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Senior Living
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Thursday, May 9, 2024

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VOLUME 55, NO. 28 \$1.00

Commission rejects housing project

By Shaun Ryan

On Tuesday, May 7, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners unanimously voted down a proposed rezoning and a change to the county's future land use map that would have paved the way for a 288-unit affordable housing complex off County Road 16A.

The changes had been sought by developer Dominion for Preserve at Wards Creek, an apartment community on 19.22 acres to the east of the

PROJECT continues on Page 3



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FOR COUNTY COMMISSION - DISTRICT 5

Protect St. Johns

Salute to moms

K9s For Warriors held a special event honoring moms and female veterans

By Anthony Richards

Read the story on Page 10



Photo by Anthony Richards

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BRIEFS

Change in polling places announced

The St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections has officially published the updated polling place list for the 2024 Primary and General Elections. Two precincts have been updated since the March 19 Presidential Preference Primary Election – Precincts 213 and 501.

Precinct 501 — The old location was The Clubhouse at Beacon Lake. The new location is Creekside Christian Student Center, 92 Lifespring Way, St. Johns.

Precinct 213 — The old location was Hastings Branch Library. The new location is W.E. Harris Community Center, 400 E. Harris St., Hastings. The precinct was moved due to construction and the upcoming closure of the Hastings Branch Library.

Family seining event set for May 11

GTM Research Reserve will offer a program on family seining from 9 to 11 a.m. May 11 at 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. Register online at gtmnerr.org/visit/events.

Woman's Club to meet

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will meet at 6 p.m. May 15 at the Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., Ponte Vedra Beach. Topics include charity and scholarship check presentations and yearend activities. Register at pontevedrawomansclub.com.

Deadline June 30 for nonprofit grant

The Ponte Vedra Women's Civic Alliance (PVWCA) is accepting applications through June 30 for their \$10,000 grant.

The grant will be awarded to a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in St. Johns County or to an organization that serves the Beaches area, including Ponte Vedra Beach, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach.

Access the PVWCA website at pvwca.org

to request an application and to review the grant guidelines.

The Ponte Vedra Women's Civic Alliance is a nonprofit organization established in 2011 to foster friendship by working together for the good of the community; the PVWCA awards grants yearly.

St. Augustine Beach renourishment delayed

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has an-

BRIEFS continues on Page 4

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Project

Continued from 1

Wards Creek Planned Unit Development.

Members of the public spoke both for and against the project during the board's regular meeting. The most frequently mentioned objection involved a potential impact on local traffic, which is already very heavy. It was the same criticism levied by attendees at a public meeting in November.

Dominium's plan to add more through lanes to State Road 16 and Silverleaf Parkway, a left-turn lane on State Road 16 and a receiving lane failed to convince the speakers or the board. Commissioner Krista Joseph expressed concern over the additional lanes tapering once again to two and asked where all the traffic would go.

Commissioner Henry Dean agreed with Joseph's concern.

"We have been begging, we've been

pleading, we've been fighting to get that four-lane — I have for the last seven years that I've been on the commission," Dean said. "So even though this is a good project; it's been presented well; I'd love to approve more affordable housing, but I'm not going to sit here today and approve more traffic congestion on 16 when it's still two lanes and it takes an hour and a half to get from 16 and 95 up to IGP. I mean it's crazy."

Commissioner Sarah Arnold said she was a big supporter of affordable housing but that she took issue with the location of the project, also citing the traffic issue.

Preserve at Wards Creek would have offered two-, three- and four-bedroom units contained in three-story structures. All units would have been available for households making not more than 60% of the area median income. At today's rates, that would mean rents ranging from about \$1,069 to \$1,362, depending on the number of bedrooms.

Had it been approved, the community would have begun accepting residents early in 2028.

In voting down the project, the board broke with a recommendation for approval made Feb. 1 by the county's Plan-

ning and Zoning Agency.

The lack of affordable housing has become a hot topic in St. Johns County, where the median price for a single-family home is \$546,259, according to the most recent figures.

Wine Women & Shoes event set for May 16

Episcopal Children's Services will host its fourth annual Wine Women & Shoes event at Timuquana Country Club at 6 p.m. Thursday, May 16.

An irresistible blend of fashion and compassion, Wine Women and Shoes events are all about putting the "fun" in fundraiser, according to organizers.

Wine Women and Shoes gives women the opportunity to get glamorous with their girlfriends while enjoying varietals from top winemakers, all for a good cause. Episcopal Children's Services' "sip-sational" event will feature local and national wine brands, a shoppable multi-designer marketplace with fun finds including clothing and accessories and charming Shoe Guys —serving up this season's must-haves on silver platters.

In addition to shopping and sipping, guests will enjoy a marketplace with the latest trends and go-to finds, a luxe raffle called "Key to the Getaway," which features an unforgettable trip to Mexico. There is also a silent auction and a fashion show with a few familiar faces.

Everyone is invited to bid on silent auction items and shop at local and national clothing, shoe and jewelry vendors, all to benefit Episcopal Children's Services.

Tickets for the event are \$150 with all

proceeds benefiting Episcopal Children's Services' mission to create opportunity so that the children served can achieve their full potential.

"The fourth annual Wine Women & Shoes Jax event allows us to share our agency impact in the community and engage with supporters as well as those who are learning about our wonderful organization," said ECS Chief Development Officer Lauren Hopkins. "Episcopal Children's Services is pleased to produce this event to raise money for our youngest citizens in North and Central Florida and help the children and families we serve build a strong foundation for life."

To reserve tickets and bid on silent auction items, go to winewomenandshoes.com/jax.

Founded in Napa Valley in 2005, Wine Women and Shoes is a fun and fashionable national event series that lets women put their most generous foot forward, sip to their hearts' content, enjoy an evening of mission-focused fundraising. With events in more than 200 cities, it has helped net more than \$90 million for various causes across the country.

Last year's local event raised more than \$107,000 for children and families in North and Central Florida.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bishop Pohlmeier on Florida's Heartbeat Act, Amendment 4

To the Editor:

As the spiritual leader of the Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine, I want to reflect on some recent developments regarding the Florida Heartbeat Protection Act and the upcoming abortion amendment.

The Florida Heartbeat Protection Act went into effect on Wednesday, May 1, marking a significant milestone in Florida's efforts to protect the lives of unborn babies. This law underscores the intrinsic value of every human life, from the moment of conception, and affirms the sanctity of life as a foundational principle of our society.

Contrary to certain narratives in the media, the Florida Heartbeat Protection Act does not disregard the well-being of women. Rather, it recognizes that sup-

porting women begins from the moment of conception and continues throughout their pregnancy ensuring that the child is allowed to thrive and fulfill their potential.

At the same time, it's crucial to acknowledge the complex and often challenging situations that women and their families may find themselves in when facing an unexpected or difficult pregnancy. Our hearts go out to those who are navigating such circumstances, and our response as a community must be one of compassion and ongoing support.

The Catholic faith community is committed to supporting initiatives that promote life and offer practical assistance to those in need. Crisis pregnancy centers play a vital role in providing compassionate care, resources and guidance to individuals and families facing pregnancy-related challenges. We stand in solidarity with these centers and their dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to support members of our community during such vulnerable times.

As discussions continue regarding the Abortion Amendment, slated for the November general election ballot, it is essential to approach this issue with empathy and understanding. The Diocese of St. Augustine, in collaboration with the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops

(FCCB) and other agencies, is working diligently to educate and mobilize our community in a manner that upholds human dignity and promotes a culture of life.

In the coming weeks, our diocese will be conducting training sessions to equip individuals with the necessary tools to engage meaningfully in this critical dialogue. We invite every member of the community to join us in advocating for life-affirming measures and providing support to those in need. Voters must examine the reality of Amendment 4 and study its language carefully as many voices compete for your attention. Please look at the information already available by visiting <https://www.flaccb.org/abortion-amendment>. More information and resources will be added to this site in the coming weeks.

I urge everyone to approach this issue with empathy and sensitivity, recognizing the diverse experiences and challenges that individuals and families may face. Let us stand together in prayer for the protection of every life and for the strength to foster a society where every person is valued and supported.

**In Christ,
Most Rev. Bishop Erik T. Pohlmeier
Bishop of St. Augustine**

Briefs

Continued from 2

nounced an immediate halt to its beach renourishment activities in the Anastasia State Park. The contractor began work on March 8 but could not complete the park portion before significant shorebird nesting activity occurred in this area.

A least tern colony was established and, in order to avoid potential negative impacts to nesting shorebirds, their nests and their chicks, the decision was made to cease operations.

USACE Jacksonville is working with its contractor to re-set a project timeline for completing the 100% federally funded flood control and coastal emergencies beach renourishment.

For updates, go to saj.usace.army.mil/StAugustineBeach.

Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

The Palm Valley Market is held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday inside the Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Road. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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Dr. Stephanie Pearce recently joined the staff at Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville, where she is director of sports medicine. She is one of an elite pool of dual fellowship-trained adult and pediatric sports medicine surgeons in the country and one of the only female dual-trained orthopedic sports surgeons in the region. She is also one of the team doctors for the U.S. ski and snowboard team.

Dr. Stephanie Pearce

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me a little about your background.

I was born and raised in Gainesville. I went to the University of South Florida; I was recruited to play on the soccer team there. I ended up transferring back home to UF to get my degree in nutritional sciences.

At that point, I was not cleared medically to play with the soccer team, but was able to continue with the leader staff; that gave me an interest in sports medicine.

I went to University of South Alabama for medical school and for orthopedic surgery residency.

I went from there to my pediatric orthopedic surgery fellowship at Children's Hospital Colorado, then an adult sports fellowship in Vail, Colorado.

After that, I went to practice in Virginia Beach. Then got the call to come be the sports medicine director at Nemours.

How did you select this particular career path?

I always had orthopedic surgery in mind, even since I was younger. And I think breaking bones and learning how they remodel was always fascinating. Also, knowing how to get our bodies back to where we can compete at high levels was always a big interest of mine.

I went into medical school knowing I wanted to do pediatric sports orthopedic.

In my residency training, I realized that going not only into a single fellowship but dual fellowship for both pediatric sports and adult sports was going to be the best way for me to bring the highest quality and most appropriate care to patients.

That's what I did, and I'm so very glad, because it opened up a lot of doors and a lot of pathways, not just for treatment, but also for program building.

How is treating children different than treating adults?

It's a very different pathology group, pediatrics, teenagers and young adults compared to the middle-age, the older adult population. They're growing. Their joints have to be able to last those many more decades. I work as a large cartilage preservationist and restore cartilage and joints, and so with that preservation comes a lot more technique.

Additionally, their growth plates are open many times, so making sure that we do the right procedures for the joint that won't cause growth deformities is really important.

What do you like best about what you do?

Clearance day is probably the best. Clearance day is when we have gone through the journey of a patient coming in, we've gone through the prehab, we've gone through the surgery, we've gone through the rehab and recovery period, we've worked with all of our team members on everything and we finally get to a point where getting back to all the activities, no restrictions, every passion that that athlete wants to get back to.

How do you know when they are ready to return to their activity?

It is certainly a multifaceted process.

There are certain time points that we know. Certain surgeries take different times, bones heal at different rates than soft tissues, which heal different from grafts and reconstruction. Making sure that things have integrated back to where they need to be.

Then there's the physical stamina, endurance and strength. So all the work that they're doing in physical



Contributed photo

Dr. Stephanie Pearce

therapy, making sure: can they get into athletic positions in a safe way? That not only allows them to use their new surgically treated joints, but also to prevent them from re-injuring it or creating a new injury.

Then, there's the mental component. Making sure they are ready, mentally, for that as well. That comes with a lot of coaching with the physical therapist.

The multidisciplinary team — I have an athletic trainer, I have my PA, I have our medical staff, but it goes much further than that. We lean on our physical therapists in the community quite strongly, as well as their school athletic trainers.

We've also started growing our sports dietetic team. All of these athletes have unique fuel needs, not only being a growing athlete but also recovering from surgery. Then, recovering through their rehab.

