

Your Community Voice for 50 Years

PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

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75 cents

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

PonteVedraRecorder.com



Runners decked out in '80s-themed attire participate in the Awesome 80s Race last weekend in Nocatee. The event, hosted by Florida Race Day, raised money for St. Francis House in St. Augustine. For more, go to page 8

Photo by Holly Tishfield

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

GIFT OF GIVING
 Recorder
 (Image of people sitting together)

Gift of Giving
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↑ ↓
Legal Eagles
Pages 21, 23-24



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NOTES TO READERS

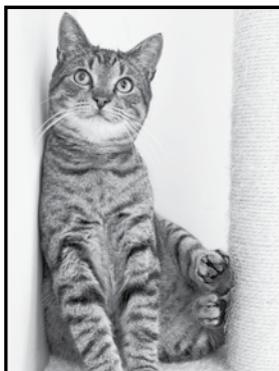
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Weekly newsletter: The Recorder offers a weekly newsletter every Monday that outlines some of the top stories of the week, as well as providing access to our E-Edition and Entertainment EXTRA! To get the newsletter emailed for free, email don@opcfla.com.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

ADOPT A PET

CAT OF THE WEEK

Hello there. my name is Cupid. I am a 2-year-old male brown tabby. I live up to my name because I am all about love! I am very lovable, sweet and happy! I love to get attention. I love to be petted. I love humans. I am searching for love – don't let me search in too many faces. Come on down and take me to my new furreverrr home today! #57353



DOG OF THE WEEK

Hi! My name is Astro. I am a neutered, male Staffordshire bull terrier. I am 1½ years old and I still have the energy of a puppy. I have spent my whole life in a rusty cage and I finally have been saved, but don't despair, this place is awesome. I love the treats and toys I get! The other dogs here are so nice, and I give the girls lots of kisses (wink, wink). Now all I need is a human family of my own so I can show them all the love I have to give. So come see me. You might just get some kisses too. #57147

Any new pet being introduced to a new home will need time to adjust to its new environment. Please reinforce house training and behavioral training, and be mindful of interacting with other pets.

St. Johns County Pet Center

Cat adoptions are \$30 for males and \$40 for females. Dog adoptions are \$45 for males and \$60 for females. Adoption fees include microchipping, neutering/spaying, rabies vaccinations and shots. The Pet Center is located at 130 N. Stratton Road in St. Augustine, off U.S. 1 between County Road 210 and International Golf Parkway. Business hours are Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center is closed to the public on Sunday. On Monday, the office is open by appointment only to claim a lost pet. **For more information, please call the St. Johns County Pet Center at (904) 209-6190.**

BRIEFS

Entrance to Ponte Vedra Beach Visitor Information Center moved

The entrance to the Ponte Vedra Beach Visitor Information Center has moved to the other side of the building at 200 Solana Road, Suite B.

All residents and visitors are invited to visit to obtain maps, brochures and information at the Ponte Vedra Beach Visitor Information Center. The office also serves as an office for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.

A chamber member, The Wedding Authority, now has a presence in the former Visitor Information Center. It now has offices in St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra Beach.

St. Johns County COVID-19 vaccination registration opens at 9 a.m. Feb. 18

St. Johns County received an allotment of 3,900 Pfizer vaccines from the State of Florida this week. Registration will open at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18, for vaccination appoint-

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

CALLING ALL EXPLORERS

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Briefs

Continued from 2

ments on Feb. 19, 22 and 24. Schedule an appointment by going to <https://tinyurl.com/y52tcoaz> or by calling the St. Johns County COVID-19 Vaccination Hotline at (904) 295-3711 after 9 a.m. on Thursday. You will not be able to register for an appointment through the website or hotline prior to 9 a.m. It is recommended that vaccine recipients arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to their appointment. The Pfizer vaccine requires a second dose in 21 days. Those who receive their first dose through St. Johns County will leave with an appointment scheduled for the second dose. The limited number of COVID-19

vaccines St. Johns County receives from the State of Florida determines appointment availability. For updates regarding St. Johns County’s COVID-19 vaccination program, go to www.sjcfll.us/coronavirusvaccinations or text SJC VACCINE to 888777.

St. Johns County Utility Department reinstating late fees and disconnections

The St. Johns County Utility Department will begin reinstating disconnection of service and assessing late fees for accounts with past due balances on or after April 1. To review your current account status or to make a payment, call customer service at (904) 209-2700, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or the 24/7 automated phone system at (844) 752-8845 or by going to www.sjcfll.us/Utilities.

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For more information, contact Murray & Elise Beard: 904.465.2784

Tickets to THE PLAYERS on sale now

In response to health and safety protocols, on-site capacity will be reduced

Tickets to THE PLAYERS Championship 2021 went on sale to the general public Tuesday, Feb. 16. THE PLAYERS returns to TPC Sawgrass the week of March 9-14, with a reduced fan footprint to ensure that the health and safety of all attendees remains the number one priority.

“We are looking forward to a great week of golf for a limited number of fans at THE PLAYERS Championship,” said Executive Director Jared Rice. “Our team and organization have put a tremendous amount of thought, effort and creativity into producing a championship that will continue to engage our entire Northeast Florida community and generate charitable and economic impact. As we have seen across the entire PGA TOUR landscape, the health and safety of everyone involved will remain our top priority in 2021. With that as a backdrop, we ask for our fans onsite to simply do their part to ensure a safe event for themselves and others in the community.”

All tickets to THE PLAYERS 2021 will be mobile and must be purchased via THEPLAYERS.com/tickets. Each guest will be allowed to purchase up to two tickets per

day, per account, while supplies last.

Daily ticket prices are as follows (prices below do not include taxes): Tuesday, March 9, \$25; Wednesday, March 10, \$25; Thursday, March 11, \$70; Friday, March 12, \$80; Saturday, March 13, \$80; Sunday, March 14, \$70.

Hospitality options: Fans interested in upgraded experiences should go to THEPLAYERS.com/hospitality for more information.

Youth Days presented by Nemours Children’s Health System: Up to two youth, ages 15 and younger, will be admitted free with a ticketed adult on Tuesday and Wednesday only.

Military tickets: In support of heightened military restrictions limiting large gatherings and adherence to comprehensive health and safety protocols, this year’s tournament will not include a Military Appreciation ceremony, concert or hospitality venue that traditionally hosts thousands of military members and their families. However, THE PLAYERS maintains its commitment to welcoming Northeast Florida military members.

Complimentary admission will be provided to active duty, retired, reserve and National Guard members, and one dependent, on Tuesday, March 9, and Wednesday, March 10, while supplies last.

Valid identification and credentials are required. Veterans with valid identification can purchase discounted tickets on March 9 and 10, while supplies last (limited to two tickets per veteran per day). Tickets for Thursday through Sunday must be purchased via THEPLAYERS.com/tickets.

To receive and redeem vouchers for these tickets, military members and veterans must follow these steps:

- Go to THEPLAYERS.com/tickets and go to the “Military” dropdown icon to access the verification system.

- Upon verification, a voucher will be issued for each day (Tuesday and/or Wednesday).

- The voucher must be printed and redeemed at an off-site Will Call location that has a new address in 2021: 13000 Sawgrass Village Circle, Building 1, Ponte Vedra Beach.

No vouchers will be redeemed at on-site entry gates.

PARKING

Parking passes are not included in any ticket purchases. A separate parking pass is required each day of tournament week, Tuesday through Sunday, and must be purchased online in advance via THEPLAYERS.com/parking. Tuesday and Wednesday parking will be \$15 per day, plus tax;

Thursday through Sunday is \$40 per day, plus tax. Parking will not be sold on-site.

New in 2021, all parking passes will be digital. “Four or more for free” parking vouchers will not be available. Rideshare is available and will drop off and pick up at the Couples entry off ATP Boulevard, a short walk from the 15th hole.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Guests will be expected to comply with the health and safety protocols outlined at PGATOUR.com/knowbeforeyougo.

Key protocols include:

- Follow the 3 Ws: wear a mask, wash your hands, watch your distance.

- Masks are required at all times (indoors and outdoors). Masks will be offered to those guests who forget to bring one.

- Social distancing must be practiced at all times.

- No food or drink can be consumed within 10 feet of the rope line.

- Upon arrival, guests will be required to social distance and complete a health questionnaire.

- The ticket-scanning and payment processes will be digital and contactless throughout tournament property.

Tournament staff and volunteers will assist spectators with questions and protocols on site.

New St. Johns County school named Pine Island Academy

By Shaun Ryan

“We are Pine Island Academy!” declared Amanda Reidl, principal of the district’s newest school, following its official naming Monday, Feb. 9.

The St. Johns County School Board selected the name from five put forth by a special committee at the board’s Feb. 2 workshop meeting. The choice was unanimous.

“I think it’s a great name,” said board chair Patrick Canan prior to the vote. “I’m all for it. It’s the one that seems to fit it from my own perspective.”

The K-8 school is located at 805 Pine Island Road near the extreme southern edge of Nocatee. It is expected to open for the 2021-22 academic year. The charter enrollment would include 826 former Palm



Photo by Shaun Ryan

The newly named Pine Island Academy in St. Johns County is seen under construction.

Valley Academy students.

Reidl told the School Board that the new school was an “identical replica” of Palm Valley Academy, which should help ease the transition for the students.

“They’re going to know where to go,” she said. “They’ll know where classrooms are. They’ll know where bathrooms are.”

Reidl facilitated a virtual community meeting Jan. 11 to begin the naming pro-

cess, and 199 people participated. A community survey requesting name and mascot suggestions followed and received 378 responses. A school naming committee met Jan. 20 to narrow down the suggestions. Fifty-seven people participated. On Jan. 25, 90 people attended another community meeting to produce the results.

In addition to the winning name, suggestions presented to the School Board

included: Coastal Palms Academy, Coastal Pines Academy, River Valley Academy and Tolomato River Academy.

Pine Island Academy was needed as Palm Valley Academy was over capacity. Though it was designed to accommodate only 1,490 students, enrollment has exceeded 2,000. The new school will help Palm Valley Academy to lower its enrollment to about 1,200.

Students living in the Crosswater Village communities, Coastal Oaks, Tidewater, Snowden Village and along Pine Island Road will attend the new school.

Reidl also told the board that the school colors are purple and gray and that the students themselves would select their mascot.

Top recommendations for mascot are: Cougars, Coyotes, Dolphins, Manatees, Pioneers and Terrapins.

New WeatherSTEM weather station comes to Jacksonville Beach

Jacksonville Beach has a new weather monitoring system, WeatherSTEM. The city’s Emergency Preparedness Division and the state Division of Emergency Management installed it as the result of a Florida Severe Weather Network Grant.

The state-of-the-art weather station will allow for more accurate weather forecasting. It will provide live-streaming with high-resolution cameras, weather health

and safety alert notifications, lightning detection, heat-level monitoring and real-time and future-cast radar information.

“Having the WeatherSTEM Weather Station in Jacksonville Beach, on the beach, will provide the ability for the Ocean Rescue Division to monitor weather conditions that can cause a threat to bathers and beachgoers,” said Maxwell Ervanian, prevention and training officer

for the Jacksonville Beach Ocean Rescue Division. “The WeatherSTEM weather station will also provide the ability for visitors of Jacksonville Beach to view weather, beach and ocean conditions, looking east from the pier and looking south down the beach from the pier.”

The station can be accessed at duval.weatherstem.com/fswnjxbeach or by downloading the WeatherSTEM app

through the Apple App Store or on Google Play. The station can be found on Twitter and Facebook via @fswnjxbeach. To view all WeatherSTEM stations in Duval County, go to duval.weatherstem.com.

For further information on WeatherSTEM and how to view forecasts, monitor weather and more, go to weatherstem.com.



Photo by Don Christian

Right whale sightings have been on the rise along the First Coast. As of Feb. 15, there have been 66 official sightings in the waters off St. Johns County since December, including five sightings near Ponte Vedra Beach on Feb. 12 alone.

Right whale sightings increase locally

By Shaun Ryan

The northern right whales have returned, and sightings have been reported this month in the waters off Ponte Vedra Beach.

The annual arrival of these endangered sea mammals is cause for celebration among local residents, many of whom flock to the coast when learning where and when a sighting has been made.

Generally, there are about 75 sightings between Jacksonville and Cape Canaveral each year in December through March. That's because between 100 and 150 whales migrate south for the winter, having summered in the shores off New England and Nova Scotia.

Northern right whales give birth to, and nurse, their calves in the Atlantic waters of northern Florida, which improves the chances of sightings in this area.

People seeing a whale are encouraged to call the Marine Resources Council hotline at (888) 979-4253 and report it. Experienced response teams are then deployed with cameras and GPS units to track the whales.

As of Monday, Feb. 15, there have been 66 officially verified sightings off the coast of St. Johns County since the beginning of December. Twenty-three of those sightings were very close to shore.

Right whales can grow to 45-55 feet in length and 70 tons in weight. When calves are born, they weigh about 2,000 pounds and are 15-16 feet long.

The total population of the northern right whale is between 400 and 500. About a dozen calves are born annually.

Right whales get their name from early whalers, who called them the "right" whales to hunt due to their high level of fat. Overhunting impacted the species, reducing the total population to a few dozen by the end of the 19th century.

Right whales were declared a protected species, and hunting them has been forbidden since 1949.

But human activity continues to threaten the whales, which get entangled in fishing gear, are hit by vessels and are harassed by people.

Local residents had an unfortunate reminder of these dangers Saturday, Feb. 13, when a dead calf washed ashore at Anastasia State Park in St. Augustine Beach. The calf showed signs of propeller injuries.

Readers who want to do some whale watching should take along a pair of binoculars. One way to locate a possible whale is by watching other animals. Sea birds often flock overhead of the whales, and they can often be found in the company of dolphins.

RIGHT WHALE SIGHTINGS OFF THE COAST OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

Below are officially recognized sightings. Some whales may appear in multiple sightings.

