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THE PLAYERS

Thursday, March 21, 2024

PonteVedraRecorder.com

VOLUME 55, NO. 21 \$1.00

Nemours, Furyk Foundation packed backpacks during fun THE PLAYERS event

By Anthony Richards

Nemours Children's Health and the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation teamed up with Blessings in a Backpack for a special event that was hosted at the Nemours kids zone area during THE PLAYERS on March 13.

"As a local star, I think it would be easy for Jim and Tabitha to just play golf and keep it at that, but what's amazing about them is not only the great events they put on but the worthwhile endeavors that they're partnered with," THE PLAYERS executive director Lee Smith said.

Smith believes that the Furyks have a similar mantra to that of the PGA Tour, in which they want to give back to the

NEMOURS continues on Page 28



Photo by Craig O'Neal

Scottie Scheffler made history this week, becoming the first to win two consecutive PLAYERS Championships. Read the full story in Sports on page 52.



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

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One of Us

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Send us your news

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



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

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

BRIEFS

Beach cleanup is Saturday

The Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM) will conduct a beach cleanup on Saturday, March 23. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Participants will be directed to a specific beach for cleanup. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended. Email Candace.Killian@FloridaDEP.gov to participate.

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.

Believing in Girls Breakfast is March 28

Pace Center for Girls will hold its Believing in Girls Breakfast on Thursday, March 28, at the Florida Blue Conference Center, 4800 Deerwood Campus Parkway, Jacksonville. Coffee and networking at 8 a.m. Program is 8:30 to 10 a.m. The breakfast is complimentary. Guests will have an opportunity to make a donation in support of Pace Jacksonville. To register, go to facebook.com/pacejacksonville. For more information, go to pacecenter.org/locations/Jacksonville.

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club to meet

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will hold its monthly happy hour for members and friends at 5:30 p.m. April 2 at Sawgrass Marriott, Ponte Vedra Beach. This is an informal gathering for women to get to know each other and introduce their friends to club members.

Register to attend at pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php.

For further information, email Membership@pontevedrawomansclub.com.

Party for Prevention planned

St. Augustine Youth Services will host the St. Johns County 2024 "Party for Prevention" to bring awareness of the issues surrounding child abuse and neglect while providing resources and entertainment to attendees. Local agencies and vendors will be onsite and activities for children and families will be provided. A free light dinner will also be provided, with desserts

available for purchase.

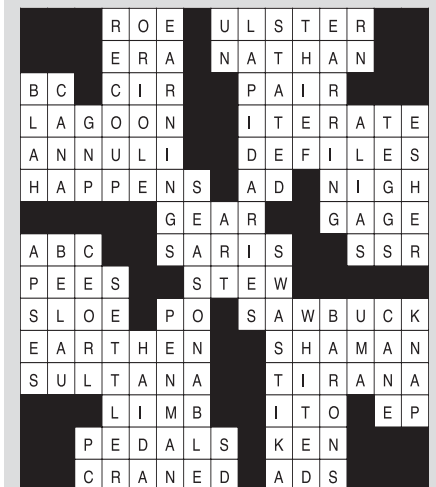
The free event will be held 4-7 p.m. April 3 at the main campus, 201 Simone Way, St. Augustine.

For further information, go to sayskids.org/events.


SAYS has provided critical mental health services to youth for more than 34 years, currently operating three community programs serving youth and young adults up to age 25, and residential therapeutic group homes for boys ages 6-17 who have experienced emotional trauma or abuse.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



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Registration open for Betty Griffin Center 5K Race for Peace

Registration is under way for The Run for Peace 5K, benefitting the Betty Griffin Center, which begins at 8 a.m. April 6 at the St. Johns County Ocean Pier, 350 A1A Beach Blvd.

Runners and walkers, along with race volunteers, can sign up at www.runforpeace5k.org through April 5. Registration is \$25 for adults and \$20 for students, and supporters can sign up to take part virtually for \$25, as well.

“More than 600 runners and volunteers took part in last year’s race, helping us raise more than \$30,000 for

our nonprofit agency,” said Betty Griffin Center CEO Kelly Franklin. “All of the proceeds help us provide services to survivors of domestic and sexual assault in our community, so we really appreciate everyone’s support of this important fundraiser.”

Participants of all ages and skill levels are welcome, and each participant receives a Run for Peace 5K T-shirt and finisher’s medal. Virtual participation is available for runners who cannot attend but want to participate.

Since 1990, the Betty Griffin Center

has provided shelter, counseling and support to domestic or sexual abuse victims in St. Johns County such as a 24-hour crisis hotline (904-824-1555), court advocacy and civil legal representation. To advance this mission, the Betty Griffin Center also operates two thrift shops in St. Johns County.

Sponsors include Mastercraft Builder Group, KeHE Cares, Pearmid Properties, Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation, Main Event, Herbie Wiles Insurance, VyStar Credit Union, Volkswagen St. Augustine, Walmart Foundation, Ascen-

sion St. Vincents, Atlantic Automotive, Farghaly Medical & Spa, Hallett Insurance, Coldwell Banker/Vanguard Realty, Funkytown, St. Augustine Beach Police, Proshow DJ, EasySociAbility and Wayne Scott Fusco Photography.

There are still several sponsorship opportunities available at a variety of levels for businesses and individuals. For details, go to bettygriffincenter.org/5k-race-for-peace-on-april-6 or contact Betty Griffin Center Development Director Kenlie Kubart at 904-808-8544 ext: 207.



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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.

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

Annuals vs Perennials

"A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust." — Gertrude Jekyll



By Kathy Esfahani

Homeowners often wonder whether it is better to plant annuals or perennials to develop color in their landscape. The answer is both! Planting a combination of

annuals and perennials adds color and variety in your gardens that last season after season.

An annual is a plant that lives for only one season. Although replacing annuals at the end of each season adds maintenance to your yard, the reward is a rainbow of vibrant colors while these plants are blooming. Annuals typically



Mixed Annuals

last three to six months, requiring replacement two to three times per year.

When using annuals, plan your landscape to include several places where you want constant color and do not mind replanting each season. These locations can be garden beds or planters. Popular spots for annuals include framing a front entry, highlighting a driveway

or mailbox, or surrounding a relaxing outdoor living space. Prepare your gardens for annuals with two to three inches of compost, peat or topsoil. If you choose, you can add fertilizer; mix approximately the first six inches of soil before planting.

In our area, look for warm weather annuals such as begonias, coleus, gerber daisies, impatiens, melampodium, salvias, torenia, vincas, and zinnias.

Perennials are plants, shrubs and trees that last indefinitely; flowers can survive at least three growing seasons in Northeast Florida. Many perennials turn brown and seem to die in the winter, but they will grow back from the roots. Just prune off dead stems and wait for them to reappear. Although perennials require less maintenance since they do not need replacing, they do not produce the dramatic color of annuals.

Consider planning your landscape with at least 90% perennials to balance the showy color with less replacement cost and effort.



Flower of the Week

Pentas

When selecting perennials to add to your landscape, look for African iris, agapanthus, blue daze, bush daisy, foxtail fern, gaillardia, gardenia, gazania, gold mound duranta, hydrangea, knockout/drift roses, lantana, loropetalum, mandevilla, muhly grass, pentas, portulaca and potato vine.

Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Pentas

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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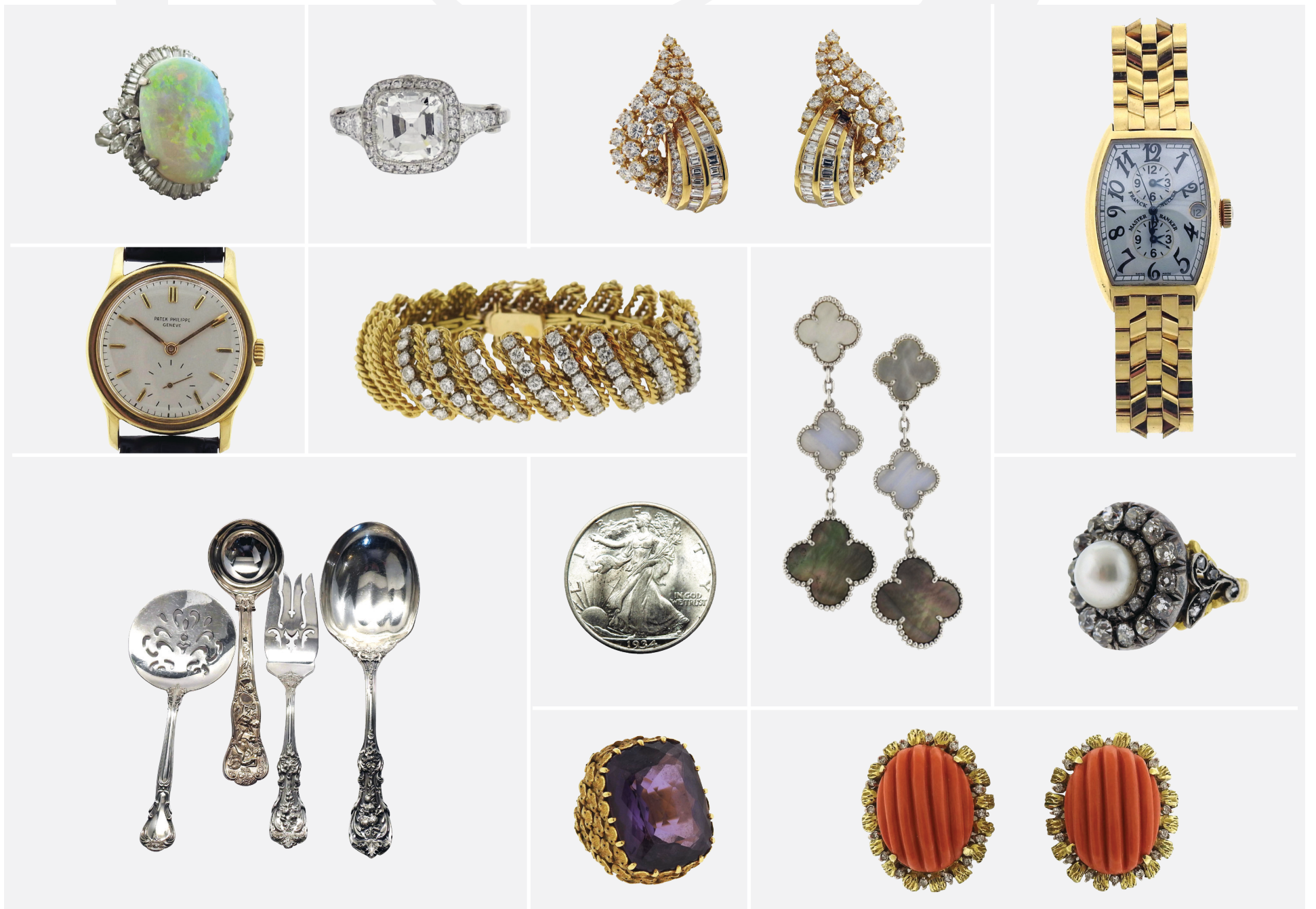
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CALL TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

Laury Livsey is the historian for The PGA Tour, archiving and preserving its past and documenting its present for the future. With this year being the 50th anniversary of THE PLAYERS Championship, fans are showing more interest in all that came before.

Laury Livsey

As told to Shaun Ryan

How did THE PLAYERS become such a big part of this community?

We didn't start here in Florida. We actually started in Atlanta. That's where the first tournament was. Commissioner [Joseph] Dey, before he retired, planned to move it around. So, it started in Atlanta, went to Fort Worth, then went to the Fort Lauderdale area, and then came here to replace the Greater Jacksonville Open.

Deane [Beman, former commissioner] decided to build the headquarters here and build a golf course. And here we are.

It was over at the Sawgrass Country Club at first.

Yeah, from '77 to '81. The first PLAYERS at TPC Sawgrass was supposed to be in '81 when the golf course was ready, but the viewing areas were not. So, they had one more year across the street and then '82 was the first year.

Are you actually employed by The PGA Tour?

I've been with the Tour since November of 2002. Always in communications, and I'm in communications right now. My role changed to historian, and I've been doing history for almost a decade.

But I was also doing public relations for PGA Tour China, PGA Tour Latinoamérica, PGA Tour Canada — our international tours — and trying to promote those players who were on their way up.

How did you become The PGA Tour historian?

I really felt like there was a need for a historian. We have so much from a corporate standpoint that has never been archived ... it's just in boxes. So, I approached my boss and said, "What would you think about making that my full-time job?"

It became official last July. So, it's relatively new, even though I'd been doing historical things for almost the entire time I've been at the Tour, but really in a de facto way for the last decade.

There must be a lot of history to document.

The Tour's been around since 1968. So, The PGA Tour is not that old. But the history of golf in America goes back to the 19th century.

I think there's a lot to tell. And guys like Lloyd Mangrum fascinate me. Guys that fought in World War II, and World Golf Hall of Famers and just really, really great players who made good money but didn't make the kind of money that players are making today. They're the ones

who built the tour.

Tell me about what you do.

It's a real mix. Right now, I'm trying to build database of things that have to do with our tournaments, our players, our company that I think will help tell the story.

And a lot of this stuff has just been stored at our Iron Mountain facility on Commonwealth Avenue on the westside. I want to scan it, make that available, searchable, put tags on it.

In addition to archiving, you write articles.

I just finished writing a 3,500-word article that's on theplayers.com about the history of how the Tour went to Atlanta Country Club in Marietta for the first PLAYERS Championship. I went up to Atlanta Country Club, talked to the team up there. Found some members who went to the first event. Talked to some people, and then wrote a story about it.

We celebrated the 40th anniversary of the PGA Tour logo in 2020. I wrote a 4,000-word story and three sidebars on how that came about. Disney designed that. Don't know who the artist was.

We'd had our little shield logo, it looked a little bit like the Union Pacific logo. And our marketing director at the time, Art West, said, "I've got to be able to sell the tour. I can't sell a shield."

So, Disney created this logo [the current one].

Future historians will be grateful for all the work you've done.

I think so. The first wave I did, adding scores in, we didn't even have full scores for early U.S. Opens in our system. And that's easily gettable information. You can find that; it's a significant enough event. And we put that in.

So, I would say, in our first wave, we added somewhere in the neighborhood of about 200,000 scores and probably somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,500 players that played in the U.S. Open, played in the PGA, played in the Master's, played in the old Metropolitan Open in New York. And we're still not even close to being done.

So, what do you like best about what you do?

The variety. And just the history. I was a history minor in college. And I just love it. I always loved, really, American history.

To be able to do something where I feel like I'm contributing to the company and I'm going to leave it in a better place than when I arrived.



