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Not your average newspaper, not your average reader Ponte

February 11, 2021 Volume 51, No. 67 75 cents

PonteVedraRecorder.com





INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

The Recorder's Entertainment EXTRA featuring TV listings, streaming information, puzzles and more!



Valentine's Day

Senior Living



Serving Ponte Vedra and the Beaches since 1969, and now Nocatee







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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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NOTES TO READERS

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

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

ADOPT A PET

CAT OF THE WEEK

Hello there. my name is Cupid. I am a 2-year-old male brown tabby. I live up to my name because I am all about love! I am very lovable, sweet and happy! I love to get



attention. I love to be petted. I love humans. I am searching for love – don't let me search in too many faces. Come on down and take me to my new furreverrr home today! #57353

I am a neutered, male Staffordshire bull terrier. I am 1½ years old and I still have the energy of a puppy. I have spent my whole life in a rusty cage and I finally have been saved, but don't despair, this place is awesome. I

DOG OF THE WEEK

Hil My name is Astro

love the treats and toys I get! The other dogs here are so nice, and I give the girls lots of kisses (wink, wink). Now all I need is a human family of my own so I can show them all the love I have to give. So come see me. You might just get some kisses too. #57147

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

St. Johns County Pet Center

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

BRIEFS

COVID-19 vaccination registration opens at 9 a.m. on Feb. 11

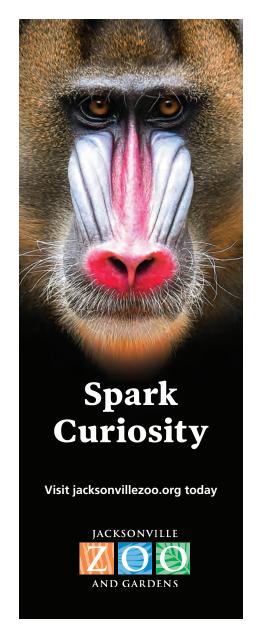
St. Johns County received an allotment of 3,900 Pfizer vaccines from the State of Florida this week. Registration will open at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 11, for vaccination appointments on Feb. 12, 15 and 17. Schedule an appointment by going to https://tinyurl.com/y52tcoaz or by calling the St. Johns County COVID-19 Vaccination Hotline at (904) 295-3711 (dial all 10

digits) after 9 a.m. on Thursday. You will not be able to register for an appointment through the website or hotline prior to 9 a.m. It is recommended that vaccine recipients arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to their appointment. The Pfizer vaccine requires the recipient to receive a second dose in 21 days. Those who receive their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine through St. Johns County will leave with an appointment scheduled for the second dose. The limited number of COVID-19 vaccines St. Johns County receives

BRIEFS continues on **Page 3**

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS HOOCH TORSO EDITS URN ENVOY MADISON REAGAN REBFEND OPS TIPI DUGOUT TONSPARTY A L A R S L E E P M A N T A K A M E FORE RISCSIR OMITTOE ARTHUR JOHNSON OVOLO LORA RUBES THE OMSK 3 5 9 8 4 9 4 3 6 8 5 2 8 5 9 3 4 6 6 2 3 5 4 7 8 9 5 8 9 6 2 3 4 9 3 6 2 5 1 4 8 3 2 8 6 5 4 9 5 8 9 4 6

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.



Briefs

Continued from 2

from the State of Florida determines appointment availability. For updates regarding the COVID-19 vaccination program, go to www.sjcfl.us/coronavirusvaccinations or text SJCVACCINE to 888777.

Flagler Health +/St. John County offering COVID-19 testing

Flagler Health +, in partnership with St. Johns County, is offering COVID-19

testing between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Saturday at the St. Johns County Agricultural Center, 3111 Agricultural Center Drive.

Operated by Telescope Health, the site will provide PCR COVID-19 tests, rapid COVID-19 tests and COVID-19 antibody tests. Insured test recipients will be required to pay a draw fee of \$52 for a PCR test, \$129 for a rapid test and \$52 for an antibody test, and insurance will be billed for the remaining balance. Uninsured St. Johns County residents may receive a PCR test at no charge upon registration with Flagler Health + Care Connect and must pre-register by calling (904) 819-3035. In addition, uninsured residents may also pay \$129 out of pocket for the rapid test and \$100 out of pocket for the antibody test.

Rapid test results are typically available within four-to-six hours. PCR and antibody test results are available within 48 hours on average, but may take longer depending on regional testing conditions. For more information, go to www.flaglerhealth.org/covidtesting or call (904) 819-3035.

County conducting transit survey

St. Johns County is hosting a survey through Sunday, Feb. 14, to garner public feedback on the county's transit development plan. The purpose of this survey is to identify public transportation needs and means of enhancing travel and access in St. Johns County. To complete a survey, go to www.publicinput.com/sjtransitsurvey. For more information, email rgarvey@sjcfl.us or call (904) 209-0630.







COLLECTION







601 1ST ST. S 2E | JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FL | 1 BED | 1 BATH | 925 SQFT | \$367,000

Live the dream on the beach! This well-kept condo offers one carport parking spot, a kitchen with great cabinet space, extra storage closet, and a private balcony overlooking the community pool, dunes, and ocean. Tile floors make beach living simple, and high windows and ceilings bring the outside in. The building laundry room is located next door to the unit. Make this your beach getaway today! MLS 1075667

For more information, contact Barbara Maple: 904.571.1764 | BarbaraMaple@WatsonRealtyCorp.com





SJC Commission, School Board discuss safety, growth and more

By Shaun Ryan

The St. Johns County Commission and St. Johns County School Board held a joint workshop on Wednesday, Feb. 3, to address issues they had in common.

The meeting started off with a discussion on school safety, an issue that has been at the forefront of concerns since February 2018, when 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

"It's a sad reality that we have to focus so much on safety," said School Board Chair Patrick Canan, "but in this current age, it's obviously necessary."

He said he has been opposed to turning

schools into "mini fortresses," but that many changes have been made, particularly with regard to ingress.