It's similar to dealing with high-level athletes who have in-season and out-of-season needs. This is a third type of season. It's a rebuilding season.

Do you work with athletes to prevent injuries?

What's better than treating an injury is preventing it. I've done a couple of podcasts and outreach, talking

about prevention. Prevention tends to be a little bit harder to sell. Parents are OK with prevention. Kids, especially teenagers, don't feel that they are susceptible as often.

But performance is really something that can get people's attention. If we have appropriate performance, we can have appropriate prevention.

Making sure we have good landing form, good landing mechanics. Running form is really important. Making sure we're doing the appropriate stretches.

Tell me about your work with the U.S. ski and snowboard team.

I'm one of the team doctors. I work mostly with the snowboard and freeski teams, but work with all of them peripherally.

It's been a lot of fun, really getting in with the athletes and kind of understanding what they are going through on competition day versus leading up to the Olympic years.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I love spending time with my family. Got two kiddoes and a wonderful husband. We spend a lot of time at the beach.

Arboretum plans sip-and-stroll wine-tasting event

Tickets are on sale now for Spring Uncorked, a first-of-its kind sip and stroll wine-tasting event at the Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens (JABG). Taking place Saturday, May 11, from 4 to 7 p.m., this evening promises an extraordinary wine tasting experience amidst the vibrant gardens of JABG. Tickets are \$65 for nonmembers and \$40 for JABG members, raising funds to support the arboretum's mission.

Guests will embark on a leisurely stroll through the arboretum while enjoying an array of curated wine and cheese pairings, live music from local musicians, food trucks and art vendors, lawn games and guided painting sessions for pre-sale ticket holders. While the arboretum always welcomes children and young adults, you must be 21 or older to enjoy the wine tastings.

"The arboretum's entertainment offerings continue to grow with this first-ever event, and we're thrilled to share it with you," said JABG Executive Director Dana Doody. "We're excited to offer an evening where guests can raise a glass

to the colorful spring season while immersing themselves in the beauty of the arboretum. We hope to see you there!"

Proceeds from Spring Uncorked will directly support the arboretum's ongoing mission. These funds are vital for maintaining and operating the property, allowing JABG to continue offering educational programs, horticultural displays and unique community events for all to enjoy.

By attending Spring Uncorked, the public will not only enjoy a delightful evening but will also directly contribute to the growth and sustainability of JABG, a cornerstone of Jacksonville's environmental and cultural landscape.

Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens is located at 1445 Millcoe Road, Jacksonville.

Go to jacksonvillearboretum.org/event-activities to purchase tickets.

The Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to cultivate a unique environment for recreation, education and inspiration.

The 126 acres that comprise the Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens are unique in that there are 13 distinct ecosystems within its boundaries. More than three miles of award-winning trails traverse these habitats, which include freshwater and tidal marshes, upland hardwood forest, pine flatwoods and dry prairie, bottomland forest and live oak hammock.

Woven in this rich diversity, the arboretum offers beautifully curated botanical

gardens, ranging from the rich greens of a fernery to the bright florals of a pollinator garden. Alongside these unique natural attractions, the Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens attracts visitors through annual special events and educational programs.

The park is open to the public seven days a week. For more information, go to jacksonvillearboretum.org or email info@jacksonvillearboretum.org.

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Cocktail party to raise funds for youth sailing center

The St. Augustine Yacht Club has announced its upcoming fundraiser cocktail party in support of the construction of its new youth sailing center. The event is scheduled for 4-7 p.m. Saturday, June 1.

The St. Augustine Yacht Club has long been a cornerstone of the community, fostering a love for sailing and maritime activities among enthusiasts of all ages. The youth sailing program, which is open to children from the surrounding communities, began in 2012 with 38 youngsters and today has served more than 1,500. The sailing program offers on-water sailing lessons throughout the year by certified instructors, summer camp, race training and sailing clinics, and provides scholarships to children in need. With a commitment to build a new youth sailing center, the club has embarked on an ambitious construction project aimed to better serve its members and the wider community.

The Welcome Aboard fundraiser cocktail party, set against the picturesque backdrop of the St. Augustine Salt Run on Anastasia Island, will be an opportunity for donors and members of the community to come together in support of this initiative. Guests will be treated to complimentary beverages, hors d'oeuvres and live music while meeting the junior sailors, learning about their experiences



Contributed photo

The St. Augustine Yacht Club's youth sailing program has made sailing accessible for up to 1,500 youths since it began in 2012.

and viewing the progress and plans for their new sailing center.

"We are incredibly excited to host this fundraising party to support the construction of our beloved sailing center," said Kathleen Floryan, commodore of the St. Augustine Yacht Club. "This project is a testament to our commitment to provide a top-notch facility for the youth in our community and ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the thrill of sailing on the beautiful waters of St. Augustine."

All funds raised from the cocktail party are tax-deductible and will go directly toward the construction project. Checks should be made out to the St. Augustine Yacht Club Foundation, which is a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

For more information about the fundraiser cocktail party or to donate, go to staugustineyachtclub.com.

The purpose of the St. Augustine Yacht Club is the same as it was in 1873, to promote boating and water-related activities, cruising, sailing and racing. As it has for

more than 150 years, the club's Burgee, a white fortress on a red field, flies aboard all members' yachts and high above the clubhouse of one of the oldest yacht clubs in America.

The St. Augustine Yacht Club Sailing Center's mission is to provide affordable access to boating for youth in and around the St. Augustine area by offering summer sail camps, afterschool sailing lessons, racing, coaching and on-the-water fun for the community.

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Photos by Anthony Richards



K9s founder Shari Duval among women recognized during night

By Anthony Richards

K9s For Warriors strives to do its part to help military veterans of all kinds, and that includes men and women who need assistance through their program.

As a result, the nonprofit organization took time to celebrate the mothers they

have helped over the years and recognize the strong female leaders they have had as donors and behind the scenes with a Salute to Moms event.

Of course, it all started with Shari Duval, who founded K9s For Warriors and was an instrumental presence within the organization and an inspiration the

organization still uses as guidance in its day-to-day mission even after her death in 2021.

Her legacy is especially felt in the events that take place, and the Salute to Moms night was no different.

One of the things that made the night special was having a pair of female veter-

ans in attendance who had gone through the program in the past and returned with their furry companions to share the impact the organization has had on their lives.

“This event is in honor of Shari and all

K9S continues on Page 11






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Photos by Anthony Richards



K9s

Continued from 10

the wonderful women who have impacted our organization and all those we serve as an organization,” said Kiersan Cue, development manager with K9s For Warriors.

It was the second time the event was taking place and it returned to the calendar after not happening a year, and

according to Cue everyone in attendance was happy to have it back.

“Typically, as a veteran organization the first thought is that we’re serving men and the women part sometimes gets lost in our messaging, so this was a great opportunity for us to get the word out,” Cue said.

The festivities on the night included dinner being served by South Kitchen, Unbridled Bar provided the cocktails as well as jewelry and bouquet bars.

The veterans honored on the night



included Kerry Bering with her service dog Bass and Jovanna Coleman and her service dog Danny.

Coleman went up on the stage at the event along with her three children and they each talked about how Bass has been such an important part of the family as a whole.

“He’s changed things exponentially for all of us,” Coleman said.

She couldn’t decide what she wanted to do after her time in the military but when she got paired with Danny she decided to

take a leap of faith and recently earned her doctorate degree in physical therapy.

Danny was there for her every step of the way, including going back and forth to school with her.

“It’s difficult to understand when you need help, especially when you hold yourself to a high level, but having to take a moment to admit that and seek assistance can be a very powerful place to be,” Coleman said. “This place allowed me to sit here today and be able to share it with my kids.”

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MM1481

Turtle nesting membership a unique Mother's Day gift idea

By Anthony Richards

Finding a gift for Mother's Day can be tough at times, but one unique gift to get the mom who is conscious about the environment is a membership to the sea turtle program with the Friends of Anastasia State Park.

According to the Friends of Anastasia Park, the membership is one of the best ways to keep track of all the turtle happenings taking place at Anastasia State Park in St. Augustine.

There are several membership types to choose from, each consisting of various benefits, including a tote, tumbler

and free entry into Anastasia State Park.

Turtle conservation is something on the mind of many and a passion for many in the area and the creation of the turtle nest program was put in place to help raise money and offer continued support, including a strong learning environment to better protect the endangered sea turtle population.

The next step after signing up is deciding which of the three types of sponsorships to get involved with.

The individual/family sponsorship is \$50, while the small business sponsorship is \$100 and large business sponsorship is \$250.

Each sponsorship includes 12 free park entries as part of the package of benefits.

Donations can always be made on top of the sponsorship to the turtle nest program

as it is dependent on the community's support due to the Friends of Anastasia state Park being a nonprofit organization.

The ultimate goal of the organization is to generate supplemental resources that will provide increased recreational opportunities and further enhance protection of the natural and cultural resources of Anastasia State Park.

Local mothers and their families can now join in the mission and do their part to help give back to the cause and help secure the future of sea turtles along the First Coast.





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Alhambra offers Mother's Day special

Alhambra Theater & Dining, 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville, is offering a special ticket sale now through Mother's Day. Purchase an Alhambra Mother's Day Certificate and let Mom choose a show for two people to attend for just \$89. The offer ends May 12.

The eligible shows to pick from are:

- "Boeing Boeing" — May 23-June 26
- "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" — June 20-Aug. 11
- "Gypsy" — Aug. 22-Sept. 18 and Sept. 24-29
- "The Wedding Singer" — Oct. 3-Nov. 3

To purchase tickets, call the box office at 904-641-1212. Go to alhambra-jax.com for more information.



Free concert set for Mother's Day

The final concert of Beaches Fine Arts Series' 51st Season brings Emilio Solla and Tributango as a special Mother's Day concert on May 12.

The free concert will start at 4 p.m. at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church. Doors open at 3:15 p.m. and seating is first come, first served. A reception follows with an art exhibit by Kim Collier.

Performers of Tributango include: Emilio Solla, piano; Pablo Aslan, bass; Sami Merdinian, violin; and Rodolfo Zanetti, bandoneon.

With 11 CDs as bandleader and more than 40 as arranger/producer, Solla is regarded by peers and critics as one of the most outstanding and unique composers in the tango-jazz field, a musical language which blends Argentine tango and folk with jazz and other contemporary music styles.

Collier grew up in Northeast Florida, majored in textile design at Florida State University, taught high school art in Duval and St. Johns counties, and lives in Jacksonville today. Her artwork has exhibited locally at Word Revolt Gallery, FemArt, The Art Center, Florida State College South Campus, Jacksonville Museum of Contemporary Art, Reddi Arts and nationally at the Electronic Gallery 2000 out of Los Angeles, at Three Rivers Art Festival in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and at High on Fiber in Mesa, Arizona.



Contributed photo

A work of art by Kim Collier

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Florida Master Gardeners teaching and learning at the UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County teaching demonstration gardens.



Photos by Tyler Jones, UF/IFAS photography:
A mother and two daughters pick blueberries at a U-pick farm.

Outdoors, gardening and more: Fun activities for Mom

Pondering a gift for Mother's Day? Does she enjoy nature or gardening? How about healthy lifestyles? Why not consider a unique experience gift this year?

Through Extension, UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) offers a wide array of programs, including demonstration gardens, workshops to improve your green thumb, nutrition classes, the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) and much more. Experiences offer not only an opportunity for fun and learning, but a way to make

memories and friends. If she's outdoorsy, mom might want to learn about Florida's many trails, fishing opportunities, butterflies, birds and more. If so, she might want to sign up for the Master Naturalist Program.

"This Mother's Day, consider treating yourself or someone you love to a Florida Master Naturalist Program course," said Marty Main, professor of wildlife ecology and conservation and program director. "The FMNP offers 11 courses that provide opportunities to learn about and reconnect

with Florida's natural world with like-minded adults."

So, whether your primary interest is to enjoy nature or to learn and share information about our natural world with your grandchildren or children, FMNP has much to offer, Main said.

