

# THE RECORDER



INSIDE



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Serving Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine, The Beaches and Greater St. Johns County

Thursday, August 17, 2023

PonteVedraRecorder.com

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## NOCATEE

# App connects customers, businesses

By Shaun Ryan

When seeking recommendations for a local product or service, would-be customers frequently find themselves scrolling endlessly through social media.

Now, a new resource created specifically for residents of Nocatee streamlines the process, connecting people quickly to the local businesses they seek.

The Ponte Vedra Connection mobile app is easy to access and easy to use.

"It's literally one tap and everything you need in Nocatee is right there,"

APP continues on Page 9



**INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!**  
The Recorder's Entertainment EXTRA featuring TV listings, streaming information, puzzles and more!

# Cancer scare leads to fashionable sun protection

By Anthony Richards

There is no reason that protecting one's skin from sun damage and cancer also has to result in a sacrifice of fashion and style of their clothing.

This is a question Melissa Papock posed nearly two decades ago and it is the reason she started her business Cabana Life.

"We launched the business in 2005 with our first collection, and actually started with children's clothing, before adding women's clothing in 2012," Papock said.

Today, Cabana Life primarily has women's dresses along with resort and swimwear to go with some children's apparel and even a small number of men's styles available.

"We've gotten to the point where we can offer sun protection for the whole family," Papock said.

For Papock, Cabana Life's mission is very personal and the creation of it came from her own realization of how harmful the sun can be.

"I was 26 and working in New York



Photo by Anthony Richards

**Melissa Papock started Cabana Life in 2005 with the mission of creating sun protective clothing that is also fashionable.**

City for a lot of the top beauty and fashion magazines, and thankfully for whatever reason, I went for a routine skin check at my dermatologist's office," Papock said. "I had a little pink spot on my arm, so it wasn't your traditional

black or brown mole, and I honestly thought it was just a scar from a mosquito bite since it was summer. I went back for a biopsy of it and it turned out to be

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## Send us your news

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



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## BRIEFS

### County offering public safety alert service

St. Johns County Emergency Management is using Nixle Alerts to provide another way for the public to stay updated with relevant information from the St. Johns County Emergency Operations Center. Anyone can text StJohnsEOC to 888777 to opt-in to receive notifications through SMS text messages. Nixle does not charge for this service, but carrier message and data rates may apply.

St. Johns County Emergency Management will use this service to alert residents of public safety advisories, natural and human-caused disasters and other significant events that may impact the community.

was recently awarded a one-year mental health court planning grant through the Florida Department of Children and Families. Under the grant, EPIC will coordinate the effort to assess the current need and the steps for implementing a mental health court in St. Johns County.

A mental health court would provide access to treatment services for people who are involved with the legal/court system and are experiencing both mental health and substance-use issues.

EPIC offers mental health and substance-use treatment and prevention services in both St. Johns and Flagler counties. For more information, contact EPIC at 904-829-2273.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

### Date for Ponte Vedra resort meeting rescheduled

A key meeting concerning a proposed planned unit development (PUD) in Ponte Vedra Beach has been rescheduled.

The St. Johns County Planning and Zoning Agency (PZA) public hearing for PUD 2023-02 Ponte Vedra Resort will be held Sept. 21 at the request of the applicant, Ponte Vedra Corp. This meeting will begin at 11 a.m. in the St. Johns County Auditorium, located at 500 San Sebastian View.

This item had been scheduled to appear before the PZA on Thursday, Aug. 17.

### Women's Club to meet

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will hold its September General Meeting from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 19, at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., Ponte Vedra Beach. Dinner buffet is \$30. Register at [pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php](http://pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php).

Annual membership in the club is \$50. The club raises money for local charities, two of which it selects each year to support.

### Democratic Club plans summer social

Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will host a summer social from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Sept. 26 and all are welcome. It will be held at Pusser's Bar & Grille, 816 U.S. A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach. Snacks and appetizers will be provided. Cash bar. Music by the Baystreet Band. For more information, email [jkary@verizon.net](mailto:jkary@verizon.net).

### EPIC awarded mental health court planning grant

In collaboration with the 7th Judicial Circuit in St. Johns County and other local partners, including law enforcement, EPIC Behavioral Healthcare

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

A	C	L	U		S	E	P		P	Y	A				
T	H	A	R	P		A	L	L		P	A	U	L		
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5	2	8	4	7	3	9	6	1
3	7	9	1	2	6	8	4	5
6	1	3	8	4	5	7	2	9
4	5	2	7	6	9	1	3	8
9	8	7	3	1	2	4	5	6

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Covering Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine, and Greater St. Johns County

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# Coastal Friends topic is estate planning for pets

After the summer's hiatus, Coastal Friends will hold their monthly luncheon from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 6, at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach.

The guest speaker will be Jennifer Barker, CEO of First Coast No More Homeless Pets. She will discuss estate planning for pets and provide information on what will happen to your pets if something happens to you.

"The mission of FCNMHP is to make veterinary care affordable and accessible

to all as we save lives by keeping dogs and cats in homes and out of shelters, providing low-cost spay-neuter services and delivering a broad range of programs and services," she said.

Marsh Landing Country Club will serve caesar salad, chicken cordon bleu with mashed potatoes, seasonal vegetables with Dijon mustard sauce and chef's choice for dessert.

Open to members as well as the community, the cost to attend this luncheon is \$25.

Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible since the deadline for checks to be received is Friday, Sept. 1.

Coastal Friends is a social club that has been in existence for 25 years. It consists of women

who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, St. Augustine and the surrounding area.

Some of the activities offered by Coastal Friends are adventures and outings, book club, bunco, canasta, happy hour, lunch in, periodic lunches at local restaurants, mah jongg and wine socials. Luncheons are held the first Wednesday of every month.

New members are welcome throughout the year. Contact brookemeister@msn.com for more information on how to join.



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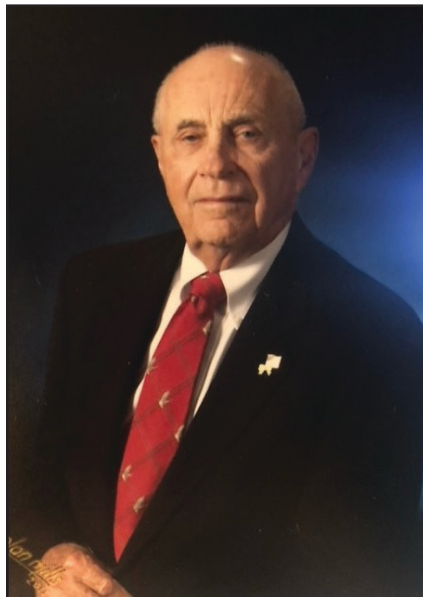
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**OBITUARIES**



**Arlin D Lewis**

Arlin D Lewis, 89, of Neptune Beach, Florida, passed away August 1, 2023, after a long attempt to recover from a broken hip. Arlin was born in Greensboro, NC on August 28, 1933, to Florence McNeill and Arlin R. Lewis.

He grew up in Spencer, NC and attended Spencer High School. That is where he met Perry, and on August 1, 1953, they were married. Arlin was entering the United States Air Force

and got married to his bride before leaving. He served four years in the USAF and upon returning took a job with Duke Energy in Charlotte, NC. He was with Duke several years before beginning his career at IBM. He was with IBM for 35 years. Taking the family many places where they still have friends today, Columbia, SC, Birmingham, AL, Atlanta, GA, Raleigh, NC and Jacksonville, FL. Arlin and Perry moved across the bridge to the beach upon retirement in 1982 and lived in Neptune Beach for almost 40 years.

Arlin enjoyed immensely being a father and grandfather. He was truly the best! So very caring in every way. His grandchildren loved him back with all their heart. He had something special with them. He attended many ballgames, recitals, graduations, it did not matter where, sometimes in NC and sometimes in FL.

Upon retirement and moving to the beach, golf became a ritual/hobby/sport for Arlin. He played often with friends. He was a member at Selva Marina CC. Arlin's love for the game continued long after he stopped playing. He was a starter at March Landing CC, which he enjoyed early mornings on the course. He also became a part of all the volunteers that

make the TPC Sawgrass a great golf tournament. He loved volunteering, chairing committees and most of all working with the kids (runners). Some whom he saw year after year. He was also a "Storyteller" at the Clubhouse. He loved both of these so much he did them for over 30 years at TPC Sawgrass Ponte Vedra.