Capt. Peggy Tennyson of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office reported that there is a deputy on every school campus in the county and that the goal was to place two deputies in each high school.

Sheriff Rob Hardwick pointed out that growth would prove to be a challenge. As new schools are built to accommodate the influx of families, more deputies will be needed. Hardwick hinted that he may need funds for that increase in deputies in the future

Growth itself was one of the topics the two boards addressed. One projection is

that, by 2045, there will be about 500,000 people in St. Johns County. And that will necessitate the construction of more schools

One area that is currently seeing growth is Nocatee where more than 12,000 dwelling units have been approved.

County Commissioner Henry Dean pointed out that even the pandemic hasn't slowed development. He said in November 2019, there were 270 single family home permits in the county. In November 2020, there were 520.

He expressed concern, however, that COVID-19 may have resulted in a drop

DISCUSSION continues on **Page 7**

New SWCD board members sworn in

Judge Howard McGinnis recently administered the oath of office to three newly elected board members of the St. Johns Soil and Water Conservation District — Chuck Owen, Nicole Crosby and Mary Lawrence, who are now supervisors on the board.

Lawrence was previously appointed to her position when it was vacated, and now she begins a new four-year term, having been elected in November along with Owen and Crosby.

Erica Connor was voted chairperson by the group and Chad Levrini was voted vice chairperson. Both were elected in 2018. Connor, Levrini and Crosby live in Ponte Vedra and Owen and Lawrence reside in St. Augustine. The five positions are non-partisan and non-salaried.

Serving the county as office specialist II for 31 years is Gina Allen, who is district secretary to the Soil and Water Conservation board. Also present at the first meeting to kick off the new term was Charlene Meeks, executive director of the Association of Florida Conservation Districts (AFCD), Richard Darby, first vice president of AFCD, and Yesmarie Chaparro Feneque, district conservationist with the United States Department of Agriculture. The USDA/NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) works closely with the Soil and Water Conservation districts.

SOME HISTORY ON THE SWCD

The 1930s Dust Bowl disaster spurred the U.S. Congress to declare soil and water conservation a national policy and priority in 1935. To elicit the active support of landowners on a local level, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, serving conservation needs at a county level, were created to work in partnership with the federal government. Today, there are nearly 3,000 conservation districts nationwide dedicated to wisely using soil and water resources



Photo provided by Michael Ryan

St. Johns County Soil and Water Conservation District board members Mary Lawrence (from left), Nicole Crosby, and Chuck Owen are sworn in by Judge Howard McGinnis in late January,

and involved in efforts as varied as their conservation needs and the local citizenry they serve. The authority to create Florida's SWCDs was established in 1937, and there are currently 58 SWCDs in the state. The St. Johns SWCD was established in 1950.

The powers of the SWCD and its supervisors are quite broad and relate to the development and implementation of soil and water conservation practices on private lands in St. Johns County. On its website, the county's SWCD describes its commitment to creating ways to conserve water, prevent soil erosion and inform the public about conservation problems. The SWCD may provide input as a liaison between community interest groups, local authorities and regulatory entities.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CELEBRATING CARTER G. WOODSON FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

This year marks the 45th Black History month, a nationally recognized annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and acknowledgement of their central role in U.S. history. The concept of celebrating African American achievements was proposed and implemented by Carter G. Woodson, an American historian, author and the founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Upon the acceptance of Black History Month, Woodson created a sense of equality for Blacks living in a segregated country. The ability to celebrate and recognize African Americans' excellence, innovation and trailblazing in fields such as science, technology and civic engagement enhanced the Black community's sense of pride. Black History Month is now observed by other countries, such as Canada, Germany, Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Woodson emphasized the importance of establishing a theme for the public to explore during this month. This year's theme is "Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity." The significance of this theme is to explore the Black diaspora, the dispersion of Black families across the United States. Woodson was one of the first scholars to study this topic.

In celebration of Black History Month, the Florida Commission on Human Relations honors leaders and advocates who have made great sacrifices to protect the rights of many citizens and/ or made a change in their communities and the nation, some of whom are enshrined in the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame.

Black History Month is a time of reflection and serves as an opportunity to gain new perspectives and learn more about the important achievements of this rich and vital culture. I encourage all to take this time to educate yourself on and appreciate African American contributions.

Mario A. Garza

Commissioner and Chairman, Florida Commission on Human Relations

Rutherford joins other Florida members of Congress to reintroduce school safety legislation

U.S. Reps. John Rutherford, Mario Diaz-Balart, Ted Deutch and Stephanie Murphy have reintroduced the Luke and Alex School Safety Act, the House companion to a Senate bill introduced by Sens. Ron Johnson, Marco Rubio and Rick Scott.

This legislation would codify into law

a federal clearinghouse that categorizes, assesses and shares best practices for school safety measures and identifies the resources necessary to implement them.

The Luke and Alex School Safety Act honors Luke Hoyer, Alex Schachter and the 15 others who died in the 2018 shootings at

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland.

"Every child deserves to feel safe in school," said Rutherford. "For administrators, students, parents and local law enforcement to develop a robust school safety approach, they need easy access to the most accurate and up-to-date information on how to do so. The Luke and Alex School Safety Act will create a one-stop shop for the latest school safety research, best practices and grant opportunities and make them acces-

K9s for Warriors founder Shari Duval dies at age 75



K9s For Warriors founder Shari Duval poses with K9s For Warriors CEO Rory Diamond. Duval died Feb. 4 at age 75.





Photos provided by K9s For Warriors

ABOVE: Shari Duval made rescuing dogs part of K9s For Warriors' mission, along with helping veterans suffering from trauma.

LEFT: Duval poses with her son and K9s for Warriors president Brett Simon, who inspired Duval to create the nonprofit.

Honorary 'mom' to the program's veterans put up long fight against cancer

By Holly Tishfield

On Feb. 4, local and national nonprofit organization K9s For Warriors announced on its Facebook page that its beloved founder, Shari Duval, had passed away after a long battle with cancer.