Photo by Shaun Ryan

PGA Tour historian Laury Livsey is seen with numerous vintage PLAYERS Championship badges, some dating back to the 1970s.

What do you like best about living in Northeast Florida?

Just how different it is. We have a pretty good-sized lot. And we've got a retention pond in our backyard. We've got egrets and we've got wild turkeys and we've got just all these wading birds that you would never see in Utah.

I just really like that.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I like to garden. I like to work in my yard. I like to plant flowers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an abridged version. Read the entire interview at pontevedrerecorder.com.

With spring in full swing, some county yard waste do's and don'ts

By Anthony Richards

Spring cleaning is something many people are starting to do, and that sometimes includes cleaning up around not just the inside of a home, but also the outside of it.

Clipping tree limbs, trimming bushes, cutting grass and other yard work can also lead to debris or trimmings being collected and disposed of.

However, St. Johns County wants residents to be aware the best procedures to follow when taking the next step in the cleanup process and putting it out to the curb for pickup.

Leaves, grass clippings, twigs, and other small pieces of yard waste should be placed in a bag, bundle or container to help keep the materials together to prevent them from scattering while also making it more efficient to pick up.

Containers with yard waste should not be larger than 32 gallons capacity in size and should not weigh more than 50 pounds.

In Florida, where a palm tree is the state tree, palm fronds are very prevalent and that means having to dispose of the palm fronds once they are cut.



The county instructs that all palm fronds, branches and shrubs should be stacked neatly in piles running parallel to the curb, and that the piled items should not be more than six feet long and weigh more than 50 pounds.

Yard waste is to be separated from garbage and recycled products, and they are each supposed to be put out by 6 a.m. on that area's scheduled collection day.

Collection days can sometimes be forgotten or mixed up, which is why the county has partnered with the app "Recycle Coach," to help residents keep track of their curbside collection schedule.

The county has the upgraded version of the app, which offers more educational content and recycling resources, especially when it comes to figuring out if certain materials are on the county's recyclable list or not, including software that allows the app to tell someone if a product is recyclable or not just by taking a photo of it.

Other helpful tips from the county include advising people to not blow leaves and other yard waste into the street or storm drains, because those drains empty into nearby waterways and could create issues as a result.

Yard waste that is taken and placed in front of vacant lots or properties will not be collected and is discouraged by the county.

Items that are not permitted as yard waste include whole trees, land clearing debris, fencing, landscape timbers, garden hoses, planters, flowerpots and yard decorations, as well as any other items that does not fit the size and weight parameters mentioned above.



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OBITUARIES



Patricia Durand Kelk

Patricia (Pat) Durand Kelk, 83, of Ponte Vedra Beach, passed away on March 11, 2024, after a courageous, inspiring, persistent battle with ovarian cancer. She

will be remembered by friends, neighbors and family as kind, strong and independent. She was especially thankful for others' acts of service, calling them her angels. She always had an attitude of gratitude.

Pat was born on February 28, 1941, in Toronto, Ontario, to Godfrey and Marjorie Durand. While she moved to New Jersey in 1952, she was always proud of her Canadian heritage and dual citizenship. One of her very special memories was spending time at the family cottage, built by her father and grandfather on Nottawasaga Bay in Collingwood, Ontario. She loved sharing this place with her children and grandchildren.

Pat graduated from Jonathan Dayton High School in Springfield, NJ in 1959, attended Douglass College (Rutgers) from 1959-1961 and Cornell University New York Hospital School of Nursing (1961-1964).

Pat co-founded Residential Home Care, Inc. in the Westfield, NJ area with Joyce Dolan, taking care of the elderly for 30 years from 1980-2010. A resident of Sea Bright, NJ and Palm Coast, FL for many years, Pat moved to Ponte Vedra Beach, FL in 2013 to be closer to family.

Pat was a devoted member of Palms Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville Beach, FL, enjoying her time with parishioners as a Love Caller, Shepherd and Deacon. Pat enjoyed softball, tennis, paddle, golf, boating, RVing (at 80 years old), reading and spending time with family, friends and her dogs. She will always be remembered for her boating stories and sense of adventure.

Her proudest accomplishment is her legacy of two daughters and seven grandchildren. Her greatest wish was to see the lives of her grandchildren unfold (and to have great-grandchildren). She is survived by her children, Jacqueline Allman

(Steven), Sandra Paris (Brent), her grandchildren, Katherine Khodaverdy (Levic), Samantha, Elijah, Mathias, Madeleine, Abigail and Grant, and her siblings, Ian, Gordon and Carol.

Pat's interment will be at the columbarium at Palms Presbyterian. A celebration of life will be held at Palms Presbyterian on Friday, March 22, 2024, at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Compassion Fund at Palms Presbyterian Church at 3410 3rd Street S, Jacksonville, FL 32250 or the American Cancer Society at donate.cancer.org. Please visit her Tribute online at www.quinn-shalz.com.

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Memorial Carolyn Marie Ashton

Our beloved mother and grandmother and great grandmother, Carolyn, 97, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, passed away in the early hours of March 6, 2024.

Born June 6, 1926 in Asheville, North Carolina, Carolyn was the sixth of seven children of Oscar Francis and Margaret Whittemore Blankenship Sr. She grew up in nearby Fairview, N.C., with her three sisters and brothers: Marjorie Miller, Freneau, Francis, Olin, Blaine Huntley, and Martha. She is preceded in death by the latter, as well as her first husband Thomas G. Ellis Jr., second Arthur Richardson and third Thomas Ashton.

She was the 1944 valedictorian and a

graduate of Fairview High School. Carolyn attended Western Carolina University and graduated in 1948 with a Bachelor's Degree in Education and Business. She served as President of the student body and participated in chorus, drama, and the women's basketball team.

In the 1960s Carolyn taught at Duncan U. Fletcher High School in Jacksonville Beach. She was an active member of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville Beach and Sunday school teacher, Ponte Vedra Palm Valley and Fletcher PTAs, a Junior Women's Club President and Regional Director, The Beaches Fine Arts Society, The Ribault Garden Club, and a member of the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club where she loved playing on the tennis team. Real estate became a successful second career at Century 21 and Ponte Vedra Club Realty where she consistently earned entry into the Multi-Million-Dollar Sales Club before retiring in 2002. She had resided in Jacksonville Beach since 1954.

Mrs. Ashton is survived by her two sons and their families: Thomas Ellis III and wife Deborah Mason and their son Drew; and Tim Ellis and wife Teresa and their daughter Ashley and husband Zoiner Tejada and daughter Whitney and husband Brian Boudreaux and their three children Elise, Kyle and Emily.

Carolyn's ashes will be interred alongside her parents and siblings at Cane Creek Cemetery in her childhood hometown, Fairview N.C.



Travis Robert Wilson

Travis Robert Wilson, 38, passed away on March 9, 2024, after a hard-fought battle with cancer. He was born on May 17, 1985, in Jacksonville, FL.

Travis is survived by his mother, Linda; brothers, Brad and Chris; aunt and uncle, David and Sandi Wilson; stepfather, Frank

Cervone; sister-in-law, Ellen; nieces, Harper and Emily; nephew, David; and a litany of friends, family, and coworkers.

He was predeceased by his loving father, Greg, grandparents, Marvin & Maureen Wilson, along with his beloved grandfather, David Williams.

Travis was a caring, thoughtful, and determined son, brother, nephew, uncle, and friend. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered for his love of family, friends, his work as a general contractor and project manager at Stellar construction company, and never-ending intellectual curiosity.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 22, 2024, at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, with reception to follow at 12 p.m.



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DEATH NOTICES

Christopher Paul Brunscheen

Christopher Paul Brunscheen, 31, of Tampa, Florida, died Feb. 29, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Mary Debarr

Mary Debarr, 92, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died March 10, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Adriana Marina Pesce Guevara

Adriana Marina Pesce Guevara, 34, of Jacksonville, Florida, died March 5, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Septime Valerie LaCour III

Septime Valerie LaCour III, 79, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died March 16, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Vien Van Pham

Vien Van Pham, 66, of Jacksonville, Florida, died March 8, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Judith Ann Zitiello

Judith Ann Zitiello, 74, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died March 6, 2024. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100





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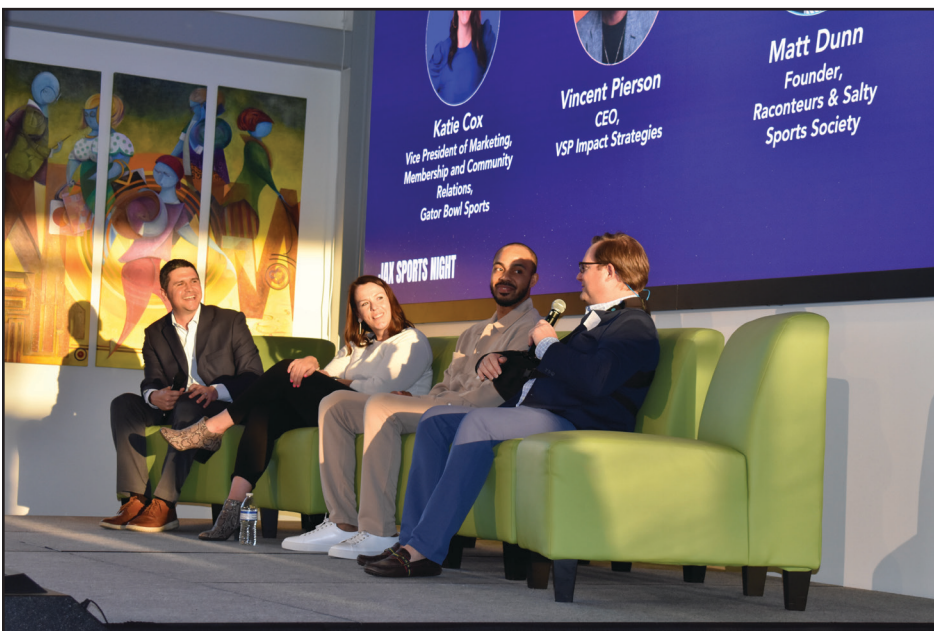
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Jax Sports Night at the link in Nocatee was hosted for the first time on March 6 and focused on the local sports marketing landscape.



Photos by Anthony Richards

A featured "Women In Sports" panel was part of the night.

Sports marketing highlighted during inaugural Jax Sports Night at the link

By Anthony Richards

Sports have always been something unique that seems to bring people together, and that was the goal behind Jax Sports Night at the link in Nocatee on

March 6.

The night centered around sports marketing opportunities in the area with panels and networking for those looking for insight into that world of business.

Several of the marquee and well-known sports organizations were represented as part of the panels, including the Jacksonville Jaguars, Gator Bowl Sports, Jacksonville Icemen and NASCAR throughout the night.

One of the things mentioned throughout is the diverse field that is the sports world and all the ways to get involved depending on what paths best suit a person's personality and goals.

According to Katie Cox, vice president of marketing, membership and community relations with Gator Bowl Sports, there are so many people that still think they just host the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl each year, but it goes so much deeper than that.

"We don't just work all year to plan one game, but we do get asked that a lot," Cox said. "We are also host of Florida

and Florida State baseball, which is coming March 26 in the baseball park downtown. We also try to engage any chance we get to build our members, because we are membership based, and as a nonprofit, we would not be anything without our members."

Being a nonprofit has helped Gator Bowl Sports to never lose sight of their approach, which is to strive to help its community through the events that it points on and the initiatives it partners with.

"One of the ways we also look to get involved is with the local chamber of commerce," Cox said. "We use sports to help connect with people and to help bring them together, and we even have Gator Bowl Charities, which is ongoing all year for those who are looking to make a difference in the sports world."

Gator Bowl Sports is just one example of the array of pathways someone can take no matter what interest they find themselves connected with, because there are many avenues to explore.

A focus of the night also included a panel solely constructed to promote women in positions of power within the sports marketing world to provide their perspectives.

One of those featured women was Kara Terwilliger, who is managing director of national partnerships with NASCAR.

Terwilliger shared a story to those in attendance of how through her role with NASCAR she was able to help build a relationship with the organization's partner Advent Health, and it led to the creation of five new nursing home facilities at Daytona International Speedway prior to the Daytona 500 in February.

"Now that it has been implemented, the goal is to make it an initiative that can be had from track to track," Terwilliger said.

According to Terwilliger, she expressed how much of an accomplishment it is knowing the work that went in behind the scenes to make an initiative like that become a reality.

Asia Gholston, vice president of marketing with the Jacksonville Jaguars, was also on hand and shared a couple of proud moments she and her team had last season and it included a marketing campaign they started called "Duval Designs," which was a call to all local artists to help pitch ideas for the team's local gameday posters.

"It was really important to us to highlight the artist and showcase their work, and a lot of them ended up seeing an increase in business and followers after that," Gholston said. "It's always good for a company as big as the Jags to be able to hand over our platform to support the local artists and give back in that sense."

The night was the first Jax Sports Night of its kind hosted by the link.

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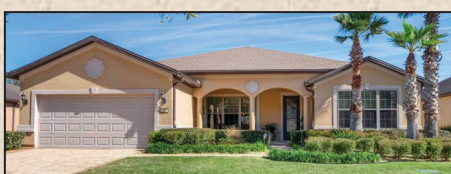
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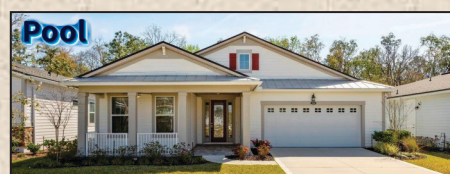
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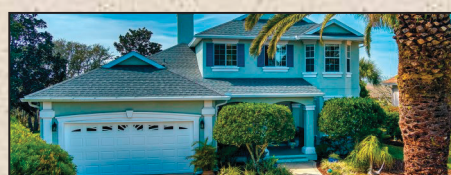
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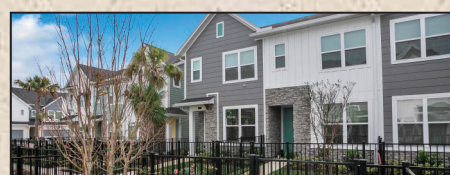
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanking legislators for investing in health care

To the Editor:

The Florida Legislature passed monumental health care legislation and funding this year. With this funding, our communities across North Florida will benefit from additional access and infrastructure to meet their needs. The passage of the "Live Healthy" legislation (SB 7016, 7018) is a testament to our policymakers' and health leaders' commitment to investing in a healthier and more stable Florida.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Florida Legislature, especially Senators Clay Yarborough, Tracie Davis and Jennifer Bradley, and Representatives

Paul Renner, Sam Garrison and Wyman Duggan for prioritizing the health of our state's residents. The approved health care legislation ushers in a modern approach to advancing health care innovation, strengthens the health care pipeline and improves access to behavioral health resources.

