Your Community Voice for 50 Years

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Staying Healthy: Mentally & Physically Pages 7-9

Business Weekly



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EDITOR'S NOTES

What's This?: Because of the COVID-19 crisis and the current closure of the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, the Recorder is suspending the "Do you know what this is?" contest until further notice.

Pets of the Week: Beacuse the St. Johns County Pet Center is closed, the Recorder's Pets of the Week feature has been temporarily suspended. The feature will return once the Pet Center reopens.

NOTES TO READERS

On our website: Visit **pontevedrarecorder.com** to get the latest closures, cancellations and updates for St. Johns County, as well as a listing of virtual events taking place around Northeast Florida.

Don't miss an issue: In case social distancing requirements get more strict, we will email you your paper. Send your email address to don@opcfla.com.

Weekly newsletter: The Recorder offers a weekly newsletter every Monday that outlines some of the top stories of the week, as well as providing access to our E-Edition and Entertainment EXTRA! To get the newsletter emailed for free, email don@opcfla.com. We'll add you to the list.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Florida started preparing for pandemic viral diseases in 2006

While no one could have predicted the full impact that the COVID 19 virus has created and even one life lost is tragic, Florida has done a good job in preparing for this Pandemic.

In February 2006, as the Chief Medical Officer of the Florida Army National Guard, I participated in Florida's Viral Pandemic Summit in Tallahassee under then Gov. Jeb Bush as we were deeply concerned about the threat of Avian Flu. I believe that Florida was the first or one the first states to prepare for Pandemic illnesses.

It was the first time that I heard the term "social distancing" being used in modern times. Plans were made for stockpiling anticipated supplies, hospital resources were inventoried, and the National Guard offered their full support. The Florida Guard is now running at least three testing sites including TIAA Bank Field in Jacksonville.

President Donald Trump and Gov. Ron De-Santis have responded in an excellent manner to work toward opening areas in a relative safe manner. You cannot legislate a virus and lives will still be threatened until herd immunity (when at least 30% to 40% of the population develops antibodies to this specific coronavirus) is reached. This may take over a year if a vaccine is needed to reach that level. Test results are now returning within 24 hours which will help in diagnosis and managing those needing isolation.

Once antibody testing becomes commercially available in a few months, we may know of the full extent of the current spread. Citizens will still need to use reasonable caution and weigh their risks especially the elderly and those with underlying health problems who are at risk for severe infection. We take risks every day when swimming, driving, flying or even crossing the street. The more we as a population understand communicable diseases, the sooner we can return to our usual lives.

We still should not change our lives to prevent getting the disease, we should assume we are already caring the virus and change our lives to prevent infecting others.

Ronald "Doc" Renuart, DO

Physician, (Ret.) Colonel

Dr. Ronald J Renuart Sr, DO is a doctor primarily located in Ponte Vedra Beach. His specialties include Family Medicine and Internal Medicine.



Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.



Surfs up! County eases restrictions, reopens beaches on limited basis

By Don Coble

Unlike everyone else, Richard and Mary Ann Earnst weren't dressed for the beach Tuesday. Their walk near Mickler's Landing was more celebratory than catharsis.

We live 5 miles from here in Nocatee, and this is the first time we've been to this beach," Richard said has hundreds enjoyed a spectacular morning of sun, sand and seaside freedom. "It's always too crowded here. It's hard to get a parking spot. It's always crowded."

Last Tuesday was no different. Four days after St. Johns County officials reopened the beaches with restrictions to

protect everyone from COVID-19, hundreds enjoyed a brief escape from state-ordered confinement to stretch their muscles and smell the salty air.

For the Earnsts, however, it was a perfect setting to celebrate their 46th wedding anniversary. While others wore bathing suits, sunglasses and hats, the Earnsts were dressed for their special occasion.

'We decided to go to the beach for our anniversary," Mary Ann said. "It was a nice way to spend the morning."

The beaches — all 42 miles of them — along with its



Nocatee residents Mary Ann and Richard Earnst enjoy Mickler's Beach for the first time on Tuesday.

BEACHES continues on **Page 4**







COLLECTION



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Lovely lakefront home in Fleming Island Plantation. This recently updated home offers an open floor plan with incredible pool to lake views, 3 beds, a separate office, 3 full baths, an updated kitchen, separate breakfast room, large great room, formal dining room, new roof, & 3-car garage. MLS 1047107

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TWENTY MILE @ NOCATEE \$679,900

Sought-after Brooke model on oversized corner lot. This home offers 5 beds, 3.5 baths, soaring ceilings, floor-to-ceiling bay windows, a gourmet kitchen with upgraded granite, 5-burner gas cooktop, & custom sub-zero fridge, formal dining room, fenced backyard with room for a pool, & large covered lanai. MLS 1044348

Victoria Ji | 904.612.9767 VictoriaJi@WatsonRealtyCorp.com



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4 COMMUNITY NEWS

Ponte Vedra Recorder · April 23, 2020

Suspect suffers 'traumatic' wounds in shootout with SJCSO in Sawgrass Publix parking lot

Shoppers told to 'shelter in place' during incident

By Amber Lake

St. Johns County Sheriff's office is contending with an active crime scene after a shooting that occurred at approximately 12:40 p.m. at the Publix in Sawgrass Village in Ponte Vedra Beach. The shooting involved multiple officers and an armed suspect in the parking lot of the grocery store. Nearby pedestrians were asked to shelter in the store until the suspect was apprehended at approximately 2 p.m.

According to a press briefing at 2:30 p.m. today, Sheriff David Shoar announced no officers were injured during the incident and the suspect was flown to UF Health Jacksonville. Shoar described the incident as "the best possible outcome," in terms of safety for bystanders and officers.