Duval was an outstanding member of the Ponte Vedra Beach community, creating the K9s For Warriors organization more than 10 years ago in an attempt to make a difference for American veterans.

Before she opened the organization, she spent her time volunteering at veterans' charities in Jacksonville. This inspired her to create a way to provide necessary assistance to struggling veterans.

Her son served as a bomb dog handler for two tours in Iraq. Once he returned, it was clear that Duval's son suffered from the same post-traumatic stress disorder she had seen in so many other veterans.

Duval spent two years researching canine assistance for PTSD and other military-related traumas, and began her nonprofit in 2011 as a solution to both her son's disorder and the disorders of other American warriors.

"She had grit and tenacity, and she never gave up," said Rory Diamond, CEO of K9s For Warriors. "I have never seen anyone like her."

Diamond said Duval was involved with every aspect of the organization, from fundraisers to dog training to personally helping veterans in need. She was affectionately dubbed "mom" by many of the warriors, because she spent so much time ensuring the stability and healing of any and all warriors who entered her facility.

"She pioneered how to love on warriors," Diamond said. "She would do anything for them."

Recently, the North Florida campus was renamed in her honor as The Shari Duval K9s For Warriors National Headquarters. Despite being ill while attending the ceremony, Diamond said Duval still gave a rousing 10-minute speech about the importance of the organization's work.

After helping hundreds of veterans, rescuing more than 1,000 dogs and becoming the nation's largest provider of service animals for disabled veterans, Duval has left behind a legacy that will last for generations.

Her philosophy of never giving up remains true in the many stories warriors tell about her life, and the impact her work has had on hundreds of people.

Rotary 'Service Above Self' scholarship accepting applications

\$2,000 award will go to top Nease or PVHS applicant

The Rotary Club of Palm Valley (formerly Ponte Vedra Beach Sunset) is now accepting applications for its annual Jeff Hart Memorial "Service Above Self" Scholarship (SASS).

This year, the club will award one \$2,000 scholarship to the top applicant from either Allen D. Nease or Ponte Vedra high schools. The SASS is open to juniors and seniors enrolled at either school (including those enrolled in virtual classes

due to COVID-1), who have demonstrated their commitment to serving others in the community.

SASS was initiated in 2011 and chaired by charter member and club past president Hart until his passing in 2019. It is now named in his honor to celebrate his life of service to his community and to provide recognition to students for their exceptional commitment to service. While the program has evolved over the years, this year's COVID-19 pandemic required a number of important changes to the application and scoring process. The pandemic has reduced traditional volunteer oppor-

tunities for teens; and, the pandemic has resulted in more teens enrolling in virtual classes which limits their direct access to school teachers and staff. The SASS Committee adapted the 2021 application to address these concerns in an effort to ensure all student applicants receive equal and fair consideration.

"In keeping with Rotary International's Four Way Test to 'be fair to all concerned,' we adapted or dropped some of our application requirements to help make it as fair as possible for students to apply this year," said current club president Horton Hickerson. "We're giving appli-

cants the opportunity to share with us how they've adapted their service during the pandemic. This year, it's not about how much service, but more about what kind of service and its impact."

The SASS program chair, Paula Roderick, also emphasized that while academics do play a role in selecting the scholarship winner, the SASS is weighted most heavily on the applicant's service.

"We strongly encourage juniors and seniors at both schools to check out the SASS application link if they have been Josh Martino is president of the Home Team Restaurant Group, which includes Bono's Pit Bar-B-Q, Willie Jewell's Old School Bar-B-Q, Pastiche Catering & Events, Aiken Fish House, Peachtree City Yacht Club and Reina Cookies.

Josh Martino

As told to Shaun Ryan

Tell me a little about your business and its restaurants.

Bono's Pit Bar-B-Q has been an iconic Jacksonville institution for over 72 years. We serve authentic pit BBQ, cut to order and served with a heartfelt approach to customer service.

Willie Jewell's is a fast casual version of Bono's, started in 2009, and has grown to 15 locations around the country.

We also have an upscale catering company, Pastiche Catering & Events, which complements our traditional BBQ catering and allows us to serve any style of event from no ties to bowties.

We have also launched a seafood concept, the Aiken Fish House in Aiken, South Carolina, and are working on one as we speak in Peachtree City, Georgia, called Peachtree City Yacht Club. Needless to say, we love food, we love people and we love serving our community.

Tell me about your background, how you got to where you are today.

I was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, went to high school in Connecticut, graduated from Vanderbilt in 2000 and law school in 2003. I always knew I wanted to use my law degree in a business environment, rather than a court room, but I admit I never knew it would lead me to restaurants and the hospitality industry.

My father is Italian, and my mother is originally from Poland. The food being cooked in our house every night was incredible, and I would love to do my homework in the kitchen. Subconsciously, the impact of that experience growing up — the love, happiness and camaraderie food represented for me — lit a fire inside of me that has burned ever since.

The Adeeb family gave me the opportunity to live out a dream, and I am eternally grateful.

(The Adeeb family name is synonymous with the restaurant industry in Jacksonville. From the Sea Turtle and Green Turtle back in the day to the Beach Diner, Strings Sports Brewery and Bono's Pit Bar-B-Q today, the Adeebs have served this community both inside and outside their respective restaurants for generations.)

COVID-19 has presented many businesses with tremendous challenges. How have you met these, and how have you helped your employees through this time?

COVID-19 has taken its toll on many industries and has shown no mercy for the restaurant business. We have seen our dining rooms get restricted to 10%, shut down completely, brought back to 25%, 50% and now full capacity. Albeit temporarily back in March 2020, we furloughed much of our service staff due to a lack of in-house guests and dining room restrictions.

