home
- Available and/or needed shadeDesired uses for your new outdoor
- living area
- Gardens and planters to accent your new patio

• Existing or needed irrigation to meet your landscaping needs

• Lighting to highlight your new space Happy creating!

Flower of the Week: Canna Lily

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery



Canna Lily

Email Kathy at kcg.pvr@gmail.com for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future. For more information and ideas, visit Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. The phone number is 904-655-7373. THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2023 • PAGE 19

In the Arts Send your arts news to news@pontevedrarecorder.com

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Alhambra's 'Fiddler' worth the 25-year wait

By Shaun Ryan

REVIEW

Any good musical production is a journey. Whether external or internal, it's the journey that keeps audiences coming back even when they have committed to memory every spoken line, every song, every scene. It's the journey that audiences yearn to relive, with musical numbers they have grown to love serving to mark their progress.

It's one reason shows like "Fiddler on the Roof" never decline in popularity. No matter how many times we may have seen it, whether on stage or screen, we're always ready to relive it. And, if fortunate enough to see it performed by different companies, we discover something new with each viewing.

Thus, Alhambra Theatre & Dining's acquisition of the show's performance rights after 25 years is reason to celebrate. Local audiences may now embark on that journey once again.

The production features the work of three members of the Booth family: Tod in the lead role of Tevye, his wife Lisa as Tevye's

wife Golde and daughter Jessica as director. Their individual talents, honed over decades, as well as their offstage familiarity enrich the show in ways both apparent and subtle.

Tod Booth's Tevye is sympathetic, likeable; he's someone you want to know. This works especially well when he feels he must reject his daughter for her choice of a husband. His "Chava is dead to us" is a cold slap in the face simply because it comes from someone with whom we have identified, someone who until now has shown a willingness to accommodate what he cannot change. As a result, his small acknowledgement of Chava and Fyedka at the play's penultimate moment serves as a sign of hope, and one can almost sense a collective sigh of relief from the audience.

Those who have previously seen "Fiddler" know these moments are coming, but thanks to Booth's effective performance, they remain impactful.

Lisa Valdini Booth literally becomes Golde. Last seen as Mrs. Potts in the

Alhambra production of "Beauty and the Beast," she leaves no vestige of the actress herself for audiences to recognize. That's not to say that she doesn't bring her own insights and life experiences to the role. At the conclusion of "Do You Love Me?" both Lisa and Tod Booth share a moment that radiates authenticity.

This cast is rich with talent, and to recognize each individually would require more space than can be had. But some performances stand out even so.

Sarah Warshavsky as Tzeitel, Natalie Drake as Hodel and Sofia Smith as Chava deliver especially strong performances. Their "Matchmaker, Matchmaker" is one of the show's highlights.

Patti Eyler's Yente is flawlessly executed and Allan Baker gives a powerful performance as Lazar Wolf. Also worthy of recognition are Bear Manescalchi as Motel, Alexander Blanco as Perchik and Melvin Nash as Fyedka. In fact, Nash's long-held note at the start of the Russian response in "To Life" drew applause from the audience.

Everyone has their favorite "Fiddler" numbers. Highlights of this production, in addition to those already mentioned, were without question the dream sequence when a towering Fruma Sarah (Alexia Adcock-Stanford) terrorizes Tevye and the bottle dance, which always generates a great deal of suspense.

Set designers David Dionne and Ian Black deserve a mention for once again transforming Alhambra's small performance area into something greater. The set gives us both the inside and outside of Tevye's house, the tailor shop and a suggestion of all Anatevka. And the Fiddler actually does sit atop the roof without interference from the venue's ceiling or lighting fixtures.

Anyone wanting to experience "Fiddler on the Roof," whether for the first or 20th time will want to get tickets before they're all gone. The show runs through Sept. 17.

Alhambra Theatre & Dining is located at 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville. For tickets, go to alhambrajax.com/tickets. The business phone number is 904-641-1212.

Jacksonville Symphony announces scholarship

The Jacksonville Symphony has announced a \$500 Usher Scholarship for students interested in symphonic music and/or the performing arts. This scholarship provides students with valuable exposure and experience in the performing arts world while supporting their educational journey.

"We are thrilled to offer this scholarship to students interested in the arts and provide them access to exceptional symphonic music during their time volunteering," said Steven Libman, president and CEO. "Our dedicated volunteers are one of the cornerstones of the symphony's success, and we're excited to welcome more students."