But don't just take Main's word for it. See what others have to say.

"It's the best thing I have ever done," said Ellen Elliotuote, an FMNP volunteer. "I have learned so much, met so many wonderful people and found meaningful

ways to get involved."

If mom likes to garden, she might want to attend a workshop or two. She might even be interested in training to be a Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV). Such programs teach lay people to become certified volunteers.

"Mother's Day and flowers go hand in hand," said Wendy Wilber, statewide coordinator for the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program. "If moms want

ACTIVITIES continues on Page 15

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UF/IFAS file photo

Participants in the Florida Master Naturalist Program enjoy some of nature's beauty.

Activities

Continued from 14

to learn about the care and maintenance of their blooming plants, they can contact the Master Gardener Volunteers at their county Extension office. The MGVs can share information and troubleshoot problems on any plant under the Florida sun.”

Beyond the garden, your mom also can learn about overall, sustainable lawn care with the nine principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping (FFL) Program.

“Florida-Friendly Landscaping offers a wealth of resources for the whole family, from vegetable gardening to creating butterfly habitats,” said FFL Coordinator Claire Lewis. “In addition to enhancing the beauty of your yard,

it provides a sustainable approach to landscape design and maintenance, helping to protect Florida’s water and natural resources for future generations.”

Maybe mom wants to live a healthier lifestyle. County Extension agents offer programs about nutritious food and even exercise.

“We can show you how food can be nutritious and also delicious,” said Andrea Nikolai, a family and consumer sciences agent and registered dietitian with UF/IFAS Extension Polk County. “And we can help you find meal solutions, foods to eat to feel your best, how to eat to stay young for your kids and grandkids, how to prevent diseases and some interesting tips that are fun to tell friends.”

Check out opportunities Mom can enjoy through your local county Extension office at sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/find-your-local-office.

Make mom breakfast in bed this Mother's Day

There’s no shortage of breakfast in bed options to serve Mom this Mother’s Day. If Mom loves a traditional hearty morning meal, this recipe for “Mixed Berry French Toast” courtesy of Taste of Home (tasteofhome.com) is sure to please.

Mixed Berry French Toast

Makes 8 servings

6 large eggs

1/4 cups fat-free milk

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 loaf (1 pound) French bread, cubed

1 package (12 ounces) frozen unsweetened mixed berries

2 tablespoons cold butter

1/3 cup packed brown sugar

Confectioners’ sugar and maple syrup (optional)

Whisk together the first 6 ingredients. Place bread cubes in a 13 x 9-inch or 3-quart baking dish coated with cooking spray. Pour egg mixture over top. Refrigerate, covered, 8 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Remove berries from freezer and French toast from refrigerator and let stand while oven heats. Bake French toast, covered, 30 minutes.

In a small bowl, cut butter into brown sugar until crumbly. Top French toast with berries; sprinkle with brown sugar mixture. Bake, uncovered, until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, 15 to 20 minutes. If desired, dust with confectioners’ sugar and serve with syrup.

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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

Celebrating Mom with Flowers

"A mother is like a flower, each one is beautiful and unique." — unknown

By Kathy Esfahani



Kathy Esfahani

Motherhood has been celebrated throughout history. Festivals in ancient Greece and Rome honored mothers, and early European Christians recognized them on "Mothering Sunday" each year. Mother's Day became an official United States holiday in 1914. In all of these celebrations, children often

show appreciation to their mothers with gifts of flowers.

Although all flowers are a wonderful gift for mothers on Mother's Day, certain varieties stand out as popular choices and have meanings particularly suited to show mothers how special they are:

- Carnations are a popular choice for Mother's Day gifts. They are long lasting, affordable and available in a variety of colors. All carnations mean love and devotion, and pink carnations specifically symbolize a mother's love.
- The colorful blooms of daisies bring out happiness



Photo provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Roses

and represent cheerfulness and innocence. Daisies are available in a variety of colors, each with specific meanings: pink represents admiration, red symbolizes love and yellow means cheerfulness.

- Lilies produce large, elegant blooms in many colors. Symbolizing purity, fertility and new life, lilies are a traditional choice on Mother's Day. These fragrant flowers are ideal for celebrating a mother's devotion to her children and family.
- Peonies symbolize compassion, beauty and prosperity. They are available in pastel colors of light

pinks and whites as well as more vibrant reds and purples. Blooming in spring, their lush flowers stand out in a bouquet.

- Roses are a traditional choice for Mother's Day and come in many colors. Pink roses represent grace and appreciation, perfect to celebrate mom! But a multicolor bouquet is also beautiful. Yellow roses represent friendship and joy, peach means sincerity and gratitude, and red symbolizes love and passion.
- Sunflowers feature large, yellow flowers representing happiness, loyalty and wisdom. The blooms of a sunflower naturally turn to face the sun, thought to be a reminder of positivity and looking toward the future.
- Tulips are spring bloomers available in colors ranging from yellows and oranges to pinks, lavenders and purples. Featuring classic flowers with long petals, they symbolize confidence and affection.

Happy Mother's Day to all the moms in our community and thank you for all you do!

Please 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.

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SENIOR CENTERS HOLD ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT MAY PAGE 30

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THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024



The fitness center in the clubhouse.



The music/media room in the clubhouse.

Rise at Nocatee taking shape



The clubhouse interior.



By Shaun Ryan

Rise at Nocatee, a new 55-plus active living community one mile from Nocatee Town Center, has just completed its 10,000-square-foot clubhouse and public interest in the project is growing.

General Manager Jerry Shafer encouraged people to visit and see the new facility, which includes a yoga room, fitness room, music and media room, arts and crafts room, game room and bar area.

As it is being furnished, the Rise team has not forgotten that future residents may have fond memories of the things of yesterday.

“We have an awesome-looking 1960s vintage record player console for our music and media room,” Shafer said. “It’s very cool.”



General Manager Jerry Shafer

Now under construction are the 178 apartment homes.

When complete, there will be 59 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments in four-story Building 1000. There will

be 119 one- and two-bedroom apartments in five-story Building 2000. Floor plans start at 683 square feet and go up to 1,538 square feet.

“The units are coming together,” Shafer said. “We are now installing kitchen and bathroom cabinetry. We’re doing tile shower surrounds in the bathrooms, as well.”

Building 1000 is on track for completion around June 25. Building 2000 is expected to be finished at about the first week of September.

All first-level apartments will have screened-in porches.

So far, Rise at Nocatee has 24 approved applications, so it is about 14% pre-leased. Shafer said a lot of people have been calling or dropping by to see what’s happening.

Of course, hard hat tours are still being offered. Interested people can either stop by for a tour or schedule an appointment online. Those taking the tours will be asked to sign a liability waiver and will be issued a hard hat and construction vest. Shafer recommends they wear close-toe shoes.

For more information, go to risepontevedra.com, email live@risepontevedra.com or call 904-341-5239.

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Creating a checklist can help ease stress of moving

By Anthony Richards

Packing up and moving can be a hectic and stressful time for everyone involved and for those preparing to move into a senior living community it is no different.

However, Beach House Assisted Living & Memory Care in Jacksonville Beach advises creating a checklist to make sure everything is in order prior to the move.

Before anything is even boxed up getting organized is the first step suggested because organization and having a plan in place can be a good way to make sure nothing is forgotten and that the move goes as smoothly as possible.

Hiring movers is recommended especially for senior citizens who may have physical limitations that would make moving themselves difficult.

Part of a move requires making sure all bills and services are transferred over to the person's new address.

The proper address change is vital for not just family and friends but also for government departments, such as the Social Security Administration.

Once one feels organized enough, packing for the move is the next step in the process and Beach House believes although being a major part of the prep work that it can be much smoother with a



step-by-step approach.

When packing items for the move it is important to remember what items, if any, the assisted living community suggests, and it can be helpful to acquire a copy of the floor plan of the new place to get a better idea of what furniture will work best.

Each of these steps are designed to

help take as much stress away from the moving process as possible, in the hopes of making moving day the happy occasion that it should be.

Sometimes packing things away can make it hard to find certain items in the days following a move.

That is why Beach House suggests having a "first day" box that is filled

strictly with practical items like toiletries and sentimental items that are necessities and one of the first things to seek out and unpack.

Moving can be an emotional time for those involved and this can especially be the case when loved ones make the move from a place they have called home for some time.

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Zach Bower shows off his knife skills in the kitchen at Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge.



Dylan Nicholas polishes silverware.



Caleb Clayton interacts with residents.

Contributed photos

Project SEARCH graduates leave with work experience, memories

By Anthony Richards

Schools across St. Johns County will be wrapping up their school years during May and many graduations will be held to commemorate students heading to the next stage of their life.

One of those graduations will recognize just three students but it will be just as important as all the others.

The graduation will be honoring three students who are completing the Project SEARCH program, which is designed to offer real-life and job skills for young adults with disabilities through an internship at Vicar's Landing and its campuses.

According to Project SEARCH instructor Laura Davis, the emphasis of the program is to focus on helping the students gain the necessary skills to obtain long-term and competitive paid employment now that their high school time within the district has reached its end.

Project SEARCH is one of two programs in the county that attempt to create skills through internships for students with disabilities, the other called Life-work, which focuses on students who are a little younger and may have a couple of years left before entering the workforce fully.

The typical age for Project SEARCH students is 20 to 21 years old, and the value of the experience gained through the program is bountiful.

"We don't want this to be the end for them, because it's not the end for them," Davis said. "This is just how the road is

winding for them. The projections are that they at the time that they finish or will have it within the next three to six months after graduation."

There have been times when the business they interned for end up hiring them after graduation, but in this case all three interns live in the Fruit Cove area, so finding employment closer to where they live and with less commute will be the goal.

This year's graduates in Project SEARCH include Caleb Clayton, Zach Bower and Dylan Nicholas.

One of the goals is to make sure that they get immersed in many of the various aspects that make up the day-to-day jobs at a business so that they can discover what type of work fits them.

For Bower, he found a love for working with the kitchen staff at Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge and showed a real knack for chopping up vegetables and helping with meal preparation.

"I've really enjoyed learning the different knife skills and what to do when you're in the kitchen," Bower said.

Meanwhile, Nicholas has been working toward his dream job of working at Dunkin' Donuts, and one of his tasks has been making sure the coffee counter in the lobby at Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge stays stocked and fresh.

"We do all types of assessments to understand where they are currently, but like any 20-year-old, do you really know what you want to do," Davis said. "That's the valuable thing with this program, is

that they are given the opportunity to explore and be exposed to many things."

Seeing them realize what aspects of the job they can and find out they love to do proves that the program is working on many levels.

"Those are the things gained outside of even the skills learned, such as confidence and what it means to work on a team and be flexible," Davis said. "All of which are things so valuable to being members of a workplace."

Davis has a staff within the program throughout the school district, but she also thanked the staff at Vicar's Landing's campuses and the residents for helping create a supportive and conducive learning environment for the interns.

The graduation ceremony will take place May 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge located at 251 English Oak Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach and it will include a reception following the recognition.



Caleb Clayton, Zach Bower and Dylan Nicholas will be graduating from St. Johns County's Project SEARCH program on May 23.

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Photos by Susan Griffin

Pictured are Greg Blais (RISE President), Lowell Larson (Southern Ventures), Courtney Gordon (RISE COO), Paul Morgan (RISE senior vice president of project management), Terry Phillips (Joyce Development), Greg Hunter (RISE CFO), Randy Baugh (Development Consultants Inc.), John Joyce (Joyce Development), City Councilman Will Lahnen, Mike Junk (Gate Petroleum), Becky Hamilton (Gate Petroleum) and Ryan Holmes (RISE CEO).

Ground broken for RISE at Glen Kernan Park

On April 30, a ceremonial groundbreaking event was held for the latest 55+ active living community coming to Jacksonville: RISE at Glen Kernan Park. This first-class, master-planned community sits on nearly 50 acres of premier real estate on northwestern Butler Boulevard and Hodges Boulevard.

RISE at Glen Kernan Park represents RISE's sixth project developed, or under construction, in Jacksonville and its second 55+ active living development in the city.