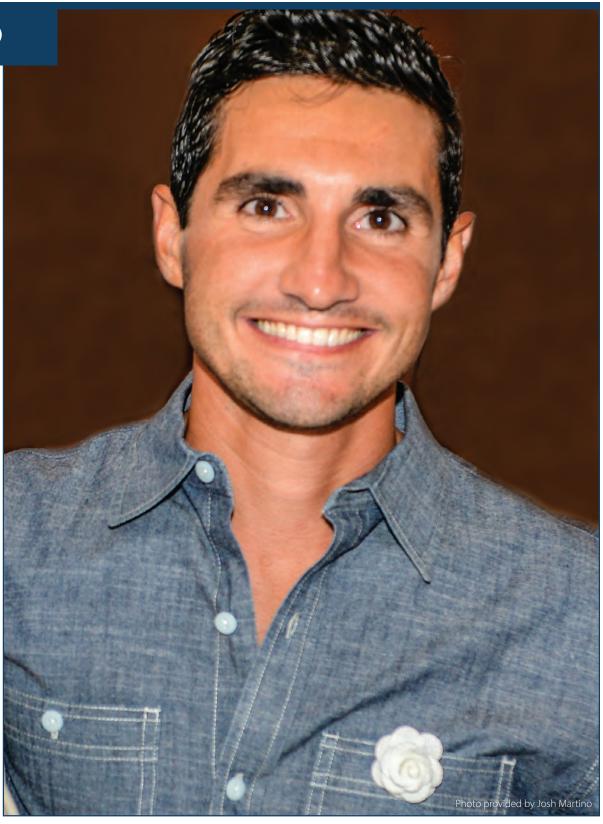
We helped our employees get set up on unemployment, which proved to be a difficult and frustrating task. Many of our employees who were furloughed did not receive a check for 6-8 weeks.

The restaurant industry ended 2020 with total sales \$240 billion below the forecast for the year. As of Dec. 1, 2020, more than 110,000 restaurants/bars were closed for business temporarily or for good.

The good news is that we have been at full-strength for many months. Our team has shown incredible resilience in the face of all these challenges, and I am humbled by the efforts they made to ensure we continued to serve our community.

How have other businesses and organizations helped?

Jacksonville is a community like no other I have ever experienced. It is easily the most philanthropic and communal city I have ever lived in.



Early on during the pandemic, we reached out to our partners, vendors and manufacturers to see if they could offer food donations to support our employees who were out of work. The outpouring of generosity was awe-inspiring and confirmed the goodness of so many people we get to work with every day.

Our partners at the Jaguars, Jumbo Shrimp, Icemen, JU, UNF and local radio stations all put out positive and support-inspiring messaging on our behalf, helping to promote our takeout and delivery business during our time of need.

Tell me about your work with Feeding Northeast Florida and Project Share.

Serving on the board of Feeding Northeast Florida, it became apparent there was a dire need to feed the seniors in our community who were at risk and unable to leave their homes. They were food-insecure and had no way of being provided with healthy meals.

We were able to create Project Share, and through

the generosity of organizations like the Chartrand Foundation, VyStar, The Insetta Family and many others, grants were procured to deliver food from the Food Bank to local restaurants. That food was turned into tens of thousands of healthy meals for seniors, at-risk children and many others.

Many restaurant employees were able to come back to work and receive a paycheck while literally producing life-saving meals for those in need. The soul and purpose of this project lifted our employees' spirits during an otherwise stressful and anxiety-laden time.

What do you like best about living in Ponte Vedra?

I love waking up every morning and watching the sun rise over the beach. I love raising our family in such a friendly and nurturing environment. I love the friendships and fellowship of this community. There was a time in my life when I could not point to Jacksonville on a map, and now I am a walking bumper sticker for the place.

Stevenson's bill would address shortcomings in mental health care

State Rep. Cyndi Stevenson has filed a bill that aims to expand mental health care by identifying gaps in coverage.

"The purpose of this bill is to help people get the right services, at the right place, at the right time," said Stevenson. "Too often we hear complaints and it is years too late. The consequences can be catastrophic. This bill is an attempt to remedy that."

House Bill 701 establishes a system with the Department of Financial Services and the Agency for Health Care Administration to track and monitor complaints by insurance customers of any gaps and inadequacies in coverage of and access to behavioral health care services. This information will be reported to the Division of Consumer Services.

The bill would also require that insurance companies and health maintenance organizations provide a written notice to their customers of state and federal requirements for coverage of behavioral health care access.

A toll free number would be provided for customers to report complaints regarding their coverage, including challenges of locating and accessing behavioral health care services, the expense of receiving such services and any other complaints regarding the adequacy of services.

The bill would also require that a joint report from the Department of Financial Services and the Agency of Health Care Administration be submitted to the governor, president of the Senate and speaker of the House. This report would contain the data involving complaints from health insurance customers, the cause of such complaints and whether the complaints were resolved with in a timely manner.

"In recent years, the importance of acknowledging, understanding and remedying mental health issues has become more and more evident," said Stevenson. "This bill gives everyone who is suffering from mental health issues a voice to make sure that they are satisfied with their health care coverage."

Discussion

Continued from

of sales tax revenue, a half-cent of which is dedicated to new school construction.

School Board member Beverly Slough said the district did see a drop in sales tax receipts, "but interestingly, they're recovering."

She suggested that, as more people have been moving into the county, they are spending more money and helping to generate that extra sales tax revenue.

On another matter, the 2020 census will no doubt reflect changes in population. As a result, district maps will have to be redrawn.

But the boards will be under pressure because the pandemic has pushed back release of the census results until August. Normally, they are released in March.

Vicky Oakes, St. Johns County supervisor of elections, recommended the boards do as they did in the past and continue to share the same district lines. She said this would mean less confusion for voters and greater cost effectiveness in conducting elections.

Districts can only be redrawn in oddnumber years, so if the boards are not able to complete the work this year, they will have to wait until 2023 to do so.

Several parents in the St. Johns Forest Community attended the meeting to plead with the school board to restore bus service to their neighborhood.

State law does not mandate bus service for students living within two miles of their school. The students in part of that community reside within two miles of Liberty Pines Academy, a K-8 school.

But to get to school, the children must walk along St. Johns Parkway and part of State Road 9B. The parents said they fear for the safety of their children walking alongside fast-moving traffic. Also, they pointed out the risk of child abduction due to the proximity of the interstate and relative ease of departure from the area.

