

# THE RECORDER



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

Senior Living  
Page 17

Thursday, December 7, 2023

PonteVedraRecorder.com

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## Avoid Medicare scams

Advisory service offers tips

By Shaun Ryan

The number of Medicare scams tends to increase during the annual enrollment period, which runs from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, but that doesn't mean the scammers will go on holiday after that. Anyone can become a scam victim at any time.

According to David Luna, licensed insurance agent and co-founder of Medicare advisory service Connie Health, Florida has been consistently identified as one of the most common places in the nation where fraudulent activity occurs.

"The state of Florida is particularly at risk for Medicare and Medicaid health

MEDICARE continues on Page 12

## Sawgrass Marriott takes gingerbread tradition to next level

12-foot gingerbread house creates holiday vibes, aromas in lobby

By Anthony Richards

Creating gingerbread houses is a tradition for families during the holidays, but the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa took that tradition to another level when they revealed their 12-foot gingerbread house in the resort's lobby on Dec. 2.

A usual gingerbread house is built in one night, but the scale of this project was months in the works before the final version was revealed on the second level of the resort's lobby.

According to executive pastry chef James Victorino, the project included 75 pounds of brown sugar, 285 pounds of all-purpose flour, eight gallons of molasses and 25 dozen eggs to go with seemingly endless amounts of cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg.

"We started back in October, but it was on and off because we had a bunch of ban-



Photo by Anthony Richards

Sawgrass Marriott executive pastry chef James Victorino explains to children what the 12-foot gingerbread house in the resort's lobby is made out of.

quets so we had to fit it in when we could," Victorino said. "We're definitely proud of what we accomplished."

When he first heard about the idea for the

project, he was intrigued by the challenge as someone in the culinary world, because

GINGERBREAD continues on Page 16



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## Send us your news

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



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Plus, find the Recorder on Facebook at  
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## Best of Beaches voting ends

Voting for the Best of the Beaches contest is now closed.

Readers have nominated and voted for their favorite Beaches businesses, organizations and professionals in several categories online. Voting ended Monday,

Dec. 4.

Winners will be announced in a special Winner's Circle section to be published in an upcoming edition of The Recorder.

Thank you to all who voted in this year's contest! We appreciate your input.

## BRIEFS

### Grief support group to meet

A grief support group meets at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Room 107 of the Family Life Center, 578 First Ave. North, Jacksonville Beach. The group is for men and women grieving the death of a family member or friend. The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 13. For information call Kathy at 553-8933.

### Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

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

### Family seining event set for Dec. 9

GTM Research Reserve will offer a program on family seining from 9 to 11 a.m. Dec. 9 at GTM Research Reserve Guana Dam, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Learn about the animals and their roles in Guana Lake by pulling a seine net and collecting species of fish, crabs and other marine life.

The event is free, but parking is \$3 per vehicle. All necessary gear (waders and boots) will be provided. Hat, insect repellent, water and sun-screen are recommended.

Register online at [gtmnerr.org/visit/events](http://gtmnerr.org/visit/events).

### Seminar focus: nonsurgical treatments for chronic pain

Dr. Nathan Riddle, owner and founder of Riddle Wellness, will host a free health and wellness seminar at noon Dec. 14 at Ponte Vedra Beach Library to educate the community about the newest non-surgical treatments for chronic pain.

Riddle is the local representative of a national, nonprofit organization that has provided wellness programs for thousands of businesses, organizations and churches. He also volunteers to do disease prevention programs in the form of health

or stress screenings and workshops.

The Ponte Vedra Beach Library is located at 101 Library Blvd.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

R	A	B	B	I	S	S	A	L	I	N	E	
M	A	D	E	I	R	A	A	B	A	L	O	N
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9	3	4	8	5	1	6	7	2
6	1	5	7	2	4	8	3	9

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'Tis the season to get Creative with STEM and Culinary Camps

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# Las Posadas returns to mission grounds

Organizers of the popular Las Posadas event are inviting area residents to the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche at Mission Nombre de Dios in St. Augustine for an unforgettable evening.

Visitors will see a live Nativity and savor the warmth of freshly baked cookies and rich hot cocoa amidst the glow of lanterns and the sounds of history coming to life.

The Historic Florida Militia will conduct a procession capturing the essence of “Las Posadas” (The Inns) in a celebration that transcends time.

This is not just an event. It’s a bilingual, family-friendly pilgrimage into the heart of Christmas, and it unfolds for one night only, rain or shine, from 3 to 9 p.m. on

Saturday, Dec. 16, at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche, 101 San Marco Blvd.

Visitors are asked to consider a minimum donation of \$5 per adult (12 and older). Online donations will be promptly acknowledged with a receipt.

Limited parking in the main lot is complementary with your event registration, but it is on a first-come, first-served basis — make sure to secure your place! Additional parking is available for a nominal charge.

To participate in Las Posadas, reservations are required. Book a spot by visiting [missionandshrine.org](http://missionandshrine.org).

For additional information, call 904-824-2809 or email [info@missionandshrine.org](mailto:info@missionandshrine.org).



Contributed photo

Participants of a previous Las Posadas event re-enact the search by Mary and Joseph for lodging in Bethlehem.

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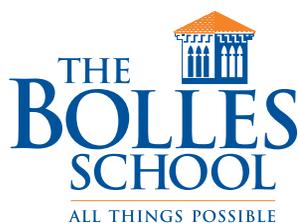


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# Beach fire season underway in Atlantic Beach

By Anthony Richards

Beach fire season is in full swing in Atlantic Beach and permits are now being accepted for anyone planning to have a gathering on the beach with a fire.

Atlantic Beach's fire season began Nov. 1 and will end Feb. 28.

However, the City of Atlantic Beach has certain regulations in place to help ensure that everyone can be safe while enjoying a fire on the beach, such as a fire must always be attended to by a responsible adult 21 years of age or older.

Certain regulations focus on the location chosen for a fire, as it must not block beach access ramps so that city vehicles can have entry onto the beach if needed, and it should not be set up against or in beach dunes with vegetation.

No personal vehicles will be allowed on the beach at any time, even for those approved to have a fire.

Being aware of weather conditions is always a good safety tip at the beach no matter the time of year, but especially during fire season, as the City of Atlantic Beach advises using good judgement by checking the wind first and not lighting fires in windy conditions.

Another rule in place as always is that applicants granted access for a fire are responsible for making sure no one in their party disturbs the beach topography and vegetation in place, and any violators who do will be subject to a \$5,000 fine for violation of the Florida

state ordinance.

The size of a fire is another thing to be followed, as large bonfires are not allowed on the beach and instead campfires are required to remain at a size no larger than two feet by two feet in its perimeter and one foot deep.

Because a portion of fire season also falls in the midst of the holidays, the City of Atlantic Beach does not allow the burning of Christmas trees or pallets on the beach.

Some regulations are in place throughout the year and remain so, such as no alcoholic beverages, glass containers or fireworks on the beach.

All fires must be fully extinguished and not left to burn or smolder by 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, but an extra hour is provided on Friday and Saturday with the time being 11 p.m.

According to the City of Atlantic Beach, anyone parking on 18th Street will need to wrap up their night sooner, as the parking lot closes at 9 p.m.

All campfire ashes and debris must be removed from the beach and all fire pits must be filled in and leveled with the surrounding area by the approved applicant and all trash must be picked up and placed either in the trash barrels along the beach or in bags next to the barrels.

Not complying with the regulations in place may lead to the event being shut down, being assigned additional damage/clean-up fees and losing the right for future approval of fires along the beach.

# Brilliant Boats

Area residents gathered along the Intracoastal Waterway on Saturday, Dec. 2, for the annual Palm Valley Boat Parade. Despite the fog, spectators “Saw Three Ships — And More!” as they passed by, brightly decorated for the holidays.

Photos by Shaun Ryan



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*Dr. Ameeth Vedre is a non-invasive cardiologist and cardiac imaging specialist. He is passionate about both general and preventive cardiology. He brings that passion, together with his extensive knowledge, to the patients of First Coast Heart & Vascular Center in St. Augustine.*

## Dr. Ameeth Vedre

### As told to Shaun Ryan

#### Tell us a little about your practice and what you specialize in.

We are a full-fledged cardiovascular practice with dedicated, board-certified, honest, hardworking physicians with a goal of patient care first above all. We thrive in timely care and are always available to our patients: 24/7/365.

Our specialists have attended and graduated from top tier schools — Harvard, Duke, Michigan, Cleveland Clinic, George Washington, eminent NY schools — and have excellent credentials from UF Health system, as well.

We provide a comprehensive range, from preventive (medicine), heart failure, atrial fibrillation and interventional cardiology to complex atrial fibrillation ablation, TAVR, valve cutting-edge, sophisticated state-of-the-art care in all area hospitals, but primarily in UF Health Flagler, Memorial and Orange Park hospital systems.

We have our providers covering St. Johns, Duval, Clay and Palm Coast.

#### It's always interesting to know why different physicians choose to specialize in one area rather than another. What first interested you in cardiology?

My interest pans out from my deep-rooted belief in family, education and observing my grandparents and parents in the health field in varied specialties. I used to intern with my father early on from high school in hospital and clinics and learned patient care begins by “listening” rather than “telling.”

My service attitude is deeply rooted from my grandparents who were social reformers in land donation, equity care diversity in pre-independence and post-independence India called the “Bhoodan Movement,” aka the Land Donation movement.

#### Tell us about your education, perhaps some of the highlights.

I finished with highest honors and distinction in Bangalore University, M.S. Ramaiah Medical College in India, one of the top med schools of India, attending an internship in one of the finest and excellent hospital systems, “Gandhi Hospital,” Hyderabad, India.

My journey for excellence brought me to do an internal medicine residency in Michigan State University with my Spartan spirit: “Go Green.”

I further pursued clinical cardiology research at University of Michigan and pursued a cardiology MD fellowship in Michigan State University.

My passion for advanced cardiac imaging brought me in to acceptance at Duke University, North Carolina, for cardiac MRI training.

#### Do you have any professional achievements or accomplishments you'd like to share?

1. I was selected Roderick Abbot Best Outgoing Intern and Resident
2. Co-Chief Fellow at the fellowship program
3. I had the honor and distinction of getting Gold Medals and honors in biochemistry, microbiology, pharmacology medicine fields in med school training.
4. I published extensively in top tier American



Contributed photo

**Dr. Ameeth Vedre is a non-invasive cardiologist and cardiac imaging specialist.**

College of Cardiology journals as first author and received awards for presentations at meetings.

#### What do you like best about what you do?

Providing preventive, accurate, timely care in cardiology and my group peers mentors at First Coast Heart and the camaraderie.

#### What do you like best about living here on the First Coast?

Amazing resources for children and family, beaches, trails, lakes and, above all, the excellent community.

#### How do you like to spend your free time?

I enjoy lots of time with family, my wife and my 12-year-old daughter. We make it a point to attend all of Ameya's (my daughter) basketball games.

I love table tennis, traveling a lot with my wife and family/friends, taking time to read nonfiction — and I am a history buff.

My goal is to provide excellent care to patients — I care for them like family — and work with my peers to be the most dependable cardiology practice around.

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

**KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE**

# Holiday gift ideas for the gardener

*"Flowers are the gift to us from nature, our gift to nature is our love."*  
— Debasish Mridha



**By Kathy Esfahani**

The holiday season is in full swing! As you think of your family, friends and others in your life, it is often challenging to find the perfect gift for everyone on your list. The following ideas are suitable and thoughtful for the gardener you know.

- Birdhouses are a wonderful addition to a garden or landscape. They come in all shapes, sizes and colors to suit specific designs.
- Birds are a welcome addition to any garden because they help with pollination and pest control. Bird feeders attract birds into a landscape and make it easy to observe these garden visitors. Look for feeders that hold bird seed and/or hummingbird feeders depending on the gardener's preference.



Photo provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery  
**Birdhouses are a wonderful addition to a garden or landscape.**

- A nursery gift certificate allows the gardener to choose the flower most needed in his or her landscape. Package the gift certificate with a small flower or plant for a thoughtful presentation.
- Fountains or water features add a soothing murmur to the garden.
- A butterfly house can help make a garden home for these fluttering creatures. Not only are butterflies beneficial to the

garden but watching them can help reduce stress and promote positive mental health.

- A rainfall gauge helps the gardener know when to water versus when the landscape is satisfactorily moist. Gauges come in a variety of designs to suit the recipient's personality or preferences.
- A soil pH meter measures acidity in the soil so the gardener knows how best to treat and/or fertilize the garden.
- New garden tools are always useful. Tools are available in sets, decorative designs, various sizes and more.
- With the garden tools comes a need for a tool container/apron. This gift ensures that the gardener in your life always has the tool he or she needs anywhere in the garden.
- Look for kneeling cushions/stools to make gardening a more comfortable pastime. Some gardening seats even come with space to store tools.
- Watering cans come in various colors, designs and shapes. Decorative cans add a splash of color to this most necessary tool.
- Every landscape has a place for steppingstones, whether they are organized

in a path or as a marker for the special spot in the garden. Stones range from simple pavers/bricks to more colorful, extravagant designs.

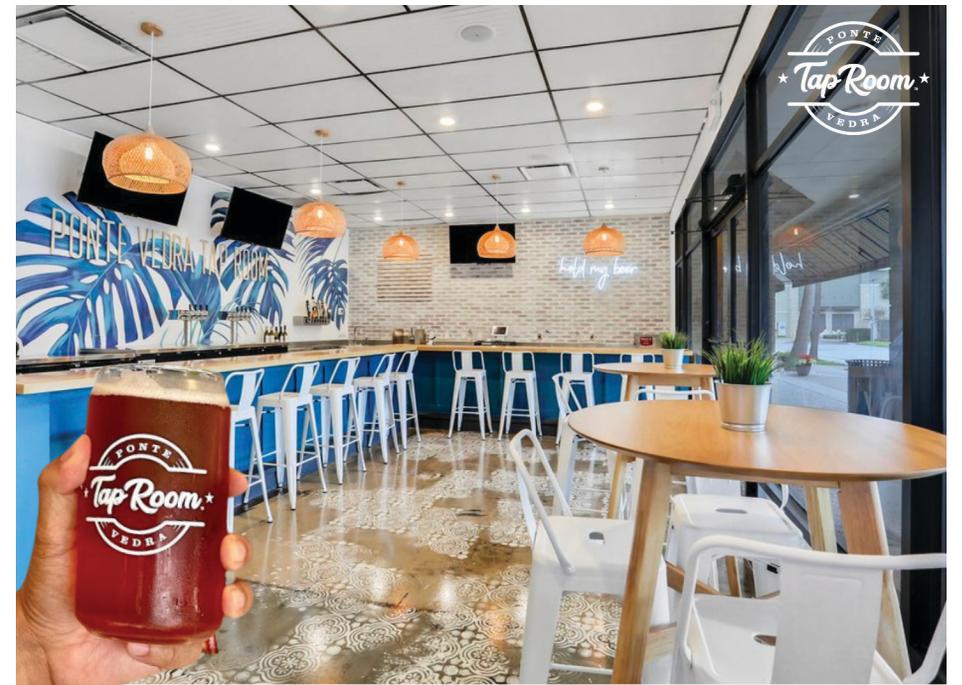
- Garden sculptures or windchimes add a unique touch to a landscape and help personalize the garden.
- A beautiful flowerpot/planter is a welcome gift for any gardener. Whether used to highlight an area of landscape or grow young plants before transplanting, planters are always helpful. Look for pots in any color, shape and size.
- A potting bench helps the gardener organize tools, plant small pots or finish other tasks necessary for landscape maintenance.