The suspect has yet to be named, however, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office spokesman Chuck Mulligan said the shooting started after a black, four-door Toyota Tundra was discovered by deputies, which had been reported stolen in Lewistown, Pennsylvania.

"(The stolen vehicle was found) and the shooting occurred immediately,"



Photo by Susan Griffin

St. Johns County Sheriff's officers shut down the area around Sawgrass Village after a shooting occurred at the parking lot of the Publix Super Market.

Mulligan said. "After (SJSO) found the car and (the suspect) stepped out with a 12-gauge shotgun and begun firing."

According to Mulligan, the standoff lasted a little over an hour, ending with the deputies issuing tear gas into the vehicle. The suspect was then discovered to have a "traumatic" gunshot wound, although it is unclear whether it was inflicted by the St. Johns County Sheriff's

office or the suspect himself.

During the press briefing outside the scene, Shoar announced the shelter in place was lifted and the parking lot is now an active crime scene. While the SJSO believes it may have the name of the suspect, it has yet to release the information.

Go to pontevedrarecorder.com for the latest updates on this developing story.

Beaches

Continued from 3

parking lots, were reopened from 6 a.m. to noon. The county restricted use to activity, meaning beachgoers had to be walking, running, surfing, swimming or fishing. Picnics and beach blankets were prohibited. And most important, everyone was required to adhere to Gov. Ron DeSantis' executive order to practice social distancing.

Although the beaches were crowded, most followed the rules, said a St. Johns County Sheriff's Office deputy assigned to the park.

"It's been busy here since 9 [a.m.]," he said. "Cars going up and down the aisles looking for a parking spot is normal. People seem to be compliant. They're keeping their distance. It's a little tougher when it gets to noon. By the time some people find a parking spot, it's time to go."

A large part of the crowd were residents walking their dogs and local fishermen working the surf. There were so many poles in the water north of Mickler's on Tuesday, it looked like towers from a convention of amateur radio operators.

"This is the most fishing and dog-walkers I've seen here in 15 years," the sheriff's deputy said.

Parking lots for the beaches were closed on March 23 after county and health officials became concerned with the number of beachgoers who weren't practicing social distancing. Officials then closed the beaches on March 28 after a dramatic influx of residents from Nassau and Duval counties to the north and Flagler Beach to the south were closed, prompting them to join revelers on spring break and local residents clogged the official entry ways onto the beach.

The St. Johns County Commission and Administrator Hunter Conrad agreed on April 14 to extend its declaration of emergency — and to keep the beaches closed.

That all changed on April 17 — shortly after the Duval



Photo by Don Coble

Beachgoers enjoy the water at Mickler's Beach on Tuesday.

County announced a limited re-opening of its beaches.

"Our residents have shown extreme grace, measure, and personal responsibility throughout this pandemic, and our trend is beginning to flat line and has been doing so for nearly two weeks," Conrad said. "We also know this not over and we are urging all who use the beach to follow the restrictions in place. Our hope is that this becomes a great mental health release for so many and becomes the first step of many in the coming weeks and months in our return to normal life."

OBITUARIES

Ken L. Murray

"Many people can play the notes; but few can stir the soul." Ken stirred the souls of all those who knew him.

Ken L. Murray passed away peace-



Ken L. Murray

fully on April 2, 2020 at the Mc-Graw Community Hospice Center with Vicky, his loving wife of 53 years, and his precious daughter Lisa by his side. His adoring

grandsons Max and Mason had said their goodbyes to him.

Ken put up a valiant fight against Alzheimer's and Dementia over the last year. He tried so hard to continue on as if life were normal – always trying to please his family.

Ken is survived by his wife Victoria; his daughter Lisa Whitaker; grandsons Max and Mason Whitaker; sisters Nancy (Paul) Rochester, Gloria (Lewis) Morrissey; brother-in-law Bill Bartley and many nieces and nephews. His father and mother, Don and Valera Murray; his son-in-law Mike Whitaker and sister-in-law Sally Bartley preceded Ken in death.

Ken and Vicky grew up in East Lansing, MI, graduated from MSU and moved to Colorado in the early 70's. Ken ran in the very first iconic BolderBoulder Marathon and skied most black diamond runs from Aspen to Boulder. In the 90's they moved to Jacksonville Beach, FL. Ken's real estate career included helping to establish Hidden Hills Country Club and Cimarrone Golf and Country Club into the unique neighborhoods they are today.

Ken and his dog became a fixture on 1st Street where they would just "hang out". He loved music and concerts (Rolling Stones, Eagles); if he could hear music, he would be dancing!

Everything Ken did in his life, he did with patience and kindness.

Due to the Coronavirus restrictions, a Celebration of Ken's Life will be held at a later date. If you would like to offer a donation in honor of Ken, please do so to either Love Me True Rescue in PVB (www.lovemetru-erescue.com) or Community Hospice of NE FL McGraw Center (https://www.communityhospice.com/give/). Please visit his Tribute online at www.quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home.



OBITUARIES continues on **Page 6**

Ponte Vedra Recorder · April 23, 2020 ONE OF US 5

Beau Beech is still shooting 3-pointers. But instead of a scoring for the Hamburg Towers of the German Basketball Bundesliga League, the former Ponte Vedra High standout and the second-leading all-time scorer at the University of North Florida, can only get his shots at his parents' house. The worldwide shutdown of all professional sports leagues for the COVID-19 pandemic not only forced an unexpected vacation for the 6-foot-7 small forward, it created a lot of questions about his young career.