Speakers included Jacksonville District 3 City Councilman Will Lahnen, Ryan Holmes (RISE CEO), Greg Hunter (RISE CFO) and Louis Fegan (RISE vice president of construction).

Holmes welcomed attendees and thanked everyone who had worked to bring this project to its current point. He reiterated RISE's commitment to Northeast Florida and highlighted the variety

of multifamily product types that RISE is developing, building and managing across the state.

Lahnen extolled the project, noting the associated road improvements and new retail space as being positive features.

"We're really excited that you chose to develop this in our community," he said.

The site boasts six outparcels of premier retail, a Gate convenience store and car wash, and a seven-story Embassy Suites hotel. RISE at Glen Kernan Park features 308 units, which consist of a mix of 74 cottages and 234 one- and two-bedroom flats. Each unit will have full-size washers and dryers, luxury vinyl tile flooring throughout the kitchen and common areas, granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. Private balconies are available with select units.

Among the many amenities available to residents are a business center, heated

resort-style pool, pickle ball courts, bocce ball, shuffleboard, an eight-acre pond, fitness center, dog park, multiple indoor lounge areas, yoga lawn, outdoor community kitchen, firepits and more.

Hunter explained that RISE Glen Kernan Park "caters to residents who are 55 years and older who seek a unique blend of lifestyle, amenities and highly curated residential activities which are tailored to residents who are seeking an engaged and vibrant lifestyle."

He recognized a list of financial partners who are invested in the success of this project. That list includes Walker & Dunlop, Benefit Street Partners, Pearlmark, Schneider Downs and local private investors. He also acknowledged the expertise from firms including Coleman Talley, Price Atlantic, Niles Bolton Associates, Prosser Engineering and Joyce Development Group. Finally, he thanked the City

of Jacksonville.

"We're truly thankful for this great team," Hunter said. "And all the efforts to deliver what we know will be the new standard for active adult housing here in Jacksonville."

Fegan gave an update on construction progress at the site. He indicated that underground utility installation was well underway with the expectation that vertical construction would begin in the next 100 days.

The first units are scheduled to deliver in summer of 2025 with the clubhouse following closely in the fall of 2025. The remaining units are delivering in summer of 2026.

Fegan also took time to recognize the local subcontractors.

"We made a conscious effort to support our local contractor community here in Jacksonville," he said.



COA partners with AARP to offer safe driving course

By Anthony Richards

The St. Johns County Council on Aging is offering residents an AARP smart driver course May 15 and 16 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at River House located at 179 Marine St. in St. Augustine.

It is not like other driving tests that one would take when first learning to drive because it is not teaching the basics but is instead intended to further enhance a driver's knowledge of road safety and what to do when faced with certain situations.

The class will feature evidence-based safe driving strategies that are always adapting and important to keep up with.

Some traffic laws have been in place and are the standard, such as red means "stop" and green means "go."

However, there are certain laws that are always being tweaked and may even vary depending on the state one is in.

That is what makes the class a valuable tool that can be used by any driver of any age really, but it can be especially helpful with so many people moving into St. Johns County from other states where they may have become accustomed to those rules but are now having to adjust to Florida's.

While new traffic laws and the rules of the road will be a major part of the class, it will also focus on the importance of knowing how to handle an aggressive driver situation and the best ways to ap-

proach it if confronted with one.

The class will consist of two days and a person must attend both classes in order to get credit for completion of the course.

Registration is required to take part and space is limited with only 50 spots available for the class.

The cost for the two-day class is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members, while there is no fee associated for the class for those with United Healthcare insurance.

Auto insurance discounts may also apply depending on the insurance provider and a completion certificate following the course can be obtained for those looking to explore that option.

The course demonstrates no matter how experienced a driver is, it is never too late to catch up on the rules and learn safe driving tips.

After all, being a safe driver is not just about keeping those in the car safe but also about keeping everyone around you safe, as it does not just include the cars sharing the road but the segments of the roadways where pedestrians are welcome to share the same road as well, whether that is walking, running or riding a bicycle.

To learn more about the program and the course being offered locally, residents can go to aarp.org/drive or can register by calling 904-209-3655 or by emailing tharris@stjohnscoa.com.



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Starling acquires former Palms community

By Shaun Ryan

Starling, which owns and operates assisted living and memory care and independent living facilities in the Nocatee area, has acquired the former Palms at Ponte Vedra, bringing its number of communities to seven. Starling's headquarters are in Jacksonville.

The rebranded Starling at Ponte Vedra offers assisted living and memory care and is located at 405 Solana Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. The purchase, from former owner Health Care Managers Inc., was completed early in April.

"We've always worked well with the

team at The Palms over the years," said Megan Kennedy, Starling chief operating officer. "When we were approached to potentially purchase the community, we were very, very excited. They have a phenomenal reputation, and their team is tenured and dedicated."

She praised the level of care, the food and activities offered at the facility.

For Starling, the acquisition provides significant advantages.

"It allows us to improve processes, have a bigger footprint and reach more seniors and provide services and amenities," Kennedy said.

Starling plans to enhance some of the

services offered at the former Palms, including technology upgrades with new WiFi and upgrades in electronic medical records software and the nurse call program, an emergency response system to bring assistance when needed.

Starling is also refreshing the landscape and some finishes and has already upgraded the kitchen equipment. A gym space and related equipment is now being planned.

In addition, it has created a new memory care director position.

"We have a great memory care program for our residents with Alzheimer's and dementia, so we felt strongly in adding that

memory care director role to supplement the team already in place," Kennedy said.

Starling has retained the other employees.

"We are very proud of that team," Kennedy said. "They've accomplished great things since they opened. Their executive director, Barbara (Matteson), has been there since day one, along with a couple other members of her team."

One of the advantages Starling offers is, by virtue of its multiple communities, it has leverage with preferred providers, including Next Therapy Solutions, which provides occupational physical therapy.

To learn more, go to starlingliving.com.

GUEST COLUMN

Grandparents can teach lessons about money, investing

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

Typically, being a grandparent is mainly about fun and games (and candy, of course). But you can choose to do more by helping teach your grandchildren about money, saving and investing. Remember, the lessons they learn while they're young may become so engrained they will help guide them well into their adult lives.

You might want to start by talking with their parents to help ensure what you're going to tell them aligns with what they're hearing at home. As a result, you should be able to reinforce the lessons their parents are teaching rather than sending conflicting messages.

Begin with the three "buckets"

The next time you slip your grandkids some money (you know you do), consider employing this classic method for teaching the value of money and saving, especially if they're very young.

The idea is simply to have them divide the money into three "buckets" — whether they're literal or figurative is up to you:

1. Spending. The first bucket is for them to spend right away on whatever they want, like a toy or a special treat (with their parents' permission, of course).

2. Saving. The second is for saving for something bigger, and more expensive,



Contributed Photo

Jamie L. Seim, Matthew D. Guevara, Evonne T. Heykens and Stephen T. Foody.

they'd like to have down the road. This can teach them about delaying gratification and setting a savings goal. If you're looking for a good excuse to set up a custodial savings account for them at a bank, this could fit the bill.

3. Giving. Finally, have them use part of the money to help them learn about giving back and supporting a cause they really believe in. Since young children often love animals, the local humane society may be a good place to start.

Introduce investing

When you think they're ready, introduce

them to the potential rewards, and risks, of investing. Help them understand the difference between owning a stock — taking an ownership position in a company that may pay a dividend — and a bond — lending money to a company or government entity in return for interest payments.

Discuss the value of not putting all their eggs in one basket or, in other words, diversification. Explain that a portfolio that's mainly stocks may have a greater return potential than one that's primarily bonds but is also likely to experience greater volatility from market activity.

You could also encourage them to

begin setting long-term investment goals. Although being able to afford retirement is motivating for adults, it may not resonate with them at this point. However, higher education, a new car, or a fun trip just might work.

Making it real

Since they've already learned something about banking through that savings account you (hopefully) helped them open, as they get older, it could be a good time to help make investing real by assisting them with starting an online investment account and providing some start-up funds. Keep in mind you can give up to \$17,000 (\$34,000 for a couple) in 2023 to an individual without incurring gift tax implications.

After they've seen firsthand how investing works, explain that as they get older, potentially accumulate assets, and have a more complicated financial situation, they should consider working with a professional financial adviser to help them work toward their long-term goals.

Diversification cannot eliminate the risk of fluctuating prices and uncertain returns.

This article was written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Ponte Vedra Wealth Management Group in Ponte Vedra Beach at 904-273-7918.

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Starling celebrates Kentucky Derby, Cinco de Mayo

The residents at Starling at Ponte Vedra had a fun-filled weekend celebrating both the Kentucky Derby and Cinco de Mayo.

Photos courtesy of Starling at Ponte Vedra



A First Coast son looks back

By Shaun Ryan

A lot has changed in Northeast Florida over the decades, but those who grew up here in the '50s and '60s still treasure fond memories of a simpler time on the First Coast.

Patrick Park is among them. Today a resident of Covington, Louisiana, Park is a native of Jacksonville Beach, born in 1946. He was 12 when he and three siblings were adopted and moved to Ponte Vedra Beach.

He attended Ponte Vedra Palm Valley Elementary School and Fletcher High School and dated a local girl from his school.

"We would walk down from Fletcher to the Dairy Queen store and get chocolate-covered ice cream cones after school," he recalled.

Looking back, many will remember restaurants they once frequented, and Park is no different.

There was The Inlet near the beach, The Homestead restaurant and Nick's Pizza, a local favorite. Park also recalled The Green Turtle and a special treat he enjoyed as a boy.

"My grandmother used to work there," he said. "She'd bring hushpuppies home all the time."

As a boy, he played for the local Pee Wee football team and swam for various teams, including the one at Fletcher, where he was coached by John "Wimpy" Sutton.

Before he finished high school, the Park family relocated to Coral Gables, Florida.

At 17, Park joined the U.S. Navy, telling the recruiter he wanted to be a frogman like Mike Nelson in "Sea Hunt." He spent two years aboard ship and entered Navy SEAL training, where he encountered a familiar face.

"I thought: I know this guy, but where

FAMOUS PONTE VEDRANS?

Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood



By Scott A. Grant

I started writing this series on famous people who lived in Ponte Vedra because there was a list on the internet, and it made me wonder: Did these people really live here? The list has

been replicated and distributed over the years by various Realtors as part of a package pitching Ponte Vedra as a great place to live.

I published the articles that I wrote in the Ponte Vedra Recorder because I wanted them to live on the internet so that future researchers could find my research. And, in fact, a number of my articles have elicited responses from interested parties all over the country. Just the other day, I got an email from someone who wanted more information on an article I wrote about baseball Hall-of-Famer Bill Terry, who did in fact maintain a beach home here although he lived in San Marco. Just last year, an article I wrote about Ernie Mickler spurred the Palm Valley community to put on a History Festival.

As it turns out, many of the people on the list did have some ties to Ponte Vedra, even if they were brief, as in the case of Teddy Roosevelt Jr. One of the names that most intrigued me was Fred Rogers, star of the TV show "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood." Nearly everybody knows his TV show for children that

was a hit for decades. The show opened with the song "It's a beautiful day in my neighborhood" and, of course, it is a beautiful day in my neighborhood as well.

There are a couple of people on the list of Famous Ponte Vedra Residents that I cannot tie to Ponte Vedra, one of those is Fred Rogers. Rogers was born in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, famous as the home of Rolling Rock Beer. Rolling Rock is no longer made there. It is brewed in Newark, N.J. For a time, Sam Adams was brewed at the old Rolling Rock plant, but has since moved its brewery to Allentown. Rogers was two years older than Latrobe's other famous resident, Arnold Palmer, and it is intriguing to think they probably met as young men, although it is doubtful they would have had much in common.

Rogers, who learned to play the piano at age 5, went to Dartmouth but did not like it and transferred to Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, to pursue a degree in music. It was there that he met his future wife, Joanne Byrd. Joanne was also studying music at Rollins, and

she had also learned to play the piano at age 5. Joanne Rogers was born in San Marco and that remains the closest tie to Ponte Vedra. Fred and Joanne bonded over a shared interest in music and unhappy childhoods. They liked to play piano duets together for fun.