The board is expected to address the issue at a future meeting.

Rutherford

Continued from

sible to every school district across America."

"I want to thank Congressmen Diaz-Balart, Deutch, Rutherford and Congresswoman Murphy for reintroducing The Luke and Alex School Safety Act," said Max Schachter, Alex Schachter's father and founder and executive director of Safe Schools for Alex.

"We still find it hard to grasp that our son Luke was killed in a school, along with 16 other innocent souls," said Tom and Gena Hoyer, Luke Hoyer's parents. "This legislation will help protect our nation's children and teachers while they are in school. We are deeply grateful to the members of the Florida delegation who have come together on this bill for school safety."



"Model" Home in Alta Lakes

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



Pristine Craftsmanship on Ponte Vedra Blvd.

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

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



Oceanfront Beach Escape

Located between The Lodge and the Cabana Beach Club, this second-story condo gives elevated views of the beach while maintaining the unit's privacy and security. Includes a large covered balcony and ground floor storage. **3 bedrooms & 3 bathrooms \$1,585,000**



Pristine Waterfront

Immaculately maintained home located on a cul de sac on the largest lake in Marsh Landing features a spacious floor plan, first floor master, and expansive 180-degree water views showcased throughout.

4 bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms \$1,150,000



HomeServices

Florida Network Realty
"From Cottages to Castles"





Atlantic Beach Retreat

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

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

Elizabeth Hudgins, REALTOR® 904.553.2032 cell Elizabeth@ElizabethHudgins.com www.ElizabethHudgins.com





Sarah Alexander, REALTOR®

OBITUARIES

Donald L. Bennett

Donald L. Bennett, 58, unexpectedly passed away February 1, 2021, while he was peacefully sleeping. His cause of death was a heart attack.



Donald L. Bennett

He was born January 8, 1963, in Maricopa County, Arizona. At an early age, he and his family moved to San Diego, California, where he lived until moving to Atlantic Beach, Florida in 2005.

He grew up in San Diego, graduating from Santana High School in 1981. While in San Diego, he worked at Padre Dam Water Company for several years. In his early 20's, he started a successful painting business that continued after he moved to his beloved mountain cabin in Julian, California. His business thrived, but he decided he needed a change, so moved to Atlantic Beach, Florida in 2005 to be closer to his Mother.

He enjoyed spending time with family, especially his nephew and niece. He also enjoyed softball, soccer, camping, and spending time with his friends. He made many lifelong friends that he remained in touch with long after his move to Florida. During his long time tenure with Home Depot here, he developed close relation-



ships with all those he worked with, employees as well as customers and vendors.

He is survived by his Mother, Genell Kriner, sister, Nancy Lowell, nephew Lee Lowell, niece Emma Lowell, and Aunt, Margaret Sweat (Wayne Carter). The bond he shared with his family will never be broken, even by death. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

A gathering of immediate family and close friends to celebrate the life of this wonderful man will be held Saturday, February 13, 3:00 PM, at Ocean 14 Condominium Clubroom, 1301 1st St South, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the American Heart Association.

**Because of COVID restrictions, masks and social distancing will be mandatory.

**Ocean 14 is a condominium, so there is no parking on the property, but there are two public lots on either side of the building. Please visit the online Tribute at www.quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by



Ronald T. Giddens

Born at home in Pecan Park, Ronald T. Giddens died December 5 at the age of 93. Though born in humble beginnings, he rose to accomplish much in his lifetime.



Ronald T. Giddens

He officially began working at the age of 12 — though he always claimed to be 6 at his father's funeral home, Giddens Funeral Home. He would go to school during the day and work nights and weekends at

the funeral home. At the age of 17 Ronald joined the Merchant Marines. When he returned home after the war, he joined his father and brother at the funeral home. In 1946, Ronald went to Jacksonville Beach to open his own funeral home. Originally on Third St., it moved twice before its current location on Beach Blvd.

In 1952 Ronald met and married Lois Strickland. During the early years of their

marriage, they lived in the Giddens Funeral Home on Riverside Ave. Lois taught first grade during the day and would dispatch ambulances at night. Eventually, they moved to Jacksonville Beach. After their daughter, Robin, was born they moved to Avondale. The family were members of Avondale Baptist Church, where Ronald served as a deacon and in various other roles in the church. Ronald's love of the beach never diminished and in 1979 they moved to Ponte Vedra Beach where he lived until his death. His wife Lois preceded him in death in 1996.

Ronald worked diligently to build his business and was quite successful. Eventually, he had four funeral homes in Jacksonville. In addition to his business, he was appointed by Gov. Claude Kirk and again by Gov. Ruben Askew to the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers where he served for 17 years. He also was President of the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards. In 1972 he and Bobby Hardage decided to merge their funeral homes for economies that would come from having a larger company. The two bought out all of the partners of their firms. Their success caught the eye of Service Corporation International (SCI) and in 1975 they sold their business yet stayed involved until both of their deaths.

During his lifetime, Ronald was a member of various organizations including Oceanside Rotary, Beaches Business Association, The Optimist Club, The Loyal Order of the Moose, and the Civitan Club. He was a Board member of the Baptist Home for Children and served as its President; he served on the Board of the First Guaranty Bank (now CenterState Bank) and was a founding member of the Ponte Vedra Beach Chamber of Commerce. Ronald was also a member of Christ Episcopal Church and served on the Christ Church Foundation.

Life was not all work and no play. Ronald was a wiz at finding sharks' teeth on the beach and accumulated quite a collection. He was an avid golfer playing regularly at the Ponte Vedra Club but unfortunately never shot his age. He and his first wife, Lois, would spend time in Highlands, N.C. and enjoyed Thanksgivings at The Cloister. They also traveled with friends to Europe playing golf at St. Andrews in Scotland.

Ronald is survived by his second wife, Lester Hart Giddens; his daughter and son-in-law, Robin Giddens and J. David Sheppard; and his grandchildren, Molly Giddens Sheppard and James D. Sheppard, Jr., as well as other extended family.