Beau Beech

As told to Don Coble

What have you been doing since your league shut down?

I'm lucky to still be working out every day. I have a basketball court in the front yard. That's nice. I'm putting some shots up. I've got some body weights. I grabbed a couple weights from the high school. Thanks to my dad for that. I'm just hanging out. My sister just bought a house with her fiancé, so we're doing some remodeling on the house during the week. That's the name of the game right now.

How did people in Germany handle the quick and explosive nature of the coronavirus?

I never expected this to happen. Our team didn't expect this to happen. Our owner, our [general manager], our coach, nobody. Nobody saw this coming. And it happened in a blink of the eye, too. That probably was the most-surprising part of it all was how quickly it happened. Basically, it went from a normal day to the next day everything was shut down.

How did you team handle COVID-19?

I stayed in Hamburg for two weeks as part of our quarantine once they told us our league was shut down with the expectation we were going to play after two weeks. I was hopeful that was going to happen. That was March 10 or 11 they told us, something like that. We were hopeful by April 1 we'd be playing again. No big deal. As things went on, it got bleaker and bleaker. I don't have any confidence the season will pick back up for us because there's so many little things outside basketball that have to be figured out. Across the world, the NBA, the NFL, Major League Baseball, everywhere. There are so many minor details. This guy's contract, that guy's contract. Logistically, how do we get to places? What are we doing with fans? There are so many things out side of the game. There's so much more to the sport than just basketball.

How has this affected you personally and professionally?

Sports is my life. You realize just how little sports means when something like this is going on. Your town, your city, your state, your country, your world, it's better to be safe. But I want to play again. I'd play tomorrow. But we have to be smart. But for now, sit out, stay safe, stay away.

Are you concerned these postponements and uncertainty will keep you from achieving your goals in basketball?

It's unfortunate in my career that this happened at this time. I thought I was playing a pretty good season. I was looking at hopefully getting back to the whole NBA offseason league, doing some workouts at camps, trying to get on a summer league roster to see where that takes me. I wanted to try to get back to my rookie year when I went to training camp with Brooklyn. That was kind of the goal this summer. All of that's put on hold. Now I can't even predict if they'll even have one [summer league]. Is it going to be worth it to put in the time? There will be a time where you have to go make money. You can't wait, wait, wait. I want to play. I don't want to sit out.



Photo provided by Beau Beech

Are you still shooting 3 pointers in your front yard?

That's what I do. That's my calling card. That's why I get paid. Know your game.

How does he German league compare to the NBA?

It's more like the college game if you're comparing professional league to professional league. Defensively,

it's very physical. It's almost like watching late '90s NBA basketball. Guys are athletics. Guys play a modern style. The game is a little bit fast. Shooting a lot of 3s. Skilled players. But they're not dumping it in the post and letting this guy take all the shots. Defensively, it's brutal out there. It's very physical. Once you're out there, you really see the difference.

National Hurricane Center offering webinars for students

With all of us learning and working from home, the National Hurricane Center will be conducting webinars about hur-

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Friday's webinar will start at 11 a.m. To register, visit attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4091912094002447372.

Obituaries

Continued from 4

Robert "Bob" J. Kinz

Robert "Bob" J. Kinz, 82, died April 11, 2020. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Lestina C. Kaliali

Lestina C. Kalali, 76, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died April 15, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com (904) 249-1100.



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From the actions your local government is taking, to lists of local stores that are delivering and tips on what to do while you're at home, the Ponte Vedra Recorder is committed to bringing you the news you need, when you need it.

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

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STAYING HEALTHY: MENTALLY & PHYSICALLY

Ways to combat pandemic stress



Dr. Erika Hamer **Guest Columnist**

To say we live in stressful times is really an understatement. While every generation thinks theirs is the best of times and worst of times, the current situation of life under a global pandemic is truly unique. Even the global flu pandemic from more than 100 years ago — despite its devastating toll of 50 million dead - can't really compare to today's situation, particularly when we are hyper aware of all that is happening in the world thanks to technology. The

current pandemic is not only a medical crisis but an economic and social crisis as well — all combining to increase our daily stress to truly unhealthy levels.

First let's remember that certain kinds of stress can be a good thing. Mechanical stress, such as exercise, causes your muscles and bones to become stronger and your nerve system to become smarter. Taking on a new assignment at work or taking a challenging class in school may be stressful, but the effort involved in achieving a successful result will cause you to grow and develop in ways that you might not have

But chronic, ongoing physical and mental stress, the kind that is affecting us now on a daily basis, is not good for us. Chronic stress causes real psychological and physical problems. People undergoing chronic stress may develop anxiety, which if not managed effectively may lead to depression. Chronic stress may lead to a variety of disorders and diseases, including back pain, fibromyalgia, headaches, chest pain, shortness of breath, arthritis, inflammatory conditions such as Crohn's disease, gastrointestinal problems such as peptic ulcer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and even heart attacks and stroke. Chronic anxiety can lead to persistently elevated levels of adrenaline which in turn can cause a person to always anticipate the worst, to have ongoing feelings of dread, to be constantly irritable and tense, and to experience panic attacks.

