

Your Community Voice for 50 Years

PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

January 16, 2020
Volume 51, No. 11
75 cents

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

PonteVedraRecorder.com

RALLY IN TALLY



Area teachers and parents were part of a group that went to the state capitol last Monday for the "Fund our Future Rally in Tally" event. Thousands of teachers from across the state attended the rally to lobby for more funding and higher pay. **Read more on page 12.**

Photo by Bob Wilfong



School is Cool

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Get Organized in 2020

Get Organized in 2020

Pages 17-24

In the Arts

Pages 30-35



CAR OF THE WEEK

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Hugh Osteen
Florida Market Manager
hugh@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831

Susan Griffin
Publisher
susan@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3938

Maggie FitzRoy
Editor
maggie@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3939

Paris Moulden
Page Designer/Reporter
paris@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3943

Christine Rodenbaugh
Reporter
chris@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831

Amber Lake
Reporter
amber@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3945

Daniela Toporek
Reporter
daniela@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3941

Ed Johnson
Senior Account Executive
ed@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3940

Kristin Flanagan
Account Executive
kristin@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3950

April Snyder
Sales Assistant
aprils@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3937

Bob Bueno
Circulation Manager
bbueno@opcfla.com
904-463-0962

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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. Email submissions to pvrecorder@opcfla.com or bring them by our office at **1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach**. Submissions may be published in the paper, on our website or on our social media platforms.

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Also, check out the **Ponte Vedra Recorder** channel on YouTube.

WHAT'S THIS?



Do you know what this is?

Email answer to pvrecorder@opcfla.com by Monday at 5 p.m.

All correct entries will be entered into a random drawing to win tickets for two adults and two children to the Jacksonville Zoo. In order to allow as many families as possible to win, participants are only eligible to win a ticket prize pack once every four months.

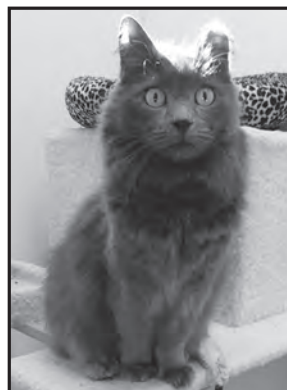
Three readers correctly identified last week's photo as the World War II Operation Pastorius Marker in Ponte Vedra Beach. The winner of the random draw was **Mary Maples**. Congratulations, Mary — you may pick up your prize at the Recorder office during normal business hours.



ADOPT A PET

CAT OF THE WEEK

Murphy was given to the Pet Center as an owner surrender. She is a beautiful 3-year-old female domestic medium hair who is spayed. Murphy is extremely lovable, loves to be brushed, is litter trained and good with kids, but she would like to be the only animal in your home. Come see Murphy at the Pet Center today. #14513



DOG OF THE WEEK

Trooper was found as a stray. He is about 1½ years old — an intact male, American bulldog mix. He is very playful, energetic and loving. Trooper loves to be outside and run, loves to eat and is treat-driven. Come see Trooper at the Pet Center today. #53072

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

St. Johns County Pet Center

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

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

A	R	U	B	A	A	I	R	M	O	S	S	
G	I	R	O	S	O	D	E	W	I	L	C	O
A	S	S	E	T	N	O	M	I	N	L	A	Y
C	A	R	R	I	E	I	N	D	I	A	N	A
S	A	M	E	X	I	T						
C	O	G	Y	A	M	S	P	H	O	B	I	A
O	V	E	N	G	I	S	T	S	W	O	R	N
N	O	N	O	O	L	E	O	S	E	R	I	N
A	L	T	A	R	K	N	O	T	N	I	S	I
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B	A	S	E	O	W	E						
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8	3	6	2	1	7	4	9	5				
2	9	5	6	4	8	3	1	7				
4	7	1	3	9	5	8	2	6				
9	5	4	7	6	2	1	3	8				
1	8	7	5	3	4	9	6	2				
3	6	2	1	8	9	7	5	4				
6	4	3	8	2	1	5	7	9				
7	2	9	4	5	3	6	8	1				
5	1	8	9	7	6	2	4	3				

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.



PHOTOARK
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A federally endangered Florida panther, Puma concolor coryi, ZooTampa at Lowry Park.

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Community responds to Fish Island cleanup call



ABOVE: Maureen and Dan Winkler (left) and John Atwater (right) nearly filled their sled within the first 10 minutes of Saturday's Fish Island Community Cleanup in St. Augustine. More than 200 residents volunteered for the cleanup effort.



RIGHT: Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline (left) was part of the "yellow" group with volunteers Lynne Carson (center) and Vicki MacDonald, at the Fish Island Community Cleanup.

Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh

By Christine Rodenbaugh

More than 200 volunteers participated in the Fish Island Community Cleanup Saturday in two shifts.

The cleanup was hosted by the Matanzas Riverkeeper, Jen Lomberk, and the City of St. Augustine to remove debris scattered throughout the 59-acre property – much of it left by transients who squatted on the land before the North Florida Land Trust purchase was finalized in November. A contractor had previously removed large amounts of trash, but individuals were able to reach small pockets blocked by dense

vegetation and scour underbrush for smaller items like batteries, eyeglasses, CDs, clothing, cans, bottles and myriad other items.

"The community response has been so fantastic," Lomberk said. "It's a little overwhelming, but needed."

Equipped with gloves, large buckets and extended "grabbers," the first wave of volunteers was assigned to one of five groups with a leader who guided them to the team's cleanup area. The City had placed three dumpsters on the property, and there were rolling trash bins at regular

FISH ISLAND continues on **Page 7**

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Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition holds meeting Jan. 22

The Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition will hold its monthly meeting Wednesday, Jan. 22, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library to discuss a variety of issues.

Jacquelyn Smith, director of Special Operations for Congressmen John Rutherford's office, will be the guest speaker at the meeting and will discuss what Rutherford's office does for the constituents and

the numerous services offered. Smith has worked in the 4th Congressional District for 18-plus years under congressmen Ander Crenshaw and Rutherford. Her job is to serve the people by helping them with issues relating to the federal government and to be in the community, so the constituents feel a link to their representative.

Smith has also acted as liaison between the district's D.C. office and the district,

making issues of importance in the 4th Congressional District — such as shore protection — remain at the top of the agenda. Smith has headed 16 veteran recognition ceremonies and has worked with area students on their military academy nominations and the Congressional Youth Medals.

Also, at the meeting, Dick Williams will provide an update of the ongoing proj-

ects in the community, and Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition President Lisa Johnson Cook will provide updates on county committee meetings dates and other happenings affecting the Coalition's mission.

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library is located at 101 Library Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information on the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition, go to pvbcoalition.org.



photos provided by the Cora C. Harrison Trailhead

The Cora C. Harrison Trailhead is located on the Palatka-to-St. Augustine State Trail.

Cora C. Harrison Trailhead to open with community bike ride

The Cora C. Harrison Trailhead will officially open with a community bike ride at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, hosted by St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department. The trailhead is located on the Palatka-to-St. Augustine

State Trail, a multi-use recreational trail along a corridor that stretches through St. Johns and Putnam counties.

The community bike ride will begin

TRAILHEAD continues on **Page 10**



The trailhead is part of a multi-use recreational trail along a corridor that stretches through St. Johns and Putnam counties.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY BRIEFS

County's Master Gardener volunteers to give away tree, shrub seedlings

In observance of Florida's Arbor Day, UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Master Gardener volunteers will be giving away tree and shrub seedlings on Friday, Jan. 17, at 8:30 a.m., at the following locations: Anastasia Island Branch Library; Bartram Trail Library; Hastings Library; Publix at Murabella; and Publix at Nocatee. Species include hackberry, redbud, yaupon holly, Southern redcedar, spicebush, strawberry bush and arrowwood viburnum.

South Ponte Vedra Beach, Vilano Beach renourishment easements needed

Although 90% of the South Ponte Vedra Beach and Vilano Beach Renourishment easements have been obtained, the

remaining easements must be secured by March 31, for the project to proceed on the updated Army Corps project schedule and for the beaches to be renourished in 2020. If you are an oceanfront property owner south of Serenata to the St. Augustine Inlet and have questions, did not receive your packet or need assistance completing your documents, call (904) 209-0760 or email jjolley@sjcfl.us.

St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier announces new business hours

The St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier is temporarily adjusting business hours due to the ongoing pier reconstruction project. As of Jan. 13, the gift shop is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. For more information regarding the pier gift shop, call (904) 209-0326.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ponte Vedra Recorder readers can help us work toward saving a billion gallons of water this winter — and save money on their water bills.

Even in sunny Florida, lawns and landscapes take a break during the winter and naturally go dormant. During the cooler months of December, January and February, our landscapes typically need less water, and irrigation often isn't needed at all, so now is a great time to save water without giving up curb appeal.

On Dec. 2, the St. Johns River Water Management District kicked off its annual "Skip A Week" water conservation message, part of our year-long "Water Less" campaign. "Skip A Week" asks residents who water their lawns to voluntarily skip every other week this winter.

While current irrigation restrictions do allow watering up to once a week during Eastern Standard Time, weekly irrigation isn't always needed this time of year. If homeowners who do regularly water their yards simply skipped every other week this winter, more than a billion gallons of water could be saved across our 18 counties.

Skipping every other week is as easy as manually turning off your automatic sprinkler system. You'll be training your grass to grow deeper root systems, which makes them more drought-tolerant and less susceptible to pests and disease. Overwatered lawns are weak lawns.

Research shows watering deeply every 10–14 days is generally plenty during winter months.

If you do water your lawn — and even when you "Skip A Week" — remember that your watering day is based on your address: odd addresses irrigate on Saturday, even addresses irrigate on Sunday and non-residential addresses water on Tuesday. Always water before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

We're all in this together. Skipping every other week of sprinkling is a simple way to do your part to help the region meet current and future water supply needs and conserve our most precious water resources. You can learn more at WaterLessFlorida.com, where you'll also find tips on year-round water conservation and efficient irrigation.

Ann B. Shortelle, Ph.D.

Executive Director,
St. Johns River Water Management District

World famous golf architect Pete Dye dies at 94

By Amber Lake

The PGA TOUR announced that Pete Dye, innovative golf course designer, died Jan. 9 at age 94.

Dye gained notoriety in the golfing world for designing THE PLAYERS Stadium at TPC Sawgrass. He was

known not only for his unique approach to golf course design but also for creating some of the world's most challenging and cutting-edge courses. Most notably Dye was recognized for the iconic "Island Green" at the 17th hole at Sawgrass.

Known in the golfing world as the "mad scientist of

golfing architecture," Dye and his wife, Alice, worked together to develop over 100 courses. Alice passed away in February 2019 at age 91. Dye leaves behind his two sons, Perry and Paul Burke, as well as a legacy of challenging courses that continue to make some of the world's best golfers scratch their heads in wonder and frustration.



Photos provided by Cypress Village

Cypress Village executives and LeadingAge FLICRA advocates pose with state Reps. Cyndi Stevenson (front, third from right) and Clay Yarborough (front, second from right) during an event at Cypress Village on Dec. 20.

Cypress Village honors Florida Reps. Yarborough and Stevenson

Cypress Village residents and associates filled Egret Hall the morning of Dec. 20 to celebrate and honor Florida House of Representatives members Clay Yarborough of District 12 and Cyndi Stevenson of District 17.

This celebration had been building for several years after House Bill 1033 was initially filed for review and revision by Stevenson, and everyone present was excited to celebrate the successful passing of the bill in both the Florida House and Senate. The bill serves to protect residents in senior living Continuing Care Retirement Communities from a variety of financial risks and creates a statewide Continuing Care Advisory Council to make sure that residents across Florida have proper advocacy in legislation and are being taken care of in their retirement.

The ceremony included a welcome by Cypress Village Executive Director Ty Morgan, as well as an awards presentation to the representatives. Two organizations were integral in the passing of this bill and continued advocacy for senior living reform; The Florida Life Care Residents Association and LeadingAge Florida, both of which presented awards to the Representatives for their efforts.

Cypress Village resident and FLICRA Treasurer Jim Jandreau said, "This new law, monumental in its scope, struck a fair and needed balance of resident protection and will lead to further economic growth and vibrancy of the CCRC model in Florida."

He joined William Stander of FLICRA as they presented an award of appreciation to both Yarborough and Stevenson. The Executive Director of LeadingAge Florida, Susan Langston, was also present and spoke, recognizing the dedication of the



Executive Director of LeadingAge Florida Susan Langston and Rep. Cyndi Stevenson

legislators for their dedication to the task and the passing of HB1033.

"Without the strength of their vision for a healthy senior living market with strong protections for residents, this important reform simply would not have happened," Langston said.

She named Yarborough and Stevenson as LeadingAge Florida's Legislators of the Year.

Following the remarks by Yarborough and Stevenson, attendees participated in a meet and greet with the dignitaries and enjoyed mimosas and a gourmet breakfast buffet.

Governor appoints Brandon Patty to clerk of court, comptroller

By Christine Rodenbaugh

Governor Ron DeSantis appointed Brandon Patty to fill the St. Johns County Clerk of Court and Comptroller position left vacant in December when Hunter Conrad resigned to take the role of county administrator. The term ends December 2020.

"It's the honor of a lifetime to get the call to serve by the governor," Patty said. "It's humbling."



Brandon Patty

Patty is a Florida native, born in Okeechobee and raised in Tallahassee. He graduated in 2005 from George Washington University with a bachelor's degree in international affairs and earned a master's in international relations from The London School of Economics in 2011.

Patty is currently chair of the St. Johns County Republican Party and serves as an information warfare officer in the U.S. Navy Reserves.

Patty walked through the doors to the County Administration Building Dec. 17 and describes what the public sees of the clerk's office as "the tip of the iceberg." The office partners with the court system, safeguards taxpayer money and acts as custodian of records.

"The good news is, the clerk's office has been very well run by Hunter," Patty said.

With a 100-person office and a \$75 million budget, the learning curve has been steep. Patty said he's calling on his cumulative management experience, including military service and even working at Publix in high school, in his new role with the county.

Recording documents is a primary point of interaction with the public for the clerk's office. Recently, Patty learned residents were waiting in line for documents to be processed – mostly passports. Patty and his senior staff will be trained to process passports so they can step in when demand is high. However, if he or his staff is pulled from regular duties on more than an occasional basis, Patty will look for a different solution.

"It's about residents getting the service they need in a timely fashion," he said, acknowledging the county's rapid growth brings challenges for all. His management focus will be to facilitate a more streamlined, efficient and effective clerk's office.

Because the office keeps legal records like deeds, marriages and court documents, the St. Johns County Clerk's office has more items than "younger" counties might. A stash of papers from the 1600s was recently found in a closet. Nicknamed the "breadbox papers," they were sent to the St. Augustine Historical Research Library for copying and review.

"There's so much history here," Patty said. "Many [clerks] have come before me and many will come after. I want to be a good steward ... for the clerk's office to be proud we're part of this history."

Rhonda Goodall of Ponte Vedra Beach is a children's book author and illustrator. She has published five books to date.



Photo by Maggie FitzRoy

As told to Maggie FitzRoy

What type of children's books do you write?

There is one theme to all of them: teaching kids love, happiness and kindness. They are also about dealing with real situations.

What was the first book you wrote?

"Frizzle." It's the first in a series, so far of three books. The fourth is due to come out in the spring.

What is the situation that the character named Frizzle must deal with?

I had been drawing this little character all my life, the one I later named Frizzle. Then one day, 11 years ago, I just came up with a story in my mind and wrote it. Frizzle realizes one day that he doesn't have a family. He goes to his wise friend, Mr. Owl, to tell him he is feeling sad about that. Mr. Owl reminds him of all the friends he has in Happy Town, where he lives—friends that love and care for him, that truly are his family. Frizzle realizes Mr. Owl is right, and he is excited to realize he really does have a family. I loved writing it.

What was your second book?

"My Pancreas Needs Glasses." It features children with medical issues. Two brothers, based on two of my own children, are walking through their neighborhood and they run into people they know. Some have physical challenges and the brothers come to realize how many

people they meet in a day who have some type of medical issue that you would never even know about.

What inspired your second book?

My son Julian is a diabetic. Growing up, no other kid in his class had to take insulin shots. You realize kids do feel different when they are dealing with something. I wanted to write a book that would help kids realize that everybody has got a story. You don't always see it, but everyone has got something to deal with, or someday they will. I made it a lighthearted, fun book. It won the Florida Authors and Publishers Association Presidential Award for a children's chapter book for ages 7-12.