Visit us at the nursery to select a unique and memorable gift for the gardener on your list. Happy holidays!

**Please email Kathy at [kcg.pvr@gmail.com](mailto:kcg.pvr@gmail.com) for any questions or gardening tips you would like to see in the future. For more information and ideas, visit Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery, 196 N. Roscoe Blvd. The phone number is 904-655-7373.**



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**When:** December 23rd, 2023

**Where:** Ponte Vedra Tap Room  
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# Museum celebrates MOSH Wonderful Time of the Year

The Museum of Science & History (MOSH) recently announced its second MOSH Wonderful Time of the Year campaign, featuring special promotions, events and donation opportunities.

The initiative began in 2020 as a way for the cultural institution to help make up for funds lost during the COVID-19 pandemic and to support the museum's ongoing efforts to serve the community through in-person and virtual programming.

This year, the museum will once again serve as an official drop-off location for Toys for Tots. Visitors can bring new toys or books to donate to the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation through Saturday, Dec. 9.

Additionally, visitors can directly support the museum this holiday season through its Pay It Forward membership program, an initiative that launched on Giving Tuesday and offers individuals and families an opportunity to purchase a family membership for just \$25 that will be gifted to local families facing financial barriers.

The museum will also host holiday-themed programming during the campaign, including:

- Join the museum for Merry Day at MOSH on Saturday, Dec. 9, for a family-friendly festive afternoon. Guests will have the opportunity to explore the museum, experience a holiday-themed planetarium show and take a picture with Santa. All tickets include



complimentary hot chocolate, access to arts and crafts stations and a take-home photo.

- The Bryan-Gooding Planetarium will present a Laser Holiday edition of MOSH's Cosmic Concerts from 5 to 6 p.m. Dec. 16 and 17.

- The Vagabond Flea Market is collaborating with MOSH for the first time and will host its monthly maker's market, previously hosted in Murray Hill. MOSH will host vendors of locally handcrafted goods, unique vintage pieces, and designers of many sorts for

a creatively curated holiday shopping experience. The Vagabond Flea at MOSH will take place from 6 to 10 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 21.

- In addition to the holiday-themed programming, MOSH is once again offering its Winter Discovery Camps. Parents can sign their children up for the two-day experience (Dec. 27-29) where campers will learn about the science and history behind myths, monsters and legends such as the Loch Ness Monster, the Kraken and more. Camps are divided for children grades K-2 and 3-5.

As a special treat this holiday season, the MOSH is offering \$1 admission for children ages 3 to 12 with the purchase of a full-priced adult entry ticket throughout the month of December.

"The team at MOSH is looking forward to finishing the year with events that engage the community, no matter how old they are," said Bruce Fafard, CEO of MOSH. "We hope that visitors find an event that's a perfect fit for them, and also a reason to return to MOSH next year. This new partnership with Vagabond Flea gives the community a fresh perspective of what MOSH can be. We want them to not only learn about science and history, but the makers and shakers of the city they live in now."

To learn more about holiday programming and exhibit hours, go to [themosh.org](http://themosh.org).

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## OBITUARIES



### Nancy Turner Wenderoth January 23, 1924 - November 30, 2023

Nancy Turner Wenderoth, 99, of Fort Smith, Arkansas passed from this life on Thursday, November 30, 2023 and was reunited in heaven with her loving husband Collier on what would have been their 78th wedding anniversary. She was born on January 23, 1924 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Nancy also resided for many years in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 65 years, Collier Wenderoth,

Jr., parents Robert Ellis Turner and Lois Graham Turner, and her brother and sister-in-law Bobby and Martha Turner. She is survived by her four daughters and their spouses: Nancy and Harry Robinson of Fort Smith; Gingie and Marc Watson of Marietta, GA; Janie and Randall W. Goins of Fort Smith and Sally and James Jones of Fayetteville. She was "Nannie" to fifteen grandchildren: Tripp Smith of Fort Smith; Collier Smith (Julie) of Fayetteville; Katie Robinson (Kirk) of Fayetteville; Renee Durham (Scott) of Fort Smith; Sara Robinson of Fort Smith; Amanda Mendenhall (Kevin) of Fort Smith; Marc Watson, Jr of Sandy Springs, GA; Margaret Ferguson (Stephen) of Fayetteville; Nancy Cole (Mike) of Dahlonga, GA; Virginia Watson of Atlanta, GA; Aimee Goins Miskov (Jon) of Fort Smith; R. Trent Goins (Megan) of Fort Smith; Caroline Duncan of Norwood, CO; Allison Singleton of Dallas, TX; Jenny Pillar of Fort Smith; sister-in-law Nan Pierce of Hot Springs, AR; four nephews: Bill Pierce, Collier Pierce, James Pierce and John Pierce.

Nancy grew up in both Little Rock and Fort Smith and was a graduate of Fort Smith High School where she played the violin and was a majorette. She was a member of DAD (high school sorority). She was a fifty plus year member of First Presbyterian Church in Fort Smith, where she served as a Sunday school teacher, elder and was honored with a lifetime

membership award. She also attended The Chapel at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.

Volunteering and serving others was a passion of hers. She served as Junior League President from 1962-1963 and participated in events affiliated with the Fort Smith Little Theatre, delivered Meals on Wheels for over 30 years, and served on many committees over the years. One committee in particular worked to restore the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock. She served as President of the Hardscrabble Women's Golf Association. She shared her love of cooking and traveling through her popular monthly column "Notes from Nancy's Cooking" for 10 years in the Southwest Times Record. In addition to family recipes passed down from generation to generation, these columns featured culinary finds from her travels around the world. Nancy and her husband Collier made several meaningful lifelong friendships with people from all over the world throughout their travels.

She was an avid sports fan and started at a young age listening to the St. Louis Cardinals on the radio with her father. In her later years, at the age of 90, she threw out a first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals game in St. Louis surrounded by her family. She also loved the Arkansas Razorbacks and Jacksonville Jaguars. Nancy enjoyed playing many sports throughout her lifetime including tennis, golf and

swimming. She thoroughly enjoyed long walks on the beach daily at her home in Ponte Vedra, FL. Nancy had a love for entertaining and hosting. Nancy was a lover of flowers and greatly enjoyed sending flowers regularly to loved ones and friends. Her favorite pastime was writing lots of thank you notes—she never missed an opportunity to thank someone in writing and wrote notes daily up until her passing. She enjoyed movies and especially the Hallmark channel.

Nancy's grace, courage and strength she portrayed throughout her life was nothing short of spectacular.

Memorial services will be held at First Presbyterian Church, 116 North 12th at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, December 5th. Following the service between 12-2 PM there will be a celebration of Nancy's life at Hardscrabble Country Club. Private burial will be at Forest Park Cemetery in Fort Smith under the direction of Edwards Funeral Home prior to the memorial service.

Honorary Pallbearers will be her grandsons: Tripp Smith, Collier Smith, Marc Watson, Jr, and R. Trent Goins; and her sons-in-law: Harry Robinson; Marc Watson, Sr.; Randall W. Goins and James Jones.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to: First Presbyterian Church 116 North 12th or the charity of your choice.

To view the online guestbook, please go to [www.edwardsfuneralhome.com](http://www.edwardsfuneralhome.com).

## DEATH NOTICES

#### Patricia Ann Bane

Patricia Ann Bane, 72, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Nov. 16, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – [www.pontevedravally.com](http://www.pontevedravally.com)

#### LaVonne Blackburn

LaVonne Blackburn, 94, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 27, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – [www.pontevedravally.com](http://www.pontevedravally.com)

#### Jerry Butler

Jerry Butler, 85, of Ponte Vedra Beach,

Florida, died Nov. 20, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – [www.pontevedravally.com](http://www.pontevedravally.com)

#### Frederick William Hoge

Frederick William Hoge, 90, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Nov. 29, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com)

#### Muriel McGowan

Muriel McGowan, 107, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 29, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family

Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com)

#### Sandra Ann Schiefen

Sandra Ann Schiefen, 82, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Nov. 27, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com). 904-249-1100

#### Barbara Ann Wamsley

Barbara Ann Wamsley, 93, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Nov. 29, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 [www.quinn-shalz.com](http://www.quinn-shalz.com)



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198 & 212 W. King St.  
**San Marco Lot**  
301 San Marco

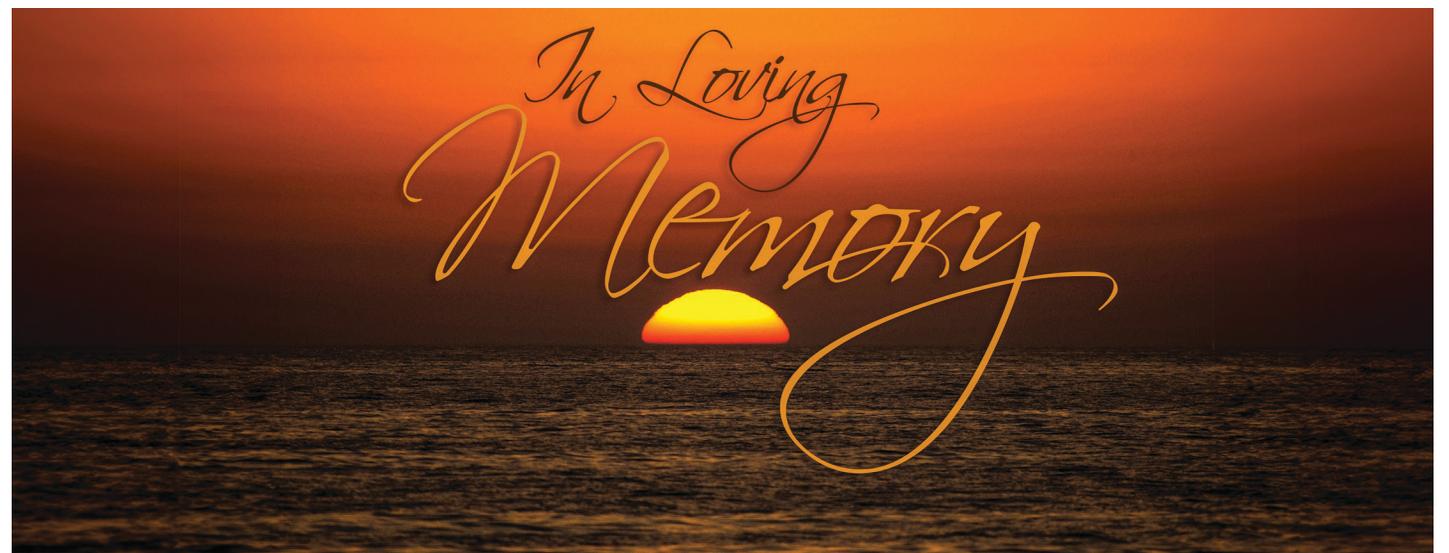
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# Old Town Trolley Tours celebrate 22 years



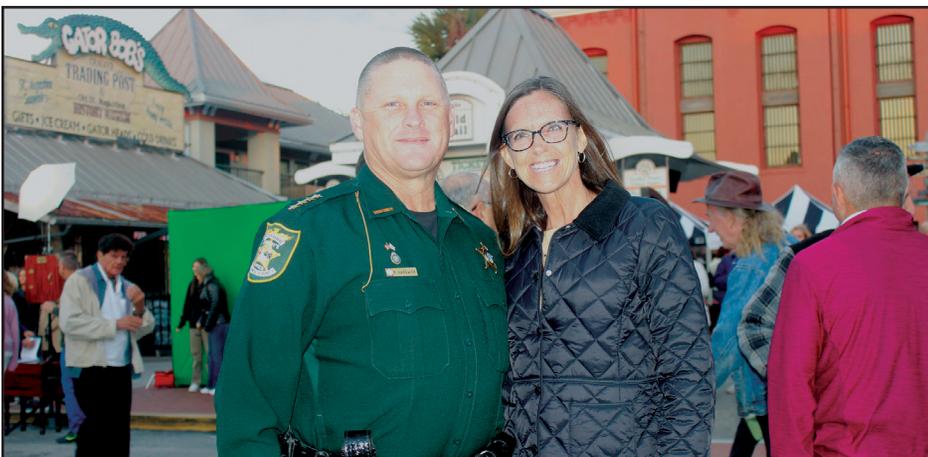
Bonnie Hayflick and her husband, Bill Gregory, with Charles Cox (center).

Old Town Trolley Tours celebrated their 22nd anniversary with a celebration that included entertainment and vendors on Nov. 1.

Photos by Susan Griffin



The Rivertown Band provided live music for the event.



St. Johns County Sheriff Robert Hardwick and his wife Kendell.



St. Augustine Distillery was one of the vendors at the celebration.

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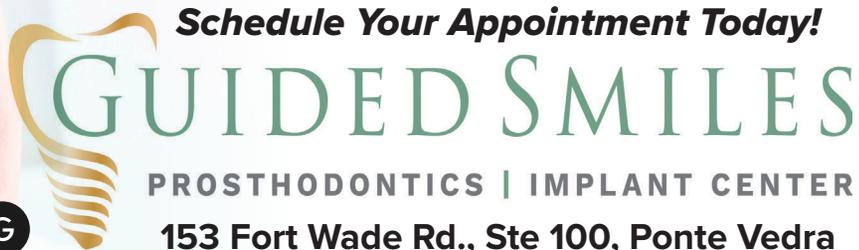
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# Medicare

Continued from 1

care fraud,” he said.