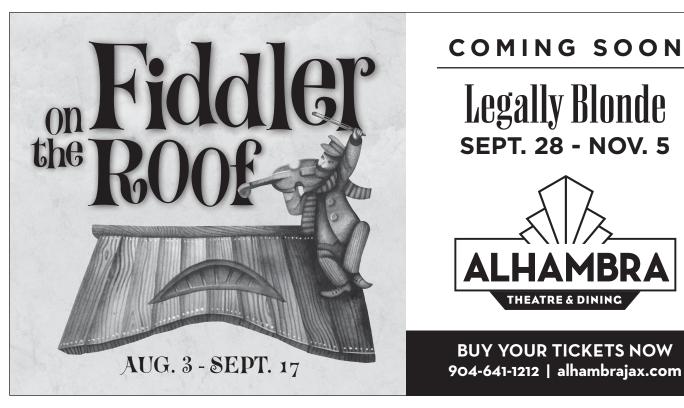
The symphony's strong volunteer usher corps contributes significantly to making every event in Jacoby Symphony Hall run smoothly and play an integral role in the Jacksonville Symphony's efforts to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

Eligible students must be high school juniors or seniors, or college students of any level, currently residing in Duval and its surrounding counties. Preference will be given to those actively involved

in music, the arts or enrolled in a performing arts degree program. Applicants must also be willing to provide excellent

customer service to symphony patrons by performing ushering duties at a variety of symphony events.

There are five scholarships available for the 2023-24 season. Scholarship recipi-SCHOLARSHIP continues on Page 20





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Art exhibition, reception planned for Aug. 18

First Coast Cultural Center, Morris Center team up to present show

First Coast Cultural Center and The Morris Center will partner in an art exhibit and reception featuring Joe Desiderio, Robin Hanna, R.J. Higgins and Sloane Keats from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 18, at The Morris Center, 50 Executive Way in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Phillip Anthony will donate a piece of his work as a fundraiser during the exhibition to benefit First Coast Cultural Center's children's programs. A healing arts donation from Hilda Cioffi, a reiki master, registered nurse and advanced holistic practitioner, will also serve as an event fundraiser to include a 20-minute healing session.

Donna Guzzo, First Coast Cultural Center's president and CEO, and Dr. Tim Conway Ph.D., researcher, neuropsychologist and The Morris Center's president, will speak during the event.

Anthony owns and operates a fine art gallery in St. Augustine. His nature photography and paintings are represented by galleries nationwide.

Desiderio captures images including

local history, scenic beauty and people who provide him with endless opportunities to depict moments he shares photographically with the public.

Hanna's paintings include several types of media in realism and abstract styles.

Higgins' art features graphite pencil, pen and ink, acrylic, watercolor and metal sculpture with a whimsical theme featuring nature, sea life and fantasy creatures, to name a few.

Keats' work includes original oil paintings, landscapes, nature, beach scenes, impressionist, Fauvist, plein air, abstracts and seascapes, among others.

According to Guzzo, the pop-up exhibit is free and open to the public with educational and cultural components for viewing and conversations with the local artists.

"Joe, Robin, R.J. and Sloane are all professional artists with personal messages to share about their work, which represents the rich culture and subject matter found in our area," said Guzzo. "We welcome the public to enjoy the exhibit opening and reception. The purpose of the exhibit is to bring more understanding about the arts in our community and its positive impact. During the event, we will also acknowledge a 'fond farewell' to our original building, which is now



"Gossamer" is a painting by artist Robin Hanna.



Joe Desiderio

where The Morris Center is located. First Coast Cultural Center is under contract to purchase a building in the Sawgrass area of Ponte Vedra Beach."

The event is sponsored by Florida ARTS & CULTURE, United Way of St. Johns County and St. Johns County Tourism Development Council.

First Coast Cultural Center's fall classes, programs and workshops are currently available for registration. Adult classes will include gold leaf mini painting workshop, seascapes and landscapes acrylic painting, how to watercolor, abstract human painting, watercolor with six tubes, pen and ink drawing and watercolor painting, sumi painting and drawing

Scholarship

Continued from 19

ents will be required to complete a twohour usher training program and usher 10 performances in Jacoby Symphony Hall, providing knowledgeable, friendly and personal service to patrons at all times.



"Mermaid" is a work by R.J. Higgins





Robin Hanna

Sloane Keats

a realistic portrait from a photo, among others. Children's classes include the Kick StART after school program, private piano and orchestra, and youth drama and improv classes, to name a few.

For more information and to register for classes, call 904-280-0614. Go to firstcoastculturalcenter.org.

First Coast Cultural Center is located at 3972 3rd St. South in Jacksonville Beach and holds classes in Nocatee at Care Connect+, located inside the Flagler Health+ Village at 351 Town Center Plaza, Suite 205 in Ponte Vedra. Studio hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., with after-hour appointments available.

To learn more and apply for the Jacksonville Symphony Usher Scholarship, complete the online application at jaxsymphony.org/usher-scholarship.

Applications for the 2023-24 season will be accepted until Aug. 31. Scholarship recipients will be notified in September.





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JAXUSL announces partnership with GotSport

JAXUSL, the United Soccer League (USL) franchise group bringing men's and women's professional soccer to Northeast Florida, recently announced a founding partnership with GotSport, a sports software company based in Jacksonville Beach.

As one of the club's first founding partners, GotSport will support JAXUSL to provide soccer software solutions and support across its digital platforms, help the club develop and manage its databases and support the growth of its forthcoming USL Academy through 2024.