We all know the consequences of living with too much stress. But the stress of everyone at home at the same time, trying to balance work, virtual schooling and family life doesn't seem to have an end in sight anytime soon. So, how

In my own life, I am balancing working in my medical practice with virtual schooling a kindergartner, tag teaming child care with my husband who is also working outside the home, and trying to maintain a semblance of normal family life for the sake of my 2-year-old. I am sure you all experiencing similar situations — maybe both parents are home working and you are also trying to supervise the learning of children at a variety of grade levels. Here are some strategies that have helped our family and may help yours:

Embrace the Routine – Even though your normal routine may have been turned upside down during this stay-athome order, try to maintain that normal routine as much as possible. We are all creatures of habit and most of us find a great deal of comfort in maintaining a steady routine. Even with everyone at home, try getting up at the same time and going to bed at the same time because these routines can really help maintain some sense of balance. And be sure to get enough rest — during times of stress, we may not sleep as well and we all need our rest to be as patient and as adapt-



able as we need to be during this time.

We also need routine when it comes to work/school hours and regular meal times for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Setting some boundaries around "work time" and "school time" as well as "meal time" is a good way to ensure you leave room in your daily schedule for individual quiet activities or group time spent as a family engaging in something fun.

Eat Clean – Try to avoid over reliance on "comfort food" during this time — significantly reducing one's intake of simple carbohydrates — soda, muffins, cookies, cake, fast food, and even juice — will often have a substantial impact on reducing stress by limiting the spikes in blood sugar these foods typically bring. In addition, ensuring at least five servings of fresh fruits and vegetables every day will also provide great benefit. With your children home all day and you trying to work — it may be hard to monitor their snacks, so try to devise a system where you portion out their snacks for the day and then keep the rest hidden for another time. Adults need to watch caffeine and alcohol intake as well - overuse will create more stress and eventually outweigh the pleasure they bring in the short term.

Move, Stretch, Listen to Music - With everyone working from home it is very likely that you are not all working in ergonomically correct environments. Using your laptop at the kitchen table while sitting on a wooden chair may be your only option but I am sure you are also well aware of its consequences such as an increase in back pain or more frequent headaches. The same goes for your kids who may be doing their online lessons on a couch or table or even the floor. As much as possible schedule regular breaks to get up and move — even just to walk around the house or touch your toes or march in place for five minutes and really help ease the tension in tight muscles. At the end of the work/ school day, get outside, go for a walk or play in the yard anything to get the circulation moving to counteract the stiffness that comes from sitting and staring at a screen all day.

Music is also a great way to destress and studies have shown that it can actually relieve pain in adults as well as children. Scientists have studied this and now believe music reduces pain by competing with the same sensory pathways, and this may allow music listeners to divert their focus from pain and engage in more pleasurable stimuli like music. It appears music impacts the anterior cingulate cortex — a part of the brain involved in registering physical pain. This area also influences the autonomic nervous system, which explains why music study participants also saw decreases in their blood pressure and heart rate.

Boost Your Immune System – Stress can have a very negative impact on the immune system and a healthy immune system guards against disease. Increasing

What diabetics need to know about cataracts and other vision problems



McGregor N. Lott, M.D. Florida Eye Specialists

Diabetes comes with an onslaught of potential complications, and high among those are eye problems. Some studies indicate that cataracts are three to four times more prevalent in patients with diabetes who are under the age of 65. In patients over 65, cataracts are twice as prevalent, accord-

ing to a study published in the National Center for Biotechnology Information. To protect your eve health, be sure to review what can make you more susceptible to diabetic eye diseases, the signs and available treatment options.

THE LINK BETWEEN DIABETES **AND CATARACTS**

The development of cataracts is the most common vision problem for diabetics. Cataracts are a clouding of the normally clear lens of the eye, and they can begin to develop in your 40s and 50s. Cataracts develop slowly and painlessly over time — in fact, in the early stages, symptoms may be so mild that you don't even realize your vision is changing. But as a person ages, cataracts grow to the point where they can get in the way of living an active, independent life.

The main reason individuals with diabetes are more likely to develop cataracts is their inability to control their glucose levels. Sugar in the blood, also known as blood glucose, is an important source of energy for cells. Having too much glucose in the blood, though, can damage small blood vessels that deliver oxygen-rich blood and remove harmful toxins. Damage to the small blood vessels in the eyes can cause a number of eye problems, the most prominent being the development of cataracts.

OTHER VISION PROBLEMS RELATED **TO DIABETES**

In addition to cataracts, there are a number of eye conditions associated with diabetes, known collectively as diabetic eye disease. These diseases include diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema and glaucoma.

Diabetic retinopathy affects the blood vessels in the light-sensitive tissue lining the back of the eye, known as the retina. Chronically high blood sugar damages the blood vessels in the retina, which causes the blood vessels to leak fluid or blood, distorting your vision. Diabetic macular edema (DME) is a consequence of diabetic retinopathy. DME occurs when the part of



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POSITIVELY Yours

Help Protect Our Seniors

During this time, please call on your elderly neighbors: offer to help, keep them connected, make sure they have access to their prescribed medications.

Hamer

Continued from 7

vitamins like A, C, B, D and minerals like zinc can have a very positive impact on immunity. We also know the importance of keeping our hands clean (soap and water is truly the best method) and respecting social distancing to stop the spread of this virus but making a concerted effort to bolster immunity during times of increased stress can be equally beneficial to staying well.

We know the lock down associated with the COVID-19 pandemic will eventually come to an end and we will

hopefully all emerge stronger as a result. Stress and anxiety, however, will always be a part of our modern life but we can limit their negative impact on our health by maintaining routines, eating clean, getting outdoors, stretching to music, putting down the screens, enjoying time with friends and family as well as being intentional about boosting immunity. Finally, seek advice from your health care provider on additional strategies for staying healthy while managing stress.

Contributed by Dr. Erika Hamer, DC, DIBCN, DIBE, Board Certified Chiropractic Neurologist and owner of Ponte Vedra Wellness Center with offices in Ponte Vedra Beach and Nocatee Town Center.