And because scammers are always coming up with new ways to take advantage of their victims, it’s important to keep ahead of them.

“The best way to combat scams is to be alert and ensure that your address is updated, so that you receive all official notices,” Luna said. “Reach out to a licensed insurance agent or provider like Connie Health to complete changes to your plan, and never give away sensitive information, such as your Medicare number, over the phone.”

Connie Health is a national company with agents in Florida. It helps seniors with Medicare issues, including selecting a plan, resolving billing challenges and more. After the plan is selected, the company follows up with reminders about key dates, help in finding specialists and advice on maximizing benefits.

The company provided the following 10 ways people can protect themselves from Medicare scams:

- Don’t accept medical supplies from a door-to-door salesperson. It’s a scam.
- Likewise, Medicare and Medicaid never send representatives to private homes. If someone comes to your house claiming to be from these agencies, it’s a scam.
- If anyone, other than your doctor or hospital providers, asks for your Medicare card, Medicare number or Social Security card or number, it’s a scam.
- If someone offers you money or gifts for free medical care, it’s a scam.
- A provider tells you that the item or service isn’t usually covered, but they “know how to bill Medicare,” so Medicare will pay. It’s a scam. You’ll be the one who gets a bill.
- If you receive a bill in the mail for services or products you didn’t order, and there’s a demand for payment, it’s a scam. Do not pay the bill. You’re not liable for things you didn’t order. When you get a bill like this, report it at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

• If you review your Medicare statement and see that there are services, products or equipment you or your provider didn’t request or are double charged, it might be a scam. You can review your statements by mail or through your account at Medicare.gov.

• Are you getting a new Medicare card? If someone tells you that you must return your old Medicare card, it’s likely a scam. Once you receive your new Medicare card, destroy the old one with scissors or a shredder and start using the new card immediately.

• Did you get an email from Medicare? Look closely at the email address it’s coming from. While many emails may look like they’re coming directly from Medicare, once you click these links, you’re taken to a website that looks authentic but is a scam. Do not reply to unexpected emails, text messages or click on links – even if they seem genuine. If you need to log into your Medicare account, go to Medicare.gov or call 1-800-633-4227.

• Don’t be afraid of threats to terminate benefits. If you qualify for Medicare, your

eligibility will not be taken away because you don’t sign up for a particular plan.

Of course, there’s a lot more to know about Medicare than how to avoid scams. Simply navigating the Medicare landscape requires a certain vigilance to ensure one is getting the full benefit.

For instance, the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan changes every year, and that could affect costs. And income qualifications for Extra Help will change next year. In addition, people sometimes overlook an important benefit, such as Chronic Conditions Special Needs Plans for those with diabetes or other chronic condition.

A licensed agent can help determine whether a client is eligible for various benefits.

Connie Health offers a checklist of priorities for seniors to use when selecting a plan and recommends choosing an agent with local expertise, rather than relying on a call center agent in another state. Because it receives commissions, it provides services at no cost to the individual.

For further information, go to [conniehealth.com](http://conniehealth.com).



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## Palm Valley Child Development named Special Olympics Unified Champion School

### *Institution awarded National Banner*

Palm Valley Child Development, a local educational institution dedicated to fostering holistic development in children, recently announced its designation as a Special Olympics Unified Champion School, having received the highly regarded National Banner recognition.

Palm Valley Child Development was awarded this distinction in September and is one of 11 schools in St. Johns County to earn this title. Both a regional and state representatives of Special Olympics will present the school with a banner of recognition at the Special Olympics soccer game at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 13, at 185 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach.

The National Banner recognition is awarded to schools that have consistently met and surpassed the 10 standards of excellence established by Special Olympics and a national panel of leaders from the education community.

These standards serve as a framework for the implementation of comprehensive inclusion practices that nurture a sense of belonging, engagement, collaboration and respect for all members of the student body and staff. The banner attests to Palm Valley Child Development’s commitment to promoting inclusivity and ensuring that every student feels valued and supported during their educational journey.

“We are humbled and honored to be recognized as a Special Olympics Uni-

fied Champion School and to receive the National Banner,” said Vicky Holland, head of school. “It is truly a testament to the incredible commitment and dedication of our staff, the resilience and talents of our students and the unwavering support of our Palm Valley community. We remain committed to upholding the high standards that this recognition represents and look forward to continuing our journey of excellence in education.”

Being recognized as a Special Olympics Unified Champion School is an extraordinary accomplishment awarded only to those who uphold the standards of excellence set forth by Special Olympics and a national panel of educational leaders.

The philosophy of learning at Palm Valley Child Development is based on quality academics, movement, socio-emotional development, family involvement and recognition of the spirit at the heart of childhood.

The team-teaching cooperative provides small, mixed-age classes ranging from preschool through elementary, based on the four essential pillars of early intervention: child, parent, education and therapy. Multi-sensory classrooms engage students with challenging course material, authentic learning opportunities and enriching co-curricular activities that support and cultivate their varied interests and talents. Services focus on the development of academic, social, emotional and behavioral skills through comprehensive trans-disciplinary instruction that recognizes and maximizes the individual strengths of each child.

GUEST COLUMN

# Winter tips for soothing dry eye



**By Donald A. Barnhorst Jr., M.D.**  
Florida Eye Specialists

As temperatures drop, our eyes are exposed to dry air and other extreme conditions, making dry eye symptoms all too common. Fortunately, there are easy steps you can take to keep your eyes comfortable and healthy in the winter

months. Know what precautions to take to maintain your eye health and avoid symptoms like red, itchy eyes as cold weather moves in. Here are the top tips to prevent winter dry eye.

**Symptoms of Dry Eye in Winter**

Dry eye is a common condition that occurs when our eyes do not produce tears properly due to an imbalance of oil, water and mucus. Some symptoms you might experience include watering eyes, increased sensitivity to light and feeling like there is something in your eyes. You may also have blurry vision, eye fatigue, redness or stringy mucus in or around your eyes.

**Use Artificial Tear Drops**

During winter months when exposed to cold, dry wind and air, your eyes are more likely to dry out and become irritated. Dry eye symptoms can also occur as your heating system runs during the winter, which removes the moisture from the air in your home.

Keep eye drops handy during the colder months of the year to soothe your irritated eyes as needed. While no single

brand works best for all forms of dry eye, some of the best over-the-counter brands include Systane Ultra, Refresh Optive Mega-3, Retaine MGD, Optase Dry Eye Intense Drops and Oasis Tears Plus.

Apply eye drops once each morning or before going to bed in the evening. This daily process will help your eyes become more lubricated and eliminate painful symptoms. Using a heated eye mask for dry eyes is also a proven remedy to eliminate symptoms of the condition.

**Be Mindful of Makeup and Cosmetic Products**

Women are more prone to dry eye. Certain makeup products can make symptoms worse, which is why it's important to be vigilant about ingredients and opt for products without harsh chemicals. Keep in mind that retinol and anti-aging creams can harm delicate oil glands under the eyelid. Be cautious about eye shadows, avoid powders and glitter, and consider using a primer to minimize contact with your eyes' tear film. Avoid using liquid eyeliner or waterproof mascara, as they often require harsh chemicals for removal.

It's also important to regularly clean your eye brushes to prevent the buildup of bacteria. When it comes to removing your makeup, avoid products with alcohol and opt for natural options like coconut oil or argan oil, as well as micellar wipes.

**Visit the Dry Eye Experts in Nocatee and Ponte Vedra Beach**

Finding the right dry eye treatment can drastically improve your eye discomfort. The key is breaking the cycle of irritation and inflammation by determining the cause of your dry eye. Don't ignore your symptoms — dry eye can lead to eye infections and potentially impact your vision, even preventing you from wearing contact lenses. Schedule an appointment at our Ponte Vedra Beach or Nocatee locations to begin creating a treatment plan that best suits your type of dry eye.

**Donald A. Barnhorst Jr., M.D., is a Ponte Vedra resident and board-certified ophthalmologist at Florida Eye Specialists. For more information on Dr. Barnhorst, visit FloridaEyeSpecialists.com or call 904-564-2020.**

## Holiday Entertainment Guide

*Joy for All!*



**Holiday Pops**  
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**First Coast Nutcracker**  
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**Handel's Messiah**  
December 16/17



**Youth Holiday Concert**  
December 11



**Santa at the Symphony!**  
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\*Santa is available for photos 90 minutes prior to concert start with a paid ticket.



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# Christmas Classic

The streets of St. Augustine were lined with spectators Saturday morning, Dec. 2, for the annual Christmas Parade, which featured dancers, musicians, classic cars, floats, pirates, movie characters, Santa Claus and much more.

Photos by Shaun Ryan



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Raffle supports local charities

**To the Editor:**

The Rotary Club of Palm Valley recently held their successful Caring For Kids fundraising raffle. They would like to thank the generous people in our community who supported this worthy effort, from the many local businesses who donated the prizes, to all the club members' friends and family who purchased raffle tickets or made donations. The monies raised will help fund Peace of Heart's AgriAutism program and the local chapter of Blessings in a Backpack who help feed at-risk children between school days, as well as other local charities.

A big thank you goes to Platinum Sponsors Masters, Smith & Wisby, P.A., Jerue Truck Brokers, Inc., River Capital Advisors, L.C., Mr. Walther Vliegen and Mr. Will Burke. We also greatly appreciate our Gold Sponsors Beasley, Bryant & Co., CPA's, P.A., Chris Thompson of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, Fore Electric & Energy LLC, Cyndi King, Berkshire Hathaway Home-Services Florida Network Realty, as well as Mr. Horton Hickerson and Ms. Susan Goldring. We are thankful for Anne Urban, owner of Destination Planning. Her eager generosity added the needed special touch for our online "Live Drawing." And finally, a special heartfelt thanks goes out to Tim Ware of Digital Print & Media whose efforts on our behalf exemplified Rotary's motto, "Service Above Self."

**Carol Maurer**  
Rotary Club of Palm Valley

# Workshop to help bereaved during holidays

Community Hospice & Palliative Care is offering Hope for the Holidays, a workshop will help attendees learn ways to cope with grief during the holiday season, determine what is right for them and their families and refocus energy on positive activities that honor and remember their loved ones.

Attendees will leave with a renewed sense of hope for the upcoming season.

Hope for the Holidays is open to the public.

There is no charge to attend, but attendees should RSVP by calling 904-407-7001 or toll free at 800-274-

6614 Ext. 7001.

**St. Johns County**

Monday, Dec. 11, 1-2 p.m.  
Stephen R. Chapman Family Community Campus  
1355 U.S. 1 South, St. Augustine

**Arlington/Beaches**

Thursday, Dec. 14, 3-4 p.m.  
Anne and Donald McGraw Center for Caring of Community Hospice  
4715 Worrall Way, Jacksonville



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Photos by Anthony Richards



Members of the Sawgrass Marriott culinary team unveil the gingerbread house.



Children were able to write letters to Santa during the unveiling event.

# Gingerbread

Continued from 1

It is not every day that the task of creating a 12-foot gingerbread house presents itself.

“Anything like that is always very exciting, especially doing it here, because it is something on a much different scale than what they (Sawgrass Marriott) usually have,” Victorino said.

The Sawgrass Marriott is known for having its gingerbread village in the lobby, but this year decided to go even bigger,

literally.

“We’ve done different iterations of gingerbread for the holidays over the years,” Sawgrass Marriott General Manager Todd Hickey said. “It makes the lobby smell good first of all, and with such an expansive atrium here, this was really the idea of our culinarians to really bring out it and create that ‘wow.’”

The house is made entirely of edible materials except for the lights and garland used and a pair of televisions that sit behind windows that have video of Santa working with his elves in his workshop on a loop.

Hershey bars were used to create the front door of the house and the names of the chefs that worked on the project are engraved into the door’s handle.

According to Victorino, the inspiration for the house came primarily from his own house and he also used glimpses of his Filipino culture within the design as well, including a light of a star inside a flower that was hung above the doorway.

“That is a lantern that is very traditional to Filipinos, which I wanted to incorporate to make it a little more personal as well,” Victorino said.

The steepness of the 12-foot roof was one of the more challenging aspects of the project and the design had to adapt at times to figure out the best way to go about

achieving it.

The gingerbread shingles used for the roof were dyed with a red tint to give them a different look from the body of the house.

Once the holidays are over the gingerbread house will be taken apart and the materials will be recycled in a very unique way.

“The cool thing about this is that there is a lot of food involved and instead of sending all that food to the landfill, we’re going to put it on bee hill to feed our honeybees throughout the winter months when the flowers are low and there’s just not a lot of pollen,” Hickey said. “They’ll eat the sugar and the icing just like they would a flower, so we’re making sure that it’s not going to waste.”

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The front door of the gingerbread house was made out of Hershey chocolate bars.



# Senior LIVING

## FEATURING

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NEW 55-PLUS COMMUNITY COMING TO NOCATEE PAGE 20

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LOTS OF FUN AT PLAYERS COMMUNITY SENIOR CENTER PAGE 30

COA CENTER AT FLAGLER HEALTH+ VILLAGE ANNOUNCES PROGRAMS PAGE 30

**AND MUCH MORE INSIDE!**

THE  
RECORDER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023



The luncheon will also serve as a fundraiser to help the Atlantic Coast Young Marines, who are raising money to visit historic Pearl Harbor sites in the future.

# Pearl Harbor remembrance luncheon set for Dec. 10

*Festive ceremony planned to honor local World War II veterans*

**By Anthony Richards**

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is officially Dec. 7, and the We Can Be

Heroes Foundation is doing its part to make sure the anniversary of that fateful day is honored with a ceremonial luncheon Dec. 10 from noon to 1 p.m. at the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena.

Local World War II veterans will be in attendance, including John Connelly, who spent time as a prisoner of war, and centenarian Fred Pappas.

However, all World War II veterans and their families are invited to join in the ceremony, which will begin with a pre-lunch reception beginning at 11:15 a.m. where the public will have the opportunity to interact and take photos with the World War II veterans.

Pearl Harbor Day commemorates the Japanese attack on U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, which led to the United States' role and entrance into World War II.

Part of the ceremony's presentation will include historian, author and professor Dr. Wesley Moody share rare stories and explore the effect the events of Pearl Harbor had and "America's least known World War II fighter pilot."