He is survived by his four children, Rick (Terri) Lewis, Jenny (Jon) Mopper, Suzie Blue, and Marty (Bob) Bisplinghoff; five grandchildren Rebekah, Amanda, Ashley, Nick, and Alicia, and two great grandchildren Darby and Luke. He was preceded in death by his grandson, Jason Blue, his son-in-law Jim Blue, and his wife Perry Moore Lewis. A memorial service will be held at a later date at Palms Presbyterian Church. In lieu of flowers the family request donations be made to Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation ([www2.jdrf.org](http://www2.jdrf.org)) or Arthritis Foundation ([arthritis.org](http://arthritis.org)). Please visit his online Tribute at [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com).

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**DEATH NOTICES**

**Pierce F. Hoban**

Pierce F. Hoban, 93, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Aug. 13, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com). 904-249-1100

**Louise H. Kuhn**

Louise H. Kuhn, 92, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Aug. 11, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com). 904-249-1100

**Eleanor Davidson Leonard**

Eleanor Davidson Leonard, 76, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Aug. 8, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com). 904-249-1100

**Joseph Francis Putz**

Joseph Francis Putz, 77, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Aug. 14, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com). 904-249-1100

**Susan M. Schmachtenberger**

Susan M. Schmachtenberger, 78, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Aug. 9, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com)

**Mary Kathryn Stembridge**

Mary Kathryn Stembridge, 83, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Aug. 12, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com). 904-249-1100



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# Community Market makes return at new location

By Anthony Richards

The Community Market is back but this time in a different location, as it held its first event Aug. 5 at Faith Community Church located on County Road 210 in St. Johns.

The farmers market made its return after a few-month hiatus while they looked for a new host site. It will be held on the first Saturday of each month moving forward.

“I’ve been managing farmer’s markets now for 10 years,” said Julie Olsson, who is instrumental in overseeing and operating the market, having been a restaurant manager for a decade in St. Augustine.

According to Olsson, the market was initially started in March 2020 and took place at Beachwalk.

This is not the first time the market has been sidelined as the COVID-19 pandemic hit and forced the postponement shortly after it got off the ground the first time.

“When we came back after the pandemic we resumed at Beachwalk for about a year and a half,” Olsson said. “The community had just gotten so big

that they wanted us to just do the market in the winter, but we could not do that to our vendors.”

For Olsson, the vendors are one of the main reasons for the market, because it is the perfect opportunity for local artisans and business owners to showcase their products to the public.

“This is their livelihood for many of them, so they are as much dependent upon it taking place as the residents who search around in the hopes of finding such a market,” Olsson said.

She understands that because she spent time as a restaurant manager for a decade in St. Augustine.

The name Community Market was created since Faith Community Church is the new location of the market, which is striving to be hub for the community when it takes place each month.

“It really fits perfectly with Nocatee, which has its market every third Saturday of the month,” Olsson said. “It’s all about helping your fellow neighbors and vendors with whatever is needed. That



Contributed photo

The Community Market held its first event in months on Aug. 5 at Faith Community Church located on County Road 210 in St. Johns.

MARKET continues on Page 8

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*Jennifer Logue is the newly installed president of The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach, a civic club that serves the local community. A communications executive, she and her husband, David, have lived in Nocatee for the past 10 years.*

## Jennifer Logue

### As told to Anthony Richards

#### Tell us a little about Rotary.

I often get asked that question! When I mention the Rotary Club, people will say, “Rotary...now, what is that?”

The short answer is that Rotary International is a global network of volunteers who join together to provide service to others.

With more than 1.4 million members in 46,000 clubs in 172 countries, Rotary is one of the largest nonprofit organizations in the world.

At the local level, Rotarians can be found pitching in to do whatever will help make our community better. Our community is blessed to have three Rotary Clubs – Ponte Vedra Beach, Palm Valley and Ponte Vedra (Nocatee) – and members of these clubs meet weekly not only to network and socialize but also to conduct community service projects.

From picking up trash along A1A and building homes with Habitat for Humanity to conducting food and clothing drives for local food pantries and shelters, Rotarians enjoy helping others and working to strengthen our communities.

We also conduct fundraisers like our annual Mineral City Celebration, the proceeds of which are distributed as grants to local nonprofits.

On a global scale, Rotary International plays a major role in disaster relief and humanitarian aid through its seven main areas of focus: promoting peace, fighting disease, providing clean water and sanitation, supporting maternal health, offering education, supporting economic development and protecting the environment.

Rotary is perhaps best known, however, for its global campaign to eradicate polio.

When I first joined Rotary, I thought polio already had been eradicated after the development of the polio vaccine in the 1950s.

I had no idea that while the disease had been eliminated in America, it was still flourishing around the world. In 1988, Rotary joined with several world health organizations to launch a global polio eradication initiative.

At that time, there were 350,000 new cases of the disease in 126 countries around the world. Today, two of the three wild polioviruses have been eradicated and the remaining virus is down to just a handful of cases in just two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Since Rotary launched its campaign, new cases of polio have decreased 99.9%. That means we are “this close” to making polio only the second disease in history, after smallpox, to be fully eradicated from the face of the earth.

As president of a local Rotary club, I try never to lose sight of the fact that while we do a lot of good in our local community, our local fundraising efforts have also made global, transformative achievements like eradicating polio possible.

#### How did you become involved in the Rotary Club?

I have always been active in the community. Growing up in Massachusetts, I tagged along with my parents when they volunteered for countless local church and civic groups.

My father was president of our local Lions Club – another wonderful service organization – and when I grew up, I became president of the same Lions Club.

After we moved to Florida, I became involved in the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach while serving as man-



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Logue

#### New president of The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach, Jennifer Logue, stands alongside her son Bryan.

aging editor of the Ponte Vedra Recorder.

A longtime member of the club, Chuck Day, invited me to come to a meeting and I was hooked. I have been to many networking and civic meetings in my time, but never had I felt the energy and enthusiasm that radiated from the members of the Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club.

Plus, the meetings always featured really interesting speakers and a great breakfast to boot! When I was offered the chance to become a member, I gladly accepted.

#### What do you enjoy most about Rotary?

Being a member of Rotary has made such a positive impact on my life. It gave me an opportunity, as a new Florida resident, to meet people and form lasting friendships while also offering me a meaningful way to give back to the community.

I also enjoy seeing the positive impact Rotary has on others through what we call the “Family of Rotary.” Our club sponsors a wonderful “EarlyAct” program at PV/PV Rawlings that introduces elementary school students to the concepts of community service and caring for others.

We also have an “Interact” program at Ponte Vedra High School, and we have a strong partnership with the Beaches Rotaract Club – the Rotary club option for young adults from 18 to 30.

I witnessed firsthand the tremendous impact of Rotaract on my son, Bryan. When he moved to Florida, he was working from home and didn’t have an opportunity to meet people his own age.

After I invited him to attend a Rotaract social/fundraiser with me, however, he became involved in the club, and it literally changed his life. From making friends and

finding a roommate to meeting a Realtor who helped him buy his first house, Rotaract was the catalyst that helped him build a life in a new state.

And just last week, I had the pleasure of inducting him as the newest member of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach – the “Family of Rotary” indeed!

#### What do you enjoy most about living in the North Florida area?

Next week marks the 10th anniversary of our move from Massachusetts to Florida, and we are so happy we chose Northeast Florida!

We love living near the ocean and the year-round lifestyle. I used to joke that in Massachusetts, summer was three days in July, and it’s so nice to be able to get outside and enjoy the beauty of the area all year long.

#### What do you like to do in your free time?

What is this “free time” of which you speak? Seriously, though, when I’m not working, attending a Rotary meeting/social event or participating in a community service project, my time is reserved for my family.

We have three adult children and a little grandson who is the light of our lives, and nothing makes me happier than when we are all together, even if it’s just hanging out around the pool.

I also love to travel, and I recently returned from Australia, where I attended the Rotary International Convention.

Hearing firsthand from people all around the world whose lives have been transformed through Rotary inspires me to make this a great year for the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach.



# Sidewalk project coming to San Juan Drive

By Anthony Richards

The path to a sidewalk on San Juan Drive is now in motion after the Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District approved a sidewalk project along the road that will stretch from Solana Road to Miranda Road during its Aug. 14 meeting.

The project was approved with a 6-1 vote, with Trustee Charles Callaghan as the lone opposing vote.

As part of the project, the MSD will pay \$150,000 for the survey and engineering test portion of the project, while St. Johns County will be funding the construction portion of the project and will also maintain the sidewalks once they are constructed.

“The survey is going to be expensive because it takes into account all of your topo (topography), and not just the topo on a five-foot segment,” Wester said. “They take it out 10 to 15 feet on either side of that, because they have to calculate and understand where all the drainage is and where it’s going.”

Five feet is the expected width of the sidewalk, which is the standard size of most sidewalks being constructed.

There were a handful of residents that live along San Juan Drive were in at-

tendance that stated their concern for the project and informed the board that they did not believe they should go forward with it.