A private entombment was held on December 8th at Greenlawn Cemetery. Jacksonville, FL. A Celebration of Life will be Saturday, Feb. 13th at 2:00 p.m. in The Legacy Lodge at Hardage-Giddens Oaklawn Funeral Home. To view the livestream of the service please visit: https://youtu.be/1jW-Y fwmdY or https://youtu.be/y5soFh9cgoc. The family suggests memorials to Christ Episcopal Church Foundation, 400 San Juan Dr., Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082 or The Animal Rescue and Adoption Agency (taraajax. com). Arrangements entrusted to Hardage-Giddens Funeral Home, The Oaklawn Chapel. 4801 San Jose Blyd., Jacksonville, FL. 32207. Words of comfort may be shared at www.hardagegiddensoaklawnchapel.com

Sharon Duval

Sharon Duval, 75, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 4, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Claire Lee

Claire Lee, 74, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 2, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Richard Lee

Richard Lee, 76, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 2, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www. pontevedravalley.com

Richard L. Ouellette

Richard L. Ouellette, 85, of Atlantic Beach, Florida, died Feb. 1, 2021. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. (904)249-1100 www.quinn-shalz.com

Tony Trabert

Tony Trabert, 90, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 3, 2021. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.com

Scholarship

Continued from 5

involved in community service of any kind or duration during their high school careers," she said. "This year, we are especially interested in hearing about how they found ways to serve during the COVID pandemic."

Interested students need to complete an online application using the following link: https://forms.gle/e6qC98y3twcEV-jJJ7. All applications for the 2021 "Jeff Hart Memorial Service Above Self Scholarship" must be received not later than April 3. Scholarship applicants must be

involved in community service; currently enrolled as juniors or seniors at either school; in good academic standing; and planning to attend either college, university, technical or trade school after high school graduation. Children of Rotarians are not eligible for SASS. For more information or questions, contact the club's scholarship chair at JeffHartSASS@ gmail.com. Information is also available through both high schools' scholarship coordinators/guidance offices. The announcement of the winner will be made not later than May 30. Formal presentation of the scholarship will be made at a future meeting of the Rotary Club of Palm Valley.



PVHS student becomes 1st female to achieve rank of Eagle Scout in district

Marina Mitchell completed her Board of Review for the rank of Eagle to become the first female in a St. Johns District (St. Johns County) troop to attain the highest rank in the Scouts BSA program.

What used to be the Boy Scouts program was renamed Scouts BSA in 2019. Marina was one of the 11 founding girls that started troop 291 at Ponte Vedra United Methodist Church on Feb 1, 2019, the first date females could join the program. The troop now has 25 scouts ages 10-16.

Marina led a service project where she and other scouts built picnic tables and benches for the Duval Audubon Society, Crosby sanctuary. She completed 22 merit badges including the 13 Eagle required. She attended the World Jamboree in 2019 and a week of summer camp in 2019 and 2020. She attended a week-long National Youth Leadership Training near Atlanta.

She was scheduled to be a part of a 12-day backpacking trip to Philmont in the mountains of New Mexico, but it was canceled due to COVID-19. She is attending SeaBase in March with 13 other scouts and will spend the week on a 70-foot sail ship in the Florida Keys. She has always held a leadership position in the troop, including serving as the senior patrol leader, who runs the troop.

Marina is an honor student at Ponte Vedra High School where she is a member of the Color Guard. She is very active in her church, Our Lady Star of the Sea.



Photo provided by Dick Basye

Marina Mitchell is the first female Eagle Scout in the St. Johns County District.

Grocery chain celebrates Black History Month with donation program

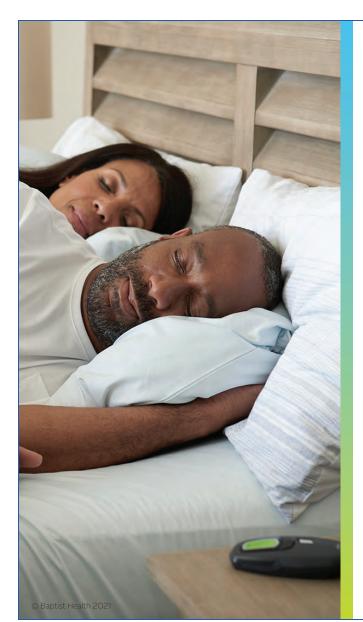
To celebrate Black History Month,
Southeastern Grocers Inc. (SEG), parent
company and home of BI-LO, Fresco y
Más, Harveys Supermarket and WinnDixie grocery stores, together with the SEG
Gives Foundation, announced a community
donation program benefiting the Romay
Davis Belonging, Inclusion and Diversity
Grant Program. The grant program supports nonprofits in the fight for racial equity
and social justice, and addresses racial
disparities in education, food insecurity and
health care

Through March 2, customers at all BI-LO, Fresco y Más, Harveys Supermarket and Winn-Dixie stores can make donations to the Romay Davis Belonging, Inclusion and Diversity Grant Program. Customers are encouraged to round up their grocery bills at the register to help support organizations that serve minority sectors of communities throughout SEG's seven-state footprint. The SEG Gives Foundation is contributing an additional \$100,000 donation to the campaign total.

"We are proud to honor Black History

Month by recognizing the key contributions of our Black associates, customers, community partners and diverse supplier partners," said Elizabeth Thompson, executive vice president and chief people officer for Southeastern Grocers. "... As we reflect on life during this poignant time in history, SEG is poised to continue fostering a culture of belonging, inclusion and diversity, where associates and customers are empowered to be themselves, and where we all embrace our differences as our strongest asset."