The remembrance luncheon will also serve as a fundraiser to benefit the Atlantic Coast Young Marines, who are raising money to visit historic Pearl Harbor sites in the future.

Young Marine Palase Randall will also have his graduation ceremony from the organization at the event.

The event is an annual happening and one of many events the We Can Be Heroes Foundation puts on throughout the year to remember and honor veterans from throughout the years.

The We Can Be Heroes Foundation is an all-volunteer, nonprofit foundation headquartered in Jacksonville.

The foundation publicizes courageous heroes and unsung heroes' stories by hosting tributes to heroes and offering educational forums on America's founding values while seeking to help veterans and those in need.

One of the additional ways they go about honoring veterans is with their online "Wall of Heroes" photo gallery for the public to honor their past and present heroes.

Adding to the vibes of the event will be soloist Karim Zabaneh who will provide live entertainment by singing a mix of patriotic and Christmas music.

A limited number of tickets are available online at WeCanBeHeroes-Foundation.org or by calling 904-373-8817.



Photos by Anthony Richards

The We Can Be Heroes Foundation's Pearl Harbor Remembrance Luncheon on Dec. 10 is one of several events they have throughout the year designed to honor those who have served.

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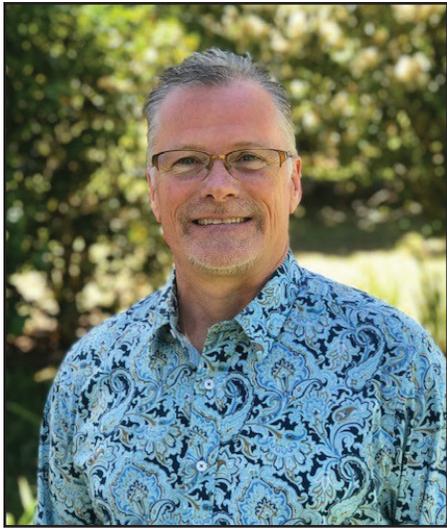
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General Manager Jerry Shafer



An artist rendering of the Rise apartment buildings.

# New 55-plus community coming to Nocatee

By Shaun Ryan

A new 55-plus active living community is coming to the area. It's called Rise at Nocatee, and when it opens in 2024, it will offer 178 apartment homes just one mile from Nocatee Town Center.

"It's a great location," said General Manager Jerry Shafer.

The housing portion of the community will consist of two buildings. The first will be four levels and have a total of 59 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. It is slated for completion in mid-April. The

second building will be five levels and consist of one- and two-bedroom apartments, a total of 119. It is slated for completion in mid-June. Both buildings will have elevators.

There are four floor plans for one-bedroom, one-bath homes, which will start at 683 square feet. There are five floor plans for two-bedroom, two-bath homes, which start at 1,140 square feet. Finally, there is one floor plan for three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath homes, which is 1,538 square feet.

The apartments will have ceilings up to

10 feet, granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, washer and dryer, high-fiber internet and more.

"Each home also will come with a spacious balcony or patio," Shafer said. "And all master bedrooms have a walk-in shower."

The nearly 10,000-square-foot clubhouse will house onsite offices, a yoga room, a 24-hour fitness room, a media and music lounge, a creative arts workshop, a game room and more. It will have a kitchen, and local chefs will be invited for cooking presentations. The clubhouse is slated

to be completed by the end of January.

The community will have a lifestyle coordinator, and Rise expects to hold between 20 and 25 activities per month.

"Our goal is to keep everyone very much involved," Shafer said.

Outside, there will be a pet park, grilling stations, a sun deck and a heated, resort-style pool. Residents will have the option of renting a garage or carport, as well.

"We will have electric vehicle and also golf-cart charging stations, which is a very

COMMUNITY continues on Page 21

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A site map of the Rise community in Nocatee.

## Community

Continued from 20

big amenity here in the Nocatee area,” Shafer said.

The community is a project of Rise, a real-estate company founded in 1995 in Georgia. Initially, Rise started out with student housing before branching out to apartment living and then multifamily properties. Eventually, Rise relocated its corporate office from Valdosta, Georgia, to

Jacksonville.

Rise is building another 55-plus community in the Melbourne area. And in the latter part of 2024, it expects to begin construction on another community, this one in Jacksonville in the Butler and Hodges area.

Those interested in learning more about Rise at Nocatee can go to [risepontevetra.com](http://risepontevetra.com). There, one will find an interactive site map, online application and more.

In addition, hardhat tours are available now. They can be booked at the website.



An artist rendering of the pool and clubhouse area of Rise.

## Event raises money for charities

St. Johns County Council on Aging (COA) is participating in the 2023 Subaru Share the Love Event. Subaru will donate \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle sold or leased through Jan. 2 to four national charities designated by the purchaser or lessee, one of which is Meals on Wheels.

“This annual event allows us to help more homebound elders receive the Meals on Wheels they need,” said COA Executive Director Becky Yanni. “We are excited to get the word out to members of our community about this opportunity to help local seniors in a meaningful way.”

Through the Subaru Share the Love Event beginning in 2008, Subaru and its

retailers have helped the Meals on Wheels network provide more than 4.3 million meals and friendly visits to seniors in need. For more information, go to [mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethelove](http://mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethelove).

Council on Aging is partnering once again with local Subaru dealer, Subaru of Jacksonville, in spreading the word about the program. Subaru of Jacksonville is located at 10800 Atlantic Blvd. To contact them, call 904-544-6516 or go to [subaruofjacksonville.com](http://subaruofjacksonville.com).

St. Johns County Council on Aging is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that serves older adults and caregivers in St. Johns County. To learn more, go to [coasjc.org](http://coasjc.org).



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## DONATIONS



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# Jacksonville Senior Expo held at UNF

Below are photos from the Jacksonville Senior Expo that took place at the University of North Florida's Adam W. Herbert University Center on Nov. 28 and 29. The two-day showcase featured a variety of vendors offering all kinds of services for senior citizens.

Photos by Susan Griffin



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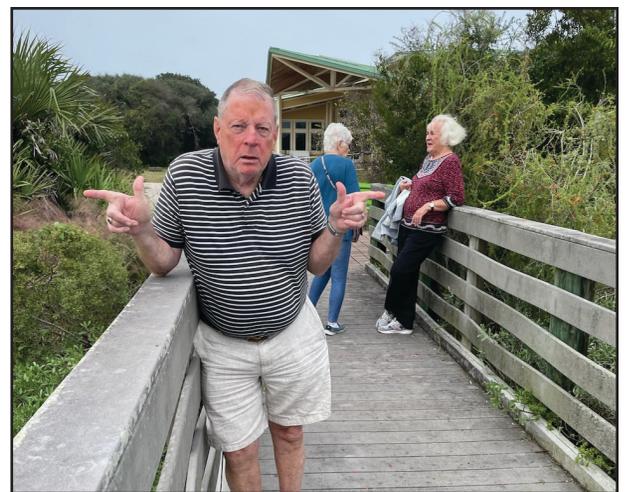
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# Starling takes field trip to GTM Research Reserve

Residents at Starling at Nocatee Independent Living recently took a trip to the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve. It was a fun trip as the residents learned about the different animals in the area while enjoying a walk through the reserve.

Photos courtesy of Starling at Nocatee Independent Living



## Seasons Greetings from First Coast Heart & Vascular Center!

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Here are some tips on how to stay heart-healthy this holiday season:

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- ▶ Stay active
- ▶ Watch your alcohol intake
- ▶ Drink plenty of water
- ▶ Reduce your stress
- ▶ Get plenty of sleep
- ▶ Take your prescribed meds

We hope you and your family enjoy a happy, healthy, and relaxing holiday.

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Retirement income threats — how should you respond?



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

## Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

When the daily news is filled with discussions about inflation, interest rates, market volatility and endless other angst-producing events, how you react could make a difference in your financial outcomes. These tips may help you sort through the noise and create an action plan that fits your situation.

### 1. Evaluate

The first step is to evaluate. Do you have a current retirement income plan that you have been following? If your plan is documented, it is likely that it includes how much cash flow you need to meet your day-to-day expenses as well as for discretionary spending. Pull out your plan and take a look to determine where adjustments might be applied.

If you do not have a plan or it has not been updated to reflect your current circumstances, document your assets, income sources, expenses and debt. Gathering all the information in one place helps clearly define your total money picture. In the process, you may uncover expenditures that can be reduced or eliminated. A few adjustments may be enough to reduce the pressure on your income flow.

### 2. Retain or adjust

If your plan is addressing your current needs, it can be reassuring to confirm that your plan is working as you had expected.

If your income needs no longer match your income plan, depending on your circumstances, there are actions you may want to consider to get your plan on track. These may include:

- Altering your withdrawal strategy to change the amount in taxes you pay on your retirement income to give you greater spending power
- Reallocating your assets or temporarily reducing withdrawal amounts to address any concerns about drawing down your investments in a down market
- Including inflation-indexed investments or other income-generating strategies in your portfolio
- Adding an annuity with income protection, which may help ensure an income stream that lasts for life, even in the event of poor market performance. A variety of annuities, such as variable annuities, registered index-linked annuities (RILAs), fixed indexed annuities and immediate annuities, may

provide income protection. One of these products may be appropriate for a portion of your assets, depending on your specific needs and risk tolerance.

Your adviser can help you explore how alternatives such as these may fit into your strategy. Indeed, both your tax adviser and financial adviser can be helpful partners in assessing your situation.

### 3. Periodically revisit and adjust again, if needed

Regular reviews of your income flow and income strategy are helpful to identify if changes are needed in your strategy or to confirm that things are working as planned.

These are just a few examples of changes that could help your retirement income deliver on your strategy. Contact your financial adviser and legal and tax advisers to review your specific situation and help address your changing needs.

**Variable annuities are long-term investments suitable for retirement funding and are subject to market fluctuations and investment risk.**

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

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GUEST COLUMN

# Tips for visiting aging loved ones during the holiday season



By Shontres Miller

Many of you have experienced this scenario. You have not seen your loved ones in many months, and you think to yourself: “Mom/Dad/Aunt/Uncle/

Sibling doesn’t look so good!” Maybe slower to get up, or slower to converse and react, but definitely noticeable decline. Visiting aging loved ones during the holidays can be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect and create cherished memories. However, it can also be a time of concern and anxiety, especially if you notice changes in their physical or cognitive health. Here are some tips to help you navigate these visits and make the most of your time together:

- 1. Communicate and plan ahead.** Before your visit, communicate your plans and schedule. Discuss their preferences and limitations to ensure they are comfortable and not overwhelmed. Consider their energy levels, dietary needs and any mobility restrictions.
- 2. Set realistic expectations.** Accept that they may not be the same people they were in the past. Be patient, understanding and flexible. Focus on enjoying the time you have together rather than on making everything perfect.

**3. Be mindful of their physical needs.** Ensure your loved ones have a safe and comfortable environment. Help with tasks like preparing meals, doing laundry or running errands. Encourage them to rest when needed and don't overschedule activities.

**4. Engage in meaningful conversations.** Take time to talk to them about their lives, their interests and their memories. Share stories of your own and ask them questions to keep them engaged. Avoid sensitive or stressful topics that might cause anxiety or upset.

**5. Create new traditions and memories.** Engage in activities that everyone enjoys, such as playing games, watching movies or reminiscing about old times. Consider starting new holiday traditions that you can continue in the years to come.

**6. Be patient and understanding.** Aging can be a challenging process, and sometimes it can manifest in ways that are difficult to handle. Be patient

with your loved ones and try to understand their perspective. Avoid criticizing or nagging and focus on providing support and encouragement.

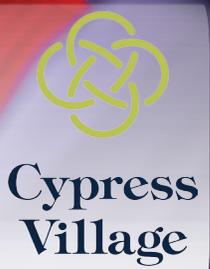
**7. Cherish the moments.** The holidays are a time to cherish the moments we have with loved ones.

**8. Involve other family members.** Encourage other family members to participate in the visit and share the responsibilities. This can help reduce your own stress and provide additional support.

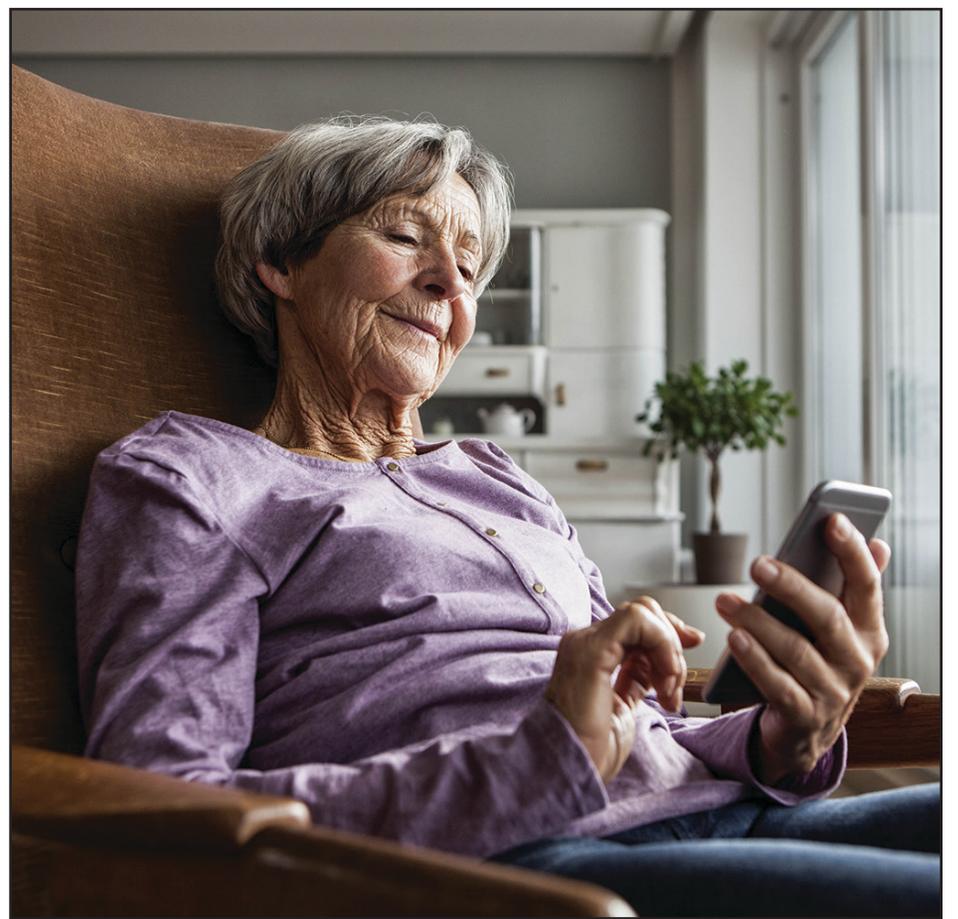
**9. Many of these scenarios can create added stress in your life.** It's very important to remember that you also must take care of yourself during this time. Make sure to get enough rest, eat healthy meals and find time for yourself to unwind and relax.