Dec. 6 — Two sightings of a mother with calf — St. Augustine Inlet and just offshore at South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Dec. 18 — Two sightings of a mother and calf — both just offshore at South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jan. 3 — Four whales off South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jan. 5 — Mother with calf off South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jan. 8 — Mother and calf just offshore at South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jan. 11 — Six sightings of a mother and calf — three off South Ponte Vedra Beach, one off Mickler's Landing, one off Ponte Vedra Beach, one just offshore at Summer Haven.

Jan. 12 — Two sightings of a mother and calf — just offshore at the Matanzas Inlet.

Jan. 17 — Three sightings of a mother and calf — one just offshore near the Matanzas Inlet, one east of St. Augustine Beach, one off Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jan. 19 — Mother and calf just offshore at South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jan. 20 — Three sightings of a mother and calf — one southeast of St. Augustine Beach, two just offshore at South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jan. 21 — Two sightings of a mother and calf — one off Anastasia State Park, one at the St. Augustine Inlet.

Jan. 22 — Mother and calf off St. Augustine Beach.

Jan. 24 — Two sightings of mother and calf off South Ponte Vedra Beach

Jan. 25 — Mother and calf off South Ponte Vedra Beach

Jan. 29 — Mother and calf just offshore at Ponte Vedra Beach

Jan. 30 — Two sightings of a mother and calf — one off Ponte Vedra Beach and one off Matanzas Inlet

Jan. 31 — Mother and calf off Crescent Beach

Feb. 1 — Mother and calf off South Ponte Vedra Beach

Feb. 3 — Three sightings of mother and calf — Two east of the St. Augustine Inlet and one east of South Ponte Vedra Beach.

Feb. 5 — One whale just offshore at Ponte Vedra Beach.

Feb. 7 — Mother and calf just offshore at South Ponte Vedra

Feb. 11 — Mother and calf just offshore at Ponte Vedra Beach; Four whales east of Crescent Beach; Four whales east of Anastasia State Park

Feb. 12 — Seven sightings of mother and calf — two off Vilano Beach, two just offshore at Ponte Vedra Beach, three east of South Ponte Vedra.

Mussallem Beachfront Park now open to public

Mussallem Beachfront Park, 3365 Coastal Highway, is now open for public use.

Acquired through a grant with the Florida Communities Trust, this 8.5-acre property is a frequent nesting location for sea turtles and has healthy beach dunes.

The acquisition of this passive park will preserve the integrity of this important stretch of beach. The beachfront portion of this site includes

off-beach parking, a crosswalk and beach access.

To learn more about Mussallem Beachfront Park, go to www.sjcfl.us/LAMP/Projects/FLct_mussallem.aspx.

For the most up-to-date information on beach access and beachfront parks, follow @SJCBeaches on Facebook and Twitter or download St. Johns County's Reach the Beach app. For more information, call Beach Services at (904) 209-0331.



A new dune walkover provides access to the beach at Mussallem Park. The 8.5 acre property, located at 3365 Coastal Highway, is a frequent nesting location for sea turtles and has healthy beach dunes.

Photo by Shaun Ryan

Dr. Helen Jackson started the Women of Color Cultural Foundation 21 years ago this month. Members of the nonprofit organization devote many hours of community service to strengthen youth, families and the community for the common good.

Dr. Helen Jackson

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me about Women of Color Cultural Foundation.

The purpose of the foundation is to address the unmet needs of people of color to eliminate disparities in health, education and economic development and other areas that affect equality for our common good.

Annually, we have the Heart of a Woman Luncheon, and that is a forum that addresses cardiovascular disease in women, because we know that one out of every four woman dies from cardiovascular disease. And for people of color, that number significantly increases.

So, we have speakers like cardiologists, pharmacists, dieticians, licensed clinical social workers, financial planners come in and talk about all aspects of the heart. And how we can better take care of our hearts.

Another thing that we do in the health area is something similar but for women's health and addressing issues like cancer and diabetes and obesity, because we also know that these are health risks that impact people of color twice as bad as it does any other population.

As far as education, we're very focused on our young people. We have a Universal Teen Scholarship Program every year where we promote global awareness by focusing on issues that impact our young people: their leadership skills, their communication skills, their ability to have real-life skill management tools to work with throughout life. We also address issues related to their inner beauty and inner worth.

Since the initiation of our program in 2000, we have managed to give out over \$170,000 in scholarships to young people going off to college.

We have several individuals who have gone off to become doctors, managers in different companies. Some have started their own businesses. We have two Ph.D's and about five master's degree finishers.

Of the people that have begun and completed our 10 weeks of training in the Universal Teen Scholarship Program, we've had a 97% success rate of those finishing college.

We also take about 1,000 to 1,500 youth to the zoo every year.

We were the first program to start addressing the issues around 9/11 and how that impacted New York and all the military personnel, firefighters and also our police officers and medical staff. We started recognizing the importance of first responders.

For the 10-year anniversary, we worked with the sheriff, the chief of fire and rescue, all of the different components of the military and the medical profession, bringing them together and honoring them on Sept. 11.

Every year, we do that in conjunction with giving back to the community. One year, we had 3,000 bags of groceries donated. On behalf of the first responders, we gave those to needy families.

Another year, we cleaned up the cemetery down on Union Street because it had been neglected. In areas around the military folk who have lost their lives, we did a special tribute and cleaned up their gravesites.

We do a lot of different things to make a difference in our community, because we truly believe in giving back.

Tell me a little about your background.

I grew up in Detroit from very humble beginnings. I'm from a family of four. My father was a factory worker at Ford Motor Company, and my mother was a teacher. So, I grew up there, got married, moved down here to Florida.

I retired as the director of nutrition and chronic disease from the Florida Department of Health in Duval County. I am a pastor with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. And I sit on various



Photos provided by Dr. Helen Jackson

community boards. Right now, I am president for the Jacksonville Women's Network and currently serve on the board of directors for Leadership Jacksonville.

What do you like most about living in Ponte Vedra Beach?

I love the area, I love the people, I love my neighbors and I love the beach. I love walking on the beach. It's such a thrill. It's a nice community to be in. It's a nice community for families.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Believe it or not, I love traveling ... Been to Antarctica. Been to Africa, Europe, Asia, South America — just all over. Been to the Holy Land, which is the thrill of a lifetime.

If I get an opportunity, I'd love to go and stay at the Ice Hotel. It's over in Greenland. So, between Greenland and Iceland, you know, that area is not well-populated, but it's something that intrigues me about being close to nature and able to see things in their original state.

And I love reading. And I love walking.

Nease NJROTC cadets roll to 2nd drill championship

The Navy's JROTC drill program at Nease High School continued its winning ways, traveling to North Georgia and capturing the Stockbridge Drill Meet overall championship against 10 other Georgia schools on Feb. 6.

The team had never previously competed at the competition hosted by Stockbridge NJROTC. However, with several meets being canceled across the state, the team seized the opportunity to travel north in search of a drill competition when a last-minute cancellation created an opening.

"We'll compete anytime, anywhere," said battalion commander Brandon Donovan. "Stockbridge hosted a fantastic meet ... I'm sure we'll be back there again next year if possible."

Nease's drill team needed to bring up several cadets from the practice squad as five cadets fell victim to COVID-19 contact tracing quarantining less than 24 hours before departure.

Cadets Benjamin Rider and Diego Molina joined the armed exhibition and basic drill teams; and cadets Lauren Villareal, Hailey Pitches and Rylie Larkin filled in for the unarmed exhibition team. Both exhibition teams require memorizing and learning hundreds of intricate and precise drill movements.

"I am so proud of the cadets," said naval science instructor Gunnery Sergeant Duane Hanson. "We practiced until nearly midnight in an empty parking lot Friday



Photos provided by Nease NJROTC
Nease NJROTC's color guard team, Daniel Mahoney (from left), Isabella Rivera, John Alves and Brandon Donovan, perform their winning routine at the Stockbridge Drill Meet.

night polishing up the routines."

Armed exhibition placed first and unarmed exhibition placed second in the competition. Nease took home first place in nine of the 12 events, including drill overall, unarmed basic, color guard, athletics overall, pushups, sit-ups, 16x100 relay, and personnel inspection.

Cadets Isabella Rivera and Amber Vidler placed first individually in female



ABOVE: Nease NJROTC members celebrate after winning the Stockbridge Drill Championship on Feb. 6.



LEFT: Nease NJROTC armed exhibition team performs precision drill maneuvers during the team's winning performance at the Stockbridge Drill Meet.

sit-ups (312) and push-ups (90), while Brady Anderson and Brodie Mongon placed second in male sit-ups (190) and push-ups (85). Cadet Ben Prohofsky placed second in academics.

The team got to tour Valdosta State University Air Force ROTC on route to Stockbridge.

"I've been thinking all along of a Coast

Guard or Navy career path, but that was a really impressive program we saw at Valdosta State," said cadet Daniel Mahoney.

Nease is currently the No. 1 ranked NJROTC drill team in Area-12 (59 programs covering northern Florida and the state of Georgia), having won the Area-12 Drill Championship each of the past six years.

Ocean Palms playground unveiled

Ocean Palms Elementary School officially unveiled its new, community-funded playground on Feb. 8 at a small ribbon-cutting ceremony where sponsors, PTO members, administration and the Chamber of Commerce members applauded the project's success.

This was an endeavor that began in the fall of 2019. The playground was installed before the start of the 2020 school year, in time for students at the school to enjoy the many slides, ladders and other activities the play structure has to offer, but the official opening ceremony was delayed due to COVID precautions.

School fundraising events, alongside project sponsors such as the Kneeland Hunter Family Fund, Flagler Health+, the JT Townsend Foundation, Memori-



Contributed photo
Sponsors, PTO members, administration and the Chamber of Commerce members joined in for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to recognize the new community-funded play structure at Ocean Palms Elementary School. Third-grader Landon Hunter led the ceremony.

al Hospital Memorial Health, Training for Warriors, Brown & Brown Insurance, John Merrill Homes and Arthur Ruthenberg Homes all helped make The Otter Park possible.

Landon Hunter, a third-grade student at Ocean Palms who encouraged his family to donate to the project through their family foundation, led the ribbon cutting.

INK! names Creekside's Pressel teacher of year

Creekside High School educator Alicia "Ali" Pressel was named INK's (Investing in Kids) 2020-21 Teacher of the Year. A special recognition program was held Jan. 27.

During the event, St. Johns County Superintendent of Schools Tim Forson congratulated Pressel and all finalists. The ceremony was held at school district headquarters, 40 Orange St. in St. Augustine. A virtual production of the event ran online.

Pressel has been teaching at Creekside since 2008. She teaches four levels within the St. Johns County Career Academies program, the Academy of Environmental Sciences and Advanced Placement Environmental Science.

She sponsors the Environmental Club and the Geospatial Mapping Club at Creekside and works with community business partners to bring grant opportunities, internships and job shadow experiences to her students to promote career readiness.

She is a regular speaker on project-based learning and STEM initiatives at national conferences. In addition to serving on the Teacher



Photos by Holly Tishfield

Runners decked out in '80s-themed attire participate in the Awesome 80s Race last weekend in Nocatee. The event, hosted by Florida Race Day, raised money for St. Francis House in St. Augustine.

Totally Tubular: Runners relive the '80s at event in Nocatee

The 5K, 10K races help raise money for St. Francis House

By Holly Tishfield

This past weekend, runners broke out their leg warmers and strapped on their leotards to participate in the Awesome 80s Race, hosted by Florida Race Day, in Nocatee.

Florida Race Day, a family-owned business offering full-service race timing and race organizing, coordinated the race with an '80s theme, encouraging runners to dawn their best costumes. The starting line was filled with groups of runners decked out head to toe in '80s gear, including lots of families and even a few guests with their four-legged friends.

Runners could choose to participate in either a 5K or a 10K race around the Nocatee neighborhoods, beginning and ending near the Nocatee Splash Waterpark.

Despite the slightly rainy weather, more than 200 participants showed up on Saturday morning to race for first place. All participants in the race received an '80s-themed T-shirt, neon sunglasses, neon sweatbands and an honorary finisher's medal.

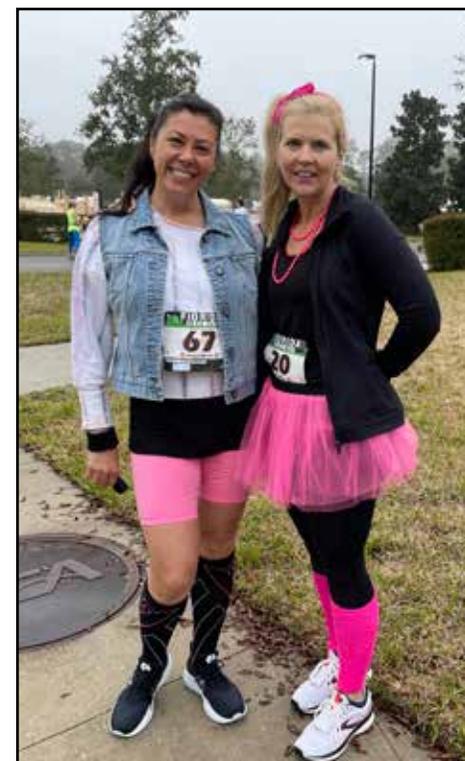
Proceeds raised with the entry fee to the race were donated to St. Francis House, a nonprofit organization based out of St. Augustine with a mission to drastically reduce the homeless population by providing a safe, stable environment and access to essential services.

Winners of the 5K race included 17-year-old Julia Renetzky from Barrington, Illinois, in first place, L. Harman from Ormond Beach in second place and Amy McIntyre from Ponte Vedra Beach in third. Winners of the 10K race included John Richardson of Ponte Vedra Beach in first place, Andrea Richardson of Ponte Vedra Beach in second place and Amanda Taylor of Ponte Vedra Beach in third place.

For a list of other races hosted by Florida Race Day, including a Grunge Run '90s-themed 5K on Feb. 27 and a SuperHero 5K in September, go to floridaraceday.com.



Keith, Summer, Paton, Presley and Harper Gruver get into the theme for the Awesome 80s Race last Saturday in Nocatee.



Ponte Vedra Beach gets surprise seal of approval

Special guest becomes social-media sensation

By Paris Moulden

A special visitor made a splash when it decided to take a break from swimming at the beach in Ponte Vedra on Monday, Feb. 8.