All said, this legislation allows for greater access to health care including:

- \$134 million in increased Medicaid reimbursement for mothers and babies
- \$10 million of recurring funds to rural hospital capital improvement projects
- \$50 million per year for a health care innovation fund
- Increased funding for health care workforce pipeline programs
- \$100 million in education funding at teaching hospitals
- \$11.5 million in behavioral health services.
- \$50 million additional dollars for

Slots for Docs program, a program to increase medical residencies

This historic legislation will benefit our hospitals in Jacksonville, who are investing in innovations in cardiovascular care. Our hospitals' cardiovascular programs are creating a robust and active clinical trials infrastructure that provides first-line access to promising new breakthroughs for heart failure, stroke prevention and AFib.

The nursing retention legislation and funding will allow Ascension St. Vincent's to continue its health care educational partnerships in Duval County. St. Vincent's has established a CNA career technical program with Westside High School, which allows high school seniors to perform their clinical rotations alongside our nursing teams and provides valuable learning and professional development for our community. We are also looking at partnerships with area univer-

sities and colleges to continue to attract new nurses.

The historic legislation and focus on health care passed this year will strengthen our sites of care and enhance the services provided to the thousands of Floridians who trust Ascension with their health needs every day. We are grateful to be part of a community of leaders who are putting our patients first and adequately preparing for what lies ahead.

Thank you,

Scott Kashman, President & CEO, Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside

Kevin Rinks, President & CEO, Ascension St. Vincent's Southside

Cory Darling, President & CEO, Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns County



SEND YOUR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!
E-mail your submission to news@pontevedrarecorder.com and your letter to the editor may appear in an upcoming issue.
Letters to the Editor are subject to editorial staff review and may be edited for clarity or length.



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Fabulous Fables

Grade 4 students on the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus took their study of Aesop's Fables to the stage in George Hall on March 7, sharing their interpretations of the stories in creative, colorful ways.

From teaching lessons about looking before you jump to the importance of small kindnesses, the Bulldogs demonstrated their passion for storytelling under the direction of lower school music and drama teacher Stacey Posick.

Contributed photos



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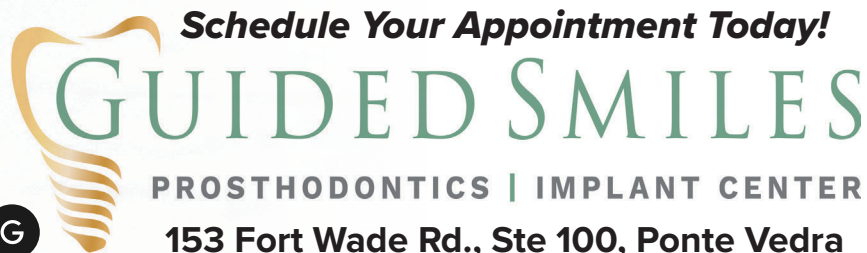
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BRAVE Summit for teen mental health set for March 27

By Erin Wallner

With a focus on breaking the stigma that surrounds teen mental health, the fourth annual BRAVE Summit will be held March 27 at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre. The free event is hosted by UF Health St. Johns and is open to all high school students throughout Florida.

The BRAVE Summit provides attendees a safe place to talk to other high school students and support professionals about mental health topics while normalizing conversations about mental wellness. This year, students will be entertained by nationally recognized music

artists Nicky Youre and Crash Adams and hear from captivating mental health advocates Kevin Hines and Odd Rod.

“In just four years, the BRAVE Summit has become an important means of outreach to youth, not only in our community but across the state,” said Carlton DeVooght, president and CEO of UF Health St. Johns. “It is rewarding to see this event grow year-over-year and to witness the impact it is having on making tough conversations about mental health more accessible.”

Participants can enjoy free food and drinks, prizes, giveaways, a photo booth, interactive games, a skate demo, art and

poetry contests and more. Additionally, students from St. Johns County can earn community service hours for attending.

“The growth of the BRAVE Summit over the past three years has been inspiring,” said Paige Stanton, the event’s founder and executive director of UF Health St. Johns Care Connect. “We had more than 1,000 youth attend last year and are expecting even more this year. To reach as many young people as possible and to let them know about the resources available to them is our goal.”

The BRAVE Summit is a centerpiece event of the BRAVE program. BRAVE, which stands for Be Resilient and Voice Emotions, was founded in 2019 and has made significant progress in connecting high school teens to mental health resources.

Before BRAVE’s implementation in St. Johns County Schools, only 35% of students who were referred to mental health providers were seen by a medical professional. With the BRAVE program, that rate has increased to 90%. Since its founding and despite the pandemic,

BRAVE has expanded into more school districts, including Clay, Nassau, Putnam, Okaloosa and Volusia counties, with the ability to assist more than 200,000 students.


The BRAVE Summit is not only for youth. There is a concurrent summit for parents, caregivers and guardians happening at The Elks Lodge from 3 to 7 p.m. aimed at providing the resources needed for successful, productive conversations about mental health with their teens. There will be speakers to discuss fostering mental wellness and to understand how to talk to teens.

Attendees will be provided with new tools and tips on how to talk to teens and learn about what it’s like for teens today to deal with the ever-changing landscape of managing their mental health. This is a free event open to any parent or guardian interested in learning about these resources.


Go to linktr.ee/bravesummit2024 to learn more or register for the BRAVE Summit for students or adults.

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Night in the Vineyard event helps protect youth

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children (MBF) will hold A Night in the Vineyard, presented by MasterCraft Builder Group, from 6 to 9 p.m. April 2 at SoNapa Grille, 2400 3rd St. South, Jacksonville Beach, in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The signature event will feature live entertainment by renowned Jacksonville bands the Band Be Easy and Bold City Classics and Nashville recording artist Colleen Orender. There will be live and silent auctions, gourmet food by SoNapa Grille and curated wine pairings, all in support of the foundation's mission to keep youth safe. The foundation is dedicated to protecting children from all types of abuse, bullying, online exploitation and human trafficking through prevention education.

General admission tickets are \$150 per person and must be purchased in advance at anightinthevineyard.com. Tickets include entry into the event, wine tastings, food, access to the live and silent auctions, live musical entertainment and complimentary valet parking. Tickets are limited.

All event proceeds will support providing youth access to MBF Prevention Education Programs — personal safety curricula that educate and empower youth, and the adults in their lives, with strategies to recognize, prevent and respond to all

forms of child abuse, bullying, exploitation, trafficking and other types of child victimization.

The programs are comprehensive, evidence-based/trauma-informed and provide youth with universal strategies to keep them safe, including five easy-to-remember safety rules. The foundation is dedicated to removing obstacles to access much-needed, life-saving programs to prevent child victimization. Its proven effective programs are trusted by schools and parents and have reached more than 11 million across the globe.

The third annual A Night in the Vineyard fundraising event will enable the foundation to educate and empower children and teens while promoting safer schools and communities for youth.

Event sponsors include Blue Stream Fiber, Carlton Construction, Clockwork Marketing Services, Constellation Furyk and Friends, Dream Finders Homes, Earth Balance Corporation, The Fiorentino Group, Foley & Lardner LLP, GreenPointe Holdings, Jax Utilities Management, Jonny Nomad Media, K & G Construction Co., MasterCraft Builder Group, PepsiCo, PRI Productions, Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC), River Bay Investments, SoNapa Grille, The Tim and Leah Chapman Foundation and Truist Bank.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. To learn more and lend support, go to anightinthevineyard.com.

Charity's new officers elected

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville recently elected a new slate of officers to its 2024 Executive Committee. Executive Committee members include:

David Marovich of 121 Financial Credit Union, chair; Jimmy Farrell of Cox Media, vice chair; Gina Fishman of Fishman Pediatric Dentistry, secretary; and Greg Lechwar of Teamshares, treasurer.

Joey Leik, chief executive officer of

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Jacksonville, welcomed the leadership additions stating, "RMHC is very fortunate to have this level of executive leadership lending their time to our board of directors. Their dedication and strategic visioning will lead us well into the years to come."

The Executive Committee will provide strategic direction for the board of directors in the 2024 board year, running January through December.



David Marovich



Jimmy Farrell



Gina Fishman



Greg Lechwar

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A look at some Holy Week worship, celebrations

Holy Week welcomes visitors and locals to celebrate the rich religious history of Florida's Historic Coast with an array of sacred ceremonies and cultural festivities from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday. All are invited to come together and celebrate the season of renewal in St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and The Beaches.

A quick glance at the architecture of downtown St. Augustine reveals the importance religion held for the city's European settlers, whose piety was given permanence through the historic houses of worship. During Holy Week, many churches offer services, vigils and events where visitors can embark on a spiritual exploration and perhaps even a transformation. From the towering Cathedral Basilica to the quaint garden-like Mission Nombre de Dios just one mile north, there's no shortage of events to stir the spirit.

Mission Nombre de Dios

Mission Nombre de Dios is a historic and holy site where Pedro Menendez de Aviles and his party landed and proclaimed the site for Spain and the Catholic Church on Sept. 8, 1565. Reverently referred to as the nation's most "sacred acre," the mission is a holy place of pilgrimage, with visitors worldwide coming to visit the National Shrine of Our Lady de la Leche.

Holy Week Events at the Mission Nombre de Dios include:

- Palm Sunday, March 24: Palm Sunday Mass at 1 p.m.
- Holy Wednesday, March 27: Liturgy of the Word with Communion at noon
- Holy Thursday, March 28: Confession from 11 a.m. until noon
- Good Friday, March 29: The Last Seven Words of Jesus (Spanish) 9 a.m.; Confession from 11 a.m. to noon; Stations of the Cross at the Great Cross at 3 p.m.



- Holy Saturday, March 30: Confession from 11 a.m. to noon; Seven Sorrows Walk at the Sacred Area at noon
- Easter Sunday, March 31: Mass by Bishop Erik Pohlmeier at the Rustic Altar at the Sacred Acre at 9 a.m.

Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine

The Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine is home to the nation's first Catholic parish. The parish's original place of worship, built in 1797, was destroyed by a fire in 1887. James Renwick Jr., architect of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, spearheaded the Cathedral Basilica's reconstruction. His crew salvaged the original coquina blocks and cement masonry of

the original building, embracing Spanish mission features and adding soaring timber beams. Henry Flagler contributed to the rebuilding efforts with a six-story bell tower that still rings throughout the city.

Holy Week events at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine include:

- March 23: Palm Sunday Vigil at 5 p.m.
- Palm Sunday, March 24: Palm Sunday Mass at 7, 9 and 11 a.m., and 5 p.m. Blessing of the Fleet procession to the St. Augustine Municipal Marina at noon.
- Holy Monday, March 25: Mass at 7 a.m. Royal Knighting Ceremony at 6 p.m.
- Holy Tuesday, March 26: Mass at 7 a.m.
- Holy Wednesday, March 27: Mass at 7 a.m.
- Holy Thursday, March 28: Mass of the Lord's Supper celebrated by Bishop Erik Pohlmeier at 6 p.m. Adoration following Mass until midnight.
- Good Friday, March 29: Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at 3 p.m. Stations of the

Cross at 6 p.m.

- Holy Saturday, March 30: Confession from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Blessing of Easter Food at 2 p.m. Easter Vigil celebrated by Bishop Erik Pohlmeier at 8:30 p.m.
- Easter Sunday, March 31: Masses at 7, 9 and 11 a.m.

Behind the scenes tours of Cathedral Basilica are available at 1 p.m. Monday-Friday. Tickets are available online.

More Holy Week Services

Many churches of different denominations offer beautiful and stirring services. Colonial Church hosts a Good Friday Service at The St. Augustine Amphitheatre, complete with food trucks and concessions, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday, March 29.

Sunrise Services

Easter sunrise services are offered on

CELEBRATIONS continues on **Page 17**

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March 31 6:30 a.m.

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Celebrations

Continued from 16

Crescent Beach by Crescent Beach Baptist Church and Vilano Beach by Turning Point at Calvary Baptist Church, beginning at 7 a.m.

Other Easter Week Celebrations

The 65th Annual Easter Parade is a St. Augustine tradition that features the Royal Family, Storm Troopers, Easter Bunny, pi-

rates, carriage horses and an array of community floats. It begins at 9 a.m. March 30, starting at the Old Jail, traveling along San Marcos Avenue to Avenida Menendez and ending in the Plaza de la Constitución at 10:30 a.m.

Each year, friends and families gather for the Easter Promenade on Easter Sunday afternoon. The Royal Family heads the promenade, with participants strolling through the Plaza de la Constitución, showing off their finest Sunday wear. Awards are presented in many fun categories, including one for the most creative

Easter bonnet. The Easter Promenade is on March 31 in the Plaza de la Constitución, from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Easter egg hunts are also a big part of the holiday fun. Here are a few:

Palencia Park Easter Egg Hunt:

10 a.m. to noon. March 28. Free Admission. 405 Palencia Village Drive, St. Augustine. 904-209-0332

Veterans Park Easter Egg Hunt:

10 a.m. to noon March 28. Free admis-

sion. 1332 Veterans Parkway in St. Johns. 904-209-0332

Al Wilke Park & Community Center Easter Egg Hunt:

10 a.m. to noon March 30. Free admission. 6150 South Main St., Hastings. 904-209-0332

Treaty Park Easter Egg Hunt:

10 a.m. to noon March 30. Free admission. 1595 Wildwood Drive, St. Augustine. 904-209-0332

Hop on these tips for a great Easter egg hunt

Egg hunts are a traditional component of many people's Easter celebrations. Children often delight in searching for eggs around the house or in the backyard. Egg hunts are so popular that they have become a component of many town-sponsored festivities. In fact, the White House hosts its annual Easter Egg Roll each year.

There are many ways to make Easter egg hunts more enjoyable and productive for participants of all ages. Try these "eggcellent" ideas.

- Designate a clear hunting area. Young children can grow frustrated searching for eggs in large areas. Set parameters for the search area that are manageable depending on the ages of the children participating. If you'll be in a large yard or field, tape off the search area perimeter.

- Vary the prizes. Candy, candy and more candy seems to be the name of the game on Easter. But too many sweets can lead to stomach aches for young Easter celebrants. Instead, mix and match the prizes contained in the eggs. Candy can be in some, money in others, and perhaps small toys in a few eggs. Another clever idea is to mix the egg hunt with charades. Put charade prompts in

some eggs so that kids have to act out what they read inside for added fun.

- Special privilege egg. Hide one egg that gives the finder the opportunity for a special honor. It may include getting the first slice of the holiday ham or being able to choose a movie that the entire family watches together after dinner.