Lott

Continued from 7

the retina responsible for sharp central vision, known as the macula, swells. Among other things, you rely on your macula to read, recognize faces, and drive. About half of all people with diabetic retinopathy will develop DME.

Diabetes also nearly doubles your risk of glaucoma, a degenerative eye condition that can steal your sight before you develop noticeable symptoms. That's why early detection and screening is key for all diabetes-related vision conditions. Issues that are caught early can be treated more easily, leading to better outcomes for your vision.

SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT FOR DIABETIC EYE DISEASE

Most diabetic eye diseases present few symptoms in their early stages. Some people may experience "floating" spots, caused by bleeding from abnormal blood vessels in the retina, but these spots often clear on their own. One of the best ways to determine if diabetes is affecting your vision is to visit your eye doctor. An eye care professional can evaluate the health of your eyes and provide treatment, which may include eye drops, injections or surgery.

TIPS TO PREVENT DIABETIC EYE DISEASE

The good news is that with proper treatment and lifestyle changes, many people with diabetes are able to prevent or delay the onset of vision symptoms. The most important thing you can do is to schedule appointments for annual dilated eye exams. That way, any potential issues are caught at the very first sign. It's also helpful to maintain your blood sugar levels as close to normal as possible. Carefully manage your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Finally, call your doctor immediately if you experience any symptoms that may indicate an emergency, including holes or black spots in your vision and flashes of light.

If you have diabetes and are concerned about your eye health, don't wait any longer. Talk to your doctor to schedule a screening. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, many offices are now offering virtual appointments as well, so you can receive the eye care you need, wherever you are.

Dr. McGregor N. Lott, M.D., is an ophthalmologist at Florida Eye Specialists. For more information on Dr. Lott or to schedule a virtual appointment, visit Florida Eye Specialists.com.

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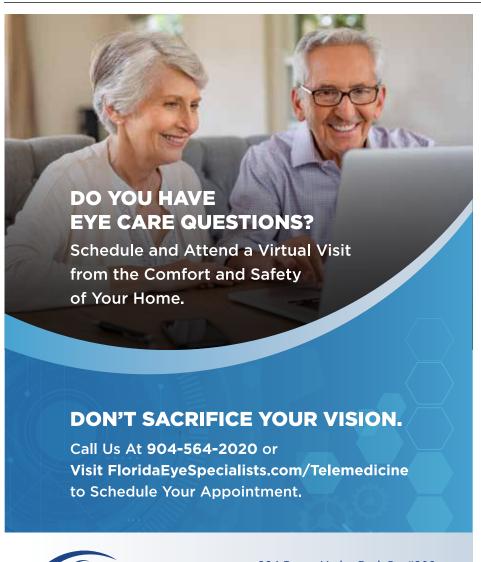
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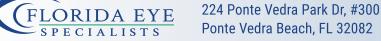
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THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020

Takeout and delivery guide:

Where and how to still eat local during the crisis

Page 14

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Gardening during COVID-19 yields more than plants

By Amber Lake

Amidst the stagnant feeling of social distancing during COVID-19, many are finding relief in the opportunity to watch something grow. Partly in thanks to the pandemic's seasonal timing, gardening hobbyists new and old are sprouting up like weeds.

Local garden centers are experiencing an influx of new customers who are looking to add some green to their interiors, straighten up their backyards and grow their

"Our foot traffic has actually gone up as well our as sales over last year," said Kevanie Counts, marketing director of Earth Works. "[Business] does seem to be more do-it-yourself projects like vegetable gardens, butterfly and perennial flower gardens. I think in a typical year folks have the weekend to get their projects done and they are limited. This year we often see the same people in day after day working through their project a step at a time."

Although garden centers are the few businesses that have remained strong during the pandemic, many have adapted additional practices like curbside pickup and online services to provide a safer environment for cautious shoppers. The centers are still open for walking through, however, as they have been deemed essential by the state.

While gardening may not seem like an "essential" activity, many are using the hobby to cope, and surprisingly, finding the health benefits aren't only physical.

The Kaiser Health Foundation recently released a report looking at how COVID-19 has impacted mental



Customers admire the flora at Home Depot's garden center in Jacksonville Beach.

health in the U.S., showing in just two weeks an increasing number of Americans reported a negative effect of their mental health regarding the pandemic, from 32% to 45% in mid to late March.

Henry David Thoreau wasn't the only one to point out the calming impact of a natural setting. A number of scientific studies have shown that nature experiences may benefit people's psychological well-being and cognitive function. Gardening may be one way to social distance while reaping those positive effects of nature on mental health and staying safely distanced.

Right now, many local garden centers are aiming at inspiring projects while facilitating planning for those

GARDENING continues on Page 11

Local spa offers members unique way to thank health care workers, first responders

By Paris Moulden

A lot of people across the country are staying home, but that doesn't mean they're relaxing. The CO-VID-19 crisis has put more stress on families, with kids out of school, and gyms and other activities closed and/or canceled.

Then, there are those who still have to work away from home and family. Essential employees like health care workers, first responders and grocery store employees. The stress on them is compounded by the threat of contracting the disease while providing valuable and life-saving services for those in the community

It was because of this Spavia, a luxury day spa, decided when it was able to open again, to pay it forward to those who meant so much during the crisis.

"For us, since we've opened, it's been really important for us to be a part of the community and to give back," said Chris Stoll, owner of Spavia located at the Nocatee Town Center in Ponte Vedra. "This seems like a prime opportunity. I've been personally inspired by the acts of

kindness we've seen and really just want to do our part."