A juvenile harbor seal was an unexpected sight as it made its way along the beach, scurrying away from the rising tide as it tried to get some R&R before heading back out to sea.

Nancy Kablach Condron, with the Ponte Vedra Sea Turtle Patrol, was informed about the unusual guest. She headed to the beach about a mile north of Mickler's Landing to offer assistance. Condron put up stakes to cordon off the area where the seal was attempting to rest.

"It was really cool to watch it," Condron said. "Some of my turtle patrol people came out and we educated a lot of people on the beach and it was a good experience. People were very respectful. We have a very well educated, responsible beach here."

While seals on Florida beaches is not a common sight, it isn't unheard of. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, although rare, seals do



Photo provided by Nancy Kablach Condron

A juvenile harbor seal takes a rest on the beach in Ponte Vedra on Monday, Feb. 8.

occasionally make the trek this far south.

"They're always pups, so they were probably born within the past year," Condron said of the area's rare seal visitors. "They're just looking for food on their own and they just wandered down here."

According to the FWC, juvenile harbor seals are solitary, independent creatures, so they tend to travel alone at this age.

According to the NOAA, harbor seals generally live in temperate coastal habitats along the northern coasts of North America, Europe and Asia. They occur on the

U.S East and West coasts, but rarely travel this far South.

As for the seal who visited Ponte Vedra Beach, it spent most of the day relaxing and trying to escape the tide.

"As the tide came up, he (or she) would scoot up the beach," Condron said. "We moved stakes three-to-four times as he moved up the beach until we were sure he wouldn't exit the area. But he kept moving up as the water came up and the last time we saw, he moved way up. I think he was tired of being interrupted by the water."

Condron said the seal spent most of its time sleeping and doing "yoga poses," by lifting its head and tail up at the same time.

While the sight of a seal in Ponte Vedra caught Condron by surprise, she was even more surprised at the response her videos and photos received. The seal became a social media sensation with the story, photos and video shared across the globe.

"This kind of shocked me," Condron said of the response. She even saw where someone took one of her seal photos and added the popular Bernie Sanders-in-mittens meme to it.

"I wanted to spread the word so in case this ever happens again, people would know what to do; to stay back and call the experts," Condron said about her videos and social media posts. "My only intent was to get people to do the right thing because nobody knows. In Florida, we don't have marine animals that come out of the water just to bask. If any of our normal animals come out for any reason, other than a nesting turtle, there's something wrong with the animal. If it's a dolphin or whale and it beaches, there's something wrong with it, so people assumed there was something wrong with the seal, but there wasn't. We're not used to that down here."

SEAL continues on Page 11



Pristine Craftsmanship on Ponte Vedra Blvd.

Thoughtfully designed and showcasing exquisite craftsmanship throughout, this custom coastal home offers master suites on both floors, along with an office, loft area, ample storage and a flex space ideal for a 5th bedroom.

4 bedrooms, 5.5 bathrooms \$2,150,000



"Model" Home in Alta Lakes

Lightly lived-in and beautifully maintained, this house looks and feels like a model home with tall ceilings, a neutral palette, and an open floor plan ideal for everyday life. Featuring water to woods views along with smart home features and premium upgrades. **3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms \$290,000**



"Model" Home in Alta Lakes

Lightly lived-in and beautifully maintained, this house looks and feels like a model home with tall ceilings, a neutral palette, and an open floor plan ideal for everyday life. Featuring water to woods views along with smart home features and premium upgrades. **3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms \$290,000**



Atlantic Beach Retreat

Ideally located in Atlantic Beach, this 3-story townhome is only two blocks away from the ocean as well as the Beaches Town Center. Enjoy the home's rooftop deck or the easily maintained backyard oasis complete with a 6-ft. privacy fence, covered patio, and relaxing hot tub.

3 bedrooms, 2 F/2H bathrooms \$810,000



Intracoastal Luxury Condo

Located in the private gated community of Marina San Pablo, this 6th story luxury condo offers a convenient location, resort style amenities, and phenomenal views of the marina and Intracoastal Waterway along with a 20x50 boat slip.

3 bedrooms, 3.5 baths \$699,000



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OBITUARIES

John (Jack) Foley

John (Jack) Foley passed away peacefully at the Vicars Landing Windsor Health Center in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida on Feb. 10, 2021.

Jack was born in Boston on March 30, 1934 to Joseph and Louise Foley. His



John (Jack) Foley

father's military service and subsequent career led to several family relocations as Jack was growing up. He graduated from Chicago's Sullivan High School in 1953. He then enlisted in the Army

as a Corporal at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas and followed with 6 years service in the Army Reserve.

With the GI Bill, Jack attended Southwest Missouri State University graduating in 1960 Summa Cum Laude with a BS in Communications. His years at SMS became the launching pad for Jack's career in marketing, advertising and public relations. He excelled in all aspects of communications and was a leader for the school's debate team which competed successfully in numerous debate tournaments against colleges across the country. After graduating from SMS,

Jack completed course work towards a Masters degree in Advertising at Michigan State University in Lansing, Michigan.

Jack began his career in communications at the Bloomfield Hills, MI branch of D'Arcy, Macmanus and Masius. Over the next 35 years he worked in a variety of marketing roles for several advertising and public relations agencies including serving as the President and COO of the Gray and Rogers Agency in Philadelphia. He concluded his career as Senior Vice President and Director of Business Development for the NW Ayer advertising agency in New York City.

Jack met his wife, Sue, in Norwalk CT. in 1987 and they were married in 1989. A few years later Jack retired and Sue's career took the couple to London for four years and then to St. Louis MO. When Sue retired in 2000 the couple moved to Sawgrass Country Club in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. They moved to Vicars Landing in Ponte Vedra Beach in 2019.

Jack loved fishing and was an avid and competitive golfer. Jack and Sue traveled extensively over the course of their marriage and retirement. Family was a top priority for Jack who kept in constant contact with his three children, parents and siblings. Jack's greatest passion was listening to other peoples' life stories — he was fascinated by the mosaic of lives and could remember incredible detail. He enjoyed relating stories that brought the people and events he described to life for his listeners.

Jack is survived by his wife of 32 years Sue, son Zack (Anna), children from his first marriage Craig (Molly), Daryl Elder

(Bill), step sister Trish, niece Jacqueline, and grandchildren Matt, Josh and Nic Foley and Samantha and Jack Elder. He is preceded in death by his brother Bill Foley.

A celebration of Jack's life will take place at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Jack's honor to an institution dear to his heart, the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, FL (fsdbk12.org). Please visit the online Tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com.

Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Family Funeral Home.



Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre
3600 Third Street South, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
Phone: 904.249.1100 Fax: 904.241.7554

Dorothy "Dotty" Mary Harkins

Dorothy "Dotty" Mary Harkins, born May 28, 1930 and raised in upper Manhattan, New York City, died peacefully on February 8, 2021 at Vicars Landing Windsor Health Center in Ponte Vedra



Dorothy "Dottie" Mary Harkins

Beach, Florida. She was surrounded by her three children, whom she treasured. As a member of the Vicar's community since 2007, Dotty's cheerful and glowing disposition was always evident to

her friends, neighbors, and staff and they will fondly remember the twinkle in her blue eyes as an enduring gift. Her smile lit up the room, and her natural warmth made everyone feel at ease.

Dorothy was the eldest daughter of Irish immigrants, James and Margaret (nee Finnegan) Howley, and was a parishioner of St. Joseph Church of the Holy Family and later at The Church of Good Shepherd, both in New York, NY. She attended high school at St. Michael's Academy on West 33rd Street in Manhattan, commuting daily by subway. She is predeceased by her sister, Margaret "Peggy" Rau and brother, Thomas Howley. Following positions at General Motors and Macy's Herald Square, Dotty married the love of her life, Joseph James Harkins, also from their close-knit neighborhood, Inwood in Manhattan. Together for 50 years, until Joe passed in 2004, they lovingly raised their three children in River Edge and Montvale, NJ. Dotty, who Joe always referred to affectionately as "his bride", was Joe's constant companion as they traveled the world throughout his banking career. They officially retired to Ponte Vedra Beach, FL in 1990, fully embracing the growing communities at Sawgrass Country Club (from 1979) and The Plantation at Ponte Vedra (from 1993).

Dotty was a strong and fiercely loving mother to Brian J. Harkins (Maureen) of Sarasota, FL, Joseph F. Harkins (Karen) of Harding, NJ, and Jeanne I. Davis (John)

of Stamford, CT. Dotty will be most deeply missed as a kind, generous and always smiling "Nana" to her 11 adoring grandchildren, Margaret "Maggie", John, Cornelius "Neil", Ryan Christopher (her deceased special angel), Christian, Julia, Peter, Matthew, Lauren, Brayden, Rowan and her great-grandson, Jack. Dotty's sincerest passions were her family and her lifetime of loving friendships from Inwood, and from her humble, caring, and considerate life that was beautifully lived in NJ and FL. She loved music of all genres, and one of her greatest joys was listening, and singing along with her family and friends, as playlists spun for hours.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, March 20, 2021 at Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, her long-time parish.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Dotty's name may be made to: Community Hospice & Palliative Care Foundation - 4266 Sunbeam Rd. Jacksonville, FL 32257 and for online donations - www.communityhospice.com/give/ or St Joseph's Church of the Holy Family - 405 W 125th St., New York, NY 10027 - <https://www.stjosephsharlem.com/donations>. Please visit the online Tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home.



Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre
3600 Third Street South, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
Phone: 904.249.1100 Fax: 904.241.7554

Ed Mrozek

Ed Mrozek passed away at 84 on February 10th, 2021.

Ed was born on September 28th, 1938 in Chicago, Illinois. He married in 1957 and served in the Army at Fort Devins from 1959 to 1962. He left the service and began a retail career with Walgreens in Harvey, Illinois. In 1971, he moved his family south to Atlanta for a better life. Ed eventually worked at Atlanta Dental where he retired in 2004. He stayed close to his family in Atlanta and then, the mountains on a trout stream in Otto, NC. In his final years, moved to Atlantic Beach, FL to be with his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Ed wed his high school sweetheart Judy and was married for 62 years. He gave unwavering devotion to his family through an exhaustive work ethic, participation in all their activities and doting on his grandchildren. He was a patriot, proud Chicagoan and enjoyed his Polish heritage and food. "Eddie" loved his Ma or "Busha", by others, and was the idolized, eldest brother of Pat, Ray, twins Rich and Ron, and Marlene. He was a golf and fishing enthusiast. Ed loved to tease and laugh, work outside,



Ed Mrozek

adored his dog, Lula and cat, Felix, fed the birds, flew his flag and cleaned his truck "Buck".

He is survived by his wife Judy, daughter Kathy (Peter) and son Joe (Tracy), granddaughters Jessica (Trevor), Nicole (William) and Carson (Nick), great grandchildren Grayson and Avery.

A memorial service will be held at Quinn Shalz Funeral Home in Jax Beach, Thursday, Feb 18th at 9:30 am. Burial service will follow at 11:30 in Jacksonville National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to a small community church in the mountains of NC, that means so much to the family.

Hickory Knoll UMC, PO Box 26, Franklin, NC 28734. Please visit the Tribute online at www.quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home.



Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre
3600 Third Street South, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
Phone: 904.249.1100 Fax: 904.241.7554

Haller Cesery Taylor

Haller Cesery Taylor passed away on Saturday, January 30, 2021. She was 18.

Haller was born on May 21, 2002 and grew up in the beachside town of Ponte



Haller Cesery Taylor

Vedra Beach, Florida. Haller was an exceptionally beautiful girl, inside and out. She was intelligent, talented, loyal and kind. She was known not only for her accomplishments,

but for her huge heart. Her parents, Martha Cesery Taylor and Walter Q. Taylor could not be prouder to call her daughter.

Those blessed to know Haller will always remember her generosity and loving spirit. There were no lengths Haller would not go to for those she loved. In her short life, she accomplished much and learned love is precious, fragile and the most important thing. Haller was faithful and dedicated, accomplishing anything she set her mind to do. She played violin for the Youth Symphony, danced many Nutcrackers at Christ Church with Ms. Felicia, rowed with Evans Rowing and Princeton crew teams, and sang in the St. John's Cathedral, Christ Church and Jacksonville Children's Chorus.

She loved the French language and was bilingual. One could always find a picture of the Eiffel Tower displayed in her room. Her favorite movie was "Breakfast at Tiffany's". She dreamt of making a special trip to New York with her mother solely to have breakfast at Tiffany's. Children gravitated to Haller naturally. She wanted to work with young children and to be a Mom herself as soon as possible.

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

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

"Life is like a cactus, prickly but very beautiful."

SUCCULENTS FOR WINTER, WHY NOT?

Whoever said you couldn't have nice plantings in winter? Succulents are a perfect choice all-year long, especially during the cooler months when temperatures can dip very low, and the seasonal rain like we've been experiencing this year often makes planting outside — or indoors — seem like a chore. But, you still have options, especially when planting succulents in your yard or filling up your favorite container with a variety of colors. Any time of the year in Ponte Vedra Beach is as good a time as any for planting succulents.

Want to bring the beauty of succulents inside? Choose your favorite container! Provided it gives adequate space for soil, drainage and air, of course. Like humans, succulents thrive on lots of oxygen and sunlight. Your favorite container can either be from something you already have lying around your home, or something simple you purchased at the local dollar store.

We have created some glorious arrangements of succulents recently gathered at the nursery and planted within a resin seashell purchased at the local home-goods store. Simply clean the container thoroughly, ensuring the item you use is free of insects, larva and debris. Fill approximately halfway, then arrange the succulents you've chosen exactly how you prefer, placing any trailing plant to the edges to



Photo provided by Kathy Esfahani



Flower of the Week: Variegated Sun Rose

provide a more abundant container.

No placement is wrong!

When putting your new creation indoors, remember to place near sunlight,

but not directly. Ensure the place chosen to feature your new creation provides lots of unobstructed airflow to give the succulents plenty of oxygen to thrive. Succulents do not need much water to survive. In fact, the less the better!

In a few days to a couple of weeks post planting, your succulents' container will flourish! Simply place the container within your home or on a patio and enjoy the beauty of the succulents all year round!