What else have you written?

The second Frizzle book is "Frizzle's Holiday Treasures." Frizzle discovers a family in need and rallies the community to help. I asked local children to help come up with gift ideas. It is meant to inspire kids and teach them it's not all about money. You can also give people a gift of your time. The third Frizzle book is "Frizzle's Rainbow in the Clouds." Frizzle befriends a turtle who needs help and helps him. It teaches kids that if someone is having a bad day, you can be kind to them. You can be their rainbow.

What is your most recent book?

"Where Did Grandma Go?" It was published last summer. It was inspired by my mom, who we lost in a horrible accident. I wrote it through my youngest son's eyes. He was sad and confused. The book aims to help children who have

lost somebody. By the end of the story, the boy who has lost his grandmother comes to realize she's in a happy place—heaven. And that she will be there waiting for him and will see him again. My goal is to make a difference in the life of every child I can. I try to do that through my books. To bring a real situation to life in a way that a child can understand and feel comfortable dealing with. It.

It sounds like you are a woman of deep faith. Are you?

Yes. I always thought I was until what happened with my mom. But I came to realize I didn't know what true faith was before that. I dedicated the book to my mom.

Tell us about your family.

My husband is Doug. I have two grown stepchildren and 3 boys. Zach is 21, Julian is 18 and Sage is 9.

Where did you grow up and how and when did you come to Ponte Vedra Beach?

I grew up in Pittsburgh. My husband's parents lived here and when his mom's health started failing, we made the decision we needed to be here. My mom also moved here from Pittsburgh. I'm still a diehard Pittsburgh Steelers fan. The Jaguars are number two.

What do you do when you are not writing?

Mainly I'm drawing, working on the next book because I'm also an illustrator. I also love the beach. And I also spend a lot of time with our close family and friends.

Fish Island

Continued from 3

intervals along the main path.

Fish Island is located adjacent to the southeast foot of the State Road 312 Bridge. Mike and Cindy Alyea live on Anastasia Island and have followed the initiative to preserve the tract of land for many years. The couple operates local nonprofit Blue Ocean Sails. They volunteered for the cleanup because “the quality on land affects the quality of water, so it’s all integrated,” Mike Alyea said.

Police Chief Barry Fox and several deputies arrived before the 8 a.m. check-in time to ensure there were no active transient camps that day. Fox said that if any homeless were contacted, they would have been put in touch with local services to get them the help they need. Officers were on site throughout the cleanup and readily available “to deal with animals or anything volunteers may be uncomfortable with,” Fox said.

For now, there is a gate blocking entry and the tract is posted “no trespassing.” The City of St. Augustine is expected to reveal plans for a park on the land and will announce the opening when the site is deemed safe and any artifacts are preserved.

Striker Thompson, a 6-year-old student at Osceola Elementary and future archaeologist, volunteered for the cleanup with his parents. The family was interested in seeing the long-abandoned homestead of Jesse Fish. Near the remaining coquina foundation of the Fish home, Striker found a white pottery shard with a cobalt blue design on the edge. Archaeological consultant Chris Newman flagged the small piece so that it could be cataloged later, and so that another volunteer did not pick up and discard the find.

Striker likes archaeology because “you find a lot of artifacts – stuff from olden times,” he said. “I might find more pottery.”



Striker Thompson, an aspiring archaeologist, points to a piece of white pottery with a cobalt blue design on the edge.

And within a few minutes, he did.

“It’s because he’s close to the ground,” Newman said as she flagged Striker’s second discovery.

City Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline’s group collected several interesting items – many of them gross and disgusting. But near the end of the two-hour shift, Sikes-Kline emerged from the overgrowth holding up a Lodge brand iron frying pan. It was rusted and “crusty,” but her face told a different story. The discarded item might as well have been treasure, not trash, when she enthusiastically shared her find with other volunteers.



Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh

Vice Mayor Leanna Freeman (left) pins the City of St. Augustine logo to Matanzas Riverkeeper Jen Lomberk’s shirt. City officials presented pins to thank volunteers for their service.

“I feel like we got a lot done,” Sikes-Kline said about her group. “For us, it was a lot along the water – stuff that just washed up.”

To thank volunteers, commissioners and city officials presented a pin of the City’s logo to each volunteer. At the end of her 2-hour cleanup effort, Vice Mayor Leanna Freeman returned to the check-out tent and “pinned” several volunteers.

“It’s an alignment of the stars over 12 years,” Freeman said. “Every single player, including the negative components, turned the tide,” she said about the successful preservation efforts. “We had people who never got involved in environmental issues in their life get involved.”

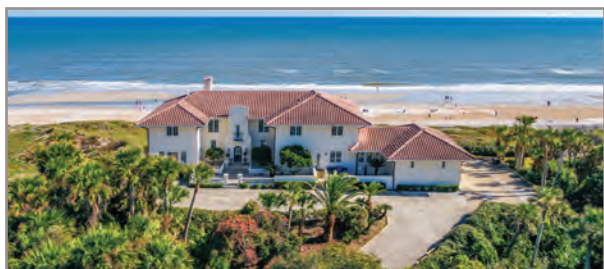
On Monday, Lomberk reported all three dumpsters were full and larger items like mattresses, chairs and tires were piled next to the bins. The City’s solid waste department will collect the debris and have a final weight later in the week.

“My faith in humanity is restored,” Lomberk said. “Today is a good day.”



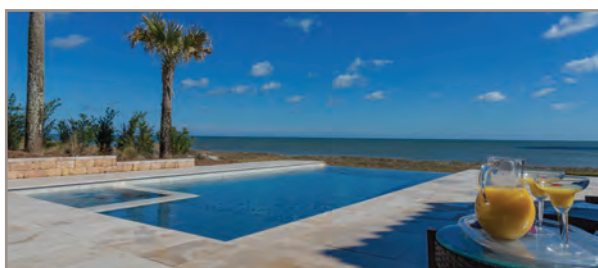
Spectacular Water to Golf Views

Ponte Vedra Beach/Sawgrass Island
Located at 8014 Pebble Creek Lane East on an estate-sized lot this spacious single story home showcases spectacular water to golf views. With high ceilings, generous windows, and custom details throughout this home was built to accommodate all your needs.
4 bedrooms, 5.5 bathrooms \$1,575,000



Design Ocean Dream Oasis

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to own over 2 acres of oceanfront property situated on one of the highest dunes in Ponte Vedra Beach. North of Mickler’s Landing, this 6,047 sqft home with 248ft ocean frontage is the ideal place to design your dream oasis.
5 bedrooms, 4F/3H baths \$3,425,000



Oceanfront Retreat

Located on a gated 1+ acre lot this spacious and bright home with expansive flowing spaces reflects the beauty of its spectacular natural backdrop. Positioned on a high and dry dune, with 27 ft of elevation and breathtaking oceanfront views.
5 bedrooms, 6 full / 2 half baths \$5,250,000



Panoramic Guana to Ocean Views

With the Guana River to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, this oceanfront home offers stunning panoramic views. Built with top engineering designs, this home thoughtfully merges comfort with sustainability.
7 bedrooms, 7.5 baths \$2,700,000



Intracoastal Condo + Boat Slip

Located in the private gated community of Marina San Pablo, this 6th story luxury condo offers a convenient location, resort style amenities, and phenomenal views of the marina and Intracoastal Waterway along with a 20x50 boat slip.
3 bedrooms, 3.5 baths \$765,000



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www.ElizabethHudgins.com



Thursday, Jan. 16	Friday, Jan. 17	Saturday, Jan. 18	Sunday, Jan. 19
<p>JAX Vegan Couple's vegan dinner at McFlamingo JAX Vegan Couple will be hosting a vegan dinner at McFlamingo in Ponte Vedra Beach at 6 p.m., Jan. 16. Dinner is \$20 per person and includes an array of menu options like salads, lentil burgers, hummus, Brussel sprouts, a prosecco toast and more. RSVP by Jan. 14 at www.EventBrite.com by searching for, "@JaxVeganCouple." For more information, call McFlamingo at (904) 834-2331. McFlamingo is located at 880 A1A N., #12, in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>The Art of Pop: A Warhol Dinner Party Celebrate the start of 2020 and the Cummer Museum's acquisition of works by pop-culture icon, Andy Warhol, at the Warhol Dinner Party at 6 p.m., Jan. 16. Party guests will enjoy beer, wine, hors d'oeuvres, themed music, artful experiences and dinner. Tickets can be found by visiting www.cummermuseum.org. The Cummer Museum is located at 829 Riverside Ave. in Jacksonville.</p> <p>Rising Appalachia at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall Rising Appalachia, founded by sisters Leah and Chloe Smith, merged multiple global music influences with their own southern roots to create the new folk album, Leylines. Visit the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall at 8 p.m., Jan. 16, to hear the band's new sounds with special guest Raye Zaragoza. Doors open at 7 p.m. For tickets, visit www.pvconcerthall.com. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is located at 1050 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>Health and Wealth in 2020 This presentation welcomes Dr. Arun Gulani, a leading eye surgeon known around the world for designing the vision, "Beyond 2020." Scott A. Grant, JD will speak on how to save for the next 200 years to shape the generations to come. After the presentation, speakers will be available for one-on-one conversations with guests. Refreshments will be provided by Savour Sensations. The presentation will be hosted at the Cultural Center of Ponte Vedra Beach from 6 to 8 p.m., Jan. 16. To RSVP or for more information, call the Cultural Center at (904) 285-2130. The Ponte Vedra Cultural Center is located at 50 Executive Way in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p>	<p>The Fabulously Funny Comedy Festival at Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena The Fabulously Funny Comedy Tour makes its Spring 2020 debut, embarking on its first, 30+ city national tour. This show-stopping extravaganza features an unforgettable lineup of iconic comedians including Mike Epps, Sommore, Gary Owens HaHa Davis and Michael Blackson. The laughing begins at 8 p.m., Jan. 17, at Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena. For tickets or more information, visit www.fabulouslyfunny.com. The Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena is located at 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd. in Jacksonville.</p> <p>33rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast The City of Jacksonville invites all to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the 33rd annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast, presented by Florida Blue. The breakfast will feature Mayor Lenny Curry and Omar Johnson. Johnson is an entrepreneur, former CMO at Beats by Dre, and former VP of Marketing at Apple. Breakfast will feature a self-serve buffet from 7 to 8 a.m., Jan. 17. The program will begin promptly at 8 a.m. For tickets or more information, email events@coj.net or call (904) 255-5422. The Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center is located at 1000 Water St. in Jacksonville.</p> <p>The Band Be Easy at Cruisers Grill Cruisers Grill in Jacksonville Beach features live music Fridays and Saturdays, from 9 p.m. until midnight. This Friday, Jan. 17, Cruisers will feature the popular local ensemble, The Band Be Easy. For more information, call Cruisers Grill at (904) 270-0356. Cruisers Grill is located at 319 23rd Ave. S. in Jacksonville Beach.</p> <p>Ponte Vedra Professional Networking Group meeting The Ponte Vedra Professional Networking Group schedules weekly meetings, Fridays, inside Fidelity Bank, where members network with each other and guests. Each member/guest will introduce themselves and one member will present about the businesses he/she represents. The next meeting is Jan. 17 at 8:45 a.m. Fidelity Bank is located at 110 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p>	<p>January Coffee + Connect: Beaches Go Green Coffee + Connect is an open meetup that provides an intimate and inclusive environment to hear about local nonprofits and explore ways of giving back to the community. Hosted by Give Back Jax, Coffee + Connect meets at Lucy's Sweet Shop at 9 a.m., the third Saturday of the month, and asks different local organizations to share their missions over coffee. Taryn Montgomery from Beaches Go Green will be the featured guest to kick off 2020! RSVP is mandatory. To do so, search for "January Coffee + Connect: Beaches Go Green," at www.meetup.com. Lucy's Sweet Shop is located at 2435 Third St. S. in Jacksonville Beach.</p> <p>Farmers Market at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre Shop fresh foods, artisan goods and local art as shoppers enjoy local music and flavorful eats, Saturdays, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre. Pets are not allowed in the market. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/staugampmarket. The St. Augustine Amphitheatre is located at 1340C A1A S. in St. Augustine.</p> <p>Wine and Whiskey Tasting fundraiser Enjoy an evening of whiskey and wine at the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club's tasting fundraiser from 6 to 8:30 p.m., Jan. 18, at Marsh Landing. Learn about curated wines and whiskeys while sampling hors d'oeuvres and meeting with new people. Cost is \$99 per person and attendance is limited. RSVP by visit www.PonteVedraWomensClub.com. Marsh Landing is located at 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>Miami University of Ohio men's Glee Club concert Palms Presbyterian Church will kick off the first Fine Arts concert of 2020 with the Miami University of Ohio Men's Glee Club for a concert at 7:30 p.m., Jan. 18, in the church sanctuary. Founded in 1907, the Miami University Men's Glee Club is one of the nation's oldest and largest collegiate choruses. All concerts are free and open to community. Palms Presbyterian Church is located at 3410 Third St. S. in Jacksonville Beach.</p>	<p>Star Wars movie night at Wicked Barley Stop by Wicked Barley Brewing Company and use the force for a Star Wars movie night in the beer garden at 6 p.m., Jan. 19, featuring the film Star Wars: A New Hope. Movie snacks such as popcorn, nachos, hot cocoa and of course, beer, will be available for purchase. Admission is free and seating is first come, first served. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the movie starts at 7 p.m. Feel free to bring blankets and folding chairs for the ultimate movie viewing experience. For more information, call Wicked Barley at (904) 379-7077. Wicked Barley Brewing Company is located at 4100 Baymeadows Road in Jacksonville.</p> <p>Bring Your Own Mug beach cleanup Join First Coast Surfrider from 10 a.m. until noon in Jacksonville Beach for the "Bring Your Own Mug" beach cleanup, Jan. 19. Hot coffee will be provided by Southern Grounds as a way of saying thanks for helping to keep the coastlines and oceans clean. Meet fellow beach cleaners and enjoy the fresh air while helping the environment. The BYOM beach cleanup will meet at 16th Ave. S. in Jacksonville Beach.</p> <p>PAWSitive Vibes Yoga The Friends of Jacksonville Animals, Inc. and Bella Vida Yoga are joining forces at 1 p.m., Jan. 19, for a PAWSitive yoga experience and fundraiser. Yogis of all levels are invited to the event with a suggested \$10 donation. Refreshments will be provided, along with raffles for a chance to win some prizes. For questions, more information or to reserve a spot, email Carolyn@friendsofjaxanimals.com. Bella Vida Yoga is located at 510 Shetter Ave. in Jacksonville Beach. Road in Jacksonville.</p> <p>Ukulele Club monthly meet-up Stop by George's Music Jax Beach at 3 p.m., Jan. 19, and check out its monthly ukulele meet-up. The club gives musicians a chance to meet other uke enthusiasts, jam out on some songs, learn new tips and tricks from the uke group leader and learn about the latest ukulele gear. This club is free and open to the public. For more information, call (904) 270-2220. George's Music Jax Beach is located at 912 Third St. S. in Jacksonville Beach.</p>