Joanne Rogers was so good that she later toured the country with a college friend performing over 300 concerts. Two of those were here in Jacksonville. Fred Rogers spent most of his life in Pittsburgh where he produced his television show. The family had a summer home in Nantucket. Nantucket is pretty far from Ponte Vedra. Given that his wife was from Jacksonville and that she performed here twice, it is possible that Rogers visited Ponte Vedra at some point, but I can find no evidence that he resided here. Perhaps someone out there knows more and can provide the missing link that ties Fred Rogers to our beautiful neighborhood.

Scott Grant is a local author, historian and money manager. He would love to hear from you at scottg@standfastic.com



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Following a stroke, Marilyn Halusky's life took an unexpected turn, yet she refused to let adversity dampen her spirit. At Cypress Village, she found not only a place to call home but a community of friends who embraced her with unwavering support. Surrounded by caring neighbors and dedicated staff, she embarked on a journey of healing and empowerment, propelled forward by the boundless encouragement and camaraderie of her Cypress Village family.

In a recent kayaking adventure organized by resident and outdoor enthusiast Marsha Green, Halusky's resilience and determination were on full display as she embraced the thrill of outdoor exploration alongside her peers. With the support of Hanna Park's Dennis Thomas, who is certified for adaptive kayaking, she overcame obstacles with grace and determination, buoyed by the unwavering encouragement of her friends and the supportive environment of Cypress Village.

"Marilyn's journey should encourage all of us to not let age or a disability stop you," said Green. "We have such a wealth of resources and experiences here at Cypress Village. You only need to ask. Her unwavering determination and posi-

tive outlook serve as an inspiration to us all. By daring to do the unthinkable, you really can empower yourself."

Cypress Village is more than just a retirement community; it is a vibrant hub of activity, where residents like Halusky are encouraged to pursue their passions, embrace new experiences and forge

meaningful connections.

Under the guidance of Lisa Drew, community life services director, and Ashley Miller, director of resident services, Cypress Village offers a diverse array of activities, events and wellness programs designed to promote physical, social and emotional well-being.

"Marilyn's story serves as a testament to the transformative power of community support, vibrant living and the unwavering human spirit," said Miller.

When hearing of the benefits and support offered, another resident, Herb Mulack, decided to join the adaptive kayaking trip after 65 years away from the water. There he discovered not only solace for his soul but also relief from his shoulder pain.

As Halusky continues her journey at Cypress Village, she remains a beacon of hope, resilience and inspiration to her fellow residents, embodying the essence of vibrant living and community spirit that defines Cypress Village.

For more information about Cypress Village and its commitment to fostering a vibrant community where residents can thrive, go to cypressvillageretirement.com.

Cypress Village is a premier continuing care retirement community located in Jacksonville. With a focus on exceptional care, vibrant community life and comprehensive wellness programs, Cypress Village is dedicated to enriching the lives of residents and empowering them to thrive in every aspect of retirement living.



Contributed photos

Alzheimer support group plans virtual meeting

The Alzheimer Association's Caregiver Support Group conducts virtual meetings on the third Thursday of each month. The next meeting is 3-4 p.m. May 16.

Support groups create a safe, confidential, supportive environment or community and a chance for participants

to develop informal mutual support and social relationships. They also educate and inform participants about dementia and help participants develop methods and skills to solve problems.

To register, call the Alzheimer Association's HelpDesk at 800-272-3900.

Back

Continued from 26

do I know him from?" he said.

Then, he had it. Joining him in SEAL training was a friend from Ponte Vedra, James "Jimmy" Thames. Both went on to serve in the Vietnam War, though in different SEAL teams.

Thinking of his youth on the First Coast, Park recalls searching for shark's teeth and shells on the beach, jumping

off the Jacksonville Beach pier and diving for golf balls at the Ocean Course.

"I sold them for 10 cents apiece," he said. "I'd sell the ones that didn't have gashes in them for 25 cents to golfers that would come by."

Park went on to sell real estate in Alabama and New Orleans but never forgot the beachside community from which he came.

"I think, overall, Ponte Vedra was one of the finest cities to grow up in," he said.

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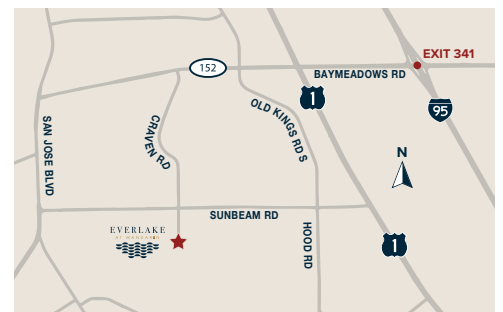
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Senior centers hold activities throughout May

Here's a look at some of the events and activities planned at local senior centers.

THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center

The following programs will be held at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach, beginning in May. If you have any questions, call the center at 904-209-3659. For more information, go to coasjc.org/ponte-vedra-center. Note: The center will be closed on May 16 for its annual Centenarian Luncheon.

Lunch — Tuesdays: Noon to 1 p.m. Registration required in advance and fee required: \$5 per meal.

Lunch — Thursdays: Noon to 1 p.m. Registration required in advance and fee required: \$5 per meal.

Hisshin Sumi-E Painting Class: Tradi-

tional East Asian brush painting. This class typically meets once a month. This month the date is Thursday, May 9. Class is from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Fee required: \$3 per person.

Acrylic Painting: 9 a.m. to noon Wednesdays. No fee required.

Bus Trip to COA's Riverhouse: A visit to COA's Riverhouse in St. Augustine for the Spring Art & Dance Show at 10:30 a.m. May 14. This is a round trip from THE PLAYERS Community Center; the COA bus will leave center at 9 a.m. and return by 2 p.m. Lunch provided. Reservation and \$5 fee required.

Chair Exercise — Tuesdays: 9:30 to 10 a.m.

Chair Exercise — Thursdays: 9:30 to 10 a.m.

Tai Chi: 10-11 a.m. Thursdays.

Canasta — Tuesdays: 10 a.m. to noon.

Canasta — Thursdays: 10 a.m. to noon

Mah Jongg — Wednesdays: 2-5 p.m.

The Mah Jongg National League 2024 Card has arrived! Experienced Mah Jongg players are wanted to play Siamese Mah Jongg.

Mah Jongg — Fridays: 10 a.m. to noon.

Mexican Train Dominoes: 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Ask a Nurse: 10 to 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays

Bingo — Tuesdays: 1-2 p.m.

Bingo — Thursdays: 1-2:00 p.m. No bingo May 16. The center will be closed.

Social Bridge: 9:30 a.m. to noon Wednesdays

Board Game Playing: Rummikub, Scrabble and more. 10 a.m. to noon Wednesdays.

Wii Bowling: 10-11 a.m. Thursdays

Technical Help for phones and computers: Available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon

Harmony: Enjoy the music of mother/daughter duo Harmony as part of the Mother's Day celebration. 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, May 9.

Library: The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch of the St. John's County Public Library System visits. Come make a seasonal craft and learn about the programs your local library has to offer. 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, May 14.

Happy Birthday May Babies: Enjoy cake and the music of Lou Parisi. 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, May 21.

Beaches Council on Aging: Meet Lori Delgado Anderson the executive director of Beaches Council on Aging/Dial A Ride. Dial A Ride is an award-winning program that provides door-to-door non-emergency transportation services for homebound seniors age 62 and older and disabled Beaches residents living anywhere from Mayport to Ponte Vedra Beach. Dial A Ride also provides door-to-door transportation from the beaches to Cypress Village and The Mayo Clinic. 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, May 23.

PURE Infusion Suites and Memory Treatment Centers: Are you currently an infusion patient, interested in learning about infusion therapy, or looking for a local neurology practice? Kiley Holt of PURE Infusion Suites and Memory Treatment Centers of Jacksonville visits to speak on biological infusion services. Their team offers many infusion therapies for conditions such as Crohn's and colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, Alzheimer's disease and other chronic autoimmune conditions. 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, May 28.

Check Your Blood Pressure with Nurse Fran: 10-11 a.m. Thursday, May 30. Free

St. John's County Legal Aid: What financial obligations put you or your loved ones' nest egg in danger? Megan Wall, St. Johns County Legal Aid managing attorney, answers these questions. Take advantage of this important free lecture from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, May 30.

River House

The following programs will be held at COA's River House, 179 Marine St., St. Augustine, in May. Please note: River House will be closed for classes and open programs on May 9 and 27. For information, call 904-209-3655 Monday-Thursday or email tharris@coasjc.org. Go to coasjc.org/river-house. Programs are open to adults age 18 and up.

Classes that require registration

Registration is required for the following programs, and space is limited. To review course details and to register, go to coasjc.coursetorm.com/category/river-house:

Why and How to Use Spices OR Spice is the Spice of Life — 1:30 to 3 p.m. Monday, May 20.

Fishing — 9-11 a.m. Tuesday, May 21.

Sea Shell Art Class — 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, May 21.

Learn How to Draw — Three weeks starting Wednesday, May 15. 9-11 a.m.



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Centers

Continued from 30

Chair Yoga — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays

Open programs

Open programs are usually free and, where noted, may require registration. Go to coasjc.org/river-house for more information.

Help with Medicare Questions — Appointments available on May 6 and on the second Monday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon. Reserve a spot with a SHINE volunteer now by calling 904-209-3655.

Mahjong open play — Bring your mahjong game and play. 1-3 p.m. Mondays

COA Travel Club — 2 p.m. Monday, May 13. Go to coasjc.org for more details.

Healing Hearts — A group for grieving a loss. The second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

One-on-One Tech Help — One-on-one help for your smart phone, tablet, or laptop questions on Tuesdays, May 21 and 28. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 904-209-3655 to reserve a one-hour spot.

Happy Hookers — Join this social group as they crochet, knit, etc. Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Spring Dance Performance and Art Exhibition: On Tuesday, May 14 there will be a music and dance exhibition from 10 to 11 a.m. in the ballroom and from 9 a.m. to noon there will be an art exhibition throughout River House.

Widow to Widow — Widows support group. Wednesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Open Game Play — Bring your deck of cards or your board game and socialize over a friendly game of your choosing. There are games available at River House. Every Thursday from 12:15 to 3:15 p.m.

AARP Smart Driver Course — You may qualify for a discount on your Florida car insurance by taking this course. Fee is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for nonmembers. Course is free with proof of Florida residence. AARP Medicare Supplement Plan insured by UnitedHealthcare. This is a two-day class is 1-4 p.m. May 15 and 16 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Pre-registration is required at 904-209-3655.

How to Avoid Becoming Victim to Predatory Lending — with Megan Wall of S.J.C. Legal Aid on Friday, May 24, 10-11 a.m.

COA Center at UF Health Nocatee

The following programs will be held in May at COA Center at UF Health Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra. Unless specified otherwise, register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling 904-814-9407. Programs are open to adults ages 18+. For more information, go to coasjc.org/center-at-nocatee.

Tuesdays

Caregiver Support Group: All caregivers are welcome. The group meets every Tuesday from 1 to 2:30 p.m. There is a trained

facilitator present at every meeting to guide the group.

Open Card Play: Bring your deck of cards and join others in playing the card game of your choice. This is a self-directed group; no instructor present. Every Tuesday from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Widows and Widowers: Social group meeting the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Some meetings may take place outside the COA.

Herbology with Professor James Carucci — Herbal Skincare: Learn which herbs will help support healthy radiant skin and how to create your own products. Leave with a sample you prepare yourself. 10-11 a.m. May 21. Cost is \$10 per class. Sign up at: coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee.

Travel Club: Discuss the group's future trips and adventures, 3-4 p.m. Tuesday, May 14.

Wednesdays

Open Art: Bring your art or craft project to work on while socializing with friends. Meets every Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Mah Jongg Meet-up: Open play for experienced players; 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, May 22 and 29; and 3-5 p.m. Wednesday, May 15.