- Label eggs for equity. When there are children across a wide range of ages, label the eggs with the children's names or utilize a color-coded system to ensure that everyone has an equal shot at finding eggs.

- Keep a master list. It can be hard to remember where each egg is hidden, so keep a running list of where they are or take photos with a phone of the hiding spots. This way you're not left to discover a chocolate-filled egg teeming with ants come summertime.

- Make custom baskets. Children will need something to carry their eggs. Prior to the egg hunt, let them decorate bags or baskets with Easter trinkets for custom creations.

Easter egg hunts are a time-honored tradition. The opportunities for fun are endless when families plan accordingly.

Salad makes a good starter for Easter Sunday meals

Easter is a religious holiday, but for millions of people it's also synonymous with the start of spring. What better way to celebrate the warmer temperatures and brighter days than with light and tasty foods to serve at Easter brunches or dinners?

A refreshing salad can balance out a hearty main course on an Easter dinner table. For a twist on the traditional lettuce-based salad, opt for greens that have a little bite. "Arugula and Artichokes" pairs two nutritious and delicious offerings in one salad. Arugula, also called rocket, is a member of the cabbage and mustard green family. It's known for its tart, peppery flavoring. Although artichokes are considered vegetables, the edible part actually is the bud of the plant's flower before it blooms. When tossed with sweet cherry tomatoes and olives, this recipe, courtesy of "The Mediterranean Diet Cookbook" (Rockridge Press), is the perfect starter.

Arugula and Artichokes

Serves 6

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 6 cups baby arugula leaves
- 6 oil-packed artichoke hearts, sliced
- 6 low-salt olives, pitted and chopped
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
- 4 fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced

Make the dressing by whisking together the olive oil, vinegar, Dijon mustard, and garlic until you have a smooth emulsion. Set aside. Toss the



arugula, artichokes, olives, and tomatoes together.

Drizzle the salad with the dressing, garnish with the fresh basil, and serve.



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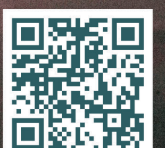
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ALL ABOUT PETS



Pet organizations offer advice concerning kittens

The Jacksonville Humane Society (JHS), along with the City of Jacksonville's Animal Care & Protective Service (ACPS) and First Coast No More Homeless Pets (FCNMHP), is seeking the community's support to help save lives by sharing information on "what to do" when you find a litter of kittens.

Kitten season is the time of year when unaltered cats procreate and give birth to kittens. In 2023, JHS and ACPS combined took in 5,203 kittens under the age of 5 months, and JHS served an additional 903 kittens via its Kitten Crusaders program. Kitten Crusaders encourages community members who find kittens to foster, rather than bringing them to the shelter, by connecting finders with no-cost veterinary care.

When community members find a litter of kittens outside, it is often instinctual to jump right in and "rescue" these tiny cats.

This notion has been given the moniker "kitnapping," and all three agencies ask the public to not act on that instinct. Instead:

- **Watch and wait:** The mother cat is likely nearby. A kitten's best chance at survival is to stay with its mother. It may take a few hours for her to return.

- **If mom returns:** Provide support (food, water, shelter) as needed and when the kittens are 8 weeks old, get mom and kittens spayed/neutered and find them homes.

- **If mom does not return:** A home is a better option than the shelter. JHS can provide coaching on care instructions and help support your efforts to find the kittens new homes once they are ready.

- **If kittens are experiencing a true medical emergency,** such as struggling to breathe, open wounds or are visibly underweight, ACPS can be reached via

904-630-2489, myjax.custhelp.com or the MyJax app.

Kitnapping is not the best option for kittens, mother cats or shelters. Underage kittens are the most fragile population in shelters and require extra time, labor and resources that are not always available. When underage kittens arrive at the shelter, they most often need to go into a foster home the very same day, putting an extra strain on staff and volunteers. Also, when no one looks for the mother cat, she is left alone to continue reproducing in the community.

"If we can share the 'don't kitnap kittens' message throughout our community, we can collectively do what is best for these little ones and keep them with their mother cat," said Denise Deisler, JHS CEO. "Together, we can save countless lives this kitten season in Jacksonville."

Community members who want to

help with the "don't kitnap" initiative can share this messaging on social media via the JHS Don't Kitnap Facebook post or downloading and sharing "don't kitnap" flyers in their neighborhoods. Volunteers are also needed for all three organizations.

The flyers can be found at: jaxhumane.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Dont-Kitnap-Jax-2024-Sponsored-by-Jaguar-Moving.pdf.

For more information, go to jaxhumane.org/kittenhelp.

The Jacksonville Humane Society provides care, comfort and compassion to animals in need while engaging the hearts, hands and minds of the community to bring about an end to the killing of abandoned and orphaned shelter animals. More information about the Jacksonville Humane Society is available at jaxhumane.org.



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Sweet doggy dreams?

It can be disconcerting to new dog owners when they discover their pooches whimpering, shaking or seemingly crying in their sleep. Although there may be some rare instances when this behavior is linked to pain and distress, by and large it is a natural response in many animals when they doze off. Although there is no exact way to measure what is going on in the pup's mind, experts like Dr. Bonnie V.G. Beaver, DVM, author of *Canine Behavior Insights*, says the main reason that dogs produce noises in their sleep is that they are probably dreaming during the REM phases in their sleep cycles. Dogs, just like humans, have the potential for vivid dreams while sleeping, as evidenced by looking at dogs' brain waves during REM sleep. During these phases, dogs may show movement like wagging their tails, twitching their paws, fluttering their jowels, or making noises like whimpers. In some cases, dogs also may bark while sleeping, says PetMD. Pet owners should rest assured that very likely these vocalizations and movements are completely normal. However, if they are new behaviors, it could be worth a discussion with a veterinarian. Also, new pet owners should know that a dog who makes noise while napping, may also do so during the night, and should not be overly concerned if they are woken from bed by pet noises. The general consensus is to simply let the pooch be as he or she works through those REM stages.

Paws off! Practice pet poison prevention



Companion animals typically do not understand that certain items in their environments can be harmful. Pets' innate curiosity coupled with unique aromas produced by common household items can put them in jeopardy of potentially deadly poisoning.

According to veterinary experts at WebMD Pet Health Center, an estimated 232,000 cases of pet poisoning occur annually in the United States. In March 2022, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center hotline fielded 22 percent more calls stemming from incidents of pet toxicity than in 2021. The following are some steps pet

owners can take to protect their companion animals against poisoning.

- Don't leave out human food. Dogs, cats and other animals may be lured by the sweet temptation of their owners' food. Many food scraps can be toxic to pets, including alcoholic beverages, chocolate, coffee beans, moldy foods, and raisins, among others. Keep the kitchen tidy and trash cans (indoor and outdoor) secured.

- Be careful with houseplants. While they may look beautiful and filter indoor air, certain houseplants can be toxic to pets if ingested. Before bringing any new plants into your home, check the ASPCA Toxic and Non-Toxic Plant Guide. Lilies may be pretty, but they also are quite toxic. The smallest nibble can be fatal to cats.

- Keep medications locked away. Be sure that over-the-counter and prescription medications are locked away and cannot be accessed by curious pets. Even seemingly mild medications, like human pain relievers, can be toxic to pets.

- Be safe when spring cleaning. Keep pets out of rooms when they are being cleaned by chemical products or when using insecticides. Wait a day or more before letting pets back into the area. Store products beyond a pet's reach when they're not in use.

With diligence, a significant percentage of pet poisonings can be prevented. Pet owners should do their homework about toxic items in and around their homes and do their best to keep pets safe.



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What pet owners should know about heartworm

Pets owners go to great lengths to ensure their animal companions are happy and healthy. Nutritious diets and routine visits to a veterinarian are two ways to keep pets healthy. Pet owners also can educate themselves about various conditions that can adversely affect their pets' health, including heartworm.

What is heartworm?

The American Heartworm Society notes heartworm is a potentially fatal disease caused by foot-long worms that can live in the heart, lungs and associated blood vessels of affected pets. A pet affected by heartworm can develop severe lung disease, heart failure and organ damage.

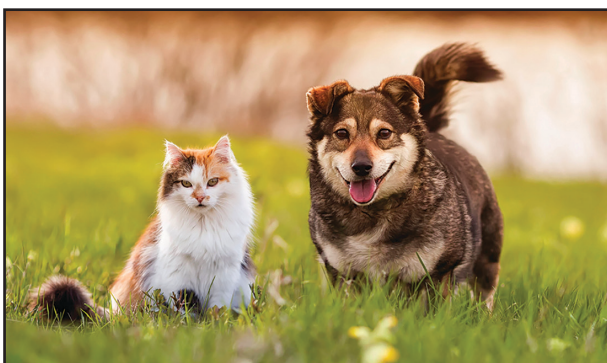
Are all pets vulnerable to heartworm?

The American Veterinary Medical Association reports that heartworm primarily infects dogs, cats and ferrets. However, wild animals like foxes and wolves also can be infected, as can animals like raccoons and opossums that many people see in their backyards and local parks. Humans also have been infected with heartworm, though the AVMA notes such instances are rare.

Heartworm and dogs

The AHS notes dogs are a natural host for heartworms. Heartworms that live inside a dog can mature into adults and even mate and produce offspring while inside the dog. Numbers increase if the dog is not treated for heartworm. Even if a dog is treated, the effects of heartworm infection can linger after the worms are gone, contributing to lasting damage to the heart, lungs and arteries.

Symptoms of heartworm infection in dogs may not manifest early on. The AHS notes that it's more likely



symptoms will develop the longer the infection persists. Such symptoms may include:

- A mild, persistent cough
- Reluctance to exercise
- Fatigue after moderate activity
- Decreased appetite
- Weight loss

According to the AHM, active dogs, dogs with heavy heartworm infections or those with additional health problems frequently exhibit pronounced clinical signs.

Heartworm and cats

The AVMA notes diagnosis of heartworm in cats is more difficult than it is with dogs. Unlike dogs, cats are not natural hosts for heartworms, and the AHS reports most worms in cats do not make it to the adult stage. In fact, many cats with heartworm have no adult worms. That contributes to the difficulty of diagnosis, and it does not protect cats against harmful side effects of heartworm, including a condition known as heartworm associated respiratory disease (HARD).

The AHS notes that signs of heartworm in cats can be subtle or very dramatic. Sadly, the AHS also reports that the first sign of heartworm in some cases is the sudden collapse or sudden death of the cat. If cats exhibit symptoms, those signs may include:

- Coughing
- Attacks that mimic an asthma attack
- Periodic vomiting
- Lack of appetite
- Weight loss
- Difficulty walking
- Fainting or seizures
- Fluid accumulation in the abdomen

Heartworm poses a potentially serious threat to cats and dogs. Pet owners are urged to speak with their veterinarians about heartworm prevention and what to do if a pet becomes infected.

Did You Know?

The American Kennel Club reports that the most popular dog names of 2023 were "Luna" for girl dogs and "Max" for boy dogs. Luna beat out "Bella" for the top spot while Max bested "Charlie." In a nod to the popularity of football and the personal life of the world's most recognizable pop star, "Kelce" was the top trending dog name of 2023 according to data compiled by the online pet ownership marketplace Rover. Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce was already wildly popular among Chiefs fans, but he rose to even greater prominence when he began dating pop star Taylor Swift during the 2023 National Football League season. Rover reports that trending names for felines included "Norbert," "Soju" and "Snoop."

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Robert Young was thanked for his 20 years of service as a golf instructor with First Tee of North Florida during a ceremony at THE PLAYERS on March 12.



PGA Tour golfer Justin Rose shares a few words during the presentation. Photos by Anthony Richards

First Tee honors longtime coach at THE PLAYERS

By Anthony Richards

Coaches can play a huge role in not only teaching the sport or subject they are instructing, but it is the special ones who realize they can make a difference beyond the basic material in front of them.

That is one of the best definitions when describing coach Robert Young and the work he has done with First Tee of North Florida during his past two decades as a coach within the program.

As a result of his impactful teaching over the years, Young was honored and presented with a plaque thanking him for his dedication during a ceremony at the Morgan Stanley fan experience tent at THE PLAYERS on March 12.

Not only was Young given the award, but he was surprised by several of his current and former students who were on

hand to congratulate him personally and catch up.

“It’s exciting to see some of these kids be here to take part in this, that’s the best surprise of them all,” Young said.

PGA Tour golfers Justin Rose and Alex Smalley were on hand to say a few words to coach Young and to the First Tee students in attendance.

“In the program you get training not only in golf, but also in life skills and talking about how to handle when you’re faced with tough times,” Young said. “That is just going to be life, so you’ve just got to know how to preserve. We focus on the assets that are going to make you a great person and not just necessarily a great golfer.”

“When I was younger, I was doing a lot of different activities, and if I hadn’t done

that, who knows, I may not be here where I’m at today,” Smalley said. “I think it’s big just getting exposed to a lot of different things, and I know I would have loved coming to tournaments like this and meeting players when I was that age.”

Young got started as a coach with First Tee in 2004 after he was teaching golf in a park near Brentwood Golf Course in Jacksonville and was approached by a man who told him about First Tee and the initiatives they had.

So, he wound up becoming a coach and he continues to carry on the love of the game and values that have been the focal point since those first grassroots beginnings.

Being an athlete himself, Young knows what it takes to play sports and how the right mindset can mean everything, just

like in life.

“I played football, which was my sport, and I had to get my mind and body both in shape so that I was able to take on the challenge,” Young said. “They can carry that right mindset into life and with whatever they choose to do.”

Having rarely waned from his mission to help and give back the best way he knows how, and that is by teaching continues to be the driving force for Young and he plans to keep it going as long as there are children out there he can teach.

“You don’t do it for the awards, but it does let me know that I’m doing something right, and it just shows how each day I go out to teach classes is so enjoyable for me,” Young said. “Just looking to continue to serve as an inspiration through golf.”

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ABC Golf Championship Premium Tasting Event held on March 13



Amy Frank and Karrie Frankel.

The ABC Wine Tasting event took place on March 13 of TPC Week and included a mix of fine wines and golf. Guests were welcome to sample a variety of wine selections.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Proceeds from ticket sales benefitted the Pace Center for Girls in Jacksonville, which was presented with a check at the event.



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THE PLAYERS Celebration helped kick off tournament week

Just as the name implies, THE PLAYERS Celebration was a time to be joyful in anticipation for the week of fun times and golf that was on schedule when the event took place on March 11.

Photos by Susan Griffin



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Photos by Shaun Ryan



Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan reads "Who Took the Cookies from the Cookie Jar?" by Bonnie Lass and Philemon Sturges while children from the Becoming Collegiate Academy listen.



Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan distributes books and backpacks to the children in attendance.