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Monday, Jan. 20	Tuesday, Jan. 21	Wednesday, Jan. 22	Thursday, Jan. 23
<p>MLK Day of Service at Hanna Park Join the Timicuan Parks Foundation and the City of Jacksonville/JaxParks for a beautification project, from 9 a.m. to noon, Jan. 20, at Hanna Park for service honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The project will include removing invasive plants, clearing trails and cleaning up the shoreline. Children under 16 must be supervised by their parent/guardian and anyone under 18 must have a parent/guardian signature on the liability waiver and photo release prior to starting. For more information, call (904) 374-1107. Hanna Park is located at 500 Wonderwood Dr. in Jacksonville.</p> <p>Yoga for Survivors Come and share this restorative yoga session at 10 a.m., Jan. 20, at the Ponte Vedra YMCA as an experienced yoga instructor, certified by the Christina Phipps Foundation, guides cancer patients, survivors, caregivers and others with range of motion and pain limitations through a gentle and safe yoga practice. The class will take place in the Y Healthy Living Center. This yoga session is free event is open to the community. For more information or to reserve a spot, call (904) 202-5376 or visit baptistjax.com/hlc. The Ponte Vedra YMCA is located at 170 Landrum Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>Monday trivia at Mellow Mushroom Join Mellow Mushroom every Monday night at 7 p.m. for trivia with Trivia Nation. This event is free to play and there are prizes for the winners. Mellow Mushroom is located at 1018-2 Third St. N. in Jacksonville Beach.</p> <p>Beaches Business Association lunch and networking meeting The Beaches Business Association is a group of professionals who work together to support the beaches communities and raise funds for high school graduating seniors. The group meets Mondays at the Moose Lodge in Jacksonville Beach for networking and lunch. Lunch cost is \$12 with \$1 ticket sales for door prizes to help the scholarship fund. Networking begins at 11:30 a.m., Jan. 20, with the meeting following from noon to 1 p.m. For questions or more information, visit www.jaxbba.org. The Moose Lodge is located at 805 First Ave. N. in Jacksonville Beach.</p>	<p>Challenge Island: STEAM Events Kindergarten through fifth grade students and their caregivers are invited to join Challenge Island at 4 p.m., Jan. 21, as the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library dives into hands-on projects using STEAM skills. For more information on Challenge Island and STEAM, visit www.challenge-island.com. To register for the event or for more information, visit the library front desk or call (904) 827-6950. The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library is located at 101 Library Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>First Coast Newcomers Club card playing date The First Coast Newcomers Club will host its next card playing date at a coffee shop in Fleming Island at 3:30 p.m., Jan. 21. For the exact location, to join or for more information, contact the club organizer at (904) 814-9612.</p> <p>Men's over 40 basketball This active recreational group meets at the Palms Presbyterian Church gym (Fellowship Hall), Tuesdays at 6 p.m., for exercise and fellowship. The group is open to all who want to play some ball. For more information, call Paul Short at (904) 626-5305. Palms Presbyterian Church is located at 3410 Third St. S. in Jacksonville Beach.</p> <p>Karaoke at theLOFT Liven up a Tuesday evening and visit theLOFT for its weekly karaoke party. Dj. Keith Wilson will provide the tunes, with a wide range of up-to-date songs and lyrics projected on a massive screen on theLOFT's wall. The first five participants get a free shot of Fireball and bragging rights. This event is free and open to those over 21 years of age. For more information, call theLOFT at (904) 551-1350. theLOFT is located 925 King St. in Jacksonville.</p> <p>Nights of Lights boat cruise The Nights of Lights boat cruises are back, now through Feb. 2, 2020, for a tour of the lights along the water in downtown St. Augustine. Boats will launch out of Beaches of Vilano and run between two to three trips per night, every day of the week. For more information, call Night of Lights Cruise at (904) 248-4424. Beaches of Vilano is located at 254 Vilano Road in St. Augustine.</p>	<p>Beaches Joint Luncheon with the St. Johns County Chamber Join members of the JAX Chamber, Beaches Division and St. Johns County Chamber, Ponte Vedra Division at Casa Marina Hotel & Restaurant at 11:30 a.m., Jan. 22, for lunch and networking. Vice President of the PGA TOUR and Executive Director for THE PLAYERS Championship, Jared Rice, will be sharing updates for the 2020 edition of THE PLAYERS Championship. For more information, visit www.myjaxchamber.com. Cost is \$30 with advance registration and \$35 at the door. Casa Marina Hotel & Restaurant is located at 691 First St. N. in Jacksonville Beach.</p> <p>Paint N' Wine at The Wine Bar The Wine Bar is inviting the community to join and "get artsy" with the staff and with Amanda Moon Art from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Jan. 22. Cost is \$25 online or \$30 at the door and includes a complimentary drink and all materials needed to create a funky elephant painting. Relax, unwind, and let the creativity flow while a professional artist guides attendees through the process. For more information, call Amanda Moon at (954) 701-9918. The Wine Bar is located at 320 First St. N., #102, in Jacksonville Beach.</p> <p>Family Bingo at Trasca & Co. Eatery Join Trasca & Co. Eatery for a family-fun evening, Wednesdays, starting at 6 p.m. The restaurant will be hosting family bingo featuring pizza specials, craft beer specials and tons of fun. Bingo starts at 6 and runs until 8 p.m. Trasca & Co Eatery is located at 155 Tourside Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>Balance & Fall Prevention seminar Arrow St. Augustine is an outpatient rehabilitation company that provides a full range of expert services for clients with orthopedic conditions, work related injuries, sports injuries and various neuromuscular and neurological conditions. At 5 p.m., Jan. 22, Arrow St. Augustine will host a balance and fall prevention seminar presented by Alex Buser, DPT for those who struggle with balance and lose their footing. To register or for more information, call (904) 217-8601. Arrow Rehabilitation of St. Augustine is located at 5575 A1A S., #113, in Jacksonville Beach.</p>	<p>Torah & Tea Join with fellow Jewish women for camaraderie and refreshments as they meet for "Torah & Tea," Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. This weekly study group finds relevant messages from issues discussed in the Weekly Torah portion. Reservations can be made by contacting Leah Kurinsky at lkurinsky@gmail.com or (904) 543-9301. Torah and Tea meets at Chabad at the Beaches, located at 521 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>When Women Lead Join the Cultural Center of Ponte Vedra Beach for a powerful evening from a panel of female community leaders such as inspirational speaker Trudy Toche, personal trainer Peggy Hilbert, clinical psychologist Dr. Robi E. Tamargo Psy. D. and JSO assistant chief Lakesha Burton. These women will share personal stories of leadership, triumph and vision as they move forward in 2020. The event will be from 5 to 8 p.m., Jan. 23. Arrive at 5 p.m. to register. and enjoy refreshments, networking and a giveaway opportunity before the panel begins at 6 p.m. Cost to enter is \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. To RSVP, call (973) 819-6581 or visit www.when-women-lead.eventbrite.com. For more information, call the Cultural Center at (904) 285-2130. The Ponte Vedra Cultural Center is located at 50 Executive Way in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>Thirsty Thursdays at Al's Pizza What's a better combination than pizza and beer? Every Thursday, from open to close, Al's Pizza serves \$1.50 Yuengling Lager and house wines. Al's Pizza is located at 635 A1A N. in Ponte Vedra Beach.</p> <p>Free calendar listings for community groups and nonprofit organizations are published at our discretion on a space-available basis. Send your event at least 10 days before publication. Submit events to Daniela@opcfla.com or call (904) 686-3939.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Compiled by Daniela Toporek</p>

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Florida Forum Series welcomes Jon Meacham

Pulitzer Prize-winning author will speak Jan. 22 event benefitting Wolfson Children's Hospital

The Florida Forum Speaker Series, produced by The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital, welcomes award-winning historian and author Jon Meacham on Jan. 22. The program is slated to begin at 7 p.m. at the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts.

A contributor to TIME and The New York Times Book Review, Meacham is a highly sought-after commentator, regularly appearing on CNN and MSNBC. His latest No. 1 New York Times bestseller,



Photo provided by The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital

"The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels," looks back at critical times in American history when hope overcame division and fear. His books include "American Lion," a biography of Andrew Jackson, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize in 2009.

For tickets or additional information, visit www.TheFloridaForum.com, call (904) 202-2886 or email womensboard@bmcjax.com.

Trailhead

Continued from 4

at 11 a.m. at Armstrong Park, 4950 Harvey Ave. in Elkton, and conclude at the Cora C. Harrison Trailhead, 8989 State Road 207 in Hastings, where the ribbon cutting will take place at noon.

Participants can purchase lunch from

local food vendors and listen to music immediately following the ribbon cutting. This event is free and open to all ages.

Online registration is required and open until the day of the ride at bit.ly/0125trailhead, St. Johns County Parks and Recreation's registration platform. Email Jamie Baccari at jbaccari@sjcfl.us or call (904) 209-0377 for more information.

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NOCATEE HAPPENINGS

Lace up for Libraries 5K to be held Feb. 29 in Nocatee

Runners and walkers will be encouraged to lace up their running or walking shoes on Saturday, Feb. 29, and join the St. Johns County Public Library System for a winter warm-up 5K or 1-mile run/walk along the Nocatee community's hike and bike trails.

Participants can choose to run a competitive 5K or just walk the 5K to support library programs. The 5K will be chip-timed using disposable bibs. Awards will be presented post-race. Races begin at 8 a.m.

The first 200 5K registrants will receive a commemorative shirt, included in the entry fee. Shirts will be given to the first 200 registered 5K participants who enter before the Feb. 15 shirt cut-off date. Late participants will not be guaranteed a shirt or preferred size.

For those who are not up to a full 5K but consider themselves bibliophiles are invited to come out and en-

joy an easy 1-mile walk with friends. Adult 1-mile entry is \$10. Children 12 and under are free when they bring a book donation at check-in. All donated books will be used to spread literacy in the community. Both adults and children may purchase a commemorative shirt for \$10.

The event will also have a virtual Race option for those who can't make it out on race day. Participants can sign up for the Virtual 5K and receive a shirt and a medal. The race packet will be available at the library the week after the event.

Pre-race packet pick up will be held at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library at 101 Library Blvd., on Friday, Feb 28. The event will also include some special raffle prizes an awards ceremony at the conclusion of the 5K race.

Call (904) 827-6950 for more information.

Jazz Trio to perform in Nocatee

The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library will present the Doug Mathews Jazz Trio Tuesday, Jan. 21 at Nocatee Hall.

Doug Mathews is chairman of the Piano Department at LaVilla School of Arts in Jacksonville, where he has the piano lab and has been an instructor since the school opened in 2000. He is an active performer, who has performed with Dizzy Gillespie, Randy

Brecker, Bradford Marsalis and Jack Sheldon, among others. He studied under the legendary Rich Matteson and the library's Gerson Yessin. The Trio will consist of Ricky Ravelo on bass and Dennis Marks on drums.

The concert is free and open to the public. Doors will open at 6 p.m., concert to begin at 6:30 p.m.

Crosswater Hall is located at 245 Nocatee Way in Ponte Vedra.

OBITUARIES

Kierin Rutzou Keith

Kierin Rutzou Keith, 19, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Jan. 5, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. (904) 249-1100

Ericka Laine Lloyd

Ericka Laine Lloyd, 29, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died Jan. 3, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. (904) 249-1100

Dorothea Elizabeth Neinstedt

Dorothea Elizabeth Neinstedt, 94, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Jan. 11, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. (904) 249-1100

Ernestine P. Overfelt

Ernestine P. Overfelt, 91, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died Dec. 29, 2019.

Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. (904) 249-1100

Ronald Ross Peterson

Ronald Ross Peterson, 86, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, died Jan. 3, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. (904) 249-1100

Beverly Jeanne Rogers

Beverly Jeanne Rogers, 63, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Jan. 4, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. (904) 249-1100

Linnie H. Schultz

Linnie H. Schultz, 84, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Jan. 4, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. (904) 249-1100

Pages 11-16

Palm Valley Academy teacher connects students through American Sign Language

By Amber Lake

Julie Durden was in college when her niece was born. Although her big family was close, she didn't expect the event would change the entire trajectory of her life — but it did.

Soon after the baby's birth, the family learned she was born profoundly deaf. The news hit the family hard because they didn't know much about deafness. Being a family of action, they rallied together and decided every member would be required to learn American Sign Language. Since she was already in school, Durden enrolled in her first American Sign Language class.

Sixteen years later, Durden has been voted by her colleagues as a finalist for the district's 2020 Teacher of the Year. She is the only teacher in the district that teaches ASL on an elementary level. While some schools offer ASL clubs, very few public elementary schools provide sign language in a classroom setting. The



Photos by Amber Lake

Julie Durden was majoring in music when she took her first ASL class in college. Today, she is a finalist for the district's teacher of the year for her work leading Palm Valley Academy's American Sign Language program.

PALM VALLEY continues on **Page 13**

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Photos by Bob Wiltfong

Tiffany Kovacs, Valley Ridge Academy teacher, makes her voice heard.



Parents of children at Palm Valley Academy, Samantha Baker (left) and Melanie Armour, attend the rally.

St. Johns teachers, parents 'Rally in Tally' for education

By Bob Wiltfong

If anyone was looking for Nocatee teacher Tiffany Kovacs at her job Monday, they wouldn't have found her. That's because instead of teaching first graders at Valley Ridge Academy, she was at the Florida state capitol in Tallahassee, holding a large, red swim pool noodle with a sign attached, reading: "This is the last straw."

Kovacs' sign made it easy to find her among the thousands of other teachers holding signs at the state capitol for the "Fund our Future Rally in Tally" event.

"I came today because I teach students to stand up for themselves and here's my turn," Kovacs said. "That means that I think Florida needs to put more into their education."

Kovacs was one of four Valley Ridge teachers who used personal days to attend the rally organized by the Florida Education Association. The FEA is the federation of teacher and education workers' labor unions and is pushing for a legislative agenda that it says will reverse Florida's rankings as 43rd in the nation in per student expenditures and 46th in teacher pay.

"It's embarrassing. It's a disgrace and there's no reason for it. We are not going to attract teachers, and education support professionals to this state if we continue to dwell in the bottom ten numbers," said Michelle Dillon, president of the teachers union in St. Johns County, the St. Johns Education Association.

Dillon said about 50 people from St. Johns County boarded chartered buses



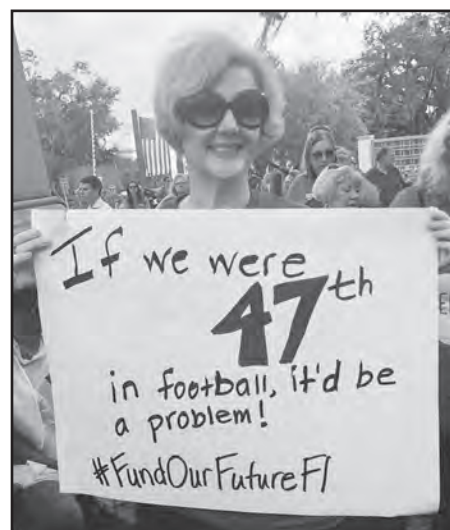
Area teachers join thousands of others at the rally in Tallahassee.

for the trip to Tallahassee. The trip was completely financed by the local union and included parents from St. Johns County as well as teachers and support personnel.

"We want this to be about the community of public ed — the volunteers, the parents, the support professionals," Dillon said, "because there is a concerted effort to privatize and demonize public ed. So, the more voices, the better."

One of the St. Johns parents joining those voices was Samantha Baker, mother of two children at Palm Valley Academy in Nocatee.

"I wanted to support our phenomenal teaching staff at PVA who are tirelessly working with our children with very little



Michelle Dillon, president of St. Johns Education Association

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The following scholarships are available through funds at The Community Foundation:

BYON M. MORRIS SCHOLARSHIP

The Byon M. Morris Scholarship will provide \$5,000 (\$1,250 per year for four years) to support tuition, books, fees, room and board and degree-related expenses for two graduating seniors who have attained Scouting's highest ranks. One Eagle Scout (Boy Scouts) and one Gold Award winner (Girl Scouts), each of whom must demonstrate an aptitude and desire to succeed, will receive the scholarship. In selecting the successful candidate, the review committee will consider academic achievements, leadership experience, desire for personal growth and financial need. All applicants must have at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (weighted) and plan to attend an accredited post-secondary institution on a full-time basis. Housed at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Byon M. Morris Scholarship application and supporting documentation requirements are available at bit.ly/2020TCFScholarships and due by March 16.

DOROTHEA B. SHAW SCHOLARSHIP

The Dorothea B. Shaw Scholarship will provide \$6,000 (\$1,500 per year for four years) to support tuition, books, fees, room and board and degree-related expenses for a student graduating from a Duval county public or private school and attending an accredited post-secondary institution in the Northeastern United States. In selecting the successful candidate, the review committee will consider academic achievements, leadership experience, desire for personal growth and financial need. All applicants must have at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (weighted) and plan to attend on a full-time basis. Housed at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Dorothea B. Shaw scholarship application and supporting documentation requirements are available at bit.ly/2020TCFScholarships and due by March 16.

SAM AND LYDIA PAYNE SCHOLARSHIP

The Sam and Lydia Payne Scholarship will provide financial assistance to a student graduating from a North Florida public or private school who demonstrates an aptitude and desire to succeed. The scholarship will support tuition and books, up to \$18,000 (\$4,500 per year for four years) provided the recipient continues to meet the eligibility requirements. All applicants must have a cumulative 2.2-3.5 (weighted) grade point average and plan to take a full-time course load in pursuit of a bachelor's degree. In selecting the successful candidate, the review committee will consider a desire for personal growth and financial need. Housed at The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Sam and Lydia Payne Scholarship application and supporting documentation requirements are available at bit.ly/2020TCFScholarships and due by March 16.