Some of the reasons for their concerns raised included the sidewalk presenting a safety issue due to it running so close to the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club’s golf course, which could result in people getting hit by errant golf balls while walking on the sidewalk.

One of those residents voicing this concern was Kathy Gleason, who said she had sent a couple of different letters to the board members stating those concerns about putting a sidewalk so close to an active tee box.

According to chairman Al Hollon, the goal behind the sidewalk project is to navigate people from walking on the road and give them a safe place where they will not be in danger of getting hit by a vehicle.

“We have vetted this, and I know we’ve talked about this for my six years on the board,” Trustee Brad Wester said. “We’ve had numerous discussions on this, including having numerous workshops. We don’t discuss anything about sidewalks outside of this room, so it has been 100% adver-

tised, legally noticed and publicly vetted.”

Kimley-Horn, a planning and design consultant firm, did a feasibility and base-line construction cost estimate study more than a year ago now.

Residents who live along the west side of San Juan Drive also voiced that they do not want a sidewalk passing in front of their houses and asked why it is not going on the east side.

According to Wester, when completed,

the sidewalk will be in front of 21 homes on San Juan and one home on Miranda as it turns the corner and meets up with the bridge.

“That is roughly 10 less homes than it would be if it was built on the other side of the road,” Wester said.

Now that the project has been approved, the next step is for Kimley-Horn to do a survey of the area to take a deeper dive into what the project would entail.

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Official 10th Year of the Women's Food Alliance Southeast

By Leigh Cort

I invited my “dream team” to dinner in August 2013 and presented a new concept to all of the professional hospitality women who I believed would best represent the newly organized Women's Food Alliance. Caterers, a wedding planner, restaurateurs, a celebrity food journalist, one restaurant franchise marketing director and a hospitality magazine publisher. Their diversity became the centerpiece of our organization's mission — to bring together all of the career-women whose businesses revolved around food, events, travel and the growing power of females in the hospitality industry.

That night, at Ocean 60 in Atlantic Beach, the seeds were planted, and an invitation was sent to 100 hospitality-related women in Northeast Florida to

attend our first official gathering on Sept. 10, 2013, at the historic Casa Marina Hotel — the Women's Food Alliance Martini Gala of the newly established “sorority” of qualified women. Everyone who attended met the leadership team and heard the story about its inception and vision for the coming year. The evening was a huge success and our WFA had 60 members going into our second month!

We set the tone and template of the Women's Food Alliance with five events that year:

1. Chocolate Tempering and Tasting at Peterbrooke Chocolatier
2. Italian Dinner at Amici Restaurant featuring “Artichokes Made Easy”
3. Bed and Breakfast gathering and a focus group sampling Charleston's Calie's Biscuits



Contributed photo

Becky Lowry, Tammy Poudrier, Sherry Stoppelbein, Mariela Groshell, Benedetta Dubetz, Leigh Cort, Donna Harden, Belinda Hulin Crissman and Jennifer Price.

4. Restaurant Marketing Boot Camp at Woody's BBQ with a rib-eating dinner contest

5. Holiday Meatloaf Cooking Competition and Holiday Cheer

Today nearly 10 years to the day, the Women's Food Alliance has expanded to Coastal Georgia up to and past Savannah. Each month the themes and venues change — always including surprises — with the growth of exciting new

women who bring their own distinctive businesses and style into the organization. We embrace entrepreneurs, new and seasoned members in hospitality throughout the Southeast, inviting them to enjoy being part of an organization that cheers, supports, networks, partners, lends a hand and always remembers “friendship first.”

For more information, go to [womensfoodalliance.com](http://womensfoodalliance.com).

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(detail) John Frederick Kensett (American, 1816–72), *Singing Beach & Eagle Rock, Magnolia, Massachusetts, 1864*, oil on canvas. Courtesy of the Thomas H. and Diane DeMell Jacobsen Ph.D. Foundation.



Contributed photo

Fifty vendors took part at the market's first event since its return. It will be held on the first Saturday of each month moving forward.

## Market

Continued from 5

family atmosphere is what we've established here.”

One of the market's rules is that everything a vendor brings to sell must be homemade or hand-created, which Olsson believes is not only what residents are looking for at such a market, but it is something they can rely on.

Vendor items at the market are part of a wide range that includes everything from artwork to soaps and food.

Although the move created some time away from the public, the location change is something Olsson believes will work

out better for the Community Market in the future.

One of the biggest differences is that the market now takes place on a grass field instead of a paved parking lot.

“It makes a huge difference, especially when the sun is beating down on that pavement,” Olsson said. “It's just a better scenario for everyone involved.”

The Community Market had 50 vendors for its first Saturday event since its return, which according to Olsson is a great number to build upon.

“There's definite room to grow with the current situation,” Olsson said. “Markets like this are such staples of a community. I can only imagine what this will all be like.”



# App

Continued from 1

said Founder and CEO Zacky Horwitz.

In the short time it has been in existence, the app has gained a large following. Launched first as a website in June, it saw modest success. But when the mobile app was introduced in July, things really began to take off. Within its first two weeks, dozens of businesses got on-board and about 300 residents downloaded the app.

The app is available from both Google Play and the App Store, and after downloading it, one can search for a specific business, a product or a service. The user can also browse businesses, discounts and deals and upcoming events.

Users can easily message businesses through the app or click the phone button to call them directly. There's a favorites button and a search history for later reference. Frequently, there are maps, social media links and more. Nocatee residents can also write reviews.

Best of all: it's free to the residents.

Businesses pay a fee to be included. They get access to their own dashboard where they can post their content, including discounts, photos, special events and more.

Participating businesses must either be located in Nocatee or serve Nocatee residents. A golf-cart symbol indicates that the business is owned by a Nocatee resident. A special badge indicates that the business is located within Nocatee.

App users may be surprised to learn that Horwitz is 18 years old and already a junior at the University of Florida, where he is studying finance. He attributes his initiative to the influence of his entrepreneurial family.

"I kind of grew up around that mindset," he said.

His family moved to Nocatee from Maryland in Janu-



Photo by Shaun Ryan

**Zacky Horwitz has created an app that connects residents of Nocatee with businesses there.**

ary, and Horwitz immediately began looking for a business of his own to start.

"I'd just moved here," he said. "I thought the community was really great. I wanted to start something that would benefit the community."

The idea came to him after he observed that everyone seeking business recommendations was turning to Facebook and Nextdoor.

"I thought to create one resource to tie everything

together would be really valuable," he said.

Based on the overwhelming response, he has succeeded.

"The feedback I'm getting from other Nocatee residents and businesses is really, really positive," he said.

To download the app, go to [app.pontevedraconnection.com/pvconnection](http://app.pontevedraconnection.com/pvconnection) or the appropriate app marketplace for either an iPhone or Android device or go to [pontevedraconnection.com](http://pontevedraconnection.com).

## DID YOU KNOW?

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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**

# Low Maintenance Landscaping

*"Those who find beauty in all of nature will find themselves at one with the secrets of life itself." — L. Wolfe Gilbert*



**By Kathy Esfahani**

Keeping your yard beautiful does not have to require hours of work! Low maintenance landscaping is attainable and enjoyable with just a bit of planning. Although every flower and/or plant needs some level of maintenance, it is possible to find colorful plants, evergreens and shrubs that only need attention from time to time.

Keep these tips in mind when planning a low maintenance landscape:

- Plants that tolerate heat are more viable in our area. Look for Florida-friendly plants when selecting options for your yard. Consider the sturdiness of a plant for resisting high heat/humidity, wind and changing weather.
- Although there are flowers that require less attention than others, look for plants with colorful and interesting foliage. Flowers generally require more time,



Photo provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

deadheading and replacement. Foliage offers not only color, but also textures, shapes and patterns. Look for plants with variegated leaves featuring stripes or color splashes.

- Consider the form of a plant that you choose — do you prefer a tight, clean look or a more loose, natural appearance? Look for plants that fit the form you prefer to avoid extra trimming.
- Choose larger plants with a broad reach side-to-side

or cascading branches. These choices might include palms, shrubs or groundcovers. By selecting bigger options, you will gain a lush, full look with fewer total plants and, therefore, have less to maintain.

- Slow growing evergreen plants and trees are nice alternatives for a low maintenance landscape since they do not drop their leaves. Be cautious of adding evergreens that grow more quickly, however, as they do require more pruning.

As you design your low maintenance landscape, consider the following plants to add color, fullness and interest to your yard: African iris, agapanthus, arboricola, Aztec grass, black-eyed Susan, blue daze, cast iron plant, croton, dune sunflower, foxtail fern, gaillardia, lantana, lirioppe, muhly grass, penta, rosemary, vinca and any ginger or succulent.

Happy planting!