**Written by Shontres Miller, co-owner of Beaches Home Care. “We Come To you with Care.” 904-325-9086**

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# Companies work to stop phone, text scams

*Public must remain vigilant*

**By Shaun Ryan**

You receive a text from your bank or some other entity, and it requests you call a certain phone number. It may promise you a loan with very desirable terms or some other opportunity. Or it may hint that something must be straightened out to avoid some sort of trouble.

So, you consider calling the number or at least responding to the text.

But stop and think.

Is this the business's normal, everyday phone number, the one you've used for years? If not, you may be walking into a scammer's trap. Even responding to the text tells the texter that someone is at your number, so you may receive a follow-up phone call from a very convincing caller.

Con games are as old as mankind and the forms they take are limited only by the imagination. As new technology becomes available, con artists adapt to take advantage of new opportunities. In fact, the newer the technology, the less savvy the potential victims. And scammers count on that.

Texts are currently very popular with

scammers, but of course the old phone call scam is still alive and well. And as scammers become more adept, they become very difficult to recognize — until it is too late.

Fortunately, the consumer has some friends in the corporate world who are fighting this battle on their behalf — often behind the scenes in a hidden way.

Local resident, telecom security adviser Dino Guglietta works with a company called VoiceAlerts, which operates within the infrastructure of various carriers. When people think of telecom providers, they often think of the big ones, like AT&T, T-Mobile or Verizon, but in reality, there are many, many providers globally. In fact, a call to the States from elsewhere is the world will travel across a chain of carriers.

“We sit within the carrier's infrastructure, and we monitor this activity,” said Guglietta.

Essentially, the service acts as a firewall.

VoiceAlerts is often able to intercept phone numbers being used by scammers — usually a number that has been pulled out of service by the carrier but one that the scammer has acquired. When this number is intercepted, it prevents the

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# Donations Needed for ElderSource's new Sharing & Caring Closet

*'Shop & Drop' event is  
Dec. 8 and 9*

Nonprofit ElderSource's new Sharing and Caring Closet will accept consumable medical supplies for local seniors in need during a two-day "Shop & Drop" event Dec. 8 and 9 at its Mandarin headquarters. Visitors can drop off donated items at ElderSource from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8, and from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9.

Suggested donations include the following.

Priority items needed:

- Incontinence undergarments (both

men and women, all sizes)

- Waterproof pads for beds and furniture
- Ensure nutritional drink (all flavors)
- Disposable, personal hygiene wipes

Additional items:

- Non-slip bathmats and rugs
- Adhesive tread stickers
- Non-stick Band-Aids
- Moist or dry heating pads
- Memory foam cushions for chairs
- Pads, guards, shields for men and women
- Skin-soothing barrier, moisturizing creams
- Disposable gloves

- Instant heat and ice
- Seasonal items like blankets, throws

Please note that food and clothing items are not being accepted for the closet.

"We have been receiving a number of requests from seniors and their caregivers for items that are very expensive and often not covered by insurance," said Linda Levin, CEO of ElderSource. "The Sharing and Caring Closet will officially open to the public in January and be in operation year-round with donations accepted during our regular business hours."

The ElderSource building is located at 10688 Old St. Augustine Road, Jackson-

ville in Mandarin. Those needing supplies may call ElderSource at 904-391-6600 to request items and to donate.

ElderSource is a local nonprofit organization designated by the state as the Area Agency on Aging and Aging and Disability Resource Center for Northeast Florida. The agency provides information and referral resources for caregivers and seniors in Northeast Florida, reaching more than 12,000 people in its seven-county service area — Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia.

Programs and services are funded by federal, state and local grants as well as private donations and endowments.

## Scams

Continued from 26

victim from being connected to the scam artist.

Instead, the potential victim hears a message stating that not only is the number not in service but that it has been used in illicit activity. Now the person knows he or she has appeared on the scammer's radar and to watch out lest the scammer try again using a new number.

In fact, as soon as the scam artist real-

izes his number has been shut off, he will typically send out a new text message providing yet another phone number.

Another company, Caller ID Reputation, works with VoiceAlerts, though it focuses on a different aspect of the issue. Businesses, whether large or small, register their phone numbers, which in turn tells Caller ID Reputation whether a given number is legitimate or not when it is used.

In addition, the company provides other services to its business clients.

Though some scammers do what is

called "brand impersonation," where they pretend to be a legitimate business or other entity, there is an even more difficult method to detect: spoofing. The target's caller ID will say that the call comes from a trusted source, but in fact it's a scammer disguising his true identity. The victim is directed to call a bogus number that leads back to the scammer.

Companies like VoiceAlerts and Caller ID Reputation play an important role in curbing the tide of scam calls and texts we receive, but ultimately each person must remain vigilant.

"Everybody needs to be really careful when they get a text message from somebody claiming to be a business, but you're not absolutely sure it is — or a phone call," said Gerry Christensen, head of partnerships and regulatory compliance at Caller ID Reputation.

Christensen offered two important pieces of advice:

- Don't respond to a text if you're not absolutely sure who's texting you.
- Don't call a number on a text unless you're absolutely sure who it is.

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# Pottery artist's work featured at Jacksonville Airport



**Sheryl Sherwood**

The Professional Artists of St. Augustine (PASTA) Fine Art Gallery, of 214 Charlotte St., St. Augustine, has announced that member and board officer Sheryl Sherwood's coil-made, pit-fired pottery is currently on display in the Haskell Gallery in the Jacksonville Airport.

The Jacksonville Aviation Authority established the JAA Arts & Culture Program in 1995 to "soothe and inspire and educate visitors regarding the abundant artistic and cultural resources available within our service region, including Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties."

Sherwood's work will be on display through December 2023.

"I have been involved with the arts since I was a child," she said. "From crayons to paints, I was encouraged and inspired by my family, including my grandmother who taught me needle arts."

Work and family put a hold on her artistic endeavors. After retiring from two careers, working in an environmental agency and as an elementary teacher of blind and visually impaired students for the Florida School for the Deaf and the

Blind, she took a pottery class and has not looked back since.

Building on both careers, Sherwood makes a conscious effort in her pottery-making to keep things as organic and chemical-free as possible. Using naturally sourced clay from Georgia, she integrates her years of teaching through a tactile approach by incorporating natural impressions of seeds, stones and plants into her methodically built coiled pots. Continuing to honor the ancient artform, she pit-fires her pots or raku fires them for their unique colorations and patterns. Each pot is one of a kind.

Her pottery has been featured in St. Augustine's Loving Our Town Magazine, as well as Canvas Rebel. Her pieces have been included in a variety of exhibitions at the St. Augustine Art Association, including the annual fall tactile art show, and are shown at the Professional Artists of St. Augustine Fine Art Gallery, the First Coast Cultural Center and the FemArt Gallery. She serves at the PASTA secretary and her work is on display at the PASTA Fine Art Gallery in downtown St. Augustine.

See Sherwood's work by at [pastagaleryart.com](http://pastagaleryart.com) or [facebook.com/pastaartgallery](https://www.facebook.com/pastaartgallery). Go to [inspiredesignsbysheryl.com](http://inspiredesignsbysheryl.com) for more information

PASTA was founded in 1982 by Jean



Contributed photos

**Sheryl Sherwood's pottery is on display at the Jacksonville Airport.**

Wagner Troemel, a champion of the arts, founder of the Winter Haven Ridge Art Association, served on the Florida Arts Group Board (FLAG) and spearheaded St. Augustine's First Friday Art Walks. The gallery has served an international clientele a wealth of local talent and

award-winning artists.

In 2023, PASTA won The Best of Florida Regional Art Gallery and was a finalist in the Best of St. Augustine Choice Awards. The gallery's mission is to showcase local and regional art and to educate and encourage area artists.

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Jerry Shafer, general manager of Rise at Nocatee 55+ speaks during the event.

# Rise at Nocatee hosts delicious tasting event at Greenwise

Rise at Nocatee 55+ hosted a build-your-own charcuterie board and wine pairing event at Greenwise in Nocatee on Nov. 16. The event allowed guests the opportunity to enjoy curated delights and the wine pairings that go best with them.

Photos by Susan Griffin



A charcuterie board on display.



Wine pairings were offered during the event.



The event was held at Greenwise in Nocatee.



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# Lots of fun at PLAYERS Community Senior Center

The following programs will be held at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. The center will be closed for Christmas on Friday, Dec. 22. If you have any questions or wish to register, call Suzanne Duvall at 904-209-3659.

**Lunch — Tuesdays:** 3 weeks starting Tuesday, Dec. 12, from noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance and fee required, \$5 per meal.

**Lunch — Thursdays:** 4 weeks starting Thursday, Dec. 7, from noon to 1 p.m. Registration required a week in advance and fee required, \$5 per meal.

**Duplicate Bridge:** 3 weeks starting Friday, Dec. 8, from noon to 3 p.m. Fee required: \$2 per person, per Friday. You must have a partner.

**Line Dancing Class:** Instructor Will Oglesby teaches many different line dances with a good selection of music. Open to all adults and experience levels. Weekly, starting Wednesday, Dec. 6, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Registration and fee required, \$9 per class.

**Acrylic Painting:** Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon. No fee required. Instructor on site Wednesday, Dec. 13.

**Bus Trip to COA's Riverhouse:** A visit to COA's Riverhouse in St. Augustine for the "Winter Art & Dance Show" at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20. This is a round trip from THE PLAYERS Community Center; the COA bus will leave The Players Community Center at 9 a.m. sharp and return by 3 p.m. Lunch provided.

**Holiday Market:** Saturday, Dec. 9,

from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Browse crafts, jewelry, quilts, art and more. All proceeds benefit THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center. Rain or shine.

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

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

**Canasta — Tuesdays:** 10 a.m. to noon

**Canasta — Thursdays:** 10 a.m. to noon

**Mexican Train Dominoes:** Tuesdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

**Ask a Nurse:** Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Bingo — Tuesdays:** 1 to 2 p.m.

**Bingo — Thursdays:** 1 to 2 p.m.

**Board Game Playing:** Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon

**Wii Bowling:** Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m.

**Bocce Ball:** Fridays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Happy Birthday December Babies!** Join everyone for cake and the vocal stylings of Harmony, a mother/daughter duo from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday Dec. 7.

**Ponte Vedra Hearing Associates Presents!** Learn how hearing plays a major role in your quality of life, from your emotional well-being and physical health to your career and leisure activities. Tuesday, Dec. 12, from 11 a.m. to noon.

**St. John's County Library:** The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch of the St. John's County Public Library System visits. Come make a free seasonal craft! Tuesday, Dec. 12, from 11 a.m. to noon.

**Concierge Care:** Join Jennifer James,



senior care liaison, for seasonal fun. Light refreshments provided. Thursday, Dec. 14, from 11 a.m. to noon.

**Sing-a-Long:** Join everyone for a fun-filled hour of singing Christmas carols with Lisa Atkinson of Home Instead. Tuesday, Dec. 19, from 11 a.m. to noon.

**Check Your Blood Pressure with Nurse Fran:** Thursday, Dec. 21, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Free.

**Care Connection:** Do you need help? Do you find it difficult to make ends meet? Are you in need of some help with the cost of groceries or health care? You are not alone. Did you know there may be help available for you? Many seniors qualify for — but are not yet enrolled in — benefit programs that could help them

pay for prescriptions, medical care and food. A Care Connection representative will be on site to meet with you on Thursday, Dec. 21, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Christmas Party!** Join everyone for holiday treats, gifts, Santa and the rocking good time music of Rod Mathews. Thursday, Dec. 21, from 11 a.m. to noon.

**Scattergories!** Come play the popular game of Scattergories where you name items according to letters. Fun for all! Tuesday, Dec. 26, from 11 a.m. to noon.

**National Chocolate Day:** Join Victoria Proctor, sales and marketing director at Camellia at Deerwood for some delicious history on chocolate while nibbling on chocolate treats. Thursday, Dec. 28, from 11 a.m. to noon.

## COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village announces programs

The following programs will be held in December at COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra. Unless specified otherwise, register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling 904-819-3234. Classes are open to ages 18 plus. For more information, go to coasjc.org/center-at-nocatee.

### TUESDAYS

**Bereavement Support Group:** This group is for anyone dealing with grief from the loss of a loved one. Ann Martel MSW facilitates these meetings. Meets Tuesday, Dec. 19, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Advanced registration is required.

**Caregiver Support Group:** All caregivers are welcome. Meets every Tuesday from 1 to 2 p.m. There is a trained facilitator present at every meeting to guide the group.

**Widows and Widowers:** Social group meeting the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Register in advance for one or both Tuesdays.

**Scan, Sign Docs & More:** Learn how to



quickly use your device to scan documents, sign a pdf document, mark or type on photos. Tuesday, Dec. 19, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Class size is limited. Cost is \$10. Sign up at coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee.

**Herbal Skin Care:** Professor James M. Carucci continues the Herbology Series by teaching about the different types of herbs commonly used in skin and hair care. You will have the opportunity to make your own product to take home for your own use or to give as a gift. Tuesday, Dec. 12, from 3:30

to 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$10. Sign up at coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee.

### WEDNESDAYS

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

**Medication Review:** Do you have questions or concerns about the prescription medications you take? Retired pharmacist Ray Lowe is here to help. Call or email to

schedule a free one-to-one appointment. Wednesday morning appointments available. Call 904-814-9407 to schedule.

**Mah Jongg Meet-up:** Open play for experienced players. Wednesdays, Dec. 13 and 27, from 1 to 3 p.m. and Dec. 20 from 3 to 5 p.m.

**Tai Chi:** Improve mood, increase energy and stamina, improve flexibility, balance and muscle strength with instructor Dennis Sheils. All levels welcome. Wednesdays at 1 p.m. Cost is \$25. To register visit <https://coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee>.