Spavia is allowing its members to donate their points to first responders, healthcare workers or other essential employees of their choosing. The local Spavia, which has 500 members, is allowing those members to donate treatments, and Stoll and his wife Emily are matching all of the donations made. If members don't have a specific person in mind to donate to, Spavia is devising a nomination process, so the treat-

1st-quarter update on the Ponte Vedra real estate market



Lisa Barton Guest Columnist

In January of 2020, there was tremendous optimism in the real estate industry. We were confident that this was going to be a very strong year for the Ponte Vedra Beach real estate market. Inventory of available homes was down, average sale prices were up, and average days on the market were down. Economic indicators were representative of a strong financial

market. Mortgage rates were low, as was unemployment. How things have changed!

As we all know, on April 3, Gov. Ron DeSantis instituted a shelter-in-place order for the state of Florida. However, many of us had already started practicing social distancing when the St. Johns County School District asked students to transition to online classes after the mid-March spring break. When THE PLAY-ERS tournament was canceled, the threat of the virus and its economic implications became very real in

How has this news affected our local real estate market? While it's still hard to tell, a story is emerging. Overall, the first quarter was strong when compared to

- Closed sales were up 26.4% through the end of March
- New listings were up 23.4%
- The median sale price was flat, but the average sale price of sold homes was up
- In the \$1 million-plus market, there were 34 sales in 2020 compared to 23 in 2019, up 47.8%

(Source: Northeast Florida Association of Realtors) Unfortunately, there is reason to be cautious when looking at these numbers. Most of the bad news regarding Covid-19 did not reach us until mid-March. Additionally, first quarter sales were reflected contracts written in December or January (since it usually takes between 30 and 60 days to go from an agreed upon contract to closing).

When looking only at statistics from mid-March and forward, we are starting to see weaknesses in pending listings, which is a leading indicator of future sales. We're also seeing a decrease in active listings, since some sellers are choosing to take their homes off the market until the shelter-in-place orders have been lifted.

Another concern, particularly for high-end listings, is the tightening of mortgage requirements for nonconforming loans, or "jumbo" loans. Several large banking institutions announced last week they will not be issuing mortgages for jumbo loans, which are loans

Gardening

wanting to create their own backyard oasis.

"Earth Works Gardens is great place to wander among three acres of lush plants, palm trees, unique water features waterfalls, natural styled fountains, ponds, a huge selection colorful pottery and cool garden art," said Counts. "Getting outside in nature is always a healthy option. It reduces stress and give us much needed vitamin D."

According to a study from the University of Washington, interaction with nature can even lead to "a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life." A lifeline for many faced with the stress of uncertainty and isolation the pandemic has resulted in.

For those looking to take in their first long breath of fresh air, Count recommends starting a butterfly garden.

"We are ordering huge quantities of milkweed for the monarchs," Counts said. "Butterfly gardening is a great place to start. Plant hardy perennials that do well in



Customers admire the flora at Home Depot's garden center in Jacksonville Beach.

North East Florida. The results are beautiful, natural and are productive at helping our pollinators.'

As the saying goes these days, "when going gets tough, the tough get to growing."

ments can get to those in the community who have done so much. So far, the spa has received 34 donations, and have matched it for a total of 68.

Spavia offers facials, skincare, mas-

sages, body wraps, waxing and more.

"First responders and healthcare workers are under such stressful and extreme circumstances, and it may be a great stress reducer for them when this is all over,"

For more information on Spavia or info@spaviapontevedra.com.

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With the continuing spread of COVID-19 and the demand for social distancing, not to mention for the safety and health of our staff who is/are still working, we have suspended all in-kind donations (clothing, toiletries, etc.) until further notice. At this time our food supply is adequate for our current needs.

We continue to provide meals and showers to our clients experiencing homelessness here at the Beach because they would have nowhere else to go. This is why we need your help. We are temporarily accessing ordering online hygiene and clothing supplies along with meal supplies, for our clients. Your monetary donation will assure that we are able to continue our basic lifesaving services for those in need in the safest way possible during this public health crisis. You can donate through our website www.missionhousejax.org/donate-now. You may also donate items through our Amazon Wishlist._https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/ VU3PNCNZN964/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex

Whichever way you are able to give during this unprecedented time, we thank you for your support and generosity. We can only get through this together, with your help.

THANK YOU,

Lori Delgado Anderson

Executive Director

LAnderson@missionhousejax.org (904)241-6767, Ext. 114

> Checks may be mailed to: **Mission House** 800 Shetter Ave. Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

"He that plants trees loves others besides himself" - Thomas Fuller



Kathy Esfahani Columnist

EARTH DAY

As a celebration of Earth Day this week, there are many things we can do in our gardens to help the environment! The first Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970, and this year marks the 50th Anniver-

sary. Even though we are social distancing, here are a few ideas to help save the Earth:

- Plant trees for shade, this can help heating and cooling costs if placed correctly. They also provide clean air and oxygen.
- Make a compost pile. Composting can help you use kitchen scraps and add nutrients to the soil.
- Planting an organic vegetable or herb garden can help reduce the use of pesti-
- Creating projects out of recycled items. You can make a bird feeder out of a



milk carton or planters out of old tires.

■ Collect rainwater to water potted

Instead of taking a drive, ride your bike around the neighborhood and enjoy nature.

■ Drink out of a reusable bottle instead of plastic and ditch the plastic bag and use a cloth bag at home.

Email Kathy at kathys.creative.gardens@ gmail.com for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future.

Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery is located at 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach. (904) 655-7373

Barton

more than \$510,400. We are all hoping this is a temporary measure, but with fewer banks issuing jumbo mortgages, many



buyers may have to wait to purchase a more expensive home.