Palm Valley

Continued from 11

school's principal, Jessica Richardson, felt there was not only an opportunity to expand foreign language diversity for the students but that the visual nature of ASL could help student's ability to learn — both deaf and hearing. The practice caters to not only visual and auditory learners, but kinesthetic learning styles as well.

“When we have kids who might be having a hard time reading, understanding vocabulary, (we now work to) match the two so they could have this visual (representation) in their head to help them read and be better with literature,” Durden said.

According to recent studies on Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic (VAC) learning, being able to address and provide opportunities for children to learn using all the sensory methods at an earlier age increases average academic successes later in life.

Durden said in addition to seeing ASL help students learn, it also has provided a tool for creating empathy and compassion in the classroom.

Recently, Palm Valley Academy hosted students from the St. Augustine-based Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB). Due to the Academy students' ability to communicate using ASL, many students from both schools were able to communicate and understand each other.

“We teach (deaf) culture in addition to language,” Durden said. Because of that, their FSDB visitors said “it was the most they ever felt accepted by a large group of people. That's a huge thing because now we're teaching acceptance as well. It's not just a thing that you move your hands for.” Transcending language barriers is the first step to understanding and creating connections between students, and empathy happens to come along for the ride. ASL is a great vehicle for compassion, as the language itself is geared toward self-expression.

“(With ASL) they'll see it and feel it,” Durden said. “That is what I love the most about it because you cannot just sign. It's



Students take turns presenting their sign language stories while the class interprets.

Photo by Amber Lake

through expression that the sentences are formed. It's just such a beautiful language. It's so much deeper because you can truly express an entirely different way than you and I can speak it.”

SJC GRADUATION SCHEDULE

Friday, January 17

5 p.m. — First Coast Technical College
FCTC, Bldg. C

Tuesday, May 12

4:30 p.m. — St. Johns Virtual School
FCTC, Bldg. C

Wednesday, May 13

7 p.m. — St. Johns Technical High School
St. Augustine High School Auditorium

Tuesday, May 19

7 p.m. — Creekside High School
University of North Florida

Wednesday, May 20

5 p.m. — Ponte Vedra High School
University of North Florida

7 p.m. — Pedro Menendez High School

St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Thursday, May 21

7 p.m. — St. Augustine High School
St. Augustine High School Auditorium

Friday, May 22

7 p.m. — Allen D. Nease High School
University of North Florida

Saturday, May 23

2 p.m. — Bartram Trail High School
University of North Florida

Wednesday, May 27

5 p.m. — First Coast Technical College
FCTC, Bldg. C



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Families enrolling for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond will be enrolled in Episcopal School of Jacksonville.

www.esj.org • www.beacheseπισcopalschool.org

School academies allow students to sample careers

By Justine Andollo

Special to the Recorder

St. Johns County is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, drawing families to the area who are eager to experience the desirable climate, booming economy and the excellent-rated schools.

St. John's County school district consistently ranks as one of the top in the state, as well as in the country. Many high school students say it is due, in part, to the academies.

An academy, by the county's definition, is a "school within a high school," where students follow a structured and personalized sequence of elective courses that are tailored to their chosen career theme. For example, students in the Academy of Information Technology, at either Ponte Vedra High School or Bartram Trail, will follow the Program of Study designed for Information Technology, which is provided to help each student select courses and a plan for their postsecondary (college or career) experience.

An academy is much more than just a group of elective courses, however. Academies offer students opportunities to earn college credit through Dual Enrollment classes, as well as industry certifications. Academy students also have opportunities to participate in field studies and summer internships, which will help connect them to their community business partners and leaders in their industry. Since academy classes are designated as academic elective courses, students have the potential to graduate with special distinctions not offered elsewhere.

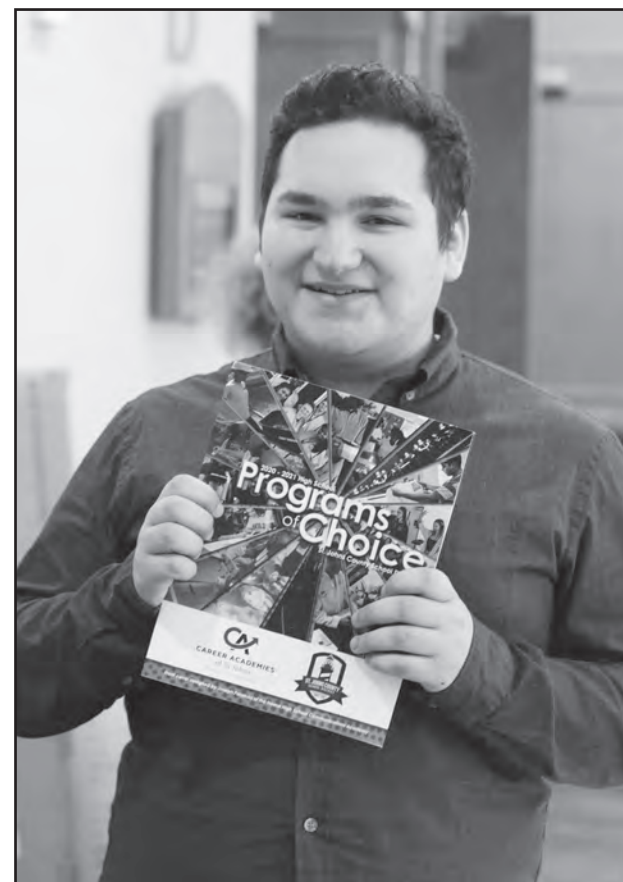
On Thursday, Jan. 9 a High School Showcase was held in the evening at World Golf Village. Each high school had the opportunity to educate prospective students and families about the academies they offer. There are seven high schools in the county, offering more than 25 individual academies. Each school had their Academy Directors and teachers on hand, as well as current academy



Joseph Faranda, sophomore at Nease High School, Communication Academy

students, to answer questions. The current students were excited to share their experiences.

Nease High School sophomore Joseph Faranda, who is part of the Communications Academy and designer of the cover of the 2020-2021 St. Johns County School District Programs of Choice Guide, said he is learning real world skills and gaining certifications in each program. "It will



Photos by Justine Andollo

Joseph Faranda, sophomore at Nease High School, Communication Academy

help me flourish in my chosen career of Graphic Design," he said, adding that he plans on furthering his education at the University of North Florida when he graduates.

According to Theresa Dodd, Executive Secretary for Career and Technical Education with St. Johns County School District, "more than 40% of students in St. Johns County are part of an academy."



Photos provided

Cristina Evans, Nicole Donnelly (clockwise from bottom left), Caroline Hunt and Cassy Lobaczewski designed a "gridiron" progress board to be placed in the in the parent loop at Nease High School in preparation for SOUPER Bowl V, the school's annual fundraiser scheduled for Jan. 30.

Nease students prepare for annual SOUPER Bowl fundraiser

By Christine Rodenbaugh

The annual SOUPER Bowl is a service project for Nease High School juniors enrolled in the International Baccalaureate program. The fundraiser was created in 2015 to provide food on weekends for St. Johns County students who rely on the free and reduced lunch program during the week.

Caroline Hunt is on the press and décor teams. Hunt said every member on the press team has emailed and written articles for at least three newspapers. The students are also working on an upcoming radio spot and a segment for a local news station.

"Working on the SOUPER Bowl has helped me grow by pushing me out of my comfort zone," Hunt said. "I am a staff member of the Nease newspaper, The Vertical, so working with the editors and organizers of newspapers throughout St. Johns County has really opened my eyes to the way a newspaper truly runs and how important it is to work together and effectively communicate."

One of the décor team projects was to design a "progress board" to illustrate fundraising progress. The team decided to use a "gridiron" that marks

progress in \$5,000 increments. The board was scheduled for placement in the parent loop of Nease on Monday.

"As of Jan. 7, we have raised a little over \$8,000 so far and are hopeful that we will reach our goal of \$40,000," Hunt said.

A \$25 ticket allows guests to sample signature soups created by more than 20 local chefs in a tasting event from 6 to 8 p.m. Jan. 30 at Nease High School in the cafeteria. Some of the soups served last year were charred Vidalia onion bisque with garlic chips and thyme oil, tomato puree with fire roasted eggplant and basil mousse, and a cold lemon raspberry soup with fruit mélange and chocolate.

As a memento from the event, each guest can choose a hand-crafted bowl made by a county student. Elementary, middle and high schools participate in the art project.

Since 2015, the event has raised more than \$100,000. This year, the SOUPER Bowl partners with Hugs Across the County to help students in need. The purchase of 10 tickets, or \$250, will feed one student for the entire year.

For information or to purchase tickets, visit www.StudentsTackleHunger.org.

KIDS SAY

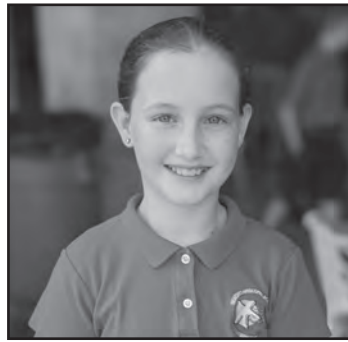
In this new feature of the Ponte Vedra Recorder, "Kids Say," area children offer their answers for some pressing questions. This week, sixth-graders at BEACHES EPISCOPAL SCHOOL were asked ...

WHAT IS YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?



"I have dysgraphia and want to improve my writing. Last year I tried to improve, and I did. I think I can improve more this year."

Mattia



"My New Year's resolution is to try new things. I am going to try things that used to scare me. Last year at camp I didn't do the high ropes course and this year I plan to do it."

London



"I am going to try to make all A's. I think it makes a good work ethic to try to have a goal for something in school."

Ella



"My New Year's resolution is to become better at long distance running. I want to get a triathlon in. You swim a quarter mile, bike 15 miles and you run 3.2 miles. My brother inspired me because he is on a triathlon team in college."

Bryce



"My New Year's resolution was to use more environmentally safe things. Now I'm not using plastic straws and using more metal stuff. Before I had a habit using a lot of plastic."

Scarlett

Sponsorship opportunities for this special feature are available. Call Susan Griffin at (904) 285-8831, ext. 3938 or email susan@opcfla.com for more information.

Bolles gives students 'All Things Possible' approach to life

By Missy Shaffer

Special to the Recorder

Courage. Integrity. Compassion. These are the foundational qualities of the Bolles experience. These themes help cultivate students with an "All Things Possible" approach to life, a passion for service and an awareness of global community.

"Throughout my experience in independent school education, I have learned that most schools have great strengths in a singular sphere — they may be strong in sports but not in academics, for example," Bolles President and Head of School Tyler Hodges said. "They can be leaders in an arts education, but weak in their athletic pursuits. Or they may emphasize academics but offer scant opportunity for servant leadership. This is not the case at Bolles. Our academic, arts, athletics and service offerings are equally as robust. This is a tremendous blessing — and profound responsibility for an anchor institution in Northeast Florida."

The Bolles School is home to approximately 1,600 day and boarding students in grades Pre-K through 12. Founded in 1933, Bolles features four diverse and co-educational campuses: The Lower School Whitehurst and Ponte Vedra Beach



Photo provided by the Bolles School

Campuses, the Middle School Bartram Campus and the Upper School San Jose Campus.

The resident life program can accommodate more than 90 male and female students from around the world. This year, students are from nine U.S. states and 23 different nations. These students help create a unique international educational

environment for themselves and their peers — both boarding and day students.

Bolles offers a comprehensive fine and performing arts program with courses in drama, dance, visual arts, chorus, music and band. Among middle and upper school students, 80% enrolled in fine and performing arts classes this year, while 100% of lower school students are

involved in art, music and theater instruction. Bolles hosts more than 40 on-campus and gallery receptions each academic year.

Academically, Bolles offers courses in six languages (including Arabic, Chinese and Japanese) and 23 Advanced Placement courses. A global context is paramount to the Bolles experience. In addition to on-campus activities and language study, Bolles offers exchange programs with schools in England, Spain, Japan, China and France, and academic and service travel opportunities to Italy, Guatemala and the Florida Keys. The school's athletic successes are known worldwide, with 61 sports teams at the middle, JV and varsity levels. Most students, 90%, participate in one or more sports at Bolles. A total of 59 Bolles students or former students have participated in the Olympics over the years, and 13 Olympic athletes from Bolles have won 20 medals.

Students from the class of 2019 qualified for more than \$4.1 million in merit-based scholarships and the 197 graduates were accepted to 295 different colleges. Bolles students understand that pursuing excellence through courage, integrity and compassion is not only the school motto, but the foundation for a successful life.

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Photo by Bob Wiltfong

Dignitaries, including Rev. Al Sharpton (third from left), attend the "Rally in Tally."

Rally

Continued from 12

wage and very overcrowded classrooms," she said. "They deserve more funding."

Baker said the FEA's proposal to pump \$22 billion into Florida's education system over the next 10 years would help her kids in Nocatee.

"The state isn't making proper allowances for the high growth in our area, so we're way behind in building schools, and it's not funding our teachers in a way that's making it competitive to come to our county," she said.

According to the FEA, the state has only increased its base student allocation for public schools about 3% since 2008, while the cost of living is up almost 22 since then. If successful, the union's legislative agenda would give all public school employees in Florida a 10% pay raise and restore previously-cut electives like art, music and drama.

"Now is the time," Dillon said. "We are losing teachers. We are losing bus drivers, and we've got to speak up."

Kovacs agrees. "I love teaching. I love the school I work at. I love the county I work for," she said.

She hopes state lawmakers are listening.

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Jan. 17th | Feb. 21st | Mar. 27th
9:30am – 10:30am

- VPK program offered 4 or 5 days a week, 8:45am-2:45pm
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- Kindergarten program: Mon-Fri, 8:30am - 2:30pm



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Feb. 25th | Mar. 24th | Apr. 28th
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Get Organized in 2020



SPECIAL SECTION • JANUARY 16, 2020



Recorder

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

Thanks for the memories. Now what do I do with them?



Barbara Trapp
Guest Columnist

As a professional organizer, I see a lot of similar “stuff” in clients’ homes. There are overflowing bookshelves, bulging clothes closets, guest (catch-all) rooms, cluttered offices and disorganized kitchens. Some garages have room for a car or two, while others serve as storage units. Paper piles tower on desks or are hidden away in drawers and bins. Everyone has stuff, and for some, purging it is an overwhelming task.

What makes it overwhelming is not just the sheer quantity to deal with, but the memories attached to things. Well-meaning family members and friends sometimes gift or pass things down to us that we don’t particularly want but aren’t sure what to do with.

There are two groups of clients in particular who are straining under the weight of stuff. The first are members of the sandwich generation: those who are raising children while beginning to care for or assist their aging parents. They tend to the everyday needs of their families and all the associated things that accumulate. Not only do they need to corral a growing collection of school papers and their children’s artwork; but also photos, memorabilia, and furniture that is beginning to trickle down from older generations.

The other group is Baby Boomers. They have raised families and collected decades-worth of their own belongings as well as the estates from one or both parents. Some even rent storage units to house it all, while others dutifully make it part of their decor, whether they want it or not.

I’ve heard clients announce, “This table has to stay in the family. My siblings don’t want it, so I am saving it for my kids/grandchildren/nieces/nephews.” Others save old bikes, school desks and toys for their children, only to find they had outgrown them or didn’t want them.

UNWANTED GIFTS

One of my clients hired me to help her clean out and organize her office. The “desk” consisted of two folding tables in an L-shape and was covered with random stacks of paper, office supplies, knick-knacks and general clutter. It was an overwhelming project for her, and she didn’t know where to begin. I suggested we start at one end and methodically work our way around the tables, making numerous decisions on random items as we got to them. We were laser-focused and winning the war on clutter.

As we neared the end of the tables, I noticed a tall beer stein with a Budweiser logo sitting at the back of the table. It seemed out of place.

“What do you want to do with this?” I asked my client.

“Ooooh I HATE that thing!” she snarled. “But it was from Uncle Walt, so I guess I have to keep it until he dies, right?” She sounded resigned and annoyed.

“No, you don’t,” I replied.

“I don’t?” My client looked excited and hopeful.

“No, because unfortunately it broke after much use,” I suggested.

She happily carried it to the donation box and added it to the pile of “unwants.” I’m not condoning lying, but Uncle Walt was not likely to ever visit her home. If someone gives you something, it’s yours to do whatever you want with it. You have free will and permission to let it go.