**Flower of the Week: Dune Sunflower**

**Please email Kathy at [kcg.pvr@gmail.com](mailto: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.**

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# Back-to-School

PAGES  
11-15

## Classes under way: a few facts to know

By Shaun Ryan

The 2023-24 academic year is under way, and families have been scrambling to see to the many details associated with the beginning of school. Students in St. Johns and Nassau counties returned to classes Aug. 10 and those in Duval County returned Aug. 14.

Here's a look at local districts and student holidays during the coming year:



- Labor Day: Sept. 4
  - Student holidays: Oct. 16, Nov. 10 (Veterans Day), Jan. 8, Feb. 19 (Presidents Day), March 15, March 29
  - Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 22-24
  - Winter Break: Dec. 21-Jan. 5
  - Martin Luther King Day: Jan. 15
  - Spring Break: March 18-22
  - Memorial Day: May 27
- The last day of school is May 31.  
For information, go to [dcps.duvalschools.org](http://dcps.duvalschools.org).

### St. Johns County

The St. Johns County School District has been awarded a grade of A each year since 2010. It has an enrollment of just over 50,000 and has 51 schools with a total 2,779 classrooms. About 25% of the district's students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

In all, 306 school buses transport more than 25,000 students an average of 26,000 miles per day. School cafeterias serve more than 73,000 breakfast and lunch meals and almost 45,000 a la carte items each week.

The district employs 6,299 people, 3,499 of which are instructional staff.

Student holidays are as follows:

- Labor Day: Sept. 4
- Student holidays: Oct. 16, Nov. 10 (Veterans Day), Jan.

4-5, Feb. 19 (Presidents' Day), March 18, March 29, April 19

- Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 22-24
  - Winter Break: Dec. 22-Jan. 3
  - Martin Luther King Day: Jan. 15
  - Spring Break: March 11-15
- The last day of school will be May 24.  
For information, go to [stjohns.k12.fl.us](http://stjohns.k12.fl.us).

### Duval County

The Duval County School District has been awarded a grade of B each consecutive year since 2015. It has an enrollment of just over 129,000 and has 197 schools. The district employs just over 12,000 people.

Student holidays are as follows:

### Nassau County

The Nassau County School District has been awarded a grade of A for nearly every year going back to 2010. It has an enrollment of about 12,300 and has 16 schools total.

Student holidays are as follows:

- Labor Day: Sept. 4
  - Student holidays: Oct. 16, Nov. 10 (Veterans Day), Jan. 8, Feb. 19 (Presidents Day), March 14
  - Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 22-24
  - Winter Break: Dec. 22-Jan. 5
  - Martin Luther King Day: Jan. 15
  - Spring Break: March 15-22
  - Memorial Day: May 27
- For information, go to [nassau.k12.fl.us](http://nassau.k12.fl.us).

Please visit the [www.da-arts.org](http://www.da-arts.org) for more information and audition requirements.  
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## Douglas Anderson School of the Arts

— A Duval County Public High School —



Established as an arts school in 1985, the school attracts students from all parts of North Florida and South Georgia who have talent in dance, instrumental or vocal music, performance or technical theater, film and video production, creative writing and visual arts.

A high academic standard — coupled with broad arts curriculum — offers students an opportunity to excel in a chosen discipline while preparing them for post-secondary education.

To learn more about the school and its programming, go to [douglasandersonSOTA](https://www.douglasandersonSOTA.com) on Facebook, or online at [da-arts.org](http://da-arts.org).

WHERE ARTS AND ACADEMICS MEET EXCELLENCE

Take an Advanced Tour of Douglas Anderson School of the Arts this school year





Nease High Paleo Club students took a trip this summer to dig for dinosaur fossils in the Badlands of Montana.



The students received credit for any fossils they found and could name it for document purposes.

# Digging up fossils, friendships

## Nease Paleo Club returns from expedition in Badlands

By Anthony Richards

A group of Nease High School students had the chance of a lifetime this summer as they made a trip out to the Badlands of Montana to dig for dinosaur bones.

The trip was made possible through the Nease paleo club and Paleo School, which is a national program and an extension of Adventure 360, designed to present high school students with unique opportunities.

The students spent a week in Montana and not just searched for fossils, but were involved in the entire process, including locating, digging them up and dressing them so that they could be preserved for transport.

“This group is going to now have those lifelong memories and connections that were created on the trip for the rest of their life,” teacher Kevi Lay said.

There are a lot of clubs and organizations, but to be able to provide them with field-level experience is something Lay, who oversees the club, acknowledges as the most important aspect.

“Just the networking and the opportunities it gives the students is great,” Lay said. “As a teacher you have these grand ideas, but then when a group of students just go out and surpass your expectations and your vision is awesome.”

Students were credited with any fossils they found during the trip, including given the chance to name their fossil for



Students enjoyed the local atmosphere, including drinking milkshakes at an old-fashioned pharmacy counter.

documentation purposes, which allowed them to really be creative and put their unique stamp on it.

One of the memorable finds was a portion of a Triceratops jawbone that still had the teeth in it.

“Lara (Sgouridis) and I found it on the first day and we named him ‘Tony F. Gunk,’” junior Iva Koytchev chuckled.

The fact that such a rare find came on the first day was a huge deal within the group and really got the week off on the right foot, according to Lay.

“It is truly a legacy, when you can find a fossil that no human eyes have ever seen until now,” Lay said. “It is quite special and a real beautiful thing.”

Each day presented its own challenge, as not only did they have to be on the lookout for rattlesnakes and quicksand, but they also battled scorching conditions and the summer heat.



Photos courtesy of Kevin Lay

The Badlands offered an entirely new scenery many students had not seen before.

“Every day I was just so ready to get back to the hotel and get cleaned up, but now looking back, I really wish I had cherished the last couple hours a little more,” Koytchev said.

According to junior Lara Sgouridis, the landscape of the Badlands was amazing to see and one of the things she’ll remember from the trip, as well as their jawbone find.

“I had only ever been on the East Coast, so seeing landscape like that was something entirely new for me,” Sgouridis said. “It was just so different.”

When searching in the desert for fossils, things tend to look the same, but there were several signs they learned to look for to indicate a fossil, one of the more interesting techniques is to lick it to decide whether it is a fossil or a rock, according to sophomore Charlotte Breton.

“If it sticks to your tongue, it’s a fos-

sil,” junior Rylee Compton said.

Some in the group had been with the Nease paleo club throughout the year, while others joined late and in some cases the trip was the first time they were meeting or getting to know the others in the club.

However, by the end of the week the bonds they had grown spending a week together searching for dinosaur fossils in the desert were very evident.

It was the third time Kendra Lay had gone on the trip, and this time was just as unique and memorable as the last two summers.

“There’s always something new and amazing to find out there,” Kendra Lay said. “Part of the trip is the people who are there with you and a part of the town that you’re staying in. I hadn’t met some of these girls until the airport, but we all just clicked from day one.”



COLUMN

# Douglas Anderson School of the Arts 2023-24 School Year

By **Natalie Hyder**

Arts Director, Douglas Anderson School of the Arts

Douglas Anderson opens the 2023-24 school year with many changes on the horizon. It is an exciting time to be a DA student. This year, we welcome a new faculty and are piloting a few new programs.

**New to DA**

Douglas Anderson welcomes a new band director, vocal teacher and assistant principal of curriculum this year.

Our new band director, Mr. Benjamin Gerrard, recently completed his Master of Music degree from Baylor University, studying conducting with Dr. J. Eric Wilson. He also studied flute with Dr. Charlotte Daniel and jazz improvisation with Mr. Alex Parker. He holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree from The Florida State University, where he performed with the Marching Chiefs, Symphonic Band and University Philharmonia.

Before his studies at Baylor, Mr. Gerrard was the director of bands at Merritt Island High School in Brevard County, Florida, from 2014 to 2021. He was responsible for the marching band, three concert bands, two jazz bands, percussion ensemble and winter guard. All ensembles received consistent superior ratings at all Florida Bandmasters Association events. He is an FMEA Emerg-

ing Leader and was on the Brevard County Public Schools Music Leadership Team. He also served as district secretary for FBA District 10.

Josh Cook has joined DA as a vocal instructor. Mr. Cook earned a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Georgia Southern University and recently finished his coursework for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting at the University of Southern Mississippi. Josh's well-rounded education and background have allowed him to learn and perform a wide variety of music from heavy metal to opera, and everything in between. This open approach to music afforded him opportunities to perform both nationally and internationally and has given him rare insight into many aspects of music scholarship and performance. Mr. Cook lives at home with his cat, Lupin.