Literacy event featured at PLAYERS Championship

By Shaun Ryan

Two dynamic literacy programs were featured Thursday, March 14, as Nemours Children's Health and THE PLAYERS Championship welcomed Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan and students from the Becoming Collegiate Academy to the tournament's Kids Zone for a special event.

PLAYERS Executive Director Lee Smith called youth support and education

a charitable pillar of the tournament.

"We always want to make a positive impact in the communities in which we play," he said, "and these types of partnerships allow all our fans, business leaders and volunteers to all come together, to row in the right direction and to support such a great cause."

Dr. Larry Moss, Nemours Children's Health president and CEO, spoke about the Reading BrightStart! program, which was founded in 2005. In recognition that

literacy and health are closely linked, the program seeks to promote reading for all children, focusing on birth through age 8.

"The difference between life expectancy for a high school dropout compared to a college graduate: 17 years," Moss said. "And there's no stronger predictor of finishing high school than reading proficiency in third grade ... Those trajectories are set early, and if they're set in the wrong direction, that's it for a lifetime. If they're set in the right direction, that's an

assurance for a lifetime."

He cited a recent national scorecard that found 37% of children in the United States are struggling to achieve a fourth-grade reading proficiency level.

"Of even greater concern is that the very best readers are not getting better, and the struggling readers are not catching up," he added.

Reading BrightStart! is currently

LITERACY continues on Page 30

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A look inside the Lexus Suite at THE PLAYERS

Guests enjoyed refreshments, lunch and snacks during THE PLAYERS Championship at the Lexus Island Suite on the 16th green. Lexus was the tournament vehicle sponsor.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Brian and Tina Zehren.



Contributed photo
Susan Griffin, Geri Price, Gloria Dongara and
Christine Ondek.



The view from the TOUR Suite

At the TOUR Suite, located in a marquee overlooking the 18th green and featuring premier views, guests enjoyed refreshments, breakfast, brunch and appetizers.

Photos by Susan Griffin



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Photos by Anthony Richards



Nemours, the Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation and Blessings in a Backpack teamed up for a fun event at the kid zone at THE PLAYERS on March 13.



Twenty-five students from Andrew Robinson Elementary School in Jacksonville and their families attended the kids zone area for the special event.

Nemours

Continued from 1

communities in which they live and play, and this is something that has been prevalent throughout Jim's entire playing career.

"There's no better example of that than the Furyk Foundation, and both he and Tabitha do such a great job," Smith said. "They are building just such a great reputation, not only for their events, but by partnering with organizations like Nemours, Blessings with a Backpack, and the many more."

"It's really cool to see a PGA Tour player that doesn't have to do this, or he could just rely on the organization to do it for him, but he and Tabitha want to be so involved and it shows their passion for giving back," Smith said.

Twenty-five students from Andrew Robinson Elementary School in Jacksonville and their families attended the kids zone area and got to spend some quality time together laughing and playing the various game stations available as guests of Nemours and THE PLAYERS.

Some of the games included miniature putting greens, a large-scale version of the

game Operation and Skee-Ball, as well as virtual activities and a coloring wall.

Smith and Furyk both spent time helping teach the children about some techniques to hold a putter and offered guidance while they took part during the putting portion.

"I think golf is a platform and a vehicle to reach out to different audiences and help, whether that's inside the ropes or outside of them, is a really worthwhile thing," Smith said. "When you put a golf club into a child's hands, initially your first question is 'Are you right-handed or left-handed?'"

That initial question has the potential to grow into something special and could create future golf fans and players, or at the least it introduces them to a new experience that they had never interacted with before.

"When one rolls in the hole after two or three tries and you see them realize that was they're goal and they just achieved it, and the light it puts in their eyes and smile on their face, is what it's all about," Smith said. "It is not only great for them, but also for the game of golf and for the future of the sport. That's how golf can grow anytime you put a club in a child's hands."



Pro golfer Jim Furyk teaches a child how to hold a putter.



Children play a large-scale version of Operation.



THE PLAYERS executive director Lee Smith was on hand to provide some tips of his own.



The coloring wall in the kids zone was a popular place.

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Literacy

Continued from 25

implemented in 61 of Florida's 67 counties. It offers a preschool reading screener with a customized list of recommended activities that boost children's literacy skills.

Moss said participating programs report that at-risk or struggling learners improve their understanding in basic reading concepts by between 98% and 124%.

"We know that literacy is one of the most essential elements to developing young brains, to making sure that kids are ready to succeed in school," said Dr. Kara Walker, executive vice president and chief population health officer for Nemours Children's Health. "And when you think about the social drivers that are connected to health outcomes, education success is just one of them."

Deegan spoke about her River City Readers program, launched citywide in January. Students of all ages are challenged to read 20 minutes a day and log their reading time online. The challenge offers prizes and incentives to the students.

"We're going to make this super fun all year long, because we know if we can make reading fun for kids, if we can enhance their love of reading, they'll be readers for a lifetime," Deegan said.



Dr. Kara Walker, executive vice president and chief population health officer for Nemours Children's Health, speaks about the relationship between literacy and health.

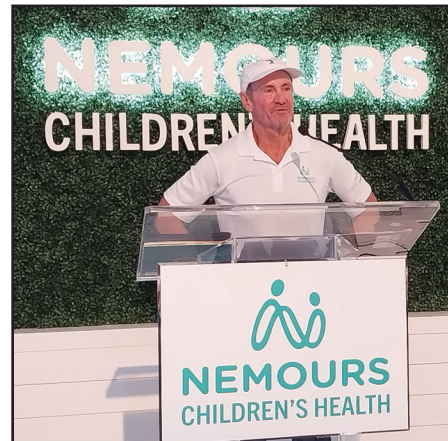
The program has been wildly successful. In less than two months, the young participants collectively surpassed the goal of 300,000 minutes organizers had set for the entire year. As a result, Deegan announced that the goal has now been increased to a million minutes by year's end.

Also, Thursday, Deegan read to the children in attendance, who then enjoyed several literacy-related games.

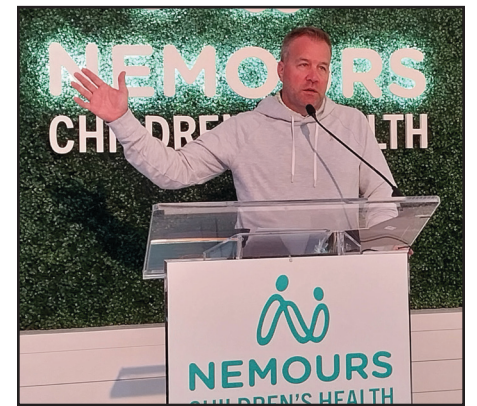
For information about Reading BrightStart! go to readingbrightstart.org. For information about River City Readers, go to jaxpubliclibrary.org/blog/mayor-deegans-river-city-readers-citywide-literacy-challenge.



A girl from the Becoming Collegiate Academy writes a word in a "sand trap" while Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan looks on.



Dr. Larry Moss, Nemours Children's Health president and CEO, speaks during a special literacy event at THE PLAYERS Championship.



Photos by Shaun Ryan

PLAYERS Championship Executive Director Lee Smith speaks during a literacy event at Kids Zone.



A boy from the Becoming Collegiate Academy practices his putting and reading skills in a game at Kids Zone.




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Thursday sights from THE PLAYERS



Xander Schauffele eyes a tee shot during his seven-under round, which had him tied for the first-round lead.

The following are photos from first round action at THE PLAYERS.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Rory McIlroy found his groove during the first round and shared the lead at seven-under as a result.



Michael Kim thanks a volunteer after finishing up his round.



Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams was following the group that included Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy and Viktor Hovland during the first round.



Ben Griffin hits a shot from some pine straw.

THURSDAY continues on Page 34



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After Hours at THE PLAYERS

The following are photos from the joint After Hours at THE PLAYERS Championship event, co-hosted by the St. Johns County Chamber and the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce. The member event was held on THE PLAYERS grounds and took place March 7.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Felicia Cox and Linda Garner.



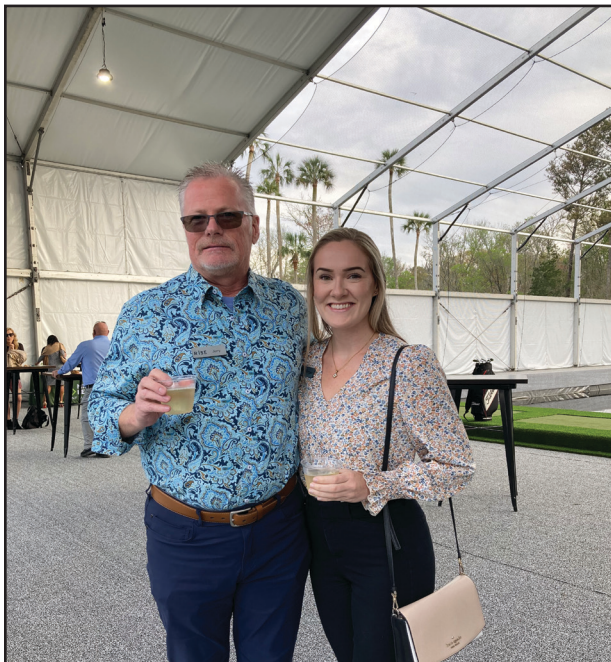
Peter verDorn and Megan Monzo.



Rebecca Mason



Miracle Leaf



Jerry Shafer and Morgan Matlock.



Matt Price, Susan Phillips and Isabelle Renault.



Maria Rodriguez and Liesl Savage.



Photo provided by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

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Thursday

Continued from 31

Photos by Anthony Richards



Defending champion and world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler started strong and was tied for sixth at five-under.



Rickie Fowler and Justin Thomas (left to right) walk among the fans to get to their next hole.



A fan dressed up in his best St. Patrick's Day attire.



Justin Thomas and his caddy discuss an upcoming tee shot.



Shane Lowry closely watches a tee shot.

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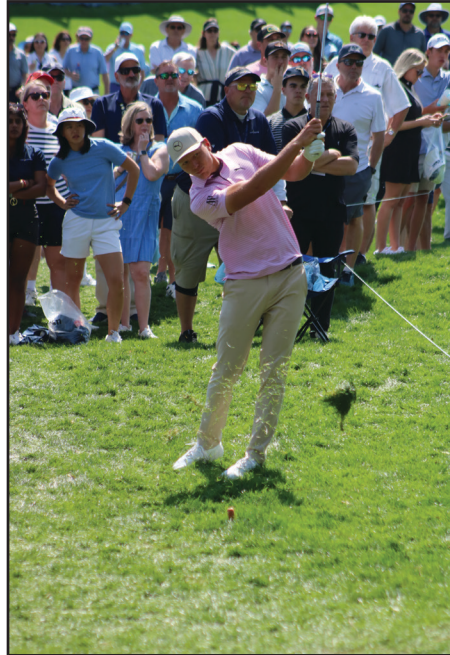
Friday sights from THE PLAYERS

The following are photos from second round action at THE PLAYERS.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Wyndham Clark reacts after coming close to draining a lengthy putt on No. 8.



Matti Schmid of Germany made a move during the second round and sat in the top five at eight-under.



Matt NeSmith hammers a tee shot on No. 18.



The crowds continued to pick up with each day.

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Friday

Continued from 35

Photos by Anthony Richards



Matt Fitzpatrick sat in a tie for second place at nine-under.



Fans enjoyed a beautiful day for golf.



Scottie Scheffler reads a green.



Brian Harman had himself a day, shooting seven-under in the second round.



J.T. Poston hits out of the pine straw on No. 18. He was four-under for the day and is seven-under for the tournament.



Rickie Fowler watches as Justin Thomas lines up a putt on No. 8.



Fans watch a tee shot from Joseph Bramlett on No. 16.


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Saturday sights from THE PLAYERS



Fans order drinks at the bar during the third round.

The following are photos from third round action at THE PLAYERS.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Aaron Rai hits his tee shot at No. 17.



The "gold man" statue at THE PLAYERS is a popular photo opportunity for fans.



Zac Blair hits a bunker shot.



Aaron Rai walks past fans on his way to the No. 17 tee box.

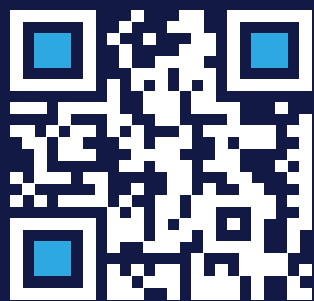
SATURDAY continues on Page 39

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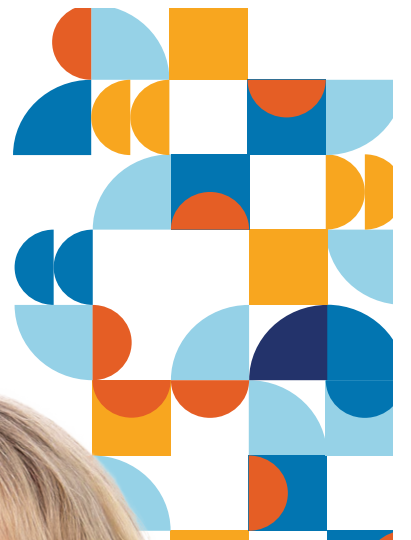
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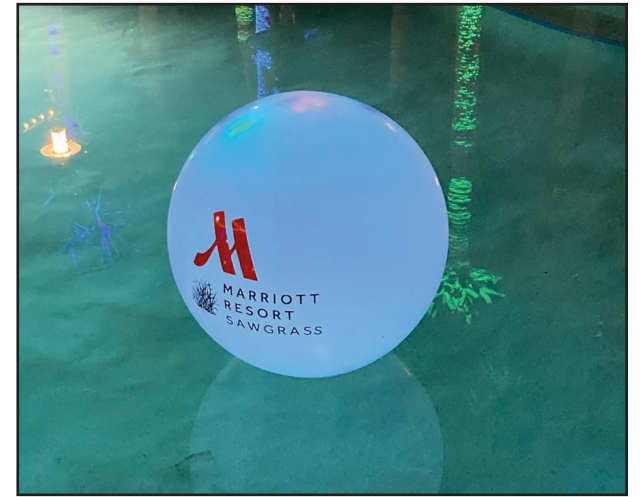


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Sawgrass Marriott hosts VIP event

The Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa hosted its annual VIP party on March 16 during THE PLAYERS. It was a perfect way for many attendees and golf fans to relax and unwind following a fun day of golf and prior to heading into the final round the next day.

Photos by Susan Griffin



Saturday

Continued from 37

Photos by Anthony Richards



Fans arrived early to preserve a prime viewing point of the famed "Island Green."



Rickie Fowler points at a fan who made noise during his back swing at the No. 16 tee.