Merriam-Webster defines memory as the power or process of reproducing or recalling what has been learned... and...the store of things learned and retained.” Nothing is mentioned about tables, tricycles or beer steins. So, what to do with all of the memories taking up space in your home? Here are some ideas:



Photo provided by Barbara Trapp

REDUCE THE FOOTPRINT

- Take photos with, or of the object. Then let go of it. This is what one client did with her father’s numerous awards and accolades.

- Digitize your children’s favorite artwork using Shutterfly, Artkive or Plum Print. Want something truly unique? Try Fivver or Etsy.

- Digitize old media such as VHS tapes (these can degrade in less than 10 years!), film reels, photo slides and cassette tapes. Try Legacybox, ScanCafe or iMemories. Afraid to put your memories in the mail? Support a local business. Don’t forget to search Groupon and LivingSocial for discounts. Are you a do-it-yourselfer? Consider purchasing a converter kit to transfer tapes.

- Cull photos and paperwork to just the very best. Why keep unflattering or mediocre photos and schoolwork? The same goes for things that evoke sadness or anger. This is your chance to destroy the evidence and negative energy.

Just let go

Bring out your inner Marie Kondo and thank it for its service, then send it on its way.

Luggage

Donate it: Take to a shelter or foster care agency. Tip: Use the luggage you are keeping for storing travel-related supplies.

Furniture

Sell it: You can try selling through the Facebook marketplace, Craig’s list, or consignment shops, but know that big brown furniture is everywhere. The market for antique furniture peaked in the ’90’s and you may not get what you think the value is. Have something really special? Try Chairish.com, an online consignment shop.

Donate it: Call the Salvation Army or Goodwill to arrange pickups.

Habitat for Humanity uses the ReSupply app to coordi-

nate furniture donations.

Vietnam Vets can pick up many items, including small pieces of furniture. Visit schedulepickup.com.

Give it away: Someone just starting out (think college students and young families) might appreciate your castoffs. If word of mouth doesn’t work, post a curb alert through the Freecycle or NextDoor apps.

Musical instruments

Sell it: Sell on Craigslist, the Facebook Marketplace, or Reverb — a specialty site. Reverb has lower seller fees than eBay.

Donate it: Contact local schools with music programs or community organizations such as the Cathedral Arts Project (capkids.org).

Give it away.

Books

Sell it: Local used bookstores such as Chamblin’s, Black Sheep Books and 2nd & Charles will offer a flat fee or higher in-store credit. Online options include BookScouter, Cash4Books and Declutter.

Donate it: Check with your local library, middle and high schools before taking nonfiction and historical books to your local Goodwill. School librarians say older books (with maps, especially) are really helpful to students doing research.

Give it away: Offer to friends and family, post curb alerts or take to the nearest littlefreelibrary.com.

Clothes

Sell it: Try local consignment shops but read the fine print to make sure you are aware of guidelines. Some offer higher rates for couture clothing, purses and shoes. Online options to try are thredUP.com, poshmark.com, Tradesy.com, Etsy.com (for handmade and vintage items), rebag.com (purses and bags), therealreal.com (designer), [TRAPP continues on Page 21](http://kidi-</p>
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Organize and declutter room by room

Getting organized is a popular New Year's resolution.

Clutter can be a major source of stress that affects how individuals feel about their spaces. Psychology Today indicates messy homes and work spaces can contribute to feelings of helplessness, anxiety and overwhelming stress. Clutter bombards the mind with excessive stimuli, makes it more difficult to relax and can constantly signal to the brain that work is never done.

Tackling messes no matter where they are lurking is not a one-time project. Much like losing weight and getting healthy, clearing a home of clutter requires dedication and lifestyle changes. With these organizational tips and tricks, anyone can work through their home room-by-room and conquer clutter.

Find a place for everything

Clutter creeps up as people accumulate possessions over the years. Over time, failure to regularly go through belongings and thin the herd can lead to the accumulation of clutter. But clutter also can accumulate if people fail to find a place to put items. Racks for garages, organizational systems for closets and furniture with storage capacity, such as storage ottomans, are some storage solutions that can help people find a place for their possessions.

Utilize vertical space when possible

Getting items up and off the floor



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

can maximize square footage in a home. Bookshelves, hanging wall shelves, hooks, cabinetry, built-ins, and other storage solutions that rely on walls and ceilings are simple and effective storage solutions. Unused space behind cabinet or closet doors are some additional places to store belongings. Hang razors or toothbrushes on medicine cabinet walls and curling irons and other hair tools on the interior of cabinet doors in bathrooms.

Create a coding system

Home offices can be some of the more disorganized rooms in a house simply due to the volume of electronics and paperwork within them. HGTV suggests using a color-coded system for important files to keep them organized. Label important items, whether

they're paper or digital files, in accordance with your system.

Put it away

When you finish using an item, return it to its storage location. This eliminates piles of belongings strewn around the house — and hunting and pecking for missing things. If you can't put it away immediately, have a few baskets on hand labeled for the different rooms in the house. Pop the items in the baskets and then routinely take each basket around the house to return the items.

Investing in custom cabinetry and organizational systems also can help people organize their belongings. Tackle rooms such as the garage, basements, bedroom closets, and pantries, or those areas that tend to accumulate clutter the fastest.

How to organize shopping receipts

The season of giving has come and gone, but with it came frequent trips to stores and more time spent shopping online in the name of finding those perfect gifts for friends and family, and, of course, returns. With purchases come receipts, and it can be easy to lose track of receipts during busy holiday season.

While keeping track of receipts is important for small business owners and entrepreneurs, it's equally essential for anyone trying to maintain and keep a budget. Receipts are also key around the holidays because they help facilitate the return or exchange of gifts that may not be the right fit.

There are various ways to organize receipts, says the financial resource Tough Nickel, and some methods depend on the person doing the shopping. Here are some ways to conquer receipt clutter.

■ **Say "Yes" when asked "Receipt in the bag?"** When making purchases, have the receipt placed in the bag. This makes it easier to match purchases and receipts and decreases the chances that the receipt will vanish at the bottom of purses or pockets.

■ **Attach the receipt to the item.** Consider taping or using a paper clip to attach a receipt to the price tag when buying personal items. This way if you choose to return the item, the receipt is right there.

■ **Opt for gift receipts.** Gift receipts are handy to have for gifted items. While everyone likes to believe they've found the perfect gift, presents may need to be returned. Ensure the recipient can get the full purchase price with the gift receipt. You can keep the original copy as backup if needed.

■ **Use a coupon organizer.** Coupon organizer pouches and envelopes can be divided by

RECEIPTS continues on Page 20

Organized lockers help keep students on track

School is often a student's home away from home. Spending an average of six hours per day and five days a week, 10 months a year in the classroom or on campus, students may feel as though they spend more time roaming school grounds than they do relaxing at home.

Lockers can be havens for students, giving them a place to store supplies and personal items and meet up with friends each day. Organized lockers may help students handle all of their responsibilities more capably.

Developing organizational habits early on is a worthwhile lesson for students, helping them avoid tardiness and keep their assignments in order.

Students typically keep a number of items in relatively small lockers, which only makes it more challenging to stay organized. The following tips can help students stay organized this school year.

■ **Make the most of locker space.** Space is limited, but with some additions, lockers can be that much more functional. Insert a removable shelf to double the space available. Metal shelves are preferable, but adjustable plastic ones can be effective if they aren't

overloaded. Install adhesive hooks on the door or an inside wall of the locker to hang clothing, bags and more. Invest in hooks that can hold a lot of weight.

■ **Organize books by class.** Keep books organized by class schedule so that books can be grabbed quickly during period changes. Put folders and notebooks with the textbooks so that all related items will be together.

■ **Add some personality.** The Container Store suggests adding color and function with magnetic accessories to liven up the space. Dry-erase calendars, pencil/pen containers, a mirror, cubbies for notes and other tools, and magnetic picture frames are some ideas.

■ **Keep on top of trash.** Routinely clean out the locker if things become unruly. Tucking a small waste pail in the bottom of the locker can be handy for taming garbage. Otherwise, periodically clean your locker during after-school hours, emptying it of old assignments and taking clothes home for laundering.

Keeping an organized locker can help students thrive in the classroom.



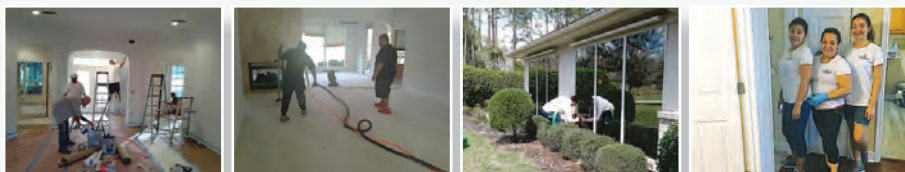
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Receipts

Continued from 19

gift recipients, retailers or however you see fit.

■ **Scan and save.** Various apps and software enable you to transition hard copy receipts to digital files. Some may further categorize purchases so shoppers can keep track of their spending habits more easily.

■ **Discard old receipts.** There is no point in keeping receipts after the return or exchange period has ended. One notable exception is purchases that will count for tax deductions, such as charitable donations.

■ **Hold onto proof of purchase.** In many instances, warranties or product registrations require a copy of the receipt and the UPC on the product. Store receipts for big-ticket items with the user manuals or other essential packaging for this purpose.



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Photos provided by Barbara Trapp

Trapp

Continued from 18

zen.com (children's clothing).

Donate it: Wearable clothing can be donated to many local charities. Have some NWT (new with tags) clothing appropriate for office wear? Consider taking to shops that support women's shelters, such as Hubbard House or Purple Dove Resale (Nassau County) or the City Rescue Mission.

Give it away: Host a clothing swap party among friends! Invite everyone to bring wearables in mint condition and let the trading begin...

Still having difficulty parting with your loved one's cherished memories? Hire a professional. A licensed therapist can help you work through past and present issues affecting your mental health. Ready to move forward? A professional organizer can help coach you through the process and recommend resources to pass your memories along.

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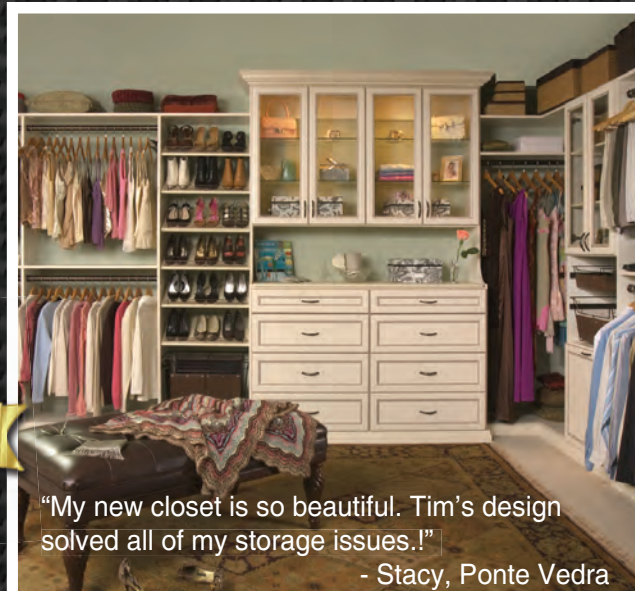
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A less noisy new year: 12 small changes to make in 2020 to break technology addiction

Tips from Joe McCormack, author of 'NOISE: Living and Leading When Nobody Can Focus'

Special to the Recorder

Digital disruptions, random distractions and 24/7 connectivity are killing our ability to focus—and that hurts our quality of life. Joe McCormack offers some simple, doable changes you can make in the upcoming year to reclaim your most valuable asset: your time and attention.

Start with your New Year's resolutions. Look past the usual contenders—lose weight, join the gym, save money—and start noticing a bad habit (actually, a whole suite of them) that hurts most of us more than we realize, he said. We've stopped discerning what we let into our sphere of attention, and it's taking a toll on our relationships, our careers, and our quality of life. "Slowly and without realizing it we've become slaves to emails, news stories, celebrity gossip, and endless social media alerts," McCormack said. "Digital distractions take us out of the moment, make us miss life's nuances, and rob us of our potential."

Thanks to what McCormack calls "noise," he said we're literally missing our lives. Days, weeks, months, and years pass by in a blur as real connections and meaningful work are replaced with mindless feasting on empty "calories" that make us mentally anemic and rob us of our focus. And, the consequences are real. We tune out our kids (and they develop the same bad habits). We half-listen to our partners. We go through the motions at the office, missing the cues that lead to smart decisions and failing to do the "deep work" that leads to real success.

That's the bad news. The good news is we can live richer, more rewarding, more intentional lives. We just need to be aware of what we're doing—and what we're not doing—and make some small, yet surprisingly high-impact changes around our relationship with technology.

McCormack is looking for folks to join his "Just Say No to Noise" movement. He suggests adding a "noise management" component to more traditional resolutions, which may make you more likely to reach them. For example, if you want to lose 20 pounds, cutting digital distractions frees up more time to prepare healthful meals and exercise.

Here are a few tactics you might want to try:

Set a few reachable "North Star" goals. Think about some attainable goals you would like to achieve in the following year. They could be relatively simple to achieve, like going to bed by 10 p.m. each night, working out four days a week, or going on a day trip with your kids at

least two weekends each month. Or they might be more ambitious, like writing a book, getting a big promotion or changing careers. Whatever your North Star goal may be, write it down and then make a public pact with a friend or family member so you can stay accountable. Think about how reducing noise will open up room in your life to make these goals a reality. The following advice will help you get there:

Try going a week without social media. Even better, give it two weeks. This may be tougher than you think because checking Facebook is a powerful addiction. But give yourself a relatively short time frame and it will feel doable. One caveat: You can't compensate with TV. Do something productive, relaxing, or meaningful instead: Clean out a closet, go for a walk, meditate, write a letter to that great-aunt you've been neglecting. At the end of your social media moratorium, ask yourself how you feel. You might not even want to go back. If you do, hopefully you'll be able to maintain more balance and self-control.

Set boundaries around work check-ins. According to research from McCormack's firm, The Brief Lab, professionals check their phones 150 times per day and check their email 36 times per hour! That's bad enough during the workday, but for many people the vigilance continues after business hours. To curb constant email checking, draw a hard line around your phone and computer use and don't cross it. "The 7-to-7 rule is a great way to do this," McCormack said. "After 7 p.m., put away your devices for the night. Don't pick them up again until 7 a.m. the next day. This habit reduces screen time and allows for other regenerative activities like reading, conversations, and exercise."

Use 5-minute bursts of focus to stop procrastinating and start getting things done. You can either waste your entire day by giving in to tech-fueled distractions, or you can resolve to be more productive with your time, starting now. Here's how: Block off 5-minute segments of time to completely focus on and tackle one particular task throughout the day, starting and stopping on time. If you need more time, add another five minutes. "Five minutes may not seem like a long time, but when you're coming from a place of constant distraction, it can feel daunting at first," said McCormack. "The Brief Lab found the average professional has an 8-second attention span. That's why practicing bursts of intense focus is so important. It stretches an underworked muscle, and over time your attention span will increase."

Nurture your relationships through

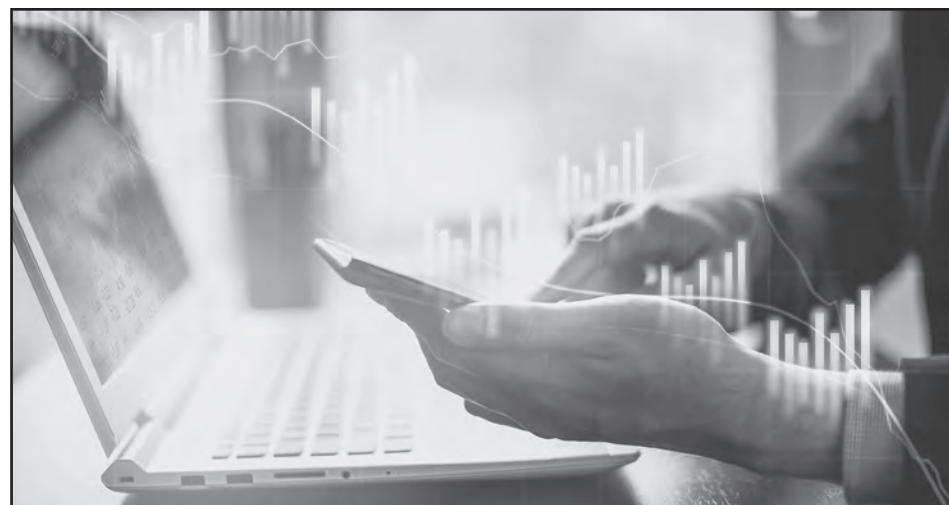


Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

present listening. Present listening means that you are in the moment, not racing ahead or looking back. It also means you're giving your listening as a gift to the other person while expecting nothing in return. Be interested, ask questions, and remember that it's not about you. Resist the urge to follow momentary emotions and thoughts. This lowers the noise around you so you both get the most out of the exchange. "Present listening gives you power to reveal hidden insights, deepen understanding, and build stronger connections," McCormack said. "Even when it feels uncomfortable, as it sometimes will, push through the discomfort. This is one of those changes that may seem 'small,' but it can have a huge impact on relationships both at work and in your personal life."