Tonya Rowan is a native of Jacksonville, Florida, and attended local area schools. She has been a Florida educator for the last 24 years, serving in large, urban Title 1 schools. Prior to serving in K-12 education she spent 10 years in higher education. Her strengths center around creating a positive school culture and establishing high standards for all. These concepts have allowed her to move graduation rates above 96% for students in the Jacksonville community.

Outside of work, Mrs. Rowan has been

a lifelong learner, earning degrees from Jacksonville University, University of North Florida and Nova Southeastern University. She is currently completing her dissertation in the doctoral program at the University of North Florida.

**New Programs for This Year**

We have a few exciting new projects launching this year. DA will be hosting its first-ever College Showcase.

Each year Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) sends students to post-secondary schools across the country. This year, DA alumni will be attending schools and conservatories such as Carnegie Mellon, NYU, USC, Yale and Julliard, to name a few.

College Showcase is an opportunity for colleges, universities and conservatories to visit our campus and connect with our talented students. This isn't your typical college fair. Representatives will have the opportunity to teach master classes, connect one-on-one with students, audition students for their programs, or provide feedback through portfolio reviews. Our goal is to provide equity amongst the students in their exposure to post-secondary programs and scholarship opportunities.

Douglas Anderson has teamed up with Career and Technical Education (CTE) to provide career readiness in the arts for our

students. This year, the Creative Writing Department will become a CTE academy in journalism. The creative writing department worked with CTE over the summer to adapt their courses to the arts. Students in creative writing will now graduate with a business industry certification and become eligible for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship.

DA will be offering a business entrepreneur CTE course this year that is open to all arts majors. The business course curriculum has been adapted to fit business in the arts. Students will spend one semester building their brands and the second semester turning their brands into business models. Students will learn how to navigate the business side of being a practicing professional artist.

**On the Horizon**

What's next for DA? To cater to the 21st century student, DA is developing a new singer/songwriter track, under the Vocal Department, to launch in the 2024-25 school year. The track is for creative musicians; it will focus on commercial music and music industry with emphasis on songwriting, composing and recording. Chair Holly Hammond will be making trips out to middle schools to promote and gain interest in this new program. She can be contacted by email at [hammondh@duvalsechools.org](mailto:hammondh@duvalsechools.org) to discuss details.



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Contributed photos

Students and their families learned about Ocean Palms at the school's annual Kindergarten Tours.

# Ocean Palms embarks on back-to-school extravaganza

Ocean Palms Elementary School rang in the new school year with the 8:30 a.m. bell on Thursday, Aug. 10. However, for students, staff and families, it was merely the last event in a series, that led up to the first day of school.

On July 31 and Aug. 1, kindergarteners and new families were invited to meet administration, learn about the school, and take a tour at OPE's annual

Kindergarten Tours. With approximately 200 families in attendance over two days, it was the perfect occasion to introduce new families to the OPE community.

Then, on Aug. 3 and 4, teachers and staff were welcomed back to school with a breakfast and lunch. At the lunch, sponsored by Tropical Smoothie Café, staff could be spotted in costumes

ranging from superheroes, to chefs, to mermaids. It was a once-upon-a-time-themed day, and teachers were challenged to dress up in what they aspired to be as children. The next day, teachers were treated to a breakfast by Canopy Road Café as they continued their back-to-school planning.

Finally, families were welcomed into school on Aug. 9 for Meet the Teacher.

Here students, families and staff met one another, reconnected with friends, learned to navigate the building, discovered how to get involved and delivered their school supplies to classrooms in preparation for school the next day.

So, with that first bell came the end of the back-to-school extravaganza, but it also ushered in the year ahead for the Ocean Palms community.



Breakfast by Canopy Road Café fueled up teachers and staff at OPE as they headed off to plan for the new school year.



Teachers and staff at OPE enjoyed a once-upon-a-time-themed luncheon by Tropical Smoothie Café.





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Students and families attended school for Meet the Teacher at Ocean Palms.



# Developing emotional intelligence through children's songs

Submitted by Jacksonville Country Day School

That song your child learned at school and is now singing on repeat might be more than you know; it might be the key to them developing strong emotional intelligence.

At Jacksonville Country Day School, every song our students sing is sung with a purpose. Singing and being exposed to music enhances the development of emotional intelligence and allows children the opportunity to experience, identify and manage their emotions.

Wendy Johnston, JCDS Early Learning (Pre-K 3 through kindergarten) team lead and expert in elementary education, breaks down the songs JCDS students sing every day, how they develop emotional intelligence through music, and why song and music are an integral part of a child's development.

## What are the benefits of singing songs at school?

We sing songs to develop routines, community, life skills, self-confidence, gratitude, friendships, manners, empathy and self-control. Singing also enhances memory, alertness and mood, and it's just plain fun to sing (and dance). For example, we celebrate others when someone gets new shoes, a haircut or loses a tooth. We wish others well when they are not able to be at school.

We are grateful to our Earth for providing food that we eat during snack time or lunch. Singing songs can enhance learning by engaging centers of the brain that are in charge of language, memory and concentration. Music can



Contributed photo

Justine Jeans, JCDS pre-K4 teacher, and her students from the 2022-23 school year.

elevate our mood, spark creativity and encourage us to get our body moving.

## What are some of the songs JCDS Early Learning students sing and why?

"It's Pre K," is played frequently in our pre-K 3 classrooms. The lyrics talk about "putting on my shoes, playing with friends, working it out and eating a snack." These words promote independence, confidence and conflict resolution.

Pre-K 4 students enjoy singing, "My School Family," and it is played during their morning meeting time. This song encourages students to practice greetings and develop friendships with each other and reminds everyone that we are part of a school community.

Kindergarteners often sing, "The Rules Rap," which talks about self-control, working together and respecting boundaries, including when to use a big voice versus a quiet one.

## How does singing songs build a child's emotional intelligence?

Music activates the areas of the brain involved in emotional processing. Young children's brains are in the process of rapid development. If I am singing a song about being special from my head to my toes and my friend is also singing it, I am more likely to experience a happy feeling about myself and my friend.

The same goes for developing mindfulness; when learning about an uncomfortable situation I might remember the

words to the "S.T.A.R. Song": 'Stop, take a deep breath and relax before reacting in an impulsive way.'

## Why is it important to develop emotional intelligence? What is emotional intelligence?

It is important to be able to manage your own emotions as well as understand the emotions of the people around you. Being able to identify one's emotions is the first step to being able to manage them. It is a critical life skill to be able to talk about your feelings, and sometimes it is easier for children to do so with a song. Matching feelings with words and music gives students an outlet and provides a learning opportunity for them to develop emotional intelligence.

Emotionally intelligent individuals tend to have high self-confidence and develop friendships more easily. They read social cues well and have realistic expectations of themselves and others. When you are singing, you are engaging systems in your brain that help you regulate your behavior. Regulating your emotions is a valuable life skill necessary for all aspects of life. It helps you build confidence and form meaningful relationships.

At Jacksonville Country Day School, our academic philosophy ensures the education of the whole child. When a child is emotionally confident, they become resilient, successful learners who possess the tools to succeed, even when faced with challenges.

So next time your child is humming that tune (over and over again) ask them to teach it to you.



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# Business Weekly

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— FEATURING —  
*Local Real Estate Showcase*



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THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023

[www.PonteVedraRecorder.com](http://www.PonteVedraRecorder.com)

## Summer's 'dog days' put buyers on hold

The dog days of summer have some buyers on hold.

The median price of single-family homes in Northeast Florida inched up 1.3% to \$395,000. July finished with closed sales of single-family homes down nearly 20% from June.

“Interest rates, the cost of goods and services and available supply are all factors in the decline in closed sales,” said 2023 NEFAR President Diana Galavis.

Galavis also attributed the slowdown to the 30-year-fixed interest rate, which has increased and pushed median monthly

mortgage payments higher.

“This reflects Northeast Florida’s home affordability index rate registering at 65, which is down 3% from last month and 12% from last year,” she said.

By falling 3% to 65, Northeast Florida’s Home Affordability Index is

registering at its lowest point ever. The Housing Affordability Index measures housing affordability for the region. In other words, it measures whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a

**BUYERS** continues on **Page 18**

### Sun

Continued from 1

melanoma, which is the most dangerous form of skin cancer.”

Two hundred stitches later, the spot was removed, and although she had a five-inch scar to remember it by, they were able to remove the threat.

“Looking back it looks like a miracle, because at 26 everyone feels like they’re healthy and invincible to things like that,” Papock said. “At the time, I thought of skin cancer as ‘cancer light,’ like so many young people do. I thought, ‘Oh, they can just cut it off and it will be fine,’ but the doctor told me that I could die from something like that.”

Her scary experience got her thinking, and she began asking questions about the steps and options people can take to help protect against sun damage and the harms it can present, as the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the world, with an average of one in every five Americans having some form of skin cancer in their lives.