Tai Chi: Improve mood, increase energy and stamina, improve flexibility, balance and muscle strength with instructor Dennis Sheils. All levels welcomed. 1 p.m. Wednes-

days. Cost is \$25. To register go to coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee.

Medication Review by Appointment: Have your prescriptions evaluated by a pharmacist volunteer. Then meet one to one to discuss the results to relay to your physician. Wednesday mornings by appointment.

Advanced Care Planning: A comprehensive lecture to explain what it is, reflect on your values and desires, decide and document your preferences and find out what to do next. Presented by Community Hospice, 10-11 a.m. Wednesday, May 15.

Genealogy Group: A genealogy expert will guide you in discovering your ancestors on the third Wednesday of each month. The group will discuss Family Tree Maker and compare other computer programs on Wednesday, May 15, from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

How to Avoid Becoming a Victim of Predatory Lending: This lecture will cover important information that you need to know to protect yourself and your loved ones. Presented by Megan Wall, managing attorney of St. Johns County Legal Aid. 10-11 a.m. Wednesday, May 29.

Caregiver Needs Assessment: Make an appointment with a qualified dementia care specialist, who will set up a time to discuss your situation one to one; develop an individualized education and needs assessment to support, guide and empower you to find solutions for those needs. Call to schedule an appointment 904-814-9407 or email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com.

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Wolfson Bass Tournament celebrates 35 years of fishing, philanthropy

Since the first boats launched in the St. Johns River in 1989, the Wolfson Children’s Hospital Bass Tournament has grown to welcome more than 1,000 anglers each year. The 35th annual tournament will return to Palatka on May 16-18, and while the tournament’s size has changed, its mission remains the same.

Founded by the Plant Facilities Department of Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville in 1989 to fund capital improvements and purchase the latest medical technology, the tournament has raised more than \$7 million for Wolfson Children’s Hospital and the patients treated there.

The only children’s hospital in North-east Florida, Wolfson Children’s serves children across the region with routine and complex conditions, including congenital heart disease, cancer and blood disorders, neurological conditions, traumatic injuries and more.

Mending tiny hearts

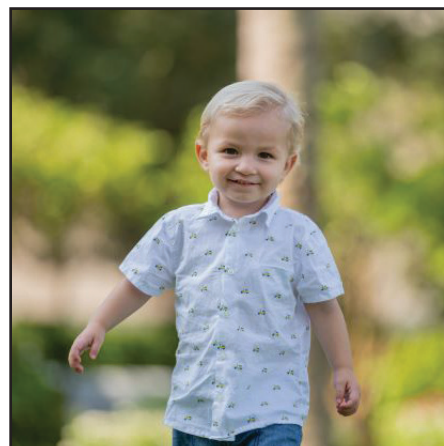
In 2024, as with the last several years, the proceeds will benefit Wolfson Children’s C. Herman and Mary Virginia Terry Heart Institute. It’s the only

program in Jacksonville that provides a full range of cardiac services for children across the region, including 2-year-old Oliver Martin, a Ponte Vedra resident and the 2024 Wolfson Children’s Bass Tournament AmBASSador.

Shortly after birth at Baptist Medical Center South in Jacksonville, doctors noticed Oliver’s chest was moving rapidly while breathing. After some initial testing, he was transported by Kids Kare helicopter to Wolfson Children’s Hospital Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit in downtown Jacksonville.

Oliver was diagnosed with aorto-left ventricular tunnel, a very rare congenital heart defect that disrupts proper blood flow and causes difficulty breathing. At five days old, Oliver underwent a successful open-heart surgery to repair the defect.

“Oliver is now a typical toddler boy,” said his mom, Amanda. “He loves trucks and balls, is always running around with a snack or two in his hand and talks non-stop. To see how happy he is, you’d never know he had such a difficult start to life. I can’t thank the entire medical staff at Wolfson Children’s Hospital enough. Not



Contributed Photo

Today, young Oliver Martin is a happy, energetic child. At five days old, he had to undergo heart surgery at Wolfson’s.

only did they save a life, but they also gave a new purpose to ours.”

Sam Dean, tournament co-chair and Baptist Health system director of Plant Facilities, said he continues to be inspired by children like Oliver and the tremendous support the tournament receives from anglers who come from across the Southeast, many of them for generations, to participate.

“While they have a passion for fishing, they also have a passion for making a difference in the lives of Wolfson Children’s patients,” said Dean, who also helped organize the first event in 1989. “These are anglers with a heart.”

Along with the thousands of anglers in attendance, more than 100 volunteers from Baptist Health, Wolfson Children’s, the City of Palatka and area businesses, including Title Sponsors Miller Electric and W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractors, Inc., join together to make the tournament a success year after year.

“I’m so thankful to be a part of such an important event,” said Brian Seay, tournament co-chair and executive vice president of Miller Electric. “As the tournament grows, so does the support for Wolfson Children’s. It’s been incredibly rewarding to know that together we’re making a difference in the lives of children from across the Southeast.”

Registration is now open at giving.baptistjax.com/event/2024-wolfson-childrens-bass-tournament/e487694 for the three-day event, which includes a Lads

TOURNAMENT continues on **Page 35**

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Nominations begin May 17th



The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 55 years of community news excellence, has launched our sixth annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32081 & 32082.**

YOU, our valued readers, now have the chance to nominate your favorite businesses in various categories online. Online voting begins June 11th after nominations are complete. **HURRY, last day to nominate is June 10th!**

www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2024/#//

Tournament

Continued from 33

& Lassies Tournament on Thursday, May 16, followed by a VIP & Friends Tournament on Friday, May 17.

The 35th Annual Wolfson Children's Hospital Bass Tournament kicks off at safe light on Saturday, May 18. More than \$48,000 in cash prizes will be awarded during the three-day event.

Also returning in 2024 is the annual bass boat giveaway. For a suggested donation of \$20, anyone may enter a drawing to win a 21-foot 2024 Bullet Boat model 21XRS with a trailer, courtesy of Bullet Boats, valued at \$97,000, with a motor to be included. Like the tournament, all proceeds will benefit the Terry Heart Institute.

"Everyone looks forward to the bass boat giveaway," Dean said. "It's a fun event that has also become an important part of our fundraising efforts. If you can't make the tournament, a suggested donation of \$20 gives you a shot at a new boat while helping support Wolfson Children's heart patients. It's a win, win."

To register for the Wolfson Children's Hospital Bass tournament, enter the bass boat drawing or donate to the hospital's mission, go to wolfsonbasstournament.com.

Group donates \$10.5K to Literacy Alliance

100 Women Who Care Beaches chapter members donated \$10,500 to The Literacy Alliance of NEFL. The donation, from their inaugural first quarter meeting, will support literacy programs in the region.

During the meeting, members voted

for The Literacy Alliance after hearing presentations from three local, nominated organizations. The donation demonstrates 100 Women Who Care Beaches' dedication to making a difference in the community.

The public is invited to join 100 Women

Who Care Beaches at their second quarter meeting from 6 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 14, at the Beaches Library, located at 600 3rd St., Neptune Beach. Go to 100women-beaches.com for more information and to join.

Contributed photo



Living with acid reflux? It doesn't have to be your normal.

Most of us take basic things, like having a cup of coffee or going out to dinner, for granted. But if you have reflux, even basic activities can cause discomfort.

Reflux and GERD should not be managed by suffering through or waiting it out. Chronic acid reflux causes more than discomfort; it can cause long-term damage and even cancer if left untreated.

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OBITUARIES



Constance Stewart Green

Constance Stewart Green passed away April 27, 2024 after a long and fruitful life.

Connie was born August 1, 1936 in Jacksonville, Florida to Arthur and Pearl Stewart. She grew up on the Southside and attended Landon High School. She met the love of her life, Causey Stanton Green (who precedes her in death) while attending Sophie Newcomb College of Tulane University. Connie was a Green Wave cheerleader for Tulane.

Connie and Stanton married in 1955 moved to Miami where Stanton started medical school and Connie received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Miami. She

and Stanton moved to Long Island, New York where Connie taught school and received her Master of Arts Degree in American Studies from Long Island University.

In 1966 Connie and Stanton moved back to Jacksonville where she led a very active life. After several years in the San Marco area Connie and Stanton moved to Montgomery Place in the Avondale area where they raised their three children. Connie could be seen running or biking from Avondale to the Florida Yacht Club where she played regularly on the FYC tennis A team. Connie and Stanton re-acquired the old Green Homestead in Welatka, Florida, "The Old Place" where they worked weekends putting 340 acres into pasture for cattle and horses. You could find Connie operating the tractor and bushhog regularly.

In Jacksonville, Connie was very active on numerous fronts. As President of the Board of Trustees of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, she was instrumental in hiring Roger Nierenberg and helping elevate the JSO to new levels of excellence. She later became President of the Museum of Science and History helping lead it into the modern era. In this role, she helped spearhead the first performance of the Nutcracker Ballet accompanied by the JSO, which is now in its 40th year. In 1987, she led the \$5 million restoration project of Robert E Lee High School after it burnt down. She claimed this was the most rewarding volunteer effort of her life. Connie and Stanton embarked on numerous business ventures over the years including the Jacksonville Ford Tractor Company and the Jacksonville Sport Medicine Center.

In 1993 Connie and Stanton left Jacksonville and began a new and daring chapter in their lives. They acquired what became the Triple C Ranch in Cedaredge, Colorado. The ranch consisted of deeded land and Bureau of Land Management/National Forest land permits comprising over 5,000 acres of deeded grazing land. The ranch, at its height, accommodated 400 calves, 400 cows, Angus bulls and 5 horses. Connie and Stan transformed the ranch from a three season cow operation to a round-the-year, cow-calf

operation. While in Colorado, Connie became President of the local Rotary chapter and they were active members of the Colorado Cattleman's Association. Connie later wrote and published a book entitled "You've Got to be Kidding! From Mending Bones to Mending Fences," written about her experience of being a cattle rancher.

Following Stanton's death in Colorado, Connie operated the ranch for an additional two years before moving back to Jacksonville. She purchased property in Neptune Beach and built her last home on the water. She married Ed Austin in 2003 with whom she shared a love of literature, history and travel.

Upon returning to Florida, Connie reestablished her connection with Rotary, becoming a member and receiving the "Service Above Self" award in 2004. She hosted Phar's Follies and established the annual Croquet and Cocktails Social at the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach. She became an active member at The Highlands Country Club in Highlands, North Carolina especially enjoying croquet. She helped spearhead the development of croquet at the Florida Yacht Club and was an active member of the Ponte Vedra Croquet Club. She endowed a scholarship to The College of Health at UNF and the C. Stanton Green, MD Anatomy Lab. She was an active member of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America. She was active in the Ribault Garden Club and was a former docent at the Cummer Museum of Art.

She is survived by her sister, Lee Stewart Beger and her three children: Holly Stewart Green and her husband David M. Dunlap, C Stanton Green Jr. and his wife Dorothy Mitchell and C. Stewart Green and his wife Heather See-Lauer. She was "Cese" to eight grandchildren: Causey Dunlap Hebel, Marcus Dunlap, Gemma Green, Causey "Ty" Green, Colton Green, Callum Green, Kennedy Green and Constance Sadie Green.

The family will have a short "Remembrance of Life" at the Florida Yacht Club on May 11th with Remembrances beginning at 4 p.m. followed by cocktails.

DEATH NOTICES

Gonzales Barrington Johnson

Gonzales Barrington Johnson, 87, of Jacksonville, Florida, died May 4, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Ann Boyd Saalfield

Ann Boyd Saalfield, 82, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died May 2, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Elizabeth J. Wagner

Elizabeth J. Wagner, 81, of Jacksonville, Florida, died May 3, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100



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OUT WITH THE OLD IN WITH THE NEW

Fest celebrates Bartram 250th

On Saturday, May 11, the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department, in coordination with the St. Johns Cultural Council, will hold the 2024 Bartram Living History Fest at Alpine Groves Park, this year commemorating the 250th anniversary of naturalist William Bartram's historic visit to Florida.