Gary Woodland and Mackenzie Hughes walk off the No. 16 tee box.



Brian Harman made a charge on moving day, shooting eight-under for the round to get to 15-under for the tournament.



Rickie Fowler signs autographs at the kids autograph zone following his round.



Fans celebrate St. Patrick's Day at this year's tournament.



J.T. Poston hits off the tee at No. 2.

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Sunday sights from THE PLAYERS



Fans flocked to the famed "Island Green" at No. 17 to watch the final round action.

The following are photos from final round action at THE PLAYERS.

Photos by Craig O'Neal



THE PLAYERS trophy made its way to the course during the final round.



It was clear that the final round coincided with St. Patrick's Day this year.



Rory McIlroy takes aim at No. 17.



A fun time for the whole family.

SUNDAY continues on Page 41

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Sunday

Continued from 40

Photos by Craig O'Neal



Volunteers are the unsung heroes of the tournament each year.



Scottie Scheffler hits his last fairway shot of the tournament en route to repeating.



Brian Harman caps a wonderful round and finished just one shot back of the lead at 19-under.



On an island, but not alone.



Scheffler walks over to the trophy presentation.




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Deegan to speak at Coastal Friends luncheon

Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan will be the guest speaker at the next Coastal Friends monthly luncheon, to be held 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. April 3 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. Deegan, the city's first female mayor, is also a published author, breast cancer awareness advocate and former television anchor of First Coast News.

The luncheon is open to the community, members and guests of Coastal Friends. The menu will consist of caesar salad, roasted pork tips al mojo with herbed velouté, mashed potatoes and carrot cake. The cost to attend is \$25. Seating will be limited for this highly sought-after event, so reservations must be made in advance by contacting bartshar@comcast.net.

Established in 1998, Coastal Friends is a social group of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach,

Atlantic Beach, St. Augustine and the surrounding area. Some of the activities offered are: adventures and outings, book club, bunco, canasta and canasta lessons, happy hour, lunch in, lunch out, mah jongg and wine socials.

Luncheons are held on the first Wednesday of every month, except for July and August. Additionally, Coastal Friends collects food and pet items, toys, gently used items and donates them to various local organizations and animal shelters.

April's organization of the month is ISAIAH 117 House, a nonprofit group formed to meet the needs of children, specifically from the time of removal from their homes until their foster placement. Their mission is to reduce trauma for children awaiting placement and to ease the transition for foster families.

New members are welcome throughout the year.

Cardiac arrest subject of Women's Health lecture

All Northeast Florida community members are invited to The Sisisky-Kleppinger Annual Endowed Lecture for Women's Health from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, April 3. Baptist Health heart specialists and Wolfson Children's Hospital cardiologists are coming together in an expert panel to discuss preventive heart care, signs of heart failure and how to prevent sudden cardiac death.

Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when an electrical malfunction in the heart causes the heart to stop beating and pumping blood. During sudden cardiac arrest, blood does not travel to the brain, lungs and other organs, causing a person to lose consciousness. As the name suggests, sudden cardiac arrest often happens suddenly. Knowing what to do in the critical moments after an individual collapses can save their life.

To provide education about the warning signs and symptoms of cardiac arrest, as well as guidelines for what to do to save someone's life, expert panelists will lead a discussion and answer audience questions. The discussion will be moderated by C.C. Brooks, vice president of Patient Care Services at Wolf-

son Children's Hospital, and panelists include:

- Judy Ashouri MD, pediatric electrophysiologist at Wolfson Children's Terry Heart Institute
- Geetanjali Dang MD, cardiologist at Baptist Heart Specialists
- Matthew McKillop MD, electrophysiologist and medical director of the Electrophysiology Program at Baptist Heart Specialists
- Khushboo Parikh MD, pediatric cardiologist at Wolfson Children's Terry Heart Institute
- Siddharth Wayangankar MD, interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Peripheral Vascular Program at Baptist Heart Specialists

The event will take place at WJCT Studios, 100 Festival Park Ave., Jacksonville. Here is the schedule:

- 5:30-6 p.m.: Reception
- 6-6:30 p.m.: Welcome and panelist introductions
- 6:30-8 p.m.: Panel discussion and audience questions

There is no cost for attendees. Attendees are asked to pre-register at WomensLecture.com/2024.

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Contributed photos

Peter Fouts earned his Eagle Scout rank after completion of an outdoor gym.

Eagle Scout builds outdoor gym

Episcopal School of Jacksonville (ESJ) student Peter Fouts, Class of 2026, earned his Eagle Scout rank on Feb. 8. He has been a member of BSA Troop 277 at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach since 2019.

Peter completed his Eagle Scout Service Project to benefit the school's

rowing program. He designed and built an outdoor gym for the middle and upper school rowers to use for strength training, which is located behind the Walton Boat House on the school's Knight Campus.

Peter and his work day crew, which included several rowing teammates, tore down some old, broken pull-up bars,

cleaned out overgrown brush and built updated pull-up bars at varying heights, as well as three raised platforms equipped with weight racks and designed for performing sit-ups, push-ups, leg raises, as well as for use with weights.

Peter raised \$1,300 for his project materials through donations and selling

Christmas poinsettias. Several current and alumni rowing families contributed to his project.

A total of 205 service hours were contributed to this project with Peter contributing 67 of these service hours.

The rowing team began using the outdoor gym this fall.

Feeding the hungry

Ponte Vedra Church, in support of Blessings in a Backpack, purchased, packed and delivered 153 food bags for students attending Sea Breeze Elementary in Jacksonville Beach during their spring break. This is the third year the church has supported this mission. Each bag contains three meals for seven days.

For those students needing assistance, these food bags support the notion, "that no child should go hungry." The event is driven by the Ladies Thursday Morning Bible Study and supported by the congregation.

Ponte Vedra Church is a Bible-based, mission-driven congregation with an emphasis on supporting local communities. Worship services are held at 11 a.m. each Sunday, and the church is located at 76 S. Roscoe Blvd. Small Bible study groups meet throughout the week.

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Shipwreck Island opens for the 2024 season

Adventure Landing's showcase attraction, Shipwreck Island Waterpark, opened for the 2024 season on March 15 for spring break. The waterpark will be open daily through March 31 and will then be open weekends only through May 5. Shipwreck Island Waterpark consists of slides "from mild to wild" so there is always something for everyone, regardless of age.

A complete operating schedule can be found on Adventure Landing's website at jacksonville-beach.adventurelanding.com/plan-your-visit/hours.

Adventure Landing is a "pay as you play" facility for its year-round attractions (go-karts, miniature golf, laser tag, batting cages and arcade games). Waterparks guests can pay for a daily admission or purchase a season pass to Shipwreck Island. The cost of a daily admission varies, and details can be found on the website. Waterpark season passes, which allow passholders unlimited admission, are on sale for a limited time only and are the



Contributed photo

An aerial view of Shipwreck Island.

best way to save so guests can swim, splash and play all summer long.

As one of the most popular attractions for kids and families anywhere on the First Coast, the community will enjoy yet another season of celebrations, events and family fun at Adventure Landing Jacksonville Beach.

Special events being planned include some annual favorites: Easter egg hunts, character breakfasts, various community Appreciation Days and more.

Adventure Landing and Shipwreck Island Waterpark is located at 1944 Beach Blvd. in Jacksonville Beach. The entertainment park offers a combination of family fun attractions including waterpark, video games, go-karts, laser tag, miniature golf courses, batting cages, birthday parties, corporate team building and group events.

For more details, call 904-246-4386 or go to adventurelanding.com.

Community Hospice & Palliative Care observes Social Work Month

Community Hospice & Palliative Care is joining the nation in celebrating Social Work Month this March, recognizing social workers' invaluable contributions in hospice care.

As an organization committed to providing compassionate and comprehensive end-of-life care, Community Hospice & Palliative Care extends its appreciation to its dedicated team of social workers who

play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of our patients and their families.

Social Work Month is an opportunity to highlight the impact of social workers in hospice care, emphasizing the essential

support they provide to individuals facing life-limiting illnesses and their loved ones. Social workers are integral members of the organization's interdisciplinary team, working collaboratively with other health care professionals to address patients' and their families' emotional, psychological and social needs.

"Our social workers embody the heart of our organization, consistently demonstrating empathy, compassion and expertise in navigating the complex challenges associated with end-of-life care," said Mary McElroy, senior vice president of hospice services at Community Hospice & Palliative Care. "Their dedication to enhancing the quality of life for our patients and families is truly commendable, and we are honored to celebrate their contributions during Social Work Month."

In hospice care, social workers provide emotional support, facilitating communication between patients and their families and connecting them with community resources. They play a pivotal role in helping individuals cope with the emotional aspects of end-of-life transitions, ensuring that the care provided is not only medically sound but also sensitive to each patient's unique needs and preferences.

Community Hospice & Palliative Care seeks to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for its social workers, recognizing the importance of their role in promoting holistic and patient-centered care. This Social Work Month, the organization expresses its gratitude to its social workers for their unwavering dedication and commendable efforts in positively impacting lives.

For more information about Community Hospice & Palliative Care and the services provided by its compassionate team of social workers, go to community-hospice.com.



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Florida Water Tours showcases native wildlife

Nestled in a gentle dip on the Northeast Florida coast, St. Augustine has miles of waterways just waiting to be explored. The Intracoastal Waterway, comprised of two main rivers, the Tolomato and Matanzas, meanders through the Nation's Oldest City and is teeming with wildlife.

Florida Water Tours specializes in boat tours that show passengers the beauty of St. Augustine's maritime ecosystem. Departing from Camachee Cove Yacht Harbor, Florida Water Tour's Dolphin and Wildlife Adventure is a chance to enjoy wildlife viewing with captains and crew who are passionate environmental advocates.

"I started Florida Water Tours so I could share my love of dolphins and the great outdoors," said Jessica Jadick, founder and owner of Florida Water Tours. "If you had asked me what my dream job was as a child, it would be this – I'm doing it right now! When I started this business, I knew I wanted to stoke this same fire for the marine environment in the next generation. Our Dolphin and Wildlife Adventure is the perfect place to start learning about our local wildlife – it's captivating for adults while still engaging for children."

The Dolphin and Wildlife Adventure Tour has professional marine naturalists who take passengers to the best places to view the plethora of wildlife that call the waters of St. Augustine home. The guide creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment, revealing fun and fascinating facts, all while searching for birds, dolphins, manatees and turtles.

Although the wildlife is the star of the show, the historical stories and landmarks of St. Augustine can't help but make an appearance.

The Dolphin and Wildlife Cruise is a 90-minute excursion and departs daily at 10 a.m., noon and 4:30 p.m. Florida Water Tour's two vessels, The Osprey and The Island Breeze, are

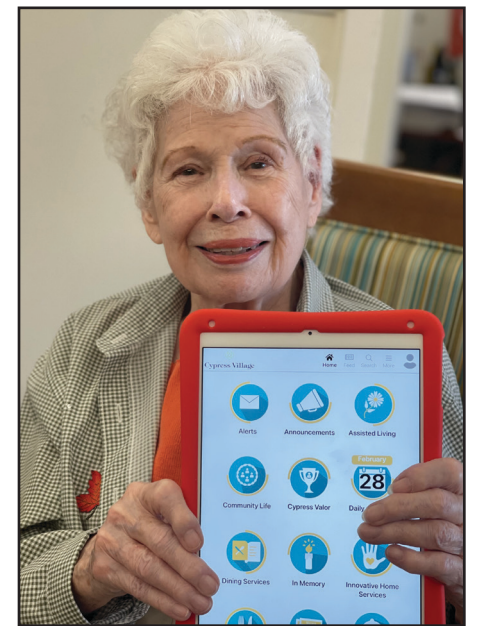


docked at Camachee Cove Yacht Harbor, just north of downtown St. Augustine, with plentiful, free parking.

The Dolphin and Wildlife Tour is \$29 for ages 13 and older, \$16 for ages 3 to 12, and \$7 for children 2 and under.

Water, soft drinks and snacks are available for purchase on both boats. Guests may purchase alcoholic beverages on board The Osprey, while The Island Breeze is BYOB. Guests can check availability at floridawatertour.com/cruises/dolphin-cruise.

"Our focus has always been creating a living classroom, where people of all ages can come and learn about the marine environment while having a really good time," said Jadick. "This area has a dynamic ecosystem made up of wetlands, coastal marshes, and active wildlife — we enjoy it every day, and we love being able to share it with our passengers."



Contributed photo

Resident Kate Nall's one-on-one app session showcased the app's user-friendly features, enhancing community engagement.

App offers Cypress Village residents access

Cypress Village Retirement Community has launched its new Touchdown Community App, offering residents seamless access to community updates, events and connections.

The Touchdown Community App simplifies community updates, event planning and social connections, making it the go-to resource for Cypress Village residents. From important announcements to exciting activities, everything residents need to know is just a tap away.

The app integrates with Amazon Alexa, enabling residents to easily access information with voice commands, making tasks like checking menus effortless for those with low vision. By integrating with Amazon Alexa, Cypress Village ensures that everyone, including those with low vision, can easily access information. Residents can simply ask Alexa to open the community app and inquire about daily menus or upcoming events, enhancing independence and accessibility for all.

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Business Weekly

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Kersey joins Ponte Vedra Wellness Center

Dr. Erika Hamer, chiropractic neurologist and owner of Ponte Vedra Wellness Center, has announced that Dr. Deborah Kersey has joined the practice. Kersey brings more than 20 years of experience to patients at Ponte Vedra Wellness Center.

Kersey received her Doctor of Chiropractic from Chiropractic School at Life University in Marietta, Georgia. She also holds an advanced certification in Webster Technique, which allows her to make a difference in the lives of pregnant patients, helping to ensure a safe, efficient and easy labor. She is a member the Florida Chiropractic Association and has held a variety of leadership positions throughout her career.

Kersey became aware of the many benefits of chiropractic care at a very early age. Her mother worked for a chiropractor and started taking her daughter for adjustments at age 6, when she was



Dr. Deborah Kersey

suffering from recurring ear infections. After that issue cleared up, her mother would take her every time she had a

cold or other childhood illness and her recovery time was quicker than most children her age with similar issues.

“I experienced for myself how regular adjustments positively affect the immune system,” she said. “Since I would often come to the practice after school, I feel as though I grew up in a chiropractor’s office and knew I wanted to help people in this same way when I was older.”

Kersey’s goal in treating her patients is to facilitate the body’s ability to heal itself through chiropractic care and to restore someone who is experiencing pain to a normal, active lifestyle.

In addition to acute care in the case of accident or injury, Kersey seeks to educate her patients on the need to get regular wellness adjustments in order to maintain their health and live their best life.