According to Papock, she had this



A sample sale event is scheduled at the new Cabana Life headquarters located at 315 11th Ave. N. in Jacksonville Beach on Aug. 25 and 26.

false sense of security that her typical cotton clothing was protecting her, but it turned out that even the skin being covered was only a sun protection factor of 5 or 7, which is very low on the scale.

Sun protection factor or SPF is used

by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to measure how much solar energy or UV radiation is required to produce sunburn on protected skin. The higher the SPF number, the more protection there is.

“Here I was working for a lot of the top fashion and beauty magazines reporting on all the trends, but I had never heard of sun protective clothing,” Papock said.

Once she started looking into it further she realized that most of the sun protective clothing was fluorescent and synthetic and just not something she saw as an appealing look.

“From then on, I’ve been hellbent on making the most luxurious, lightweight and breathable fabrics that still have a 50-plus UV protection, which is the highest rating available,” Papock said.

That mission continues to be the focal point of the business years later and it is something Papock and her staff have successfully seen grow and develop



Photos by Anthony Richards

A cocktail cart is set up at the new location for those who reserve an appointment to see the selection firsthand.

over that time to the point where they just recently moved their headquarters from Ponte Vedra Beach to Jacksonville Beach to accommodate the influx of interest with a bigger space.

“I wanted to use my experience to help spread the word so that they wouldn’t be sitting in my position and have to hear the word ‘cancer,’” Papock said.

A sample sale event is scheduled at the new Cabana Life headquarters located at 315 11th Ave. N. in Jacksonville Beach on Aug. 25 and 26.

The two-day event is open to the public and will showcase new styles of clothing at discounted prices with a portion of the event’s proceeds going to local charities.

For more information or to see the selection of clothing available go to [cabanalife.com](http://cabanalife.com).

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# Benchmarks of Success

*A look at major career changes in the area.*



**Elizabeth Bernardino**

**Bernardino named Chamber's VP of program development and marketing**

Elizabeth Bernardino has been named vice president of program development and marketing for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce effective June 29. In addition to overseeing marketing efforts, Bernardino will be responsible for membership experience and programming.

She brings a wealth of nonprofit and for-profit, marketing, membership and programming experience to the Chamber. As head of marketing at Weaver Fundraising (Trail's End Popcorn for Boy Scouts), Bernardino's primary focus was to reach, serve and retain every Council, Scout and volunteer by providing awareness, resources and support for their fundraising experience. Prior to that, Bernardino was the senior vice president at Girl Scouts of Gateway Council and implemented strategy for many departments, including data analytics, membership sales and programs, including the cookie sale.

The Chamber began the search for a new vice president when the announcement was made that current Vice President of Operations & Membership Aimee Stafford would be moving back to Kentucky to be with her family.

Bernardino received her Bachelor of Science degree in integrated marketing and communications from San Diego State University. She will be responsible for recruitment and retention management, strategic marketing, brand management, member benefit management and Council and Division governance and programming.



**Liana Cooper**

**Liana Cooper joins local real estate firm office**

Liana Cooper has joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty at its Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office.

An experienced specialist in the beauty industry, Cooper has contributed her expertise to two of the leading luxury beauty industry leaders in the field. She has lived in Northeast Florida since 2014.

For more information, Cooper can be reached at 904-285-1800, Liana.Cooper@FloridaNetworkRealty.com and LCooper.

FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

The Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office, located at 333 Village Main St., Suite 670, is managed by Holly Hayes, who can be reached at 904-802-0432, Holly.Hayes@FloridaNetworkRealty.com and floridanetworkrealtycareers.com.



**Sarah Coronado**

**MW Builders promotes Sarah Coronado to project manager**

MW Builders, a commercial construction company, has announced the promotion of Sarah Coronado as project manager. Coronado joined MW Builders as assistant project manager in March. She is based in the company's Jacksonville office.

She provides overall management and direction for all aspects of project construction.

She has been working in the construction industry since 2016. She has a wealth of experience in the commercial and light industrial industry and is proficient in all project phases from preconstruction to completion.

Coronado has a degree in building construction management from the University of North Florida.



**Gloria Barrera**

**Gloria Barrera joins real estate firm's local office**

Gloria Barrera has joined the local office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. She had previously worked with another company affiliate in New York before moving to Northeast Florida a few years ago.

She possesses a wealth of knowledge and an extensive background in the industry. With nearly two decades of real estate experience and a degree in business administration from the University of Guayaquil in Ecuador, and fluency in Spanish, she brings a unique set of skills and understanding to serve the diverse needs of homebuyers and sellers.

For more information, Barrera can be reached at 904-994-8407, Gloria.Barrera@FloridaNetworkRealty.com and GBarrera.FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

The Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office, located at 333 Village Main St., Suite 670, is managed by Holly Hayes, who can be reached at 904-802-0432, Holly.Hayes@FloridaNetworkRealty.com, and floridanetworkrealtycareers.com.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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# Ponte Vedra Plastic Surgery hosts Chamber before hours



Karina Coryell, Latisha Akerele and Linda Thomson.

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ponte Vedra Beach Division held a before hours event at Ponte Vedra Plastic Surgery on Aug. 9. Members were able to mingle and network inside and outside the location.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Superfit Foods were setup offering healthy snack options for those in attendance.



Mobile Coffee Shop was one of the vendors at the Chamber before hours event at Ponte Vedra Plastic Surgery on Aug. 9.



Contributed photo

Lazy River at Nocatee.

## Nocatee named 'Best Place to Raise a Family in Florida'

Niche, an online publisher of nationwide rankings and reviews for schools, cities, neighborhoods and more, has named Nocatee the top residential community in Florida.

In its 2023 rankings, Niche gave the master-planned community an overall A+ grade, naming it the No. 1 best place to raise a family in Florida out of 1,177 locales evaluated statewide.

“Nocatee continues to set the standard for world-class community living in the Sunshine State and nationally,” said Rick Ray, CEO of The PARC Group, the master developer of Nocatee. “Being recognized at this level is an honor that motivates us to continue raising the bar for our residents.”

Nocatee also received high marks for its public schools, jobs, outdoor activities and health and fitness amenities, all of which received A grades.

The rankings are calculated based on Niche user data, aggregated student- and parent-submitted surveys, public information and other benchmarks — all statisti-

cally balanced to ensure comprehensive and reliable assessments.

“There isn’t a better place to raise a family in the country,” according to one reviewer. “Best schools in the state, golf cart accessibility throughout the community, great neighbors, amazing events, two resort-style waterparks and more.”

“Nocatee is a place that makes everyone feel welcome and appreciated,” wrote another resident. “The amount of support and activities provided to residents is something I have never experienced before.”

“You can’t beat it,” another reviewer wrote. “We have lived in five different states, and Nocatee is hands down the best place we have ever lived.”

As the demand for new homes and the Nocatee lifestyle continues growing, The PARC Group has announced new neighborhoods planned to open in 2023 and 2024.

For more information about Nocatee and its award-winning lifestyle, go to [nocatee.com](http://nocatee.com).

## Buyers

Continued from 16

mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income and median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability. This index measures affordability factors for all homebuyers making a 20% downpayment. An index of 100 is defined as the point where a median-income family has the exact amount of income needed to purchase a median-priced existing home. An index value greater than 100 means that the family has more than enough income, while a value below 100 means that a family doesn’t have enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan.

Meanwhile, sellers are pricing homes according to the market, and with advice from Realtor experts they are receiving almost 98% of their listing price, said Galavis.

New listings in the region remained steady at 2,952 and active inventory increased 6.9% to 4,845 homes. The months’ supply of inventory in July skyrocketed and is now 33.3% higher at 2.7 than it was from the previous month when it registered 2.0.

“Many people are looking to buy, invest and move to Northeast Florida, and this is reflected with the months’ supply of inventory,” Galavis said. “There are more buyers in the market than there are homes. Even with increased housing

costs due to higher interest rates, insurance and inflation, many buyers understand that homeownership provides a pathway to long-term wealth. In a highly fluctuating market, it is important to seek out a Realtor to provide the professional advice needed for the purchase and sale of real estate.”

In St. Johns County, July’s median prices jumped 5.7% to \$585,000 for single-family homes. The median days on the market were 38, an 18.8% increase from the month before. Month-to-month, closed sales fell 16.7% to 489, pending sales rose 10.4% to 551 and new listings dropped 10.1% to 733.

Active inventory rose to 1,492 homes, an increase of 2.5% from June and

3.1-month supply. The affordability index slid 6.4% to 44, demonstrating that it is terribly expensive to live in St. Johns County.