In honor of Black History Month, SEG is also sharing the inspirational story of the Romay Davis Belonging, Inclusion and Diversity Grant's namesake, 101-year-old Winn-Dixie associate Romay Davis. A video tribute highlighting the fascinating life story of Romay will be released later this month and includes her historic role in serving as part of the first all-Black Women Army Corps unit deployed overseas during World War II, and her thriving 30-year fashion career as a designer and model in New York



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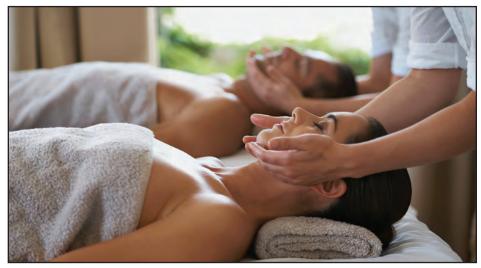
Peter Nassar, MD



Oon Lerner, MI

Dr. Nassar and Dr. Lerner work together to help patients determine if they are candidates for Inspire.





Sawgrass Marriott offers romance and relaxation for Valentine's Day

By Holly Tishfield

For a resort that is more than 30 years old, the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa still impresses guests with its sprawling 65 acres of property including newly renovated rooms, villas, pools, access to TPC Sawgrass golf club and full-service spa.

It used to be a place where golfers came to vacation, thanks to the close proximity to the renowned TPC Sawgrass golf club, but over the years, it also became a place where vacationers golfed.

The Sawgrass Spa at the resort offers guests a wide range of services to put them in a state of rest and relaxation.

On a normal day, guests can select from one of the many massages, fitness classes, nail salons or facials, but with Valentine's Day quickly approaching, the Sawgrass Spa is serving up new and exciting treatment options.

One of their special services is the "Take Time For Each Other" package, which in-

SPA continues on Page 11

*20% Service Charge will be added to all Spa services. Gratuities are at your discretion.

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LOVE IS IN THE AIR

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Available February 12-14, 2021

MONTH-LONG SPECIALS

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GIFT OF RELAXATION

With the purchase of a \$250 gift card, receive a complimentary Sawgrass Spa gift (\$30 value). Available through February 28, 2021



VALENTINE'S DAY HOURS BREAKFAST: 7:00AM-11:45AM LUNCH & DINNER: 12:30PM-10:00PM

After a day at the Spa, join us at Alice & Pete's Pub for one of our special Valentine's Day cocktails— Heartbreaker, Two to Tango, and Love Potion.

Chocolate shop prepares for sweetest day of the year

By Shaun Ryan

The most romantic of all holidays is rapidly approaching, and the team at Peterbrooke Chocolatier has been hard at work to make sure Valentine's Day 2021 is the sweetest ever.

"We're doing everything we can possibly think of," said Rosemary Duggan, director of training at the store in the Sawgrass Village Shopping Center. "It's our Super Bowl."

Indeed, the shelves are lined with elegant gift baskets, heart-shaped boxes and much more. In one corner, wine-andchocolate pairings promise an enchanting evening for two.

"Our chocolate-covered strawberries are our biggest seller," said Duggan.
"And, of course, we have our chocolate-covered popcorn."

The latter is a year-round favorite that, for holidays, becomes a tasty filler for hollow chocolate molds. At Christmastime, these might be shaped like snowmen. Around Valentine's Day, they are molded into hearts.

But popcorn isn't all that can be concealed inside these sweet vessels.

"You can hide a ring if you're planning on asking your sweetheart the big question," said Duggan. "We can put that ring in there for you."

Special arrangements like this are possible because many of the delicious

CHOCOLATE continues on **Page 12**



Photo by Shaun Ryan

Among the many ways Peterbrooke Chocolatier has to express love are treat-filled

Spa

Continued from 10

cludes two relaxing 50-minute massages to be shared with a loved one, including an aromatherapy or CBD oil enhancement. Following the couples massage, guests can indulge in a complimentary glass of champagne by the private spa poolside.

Another of their Valentine's specials is

the "Love Is In The Air" package, where guests can receive a complimentary upgrade on select CBD oils or aromatherapy with the purchase of a body treatment enhancement.

Besides the packages tailored for Valentine's weekend, the Sawgrass Spa is offering month-long specials, as well. The "Warm Up CBD Body Wrap" is a nourishing, warming, antioxidant-rich full-body wrap with a scalp and foot massage, in which 100mg of cannabinoids

and over 15 vitamins/minerals are used to restore and smooth the skin.

For a larger deal, guests can purchase the "Links of Love" package, a special provided through TPC Sawgrass that includes a three-day luxury accommodation at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, massages/facials at the Sawgrass Spa, and much, much more.

To find out more about the Sawgrass Spa's Valentine's Day specials, visit their website or call the spa at (904) 674-4772.

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Chocolate

Continued from 11

treats sold at the shop are actually created there. Behind the scenes, there is a whole kitchen devoted to making high-quality chocolate products.

In fact, customized options are one of the hallmarks of the shop. A customer may want company logos or loved ones' names written on the candy in chocolate script or something special dipped in chocolate. And the Peterbrooke staff is pleased to do it.

"We love customization," said head chocolatier Amy Myhre. "Whatever you're thinking ... you bring it to us, and we'll try to make it work."

Myhre recommended that customers wanting something special simply give the shop a week's notice.

For those who don't consider themselves chocolate aficionados, it is important to understand that every brand has its own recipe. Since its founding in Jacksonville in 1983, the focus of Peterbrooke Chocolatier has been hand-crafted, European-style chocolate.

"We use very high-quality cocoa in our chocolate, which means it's very smooth," explained Duggan. "We use real cocoa powder, real cocoa butter, and that's what makes it taste very good."

In addition to in-store sales, the team at Peterbrooke Chocolatier offers catering. They can put together platters of



Photos by Shaun Ryan

Chocolatier Grace Crespo holds a tray of freshly made macaroons in the Ponte Vedra shop of Peterbrooke Chocolatier.

chocolate-dipped fruits and other treats and chocolate tables for weddings and corporate events.

Among the selections are chocolate fountains and centerpieces, strawberry trees, wedding favors and more.

The shop also has a portable gelato machine, which can be brought to events.

For customers who are concerned about the coronavirus, the shop offers curbside service. For Christmas, it transitioned from its traditional platters to those with individually packed items. Staff members wear masks 100% of the time, and sanitizers have been made available for people to use.