From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Alpine Groves Park (located at 2060 State Road 13, St. Johns) will see crafts tables, historical demonstrations and tours of the

park's historic buildings in celebration of Florida history from the early 18th century to today.

"Our parks have such interesting stories to tell, and we are excited to bring some of those stories to life," Outdoor Recreation Supervisor Kelly Ussia said. "Alpine Groves in particular has a rich cultural history tracing back to indigenous groups, the Fatio family, William Bartram and a long-standing agricultural story."

"Alpine Groves is one of my favorite parks in the county, and I'm happy to see its unique history celebrated," Natural Resources Superintendent Nathan Otter said.

The St. Johns Cultural Council is also presenting a related Art in Public Spaces exhibition through May 29 in the rotunda gallery of the St. Johns County Administration Building at 500 San Sebastian View: "Fair Winds to Elysium: William Bartram's Travels in East Florida,

1774-2024." In addition to the St. Johns Cultural Council, the exhibition has the support of the Florida Division of Arts and Culture and the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council.

Attendees at Bartram Living History Fest will be able to catch shuttles from Hickory Creek Elementary, 235 Hickory Creek Trail, St. Johns. Shuttles will transport attendees to and from Alpine Groves Park starting at 9:30 a.m. and will run until 1:30 p.m.

Amelia Island voted 'Best Island'

Global Traveler magazine recently announced the results of its 2024 Leisure Lifestyle Awards, with readers voting Amelia Island the Best Island in the U.S. This annual survey honors many aspects of the world of leisure and lifestyle travel, awarding top goods, services, destinations, hotels, airlines, airports, cruises and more selected by Global Traveler's nearly 850,000 readers.

No stranger to the magazine's "Best

Islands" list, Amelia Island claimed the No. 1 position for the first time this year, finishing ahead of St. Simons & Little St. Simons, Georgia; Hilton Head, South Carolina; Marco Island, Florida; and Maui, Hawaii.

"It is always an honor to be recognized by discerning travelers like the readers of Global Traveler magazine, who truly understand and appreciate what a rare gem Amelia Island is as an island destination," said Gil Langley,

president of the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We're excited to welcome visitors this summer to discover for themselves why Amelia is indeed the best island in the U.S."

According to Global Traveler, the survey was conducted over an eight-month period, with open-ended questions for the best in the categories of leisure, luxury and lifestyle travel. The survey reached nearly 850,000 readers in print and online.

Located off the northeastern tip of Florida, Amelia Island is just 13 miles long, two miles wide, and edged with natural Appalachian quartz beaches framed by rolling sand dunes. The island has captivated generations of travelers with its stunning natural beauty, unique history, outdoor adventure, independently owned eateries and charming seaport character.

To learn more about Amelia Island, go to AmeliaIsland.com.

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Photo by Anthony Richards

Brothers Leo and Gio Georgallis opened Lukumades in Jacksonville Beach with a grand opening on May 1.

Lukumades opens first American location in Jacksonville Beach

By Anthony Richards

What does New York, Los Angeles and Chicago have in common with Jacksonville Beach?

They all were in consideration to be the city where the first Lukumades location in the United States would open, but it was Jacksonville Beach that brothers Leo and Gio Georgallis chose when bring-

ing the Greek doughnut franchise to the states and they officially held their grand opening on May 1.

In many ways it was a decision made from the heart as the brothers grew up in Jacksonville Beach and it has always been a special place to them.

“We’ve got over 25 locations all over

LUKUMADES continues on Page 40



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A wide range of selections make up the menu.



Gelato is one of the many things on the Lukumades menu.

Lukumades

Continued from 39

the world in Dubai, Singapore and places like that, but I really wanted to do something like this in my hometown first,” Leo Georgallis said. “I really wanted the first one to mean something and Jacksonville means a lot to me.”

While those bigger cities and expanding in the United States is still on Leo’s mind and something he would love to do in the future his focus right now is making sure Jacksonville Beach location thrives and hits home with resident and he believes everything is in place to do

just that.

“We’ll see how this goes but we’re the master franchiser in Florida and in the next five to 10 years, I’d love to be in every beach town so we can share this with everyone,” Georgallis said.

One of the things that makes him confident in the business is its location, as Lukumades is nestled into a line of stores and sits right across from the Jacksonville Beach Pier at 504 1st St. North in Jacksonville Beach.

“This has been a long process and a couple of years now with me and the creators talking back and forth about bringing this to America,” Georgallis said.

The company started in 2015 in Australia, as the city of Melbourne has the largest population of Greek people outside of Greece in the world, and the concept started evolving quickly even during the COVID-19 pandemic when they found themselves as one of the few businesses that continued to grow during that time due to their product which proved easy to grab and eat on the go.

The staple of the Lukumades menu are the doughnuts, which the shop is named



Photos by Anthony Richards

Lukumades, which is also the name for the Greek doughnuts sold, are made fresh about every 30 minutes.

after and that are created using a unique style and ingredients.

“Lukumades is the actual name of the dessert, and it is considered the first dessert ever written about in modern literature, so it’s a more than 2,000-year-old recipe,” Georgallis said. “In 776 B.C.

where the first Olympic Games were held in Greece, instead of winning a gold medal, you got a gold token which was a fried doughnut in honey and dusted with cinnamon. Something’s been working right for those 2,000 years but all we did was just modernize it and take it to the next level.”

Part of the modernization includes having a variety of flavors a customer can choose to top their lukumades with, such as cookies and cream, pistachio and kinderella, which combines melted hazelnut sauce, drizzled milk chocolate and crushed biscuit on top of the lukumades.

Another way that Lukumades stands out, as if they needed another one, is that they are making fresh doughnuts roughly every 30 minutes and pride themselves on serving them hot and fresh.

Coffee is also offered to accompany the lukumades, including a Greek twist with its freddo espresso and freddo cappuccino options, as well as an array of flavors of gelato, shakes and refreshers to choose from.

Lukumades is open daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

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Hospitals get A grade in patient safety

Baptist Health has announced that Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville, Baptist Medical Center South, Baptist Medical Center Nassau and Baptist Medical Center Beaches all received A’s for providing the highest level of patient safety.

Baptist Medical Center Clay, which opened in late 2022, will be eligible for evaluation by The Leapfrog Group later this year.

Data suggest that 61% of consumers rely on online resources to find their providers, using tools like patient reviews and industry reports to help guide their decision-making processes. Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, issued by independent nonprofit safety organization The Leapfrog Group, provide patients with a well-established metric for assessing the safety of the hospitals they are choosing to care for themselves and their loved ones.

The A grade is one achieved by just 29% of hospitals reviewed in the spring rankings.

“We’re immensely proud of our teams for setting a high standard for safe, efficient and effective care,” said Michael A. Mayo, president and CEO of Baptist Health. “We realize patients and their families put their trust in us to provide high-quality care at a time when they may be their most vulnerable, and we are committed to delivering exceptional care, value and experiences for those we serve.”

“We have created a culture of continuous improvement where we challenge ourselves not just to meet our already high expectations, but to exceed them for the benefit of all of our patients,” said Jeremy Goodman, vice president and system quality officer of Baptist Health.

Long considered to be a gold standard

for patient safety metrics, the Leapfrog grading system includes evidence-based patient safety measures, including hand-washing protocols and the availability of highly trained nurses and physicians, to assign grades to 3,000 general acute-care hospitals across the country.

The ranking takes into consideration:

- Process measures (how a hospital gives treatment, including staff responsiveness)
- Structural measures (the environment in which patients receive care)
- Outcomes measures (the effects of care on patients’ health status)

The current distinction recognizes adult hospitals only; there is a separate evaluation process for children’s hospitals including Wolfson Children’s Hospital.

To learn more about Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, go to hospitalsafetygrade.org.

UF Health St. Johns expands mental health services

By Matt Walker

UF Health St. Johns hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, May 1, in celebration of its newly expanded Behavioral Health Resource Center. This expansion is the latest effort in the hospital's role in supporting mental health needs in Northeast Florida and in setting a national standard for addressing behavioral health challenges.

The Behavioral Health Resource Center provides access to and coordination of mental and behavioral health services, particularly for youth and adults who are in crisis or in urgent need of mental health care.

"We are excited to see this expansion come to life," said Valerie Duquette, director of the UF Health Behavioral Health Resource Center. "It's the logical next step in this program. We want to reach as many people in need as possible while making everyone feel welcome, regardless of what they may be experiencing. Crisis looks different for everyone, but we want people to know that we care, and we are here to help, 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

The Behavioral Health Resource Center's goal is to centralize care and expand access to mental health and substance use help for St. Johns County and surrounding areas, Duquette said.

Launched in 2022, the Behavioral Health Resource Center quickly filled an important gap in the St. Johns County area by reducing wait times to see providers and cutting down on emergency room visits. In its first year, the center



Photo by Alyssa Hinman

UF Health St. Johns President and CEO Carlton DeVooght, UF Health Behavioral Health Resource Center Director Valerie Duquette and Vice President of Nursing Michelle Paulo cut the ribbon at the newly expanded Behavioral Health Resource Center.

saw nearly 1,000 visits with about 450 patients and expanded from weekday-only patients to serving the community 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Approximately 20% of these visits would likely have resulted in the patient being seen in the emergency room had the Behavioral Health Resource Center not been an option.

"I want to thank our partners in the

legislature; our local delegation, Rep. Cyndi Stevenson, Sen. Travis Hudson, as well as Speaker Chris Sprowls, Speaker Paul Renner, Rep. Josie Tomkow and Rep. Dana Trubulsky," said Carlton DeVooght, president and CEO of UF Health St. Johns. "Their leadership on this project was invaluable and without them we would not be here today. And of course, Gov. Ron DeSan-

tis and first lady Casey DeSantis who played a key role in the development of the UF Health St. Johns Behavioral Health Resource Center and other projects assisting with mental and behavioral health programs in our community. What began as a local idea became regional and has now blossomed into statewide programs no one else can match."

Community Hospice & Palliative Care celebrates Nurses Month

It's National Nurses Month, a time to shine a spotlight on the dedication and compassion exhibited by nurses, such as those of Community Hospice & Palliative Care. Throughout May, Community Hospice honors these health care professionals for their commitment to providing

exceptional care and support to patients and families facing life-limiting illnesses.

Nurses are the heart and soul of hospice and palliative care and embody the essence of compassionate caregiving. Day in and day out, they ensure that each patient receives personalized care that

respects their dignity, honors their wishes and eases their journey.

From managing pain and symptoms to offering emotional support and guidance, the nurses at Community Hospice & Palliative Care are there every step of the way, providing comfort to patients

and families during some of life's most challenging moments. Their expertise, empathy and dedication make a profound difference in the lives of those they serve.

To learn more about the support and services of Community Hospice & Palliative Care, go to CommunityHospice.com.




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In the Arts

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

First Coast Cultural Center plans textile art exhibit

First Coast Cultural Center will host an exhibit for fiber artist Jessica Pinsky beginning with an artist opening reception from 5:30 to 7 p.m. May 21 at 6000B Sawgrass Village Circle in Ponte Vedra Beach. The exhibit will continue through July 5.

Pinsky, based in Cleveland, Ohio, will share her hand-woven images representing a variety of themes, including memory, childbirth, the passage of time and motherhood in her visually expressive pieces. Her artwork bridges weaving, sculpture and painting.

As the executive director of Praxis Fiber Workshop, a community textile organization in Cleveland, and adjunct professor at the Cleveland Institute of Art, Pinsky leads programming for artists of all ages in traditional textile creations on the loom.

According to Donna Guzzo, First Coast Cultural Center's executive director and CEO, the exhibit is free and open to the public with educational and cultural components for viewing and conversations with Pinsky on May 21.

"We welcome the public to enjoy the exhibit opening and reception," Guzzo said. "The purpose of the event is to bring more understanding about textile arts and its positive impact in the creative community."