**Genealogy Group:** A genealogy expert will guide you in discovering and finding your ancestors on the third Wednesday of each month. Wednesday, Dec. 20, from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

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

# Former Jacksonville sheriff to be honored

The Winston Family YMCA and the YMCA of Florida's First Coast recently named former Jacksonville sheriff and past president of Edward Waters University Dr. Nathaniel 'Nat' Glover Jr. the 2024 recipient of the W.W. "Bill" Gay Community Impact Award.

The award will be presented to Glover at the third annual Giving Tree Gala at the Jessie Ball duPont Center in Jacksonville on March 9.

"I am truly honored to be recognized by an organization that shares my passion for serving others, particularly low-income children in our community," said Glover. "It is a testament to the impact that we can make when we work together towards a common goal. I have always believed that education can change lives and create opportunities where none existed before, and I will continue to work tirelessly toward that goal. I am grateful to the First Coast YMCA for this incredible honor, and I pledge to continue to serve our community to the best of my abilities."

In 1995, after serving 28 years with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Glover was elected the first African-American sheriff in Florida since the Reconstruction era and the first African-American sheriff in the history of Jacksonville. During his tenure he donated \$250,000 of his pension to fund college scholarships for need-based high school graduates.

After serving two terms, Glover was appointed the 29th president of his alma mater, Edward Waters Uni-

versity. A Jacksonville-native, Glover received a Great Floridian designation and was inducted into the Florida Law Enforcement Hall of Fame.

He recently published his memoir "Striving For Justice: A Black Sheriff in the Deep South." Proceeds will go towards funding the "Where They Will Shine" scholarship for need-based students in partnership with the Florida State College Jacksonville Foundation.

"Dr. Glover has epitomized service to the Jacksonville community and his contributions continue to be felt by generations today," said Tim Burrows, YMCA of Florida's First Coast vice president of operations. "Beyond his extensive service in law enforcement, Dr. Glover has made an indelible impact on countless lives, particularly through educational opportunities for low-income children. His passion for serving those around him matches that of the First Coast YMCA and we couldn't be more honored to present him with this award."

The annual Giving Tree Gala is an opportunity for the Winston Family YMCA and the YMCA of Florida's First Coast to thank supporters who empower the YMCA to provide critical programs and services. The W.W. "Bill" Gay Community Impact award is named in honor of W.W. "Bill" Gay, who was a longtime supporter of the YMCA of Florida's First Coast.

For more information about supporting this year's gala, go to [givingtreegala.org](http://givingtreegala.org).

# Cypress Village leads toy drive

Residents of Cypress Village are taking the initiative this holiday season by partnering with Toys for Tots to spread joy to children in need.

Led by the compassionate residents of the senior living community, Cypress Village announced its collaboration with Toys for Tots, a program run by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, dedicated to delivering holiday happiness to less fortunate children.

Residents of Cypress Village are actively participating in this campaign by organizing events, contributing personal donations and raising awareness both in the community and outside of it. This partnership embodies the spirit of community, compassion and intergenerational connection.

Cypress Village encouraged area residents to embrace the holiday spirit and make a positive impact on the lives of children through this collaboration with Toys for Tots.

Cypress Village is a 120-acre retirement care community located adjacent to the Mayo Clinic. For more information on this community, call 904-223-6100.



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# Foundation to help visually impaired through new advances

## Nonprofit introduced at inaugural iBall

Dr. Arun Gulani, founding director and chief surgeon of Gulani Vision Institute in Jacksonville, recently launched the Gulani Vision Global Foundation with a mission to bring advanced eye surgery methods, research and revolutionary technology to patients and medical professionals from around the world.

The formal announcement was held on Nov. 17 at the inaugural fundraiser, Gulani Vision iBall, with presentations, awards to local visionaries, a City of Jacksonville proclamation and an evening of international foods and entertainment.

The event at the River Club in downtown Jacksonville commemorated the Gulani Vision Global Foundation, a charitable 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, which is dedicated to advancing the world of vision while bringing together international business and philanthropic leaders, patients and innovators.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the inaugural “Gulani VISIONARY Award” to Shad Khan, owner of the Jacksonville Jaguars, as a visionary who demonstrates exceptional commitment and leadership that has impacted communities in Northeast Florida and worldwide.

Accepting the award for Khan was Whitney Meyer, senior vice president and chief community officer at the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Gulani was also presented with the City of Jacksonville’s Mayor Donna Deegan Proclamation award for outstanding achievements and world leadership, with record-breaking medical tourism in a local private medical practice and for his innovative eye surgical techniques. He was recognized and pinned by Donna Guzzo, a local United Nations ambassador and nonprofit executive, in recognition of his global impact on vision care.

During the event, Gulani addressed guests with his vision for the foundation, emphasizing its commitment to providing assistance to deserving patients, sharing his renowned expertise with aspiring surgeons and propelling innovation for the future of vision care. The foundation is created to make a significant impact on the global landscape of ophthalmology through inspiration and excellence.

Honorees were presented awards with the Crystal Ball for the Future of Vision for their exceptional achievements and contributions to the community and globally.

Award recipients included Donna

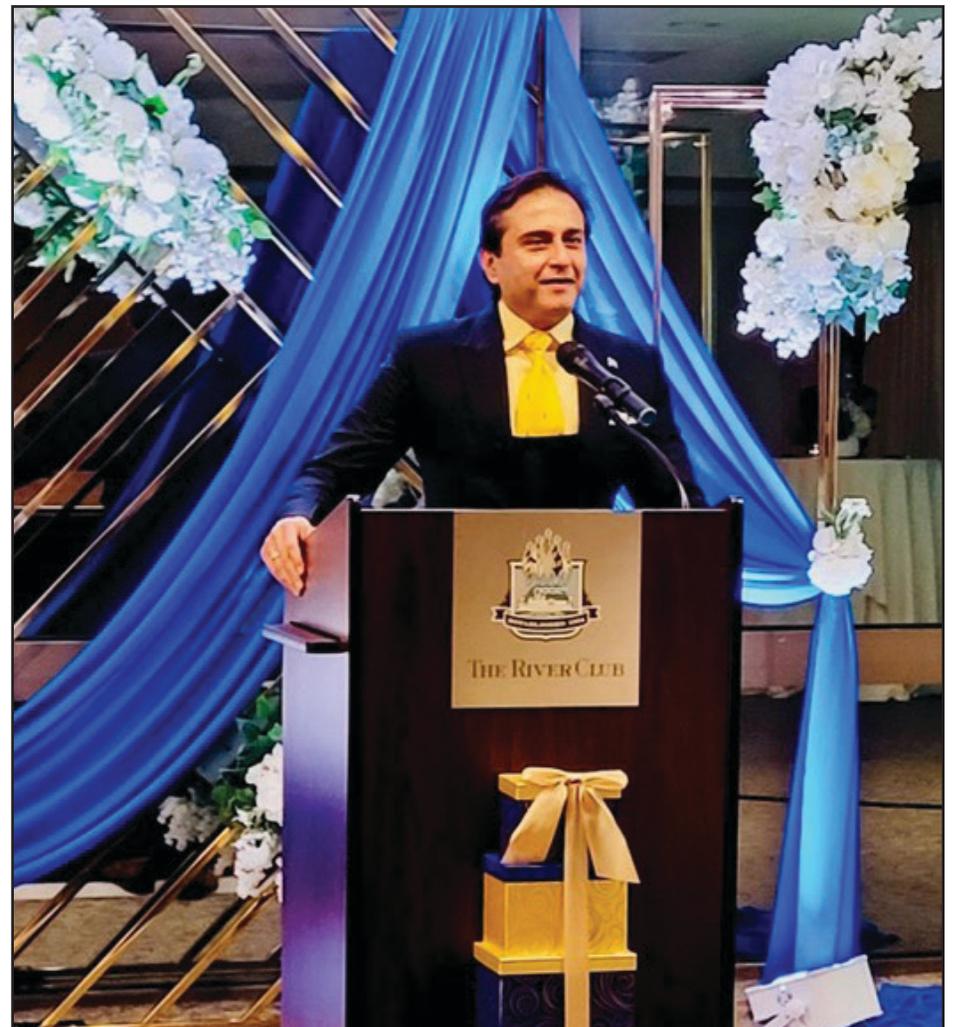
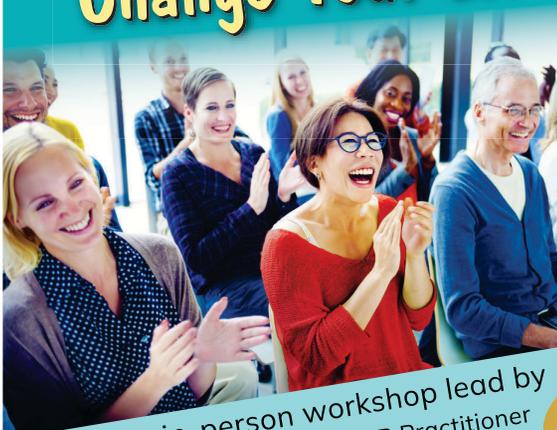


Photo provided by Gulani Vision Global Foundation

Dr. Arun C. Gulani at Gulani Vision Global Foundation iBall event.

FOUNDATION continues on Page 34

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Photos provided by Gulani Vision Global Foundation



Leigh Cort and Dr. Gulani



Dr. Gulani and Shyam Paryani



Dr. Gulani and Donna Guzzo

# Foundation

Continued from 33

Guzzo, president and CEO of First Coast Cultural Center, president and CEO of Language Exploration Enrichment (L.E.E.) St. Johns, and United Nations ambassador of sustainable development goals; Leigh Cort, founder and president of Women’s Food Alliance and president of Leigh Cort Publicity; Shyam Paryani, director of community engagement and director of the Executive Master of Health Administration (EMHA) program at the University of North Florida Brooks College of Health; Vic Micolucci, news anchor and investigative reporter at WJXT-TV; Nick Loren, vice president and head of development and production at Mayday Movie Productions LLC; Lee Giat, CEO at Flying Ostrich Media Inc.; and Tracey Tischler, aesthetician and beauty influencer.

Additionally, Gulani’s patient, Natasha Namen, a champion ballroom dancer, shared a performance with her dance



Lee Giat



Dr. Gulani and Natasha Namen



Dr. Gulani and Whitney Meyer and Gulani Visionary Award.



Dr. Gulani and Nick Loren

partner Vasily Vlasov from Arthur Murray Dance Studio. Namen created the dance to rejoice in her sight and surgery outcome with Gulani.

“The Gulani Vision Global Foundation

has been established to provide research, treatments and procedures to help those close to blindness and restore their sight,” said Gulani. “We hope to attain the next level of sight improvements as a testa-

ment to the commitment to the future of humanity, while combining the celebration of vision with a commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of individuals worldwide.”



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# Christmas FANTASTIQUE set for Dec. 20 and 21

Christmas FANTASTIQUE will be presented at 7 p.m. Dec. 20 and 21 at Lewis Auditorium, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine. The original production by Zoika's Dance tells the classic holiday story of "The Nutcracker" through the language of dance, featuring classical ballet, as well as tap, hip hop, acro and contemporary dance.

Professional dancers join young, local dancers on stage for the holiday extravaganza. Tickets are \$25 and \$35 and may be purchased online at zoikadance.com.

Christmas FANTASTIQUE invites audiences to experience the wonder of young Clara's Christmas Eve dream, as her Christmas tree grows tall, her toys come to life and she travels with a young prince to the Land of Sweets.

"There is nothing like the excitement a young child feels experiencing the magic of the holidays," explained director Zoika Garcia. "Their excitement is so pure and real. That feeling of wonderment is shared with audience members, no matter what their age."

To create this holiday magic, Garcia has cast local 10-year-old dancer, Emily Laidler, in the role of Clara. She will be joined on stage by a cast of 70, including professional dancers who will bring their mastery and fireworks to the stage. The Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier roles will be danced by professional ballet dancers Elisa Ruby of Mexico's Ballet Prover and Jalen Williams of Ohio's Dayton Ballet. Clara's mother and father will be portrayed by professional tap dancers Jenne Vermes and Sean Mansfield of Noise Complaint Tap Dance Theatre. Clara's grandparents will be portrayed by seasoned St. Augustine performers Tommy Bledsoe and Joy D'Elia.

Garcia and the cast are also planning to present Christmas FANTASTIQUE for local children served by St. Johns County nonprofit organizations including St. Augustine Youth Services, the Betty Grif-

fin House and Fostering Connections, as well as students from The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. Thanks to the support of community sponsors, Zoika's Dance will provide complimentary tickets for these children.

"Sharing dance with the community gives us so much joy," Garcia explained. "And sharing this holiday experience with children who might not otherwise be able to attend makes it so much sweeter."

Sponsorship and marketing opportunities are available to support the production and its community outreach.

For more information on becoming a sponsor, go to zoikadance.com/sponsors.

Zoika's Dance is a comprehensive dance school in St. Augustine that offers beginner to advanced classes in dance, voice and musical theater, as well as performance opportunities.

To learn more, go to zoikadance.com.



Contributed photo

Emily Laidler, 10, will perform the part of Clara in Christmas FANTASTIQUE.

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Photos by Anthony Richards



# Furyk Foundation packs more than 6K bags for holiday meals

By Anthony Richards

The Jim & Tabitha Furyk Foundation believes that no family should go hungry, especially during the holidays, and recently held their annual Hope for the Holidays event at TPC Sawgrass on Nov. 30 to help toward that cause.

Residents from across the First Coast gathered under a tent in the TPC Sawgrass parking lot and made several trips through the lines and it led to more than

6,000 bags of food being packed by the end of the night.

When the event first started in 2011 it packed 500 bags, which shows how much the event and community support continues to grow with each passing year.

Each bag was packed with several canned and bagged food items to ensure that families battling food insecurity in Duval and St. Johns counties have a nice holiday meal.

The bags included canned ham, applesauce, corn, greens beans, rice, corn

muffin mix, elbow noodles, stuffing mix, instant mashed potatoes, and candy canes to add a holiday flare to each bag.

Several groups of students from area high schools were on hand to help volunteer their time to hand out food or sort the filled bags into their designated vehicles for transport.

Christmas music blasted throughout the canopy and there were an endless number of smiles and festive cheers to go around by all those who offered up their time to help pack.

Once packed, the bags were sent out to several charity organizations across the First Coast, who then make sure they get to the families that need them the most.