Plan for unplugged weekends. It's all too easy to waste weekends, or good portions of them, zoned out in front of the computer or the TV. In order not to do this, you need to plan ahead. When you don't have an activity on the calendar, you will probably default to digital devices. Of course, you can't (and shouldn't) have every weekend booked to the hilt, but McCormack suggests at least two weekends out of the month should contain scheduled activities and events that will get you away from your devices and help you engage in the present. "Get together with friends or family members and take a hike, or go on a road trip," he said. "And there's nothing wrong with scheduling quieter events like staying in on a rainy Saturday for a board-game marathon or cooking a big dinner together and inviting neighbors over to help enjoy it. These activities promote real-life bonding with people you care about."

Commit to deviceless dinners. Dinner time can be a sacred time for families. Make a family pact to put down your phones, totally disconnect, and enjoy each other's company while you share a meal together. Take turns talking about your day and really connect with each other.

Designate screen-free areas at home. The places where you and your family sleep, converse, and eat should generally

be free of technology, especially screens. Replace the television in the living room with beautiful artwork or family photos. Replace the computer monitor in the living room with a cozy chair and some nice bookshelves to create a reading nook.

Every week get rid of something that isn't working for you. Find an item you don't use and don't need and donate it. Clutter is its own form of "noise." Plus, this practice helps you get used to thinking about what's essential in your daily life and focusing intently on it. "There's a good reason minimalism and decluttering are such trends right now," said McCormack. "In the same way that too much data overwhelms and paralyzes us, so do too many choices and too much stuff."

Focus on getting brief in your workplace communication. Brevity has flown the coop in the age of endless emails and too many meetings. But you can learn to streamline your thoughts, so you are more easily understood and less exhausting to your colleagues and acquaintances. "When trying to inform, explain, update and convince, simplicity goes a long way," McCormack said. Focus on being lean, clear, and concise, whether you're speaking or writing. Tailor emails, voicemails, phone calls or presentation accordingly.

Carve out quiet time at work. Prioritize it. A study conducted by The Brief Lab found that 64% of professionals reported having less than two hours a day of quiet, uninterrupted activity. Those quiet moments where we used to get lost in thought are largely disappearing as we obsessively consume information. We can fix a big part of this problem by wrenching ourselves away from screens as much as possible. We can also seek out quiet spaces at the office when we need to do "deep work." And we can utilize tools like noise-canceling headphones or even an old-fashioned handwritten "do not disturb" sign taped to our door. "The point is to get intentional about protecting quiet time," said McCormack. "When you don't shut out the world,

3 strategies to manage your time more effectively

Busy professionals juggling the responsibilities of work and family often feel pressed for time. Adding a 25th hour to the day might not be possible, but busy men and women can make more time by managing their existing time more effectively.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that stress and time management are linked. People who effectively manage their time may, as a result, prove more capable of handling stressful situations than those who are not as adept at time management.

Effective time management is an ongoing process that often requires people to revisit their approaches as their commitments change. In addition to making such adjustments when necessary, men and women can employ these three strategies to manage their time more effectively.

1. Keep track of yourself

Maintain a log that indicates how much time you're spending on the various tasks you perform throughout the day. Without such a log, it can be difficult to determine where time is being wasted and which activities require the most attention. In addition, maintaining an activity log can shed light on when you tend to be the



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

most productive and when your energy begins to wane. That's an especially beneficial thing to know, as it may compel you to make changes that can boost your energy levels at times of the day when you can most benefit from a little extra energy. For example, if you notice your productivity routinely slows to a crawl after lunch, you might choose to change your diet so

you consume more energy-boosting foods at midday.

2. Steer clear of your mobile devices

A 2019 study from eMarketer.com estimated that people will spend an average of three hours and 43 minutes on their mobile devices each day in 2020. The study found that much of that time was spent using

social networking apps. Some professionals may need to use social networking apps as part of their jobs, but those that don't should steer clear of their mobile devices during the day. Doing so may reduce distractions that can have an adverse effect on productivity, thereby helping people get more done in less time. During the workday, turn off unnecessary mobile phone notifications, such as those from sports or social media apps.

3. Make an effort to clear the clutter

Clutter might not seem like too big a threat to productivity, but studies have found that it is. The National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals notes that 54 percent of adults are overwhelmed by clutter at home and work, with 78 percent acknowledging they have no idea how to deal with it. One study even found that the average person wastes more than four hours per week searching for papers. That's lost time and time that's certainly not managed effectively. By clearing away clutter at home and at the office, adults may be saving themselves an untold number of hours each week.

Men and women can manage their time more effectively by embracing various simple strategies.



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

7 ways to start getting organized

Becoming more organized is a popular resolution each new year. However, like many resolutions, people's commitment to being more organized tends to wane as February draws near.

Being unorganized can adversely affect productivity, state of mind, motivation, and even happiness. Sixty-seven percent of people surveyed in an Alpha Phi Quarterly study believed they could save up to 30 minutes a day if they were more organized. And a Huffington Post survey determined worrying a home isn't clean enough or organized enough is the fifth most common stress trigger for Americans.

Getting and staying organized requires commitment. Having some handy tips at the ready to facilitate the process can make things go more smoothly.

1. Determine what organization means to you. Being organized might mean one thing to you and something else entirely to someone else. Some may put form before function. Others may be interested in the aesthetics of a neat-looking space. Once you have a handle on what being organized entails to you, you can get to work.

2. Start with what motivates you most. Perhaps this is a room in the home that has become overrun with clutter. Or maybe it's getting finances organized so you can save for a dream vacation. When you accomplish your biggest goal, the seemingly smaller ones may seem less difficult.

3. Declutter your mind. Think of a

busy mind as a computer that has that turning hourglass or spinning color wheel icon when it's stuck on a process. Every application stalls because the computer cannot do everything at once. The same thing can happen in the brain. Sit down and make a to-do list of what's on your mind. Then start prioritizing tasks. This will do wonders to clear your head.

4. Create deadlines for yourself. An open-ended timeline to get things done may promote procrastination. Deadlines may provide motivation.

5. Avoid distractions. Try to remove as many distractions as possible. When working on a chore, hire a babysitter to look after the children or step away from social media so you can focus on the task at hand. Interruptions only slow you down.

6. Think before you acquire. Once you are organized you may have challenges fitting new items into the mix. If you're getting ready to purchase something new, carefully consider its usefulness and determine in advance where it will go, and whether or not you have the space.

7. Be accountable to another. Having help getting organized can mean delegating certain tasks or enlisting someone to check in with you to see if you're on target. Embrace this system of checks and balances.

Becoming organized is a process, but once you get the hang of it, it can be easy to stay organized.

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Technology

Continued from 22

you're constantly aware of its endless demands. These will break your focus and make you feel anxious because you can't stop what you're doing and fix' them."

Hone your impulse management skills. (You're going to need them!) Despite your best efforts, there will be times when your mind gets yanked around, latching onto things that really don't matter much. When you find yourself impulsively getting distracted at work, at home, or wherever, practice managing your impulses and staying focused. A few tips:

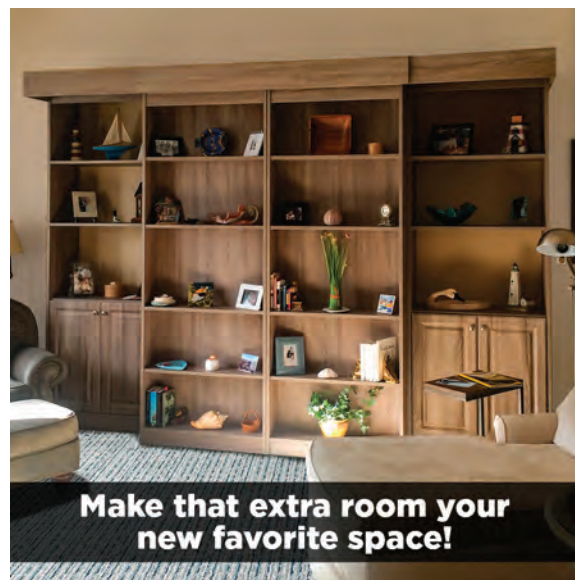
■ **Notifications.** When you hear an alert on your phone, tell yourself "no" and get

back to what you were doing. (And better yet, silence any digital noisemakers.)

■ **Passerby.** When someone approaches your desk, your curiosity awakens. Now you have to either say hi or pretend you didn't see them. Back to work. Say no.

■ **Ideas.** Walking to get scissors, you start thinking of an appointment tomorrow and recall you haven't accepted the invitation yet. Just say no and retrieve the scissors.

"Look back over the past year and ask yourself if you were as intentional as you wish you had been," McCormack said. "If your answer is no, you owe it to yourself to awaken your awareness and begin mindfully creating the life you really desire. This is a game changer that will help make 2020 your best year yet."



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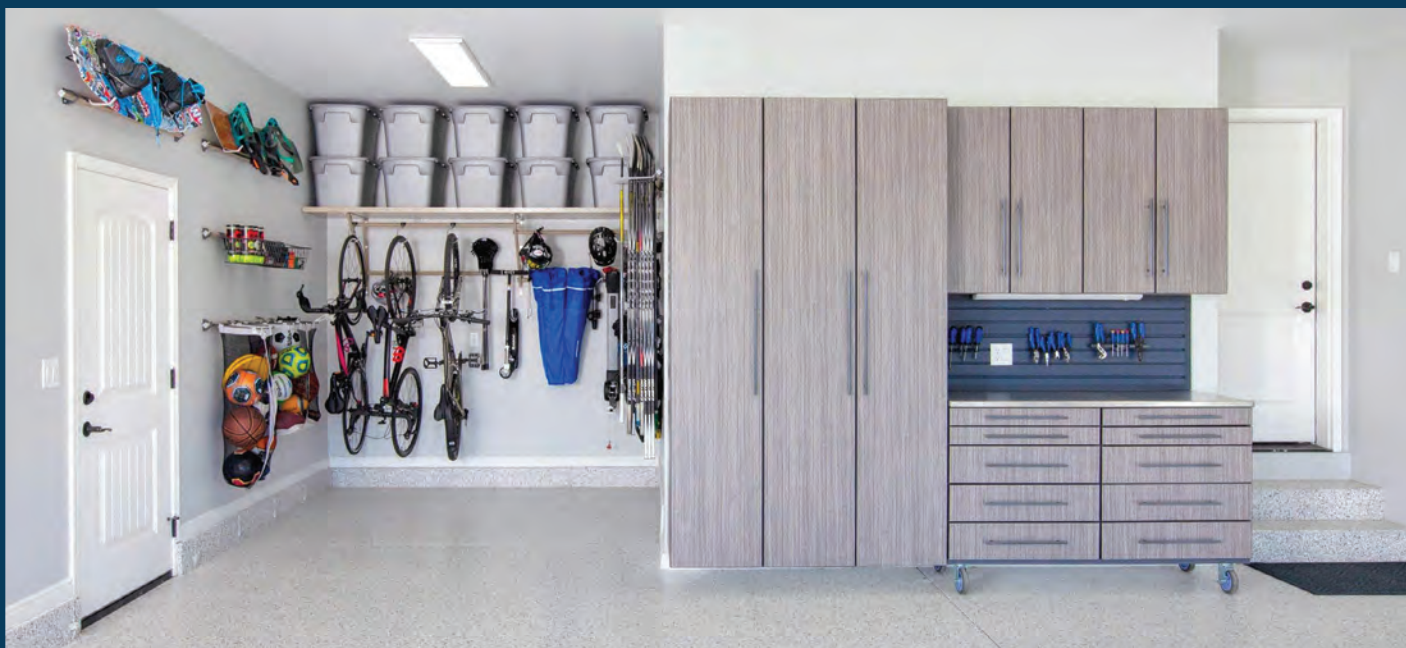
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Business Weekly

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2020

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

New Saturday market
comes to St. Augustine

Page 29

Vernon's brunch ends 2019 with featured chef Thomas Allen

By Daniela Toporek

On Dec. 29, Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa's sous chef Thomas Allen took over Vernon's Restaurant's final Sunday brunch of 2019, featuring an early New Year's celebration and dishes inspired throughout his career.

The restaurant, tucked within the hotel in Ponte Vedra Beach, was crowded with guests chatting away at their tables and lining up in the buffet area, offering the eatery's signature fluffy omelettes and thick peppered bacon.

Fresh grouper, veggies with cheese and smothered chicken and rice were also available for those looking for a less traditional experience. Vernon's very own chef Tanya White was one of them. She stopped by the brunch on her day off to support Thomas, her friend and colleague, and for a hearty meal.

"This chicken and rice is so good," she said, taking another bite. "He (Allen) did tell me it was going to be gluten on gluten today."

At the corner of the buffet, an inflatable champagne bottle "popped" gold streamers that led to a charcuterie selection with savory cheeses and meats. It was popular, to say the least.

Thomas's main entree still awaited - a crab-stuffed benedict with a soft-boiled egg, cubed ham, diced peppers and enough hollandaise to savor



ABOVE: Sous chef Thomas Allen took over Vernon's Restaurant's final Sunday brunch of 2019, Dec. 29, with an early New Year's celebration and dishes inspired throughout his career.

LEFT: A festive champagne bottle guided guests to the charcuterie selection at Vernon's Brunch.

Photos by Daniela Toporek

without drowning the dish. It took an enormous amount of willpower to resist seconds.

Instead, it was on to desserts. Mini Bar Donuts made its regular appearance with maple-bacon and s'mores

donuts while Thomas wowed with his custard and pecan pies.

"I've been with Marriott for about six years," Thomas said, mentioning

VERNON'S continues on **Page 28**

Financial Focus: Look for changes in retirement plans



Karsten Jacobson
Columnist

It might not have made the headlines, but a recently passed piece of legislation could affect the IRAs and 401(k)s of millions of Americans beginning in 2020. So, if you have either of these accounts, or if you run a business, you'll want to learn more.

The new laws, collectively called the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act, include these noteworthy changes:

■ **Higher age for RMDs:** Under current law, you must start taking withdrawals – known as required minimum distributions, or RMDs – from your traditional IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan once you turn 70½. The new law pushes the date to start RMDs to 72, which means you can hold on to your retirement savings a bit longer.

■ **No age limit for traditional IRA contributions:** Previously, you could only contribute to your traditional IRA until you were 70½, but under the SECURE Act, you can now fund your traditional IRA for as long as you have taxable earned income.

■ **Limitation of "Stretch IRA" provisions:** Under the old rules, beneficiaries were able to stretch taxable RMDs from a retirement account over his or her lifetime. Under the SECURE Act while spouse beneficiaries can still take advantage of this "stretch" distribution, most non-spouse beneficiaries will have to take all the RMDs by the end of the tenth year after the account owner passes away. Consequently, non-spouse beneficiaries who inherit an IRA or other retirement plan could have tax implications due to the need to take larger distributions in a shorter timeframe.

■ **No early withdrawal penalty for IRAs and 401(k)s when new child arrives.** Typically, you must pay a 10% penalty when you withdraw funds from your IRA or 401(k) before you reach 59½. But now, with the new rules, you can withdraw up to \$5,000 from your retirement plan without paying the

JACOBSON continues on **Page 29**

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices FNR hosts Mega Open House weekend

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty's Mega Open House weekend returns on Saturday, Jan. 18, and Sunday, Jan. 19.

"Our Mega Open House weekends have been a mega success," President and CEO Christy Budnick said. "This event offers a tremendous opportunity to visit numerous homes and neighborhoods throughout Northeast Florida in

one weekend."

Visit OpenHouseNEFlorida.com for a list of open houses. Everyone is welcome to tour homes for sale during the Mega Open House weekend.