First Coast Cultural Center's new building is formally open with arts, culture, community activities and a gift shop. The center is a place to create, understand and experience the arts. The organization accomplishes its goals through exhibitions of local, regional and national artists in a variety of media through educational and enlivening events, quality arts classes, lectures and workshops.

Key programs include Sound Connections Music Therapy for children with disabilities, which is offered free of charge to students at St. Johns County schools including Title I schools. Also, Kick StART afterschool arts enrichment programs and services are available and include Title I schools with the help of grant funding.

Summer camps are available with online registration along with additional seasonal children's camps, and adult programs. For information, go to firstcoastculturalcenter.org.



Guests observe BFA portfolios.



Guests observe a multimedia BA portfolio.

Flagler students exhibit art

On Thursday, May 2, the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum (CEAM), located at 48 Sevilla St. on the historic Flagler College campus, hosted an Art Portfolio Exhibition for some of the school's soon-to-be graduates. With five students earning their Bachelor of Arts degree, and six earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree,

there was an impressive collection of pieces for all to observe and enjoy for the evening.

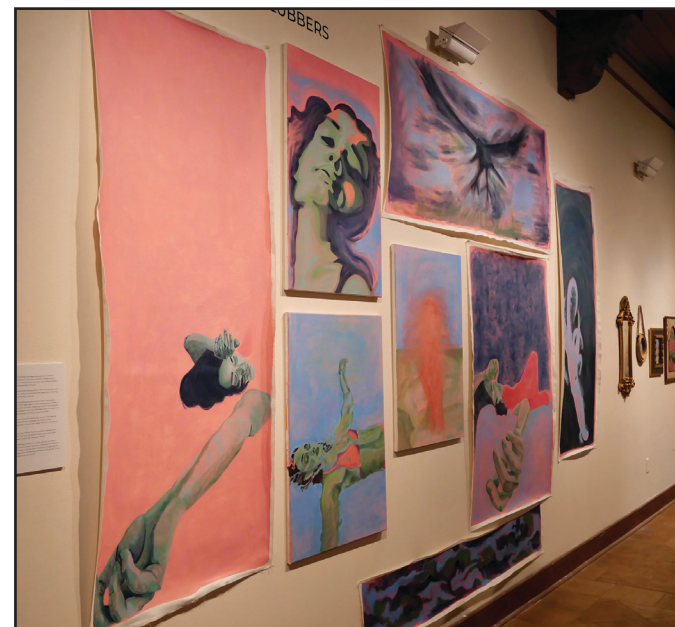
Family, friends and peers of the student artists lined the halls of the museum to admire their hard work during this brief exhibition. Even local residents stopped by to check out the event

and expressed surprise to find such a diverse assembly of glazed ceramics, acrylic paintings, photography, mixed media and more.

Learn more about upcoming events at the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum by going to flagler.edu/information/community-members/crisp-ellert-art-museum.



BFA student Bradley Edmonds' piece.



"The Duality Throughout" by BFA student Jessica Lubbers.

Worrall to perform in Sundays At Stetson's series

The next Sundays At Stetson's concert, at 2 p.m. May 12, will feature Tampa-area singer-songwriter Mike Worrall, who has taken the Florida folk and Americana scene by storm. From coffee houses to concert stages, swanky hotels to honky-tonks, large festivals to campfire song circles, he has become a fixture in the

Florida folk scene after spending years on the road.

His latest CD, "Journey's End," is available on Apple Music, Bandcamp and Spotify.

The audience will be inside for this concert. No reservations are required, though admission is limited to the first

50, so arrive early to claim your seat. Note that a \$10 donation is recommended.

For more information, go to stetsonkennedy.com/second-sundays.html.

The venue, Beluthahatchee, is located at 1523 State Road 13 in Fruit Cove, just south of the intersection at Roberts Road.

Contributed photos

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Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *The Lark Ascending*
William WALTON *Symphony No. 1*

Experience the sheer talent of Concertmaster Adelya Nartadjieva as she takes the spotlight for Vaughan Williams' majestic piece, *The Lark Ascending*. The program begins with Elgar's affectionate homage to Italy, celebrating its musical traditions through Mediterranean-inspired themes. The grand finale unfolds with Walton's First Symphony, brimming with innovative orchestral color that brings the concert to a sonorous close.

Concertmaster Adelya Nartadjieva

Only Buy Tickets at [JaxSymphony.org](https://jaxsymphony.org) 904.354.5547

Jacksonville Symphony concertmaster to be featured performer

The Jacksonville Symphony will present two performances of Edward Elgar's "In the South," Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending" and William Walton's "First Symphony" at the Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts, Jacoby Symphony Hall. The performances will take place at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 17, and Saturday, May 18.

Elgar's "In the South," described as bright, sunny and brimming with Mediterranean-inspired themes, opens the program. In a powerful conclusion, the innovative use of orchestral color in Walton's "First Symphony" draws this dynamic program to a thrilling close.

The centerpiece of the performances, Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending," features dynamic Jacksonville Symphony Concertmaster Adelya Nartadjieva. The masterpiece is famous for its vivid musical soundscapes and expressive playing from the soloist.

"The Lark Ascending" is extremely beautiful and transcends you to a place of your choosing," said Nartadjieva. "I have this picture in my head where you wake up early in the morning when the sun is about to rise, and it's dead quiet. But, when you step outside and listen very carefully, there are so many sounds in nature, and the birds are singing. The other picture I have in my head is when you go on a flight early in the morning, and you see the Earth from a bird's-eye view. You realize that life is so expansive, and you're a part of it, and it's just so beautiful."

A native of Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Nartadjieva started playing the violin at the age of 6. She performed her first solo concert with the Chamber Orchestra of Uzbekistan just nine months after she



Contributed photo

Jacksonville Symphony Concertmaster Adelya Nartadjieva will be featured in an upcoming performance of Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending."

started playing. She went on to graduate from the Yale School of Music with a master's degree. Upon graduation, Nartadjieva was awarded a First-Class Honors Degree and a Lee Kuan Yew Gold Medal as the best graduate throughout the course of study.

Nartadjieva is also the winner of several international competitions in Greece, Singapore, United States, Russia and Uzbekistan. She recently won first prize at the Woolsey Hall Concerto Competition at Yale and Gershwin International

Competition, an education grant from the Rachel Barton Pine Foundation and the Broadus Erle prize from the Yale School of Music.

In 2021, she was a guest associate concertmaster for Experiential Orchestra's recording of Dame Ethel Smyth's "The Prison," winning a Grammy Award. In 2022, following the Jacksonville Symphony's five-year search for a concertmaster, Nartadjieva joined the organization.

"Adelya is one of the finest concertmasters I've worked with," said Courtney

Lewis, music director of the Jacksonville Symphony. "Not only is she a world-class violinist, she's also a brilliant leader. Her colleagues respect and trust her, and she is a terrific advocate for the symphony off the stage, too. The sound of the first violins in the Jacksonville Symphony has been transformed since she arrived, as has the strength of rhythmical ensemble in the whole orchestra."

For more information and to reserve seats, tickets are on sale now only at Jax-Symphony.org.



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Sports



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Photos by Anthony Richards



Giada Antenucci chases a ball during the class 1A regional final against Episcopal on May 3.



Grace Raymond sprints down the sideline with the ball.

Sharks come up one goal short of another final four trip

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra Sharks were so close to a return trip to the class 1A girls lacrosse final four, but it proved not to be in the cards as the Sharks fell 14-13 in an instant classic against the Episcopal Eagles.

It was a back and forth contest the entire night as both teams proved evenly matched and had an answer for seemingly ever score.

The offenses took a little to get going, as the teams were tied at three-all after the first quarter, but the pace quickly picked up and for the majority it was the

Sharks grabbing control of the momentum.

A pair of goals by Lily Mosser were accompanied by scoring strikes by Hannah Toole and Brooke Johnson as the Sharks opened up an 8-5 lead at half-time.

Johnson showcased her bright future as the freshman entered the game off the bench and scored the first time she had possession of the ball on a prime scoring attempt following a penalty by the Eagles.

However, the Eagles came out firing with a wave of offense and three quick goals to open the second half and even

the game all up once again.

The Sharks quieted the Eagles' run thanks to a goal by Aubrey Schmidt, but the third quarter proved to be a decisive factor in the game as the Eagles out-scored the Sharks 7-2 in and carried a 12-10 advantage into the fourth quarter.

It was a crazy third quarter in many ways, and it was evident that the Eagles' confidence continued to grow with each goal.

Time and time again during the final frame the Sharks proved why they were deserving of the top seed in region 1 in class 1A and just like the Eagles had during the third quarter, Schmidt fired in

another shot following a pair of Hannah Toole goals that tied the game at 13 with 4:16 left to play.

Schmidt's game-tying goal sent a reverberation about the home crowd as the tension at the Shark Tank had been building for some time and had reached its max.

The tie did not last long though, as the Eagles quickly answered with a score of their own to recapture the lead 14-13 and although the Sharks put the pressure on defensively during the final couple of minutes, the Eagles maintained possession and eventually ran out the clock securing a spot in the final four.



Hannah Toole (No. 21) is hugged by her sister Lily Toole following a goal.



Lexie Rupp goes face-to-face with an Episcopal player driving to the net.

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CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14					15			
16					17						18			
19				20						21				
			22					23				24		
25	26	27		28				29				30		
31			32		33		34					35		
36				37		38				39			40	
	41				42				43		44			
		45						46		47		48		
49	50		51				52				53			
54		55				56						57	58	59
60						61					62			
63						64				65				
66						67				68				

- ACROSS**
- 1. It wakes you up
 - 6. A place to sleep
 - 9. Czech village
 - 13. Appetizer
 - 14. African country
 - 15. Dark brown or black
 - 16. Parent-teacher groups
 - 17. Saturates
 - 18. ESPN personality Kimes
 - 19. Songs to a lover
 - 21. Cavalry-sword
 - 22. Begat
 - 23. Patriotic women
 - 24. Famed Princess
 - 25. One who does not conform
 - 28. Neither
 - 29. Nigerian monetary unit
 - 31. Body parts
 - 33. Hit Dave Matthews Band song
 - 36. Depicts with pencil
 - 38. Make into leather without tannin
 - 39. Plants grow from them
 - 41. Alias
 - 44. Fingers do it
 - 45. More dried-up
 - 46. Clod
 - 48. Senior officer
 - 49. A way to listen to music
 - 51. The bill in a restaurant
 - 52. Historic center of Artois region
 - 54. Cyprinid fishes
 - 56. Poisonous perennial plant
 - 60. Scottish Loch
 - 61. Heads
 - 62. Extra seed-covering
 - 63. Wings
 - 64. Britpop band
 - 65. Forearm bones
 - 66. Small immature herring
 - 67. Female sibling
 - 68. Hymn
 - 3. Resembling a wing or wings
 - 4. Tears down
 - 5. Professional designation
 - 6. Noise a sheep made
 - 7. Type of lodge
 - 8. Speak poorly of
 - 9. Ties the knot again
 - 10. Apron
 - 11. Studied intensively
 - 12. City in Finland
 - 14. One who monitors
 - 17. 18-year astronomical period
 - 20. Trent Reznor's band
 - 21. Takes to the sea
 - 23. Split pulses
 - 25. Valentine's Day color
 - 26. Wyatt __
 - 27. Type of rail
 - 29. One from the Big Apple
 - 30. Asteroids
 - 32. Made more sugary
 - 34. Change in skin pigment
 - 35. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
 - 37. Koran chapters
 - 40. A place to relax
 - 42. Young woman ready for society life
 - 43. Female horses
 - 47. Half of Milli Vanilli
 - 49. Icelandic poems
 - 50. Indiana town
 - 52. Golden peas
 - 53. Closes tightly
 - 55. It's mined in mountains
 - 56. Cliff (Hawaii)
 - 57. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
 - 58. Monetary unit
 - 59. Primordial matter
 - 61. TV station
 - 65. Rise

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

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. Vipers
- 2. Not on time



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- Wesley Financial Group, LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt & fees cancelled in 2019. Get free info package & learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. 833-308-1971
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