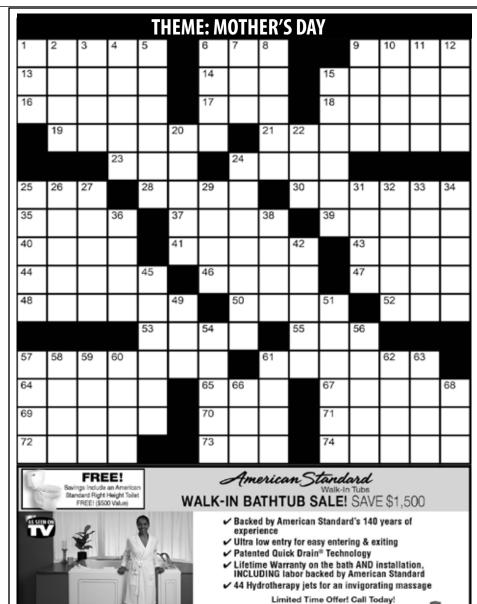
Finally, we've noticed a big reduction in actual showings of homes for sale. According to ShowingTime, the website that manages real estate traffic across the United States, the number of buyer showings has dropped 65% in Florida since March 21.

Despite the coronavirus fears, real estate transactions are still going forward! As of this week, there are 69 single family homes under contract in Ponte Vedra Beach, with 40 of those properties are priced above \$750,000, including a home listed for \$1,890,000 in The Plantation that received multiple offers.

While it's unclear what lies ahead, just this past week the Governor of New York declared, "the worst is over for his state" (Reuters). However, our situation here in Ponte Vedra might compare, there is reason for optimism and hope that things will begin to return to normal before too long.

Lisa Barton, Broker Associate **Luxury International Specialist** Keller Williams Atlantic Partners





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ACROSS 1. "Ali Baba and the

Forty ____," sing.

6. Eureka! 9. Schools of thought

13. Sound of artillery 14. Car nut

15. Without illumination

16. Nosey one 17. Kind of trip?

18. Lasso loop 19. *Little Women's mom

21. *Tracee Ellis Ross on TV

23. 24. Quitter's word 25. Like a fiddle?

28. Like Charles Dickens'

30. Quarantine state 35. *Egyptian goddess

of fertility 37. Insane, in Spain

39. Mother or daughter. in Italy

40. *Biblical Rebecca's

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

9

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6 4 9 41. Online reviews 43. Research facil.

o' shanter 44. Fisherman's decoys 46. Daytime entertain-

ment 47. Furniture wood

48. End of the road, pl. 50. Blatant promotion

52. Swedish shag rug 53. Yours and mine

55. Little squirt 57. *Mother's mom 61. *She fought for

> Mother's Day, then against it 64. In advance

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65. *Bambi's mom

67. Fancy tie

69. Less than fernier

70. I have 71. "Lifestyles of the

Rich and Famous" host 72. Fairies

73. Galley equipment 74. Feed the fire

DOWN

1. Kitchen meas.

2. Stay out of its way!

3. Pelvic parts

4. Tennis great Chris

5. Particular arrangement

6. Away from wind

7. *Mother's favorite gift?

8. Ancient marketplace 9. Part of a scheme

10. No neatnik

11. Sushi restaurant soup

Å mm

12. One-pot meal

15. Like the States

20. *One of the Gilmore girls

22. Hill dweller

24. One-eyed giants 25. *She played Forrest

Gump's mother

26. May edition, e.g.

27. *Worn atop the

Queen Mother

29. Denials

31. Nike's "Just

32. Private

33. "Take it back!"

34. *Mother in Kraków 36. Lard cousin

38. October birthstone

42. Plural of sputum

45. Rundown

49. Bottom line

51. Kind of ungulate, pl. 54. Where you'll find

AM

56. Living room center-

piece? 57. Gamecock's spur

58. *Greek goddess of fertility

59. Bald eagle's nest

60. *Mums' mums

61. Opposite of cheer

62. International Civil

Aviation Org. 63. Puppet precursor,

possibly 66. *Female gametes

68. Café alternative

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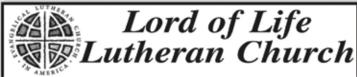
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* DELIVERY Guide

Support Local Restaurants

Aqua Grill: 395 Front St., Ponte Vedra Beach

Aqua Grill is offering complimentary delivery by staff with 5-mile radius and \$30 min order. Curbside pick-up is available from 5-8:30 p.m.

Barbara Jean's on the Water: 15 S. Roscoe Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach

Barbara Jean's is currently doing takeout orders and has expanded its services for delivery in the Ponte Vedra and Palm Valley area. To place an order or inquire if your address is covered, call the restaurant at (904) 280-7522.

Bogey Grille: 150 Valley Circle, Ponte Vedra Beach

Bogey Grille will continue to offer takeout and is partnering with Delivery Dudes for delivery. Additionally, the restaurant is offering alcohol to go. Staff will bring orders out to your car. Call (904) 285-5524 for placing orders.

JaxSpice: 311 3rd St. N. #104, Jacksoville Beach

Jaxspice located at Jax Beach is open for takeout orders. The authentic Indian restaurant is open Monday and Wednesday-Friday from 1-9:40 p.m. and Tuesday from 5-9:40 p.m. Call (904) 853-6217 to pick it up. The restaurant will also deliver

curbside and offers delivery.

Lulu's Waterfront Grille: 301 Roscoe Blvd. N., Ponte Vedra Beach

Lulu's Waterfront Grille, which serves fresh local seafood and other Southern-accented fare, is open daily from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. for delivery and curbside takeout. Call (904) 285-0139 to place order or for more information.