Get creative and happy planting!

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



**Jeff Hart Memorial Service
Above Self Scholarship**

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Palm Valley

One \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded to the top applicant from Ponte Vera and Allen D. Nease High Schools.

Applicants must be:

- Involved in community service/volunteer work
- A junior or senior at Ponte Vedra or Allen D. Nease H.S.
- In good academic standing
- Planning to attend a two or four year college or university, or a technical/trade school with a one year or longer program of study

Applications due April 3, 2021

Apply at tinyurl.com/y5k3cvfe





Photo provided by Nancy Kablach Condron

A harbor seal makes its way up the beach in Ponte Vedra to get some rest Monday, Feb. 8.

Seal

Continued from 9

After officials from the FWC left, Condron, along with a St. Johns County Sheriff's Office deputy, took turns keeping an eye on the seal. Condron checked on the seal around 6:30 p.m. Monday and it was still doing fine. When she returned around 5 a.m. Tuesday, the visitor was gone.

"There was a report of a sighting of her off Amelia Island the day before, so we believe she was heading south," Condron said.

Condron said if the rare visitors or others like it should return to area beaches, the best thing to do is call the FWC and get someone out there and try to keep people back around 50 yards until FWC officials arrive.

"The seal is coming out of the water to rest, and if people are getting too close to her, she's not going to be able to rest," Condron said. "As a matter of fact, it will probably stress them out."

But Condron was happy she was there to witness the rare sight.

"I was so glad I was home to be able to bring the stakes and to see it," she said.



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Retired FBI agent speaker at Newcomers Alumnae luncheon

Former FBI agent Mike Heard spoke at the recent Newcomers Alumnae luncheon. Pictured from left are vice president Sally Lutz, Heard and treasurer Louise Johnson.

Contributed photo



Michael Heard, a 28-year veteran of the FBI, was the guest speaker at the Newcomers Alumnae luncheon on Feb. 3 at Marsh Landing Country Club in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Heard related details of his most dangerous investigations involving violent crimes and counterterrorism, taking him throughout the United States and Cuba. He also addressed the changing climate within the FBI in recent years.

Heard gave the group some helpful tips: always be aware of your surroundings, keep your purse with you while shopping, always look at the person walking by you, and if someone demands your keys or

purse, throw the items as far away as possible and run.

He explained where guns should be kept, the best gun to buy, when to have a gun and rights regarding when to use and not to use a gun.

The next monthly luncheon will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 3 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. Reservations for lunch must be made by emailing bartshar@comcast.net before Feb. 25.

For information on Newcomers Alumnae, go to newcomersalumnae.wildapricot.org or contact brookemeister@msn.com for membership information.

Teacher

Continued from 7

Advisory Council with the National Geographic Society, Pressel was recently named a 2020 National Geographic Emerging Explorer for her work integrating mapping software and “place-based learning” within the environmental science career academy program at Creekside.

Pressel resides in Jacksonville.

“I am honored and humbled to receive such an amazing distinction. We have an exceptional group of educators in St. Johns County and it is a privilege to collaborate with them each day,” said Pressel. “The school year has been challenging in many ways. Yet,

it has provided us with a unique opportunity to reflect on our teaching practices and think about our relationships with our students. And it reminds us that what matters most is to help students truly engage in their own learning experiences.”

Pressel won a new vehicle from Beaver Toyota St. Augustine, a laptop computer from Staples in St. Augustine and more. She will have the opportunity to apply for the overall Florida Teacher of the Year program.

Finalists included R.J. Murray Middle School sixth-grade science teacher Allison Birbal and Durbin Creek Elementary School library media specialist Andrea M. O’Brien.

In addition, Valley Ridge Academy educator Lauren Woods was named Rookie Teacher of the Year.



Photo provided by INK!

INK! Teacher of the Year Ali Pressel and Creekside High School principal Steve McCormick are shown at a special recognition program.

Mattress Sale!

Sealy Queen Sets Starting at \$199
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PV3-LV46866

Obituaries

Continued from 10

She was outgoing and had a great sense of humor, ready to try and find ways to make people laugh. She loved the world of fashion and makeup. When she wasn't drawing ideas of new dress designs, she enjoyed helping others with their fashion and makeup. A student at FSCJ, she was looking forward to getting on with life and pursuing her career as a fashion designer with her Aunt Jodie at Jewel Toffier.

Haller loved going to Christ Church of Ponte Vedra since she was a young girl. As

a Christian Believer, she could be found living out her faith in many tangible ways. She would pick up every stray dog she found on the side of the road. And she did not hesitate to stop and pray for young adults in need, particularly those in automobile accidents.

She was devoted to her parents, her sister, Sydney Church and to her rescue dog, Logan. She considered Robert Champion Jr., Nicole Massey, Russell McMahan and Fritz Soloman as sisters and brothers. She couldn't wait to meet her cousin Christie Cesery's new baby, Dixon. We rest knowing she is in heaven celebrating with her friends and relatives, especially her grandparents, William Ross and Vesta Haller Cesery.

Haller left behind her mother and father, Martha Cesery Taylor and Walter Q. Taylor, her niece and nephew Christie Dixon and William Ross Cesery, her Aunt and Uncle Barbara Haller and Willam Ross Cesery. She will be remembered and missed by many family members and many, many friends.

Memorial service was held at Christ Episcopal Church at 400 San Juan Drive, on Friday, February 12, at 12 p.m. The service accommodated 120 people inside with social distancing, with additional seating outside, socially distanced, masks required. Reception followed.

In lieu of flowers, there is a gofundme account in her name.

John Francis Foley

John Francis Foley, 86, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 10, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, (904) 249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com.

Robert Keith Grepmp

Robert Keith Grepmp (Bob), 89, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 8, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Dorothy M. Harkins

Dorothy M. Harkins, 90, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 8, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre, (904) 249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com.

Janice Murray

Janice Murray, 78, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Feb. 9, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Raymond E. Smith, Jr.

Raymond E. Smith, Jr., 72, of Jacksonville Beach, died Feb. 13, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. (904) 249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

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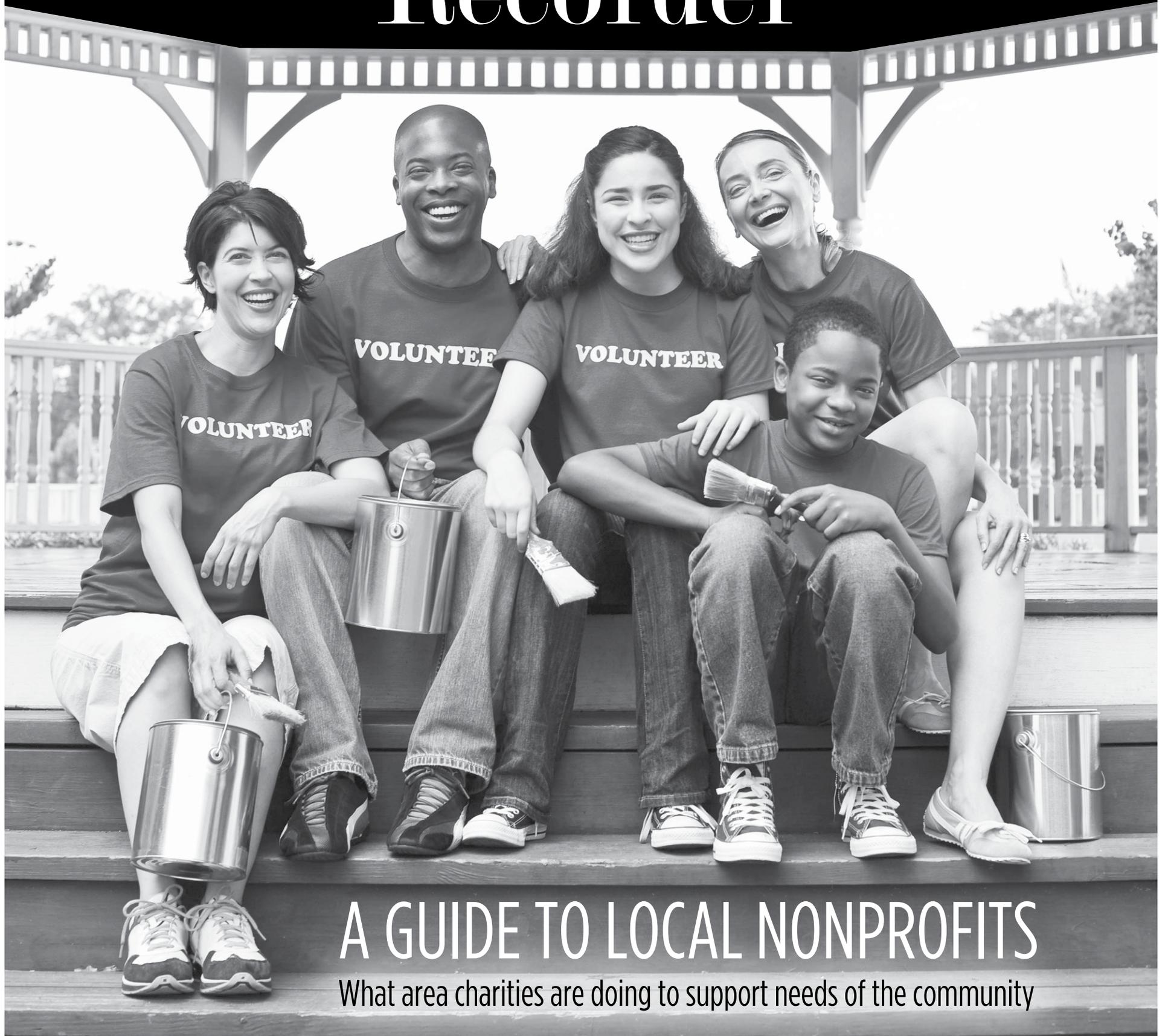
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A GUIDE TO LOCAL NONPROFITS

What area charities are doing to support needs of the community

'ROCK OF THE COMMUNITY' AWARD

Legendary honoree has long history of helping others

CROSS-COUNTRY TREK FOR A CAUSE

Cyclist's 6-month bike ride to help fight against cancer

Board Riders aim to bring local surf community together

By Holly Tishfield

The surf history in North Florida is a long and proud one. For generations, locals have been catching waves at beaches like Neptune Beach, Jax Beach and even Mickler's Beach, but recently one Ponte Vedra resident decided it was time for an upgrade.

Over the summer of 2020, Don Wight officially initiated a Ponte Vedra chapter of Florida Board Riders. This nonprofit organization began as a way to bring members of the surfing community together for events and competitions.

"Board Rider clubs foster fun, safety, self-esteem, ocean and environmental stewardship, and community engagement for surfers of all ages through friendly competitions and other events," its website says.

The Ponte Vedra division is sibling to three other North Florida chapters, including one in Fernandina Beach, Jacksonville and St. Augustine, as well as other divisions down the coast.

With a goal of bringing the community together, Wight and his PVBR division host a variety of events throughout the year. For Halloween, they held a Halloween Surf Jam, which doubled not only as a fun opportunity to dress in costumes and surf, but also as tryouts for their competi-



Photo by Russell Chandler

A surf contest at the St. Augustine Beach pier is the type of event the Ponte Vedra Board Riders use to bring the local surf community together for a common goal.

tion division of the club.

Members of the PVBR are not all necessarily competitors, some simply join the chapter to participate in local beach cleanups and skate park nights, but others join for the thrill of competing against neighboring divisions of the Board Riders.

Ages for members range from young children to adults, and every surfer is given an equal chance to prove their worth on the waves as a competitor.

Wight said that community response has been overwhelmingly positive so far,



Photo by Ivy Scott

PV Board Riders Club surfer Kyle Johnston catches a wave.

and that the club continues to grow as more and more surfers hear about the fun beach events and competitions. He also mentioned the importance of teaching new generations of surfers how to love and respect the ocean, as well as each other.

Another goal of the Board Riders organization is to support and work with local businesses to create charity drives, beach cleanups, water safety training, movie nights and ocean conservation education. Popular Ponte Vedra eatery Trasca & Co. offered sponsorship to this new chapter of

the Board Riders, and Wight said that the Board Riders have worked with the HEAL Foundation to offer surf lessons to kids.

The Ponte Vedra Board Riders' next competition will take place in Melbourne, where they will compete against Jacksonville Board Riders, Space Coast Board Riders and St. Augustine Board Riders for The Florida Cup.

Learn more about getting involved with the Ponte Vedra Board Riders or about its local sponsors on its Instagram page at @pv_boardriders_club.

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Programs of St. Augustine Society

For more information or to donate, visit www.stfrancisshelter.org or call 904-824-8987

Port in the Storm and St. Francis House are programs of St. Augustine Society, Inc., providing housing crisis services for homeless youth, adults and families in St. Johns County.

Mission House working to meet the needs of growing homeless population

In light of recent news concerning the homeless community of downtown Jacksonville, Mission House Inc. has announced that it stands in solidarity with people experiencing homelessness.

“We anticipate that the need for our programs and services will only increase throughout 2021, as we continue to work our way through the COVID-19 public health crisis, and this continued community support will be the difference in whether we are able to help individuals in their struggle to end their homelessness,” said Mission House Associate Director Michael Bradford.

The experience of homelessness has been exacerbated by the rapid spread of COVID-19 and rising un-

employment levels. Those experiencing homelessness have many additional barriers to rebuilding their lives. Many are veterans, struggle with addiction, or are part of an historically marginalized group.

This is a critical time for nonprofit organizations, especially those like Mission House, that are serving an ever-increasing population. The nonprofit’s officials say they need additional support from the Jacksonville community to better meet the needs of their clients.

“Mission House is the only homeless services agency in the Jacksonville Beaches area, and as such, we work very hard to meet the needs of adults experiencing homelessness who find their way to us from downtown Jacksonville,” said Bradford.

Mission House is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that has been serving the homeless community of Jacksonville Beach since 1997. Its mission is to empower those affected by homelessness in the Beaches area by providing food, clothing, medical care and support services with an avenue to self-sufficiency.

It addresses basic needs through its Crisis Care, Rapid Re-Housing, Outreach, Workforce Development and Mission House Clinic programs.