Kersey is married and enjoys quilting

and curling in her spare time. She had been an active member of the Jacksonville Granite Curling Club since 2018 and currently serves on the board as secretary. The curling club is open to all and regularly holds workshops to teach the skills, rules and safety precautions of the sport. Curling is a good workout and is a team sport accessible to all, despite fitness level or disability — curling can even be done if one is in a wheelchair.

“We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Kersey to the practice,” said Hamer. “I have known Dr. Kersey for over 20 years and her philosophy of wellness aligns perfectly with our goals at Ponte Vedra Wellness Center. We know that patients will greatly benefit from her experience and expertise in healing through chiropractic.”

To learn more about the services offered at Ponte Vedra Wellness Center, go to pontevedrawellnesscenter.com.

Tru by Hilton Jacksonville West hotel opens

LBA Hospitality, a renowned hotel management company focused on delivering exceptional guest experiences, has announced the grand opening of Tru by Hilton Jacksonville West. Located at 4142 Perimeter Industrial Parkway, this new hotel marks the latest addition to the Tru by Hilton brand and represents LBA’s first collaboration with Pritchard

Hospitality, LLC.

“The opening of Tru Jacksonville West marks a significant milestone for LBA Hospitality, showcasing our dedication to collaborating with outstanding partners like Pritchard Hospitality, LLC,” said Beau Benton, president of LBA Hospitality. “As a dynamic and forward-thinking brand, we are thrilled

to introduce Tru by Hilton Jacksonville West as the newest addition to our portfolio.”

Ideally situated in Perimeter West Industrial Park, this four-story, 82-room hotel enjoys a prime location surrounded by prominent commercial landmarks, including an Amazon distribution center, a UPS customer center and the CSX Intermodal center. Just 15 minutes from JAX Airport, Tru Jacksonville West caters to both business and leisure travelers, offering innovative and comfortable accommodations near key attractions such as the Jacksonville Equestrian Center, downtown Jacksonville and the beaches of Northeast Florida.

Owned by Pritchard Hospitality LLC and managed by LBA Hospitality, this hotel is the first Tru hotel to join LBA’s portfolio of 111 hotels, which includes properties from Marriott, IHG, Hyatt and independent brands, along with 51 Hilton branded properties. With a proven track record providing award-winning hospitality, LBA brings expertise and a commitment to unparalleled guest service to this new venture.

Tru by Hilton is a midscale brand that

offers a fresh and innovative hotel experience for travelers. The hotel’s central lobby, The Hive, is designed to create a unique atmosphere where guests can dine, work, play and relax. The game area features pool, foosball and shuffleboard, while well-equipped work pods offer guests a quiet spot for work.

Guest rooms at Tru Jacksonville West prioritize comfort and functionality with mobile desks, multiple device charging stations and sound absorption solutions. The hotel is pet-friendly and offers expert guidance through a partnership with Mars Petcare for an enhanced stay for pets and their human companions.

Tru also guarantees prompt resolution of guest concerns with their Tru Promise, providing a high standard of quality service. The hotel uses technology such as the Hilton Honors app to provide seamless digital check-in, room selection and convenient access with the Digital Key feature, enhancing convenience for guests.

Reservations for Tru by Hilton Jacksonville West can be made online at trubyhilton.com/jacksonvillewest or by calling the hotel at 904-865-0050.

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GUEST COLUMN

How a gift of money can help build investing habits

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

As a parent or grandparent, you likely want to teach children sound money habits and help them become financially successful adults.

There are a variety of ways to instill good financial habits. The following two approaches allow you to gift assets to children while providing them with hands-on investment experience that may prove useful in the future.

Custodial accounts

Custodial accounts can be opened for your children before they turn 18. They can be a useful vehicle to teach them about the principles of money and investing.

With these accounts, custodians control how investments are managed. Sharing account statements and the way you make decisions on your children’s behalf can be an opportunity to teach smart investment principles.

There are a couple of considerations you will want to think about as you determine whether such an approach is right for you and your family. First, when funding these accounts, keep in mind that control of these accounts transfers to the child when the custodianship ends. This generally happens when the child reaches age 18, 19 or 21, depending on state law. You may not want your child to have control of more financial assets than they can handle at that age.

It is also important to know that special tax rules, the “kiddie tax” rules, may apply. The income and capital gains generated in these accounts could be taxed at the parents’ income-tax rates for children



Pictured from left: Jamie L. Seim, Matthew D. Guevara, Evonne T. Heykens and Stephen T. Foody.

Photo provided by Ponte Vedra Wealth Management

under age 19 (age 24 if a full-time student). This means your young child may be required to file an income-tax return of their own. Your tax adviser can help you determine how these rules would apply to your situation.

Gifting money in an IRA (Individual Retirement Account)

Helping fund an IRA can benefit adult children who are starting their careers and can’t afford to contribute to a retirement account or don’t have a workplace retirement plan. Even teens with earned income can fund an IRA.

The earlier your children start investing for retirement, the more their investments may accumulate over time. There are two types of IRA, a Traditional and a Roth.

• **Traditional IRA:** If eligible, your child may receive a tax deduction when they contribute to a Traditional IRA, which will also offer tax-deferred growth potential. Any earnings from the account may grow tax free until the money is finally distributed.

• **Roth IRA:** This type of account is not eligible for tax relief on the contributions, but any earnings could be distributed tax-free if taken after the Roth has

been opened for more than five years and your child is aged 59½ or older. In addition, your child may be able to tap into these funds if they need them due to a disability or for use in purchasing their first home.

If you are thinking of gifting money, be sure to talk to a tax professional. Any time you give money to a child — including to a custodial account or an IRA — IRS gift rules apply.

Wells Fargo Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice. Please consult your tax and legal advisors to determine how this information may apply to your own situation.

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

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Benchmarks of Success

A look at major career developments in the area



Tomislav Dragovich

Cancer center names Dragovich oncologist-in-chief

Tomislav “Tom” Dragovich MD, PhD, joined Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center as head of the Division of Cancer Medicine and medical oncologist-in-chief effective March 11. He will also serve as medical director of the center’s clinical research programs.

Dragovich brings more than two decades of experience in medical oncology and clinical research to the region, with significant expertise in gastrointestinal cancer, innovative clinical trials and cancer drug development.

He will play a major role in enhancing clinical investigations into new cancer treatments for patients and growing Baptist MD Anderson’s cancer medicine team, focusing on medical oncology, hematology, supportive and palliative care, and medical specialties to help meet the needs of the local community and beyond. His expertise in clinical research trials and developing Phase I therapies will bring significant support and new opportunities for patients seeking novel or experimental cancer treatments.



Gregg Kern

GreenPointe Developers promotes Kern to division manager

GreenPointe Developers has promoted Gregg Kern to division manager in the North Florida Region.

In his new role, Kern directly oversees the development team members as well as the daily operations of his

North Florida division.

Since 2021, Kern has served as GreenPointe’s vice president of development for Northeast Florida communities. He joined the company in 2013 as construction manager. His previous professional experience in both residential and commercial construction as well as his expertise in real estate development has proven invaluable to the GreenPointe team’s success.

Kern earned a master’s degree in business administration focused on finance, a bachelor’s degree in building construction management and an associate’s degree in business from the University of North Florida.



MacKenzie Kelvington

Players by the Sea adds two

Players by the Sea recently welcomed two new staff members to its team, signaling the organization’s commitment to growth as it prepares for its 60th anniversary season. These new staff members are MacKenzie Kelvington, marketing manager, and Brandon Hines, box office coordinator.



Brandon Hines

Before coming to Players by the Sea, Kelvington worked in community outreach, guest services and public relations. Within her role as the marketing manager, she will oversee all marketing and advertising activities, including planning, budgeting and executing all engagement activities.

Hines also returns “home” to Players by the Sea from working in customer service and sales. His responsibilities include daily operations of the box office and volunteer initiatives.



Daryl Atkins

Atkins promoted to managing broker

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty has promoted Realtor Daryl Atkins to managing broker of the company’s Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office. Atkins replaces Holly Hayes, who will remain at the company as a broker associate in the Ponte

Vedra/Nocatee office.

Atkins has worked as a Realtor for nearly 25 years. During his career, he has earned numerous top producing awards and designations.

Prior to his real estate career, Atkins worked in marketing and advertising for Omnicom, a leading provider of brand and advertising services headquartered in New York City. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Indiana University.

Atkins is a member of the Knights of Columbus and volunteers with Special Olympics Florida and the Make a Wish Foundation of Central and Northern Florida.

The Ponte Vedra Nocatee office is located at 333 Village Main St., Suite 670. The telephone number is 904-285-1800.

For more information about Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, go to FloridaNet-

workRealty.com or FLNetworkRealty.com.

Moore joins real estate firm

Isabel Moore has joined Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. With a strong background in business management and entrepreneurship, and a passion for connecting with people, Moore brings a fresh perspective and unparalleled enthusiasm to her role within the agency.

A graduate of the University of South Carolina with a bachelor’s degree in business management and entrepreneurship, Moore’s expertise in fostering relationships and creating value is evident in her successful career. Currently employed by the PGA Tour, Moore has honed her skills in sponsor relations while demonstrating a commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction.

You can contact Moore at 904-400-4132 and Isabel.Moore@floridanetworkrealty.com or IMoore.floridanetworkrealty.com.

The Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office, located at 333 Village Main St., Suite 670, Ponte Vedra Beach, is managed by Daryl Atkins, who can be reached at 904-285-1800, Daryl.Atkins@FloridaNetworkRealty.com, and floridanetworkrealtycareers.com.



Seth Kirschner

Kirschner joins real estate company

Realtor and investment property expert Seth Kirschner has returned to Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty. With a wealth of experience in real estate investment and a deep understanding of the market, Kirschner’s bilingual capabilities and familial ties to

Colombia bring a unique perspective to his role within the agency.

Having established himself as a trusted adviser and successful entrepreneur in the real estate industry, Kirschner brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his clients. With years of experience both as an investment property owner and business owner, Kirschner is well-equipped to guide his clients through every step of their real estate journey.

You can contact him at 904-826-9806 and Seth.Kirschner@floridanetworkrealty.com or SKirschner.floridanetworkrealty.com.

The Ponte Vedra/Nocatee office, located at 333 Village Main St., Suite 670, Ponte Vedra Beach, is managed by Daryl Atkins, who can be reached at 904-285-1800, Daryl.Atkins@FloridaNetworkRealty.com, and floridanetworkrealtycareers.com.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

NEFBA installs Perkins as 80th president

The Northeast Florida Builders Association (NEFBA) installed its 2024 executive officers and board members Jan. 25. Meagan Perkins of Hart Resources will serve as the 80th president of the association for the coming year. Perkins was presented with the gavel, representing NEFBA’s highest office of leadership, by her father and 1996 NEFBA Past President Curtis Hart.

“The legacy of NEFBA is built on

80 years of industry leadership. This association has provided support and a collective voice for the home-building industry in Northeast Florida,” Perkins said. “I am humbly honored to serve as president for the coming year and look forward to working with our board and members to extend NEFBA’s contribution to the community.”

During the evening, officers and boards of directors were sworn in for

the Custom Builders & Remodelers Council, Professional Women in Building, Sales and Marketing Council and Young Professional Group. NEFBA’s regional councils — Clay, Nassau and St. Johns Builders councils — held separate installations during the holiday season.

“Every president must devote a tremendous amount of time and energy to the duties of the position, and it seems

that with every passing year these responsibilities grow,” said NEFBA Executive Officer Jessie Spradley. “Our outgoing President Chris Wood had an amazing year, growing our association’s membership to fourth in the nation. I am confident that Meagan will continue forward with great leadership, and I am excited to work together to

NEFBA

Continued from 48

ensure the housing needs of Northeast Florida are met.”

The following members were honored with awards during the evening: Builder of the Year Award, Scott Brannock, Tide-water Homes; Fred King Associate Member of the Year Award, Jackie Rowland, Russell Rowland; Leadership Award, Cathy Whaley, Installed Building Products; Bill Soforenko Affordable Housing Award, Ability Housing; Ken Keuster and Bill Wilson Foundation Award, Greg Matovina, Matovina and Co.; Good Government Award, Ramon Day, Ramon Day Real Estate Company; Apprenticeship Employer of the Year Award, Matt Carlton, Carlton Construction; and Lifetime Board Membership was awarded to Doug Wenzel with Maverick Home Warranties and Insurance.

NEFAR takes part in trade mission to India

A delegation from the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) traveled to Goa, India, to attend NAR-India's 16th annual convention, NARVIGATE, and the simultaneous Industrial Estate and Warehousing Conclave in Goa from Feb. 29 to March 2.

During the last day of the convention, NEFAR 2024 President Rory Dubin signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with NAR-India.

“Members of NEFAR and other invited Realtors from the United States were on hand for our historic signing of a memorandum of understanding with NAR India,” said Dubin. “Over 700 attendees at the NARVIGATE 2024 Conference and trade show witnessed the onstage signing between the two Realtor associations, which promised to be a starting point for increased real estate activity between Northeast Florida and India. This was an exciting step for NEFAR as it was both our association's first MOU signing and our first real estate trade mission. Vice Chairman of the 2024 NEFAR Global Business Council Christine Baranofsky stated that she hopes and plans to make a trade mission an annual proposition for NEFAR.”

The two-week trade mission was led by Dubin and Baranofsky and organized by Trisha Roy of Gainesville, a National Association of Realtors faculty instructor and the founder of Open Spaces International School of Real Estate.



Contributed photo

Pictured from left, members of the NEFAR trade mission to India, Christine Baranofsky, Ann Marie Wiggins, Rory Dubin, Sharon McNeal, Trisha Roy and Lesley Davidson, dress like the natives during a visit to Goa, India, in March.

The group left on Feb. 20 and returned to the United States on March 3.

In addition to Dubin, who is a managing broker for United Real Estate Gallery, and Baranofsky, who is a Realtor with The Legends of Real Estate, three other NEFAR members participated in the trade mission: Ann Marie Wiggins of EXIT Inspired Real Estate, Sharon McNeal of EXIT Inspired Real Estate and Lesley Davidson of Manifest Realty.

The trade mission also included real estate agents from North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Gainesville and Broward County in Florida.

“We learned a lot about how to properly do business with agents and developers in India,”

said Dubin, adding that the group observed several large development projects by Smart World Developers. One DXP by Smart World will be the first development on the Dwarta Expressway, which is expected to cut the amount of time in half that it takes to travel from Delhi to other locations, he said.

The group also visited Trump Towers, a large double tower that was under construction. “The finished condo project will be a golf-themed modern condominium project,” Dubin said.