McFlamingo: 880 A1A N., Suite 12, Ponte Vedra Beach

McFlamingo is offering free delivery for Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee and Jax Beach. Curbside pick-up is also available. To order, call (904) 834-2331.

Memphis Jax BBQ: 10870 U.S. 1 S., Ponte Vedra Beach

Memphis Jax is open for takeout or delivery. Customers can order online at www. memphisjaxbbq.com or call (904) 342-0078.

Mulligans: 45 PGA TOUR Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach

Mulligans is introducing Mix & Match Meals for two. Order on the website for curbside pickup or delivery with Delivery Dudes. The kitchen is open until 10 p.m. nightly.

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Palm Valley Fish Camp: 299 Roscoe Blvd. N., Ponte Vedra Beach

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Palm Valley Outdoors Bar & Grill: 377 S. Roscoe Blvd., #2, Ponte Vedra Beach

Palm Valley Outdoors is offering dockside delivery and curbside delivery. Call Palm Valley Outdoors at (904) 834-7183 and orders will be brought directly to customer's vehicle or boat.

Pieology Pizzeria: 641 Crosswater Parkway E., Ponte Vedra Beach

The pizzeria offers takeout, curbside pickup and delivery for its menu. For delivery, the restaurant encourages customers to order online at www.pieology.com/menu/custom-pies.

Poppy's Italiano: 832-1 A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach

Poppy's will be offering drive thru pick-up and delivery. Customers may inquire on the website at poppysitaliano.net or call (904) 273-7272 to place an order.

Pussers Bar and Grille: 816 Highway, A1A N., Ponte Vedra Beach

Pussers is offering free delivery. Call ahead at (904) 280-7766 or view the takeout menu at bit. ly/33xh5Yz. Delivery provided by Uber Eats.

Ruth's Chris Steak House: 814 A1A N., Suite 103, Ponte Vedra Beach

The restaurant is offering takeout. Call (904) 285-0014 to place an order or to inquire about delivery options.

Sandwich Man Deli: 1110 A1A N., #102, Ponte Vedra Beach

The deli is currently doing pick-up orders only. Call (904) 285-9660 to place an order.

Timoti's Seafood Shak: 152 Crosswater Parkway, #18, Ponte Vedra Beach

Timoti's is currently doing takeout only until further notice. Online orders can be placed on the website at www.timotis.com/order-online.

Trasca & Co. Eatery: 880 A1A N., Suite 12, Ponte Vedra Beach

Trasca & Co Eatery is offering neighborhood

pop-ups in order to bring meals to neighborhoods. Additionally, the restaurant will be offering curbside service and lunch delivery from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., dinner prepared meal delivery will be offered from 2-4 p.m. and pop-ups will be from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Anyone interested in hosting Trasca for a popup in their neighborhood, call (904) 395-3989.

Tropical Smoothie: 830 N. A1A, Suite 1, Ponte Vedra Beach

Tropical Smoothie is open for takeout. Order online or call (904) 280-4044 to place an order.

Two Dudes Seafood Restaurant: 268 Solana Road, Ponte Vedra Beach

Call (904) 273-5595 to place an order for pickup or delivery. Staff will bring your food to car or deliver for \$5 within a 5-mile radius and \$20 minimum order. Two Dudes is also delivering beer, wine and cocktails. First responders, military and health industry professionals receive 25% off takeout and delivery orders. Visit www.twodudesrestaurant.com for the menu.

V Pizza Palm Valley: 154 Canal Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach

V Pizza's curbside cocktail bar is open.. The restaurant is extending its "adult lemonade" stand hours to 2-8 p.m. every day. V Pizza is also selling its wine by the bottle for half off and curbside pick-up orders for menu items. Call ahead at (904) 473-5218 or send an email to dan@drinksidecar.com.

Woody's Bar-B-Q in Ponte Vedra: 226 Solana Road #1, Ponte Vedra Beach

Woody's is open for drive-thru, curbside pickup, delivery and online ordering. Visit woodys.com/locations/ponte-vedra/ to place an order or call (904) 280-1110.

Zoes Kitchen: 240 Highway A1A, Ponte Vedra Beach

To order pickup or delivery, go to Zoes Kitchen website or ZK app: bit.ly/33vWR1f. Zoes Kitchen closes at 8 p.m. and is also available on DoorDash

To add your restaurant to the takeout and delivery guide, email paris@ opcfla.com and provide restaurant name, location and a brief description of services offered.

NOCATEE HAPPENINGS

Coastal Wine Market offering no-contact pickup of wine, beer and cheeseboards

Coastal Wine Market & Tasting Room in Nocatee is currently offering no-contact pickup of beer, wine and cheeseboards.

Coastal Wine is offering six bottles of wine for \$120 and 12 bottles of wine for \$215. It is also offering craft beer for \$12 for a package of six and \$20 for a package of 12.

A Chef's Choice cheeseboard is also available for pickup. The cheeseboard offers two gourmet cheeses plus one meat, with crackers, pepperoncinis, herbed almonds and honey, for \$25.

Orders are accepted Monday through Friday from noon-2 p.m. for next-day pickup from 2-4 p.m.

Coastal Wine Market is donating a portion of every sale to the American Red Cross of Northeast Florida.

Coastal Wine Market is also offering digital gift cards. For more information or to place an order, call (904) 395-3520.





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Look for this special Entertainment Guide inserted into the Ponte Vedra Recorder every week.

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Forever Vets Animal Hospital is an essential business and will continue to remain OPEN to serve the community during this difficult time.



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