Mission House is seeking donations to continue these programs and services to the homeless community of Jacksonville Beach.

For further information or to donate, go to www.MissionHouseJax.org

MaliVai Washington to receive ‘Rock of the Community Award’ from Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach

Tennis great MaliVai Washington will receive the 2021 “Rock of the Community Award” from the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach during its annual Mineral City Celebration, which this year will be held virtually via ZOOM on May 1.



MaliVai Washington

Washington will be honored in recognition of the tremendous impact he has had on the community through the tutoring, mentoring and youth development programs offered by the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation.

“MaliVai Washington is a tremendous role model for our local youth,” said Sam Hall, president of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach. “The academic, athletic and character-building programs provided by his foundation have touched countless lives and helped thousands of young people develop the skills for success.”

Ranked as the No. 1 NCAA tennis player in the nation while attending the University of Michigan, Washington was named the ATP Rookie of the Year in 1990. Over a career that spanned 10 years, he won four career titles while reaching a total of 13 finals and earning singles wins over such players as Andre Agassi, Boris Becker and Ivan Lendl. In 1996, Washington became one of just two African American men in history to reach the Wimbledon Championship finals. That same year, he was a member of the U.S. Olympic Team.

It was also the year he created the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation to introduce tennis to at-risk youth. In 1997, the foundation expanded and soon would include after-school homework assistance and life skills programs.

For more than 20 years, Washington has been a Realtor and real estate investor. In 2010, he earned a finance degree with a real estate focus from the University of North Florida. Soon after, he started Diamond Life Real Estate, Inc., a development and investment company based in Jacksonville Beach. He and his wife, Jennifer, have a son in college and a daughter in high school.

The Mineral City Celebration is the signature annual fundraising event for the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach. Proceeds from the event have benefited more than two dozen local nonprofit organizations and charities, including the Beaches Dial-a-Ride program, Mission House, BEAM, HEAL, the Council on Aging and more.



Grand opening of MWYF's new teen center, Club 904, in 2020. Pictured from left: Student Athlete of the Year Mya Sudduth, MWYF board member Lezita Davis, council members Ju'Coby Pittman and Sam Newby, Mayor Lenny Curry, Mal Washington, MWYF Student Board of Directors President Ny'Reon Shuman.

Contributed photo

MWYF celebrates 25th anniversary

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation (MWYF) is celebrating 25 years of serving hope and changing lives in Jacksonville’s urban core, an area with the highest rates of crime, poverty, high school dropouts and teen pregnancy in the county.

In 1996, pro tennis player, Olympian and Wimbledon finalist, MaliVai Washington, founded MWYF to introduce tennis to low-income, at-risk children at clinics and events. Under the leadership of founding Executive Director Terri Florio, it has grown to become a comprehensive afterschool and summer youth development program serving youth from kindergarten through high school graduation and beyond.

In 2008, MWYF opened its youth center, which now houses all elementary programs, after raising more than \$3.8 million. In 2020, the foundation opened a teen center, Club 904, after raising more than \$5.5 million.

This new center serves middle and high school students and fills a need in the community for programs specifically for teens.

Over the past 25 years, the foundation has served thousands of children through outreach programs, tennis clinics, summer camps and afterschool programs and awarded more than \$1.1 million in scholarships to their members for higher education. Among students who have completed their afterschool program, none have become teen parents and 100% have graduated from high school on time.

“This isn’t something I’ve done alone, this has been a true collective, community effort and that is why we are in our 25th year,” said Washington. “I want to say how grateful I am for all of that support. Going forward, we are going to continue to try to be worthy of our supporters’ time and effort and treasure that they are trusting in the foundation.”

Eagle Scout project aids Beaches nonprofit in pandemic response

Last year, the Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM) received a call from Ben Black, a Ponte Vedra High School student, who was working on his final Eagle Scout project with Boy Scout Troop 277. Ben personally knew families who had been affected by the pandemic and wanted to help a local nonprofit assisting people in need.

After a conversation with BEAM food bank manager Meagan Anderson, Ben learned of BEAM's need for equipment repairs and committed to renovating 17 BEAM food bank carts. Replacing the carts would cost the organization more than \$10,000.

Ben got straight to work alongside his father, Geoff, picking up BEAM's food carts for repairs and spending weeks alongside his family and friends in his garage, disassembling the carts to remove rust and putting them back together with new hardware and fresh paint.

"This repair project was definitely more challenging than what I first thought," said Ben. "The materials needed for the carts were expensive, but I couldn't believe how generous everyone was. From all the people that donated or



Eagle Scout Ben Black is seen with the BEAM food bank carts before they were refurbished.

participated in my fundraising efforts, to local stores like Proctor Ace Hardware and Sherwin Williams in Ponte Vedra,

people were very generous and happy to help an Eagle Project. Neighbors and friends were also very generous during



Eagle Scout Ben Black works on a BEAM food

our 'Fill the Carts' food drive, and we were able to donate 920 pounds of food and toiletry items to BEAM, and I was

PROJECT continues on Page 17

Junior League of Jacksonville to hold Whale of a Sale

The Junior League of Jacksonville will present Whale of a Sale, Jacksonville's largest pop-up rummage sale with more than 30,000 square feet of quality pre-owned clothing, furniture, antiques, books, housewares and more.

The event will be held Feb. 26-27 at the Jacksonville Agricultural Fairgrounds and Expo Center.

Whale of a Sale is the Junior League of Jacksonville's largest fundraiser and is held annually in the spring.

The kick-off event will be held from 6 to 10 p.m. Feb. 26 with a Mardi Gras-themed preview party featuring dinner, libations and entertainment. Spirited attire is encouraged, but not required.

Three levels of tickets are available with all options including dinner, beer and wine, entertainment and access to shopping.

Tickets are: general admission, \$50 (with entry at 7 p.m.); early access, \$60 (with entry at 6 p.m.); or VIP tables (with

entry at 6 p.m., front row parking, seating at tables for eight, additional cocktails and champagne).

Whale of a Sale's main event will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 27. Admission is \$2 and parking is \$5.

COVID-19 precautions will be in place, including but not limited to: attendees will be required to wear a face mask except while eating or drinking; the shopping area will be more spread out than in past years; hand sanitizer will

be provided.

All proceeds benefit the Junior League of Jacksonville's mission of empowering women leaders to make a difference in the community and tackle some of the city's toughest issues, such as the need for affordable healthy foods and nutrition education in local low-income communities.

For more information or to purchase tickets, go to www.jljacksonville.org/events/whale-of-a-sale/.

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Cross-country bike ride to benefit Chemo Noir's cancer research

By Holly Tishfield

Greg Taylor, a Jacksonville resident and longtime fitness enthusiast, has always wanted to see the country. But traveling by plane would mean he missed some of the beautiful in-between parts from one destination to the next and traveling by car would mean going too fast to truly appreciate any of the sights.

His solution?

A cross-country bicycle ride with more than 11,500 miles.

Taylor's six-month bike ride will span the country, corner to corner. He will begin here in Jacksonville on Feb. 20 when a launch party will be held at Jacksonville Beach with more than 150 guests to see him off. From Jacksonville, he will travel west through Texas and California until he reaches San Diego. From San Diego he will travel to Seattle, and then head east to Maine, until finally he makes the trip south to Jacksonville once again.

Although Taylor's journey will be a solo one, he is completing his bucket-list trip by attempting to raise \$100,000 for local cancer research nonprofit Chemo Noir, founded by Katrin Casey.

Casey and Taylor became friends a few years ago while Taylor worked a serving job, and from there Taylor said a remarkable friendship was formed.

"She is not only an unbelievable person in the community," he said, "but she is a personal hero and a personal friend."

When Taylor reached out to Casey to share his plan of

completing the cycling trip in her foundation's honor, she was overwhelmed.

"I am completely flattered that he wants to do something at this caliber for our charity," Casey said. "He is such a passionate guy. If you meet him, you will know."

The two spent the last year or so working out all of the fine details for the trip, including specific route options, which Casey said took about two months to figure out. He has been training extensively for the cycling endeavor, not only physically, but mentally, too. Taylor said that it was important to train for the mental capacity of sitting on a bike alone for prolonged periods of time.

"I have always wanted to be involved in something grander and bigger than myself to give back," said Taylor.

Taylor lost a family member to cancer at a young age, so the Chemo Noir charity touches a special place in his heart, as he knows it does for many other Jacksonville residents.

There are many ways to support Taylor on his journey across the country. By visiting usacancercycle.com, you can keep up with a daily blog of his adventures or follow his Instagram [@usacancercycle](https://www.instagram.com/usacancercycle) for more updates. Interested parties can contribute a donation in honor of a loved one or donate to receive a shoutout from Taylor on his travels. Every penny raised from Taylor's ride will go directly to the Chemo Noir cancer foundation.

"I find myself sometimes thinking about the 11,500 miles, and that is so impossible," Taylor said. "But I absolutely know that I can put in my best effort for everybody involved."

Project

Continued from 16

really proud to be able to do that."

By the time Ben and his team of volunteers dropped off the finished products, BEAM was astonished at the craftsmanship and time spent on making sure the carts were nearly brand new.

"Ben is an incredible young man, and for this Eagle Scout to take on such an extensive project is truly remarkable," said Lori Richards, BEAM executive director. "Our food carts are the literal backbone of our emergency food service. Our team distributed over 1.1 million pounds of food from the BEAM Food Bank last year, and this will ensure that we continue to serve the influx of families seeking emergency assistance in our beaches area. We are forever grateful to Ben and his supporters."

Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America program. The title of Eagle Scout is held for life, giving rise to the phrase 'Once an Eagle, always an Eagle.' Requirements for attaining this rank include earning a total of 21 merit badges, demonstrating Scout spirit, service and leadership. Also included in the requirements is development of an extensive service project that benefits the community or an organization other than Boy Scouting.

Ben went above and beyond to not only repair the carts and collect nonperishable food items, but he also hosted a virtual 5K race, raising funds to purchase the supplies to refurbish the carts and donating the excess — more than \$1,000 — to further support BEAM's programs throughout the pandemic.

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Salvation Army launches program for expectant mothers

The Salvation Army of Northeast Florida launched a new program Jan. 26 for expectant mothers who find themselves in a difficult position with nowhere to turn.

Thanks to a donation by David A. Baker and William D. Reid, one of the Red Shield Lodge rooms, located at the Towers Center of Hope in downtown Jacksonville, was converted into the Bundle of Hope Room, a comfortable, safe haven for up to two pregnant women at any one time.

This room is furnished with a pregnant woman's needs in mind, helping to make her as comfortable as possible as she awaits the birth of her child.

The women will work with case managers to find and obtain safe, permanent housing. They will also receive additional assistance to address any other vital needs they require, such as fellowship, care for substance abuse or counseling for mental health.

This compassionate donation will provide these new mothers with a gracious opportunity to save money without any expenses and receive careful treatment and encouragement.

"We want to thank God for this blessing, as well as David A. Baker and William D. Reid for their inspiring generosity," said Area Commander Major Keith Biggers. "The Bundle of Hope Room will be a source of love and encouragement for years to come and we cannot wait to serve new mothers in need."

Reid, the donor who initiated this project, was born in the Salvation Army home for mothers in Kansas City. He contacted Robert Devers, director of development, in September asking if The Salvation Army of Jacksonville had any programs that helped young mothers or those that would be giving birth soon.

After discussing the prospects of

creating space in the Red Shield Lodge, the decision was made to launch a program that would include a room for pregnant women, along with case management and special needs to help young mothers.

When the Salvation Army approached Reid with the proposal, he was happy to sponsor.

Reid died Nov. 21 before the room was dedicated. However, his wife and daughter attended the ceremony in his honor.

When the Bundle of Hope project was proposed to David Baker, he became a matching sponsor. The Bakers are long-time supporters of the Army and have a passion for helping young women to achieve their potential while caring for the needs of their children.

In order to ensure that all pregnant women in Northeast Florida experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal

access to the Bundle of Hope program, referrals will be accepted through Coordinated Entry, which is a centralized intake process for shelters.

Anyone in need of shelter, including pregnant women, may access Coordinated Entry by calling (904) 358-2411 to complete a phone screening and intake or schedule an in-person screening and intake at a location convenient to them.

Anyone in need may also go in person to 611 E Adams St., Jacksonville, between 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays to complete an intake without an appointment for Coordinated Entry.

Anyone who would like to submit a prayer request or a request for one of The Salvation Army pastors to call may go to www.SalvationArmyFlorida.org/pray.

To help The Salvation Army continue meeting needs in the community, go to www.salvationarmynefl.org.

Virtual Wolfson Children's Challenge raises funds for lifesaving care

Hundreds of families and supporters nationwide participated in the 12th annual Wolfson Children's Challenge: Virtual Edition, celebrating former patients of Wolfson Children's Hospital of Jacksonville and raising funds for lifesaving care.

Wolfson Children's is the region's only not-for-profit children's hospital, serving children of all ages. No child is ever turned away due to inability to pay.

The first-ever virtual format allowed the event to expand beyond Northeast Florida borders and encourage participants in communities across the country to recruit their families and friends to get active and raise funds.

Children and families of all ages, fitness levels and abilities participated in the month-long challenge via the Wolfson55 mobile app. The innovative event experience allowed users access to virtual challenges, features to monitor their physical activity, tools to track individual and team fundraising progress and a virtual closing ceremony celebration.

While the races were not timed this year, fitness-minded participants had the opportunity to log their miles and minutes for the various activity challenges.

The event's inclusive and accessible activity challenges included a 20K individual walk/run and a 200K team walk/run. Participants also had the unique opportunity to put their own creative mark on fundraising with weekly social and compassion challenges such as notes of encouragement, game nights, animal-inspired workouts and more.

Almost 400 children and families from across 15 states participated in this year's challenge, logging 1,532.83 kilometers of physical activity on the Wolfson55 app in January. Together, participants and supporters raised more than \$96,000 to help fund the purchase of life-saving trauma equipment and technology for the most critical patients at Wolfson Children's.