In Duval County, the July’s median price of single-family housing was \$330,000, a 1.2% drop from June when it registered \$335,000. The median days on the market in June remained at 30. Month-to-month, closed sales dropped 22.4% to 843, pending sales remained nearly the same at 990, and new listings increased 1.4% to 1,538.

Active inventory for the county rose 10.4% to 2,196 homes, a 2.6-month supply. In July, the home affordability index remained the same, registering at 78.



# In the Arts



Send your arts news to [news@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:news@pontevedrarecorder.com)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023 · PAGE 19 [www.PonteVedraRecorder.com](http://www.PonteVedraRecorder.com)

## Betty Griffin Center announces 2024 calendar art and poetry winners

The art submission from Natalia Engl, an 11th grade student at Ponte Vedra High School, and the poetry submission from Nicholas Casillo, an eighth grader at Fruit Cove Middle School, were selected as the first-place winners in the 2024 Day Without Violence Art and Poetry Calendar Contest.

St. Johns County School District Fine Arts Specialist Joanne Crowder, author and publisher Kristen Paul, Crisp Ellert Art Museum Director Julie Dickover and artist Fran Windeler of Vilano Beach judged more than 600 submissions from St. Johns County students in selecting the artwork and poetry for next year's calendar.

"We appreciate all of the St. Johns County students who entered the contest, our judges and the continued support of the project by the St. Johns County School District, which raises awareness of our prevention work throughout the county," said Betty Griffin Center CEO Kelly Franklin. "We also appreciate the support of the locally owned print company, Hartley, which sponsored the

production of the calendar for a third consecutive year."

In the art contest, Yiwen Chen, a seventh grader at Valley Ridge Academy, won second place, and Bristol Howell, an eighth-grade student at Fruit Cove Middle School, won second place in the poetry contest.

Those receiving honorable mention include:

### Art

Savannah Crowe, grade 11, Creekside High School; Noelle Sinno, grade 10, Creekside High School; Georgie Obie, grade 10, Creekside High School; Ethan Phillips, grade four, Valley Ridge Academy; Adalynn Flores, grade three, Otis Mason Elementary School; Layann Issa, grade eight, Landrum Middle School; Aanya Patel, grade eight, Freedom Crossing Academy; Saryn Vasallo, grade 11, Beachside High School; Jewel Atzori, grade one, Island Prep Elementary School; Ina Li, grade nine, Creekside



Contributed photo

Natalia Engl's art will appear on the cover of the 2024 Day Without Violence calendar.

WINNERS continues on Page 20

## Memoir-writing topic of Aug. 26 workshop



Susie Baxter

The easy part of writing a memoir is the decision to document valuable life experiences. But how do you start, and how to decide what to keep in and leave out?

Susie Baxter has taught a college course on exactly that, and she'll teach a condensed version of her course, "Write Your Memoir," on Saturday, Aug. 26, at the FWA Ponte Vedra Writers meeting. The meeting is set for 11 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

Baxter will discuss the importance of writing about your experiences for yourself, your family, or the world. She will provide handouts to aid recall and guidance in selecting and organizing your material so your story will read like a page-turning novel instead of a litany of facts. The interactive session will illustrate the different perspective each of us has on events and she'll discuss the universal truths that cause us to empathize with the protagonist's struggles.

Baxter teaches memoir writing in the Community Education Program at Santa Fe College, Gainesville. A native Floridian, she is the author of two memoirs, "Pumping Sunshine: A Memoir of My Rural Childhood," which won the Royal Palm Literary Award, and "I, Susanette..." a coming-of-

age memoir. Her first book was a family history, "C.G. & Ethel." She has also published a how-to manual, "Write Your Memoir: One Story at a Time."

She served for several years as creative nonfiction editor for Bacopa Literary Review, a print journal published annually by the Writers Alliance of Gainesville.

During her career in publishing, she served as an executive editor for Mosby, a health-science publishing house in St. Louis, where she recruited renowned physicians to write clinical reference books. During her tenure there, she was named a Times Mirror Editor of the Year.

The Ponte Vedra Writers group is part of

the Florida Writers Association, a statewide membership organization dedicated to the support of both aspiring and published writers in any genre. The Aug. 26 meeting is free and open to members and nonmembers alike.

For information on FWA, go to [floridawriters.org](http://floridawriters.org).

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# Community finds groove at Arthur Murray open house

Arthur Murray Dance Center in Ponte Vedra Beach celebrated with the community by hosting an open house party on Aug. 13. The vibrant event included live music by The METRO Band, as well as appetizers, drinks and dance demonstrations.



Photos by Susan Griffin

**Arthur Murray Dance Center in Ponte Vedra Beach held an open house party for the community Aug. 13.**



**The center's owner Heiko Leyhausen gives dancing instructions to those in attendance.**



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# St. Augustine Book Festival set for Sept. 2, 9, 16

The Ximenez Fatio House Museum will host the St. Augustine Book Festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 2, 9 and 16. The event will feature literary events that include historic house tours, author meet-and-greets, author presentations, book signings, local attractions and vendors.

The museum is located at 20 Aviles St., St. Augustine.

Festival admission is free, with donations accepted to continue historic preservation of the 225-year-old coquina house. Advance RSVP for the tours is encouraged. More details can be found at [ximenezfatio-house.org](http://ximenezfatio-house.org).

## Beyond the Pages: Constance Fenimore Woolson Literary Tour

The Ximenez-Fatio House, once a vibrant boarding house that hosted a fascinating mix of guests, including the trailblazing author Constance Fenimore Woolson. Uncover the inspiration behind her celebrated work, "The Ancient City," born during her stay in St. Augustine. Experience 1870s guest life through her eyes, led by one of the dedicated house servants. This specialty tour will be held during the St. Augustine Book Festival. Tours are available at 10 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Sept. 2, 9 and 16.

RSVP here:

- 10 a.m. tour — [eventbrite.com/e/beyond-the-pages-cf-woolson-in-st-augustine-10am-tickets-680907802567](https://eventbrite.com/e/beyond-the-pages-cf-woolson-in-st-augustine-10am-tickets-680907802567)
- 3:15 p.m. tour — [eventbrite.com/e/beyond-the-pages-cf-woolson-in-st-augustine-315pm-tickets-688103876217](https://eventbrite.com/e/beyond-the-pages-cf-woolson-in-st-augustine-315pm-tickets-688103876217)

## BOOK FESTIVAL

The St. Augustine Book Festival will take place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 2, 9 and 16 with book signings, author meet-and-greets, vendors, the St. Johns County Book Mobile and displays from St. Augustine attractions, including Fort Mose, the St. Augustine True Crime Book Club

and The Menorcan Experience.

## Authors and Presenters

- Randy Cribbs: Presentation at 11 a.m. Sept. 2
- Darian Andreu: Presentation at 2 p.m. Sept. 2
- Marta Magellan: Presentation at 11 a.m. Sept. 9
- Marisa Carbon: Presentation at 2 p.m. Sept. 9
- Matt Frick: Presentation at 11 a.m. Sept. 16
- Gigi Best-Richardson: Presentation at 2 p.m. Sept. 16
- Elizabeth Randall: Author of eight books, including "Murder in St. Augustine"
- Ann Master Browning: St. Augustine Poetry
- Linda Brandt: Author of children's series, "Henry the Tulip Bulb"
- Uli Shackmann: Author of "Uli's Journey – Angels Along the Way"
- Gigi M. Miller: Author of "Riley the Right Whale"
- J.E. Mooney: Author of "Throwaway Boy"
- Sarah D. Younger: Author of "Windstill Night" and "Cry Whippoorwill" (stories of old Florida)
- Ester Pereira: Author of "Adventures of a Suitcase"
- Kathleen Clark: Author of stories of rescue dogs.
- Madison Hernandez: Owner of Agatha's Alley Used Book Store

The St. Augustine Book Festival is sponsored by St. Johns Cultural Council and the St. Johns County Tourism Development Council. The Ximenez-Fatio House is on the National Register of Historic Places and a Florida Heritage Landmark. The property is owned by The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Florida, since 1939.

## Winners

Continued from 19

High School; and Ava Mackie, grade nine, Beachside High School.

## Poetry

Jonah Gardeen, grade six, Fruit Cove Middle School; Louisa Ward, grade five, Patriot Oaks Academy; Marcus Mislivec, grade six, Fruit Cove Middle School; Kelsey Miller, grade six, Fruit Cove Middle School; Alene Tanbi, grade eight, Fruit Cove Middle School; Mia Yochelson, grade eight, Fruit Cove Middle School; Shanmukha Patsamatla, grade six, Fruit Cove Middle School; Riley Hartman, grade six, Fruit Cove Middle School; Tejaswini Saravanan, grade six, Fruit Cove Middle School; and Marleigh

Romine, grade six, Fruit Cove Middle School.