Such organizations include Blessing in a Backpack programs in St. Johns, Duval and Clay counties, Guardian Catholic School families, military families at NAS Jacksonville, Wolfson Children's Hospital, the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation, Daniel Kids and Community PedsCare and several other services in association with Feeding Northeast Florida.



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Contributed photos



# Kidz Entrepreneur Holiday Market set for Dec. 10

The Kidz Entrepreneur Holiday Market will take place from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10, at the Tringali Barn in St. Augustine, located at 7310 U.S. 1 South. This will be one of the area's largest indoor markets. Admission is free.

The event features more than 45 youth vendors ages 4 to 17 who will offer hand-made items and gift items — perfect for holiday shopping. Items will include art, jewelry, dog treats, candles, sweet treats, crocheted items and other handmade items. Santa and his helpers will also be giving out cookies to all. Guests are asked to bring cash for gift buying, as some youth vendors do not yet have digital payment systems.

Organized by Tyrone Bennett of We Feed Inc. and Heart & Soul Food Truck, the first Kidz Entrepreneur Fairs were held in June and July at the Lincolntonville Museum & Cultural Center.

"I wanted to organize an event where kids get an opportunity to sell items they have created to the general public," Bennett said. "It's the mission of focusing on young entrepreneurs and driving innovation and creativity. I feel that this has not



been readily available here in the Northeast Florida region. I would like to put together an entrepreneur's weekend retreat for kids, with workshops and break-out sessions led by area business owners and entrepreneurs. At the end, they would graduate."

Family activities at the market will include pictures and cookies with Santa and his elves, a holiday cooking demonstration by Chef Chip Richard of Cap's on the Water, a Nutcracker Performance



by Saint Augustine Ballet, bounce houses, face painting and a holiday visit by Sheriff Rob Hardwick.

"We have bakers, pink sauce makers, lemonade, make-up and candy makers, just to name a few," Bennett said. "My plan for this event was to get a room full with about 60 kids with different creations, coming together and offering our community a new market during the holidays. We must push our youth to be creatives and bring out the



best in them."

The Saucy Pig food truck will offer food during the event, with a portion of sales supporting a local charity.

Lunch and drinks for the youth vendors will be provided for free by Sonny's BBQ.

Hosts include The Tringali Barn, Totally St. Augustine and We Feed Inc. Sponsors include Chris Shee, MasterCraft Builder Group, Sonny's BBQ and Bailey Insurance Group.

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The Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa held its first Teddy Bear Tea of the Christmas season for families on Dec. 2.



Kerry and Cace Schicker

# Teddy bears and tea create unique holiday combination

The Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa are inviting families to come out and take part in their Teddy Bear Tea events that will take place each Saturday in December. Children are each given a teddy bear to accompany them during the tea.

Photos by Anthony Richards



Ashley and Ava.



Matt and Ava Miccarelli.



Blakeley and Daisy Vinicky.



Finger sandwiches and desserts were offered by the Sawgrass Marriott staff to guests to go with their tea.

# Holidays come alive at Vilano Beach

Vilano Beach Main Street Holiday Village activities continue throughout the month of December. Here's a look at the schedule.

## December 9

Author Book Fair Extravaganza — Vilano Road will be lined with a variety of authors for meet-and-greets. “The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition” author Carol Aebersold will read to the group and be available for a book signings. All are welcome to bring to their own copy of the “Elf on the Shelf” book or purchase them at Metalartz Gallery. Book proceeds will go to a local children’s charity. Admission is free.

- 3-6:30 p.m. Authors along Vilano Road for Book Fair
- 4-6 p.m. Santa and Mrs. Claus appearance at The Patio at Holiday Inn Express
- 6-7 p.m. “Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition” author at Holiday Inn Express
- 7-8:30 p.m. Christmas Movie Night — “Elf” at Vilano Main Street Diner at Holiday Inn Express. Guests are encouraged to wear their favorite pajamas!

## December 16

Vilano Holiday Village Christmas Artisan Market — The perfect time to get



Contributed photo

“The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition” author Carol Aebersold will read from her book.

unique and local holiday gifts in just one place.

In addition, Jeremy Weinglass will perform. He has amassed more than 30 years of experience as a professional musician and composer with an expansive repertoire of classical, standards, musicals, rock and pop. Admission is free.

- 4-8 p.m. Artisans along Vilano Road
- 4-7 p.m. Jeremy Weinglass at The Patio at Holiday Inn Express

## December 23

Cirque Adventure’s high-flying Elf Circus is coming to town! This aerial and acrobatic show performs to favorite holiday tunes. There will be aerialists flying high in the air, acrobats flipping and tumbling everywhere. There will be three (30 minute) performances.

Also, St. Johns County Fire and Rescue Department will showcase emergency vehicles at the event, with the opportunity to get up close and learn more. Admission is free.

- 1-1:30, 2-2:30 and 3-3:30 p.m. Elf Circus
- 1-3 p.m. St Johns County Fire and Rescue Department emergency vehicles
- 4-6 p.m. Santa and Mrs. Claus appearance at The Patio at Holiday Inn Express

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



Customers get checked out on the opening day of the Angelwood thrift store.



The Angelwood thrift store features a variety of items for sale.

## Community support creates 'buzz' at Angelwood thrift store grand opening

By Anthony Richards

Angelwood has expanded its reach in hopes of helping even more people in the local community, and they did so by opening a thrift store.

"Right now, there is just a lot of excitement and there's a buzz surrounding all of this," Angelwood CEO Diane Tuttle said. "People are bringing a lot of things to us, and a lot of good things so there are plenty of things for people when they come and shop."

That response is something that Tuttle understands is so vital to the success of not only the thrift store, but also the organization in general, especially as a nonprofit, which means that they are fully reliant on community support to accomplish their mission.

"As a nonprofit we really have to be careful and creative with the money we spend. I bought the clothing racks and the cash registers, but everything else in there was donated by those in the public," Tuttle said. "That's a statement that the community is behind us and what we're doing."

The thrift store is located at 5711, Suite 3 on Bowden Road in Jacksonville, and it is something that the nonprofit organization, created to serve children, adults and families living with intellectual and developmental differences, had been talking about for some time now.

"It was in 2019 when we had really



Angelwood cut the ribbon during the grand opening ceremony of its new thrift store in Jacksonville.

thought we were going to be able to do it, but then when the pandemic hit that really ended everything because 2020 was a bust and 2021 was all about recovering," Tuttle said. "It was 2022 when we really started looking at everything and making sure we researched, and our business plan was where we wanted it to be."

One of the unique aspects of the thrift

store is that it will offer a place where its residents can work and be a part of the store's staff.

According to Tuttle, that was a major reason behind the idea, and the hope is that being part of that work environment and interacting with the public will be incredibly beneficial for both sides.

"They'll be doing a lot of the work, from

sorting clothing to putting things out on the shelves and doing some cleaning," Tuttle said.

The store just had its grand opening, but already Tuttle has noticed the difference in the amount of people that ask or are now aware of Angelwood because of the thrift store.

"Already the people around are learning more about Angelwood and if we can have more people learn about us and the services we provide, maybe it will help them with their family needs or the needs of friends that they know," Tuttle said. "The benefits of all this go far beyond the money we raise. It's a win-win."

The timing of the grand opening with it coming in the middle of the holiday season, when people are looking for gifts, and the location not far from Interstate 95 could not have been better, according to Tuttle.

"We looked at this corner because we had rented an office up on Spring Park (Road) a while back and one of the things we noticed was that this corner was always busy and we really wanted a place that was going to be nicely trafficked," Tuttle said. "There is a sweet spot between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. where this area is very busy before it kind of tapers off, and that's also how we set our hours around."

The thrift store's hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and it is closed on Sundays.

Photos by Anthony Richards

# New Wawa to open Dec. 7 in St. Johns

The grand opening of the newest Wawa Inc. store, located at 54 Cypress Edge Drive, St. Johns, will be held Thursday, Dec. 7. Local friends and neighbors are invited at 7:45 a.m. to join General Manager Steven Branstrator, who will count down to the moment when the doors open at 8 a.m.

This ceremonial start gives a nod to the power of positivity and kindness, according to Wawa Inc.

The first 100 customers through the door on Dec. 7 will receive a limited-edition “Wawa Coffee, Hoagies & Kindness” T-shirt. All customers can enjoy free coffee from Dec. 7 through 17.

“At Wawa, our core purpose is fulfilling lives every day, and since our first store opened, we’ve believed that we all have a role in making this world a better place,” said Chris Gheysens, Wawa’s CEO. “Our associates deliver experiences and often create emotional connections with customers that go beyond what traditionally happens in a retail environment, and we look forward to welcoming old friends and making new ones in this wonderful community!”

After the store opens, customers will be invited inside to get a free any-size cup of coffee and participate in a community toast and ribbon-cutting ceremony at 8:30

a.m. with Wawa’s mascot Wally Goose, oversized scissors, red ribbon, confetti and fanfare.

Wawa will also recognize local first responders with its signature Hoagies for Heroes hoagie-building competition. Local first responders from St. Johns Sheriff’s Office and St. Johns Fire Rescue will compete to see who can build the most hoagies in three-minutes. Wawa will conclude the Hoagies for Heroes competitions by presenting checks for \$1,000 to each department’s charity of choice.

Branstrator will lead a team of approximately 50 associates, all of which are new positions brought to the area through the development of the store. Associates in these full- and part-time positions will receive competitive salaries and health benefits when eligible and participate in Wawa’s employee stock ownership plan. Wawa Associates own 39% of Wawa through the plan. More information and current job opportunities can be viewed at [wawa.com/careers](http://wawa.com/careers).

The store is fully equipped with a built-to-order, fresh food kitchen featuring its signature hoagies, 80 million of which are sold annually, and the ever-popular burger; award-winning Wawa coffee, 195 million cups of which are sold annually; the Sizzliä, Wawa’s hot breakfast

sandwich; Wawa’s new line of specialty beverages (hot, cold, iced and frozen); the Wawa Bakery; and Wawa’s beverage line of dairy products, juices and teas, plus packaged goods and fuel services, among other amenities.

In addition to the store-level experience, customers can access their Wawa favorites through mobile ordering, curbside pickup, delivery options and its newest Catering Online offer where customers can order Wawa foods for their upcoming events at [wawacatering.com](http://wawacatering.com).

Wawa plans to open up to 66 new stores throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and Florida in 2023. The grand opening of the St. Johns location is the 60th store to open among the chain’s six-state operating area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Florida and Washington, D.C. The chain also announced its future expansion to Florida Panhandle, Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, with more details on those new locations to be shared soon.



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# In the Arts

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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

## Ensemble based in Windsor Castle to perform

*Admission to concert,  
art exhibit is free*

The Beaches Fine Art Series will present The Queen's Six, a British a cappella ensemble, in a free concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 15, at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 465 11th Ave. North, Jacksonville Beach.

A reception follows the concert with an art exhibit by Mike Perry.

### The Queen's Six

Based at Windsor Castle, members of The Queen's Six make up part of the Lay Clerks of St. George's Chapel, whose homes lie within the castle walls. This rare privilege demands the highest musical standards, as they sing regularly for the royal family at both private and state occasions.

In 2018, this included singing for the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, now The Duke and Duchess of Sussex; in 2021, three members of the group sang at the funeral of HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh; and in 2022, members of the group sang at the committal part of the official funeral services for Queen Elizabeth II.

Most significantly, however, it is the familiarity of living and singing together in Chapel every day that lends



Contributed photo

The Queen's Six is an a cappella ensemble that regularly performs for Britain's royals.

this group its distinctive closeness and blend, as well as an irresistible informality and charm.

Individually, members of The Queen's Six have appeared in many of the most prestigious vocal ensembles on the circuit, including The Tallis Scholars, Tenebrae and The Sixteen. Their repertoire extends far beyond the

reach of the choir stalls: from austere early chant, florid Renaissance polyphony, bawdy madrigals and haunting folk songs to upbeat jazz and pop arrangements.

Since 2019, the group has recorded on the Signum Classics label, releasing albums of British folk songs, Hispanic Renaissance music and arrangements

of the songs of Tom Lehrer. In 2022, they released a recording of pop love songs, their first professional pop album.

### Mike Perry

Artist Mike Perry recently rediscovered his passion for painting on a large scale, following a successful 15-year career in the decorative arts. Growing up immersed in the antique and decorative painting industry, he fostered a lifelong fascination with incorporating the elements of patina, time-worn surfaces, and richness of color into canvases evoking such timeless themes as light, water and sky.

His commissioned works are on exhibition at numerous northern Florida locations, including the new tower and administrative offices of Baptist Medical Center, Mass Mutual Insurance, the Accounting Firm of Dixon Hughes Goodman, the private home of Ted Turner, Atlantic Beach Country Club, Nordstrom and the Jacksonville offices of Raymond James Financial.

The signature concert sponsor for this show is Stuart Ashby-Fore, in memory of her parents, Eleanor and Garnett Ashby.

For more information, go to beachesfinearts.org/the-queens-six.

## Three added to Symphony Advisory Council

The Jacksonville Symphony has announced that three new members have joined its advisory council. Coming from insurance, law and sales marketing backgrounds, the newly appointed advisory council members bring years of experience and leadership to help

provide high-level oversight and consultation on key Jacksonville Symphony activities.

The Symphony welcomes the following individuals to the Advisory Council:

- Christopher Bultinck, vice president

of business development for the PGA Tour

- Alex Burton, area president and managing director of senior living practice for Gallagher

- Christopher Walker, associate attorney, litigation practice group for Balch & Bingham LLP

"I'm thrilled to be expanding our Advisory Council with such talented, invested people," said Steven Libman, president and CEO. "These individuals bring unique perspectives on both the Jacksonville community and the arts world as a whole. With their added insight and business experiences, the Symphony's advisory council is stronger than ever as we continue the exquisite '23-'24 season."

In addition to its newest members,

five core members of the Symphony's stakeholders also sit on the advisory council:

- Monica Hernández, VP of asset services control, global markets at Bank of America
- Branita Mann, speech-language pathologist
- Patricia McElroy, senior VP at VyStar Credit Union, president of VyStar Foundation
- Nikesha Elise Williams, producer, author and founder of NEW Reads Publications
- John S. Willim, corporate finance executive and strategic planning officer

For more information and to view the full list of the Jacksonville Symphony's administration team, go to JaxSymphony.org.



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Contributed photos



The Main Gallery at St. Augustine Art Association.



The St. Augustine Art Association was founded in 1924.