The Wolfson Children's Challenge honors 55 children each year, representing the wide range of services Wolfson Children's Hospital offers to children of North Florida, South Georgia and beyond. Each of the honorees and their families were recognized leading up to and throughout the event, as



Contributed photo

The MIBG therapy room will help Wolfson Children's Hospital treat pediatric patients who have a high-risk neuroblastoma.

well as during the virtual closing ceremony on Jan. 30.

"Each year, the Wolfson Children's Challenge brings together hundreds of supporters to help turn miles into miracles for our children who need it most," said Michael D. Aubin, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital. "Despite being virtual in order to keep everyone safe, this year's challenge was just as powerful, even though individuals and families supported us from a distance. We are grateful for the generosity of our region and everyone who participated, as it ensures we can continue providing the best care for our children for years to come."

To date, the Wolfson Children's Challenge has raised more than \$4 million for the Wolfson Children's Challenge Endowment, helping fund the purchase of life-saving equipment and technology for patients who need it most. This year, the endowment will focus on the development of an MIBG therapy room on the oncology floor of Wolfson Children's Hospital. As the first of its kind in Florida, the new room will give Wolfson Children's the ability to offer the newest upfront treatment for children with high-risk neuroblastoma, the most common solid tumor of childhood cancer.

MIBG therapy is a form of radiation therapy that must be administered to pediatric patients in a special room designed to protect staff, patients and families in surrounding rooms from radiation. During the treatment, patients must be kept isolated in the specialized room for three to seven days to prevent radiation exposure to other patients and staff. The Wolfson Children's Hospital room that is being converted for this purpose already has a separate, adjoining living space to accommodate parents and families. Voice and video communication equipment will be installed in the rooms, allowing families and patients to remain connected.

Concerts for a Cause announces inaugural event with Rodney Atkins

Country musician to perform at Tringali Barn March 5 to raise funds for INK!

The inaugural Concerts for a Cause will kick off March 5 at Tringali Barn with "An Evening with Rodney Atkins," a Tennessee-born country musician with six No. 1 hits and 13 million albums sold.

Presented by Heritage Farms and Adams Entertainment, part of the proceeds will benefit Investing in Kids (INK!), a nonprofit organization that leads efforts to directly benefit educators and students within the St. Johns County School District.

This socially-distanced live music series at Tringali Barn at Heritage Farms in St. Augustine will feature dinner, drinks and a concert with designated pods for groups of up to eight people.

"Concerts for a Cause is something that I've been wanting to do for a while; we've had immense success raising money for local nonprofits through my company's annual Clays for a Cause event," said Chris Shee, owner of Tringali Barn at Heritage Farms, of his company, MasterCraft Builder Group. "I wanted to continue to give back to the community through Concerts for a Cause, a Southern rock and country music series offering a safe place to watch live music again."

Tringali Barn is located at 7310 U.S. 1 South. Gates open at 6 p.m. and the concert starts at 7 p.m. Tickets are on sale now and are sold in pods ranging from \$100 to \$1,250. They are available at TringaliBarn.com

Art, poetry submissions being accepted from St. John's County students for Betty Griffin Center's annual 'A Day Without Violence' calendar contest

By Holly Tishfield

For more than 30 years now, the Betty Griffin Center has provided shelter for local victims of domestic violence and their children. The shelter specializes not only in providing shelter, but also in professional counselling for victims of domestic assault and sexual abuse, case management and civil legal representation.

This nonprofit is heavily community-involved, and one of their biggest annual community involvement projects is currently accepting submissions yet again.

The 2022 "A Day Without Violence" Art and Poetry Contest highlights 13 local artists and 12 local poets in a competition that promotes awareness of violence-free homes and helps create peace in the community.

Submissions are open to all K-12 students in St. John's County, including home schools and private schools. The Betty Griffin Center extends invitations to all schools for students to submit poetry and art pieces centered around the "A Day Without Violence" theme.

Despite the thousands of submissions that Betty Griffin Center receives every year, no two pieces are ever exactly the same.

"It is really unique to see the different artwork that comes in from all the different age groups," said Kenlie Kubert, event coordinator at the Betty Griffin Center.

Judges for the contest consist of other local artists, some recommended by the St. John's Cultural Council. While deciding winners, the judges look for a "positive impression of peacefulness and cooperation, artistic merit, originality, diversity or images, and geographical diversity within St. John's County," according to its website.

Winners of the competition have their work printed in the Betty Griffin Center's annual calendar, with the first-place winner placed on the front cover, and second- and third-place winners being the months of January and February. The

other 110 months consist of runner-ups in the competition. Each artwork printed in the calendar is accompanied by a poetry winner.

Around 3,000 of the calendars are distributed around St. John's County to places such as schools, businesses and police stations. The calendars are also available for purchase on the Betty Griffin Center website and in one of its two thrift stores.

Not only do winners receive their work printed in a calendar, but first, second and third place also come with monetary prizes as well as recognition during a St. John's County School Board meeting and a display at a local art gallery.

Students can submit work now through April 30 for the 2022 calendar contest. They can drop off submissions at libraries in St. John's County or at the two Betty Griffin Center thrift shops. For more information on the competition, and the important work of the Betty Griffin Center, go to bettygriffincenter.org.



Photo provided by Betty Griffin Center

The Betty Griffin Center is now accepting submissions for its annual "A Day Without Violence" calendar contest, open to K-12th-grade students in St. Johns County schools.

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Ocean Palms Elementary School hosted a family-friendly outdoor workout to raise money for the school.



Fundraising workout event organizer Jennifer Werba with PTO member Stacy Rendzio.

Contributed photos

Workout raises \$900 for Ocean Palms PTO

Ocean Palms Elementary School hosted its second annual outdoor fundraising workout on Jan. 30. This family affair offered healthy advice and heart-pumping fun.

Phil Squatrito of Training for Warriors in Ponte Vedra led the workout.

The afternoon of jumping jacks, 60-yard dashes

and push-ups raised more than just one's pulse, it also brought in just under \$900 to support Ocean Palms Elementary School's PTO.

Sponsors Bill and Jo Hynes of the Hynes Home Team also attended the event and provided healthy snacks to participants.

Grune Family Foundation donates \$200K to Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida

Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida recently received a significant contribution from the Grune Family Foundation to name the gymnasium at the organization's Citi Teen Center after the late George V. Grune, a long-time Boys & Girls Club supporter, board member and donor.

The Grune Family Foundation, consisting of Betty Lu Grune, George's widow, and their three sons George, Jr. (Pittsburgh), Robert (Ponte Vedra Beach,) and Steven (Darien, Connecticut) pledged \$200,000 to the Citi Teen Center to honor their father's legacy and memorialize the gymnasium at the Teen Center in his honor.

Throughout his lifetime George Grune was deeply committed to Boys & Girls Clubs, both on the local and national level, supporting Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida and Boys & Girls Clubs of America. His devotion for Boys & Girls Clubs was developed while growing up in White Plains, New York, where he spent many hours enjoying the benefits of what the clubs had to offer. During his many years of leadership and service with Boys & Girls Clubs, Grune developed a passion for serving teens and programs that enhanced their leadership and character skills.

Grune served on the Boys & Girls Clubs of America Board of Governors in the early 1990s, eventually becoming their national chairman. After moving to Ponte Vedra Beach in 2000, he served on the local Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida Board. During these years of service, Grune contributed greatly to teen

programming at the clubs both locally and nationally. As the former chairman and CEO of Reader's Digest, he engaged the company to create educational scholarships for teens who were selected for the national "Youth of the Year" program, the highest honor a Boys & Girls Club member can receive.

"Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida is extremely appreciative of the generous investment provided by the Grune Family Foundation to honor George V. Grune's legacy and his lifetime of service to youth at Boys & Girls Clubs," said Paul Martinez, president and CEO. "This generous gift will create great futures for youth in Northeast Florida by providing teens the opportunity to discover their possible career pursuits after high school."

Originally known as the Laurence F. Lee Boys & Girls Club, the first Boys & Girls Club in Jacksonville, the club was renovated and re-opened in April 2019 as the Citi Teen Center. The Citi Teen Center focuses on creating great futures for teens through workforce development programs featuring a print and embroidery shop, robotics lab, barbershop, salon, recording studio, movie theater and gymnasium. Phase II of the Citi Teen Center, which should open in fall of 2021, features a culinary arts program complete with a commercial kitchen and catering hall.

Today, the Citi Teen Center provides area teens, ages 13-18, with a safe place to go after school to complete homework, have fun, reach their full potential and determine their path after graduating from high school.

Model train enthusiasts donate \$16K to Nemours

A group of train enthusiasts from the Train Collectors Association, Southern Division (TCA), and the North Florida Village Collectors Club have donated \$16,000 to Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville.

The funds were raised after the groups' 2020 convention was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds will help cover the costs of maintaining the landmark model train that is a centerpiece of the Nemours lobby. Funds will also benefit patients via the ADAPT (Assisted Dogs and Pony Therapy) program.

Each year, the TCA and the Department 56 collector clubs each hold a national convention. The 2020 convention was to be the first-ever event to be held jointly between the two groups.

"The overlap between the collector groups is well illustrated by the lobby display at Nemours, which is maintained by a dedicated group of people that utilize both trains and villages," said Anita Sanford, president of the North Florida Village Collectors Club.

"When the TCA's 66th National Convention, 'Make Trax to Jax,' was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Convention Committee and all of the volunteers were very disappointed," said Steve Johnson, who served as the TCA convention chair. "Between CSX, the Florida East Coast, the Norfolk Southern, the Genesee & Wyoming and JaxPort, Jacksonville is truly a 'train town' with a long history of railroad-related developments."

Both groups have a tradition of selecting a charity to benefit from convention proceeds. More than 1,000 pieces of village houses, accessories and model train parts had been donated to support convention fundraisers. Through online auctions of the items, the groups were able to continue to support Nemours as their selected charity.

Volunteers from the Northeast Florida Model Railroad Club, known as the Choo Choo Crew, visit Nemours four times annually to maintain the trains and tracks, and to change the village for each season, providing some levity and contentment for children who come to the clinic for specialty care for their complex medical issues.

The model train at Nemours is the largest size available and is known as G scale, for "garden," since many collectors use them outside in their flower beds.

"This generous donation from the North Village Collectors and the Train Collectors Association allows Nemours to provide a fun, unique and interactive experience for our patients when they enter our lobby," said Dr. Gary Josephson, chief medical officer of Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville. "The train has served as a landmark in our lobby for over 30 years and will continue to be a vital experience for years to come."

New renovations at THE PLAYERS Lobby at Nemours Children's Specialty Care included a new base for the train, and enhanced accessibility to view it.

"We are delighted that Nemours believes the train and village display are a critical part of patient care," said Larry Shughart, a railway consultant and member of TCA. "Many toy train and village hobbyists strive to present displays that remind them of their childhood, favorite stories of days gone by and miniature worlds without strife, disease or conflict. The Nemours train is designed to appeal to children and is a whimsical model that does not represent any particular time or place, but the villages surrounding the train represent the imaginary places we all visit from time to time to seek comfort and peace."

Business Weekly

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Local attorney named chapter president of trial advocates board

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com



Photo by Susan Griffin

Flagler Health+ recently announced Flagler Hospital has achieved the Healthgrades 2021 America's 100 Best Hospitals Award.

Flagler Hospital ranked among top 2% of U.S. hospitals for clinical outcomes

Flagler Hospital has achieved the Healthgrades 2021 America's 100 Best Hospitals Award. The distinction places the hospital in the top 2% of nearly 4,500 hospitals assessed nationwide for its consistent, year-over-year superior clinical performance as measured by Healthgrades, the leading resource that connects consumers, physicians and health systems.

"This distinction is particularly meaningful in a time when providing the highest level of care in the safest

possible environment requires even greater levels of innovation, resilience and commitment," said Flagler Health+ President and CEO Jason Barrett. "Words cannot express the depth of respect and pride I have for our team members, especially those who have been working on the front lines throughout this pandemic for nearly a year. We are honored to be recognized by Healthgrades for our excellence in clinical care."

"Now more than ever, it is important

to celebrate the physicians, nurses and extended care teams that are working around the clock to keep our nation safe," said Brad Bowman, Healthgrades chief medical officer. "For the select hospitals that have been recognized with a Healthgrades America's 100 Best Hospitals Award, we extend our heartfelt appreciation and commend them for their ongoing commitment to delivering the highest quality healthcare."

HEALTH continues on Page 23

New tax rules for traditional IRAs and 401(k) contributions cause for concern



Ric Schilling
Guest Columnist

There are many new tax proposals being advanced by the new administration; some may be appropriate while others may be dangerous to our economic stability both corporately and individually, in my opinion. One that particularly concerns me, as it relates to individuals trying

to create a financially secure plan for retirement, involves changing the tax treatment of traditional IRA and 401(k) plan contributions.

Under the current rules, contributions to these plans are deductible from one's taxable income, assuming certain income limitations are met in the case of IRA contributions. So, if one makes \$70,000 a year and contributes \$5,000 of those earnings to the employer's 401(k) plan, their taxable income is reduced by the \$5,000 contribution. Using the new administration's logic, that is unfair because someone earning \$40,000 who contributed \$5,000 would receive a lower benefit because they are taxed at a lower rate. It is proposed that a direct credit against taxes due be substituted for the deduction — you might say, so what, it works out the same. That would be true until you consider the next part of the proposal. To compensate for the perceived advantage that higher tax bracket taxpayers have over lower tax bracket taxpayers, it is proposed that the credit one would receive from making such contributions

SCHILLING continues on Page 23

Biden administration may spell changes to estate tax and stepped-up basis rule



Dan W. Armstrong
Guest Columnist

A new administration usually means that tax code changes are coming. While it remains unclear exactly what tax changes President Biden's administration will usher in, two possibilities are that he will propose lowering the estate tax exemption and eliminating the stepped-up basis on death. The first would affect only multi-millionaires, but the second could have an impact on more modest estates and their heirs.

In 2017, Republicans in Congress and President Trump doubled the federal estate tax exemption

and indexed it for inflation. In 2020, the exemption is \$11.58 million for individuals and \$23.16 million for couples. As long as your estate is valued at under the exemption amount, it will not pay any federal estate taxes, and vast majority of estates do not owe any tax. President Biden has expressed an interest in lowering the estate tax exemption. It could be halved to \$5 million or even reduced to the previous exemption of \$3.5 million for individuals.