For more information about the Mega Open House weekend, visit www.FloridaNetworkRealty.com or call (904) 296-6400.



Photo provided by Womens Food Alliance

Womens Food Alliance 2020 board members Sandi Galloway (from left) , Rebecca Reed, Nancy Slatsky, Leigh Cort, Cindy Stavelly, Kelly Mabry, Amy Morales and Carol Maurer

Womens Food Alliance announces 2020 board

The Womens Food Alliance, entering its seventh year as one of the top hospitality networking organizations for women in Florida and southeast Georgia, recently announced its 2020 Advisory Council. The council is comprised of professional leaders who are respected throughout the community.

Members of the 2020 council advisory board are:

Sandi Galloway – owner/ Sandi Galloway & Associates

Rebecca Reed – executive pastry chef, Black Sheep Restaurant Group

Nancy Slatsky ~ chef/manager, JAX Cooking Studio
Leigh Cort – President, Womens Food Alliance; owner, Leigh Cort Publicity

Cindy Stavelly – executive director/ St. Augustine

Pirate Treasure Museum, Colonial Quarter

Kelly Mabry – owner, Tropical Smoothie

Amy Morales – creator, Sweets for the Soul

Carol Maurer – sales manager, Hilton Garden Inn Ponte Vedra Beach

For more information visit www.XOwomensfoodalliance.com

‘When Women Lead’ panel to be held at Cultural Center Jan. 23

By Daniela Toporek

An “evening of powerful inspiration,” featuring four career-driven women in a “When Women Lead” panel, will be held at The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach Jan. 23.

The event begins at 5 p.m. and starts with registration, refreshments and networking. Guests will have the opportunity to meet similar-minded people and can enjoy a chance at winning giveaway prizes.

At 6 p.m., the panel will start and feature inspirational speaker Trudy Toche, personal trainer Peggy Hilbert, clinical psychologist Dr. Robi E. Tamargo and assistant chief at the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, Lakesha Burton. These women will share their personal stories of leadership and vision as they triumph in their career and move forward in the new decade. Despite adversity, these women will discuss what it took for them to rise to the top.

Admission costs \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. To RSVP, call (973) 819-6581 or visit whenwomenlead.eventbrite.com.

The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach is located at 50 Executive Way in Ponte Vedra Beach.



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Vernon's

Continued from 26

he left for about a year, but missed his Marriott family and came back "home."

"I wanted to grow my experience as a chef and leader, so I applied for a job at Opryland Gaylord hotel in Nashville. I worked there for a year and it was a great experience, but I missed the team and my grandkids. I contacted my Chef Joe Natoli he had a Position available and this place is special so I jumped on it.

Born and raised on a farm in Arkansas City, Kansas, Thomas said he learned about fresh ingredients and sustainability at an early age. He moved to Florida and worked with chefs of all cultures and backgrounds, including a Swedish chef, who mentored him and influenced much of his cooking.

For more information on Chef Thomas Allen and Vernon's Restaurant in Sawgrass Marriott, call (904) 285-7777 or visit www.marriott.com and search for Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa.



TOP LEFT: Crab-stuffed benedict with a soft-boiled egg and hollandaise was Chef Thomas's signature dish from the brunch.

TOP RIGHT: Seared grouper with pablano champagne cream was also offered for seafood lovers.

LEFT: Mini Bar Donuts made its regular appearance with s'mores donuts for Vernon's dessert table.

RIGHT: Chef Thomas's featured treat was a custard pie with a cinnamon maple leaf decoration.

Photos by Daniela Toporek




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New Saturday market debuts in St. Augustine

By Christine Rodenbaugh

A new farmers and artisans market debuted at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 11 at Eddie Vicker's Park, 399 Riberia Street in St. Augustine. The weekly event, STA City Market, is the brainchild of Kimberly McLemore.

The weather was warm, albeit windy after lunch. Three food trucks fed hungry shoppers who perused booths featuring hot sauces, soaps, photography, paintings, cut flowers, produce and more.

Mitzi and Sheridan Connell wanted to show support for the new market and support small business.

"I purchased a pendant from her online," Mitzi Connell said pointing to Shyla of Island Soul Designs. "I wanted to meet her in person."

Sheridan Connell was carrying fresh cut flowers from the Sunny Stems booth. "I saw another girl with flowers and thought, 'Why not?'" she said.

Shyla said, "I like this market because it's open until 3. Other markets close at noon. You can sleep in and still get produce and support local artisans."

There is plenty of parking at Eddie Vicker's park, a few covered picnic tables, benches and a fully equipped playground area. For information, visit www.stafarmers-market.com or www.facebook.com/stafarmersmarket.



Mitzi and Sheridan Connell shop for jewelry at the inaugural STA City Market on Jan. 11 at Eddie Vicker's Park in St. Augustine.

LEFT: The weekly STA City Market is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and features local artisans and makers, food trucks, produce and live music.

FAR LEFT: Wells Farm offers organic vegetables like these large purple radishes.

Photos by Christine Rodenbaugh



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Jacobson

Continued from 26

early withdrawal penalty, as long as you take the money within one year of a child being born or an adoption becoming final.

Some provisions of the SECURE Act primarily affect business owners:

■ **Multi-employer retirement plans:**

Unrelated companies can now work together to offer employees a 401(k) plan with less administrative work, lower costs and fewer fiduciary responsibilities than individual employers now encounter when offering their own retirement plans.

■ **Tax credit for automatic enrollment:** The new law provides a tax credit of \$500 for some smaller employers who set up automatic enrollment in their retirement plans. And a tax credit for establishing a retirement plan has been increased

from \$500 to \$5,000.

■ **Use of annuities in 401(k) plans:**

It will now be easier for employers to consider including annuities as an investment option within 401(k) plans. Previously, many businesses avoided offering annuities in these plans due to liability concerns related to the annuity provider, but the new rules should help reduce these concerns.

The SECURE Act is the most significant change to our retirement savings system in over a decade. We encourage you to contact your financial advisor, tax professional and estate planning attorney to assess the potential impact on your investment strategies and determine any possible tax and estate planning implications of the SECURE Act.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones financial advisor.

visor. **Karsten L. Jacobson, CFP**, is a financial advisor for Edward Jones at 2208 Sawgrass Village Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach. (904) 285-9898

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EMMA's 41st season continues with Glenn Miller Orchestra

EMMA Concert Association will present Glenn Miller Orchestra 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 25 at Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College. With a unique jazz sound, the Glenn Miller Orchestra was formed in 1956 and has been touring consistently since, playing an average of 300 live dates a year all around the world.

The orchestra is a fully self-contained group consisting of the music director, five saxophone players, four trumpeters, four trombonists, three rhythm musicians (piano, bass, and drums), one male vocalist and one female vocalist. They have performed in all 50 states, as well as throughout Europe, Australia, Iceland, New Zealand, Guam, the Philippines, South America and Central America.

With Nick Hilscher as the orchestra's music director since January 2012, the orchestra features special musical contributions from many arrangers including Bill Finegan, Jerry Gray, Billy May, Mort Lindsay, Deane Kinkaide, Joe Cribari and Dave Wolpe with Big Band classics at the forefront.

Ticket holders for the Glenn Miller Orchestra performance are invited to a free screening of the 1954 film, "The Glenn Miller Story," starring Jimmy Stewart and June Allyson. There will be two showings at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24 at The Corazon Cinema and Cafe,



Photo provided by EMMA Concert Association

The Glenn Miller Orchestra will perform Jan. 25 at Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College.

36 Granada St. in downtown St. Augustine. Attendees will be given one free beverage (beer, wine, or non-alcoholic offering) of their choice. Additional

drinks and food will be available for purchase. Seating is limited and reservations are required. Call (904) 797-2800 for reservations.

Tickets for EMMA Concert Association performances are \$40 per person. The price for children and students with school ID is \$5 per concert.

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US Navy Band to perform at St. Augustine Amphitheatre

America's Navy is coming to St. Augustine, one of only 20 cities in six states chosen to host a performance by the United States Navy Band during its 2020 tour, which is one of the signature outreach programs of the U.S. Navy.

The St. Augustine Amphitheatre will welcome The United States Navy Band, featuring the Concert Band, Sea Chanters Chorus and Cruisers popular music group, on Sunday, March 1. This free

event is sponsored by the Friends of the St. Augustine Amphitheatre.

As the original ensemble of the Navy Band, the Concert Band, has been performing public concerts and participating in high-profile events for more than 95 years. Joined by the Sea Chanters, the official chorus of America's Navy, and the Cruisers popular music group, the

NAVY continues on **Page 33**

first coast
ARTISTS

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For more information about these works, the artists, or other works, contact Bob Nickerson at First Coast Artists at 904.280.8187.

Lifelong actress makes her directorial debut directing parents in Alhambra's 'Love Letters'

By Maggie FitzRoy

Growing up in the Alhambra Theatre, Jessica "Jessie" Booth began acting as a young child. Now she lives in New York City, making her living as an actress, singer and dancer.

The show business life is a competitive one, so to add another skill to her resume, Booth is now directing, too.

She made her directorial debut with the play "Love Letters," which opened Jan. 9 and will run through Feb. 9. The play, by A.R. Gurney, was a finalist in 1988 for a Pulitzer Prize in Drama. Centering around two people, a man and a woman, it dramatizes their lifelong relationship in letters, with a simple stage set and only the two characters.

Those two characters are portrayed by Jessie Booth's parents.

Tod Booth, the Alhambra's former owner and current Creative Director, reads the letters of the man, Andrew Makepeace Ladd III. Lisa Valdini-Booth, who has performed in more than 200 Alhambra performances, reads the letters of the woman, Melissa Gardner. They sit side by side at desks facing the audience as they take turns reading the notes, letters and



Photo by Maggie FitzRoy

Jessie Booth (from left) directs her father, Tod Booth and her mother, Lisa Valdini-Booth in "Love Letters" at Alhambra Theatre and Dining.

cards the characters wrote to each other over a period of 50-plus years.

"Love Letters" debuted on Broadway in 1988 and since then has been performed by many famous celebrity couples, including Tom Hanks and his wife, Rita Wilson.

The characters began writing to each

other in second grade and continued their correspondence into their fifties. "The suspense of the story is that you don't know where the relationship is going to go. It's beautiful, funny, warm and romantic,"

ALHAMBRA continues on Page 32



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Jacksonville Symphony names new president/CEO

The Jacksonville Symphony recently announces nonprofit veteran Steven Libman as the new president/CEO. Libman comes to Jacksonville from the Atlanta Ballet, where he has served as the organization's chief advancement officer since 2014.

"After a year-long search, the Board reached a unanimous decision that Steven is the absolute perfect candidate for the job," said Don Baldwin, vice chair of the Symphony's Board and head of the Search Committee. "As interim president and CEO, David Strickland has done a fantastic job in maintaining the momentum of the Jacksonville Symphony, and we are very pleased to have Steven guide us through this next stage of our evolution."

As chief advancement officer for the Atlanta Ballet, Libman was responsible for planning, implementing, overseeing and assessing the Atlanta Ballet's development strategies in support of the organization's strategic vision and growth. While there, he led a \$23.5 million capital campaign and \$5 million annual fund. In



Jacksonville Symphony's David Strickland, chair of the board, (from left), Courtney Lewis, music director and new Symphony President and CEO Steven Libman

Photo by Renee Parenteau

his new role as Jacksonville Symphony president and CEO, Libman reports to the board of directors through the chairman and is responsible for an organization that has been operating for nearly 70 years, is comprised of more than 100 employees and reaches more than 250,000 people annually.

Throughout his career, Libman has raised more than \$150 million, including a recent \$6 million for the Atlanta Ballet

to fund a brand, new production of "The Nutcracker," with a world-class team of Tony Award-winning designers. He also co-created and launched a radio show that appeared on public radio from 2013-2016 entitled "The Voice of the Performing Arts." Hosted by Libman and Jeff Swenson, they interviewed over 500 guests, over 160 shows, with a weekly audience of up to 10,000 listeners. The thorough list of guests included members of Congress,

university presidents, as well as executive and education directors from some of the most prestigious arts organizations in the world.

"My wife, Carol, and I feel inspired to make the move to Jacksonville," Libman said. "There is a rich abundance of cultural activity in the River City, and the Jacksonville Symphony is the largest institution within that culture. Through the arc of my career, I have been a part of helping almost 4 million people to experience the joy of the performing arts, and I could not be more excited to become a part of that in Jacksonville."

The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida's leading music nonprofit offering live performances at Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts and other venues throughout the area. In addition, the Symphony provides music instruction for youth and operates the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras. For more information about the Symphony, visit jaxsymphony.org.

Alhambra

Continued from 31

Jessie Booth said the day before the show went on. She had been in Jacksonville for three months while performing in two previous Alhambra shows and felt she was leaving "Love Letters" in good hands as she got ready to say goodbye and fly back to New York. Her parents had their parts down, she said, and it would be up to the stage manager to monitor them every night and keep them on track with what she had directed.

"This is a unique show," Lisa Valdini-Booth said. "We are reading letters, so no memorization is really required."

"The simplicity of the set," which

is basically just two desks, "keeps the concentration on the words," Tod Booth said. "Why do they write letters? Because they can express in all honesty what they feel. The essence is a recorded personal history between two people. It is permanent, can be kept forever."

Since they are writing at different ages, it makes it challenging as an actor to capture the characters, Tod Booth said. "You have got to do it with your voice and facial expressions."

Adding to the challenge is that the two actors can not look at each other. "They look straight out at the audience or at the script," Jessie Booth said. "It's very difficult to do it right, from kids to older age, an arc of life, with all its foibles, mistakes and regrets."

Together, Tod Booth and Lisa Valdini-Booth have more than 100 years of experience in the theater. Jessie Booth said it has been "very exciting" directing them. Given her parent's status in the theater community, she said not many people would have felt comfortable doing it. "But I know them so well, this was really fun. It's been wonderful and easy."

With her job done and feeling comfortable handing it over to the stage manager to uphold it, she said she was heading back to the Big Apple to audition for a New York production.

"I go back to the audition grind," she said. "I'm an actor, primarily." As for directing, that works, too. "I just love theater," she said. "In whatever form it takes, I'll take it."

BEACHES MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

The Beaches Museum is a nonprofit dedicated to collecting and preserving the culture of the Beaches area.

From Mayport to Palm Valley, the museum has been binding communities together through their shared histories since its founding in 1978. In addition to regular tours of the gallery, the museum offers a diverse array of events aimed at keeping the spirit of the Beaches alive.

Here are some upcoming events in January:

Boardwalk Talk: History Happy Hour at Pete's Bar Jan. 16 at 6 p.m. at Pete's Bar

One hundred years ago, Pete Jensen made a profitable switch from New York milkman to Neptune Beach bar man. In a two-story structure that still stands, Jensen's store sold everything from live animals to moonshine. The store was a meeting place for locals and tourists as it was close to the beach, tourist cabins, and homes. Later, the store moved to its current location just south of the original building. Immediately following the repeal of Prohibition, Jensen applied for a liquor license and opened Pete's Bar. It has remained an iconic staple in Neptune Beach for more than 85 years. To say it has an interesting history is an understatement. Come learn all about it from Pete Jensen's descendants who continue his legacy into the present day.

This event is free for museum members with a suggested \$5 donation for nonmembers. Beverages will be available

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Players by the Sea hosts fundraising event for production of 'Romeo & Juliet'

Players by the Sea Theatre will host a fundraiser on Saturday, Jan. 18 to raise money for "Romeo & Juliet," which takes the Main Stage in February.

The special fundraising event begins at 6 p.m. with a silent auction. Attendees can expect opportunities to win reserved tickets to the show, jewelry from Miriam's Jewelry, tickets to tours in St. Augustine and more. There will also be a stage fight demonstration, much like what will take

place on stage for "Romeo & Juliet."

Amy Canning Love and Ashley Jones are directing the show. All funds collected from this special event will go towards cultivating their magical, futuristic vision. "Romeo & Juliet" will feature a cast of 20 women. All parts are played by female actors.

"Much like we never know why the two households are at war with each other; we are never sure where the men in the play are located or even if they even exist at all

— we can only speculate that the women were able to survive without them." Canning Love and Jones said about their production. "The one-gender cast in Shakespeare is a modern tradition — but only to be celebrated when executed with fidelity and purpose. We have such purpose and that purpose will sharpen even more as we prepare."