# St. Augustine Art Association to celebrate centennial

Nearly 100 years ago on Jan. 18, 1924, artists and writers gathered in St. Augustine to form what they called the “The Galleon Club.” These cultural trailblazers sought to transform the historic town into a thriving arts community for wintering artists. Artist after artist started traveling south to experience what the club advertised was “Like Painting in Europe.”



Jennifer Flynt, executive director of the St. Augustine Art Association.

On Feb. 23, 2024, the St. Augustine Art Association (STAAA) — which became the official name in 1948 — will celebrate its 100th anniversary with the Beaux Arts Ball fundraising event at the Lightner Museum for an evening of dinner, dancing and fine art. Tickets are \$150 each or \$1,200 for a table of eight.

The Beaux Arts Ball is a nod to how the associa-

tion would fundraise in the 1940s and beyond. With the help of affluent artistic families, the St. Augustine Art Association was able to form a more formal organization but needed its own space, so they put on the Beaux Arts Ball in what was then the Alcazar Hotel (now the Lightner Museum).

Otto Lightner himself hosted the event for years — the first of which is epitomized in a 1949 painting by artist Louise Shanks.

In 1954, the association opened what is now the main gallery building. With an official gathering space, the organization could finally exhibit work, host regular shows and sketch groups and become the cultural epicenter for the vibrant and influential force for the arts it is known as today.

“Celebrating such a significant and historic milestone feels surreal,” said Jennifer Flynt, executive director of the association. “For 100 years, artists have transformed this city into a flourishing arts community and arts destination. And I believe the magic of St. Augustine has certainly inspired many artists for more than 100 years. These creative minds continue to bring such beauty

and energy into our town, which adds so much to the history already here. It’s an honor to support them, and I know that for the next 100 years we’ll continue to do the same.”

The St. Augustine Art Association, located at 22 Marine St. in downtown St. Augustine, is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting excellence in the arts since 1924. It supports the vibrant arts community in St. Augustine and preserves its rich artistic heritage and culture.

Through exhibitions, lectures, workshops, educational programs and outreach, the association fosters a creative and accessible environment for artists of all backgrounds and skill levels. Their Permanent Collection includes works by the founding members, known as the “Lost Colony” artists.

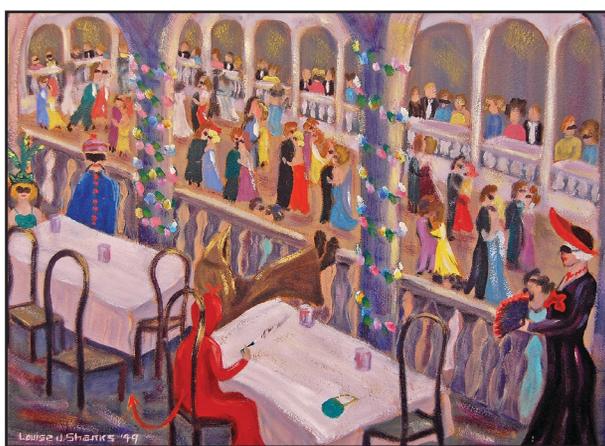
The gallery is open Tuesdays through Sundays from noon to 4 p.m., and admission is free.

Purchase tickets to the Beaux Arts Ball at [staaa.org/beaux-arts-ball](http://staaa.org/beaux-arts-ball).

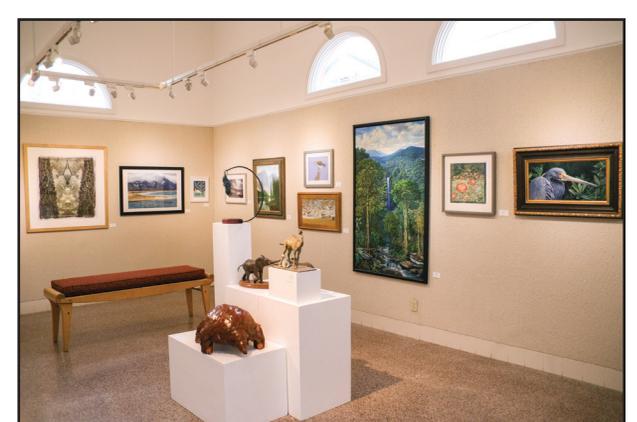
For more information, go to [staaa.org](http://staaa.org), and follow along on Facebook @StAugArtAssoc and Instagram @staugartassoc.



The St. Augustine Art Association is located at 22 Marine St.



“Beaux Arts Ball” by Louise Shanks circa 1949



The St. Augustine Art Association supports the vibrant arts community in the Nation’s Oldest City.

# MOCA Mini Market to feature local artisans

Shoppers will be looking for the perfect holiday gift during the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville’s two-day Mini Market from noon to 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 8, and Saturday, Dec. 9. Grab a seasonal coffee and sweet treat from Setlan Coffee Co. to enjoy while exploring the market and discovering a wide selection of artworks and products

from local artists in a variety of media, including original prints, ceramic works, watercolors, handcrafted jewelry, plants, custom portraits, woodworks and much more.

Participating artists will be:

- December 8: Hiromi Moneyhun, Teresa Cook, Britt Webber, Stacy Santana, Melanie Buckwalter, Julian Gossett-

Thompson, Madison Schott, Kelly Bower, Madison Thomas, Grace Pulak, Jazmin Carrera and Kate Hill.

- December 9: Hiromi Moneyhun, Teresa Cook, Britt Webber, Stacy Santana, Melanie Buckwalter, Julian Gossett-Thompson, James Greene, Lo Langone, Mary Pham, Candy Minosa, Aly Brooks and Karmen Matthews.

The museum hosts artists throughout the year during Art Walk, Third Wednesday Museum Nights and special events.

Learn more at [mocajacksonville.unf.edu](http://mocajacksonville.unf.edu).

MOCA Jacksonville is located at 333 N. Laura St.

The market is free to visit as part of MOCA’s first floor. To visit the galleries, regular admission applies.

# Sports



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## Surprises, strong starts highlight first weeks of basketball season

By Anthony Richards

A handful of games into the high school basketball season and there are several players who are beginning to stand out for both Ponte Vedra Sharks and Nease Panthers.

One of the surprises in the early season has been the play of Sage Pytel, who has become an immediate contributor for the Panthers' girls basketball squad as she leads the team in multiple categories and is only a freshman.

She is averaging a team-high 9.3 points per game for the 2-3 Panthers and is also leading the way with two assists per contest.

Junior McKenna Owens and sophomore Abigail Robinson are not far behind Pytel in both points and assists, while senior Daniela Reich has been a force on the boards and defensively with team-high averages of 5.8 rebounds and three steals



per game.

For the Ponte Vedra High girls, they are riding their first wave of momentum this season with two consecutive wins over Ridgeview and Bartram Trail, 55-54 and 52-30, respectively.

The Sharks have been tested early and wasted no time with a tournament to open the season and they have been up to the test, scoring more than 50 points in all but



one of their first five games.

It is no surprise that the offense has come out clicking with seniors Morgan Gavazzi and Kennedy Rosendahl, who are a pair of sharpshooters and have a knack for scoring.

Fellow senior Maya Richards provides hustle and energy to the team on both sides of the ball.

It has also been a strong start to the sea-

son for the Sharks' boys basketball squad, who are 4-1 and have proven early on that they can win in a variety of ways, as they defeated Raines 82-58 in a shootout and followed it up by winning a defensive slugfest against Impact Christian Academy, 37-35.

The Sharks are getting ready to play in the Sixth Annual Fortegra High School 9:12 Basketball Invitational at FSCJ's south campus Dec. 7-9 before facing the Panthers in a rivalry showdown at home on Dec. 15.

For the Panthers, they have been in every game to open the season and earned their first victory with a dominant 54-40 showing against Bartram Trail on Dec. 1.

A couple of tough road contests await the Panthers before they face the Sharks, as they will play the Bishop Kenny Crusaders Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. and the rival St. Augustine Yellow Jackets Dec. 12 at 7:30 p.m.

## Clemson, Kentucky will face each other in 79th Gator Bowl

By Anthony Richards

The matchup for the 79th Annual TaxSlayer Gator Bowl has been set and it will be the Clemson University Tigers of the Atlantic Coast Conference against the University of Kentucky Wildcats of the Southeastern Conference.

The two teams will meet on Dec. 29 with kickoff at noon on Bill Gay Grounds at EverBank Stadium in Jacksonville. The game will be televised once again this year nationally on ESPN.

The teams have met 14 previous times, including in bowl games, with

the last meeting coming in 2009 in the Music City Bowl where Clemson won 21-13.

After a rocking start, the Tigers (8-4) have appeared to have figured things in the latter part of the season and will enter the Gator Bowl riding a four-game winning streak.

The Tigers were ranked No. 22 in the final College Football Playoff rankings after finishing sixth in the ACC and are led by two-time national championship-winning head coach Dabo Swinney.

It was a fast start to the season for the



December 29, 2023



Photo by Anthony Richards

Last year's TaxSlayer Gator Bowl was one of the more heavily watched games during the bowl season.

GATOR BOWL continues on Page 45

# Legendary Jacksonville Jaguar joins JAXUSL ownership team

JAXUSL, the group dedicated to bringing USL professional soccer to Northeast Florida, has announced that Fred Taylor has joined its ownership team. A legendary University of Florida running back and former Jacksonville Jaguar, Taylor is trading the gridiron for the soccer pitch, joining fellow UF alumnus Tim Tebow on the pro soccer club's ownership team.

Taylor played 11 of his 13 NFL seasons as a Jaguar and was inducted to the Pride of the Jaguars in 2012.

"I'm honored and delighted to welcome my friend and another Florida sports legend to our growing ownership team," said Ricky Caplin, JAXUSL majority owner. "Fred joins us at a pivotal moment as we look forward to making several important announcements in the coming months on our progress to bring top-level men's and women's USL pro soccer to Northeast Florida."

Along with his ownership stake in the soccer clubs, Taylor will serve as an ambassador for the USL expansion franchise as JAXUSL builds towards the launch of its men's and women's clubs in the USL Championship and USL Super League, a USL Youth Soccer Academy, and the development of a soccer-specific stadium and facilities.

"I'm pleased to have been invited to join Ricky and Tim on the JAXUSL ownership team," said Taylor. "I'm extremely impressed with the club's plans to elevate our community by bringing USL men's and women's pro soccer teams to Northeast Florida, along with their aspirations in working with city and county authorities on the First Coast to lift every voice by creating facilities and opportunities that will benefit all communities."

A Semifinalist for the Pro Football Hall

of Fame's Class of 2024, Taylor owns Jaguars' career records in rushing yards (11,271), attempts (2,428), consecutive 100-yard games (nine in 2000) and most rushing yards in a game (234). He is 17th on the NFL's all-time rushing list with 11,695 yards.

Taylor's 4.6 yards per carry ranks 32nd all time in the NFL — tied with Adrian Peterson and Hall of Famer Terrell Davis, and ahead of Hall of Famers Eric Dickerson (4.4), Walter Payton (4.4), Tony Dorsett (4.3), Marshall Faulk (4.3), LaDainian Tomlinson (4.3) and Earl Campbell (4.3).

Taylor is also a member of the University of Florida's Athletic Hall of Fame (2010) and the Florida-Georgia Hall of Fame (2008).

Taylor joins Caplin and Tebow on the JAXUSL ownership group, as well as experienced professional soccer executive Steve Livingstone and local community innovator Tony Allegretti. Additionally, UF women's soccer coaching legend Becky Burleigh leads JAXUSL's efforts as a consultant to their women's pro team.

Fans can register their interest in JAXUSL now by securing a season ticket deposit for \$25 at [jaxusl.com](http://jaxusl.com).

JAXUSL is the operating company formed to bring and develop men's and women's professional United Soccer League franchises to Northeast Florida. The company's goal is to bring competitive USL Championship action to the First Coast by 2025-26, and to work with local authorities in the development of a 15,000-capacity community stadium and training facilities to host the club in Northeast Florida. For more information, go to [jaxusl.com](http://jaxusl.com).

Davis led the Wildcats in both rushing and receiving touchdowns with 13 and seven, respectively.

This will be the 13th time the Gator Bowl has partnered with TaxSlayer as the game's title sponsor.

"We're proud of this long-standing partnership and excited to connect with the Clemson and Kentucky fans through this historic tradition," said Jamie Saxe, CEO of TaxSlayer.

The format of the bowl season will look much different next year, as the College Football Playoff expands to 12 teams.

## Gator Bowl

Continued from 44

Wildcats, who got off to a 5-0 start before hitting a tough stretch in the middle part of the season, before righting the ship with an emotional 38-31 win over in-state rival and Louisville, who was ranked in the top 10 at the time.

Throughout the year, the Wildcats have been led offensive by Ray Davis, who finished with more than 1,000 yards on the ground and averaged 5.7 yards a carry per game.

CROSSWORD														
	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	12	
13								14						15
16			17					18					19	
20		21				22				23		24		
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29				30					31		32		33	
		34	35							36		37		
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51			52		53		54				55			
56				57		58				59				
60			61		62					63			64	
65		66							67				68	
	69								70					

**ACROSS**

- Spiritual leaders
- Commercial
- Craft supply
- Storage units
- Investment vehicle
- Colorado Heisman winner
- In a way, sank
- Post-birth brain damage (abbr.)
- Lay about
- Intestinal
- The opposite of yes
- Caused to be loved
- Messianic in Islamic eschatology
- Showing since conviction
- Not safe
- The number above the line in a fraction
- Yard invader
- Pouch
- Swedish krona
- Start anew
- While white or yellow flower
- Fourteen
- Graphical user interface
- Up-to-date on the news
- Campaigns
- Touch softly
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Violent seizure of property
- One who supports the Pope
- Anxiety
- Body fluid
- Phony person
- Title of respect
- Chilean city
- City in central Japan
- Silk garment
- Draw from
- Automobile
- Man
- Legal bigwig (abbr.)
- Endured
- A female domestic
- A "place" to avoid
- Cigarette (slang)
- Canadian politician Josephine
- French ballet/acting dynasty
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Belonging to the bottom
- Sound
- Yankees' slugger Judge
- Dickens character
- More wise
- Flash memory card
- Exposing human vice or folly to ridicule
- Atomic #79
- Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- Humor
- Shawl
- Preliminary assessment of patients

**DOWN**

- Animal disease

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

Level: Advanced

**Here's How It Works:**

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

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