Another possible tax change is how property is

valued when it is passed on at death. Cost basis is the monetary value of an item for tax purposes. When determining whether a capital gains tax is owed on property, the basis is used to determine whether an asset has increased or decreased in value. For example, if you purchase a stock for \$10,000, that is the cost basis. If you later sell it for \$50,000, you will have to pay taxes on the \$40,000 increase in value.

ARMSTRONG continues on Page 24

Ponte Vedra attorney to lead local trial advocates board



David M. Dunlap

Ponte Vedra Beach civil trial lawyer David M. Dunlap of Dunlap, Ravis & Miller was sworn in by Judge Tyrie Boyer as the 2021 chapter president at the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) annual meeting and awards ceremony on Dec. 16.

Dunlap specializes in the area of personal injury and wrongful death litigation and trials. He has been a member of the Florida Bar for more than 30 years. Dunlap, Ravis & Miller maintains offices in the Riverside area and on State Road A1A in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Dunlap has been a member of ABOTA

since 2009 and has held various leadership positions with the organization. In 2016 he received the Chapter Civility Award, which is given to the member who has done the most in the past year to elevate the standards of integrity, honor and courtesy in the Jacksonville legal community. Dunlap was honored by the Jacksonville Chapter again in 2018 with the Chapter President's Award.

ABOTA is a national association of experienced trial lawyers and judges.

It consists of more than 7,600 lawyers across the country, equally balanced between

plaintiff and defense counsel, as well as judges spread among the 96 chapters in all 50 States.

ABOTA is an invitation-only organization. Members must have active experience as civil trial lawyers, have tried at least 10 civil jury trials to conclusion as lead counsel and must possess additional litigation experience and proficiency.

Members must also exhibit the virtues of civility, integrity and professionalism by

BOARD continues on Page 24

FIRST COAST EDITION | VOL. 3 NO. 4

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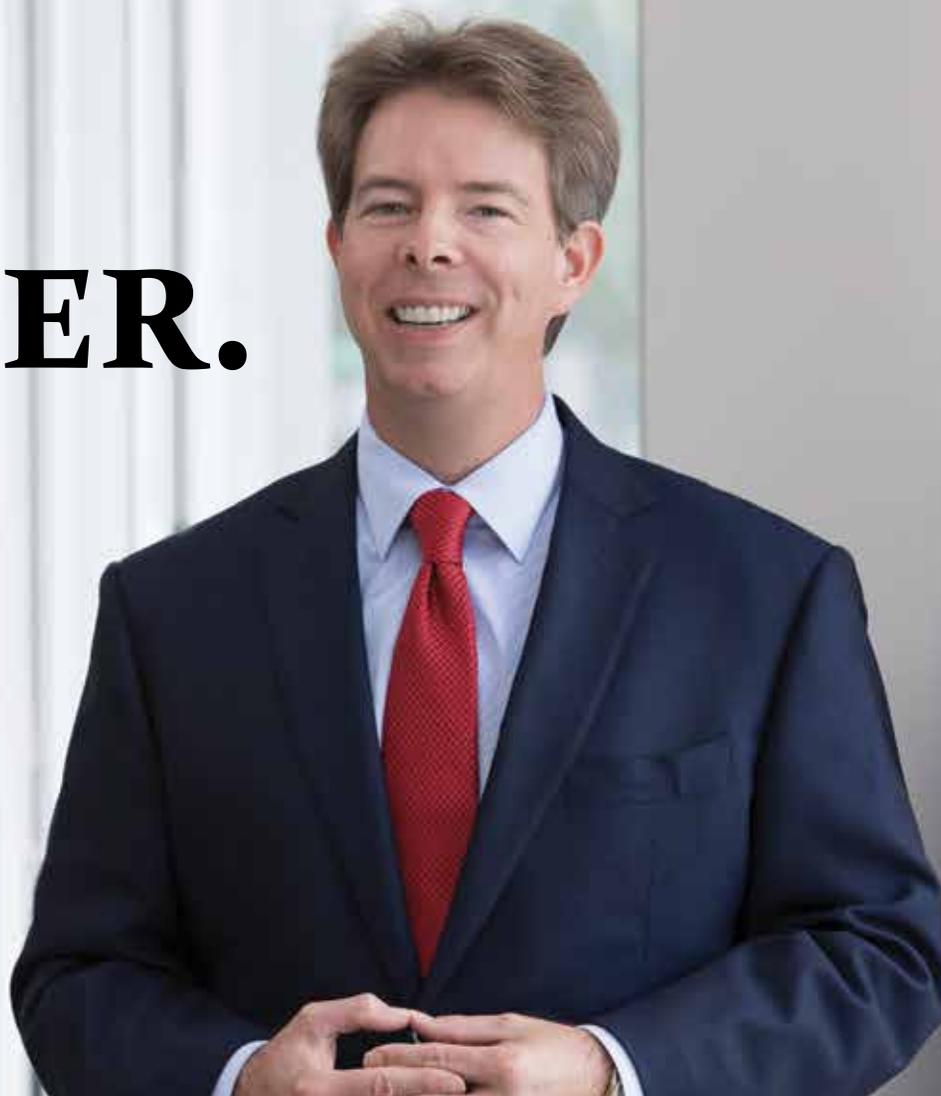
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Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices FNR plans Mega Open House Weekend

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty will conduct its Mega Open House Weekend on Feb. 20-21. The event offers open house viewings – in person and virtually — of the company’s listings of available homes.

“Our Mega Open House weekend offers a wonderful opportunity to view numerous homes and neighborhoods throughout Northeast Florida,” said President and CEO Christy Budnick. “Our knowledgeable Realtors are available to help everyone learn more about the home-buying process and find their perfect home.”

Go to OpenHouseNEFlorida.com for a list of open houses. Go to the company’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FloridaNetworkRealty, to see all of the homes featured virtually during the event.

For more information, go to FloridaNetworkRealty.com.



Photo provided by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

Beacon Lake honored at Laurel Awards

Lakefront neighborhood recognized with gold award for best community website

The Northeast Florida Builders Association’s Sales and Marketing Council recently honored BBX Capital Real Estate with a gold Laurel Award for Best Community Website for Beacon Lake.

“We are honored to receive this recognition for Beacon Lake’s website,” said Bruce J. Parker, managing director for BBX Capital Real Estate, Beacon Lake’s master developer. “Our website effectively communicates the community’s upscale, coastal lifestyle. We appreciate the accolades from our industry peers and we encourage everyone to visit our community, learn more about living at Beacon Lake and join the hundreds of families that love living here.”

The recently redesigned website presents a new look with video enhancements and other improvements that provide a better user experience. It includes a community portal for residents to keep up-to-date on Beacon Lake events and activities. The website attracts thousands of potential new residents each month and is the largest lead generator for the community.

At Beacon Lake, Dream Finders Homes and Toll Brothers are building coastal-inspired single-family homes



Contributed photo

BBX Capital Real Estate received a gold Laurel Award for ‘Best Community Website’ for Beacon Lake. Pictured from left are Bruce J. Parker, Jenn Kjellman, Danielle Simpson and Aaron Lyman.

featuring front porches and open floor plans. Dream Finders also is building luxury townhomes in Harborside at Beacon Lake. Seven model homes are currently open for tours. Homes are priced starting from the mid \$200,000s.

The heart of the Beacon Lake community is Lake House, the 8,200-square-foot amenity and fitness center. It is anchored by a 43-acre lake and located within 358 acres of nature preserve.

Beacon Lake is within the St. Johns County Public School District and currently zoned for A-rated schools including Ocean Palms Elementary School, Alice B. Landrum Middle School and Allen D. Nease High School for the 2020-2021 school year. The district plans to open a new high school in the 2022-2023 school year.

For more information about Beacon Lake, go to www.BeaconLake.com.

During that same period, if all hospitals performed similarly to those achieving the award, 172,298 lives could potentially have been saved.

Flagler Hospital has been recognized with five star designations and/or excellence awards in more than 20 areas by Healthgrades in 2020-21. These include disease-specific and surgery-related categories.

During the 2021 study period, award recipients are recognized for overall

clinical excellence and providing top quality care across multiple specialty lines and areas. These hospitals showed superior performance in clinical outcomes for patients in the Medicare population across at least 21 of 32 most common inpatient conditions and procedures — as measured by objective performance data (risk-adjusted mortality and in-hospital complications).

Go to www.healthgrades.com/quality for more information.

Schilling

Continued from 21

be limited to a certain percentage which favors the lower bracket taxpayer over the higher bracket taxpayer.

By example, the lower bracket taxpayer might get a 10% credit for contributions made while the higher tax bracket taxpayer might get a 20% credit for such contributions. Under the proposal, the cap on tax credits might be 15% thus limiting the higher tax bracket taxpayer to that amount and causing a portion of their contribution to, in effect, be taxable. The rub comes when the funds are withdrawn, presumably in retirement. While only a portion of the contributions were tax favored at the time they were made, there is no indication that withdrawals will be taxed differently than they are at present, i.e., all withdrawals will be fully taxed when received. The net result is double taxation on a portion of the contributions — limiting the tax deduction/credit of contributions made but taxing all withdrawals. I fear that this will cause many middle-income people to reevaluate the extent of their participation in retirement savings plans with all the future consequences that may result from such a decision. It could also create a wave of future retirees more dependent on government support when Social Security and other government resources are already strained.

I am not taking a political position here, just expressing a concern for the future economic health of the country and its citizens. I realize that the new administration wants to increase Federal spending in a number of ways and has to create a lot more tax revenue to pay for it. However, this proposal is not, in my view, a sensible way to accomplish their goals as it will come back to haunt us years from now when this administration is long gone.

By the way, this form of taxing IRA’s will not affect those who can no longer contribute to IRA’s due to retirement or are no longer a wage earner. This will not affect retirees, but will most certainly affect those who are working and earning a good wage.

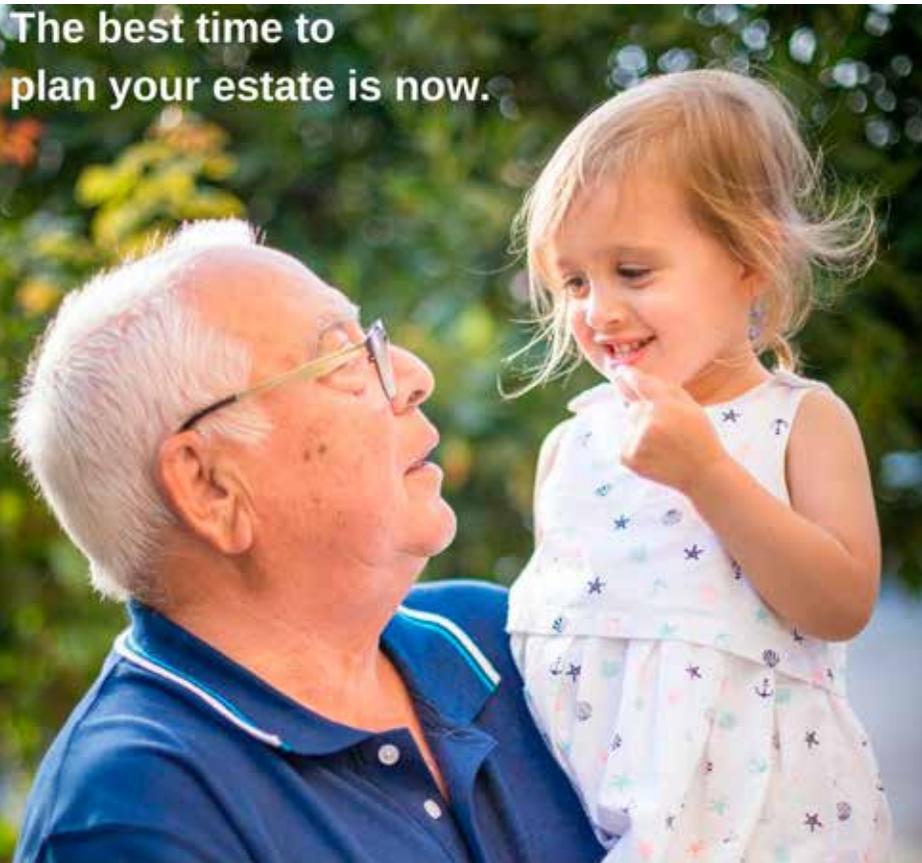
Frederic “Ric” Schilling is a Florida native, born in Jacksonville, FL. Ric is President and founder of Senior Guardians of America, a local North Florida firm specializing in tax reduction, long term illness planning, asset protection, probate avoidance and life income planning. Ric is a National Speaker and Advocate on Senior Issues and has been featured by the Florida Times Union and WJXT, TV-4 in Jacksonville as an authority on Estate Planning and Retirement Issues. Senior Guardians has an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau and is a member in excellent standing with the National Ethics Association. Ric Schilling is a Certified Financial Fiduciary (CFF). You may contact Ric at 904-371-3302 or 888-891-3381 Please visit: www.seniorguardian.com Investment Advisory Services offered through Center Street Advisors, Inc. (CSA), an SEC Registered Investment Advisor. Frederic H. Schilling of Schilling and Associates, LLC (d/b/a Senior Guardians of America) is an Investment Advisor Representative of CSA.

Health

Continued from 21

From 2017 through 2019, patients treated in hospitals achieving the award had, on average, a 26.1 percent lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that had not received the award, as measured across 19 rated conditions and procedures for which mortality is the outcome.

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Armstrong

Continued from 21

Under current law, when a property owner dies, the cost basis of the property is “stepped up.” This means the current value of the property becomes the basis. For example, suppose you inherit a house that was purchased years ago for \$50,000 and it is now worth \$250,000. You will receive a step up from the original cost basis from \$50,000 to \$250,000. If you sell the property right away, you will not owe any capital gains taxes.

According to an article in the New York Times, the current administration may choose to eliminate the basis step-up rule. In the past it was difficult to determine the original cost basis of some property, but in the digital age that information is more easily gathered. The change could result in tax increases for some people inheriting

property that has risen significantly in value.