The NEFAR delegation, which set up a booth showcasing Jacksonville at the EXPO, was identified as “international delegates,” at both the NARVIGATE Conference and the Industrial Estate and Warehousing Conclave, which represents India's commercial sector. The walls of NEFAR's booth depicted Jacksonville's colorful downtown skyline as seen near the St. Johns River and several signs identifying the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors. During the EXPO, the five NEFAR Realtors distributed brochures about NEFAR's Global Business Council, business cards, REBI (Real Estate Business Institute) course programs for foreign countries.

“We were a highlight of about 700 attendees,” Dubin said.

During the conference, NAR-India also signed an MOU with a delegation from Thailand. Realtors from the Chicago area also attended the conference.

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In the Arts

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Contributed photos



St. Augustine Plein Air Paint Out returns April 24-28

Artists and art aficionados are invited to experience the 8th Annual St. Augustine Plein Air Paint Out, hosted by the St. Augustine Art Association. This five-day event features an array of locations in the Nation's Oldest City. The Plein Air Paint Out begins April 24 and continues through April 28. The event's last day also features a pop-up exhibit at the St. Augustine Yacht Club.

Painting en plein air is a part of St. Augustine's rich art history. The activity, generally attributed to the Romantic landscape painter John Constable, became fundamental to French Impressionism

around the year 1860. Florida railroad magnate and Standard Oil co-founder Henry Flagler introduced plein air to St. Augustine by bringing in artists from across the country.

Artists Eric and Nikki Rakov enjoy the allure of plein air painting in St. Augustine.

"The event gives us the unique opportunity to create art in an environment that has rich history and visual treasures," they said in a prepared statement. "As we are putting paint on canvas, artists are also absorbing all the sights, sounds, smells and tactile sensations happening

in all parts of the Ancient City. We like to think that manifests itself somehow into the work."

Artists can select from a host of locations, including quaint streets like Aviles and Charlotte, historic landmarks like the Castillo de San Marcos and the Peña-Peck House, and coastal beaches on Anastasia Island.

During the St. Augustine Plein Air Paint Out, works-in-progress and finished paintings can be stored, viewed and purchased online and in-gallery at the Plein Air Wet Room. Artists may select one work for display at the Plein Air Pop-Up

Exhibit at the St. Augustine Yacht Club on April 28. Submissions will be judged in-person for awards, with Best in Show winning \$1,000.

Artists must be 18 years or older to join the St. Augustine Plein Art Paint Out. Registration is \$55 for association members and \$80 for nonmembers. For more event information or to register, go to staaa.org/plein-air-paint-out.

The Plein Art Paint Out is partially-funded by grants from the St. Johns Cultural Council, St. Johns County Tourist Development Council, and Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

Artist to release new oil painting series

Some might say the waterways, marshes and narrow paths that lead to the beaches of St. Augustine are a bit magical, evoking a calm serenity that is as unique as the little town that harbors them. And that's exactly what Jenna Alexander captures in her latest oil painting series, "Saint Augustine Seascapes."

The series includes 20 oil paintings, on canvas or paper, depicting natural landscapes that are familiar and well-loved by locals and old city lovers alike — such as Salt Run, Matanzas, 1st Street and 6th Street — and all at various times of day, from the rising and setting sun at dawn and dusk, to the moody midday heat, to the gloomy humidity of a cloudy day.

The series wasn't even a series at first, Alexander admits.

"I was asked to do a commission of a marsh scene, and then I fell in love with the process and therapeutic nature," she explained. "This series has helped me through some personal growth over the past six months — providing solace and strength that I was missing. I've never painted anything quite like this series."

The series will be released and available to purchase at the Secret Garden Market on April 6, hosted by Sunday Gathering Table and Jenna Alexander Studio at 73 San Marco Ave. in downtown St. Augustine. (Rain date is April 13.) Original paintings range from \$350 to \$9,000, and prints and notecards will also be available for purchase.

The market will be held from 5 to 9 p.m. and admission is free.

A special private shopping experience will be held from 4 to 5 p.m., and tickets cost \$25 (and include a tote bag). Private shopping guarantees a crowd-free and no-line experience, first dibs on select goods and early

access to Alexander's "Saint Augustine Seascapes" series. Tickets are non-refundable. Admission is free to kids younger than 12, and dogs are welcome. To shop early, purchase tickets at jenna-alexander.com. (Number of tickets limited.)



Contributed photo

Artist Jenna Alexander with some of the paintings in her new series.

Young ballet dancers admitted to prestigious summer intensives

A group of dancers from Ponte Vedra Ballet & Dance Company have earned admission into highly competitive and esteemed ballet summer intensives across the United States.

Ranging in age from 9 to 18, these talented young dancers have distinguished themselves among thousands of applicants, securing placements in some of the most renowned ballet programs in the nation. From coast to coast, they will be immersing themselves in rigorous training, mastering their technique and enriching their artistry under the guidance of esteemed instructors.

“This achievement is a testament to the dedication, passion and exceptional talent of our students,” said Dawn Wolf, artistic and executive director of Ponte Vedra Ballet & Dance Company. “We are immensely proud of their accomplishments and partial scholarships received for several of these programs. We are all excited to watch their continued progression.”

The dancers have been invited to partici-



Contributed photo

Pictured from left, top row: Alexandra Wright, Angelique Pregent, Alexandria Fonville, Alexandra Sala and Valentina Sala, Brooke Hughes; bottom row: Asha Wandell, Sarah Crownover, Margaret Ivantsov, Jessi Conk and Kinsey Stover.

pate in John Cranko School; Joffrey Ballet, Chicago; Next Generation Ballet, Tampa; Joffrey Ballet, NYC; Orlando Ballet; Bolshoi Ballet; Sarasota Ballet; Philadelphia

Ballet; Atlanta Ballet; Ballet Met; Cincinnati Ballet; Oklahoma City Ballet; Sacramento Ballet; Nashville Ballet; Milwaukee Ballet; Bolshoi Ballet (wait list); New World

School of the Arts.

To celebrate their success and showcase their talents, Ponte Vedra Ballet & Dance Company will host a community showcase at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, March 23, at the dance company's Black Box theater, located at 886 A1A North Suite 5, Ponte Vedra Beach. This event promises an enchanting display of grace, precision and artistry, featuring contemporary and classical, flamenco performances by the talented young dancers who have earned a place in prestigious summer intensives and PV Ballet's Fuse Elite Dance Team.

Tickets for the March 23 community showcase are available for purchase online at pvballet.com in the “proshop” and will also be available at the door for \$10 each. Seating is limited, so be sure to secure your tickets early and support your local dancers.

For more information about Ponte Vedra Ballet & Dance Company and its upcoming events, go to pvballet.com or email contact@pvballet.com.

Count Basie Orchestra to headline festival

St. Augustine's Romanza Festival of Music and The Arts and the St. Johns Cultural Council have partnered to present The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra during the 2024 Romanza event. The concert will be held at 4 p.m. May 12 at Flagler College's Lewis Auditorium, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine. The orchestra received a 2024 Grammy Award for Best Large Ensemble Jazz Album, “Basie Swings the Blues.”

The 16- to 18-piece big band is one of the most prominent jazz groups from the swing era with 18 Grammy Awards and performances at major jazz festivals and concert halls throughout the world. Founded by William James “Count” Basie in 1935, the band continues under the direction of trumpeter Scotty Barnhart. Barnhart is a Florida A&M University graduate and professor of jazz trumpet at Florida State University.

The concert will also feature vocalist Carmen Bradford, considered to be one of jazz music's most diverse and inspiring

vocal stylists. In addition to performing with Count Basie himself, Bradford has collaborated with George Benson, Benny Carter, John Mills and many other noted musicians.

Early ticket pricing, available during March, includes \$10 off each purchase with the promo code Romanza. With the discount, ticket prices range from \$30 to \$70. To purchase tickets and for more information, go to RomanzaFestival.com.



Contributed photo

The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra with vocalist Carmen Bradford.

Free piano concert Friday

The Beaches Fine Arts Series will present award-winning pianist Llewellyn Sánchez-Werner in a free concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 22, at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Jacksonville Beach.

Doors open at 6:45 p.m. and seating is first come, first served. A reception follows with photographic art exhibit by Mary Atwood.

Sánchez-Werner was the winner of the 2022 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition and has been

distinguished as Gilmore Young Artist, an honor awarded to the most promising American pianists of the new generation.

He has been featured on NPR, PBS, CNN International, the Wall Street Journal and WDR-Arte.

He performed at the Kennedy Center and the White House for presidents Obama and Biden.

For further information, call 904-270-1771 or go to beachesfinearts.org.

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Sports



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Scottie Scheffler walks between holes.



Scottie Scheffler finishes his round Sunday.

Scheffler is first repeat champ in 50 years of THE PLAYERS

By Kathy Bissell

Wow. THE PLAYERS was a nail biter. A popcorn, pretzel, Chex Mix or veggie chomper.

Scottie Scheffler was trying to become the first PLAYERS champ to defend his title. Meanwhile, Xander Schauffele wanted to add another marquis tournament to his victory total. But that's not the way it began.

It started with Schauffele one ahead of Wyndham Clark, everyone anticipating that Clark would play the same way he did at last year's U.S. Open. The two traded shots as the front nine got underway. For the first hour, it definitely looked like the winner would come from the final group.

But everything changed when Scheffler holed out at the 4th. It was a sign. If you know anything about golf at all, you know this is right. Scheffler had reared his championship head. He was not giving up. With visible KT tape peeking out from under the collar of his golf shirt, to patch up his injured neck, Scheffler did miraculous Scheffler-like things. He started making birdies, and he didn't stop. He was not going down without a fight. It was a case of beware the injured golfer.

After the hole-out, Scheffler birdied the 5th and the 8th and 9th. By the time he got to the 9th hole, he was 5-under for



Scottie Scheffler holds his trophy and waves to the fans.

Photos by Craig O'Neal

the day. He was at 17-under, but he had not taken the lead.

That still belonged to Xander Schauffele who was one shot better at 18-under.

Meanwhile, Clark battled, but when he made bogey at the 10th and then the 14th, it looked like it was not his day. Appearances were deceiving.

Brian Harman passed Clark, making three birdies in a row to end the front side, and he then added birdies on the two par 5s, the 11th and 16th on the back nine.

Schauffele started struggling in the middle of the back nine. After a birdie at the 12th, he made two bogeys at the 14th and 15th. By the time he reached the 16th tee, he was at 18-under, and Scheffler had finished his round at 20-under par. Could Schauffele make two birdies on the last three holes to force a playoff? Or was Scheffler, the man seemingly made of indestructible stuff, going to walk away with another PLAYERS title? Would he become the first player in 50 years to go back-to-back at THE PLAYERS?

Schauffele reached the edge of the 16th green in two and lagged his ball to assure a score of 19-under par, tied with Brian Harman who had made a big back-nine charge. But both were still one shot

SCHEFFLER continues on Page 53



Players contend with the Island Green.



Scottie Scheffler tees off at the 18th hole.

Scheffler

Continued from 52

short of Scheffler.

There were only two holes remaining. Harman and Schauffele each needed one birdie to tie and force a playoff. Clark needed to become Clark Kent, step into the hospitality structure and change into a Superman outfit to get a hole-in-one at 17 or birdies at both remaining holes. He hit a shot at 17 that landed 4 feet 5 inches. When he made the putt to tie Schauffele and Harmon, the crowd went

crazy. He still needed one more.

Then, it was Schauffele's turn at 17, and he, too, delivered. His shot landed 6 feet 8 inches from the pin. When he struck his putt, the moan from the crowd told the story. He shook his head.

Schauffele and Clark went to the 18th hole, each needing one to tie Scheffler and force a playoff. Meanwhile, Harman finished his round, missing his birdie chance to tie the lead.

The final two weren't done yet.

Clark, who had birdied the 16th and 17th, hit his approach shot at the final hole to 17 feet, while Schauffele's was

a monster 61 feet. Neither were good birdie opportunities, particularly not Schauffele's. But a chance is a chance.

In the end, Schauffele's putt ran by on the right. Clark's made one of the rudest lip outs ever seen in golf. The ball was halfway in the hole and spun out. Neither could make birdie, handing the victory to Scheffler.

"I was hoping to be in this position," Scheffler said after the exhausting afternoon. "I put up a good fight for four days. That's really all there was."

He credited his caddie, Ted Scott, for keeping his head in the right place.

"We had a great finish yesterday, and then got off to a slow start today, but then the hole-out on 4 kind of propelled us a little bit," Scheffler continued. "I'm a pretty competitive guy, and I didn't want to give up in the tournament. I did what I could to hang around until my neck got better. Today, it felt really good."

Good? It must have been great.

So, is Scottie Scheffler made from Kevlar? Is he tungsten? Stainless steel? Diamond-coated?

For certain, he's the first person ever to repeat as champion in the 50 years of THE PLAYERS.

Photos by Craig O'Neal



Scottie Scheffler has done what no golfer has done before: He won THE PLAYERS two times in a row.



Scottie Scheffler crosses the green accepting congratulations along the way.



Scottie Scheffler smiles as he strolls by.

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ACROSS

1. Small Eurasian deer
4. Irish county
10. A major division of geological time
11. Broadway actor Lane
12. Canadian province (abbr.)
14. Human gene
15. Two
16. A famous one is blue
18. Utter repeatedly
22. Ring-shaped objects
23. Spoils
24. Occurs
26. Commercial
27. Near
28. Products you may need
30. Pledge thrown down as a challenge
31. TV network
34. Silk or cotton garments
36. Soviet Socialist Republics
37. Retired American football coach Dean
39. Hot dish
40. A type of gin
41. Atomic #84
42. Sawhorse
48. About ground
50. Medicine man
51. Seedless raisin
52. Capital of Albania
53. Appendage
54. OJ trial judge
55. By the way (abbr.)
56. Bicycle parts
58. Barbie's friend
59. Moved one's neck to see
60. Commercials

DOWN

4. Influential world body
5. Engravers
6. Declared as fact
7. One who steals
8. Jewelry
9. Hospital employee (abbr.)
12. Nonsense (slang)
13. Town in Galilee
17. Value
19. A fake name
20. Sheep in their second year
21. Town in Surrey, England
25. Appropriate for a particular time of year
29. Creative works
31. Recesses

32. W. Pacific island group
33. Tolkien character
35. Ancient symbol co-opted by the Nazi party
38. Pioneer
41. Scribe
43. Painted a bright color
44. Lowest members of British nobility
45. Actress Thurman
46. Type of sugar
47. Crest of a hill
49. N. American people of British Columbia
56. Device
57. The Mount Rushmore State

SUDOKU

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


Level: Beginner

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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!

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1. Make up for
2. Baltimore ballplayer
3. Salary



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