Contest winners will receive special recognition during a St. Johns County School Board meeting and have their artwork displayed at the Crisp Ellert Art Museum throughout October during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, with 3,000 calendars distributed to classrooms throughout St. Johns County this fall.

The contest was open to all St. Johns County students in kindergarten through 12th grade, whether they attended public school, private school or were home-schooled. The number of entries varies each year, depending on the number of students that participate. First-place winners will receive \$50, second-place winners receive \$25 and all students receiving honorable mentions receive \$10 each.



# Sports



THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023 • PAGE 21

Send your sports news to [news@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:news@pontevedrarecorder.com)

For LIVE Sports and updates, follow our Twitter, @PVR\_sports

[www.PonteVedraRecorder.com](http://www.PonteVedraRecorder.com)

## JAXUSL taps Island Wing Company, Grille & Bar as partner, watch party destination

JAXUSL, the United Soccer League (USL) franchise group bringing men's and women's professional soccer to Northeast Florida, has announced a partnership with Island Wing Company, Grille & Bar and its two First Coast locations.

Island Wing Company will become a preferred watch party partner for JAXUSL soccer events on the First Coast, and they will work together to grow patrons for its restaurants and the soccer club. Island Wing Company will also supply catering for JAXUSL events, and soccer fans attending JAXUSL watch parties there or at other JAXUSL events will receive access to special promotions and prizes.

"We're excited to partner with a great organization that is looking to develop both men's and women's professional soccer franchises here in Northeast Florida," Island Wing Co. franchise owner Shane Powers said. "And we're thrilled to be able to ride along with JAXUSL as they move towards their opening goal of fielding professional soccer teams in 2025 and competing for USL Championships in both the men's and women's leagues."

"We're delighted to partner with

Island Wing Company, and we are grateful to Shane and his staff for their incredible support of JAXUSL," JAXUSL President and CEO Steve Livingstone said. "We have already held several fan events and watch parties at their locations and we're excited to expand on a fun and exciting partnership at their Southside and Bartram Park restaurants."

The family-friendly, sports-themed restaurant, nationally known for its baked — never fried — wings, craft beers on tap, burgers and live music, currently operate two franchises on the First Coast, with restaurants on Jacksonville's Southside at Tinseltown and Bartram Market in St. Johns County. A third location is currently under construction and slated to open in 2024 in the Tamaya area of Jacksonville.

This latest news follows JAXUSL's recent announcement of its founding partnership with GotSport, a leading sports software company based in Jacksonville Beach. GotSport will 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.

## Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS set for Oct. 2-8

The third annual Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS presented by Circle K is set to take place Oct. 2-8 at Timuquana Country Club. Tickets are available at [constellationfurykandfriends.com/tickets](http://constellationfurykandfriends.com/tickets).

### Fan Experience

The Hangar Bar offers fans a fun location to grab a cocktail near the 7th green. New this year at the Hangar, fans can receive a Club Champion putter fitting experience.

Established in 2010, Club Champion has grown from a regional three-studio fitting business to a trusted golf club fitting expert with locations in every major golf market nationwide offering tour-level fittings designed by master fitter and builder Nick Sherburne, the company's founder.

With drinks, putting, TacoLu, VyStar Patriot's Outpost and the Circle K Par Tee Porch right next door, the Hangar will be a go-to location.

### Community Impact

Last year, Wolfson Children's Hospital launched a new program called Family Links to help connect families with resources to promote children's health and well-being. Family Links is a child- and family-centered support program, made possible by The Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation, that addresses health-related social conditions impacting the quality of children's health.

Since that announcement, 990 individuals have been approved for health insurance

coverage, with more than 1,355 individuals receiving SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) assistance. Additionally, 50 families have been helped with housing needs, including rent and utilities assistance, while 52 families were provided help with clothing needs, diapers and other items.

More than 200 emergency food bags have been distributed to feed families in need of food.

### Competition

In addition to tournament host Jim Furyk, several players with local connections have committed to this year's event, including former University of Florida stars Chris DiMarco and Mark Calcavecchia, Jacksonville's David Duval, Ponte Vedra resident Vijay Singh and PGA TOUR rookie Tim O'Neal from Savannah.

Sparked by a \$500,000 direct donation from Constellation, the tournament title sponsor, the 2022 Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS presented by Circle K generated more than \$1.34 million for North Florida charities. Ticket sales play a large role in supporting the tournament's ability to generate this incredible impact for local community charities.

For information about Constellation FURYK & FRIENDS presented by Circle K charitable efforts, go to [constellationfurykandfriends.com/projects](http://constellationfurykandfriends.com/projects).



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<p><b>Private Party Line Rates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$14.00 1 week • \$23.00 2 weeks</li> <li>• \$31.00 3 weeks • \$37.50 4 weeks</li> </ul> <p>Add lines \$2.15 each</p> <p>(Couches, TV's, Beds, Household Items, Etc.)</p>	<p><b>Commercial Line Rates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$22.50 1 week • \$39.00 2 weeks</li> <li>• \$55.50 3 weeks • \$70.00 4 weeks</li> </ul> <p>Add lines \$2.15 each</p> <p>(Animals, Cars, Renting or Selling a Home or to Advertise Your Business or Services)</p>	<p><b>Employment Spotlight/Real Estate</b></p> <p>1x2 (2"x2") \$40.50/1 wk • \$70.00/2 wks. • \$100/3 wks. 1x3 (2"x3") \$61.50/1 wk. • \$112.00/2 wks. • \$150.00/3 wks. 2x2 (4"x2") \$82.00/1 wk. • \$153.00/2 wks. • \$200.00/3 wks. 2x3 (4"x3") \$123.00/1 wk. • \$225/2 wks. • \$300/3 wks.</p>	<p><b>Business &amp; Worship Directory</b></p> <p>1.5 x 2 \$55.00/month 1.5 x 4 \$96.52/month 1.5 x 6 \$149.52/month</p> <p>Rate Guide for: The Recorder</p>
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The St. Johns County Airport Authority will hold a Meeting on Monday, August 28, 2023, at 4:00 pm in the meeting room at the Airport's Conference Center – 2nd floor, located at 4730 Casa Cola Way, St. Augustine, Florida 32095.

**Other**

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By: Jaime R. Topp  
Interim Executive Director

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1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	
11			12			13			14			
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48					49			50	51	52	53	54
55					56				57			58
59					60				61			
62					63					64		

**ACROSS**

1. Civil rights organization
5. Calendar month (abbr.)
8. Monetary unit of Burma
11. Twyla \_\_, US dancer
13. Everything included
14. "Antman" actor Rudd
15. Italian city
16. Nowhere to be found
17. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
18. Turkish officer
20. Perform on stage
21. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
22. Canadian coastal provinces
25. Furnishes anew
30. Edible mollusk
31. No seats available
32. Garden figurine
33. Two-legged support
38. Rest here please (abbr.)
41. In a silly way
43. One from the Golden State
45. Photographers
48. Native religioinn in parts of China
49. Dickens character
50. Brodway actress Daisy
55. Ancient Greek sophist
56. Undivided
57. Daniel \_\_, French composer
59. Nocturnal S. American rodent
60. Rusty
61. Jewish spiritual leader
62. Patti Hearst's captors
63. Popular global holiday (abbr.)
64. Tall, slender plant

7. Things are served on it
8. San Diego ballplayer
9. Currency and a Chinese dynasty
10. \_\_mater, one's school
12. Exclamation that denotes disgust
14. Hairstyle
19. Supreme ancient Egyptian god
23. They \_\_
24. Connecting line on a map
25. Mock
26. One point north of due east
27. Chinese philosophical principle
28. Type of tree
29. Persuade to do something
34. A place for travelers to rest

35. National Gallery of Art designer
36. Panamanian province
37. Field force unit (abbr.)
39. Whalers' tool
40. Simply
41. Nigerian City
42. Not one
44. Obstruct
45. Political plot
46. Manila hemp plant
47. Dough made from corn flour
48. Fishes by letting the bob fly
51. Swiss river
52. Plant that makes gum
53. A French abbot
54. One point east of northeast
58. Get free of



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

Level: Intermediate

**Here's How It Works:**

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

**DOWN**

1. Defunct US energy company
2. Fellow
3. It's issued from volcanoes
4. Type of acid
5. Winged nut
6. Arouses

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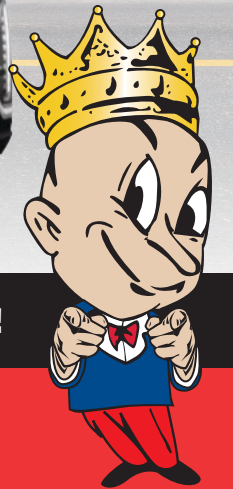




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