"Romeo & Juliet" will show at Players on Feb. 20-23. Tickets are available at

playersbythesea.org or by calling the box office at (904) 249-0289. Season membership packages cannot be applied to this show.

Players by the Sea's mission is to enrich the community through excellence in theatre. The nonprofit community theatre welcomes all creative artists to participate in making the magic of theatre come to life, whether on stage, through advocacy or assisting backstage.

Events

Continued from 32

for purchase through Pete's Bar but note it is a cash-only establishment. For more information, visit www.beachmuseum.org or call (904) 241-5657.

The 2020 Boardwalk Talk Lecture Series is generously supported by Fleet Landing Retirement Community.

Jacksonville Symphony's 'Beaches Chamber Series' Jan. 21 at 6 p.m. at the Beaches Museum Chapel

The Jacksonville Symphony will feature four ensembles to create the new Jacksonville Symphony Beaches Chamber Series, sponsored by Beaches Residents Actively Supporting the Symphony (BRASS).

A reception will be held at 6 p.m. followed by a one-hour concert at 7 p.m. All performances will be at the Beaches Museum Chapel at 505 Beach Blvd.

Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased at jaxsymphony.org

Chapel Concert: Matthew Mayes & John Meyer of Jupiter Coyote

Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. at the Beaches Museum Chapel

The Beaches Museum along with the Lazzara Family Foundation will present Matthew Mayes and John Meyer of Jupiter Coyote. Mayes is the co-founder of the popular Jam rock band Jupiter Coyote. As the principle songwriter and multi-instrumentalist for the band for the past 24 years, his songs are filled with eclectic charters, heartache, and soul searching while musically running the gamut from rock, southern boogie, bluegrass and country rock. He has been playing music for over 35 years, played over 5000 shows and sold nearly a million records and downloads independently while traveling all over the U.S. and beyond.

Individual Advanced Tickets: \$25

Individual Day-of Tickets: \$30

Chapel Concerts are held in the historic Beaches Museum Chapel. Shows start at 7 p.m., check-in begins and refreshments are served at 6 p.m. Seats are first come, first serve.



Photo by Amber Lake

The Beaches Museum regularly hosts concerts at its Museum Chapel, built in 1887.

Volunteer Interest Meeting

Jan. 29 at 10:30 a.m. at the Beaches Museum

New year, new you? Beaches residents are asked to consider giving back to their community by volunteering at the Beaches Museum, which will hold a volunteer interest meeting at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, Jan. 29. Attendees will receive a tour of the Museum, Archives and Collections, and History Park to learn more about the various volunteer opportunities currently available. For more information or to RSVP, email Museum Associate Director Brittany Cohill at info@beachmuseum.org or call (904) 241-5657.

Compiled by Amber Lake

Cummer Museum announces MLK Day special event and commemoration

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens will hold a special event in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, Jan. 20. The event will feature art engagement activities and special commemorations from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with free admission for all.

Special highlights will include art-making activities led by museum educators, live music by MJ Baker, demonstrations by artists Traci Mims and Keith Doles and complimentary trolley transportation between the Cummer Museum and the Ritz Theatre and Museum. Ecumenical Prayers for Peace, coordinated with One-Jax, will be held at 3 p.m. at both locations. The Prayer for Peace at the Cummer Museum will be accompanied by a performance from the Jacksonville Arts and Music School youth chorus and words from faith leaders from across the Northeast Florida community.

Through hands-on printmaking activities at both the Cummer Museum and the Ritz Theatre and Museum, visitors will have the opportunity to contribute to a collaborative artwork expressing peace and unity, using artistic processes employed by the artists in the Ritz's current exhibition, "Through Our Eyes." Guests can participate in this art-making project at both the Cummer Museum and the Ritz Theatre and Museum.

"The Cummer Museum is committed to being an inclusive arts and culture institution for all, and to provide opportunities for engagement on this important occasion," said the Cummer Museum's George W. and Kathleen I. Gibbs Director & Chief Executive Officer Dr. Adam Levine. "We are inspired by Dr. King's life and legacy, and are honored to welcome the Jacksonville community on this day of reflection."

Navy

Continued from 30

versatility of the ensemble expands to include music ranging from traditional wind band repertoire to Broadway showstoppers, rhythm and blues, pop and patriotic favorites. These elite ensembles combine their world-class talents to create a dynamic musical production sure to delight audiences of all ages.

One of the U.S. Navy Band's primary responsibilities involves touring the country. All the band's primary performing units embark each year on concert tours throughout specified regions of the country, allowing the band to reach out to audiences

in areas of the country that do not have opportunities to see the Navy's premier musical ensembles on a regular basis. The concerts are family-friendly events, meant to be entertaining to veterans, families, individuals and those interested in joining the Navy.

"For many years, Navy bands have been where it matters, when it matters, just like the rest of our Navy," said Capt. Kenneth Collins, U.S. Navy Band commanding officer. "Today, we have Sailors performing around the world, improving relations with our allies abroad as well as telling the Navy story here at home."

This event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.staugamphitheatre.com.



Photo provided by St. Augustine Amphitheatre

Cutting Edge award winners announced in St. Augustine Art Association's Edgy Exhibition

The St. Augustine Art Association marched into the New Year with a display of artwork unlike any of its other monthly exhibitions.

Artists challenged themselves through abstraction and experimentation to create works that reflect non-traditional standards and narratives. They drew inspiration from pop artists like Andy Warhol and David Hockney and abstract expressionists like Jackson Pollock. On the gallery walls are paintings, collages, assemblages, sculptures and other mediums that reveal a glimpse into the artists' emotions, social viewpoints and daily struggles.

"Cutting edge themes, content and use of materials compel artistic expression to be more creative and less restrictive of boundaries," said Gerald Branch, professional artist and judge for the 2020 Cutting Edge Art Exhibition. "It is my feeling that many of the works in this show reflected the artist's intent to challenge tradition, and this is without question, present in the award-winning artworks."

Ten artists received awards for their artistic achievements and edgy concepts. Relationships, fragility and personal-



The 2020 Cutting Edge award winners were Jerome Domask (from left), Lindsay Merwin, Per Hans Romnes, Xi Guo, Sara Cibelli, Robert Arbogast, Sandra Maler, Deborah Thompson, Reed Pedlow and Donna McCarthy.

ity complexities are addressed in Lindsay Merwin's painting, "Glass," which received the Jean Wagner Troemel Best in Show Award.

Per Hans Romnes tells a story of life balance and fleeting time in his 3-dimensional mixed-media piece, "Equilibrium," which won the 97Park first-place award.

Painter and sculptor Jerome Domask was selected for the Alice Alger Most Creative Award for his driftwood and metal sculpture, "Mother Earth Threatened by Mankind." When looked at, the piece can be seen in a few ways, but the narrative is clear: the cause and effect humans have on nature.

Xi Guo's mesmerizing watercolor, "Dreaming of Butterfly 11," received the 97Park second-place award, and Sara Cibelli came in third for her detailed quilted scene "Wanakena Foot Bridge." The 97Park Fourth Place Award was given to Donna McCarthy's "Kimono," a wearable piece woven from recycled National Geographic magazines.

Four works, diverse in mediums and expression, achieved honorable mentions: "Flowers" by Deborah Thompson, "Run, Hide, Fight" by Robert Arbogast, "Self Portrait" by Reed Pedlow, and "Astral Lotus - Adult" by Sandra Maler.

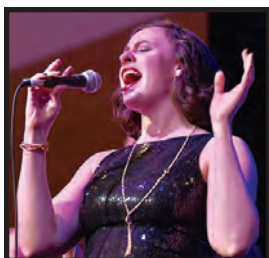
The Cutting Edge Art Exhibition is on display at the St. Augustine Art Association located at 22 Marine St. in downtown St. Augustine through Sunday, Feb. 2. All of the artwork in the exhibit is for sale unless otherwise noted, with proceeds benefitting the artists, the programs and exhibitions of the St. Augustine Art Association, a nonprofit art organization.

The gallery is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, go to www.staaa.org or call (904) 824-2310.



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Lightner Museum acquires prestigious Hitchcock painting

The Lightner Museum recently announced it has added a prestigious painting to its collection; a generous gift from Jacksonville arts patron, Dave Gonzales.

The magnificent 78-by-53 framed oil on canvas painting entitled, "Return of Persephone," was created by American Impressionist painter, George Hitchcock (1850-1913) in 1906, and first exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1907.

"The Lightner Museum is extremely pleased to announce this significant addition, and wish to share our gratitude with Mr. Gonzales for his generosity," said Teresa Radzinski, chair of the Board of Trustees.

Characteristic of Hitchcock's other Impressionistic paintings, "Return of Persephone" recounts the ancient tale of the daughter of Zeus and Demeter, Persephone, the goddess queen of the underworld, and celebrates the growth of spring. After being banned to the underworld with her husband Hades, Persephone would make an annual trip back to earth each spring, causing meadows to flower and new grain to suddenly grow. When Persephone returned to the underworld in winter, everything would stop growing and perish.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, Hitchcock attended and graduated from both Brown University and Harvard Law School. He left the U.S. to study art in Paris, Dusseldorf and the Hague. He was the only American member of the Vienna Academy, and spent the rest of his life in Holland. Hitchcock earned the nickname, "Painter of Sunlight" and was considered one of the pioneers of the modern outdoors movements. A comparable work is Calypso in the Indianapolis Museum of Art's permanent collection

Today, Hitchcock's paintings grace the



Photo provided by the Lightner Museum
Teresa Radzinski and Dave Gonzales pose in front of George Hitchcock's prestigious oil painting, "Return of the Persephone," which Gonzalez recently donated to the museum.

collections of museums and public galleries worldwide including Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Chicago Art Institute, Savannah's Telfair Museum and Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

The scope of the gift by Gonzales helps further establish Lightner Museum as one of Northeast Florida's most prominent art museums.

"Lightner Museum seemed like the perfect venue for such a visual masterpiece," Gonzales said. "I'm confident the painting will finally find the audience it deserves."

For more information on the Lightner Museum, visit lightnermuseum.org.

50

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Sports

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2020 · PAGE 36

Send your sports news to
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Randy Nader of Sawgrass Country Club re-elected JAGA president

The Jacksonville Area Golf Association recently elected its 2020 officers at its opening meeting of the year at Timuquana Country Club. Randy Nader of Sawgrass Country Club was re-elected president and will lead the organization for the second year in a row.

The 2020 officers are:

- Randy Nader, president: JAGA director, Sawgrass Country Club ... Former owner of Nader's Pest Raiders, a Jacksonville-area pest control firm ... Served as JAGA VP/Administration in 2018 ... Will serve second year as president in 2020 ... Native of Jacksonville ... Attended Fletcher High School ... Resides in Jacksonville.



Photo provided by JAGA

JAGA's newly elected officers include Randy Nader, President (from left), Cary Helton, VP/Tournaments, Larry Stark, secretary, and Jeff Adams, VP/Administration. (Treasurer Billy Walker not pictured.)

- Jeff Adams, vice president/Administration: JAGA director, TPC Sawgrass ... Retired director of the PGA TOUR's Communications Department ... Served as JAGA VP/Tournaments, 2017-2018 and

JAGA continues on Page 38

Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament to celebrate 40th anniversary

Jacksonville Marine Charities, Inc., host of the Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, and organizers will also be celebrating its past champions with two new tournaments.

One tournament will be for past champions, by invitation, for \$100. The payout will be winner take all. There will also be a high entry fee tournament, for High Rollers, for \$1,000. This tournament will have a high payout: three places, large fish, with the winner taking home \$10,000 cash plus a Rolex watch. The High Rollers bash is limited to 40 entries. There will also be calcuttas for both tournaments. These new tournaments will be fished July 13, with a captain's meeting and sit-down dinner, off site, on July 12. Every registered captain will receive a gift at the meeting.

The new events will continue to support the important work done by Jacksonville Marine Charities, Inc.

For more information, visit www.kingfishtournament.com.

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71						72				73				

THEME: SUPER BOWL

ACROSS

- Wheel stopper
- "Stinging" Muhammad
- Greek portico
- She turned to stone, mythology
- Loud noise
- *Like many football fans
- At full speed
- VHS successor
- Omit
- *Miami _____
- *They won their first two Super Bowl appearances
- Time division
- Do like phoenix
- "Swan Lake" steps
- It often follows tooth or back
- What oars do
- Part of a jousting outfit
- Dickens!
- Donkey in Mexico
- Glazier's unit
- *Like Bud at a party
- Farm structure
- Fraternal letter
- Miso bean
- Make wet
- Unmoved
- Agitate
- Tasseled hat
- Colloquial approval
- Opposite of paleo

- *Tonowanda _____, shortest-lived team in NFL history
- *Hard Rock _____
- In the buff
- Rapscallion
- It's common?
- What time does
- Lawyers' league
- Load carrier
- Extend credit
- Nonclerical
- Roommate annoyance

DOWN

- Angler's enemy
- Type of cotton fiber
- Sound of pride
- Do like a good citizen
- Family subdivisions
- Contributes
- *54
- Lemur from Madagascar
- The only one
- *Ronde to Tiki or Maurkice to Mike
- *Gambling _____
- Pirate's "yes"
- Echo
- *Popular stadium snack
- Nile reptile
- Clergy house
- *Halftime show sponsor
- "Encore!"
- *What halftime performer does

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		9	6			5	8	
3		1			8	2		

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

- 43 Across residents
- "That hurts!"
- Measure of alcohol
- Jagged, as a leaf's edge
- *Halftime performer
- Highway hauler
- Boxer's last blow
- House coat
- Not seeing eye to eye
- Tiny Tim's guitar
- To the lowest degree, pl.
- Relating to axis
- Theater to Socrates
- Leafy green
- Similar
- *Hall of Famers Ed or Andre
- Neuter
- Division word
- _____ agreement
- Bébé's mother
- *Super Bowl owner
- Wharton degree

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SHARKS EXTEND WINNING STREAK



Photo provided by Jim Neddo

The Ponte Vedra High School boys soccer team extended its winning streak to five games, earning a 3-1 victory over visiting Chiles (Tallahassee) on Jan. 10. Nico Gosendi, Jack Impey and Patrick Neddo all scored goals in the win, which improved the Sharks' record to 7-2-1. The Sharks also won earlier that week, beating Flagler Palm Coast 4-1 on Jan. 7. PVHS will next host Bolles for Senior Night on Friday, Jan. 17, and wrap up the regular season at Mandarin on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

JAGA

Continued from 36

VP-Administration, 2019 ... From Chappaqua, New York ... University of Florida graduate ... Resides in Ponte Vedra Beach.

■ Cary Helton: vice president/Tournaments: JAGA director, San Jose Country Club ... Retired CSX transportation executive ... Native of Lubbock, Texas ... University of Washington graduate ... Resides in Jacksonville.

■ Larry Stark, secretary: JAGA director, Jax Beach Golf Club ... Native of Virginia ... Retired CSX sales executive ... Resides in Jacksonville.

■ Billy Walker, treasurer: JAGA director, Oak Bridge Club ... Native of Montreal, Canada ... Graduate of McGill University ... Former partner at KMPG ... Resides in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Nader, Adams and Walker were re-elected to their positions for the second year. Stark returns for his third year in the secretary role, while Helton is a new officer.

Appointed to serve in similar capacities again in 2020 were Jack Morehead of NAS JAX (assistant treasurer) and Arch Copeland of Deercreek Country Club (JAGA webmaster). John Milton will serve as assistant VP/Tournaments again. Former executive secretary Barney Poston (Hidden Hills Golf Club) and past president Fred Seely (Timuquana Country Club) are at-large members of the executive committee. Kevin Glynn (Northern Chapter/PGA) continues to serve as the Association's administrative assistant.

As immediate past president, Gilmore remains active on the executive committee and will have input on affairs of the Association. He will chair the nominating committee.

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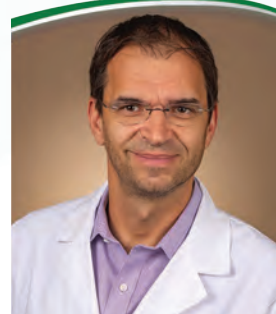
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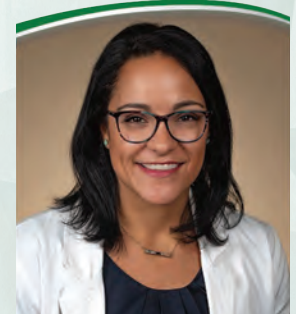
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