Another question is whether any of these changes will be made retroactively. It is unlikely, but possible that if Congress changes either of these rules later in the year, they could be made retroactive to the first of the year.

If you are concerned about these rules changing, a trust may be a good way to protect your estate. Property in a trust passes outside of probate, and there are specific types of trusts that are designed to protect assets against estate taxes and capital gains. Talk to your attorney to determine if a trust is right for you.

Tax experts agree that while changes to the tax code are likely, they probably won’t happen right away. The coronavirus pandemic and economic downturn mean that Congress has other priorities at the moment.

Dan W. Armstrong is an attorney based in Ponte Vedra Beach. He specializes in elder law, estate planning and corporate law.

Board

Continued from 22

following the ABOTA Code of Professionalism and Principles of Civility. Its members are dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the right to civil jury as provided by the 7th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The Jacksonville Chapter, one of the largest in the country, consists of 104 members. It presents educational and community programs, including the Teacher’s Law School, the 7th Amendment Symposium for Middle School Students, the James Otis Lecture Series on Constitution Day and the Gary Pajcic Professionalism-Civility Matters Program for lawyers throughout the state.

Janet E. Johnson, P.A.

Criminal Defense Attorney

Janet Johnson is committed to aggressively defending people accused in all criminal matters in state and federal court. In practice since 1994, she is a member of the Florida Bar, The Federal Bar, Colorado Bar, as well as the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She has been on the faculty of FACDL “Blood, Breath & Tears” annual DUI seminar. Ms. Johnson has been awarded the AV preeminent rating™ from Martindale-Hubbell® and was named a fellow to the prestigious Litigation Counsel of America™, as well as one of the ten best criminal defense attorneys nationally for client satisfaction by the American Institute of Criminal Law Attorneys. She also appears as a legal commentator on CNN and HLN.

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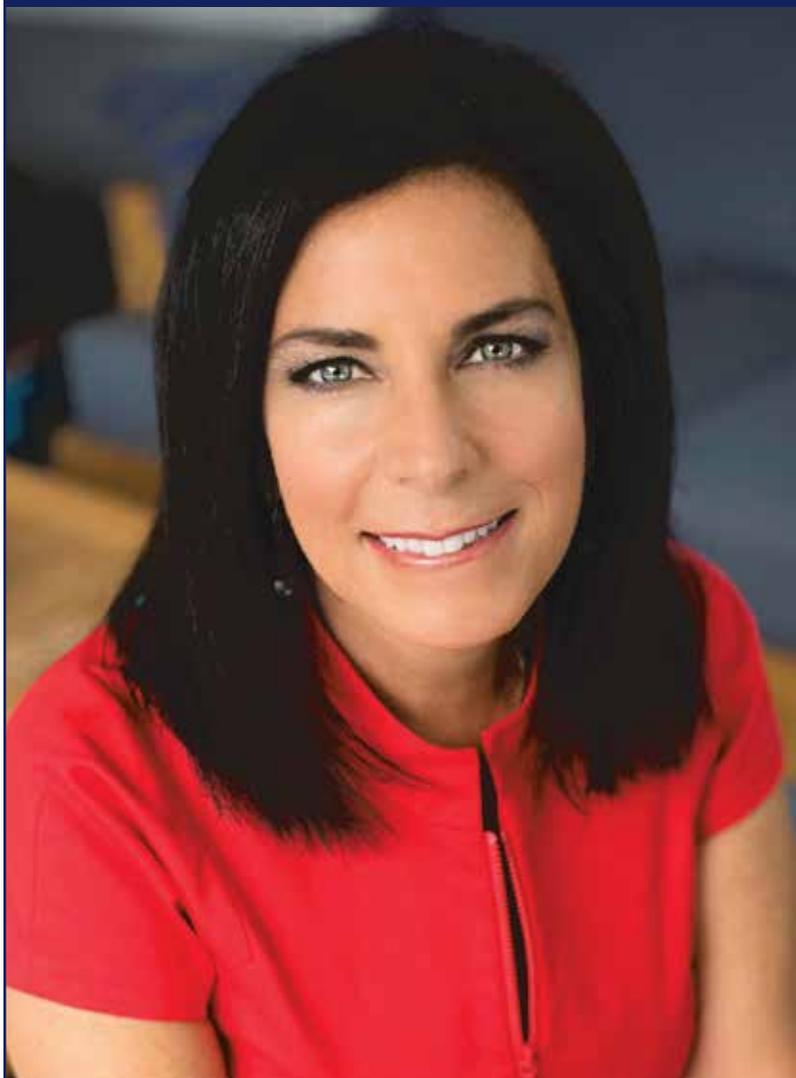
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Lightner Museum exhibitions to explore American Impressionism

This spring, the Lightner Museum celebrates the evocative, timeless beauty of late 19th and early 20th century American art with two exhibitions of American Impressionist paintings.

“American Impressionism: Treasures from the Daywood Collection,” features paintings from the acclaimed collection of the Huntington Museum of Art in West Virginia.

A companion exhibition, “St. Augustine in a New Light: American Impressionism from the Collection of the Lightner Museum,” is curated from the Lightner’s own collection.

The exhibitions will run from April 8 to July 5.

“American Impressionism: Treasures from the Daywood Collection” showcases work from a transitional time in American art when painters abandoned the rigors of academic styles and subjects.

Inspired by their European counterparts, they turned to intimate scenes of the cultivated countryside and figure studies of friends and neighbors that reflected the more modern influences of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. Robert Henri, George Inness, George Luks, Gari Melchers, John Sloan, John Twachtman and J. Alden Weir are among the notable artists featured in the exhibition.

The exhibition was organized by the Huntington Museum of Art and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.



Photo provided by Lightner Museum

Felix F. de Crano’s “King Street Looking East,” painted in oil on canvas in 1906.

“St. Augustine in a New Light: American Impressionism from the Collection of the Lightner Museum” harkens back to the waning years of the 19th century, when St. Augustine became a winter haven for Impressionist painters from artists’ colonies in the north.

Attracted by the warm climate and picturesque scenery, the artists found a reliable source of income in the wealthy tourists who wintered at Henry Flagler’s hotels. They applied the shimmering light, warm colors and expressive brushwork of Impressionism to scenes of St. Augustine’s quaint streets, bustling harbors and magnificent coastline, presenting the Ancient City and its environs in a bold new light.

Organ and strings recital to be held Feb. 21

The Florida Chamber Music Project has rescheduled its organ and strings recital for 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 21, at Riverside Presbyterian Church, which is located at 894 Park St. in Jacksonville.

The Jacksonville Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will jointly present the Florida Chamber Music Project string quartet and organist Jean Spyksma. The recital will feature works by Handel, Mozart, Vivaldi, Albinoni and Bach. Reservations for the free concert are required and can be made at <http://bit.ly/3tJCHNV>.

The concert was originally canceled due to COVID restrictions. All church safety protocols will be in place for this performance. Safe distancing guidelines will be observed. All attendees must wear a mask.

The Florida Chamber Music Project fosters and encourages the presentation of classical chamber music.

Jean Spyksma moved to Florida five years ago from Chicago, where she enjoyed a long career as an organist and conductor in the field of church music. She has been a featured organ recitalist and harpsichordist around Chicagoland, appearing regularly with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra.

Strings

Continued from 26

‘Home’ that should seal the deal, pleasing fans of the genre and creating some new ones ... the perfect blend of pure talent and pluck.”

The Wall Street Journal declared, “Billy Strings has clearly emerged as a premier guitar flatpicker of this era.”

Moreover, Strings and the album

topped Billboard’s 2020 year-end chart in both Bluegrass categories: Top Bluegrass Albums Artists and Top Bluegrass Albums Titles.

Tickets for Billy Strings are available for purchase at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre Box Office and online at Ticketmaster.com. The St. Augustine Amphitheatre Box Office will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. Payment will be only accepted via debit or credit card.

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Sports

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Sharks beat St. Augustine to win district title



Photo provided by Scott Bunkosky

The Ponte Vedra boys basketball team celebrates a 61-52 victory over St. Augustine in the district championship on Friday, Feb. 12.

By Jim Moyes

Special to the Recorder

Ponte Vedra captured its first district championship in five years by defeating St. Augustine 61-52 last Friday night on the Sharks' home court. The win advances the Sharks into the FHSAA Class 5A regional playoffs where they host Terry Parker at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18.

The victory over the Yellow Jackets was the second win during the week following an earlier 74-51 win over Deltona in a district semifinal. The one-two scoring punch of junior Luke Pirris and senior guard Alex Madson paved the way for the Sharks as the pair combined for 91 points for their week's work.

Pirris scored a career-high 35 points in the Deltona contest and followed up with 16 in Friday's final. After tallying 17 points in Tuesday's win over Deltona, Madson poured in 23 tallies against St. Augustine.

"Madson's 23-point performance where he was 4 for 5 from the arc during this championship game is one for the ages," Sharks coach Kevin Whirity said.

At one point midway through the third quarter in Friday's contest, the Sharks surged to a 20-point lead at 42-21, and it appeared

they were headed to another easy victory.

However, the visiting Jackets went on a 10-0 run to cut the deficit in half drawing some concern from Whirity.

"We learned a lot Friday (both good and bad), and we'll be grinding all week long up to Thursday's tough test against Terry Parker," he said.

A three-point play from Pirris stopped the run and both teams pretty much played even until the final buzzer. The closest St. Augustine came to the Sharks was seven points at 53-46 with less than a minute remaining. However, led by baskets and free throws from Pirris and Madson, the Sharks held their lead.

So dominant were the Sharks in Tuesday's opening round rout of Deltona that Pirris scored all 35 of his points in just three quarters of action as Whirity emptied his bench for much of the final quarter.

Pirris now becomes one of but three players in PVHS history to score 30 or more points in a single contest. Former UNF star Beau Beech holds the record with 45 markers in his senior season back in 2012, while Jackson Johnson poured in 31 against Fletcher, also in 2012.

SHARKS continues on Page 30

MORE LOCAL BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

The top-seeded Nease boys basketball team fell to Oakleaf 57-46 in the district semifinals Feb. 10. ...
The Nease girls basketball team lost to Spruce Creek 67-63 in the regional quarterfinals Feb. 11. ...
The Ponte Vedra girls basketball team fell to St. Augustine 43-35 in the regional semifinals Feb. 16.

Bolles athletes commit to universities

Ponte Vedra resident Matthew Anderson and Atlantic Beach resident Maxine Montoya were among eight Bolles student-athletes honored Nov. 11 for committing to a particular college or university to continue their athletic and academic careers.

Family, friends, classmates, coaches and faculty gathered in Davis Gymnasium on the San Jose Campus to celebrate this achievement. Athletic Director Matt Morris welcomed everyone and several coaches introduced their respective athletes.

The following Bolles student-athletes were honored:

BASEBALL

- Matthew Anderson, University of Richmond
- Jackson Baumeister, Florida State University
- Gunner Boree, Brown University



Bolles athletes commit to various universities in several sports.

- Jackson Mayo, University of South Florida

CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK

- Maxine Montoya, Brown University

SWIMMING

- Emily MacDonald, Columbia University

- Ansen Meyer, Georgetown University

- Sasha Ramey, Louisiana State University

This was the first of three college commitment ceremonies planned at Bolles this school year to recognize student-athletes as they commit to colleges.



Photos provided by The Bolles School

Baseball player and Ponte Vedra resident Matthew Anderson has committed to the University of Richmond.

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Episcopal athletes take part in signing day ceremony

Episcopal's Munnerlyn Campus held a special signing day ceremony for students and their parents and media on Feb. 3 in the Semmes Gym.

Eleven sports are represented, and students will attend more than 15 different colleges and universities, including the University of Florida, Yale, Davidson, the University of Pennsylvania, Jacksonville University and Sewanee.

BASEBALL

- Clayton Hodges, Jacksonville University
- Dillon Haines, Stetson University
- Brogan Napier, University of Central Florida
- Layton Perry, Jacksonville University

FOOTBALL

- Nick Elksnis, University of Florida
- Tucker Tomberlin, Stetson University
- Jack Bogan, Davidson College
- CJ Tremble, University of Pennsylvania

LACROSSE

- Mia Carter, Flagler College
- Winnie Pajcic, Sewanee: The University of the South

GIRLS SOCCER

- Abigail Jones, Ave Maria University

ROWING

- Emilee Podvia, Rollins College



Photo provided by Episcopal School of Jacksonville

Episcopal's Munnerlyn Campus held a special signing day ceremony for students and their parents and media on Feb. 3.

SOFTBALL

- Kami Eppley, Stetson University
- Maddie Latta, Yale University

SWIMMING

- Julian Smith, University of Florida
- Mary Kate Kelley, University of Florida
- Scott Haney, Georgia Institute of Technology
- Grant Himes, Swarthmore College

TENNIS

- Justin Bobo, Rhodes College

CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK AND FIELD/ TRIATHLON

- Sabrina Wingert (pole vault), University of South Florida

VOLLEYBALL

- Jordan Cooper, University of North Florida
- Cate Hale, Montreat College

WRESTLING

- Joe Jackson, Roanoke College
- Noah Meyer, Roanoke College

Sharks

Continued from 28

"Pound for Pound, watch out," Whirity said. "No wonder the D-1 football offers are flowing in. Pirris has the ability to score in such a variety of ways, creating many matchup challenges. And while Luke is an exceptional athlete, his desire to win is second to none."

Ironically, it was the 2011-12 district championship the Ponte Vedra team, featuring future D-1 players Beech and Johnson, that would have its season come to an end in an overtime loss on the road to Terry Parker. That contest remains as the only game played between the two schools prior to this Thursday night's game.

Terry Parker will come into the district championship game with a 15-7 record following its loss in the district finals to Lee. The Braves are led by a pair of seniors — 6-foot-2 Lakeese Natana and 6-foot-4 Chris Victor. Natana brings a lofty 18 points a game average into the the district final, while Victor tallies about 12 points per outing. Victor will pose a problem for the Sharks on the boards as he pulls down about 12 missed shots a game.

If the Sharks come out on top, they would host the winner of Thursday night's Lee/St. Augustine matchup in the regional semifinals Feb. 23.

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