The partnership will include a new GotSport feature across JAXUSL's digital media channels as the presenting partner for the "Game of the Week" segment on its weekly JAXUSL Report videocast and social media promotions. Renamed "Game of the Week, Presented by GotSport," the segment will feature JAXUSL soccer expert Mauricio Ruiz, who will preview the upcoming USL Championship action. "We're excited to partner with

GotSport, a local company here on the

First Coast that is leading the world in integrated software for sports," said JAXUSL President and CEO Steve Livingstone. "GotSport is assisting us as we develop our supporter base in Northeast Florida and will be a crucial partner in the growth of our men's and women's professional clubs and the future development of our USL Academy. We're delighted to recruit them as one of our first founding partners."

"We have been developing tools to help get players on the field since 1993 and continue to look for new and innovative ways to help make things simple and easy for the entire soccer community," said GotSport President and CEO Gavin Owen-Thomas. "We're thrilled to be teaming up with JAXUSL in our own backyard and are proud to be one of the club's founding partners."

GotSport provides solutions for player registration, college recruitment, league and tournament management, club websites, ticketing, mobile apps, team rankings and much more.

Dreamers

Continued from 1

even had some best friends form as a result of being part of the team."

The team member experience will include an array of opportunities throughout the upcoming football season, including the chance to travel down to Gainesville to scout a game at the University of Florida and take part in monthly Gator Bowl Sports membership events where they will distribute their "rookie year" playing cards.

Special "Dream Team" jerseys will be worn at these events, but at the end of the college football season, they will graduate from their jerseys and be officially granted TaxSlayer Gator Bowl green jackets similar to the ones that members of the bowl game's committee members wear.

Their jam-packed football season will conclude by meeting players and cheerleaders from the two teams that earn a spot in the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl, as well as being honored on the field during the game



A press conference was held just outside the Gator Bowl headquarters in the shadow of EverBank Stadium in downtown Jacksonville naming Dreams Come True's 2023 Dream Team.

on Dec. 29.

Many of the team members enjoy watching and playing sports and you could see on their faces the emotion and excitement as they sat there waiting to sign their names.

"He loves sports, so this will be just a wonderful experience for him," said Arsenio Ferguson, Willie's dad.

According to Breana Ferguson, they had heard about the dream team, but they were surprised and did not expect to have a big press conference.

"It's definitely an eye-opener to see the amount of people and support that are out there helping us," Arsenio Ferguson said.



Photos by Anthony Richards Family members of those joining the Dream Team were on hand to share in the moment.

"Seeing these other families reminds you that you're not alone in this fight."

As part of Gator Bowl Charities' outreach, Dreams Come True is just one of more than 100 local organizations and schools partnered with across Northeast Florida to help impact the lives of roughly 4,500 youth annually.

"Days like this really put into perspective the ways we can give back to the community and how important it is that we do give back," Worley said. "Forty-five hundred kids is pretty impactful."





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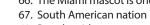
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69. Body part

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- 1. German courtesy title
- 2. Ancient Greek City

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3. Ancient Hebrew

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music

8. Decorated

9. Take a seat

people

21. Challenges

26. By way of

32. Widens

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28. Egyptian city

10. Belonging to a

12. Part of a ticket

23. Popular BBQ food

27. Shady garden alcove

29. Partner to "flowed"

33. Old Eurasian wheat

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25. Subway dweller

bottom layer

11. Member of a Semitic

13. Defunct Guinean money

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calendar month

4. Long-legged frog family

Delivered a speech

Lute in classical Indian

ACROSS

- 1. A way to pick up
- 5. Presents
- 10. Type of guitar
- 14. Actor Idris
- 15. A citizen of Iran
- 16. Creative
- 17. Harness
- 18. Weight unit
- 19. You better call him
- 20. Utterly devoted 22. Male cat
- 23. Spiritual leader of a
- Jewish congregation
- 24. Risk-taker
- 27. A team's best pitcher
- 30. Cool!
- 31. Women's ___ movement
- 32. Georgia rockers
- 35. Step-shaped recess 37. The princess could detect
- its presence
- 38. Type of truck
- 39. Butterhead lettuces
- 40. Angry people see it
- 41. Lines where two fabrics are sewn together
- 42. Soviet citv
 - 43. Carpet
 - 44. Traveled all over
 - 45. Thin, straight bar
 - 46. Body art (slang)
 - 47. Congressman (abbr.) 48. No seats available
- 49. Breaks apart
- 52. Arabic name
- 55. Ballplayer's tool
- 56. Type of sword
- 60. Baseball team
- 61. Upper bract of
- grass floret
- 63. Italian Seaport 64. Ancient Syrian city
- 65. Shoelace tube
- 66. The Miami mascot is one
- 68. Popular video game
- "Max

34. Act incorrectly

- 36. European pipeline
- 37. Al Bundy's wife
- 38. Ocean
- 40. Root eaten as
- a vegetable
- 41. Sound units
- 43. Style of music
- 44. A way to drench 46. Hot beverage
- 47. A cotton fabric with
- a satiny finish 49. Rumanian city
- 50. Urge to action

54. "Perry Mason"

59. Take a chance

61. Bland food

62. Consumed

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53. Wings

57. Small frv

58

SUDOKU

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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine

more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle

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row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row,

column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The

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51. Vaccine developer 52. Canadian law enforcers

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_Clapton, musician



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