Myhre said they are very grateful for their customers, whom they think of as family, for remaining supportive throughout 2020.

"As a small business, this past year has been a strange time," said Myhre. "And I think we have seen nothing but great, sweet people coming into the store and trying to support us."

Whatever 2021 brings, one thing remains clear: celebrating love isn't going away. And where there is romance, there is chocolate.

"Valentine's is a sweet time to express love, a little extra love," said Myhre. "We all need that this year in particular."



Peterbrooke Chocolatier offers a delicious selection of fruits, berries and more dipped in chocolate.



Chocolate hearts bearing romantic messages can be found at Peterbrooke Chocolatier.



Head chocolatier Amy Myhre holds a cup of gelato, one of Peterbrooke Chocolatier's biggest draws.







Coping with the COVID-19 pandemic **Letters of love**

from area Girl Scouts

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Find more Senior Living content in **Business Weekly** Page 21

Fitness leader keeps seniors moving at age 96

By Shaun Ryan

On a bright morning a group of seniors assembles in Oceanfront Park in Jacksonville Beach. There's a lot of animated conversation as they set aside belongings and then spread out in deference to social distancing conventions.

Suddenly, a petit, energetic woman appears and calls the group to order. She touches the screen on her phone and disco music emanates from a speaker nearby.

Immediately, she launches into a series of stretching moves, and the group strives to keep up. Their respect for the woman is manifest, perhaps because she herself is a senior who has survived a lifetime of ups and downs.

Perhaps because, at 96, Joan Taylor has demonstrated that age is not automatically a barrier.

According to Taylor, people are often surprised when they learn that she's a nonagenarian. They sometimes ask what her secret is.

"I don't have a secret," she responds, though she concedes that she doesn't eat junk food and enjoys exercise.

Taylor has been with the group since the 1980s when Ponte Vedra resident Betty Pierce was leading it at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church. Since then, the group has had to move to different venues, but a few members have been with it all along, including Taylor.

Today, she leads the class three days a week. And afterward, she returns to her apartment, where she does sit-ups and leg lifts.

Taylor's tenacity inspires the others, as does the story of her life.



Photo by Shaun Rya

Joan Taylor leads a group of seniors in exercises during her three-days-a-week fitness class in Jacksonville Beach's Oceanfront Park.

THE BLITZ

Born in London, she was 15 when World War II broke out and was among the students evacuated by train in September 1939.

"They wanted (children) out of London," Taylor said. "They still had memories of the First World War, I guess, and the use of gas and all that."

A family in Eastbourn took her in. However, because there had been no bombing, she returned to London at Christmastime.

And that's where she was during the Blitz.

Taylor didn't return to school, deciding instead to seek work.

"There weren't many things for women to do in those days," she said. "You were a typist, a secretary or a nurse or something like that. I liked fiddling with hair and make-up and stuff, so I thought: Well, I'd like to be a hairdresser."

She became an apprentice at a "very high-class" salon.

One morning in 1941, she took the bus to work only to find the salon was gone.

"They'd been bombed overnight!" she said

MARRIAGE AND EMIGRATION

She met Douglas Taylor at a dance in 1944. He was a Canadian soldier stationed in England. Their relationship grew serious and was kept alive by mail when he was sent to fight in Sicily.

The war was only over for a few days when he arrived at her door and they were wed that same month.

The groom was sent back to Canada, but his new wife had to remain in England for a brief time because she was expecting a baby and special arrangements had to be made.

Eventually, she boarded a hospital ship

departing from Liverpool and arrived in Nova Scotia 10 days later.

It was another two days by train to Toronto, where Joan Taylor was reunited with her husband

MOVING TO THE STATES

The Taylors lived in Canada for the next 15 years and had three sons. In 1961, they moved to Massachusetts, where Joan Taylor went to work in the purchasing department of Zayre Corp.

Douglas Taylor died in 1979, and Joan Taylor moved to Neptune Beach in 1980.

And at the suggestion of a friend, she joined Betty Pierce's exercise group.

ON THE MOVE

The group moved from Our Lady Star of the Sea to St. Paul's Catholic Church in Jacksonville Beach and then to Community Presbyterian Church in Atlantic Beach.

In 2004, Joan Taylor moved into Pablo Towers, where she was asked to start up an exercise class. So that's where the group relocated next.

Then, in 2020, the coronavirus hit and threatened to put an end to the group's gatherings.

But Taylor had an idea. People could space out and still exercise as a group at nearby Oceanfront Park.

"Everybody's really happy here," Taylor said.

And though she experiences the aches and pains of arthritis, Taylor is not about to curtail her active lifestyle.

"I'm going to keep going as long as I can," she said.

NOTE: This is an abridged article. Read the entire story at pontevedrarecorder.com.

Cypress Village residents among 1st to receive COVID vaccine

Residents of Cypress Village, a continuing care retirement community in Jacksonville, have been among the first to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine as a part of the nation's fight against the novel coronavirus that took the world by storm less than a year ago.

In October, Cypress Village registered the community and partnered with CVS Pharmacy to procure some of the first available COVID-19 vaccines. The first doses of the vaccine were delivered to Cypress Village on Dec. 21, less than a week after Pfizer received Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the vaccine that was proven 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 in clinical trial participants.

As a part of phase 1 of the distribution process, the first to receive the vaccine were residents living in the community's longterm care, as well as assisted living and memory care residents and the frontline employees who work in those areas

"The continued health and safety of our residents and employees is our number one priority" said Ty Morgan, executive director at Cypress Village, "We have done a tremendous job at mitigating exposure to the virus, and the vaccine is just another tool in our tool kit."

In January, the community began offering vaccinations



Photo provided by Cypress Village

Cypress Village resident Floren Fisher receives his COVID-19 vaccine shot.

to the more than 700 residents in independent living, the majority of whom are over the age of 65.

"I was amazed at how efficiently it was run for so many people there," said Anna Kochan, a resident of the community who received the vaccine.

Each resident who signed up for the vaccine clinic received an appointment confirmation via a notice in their

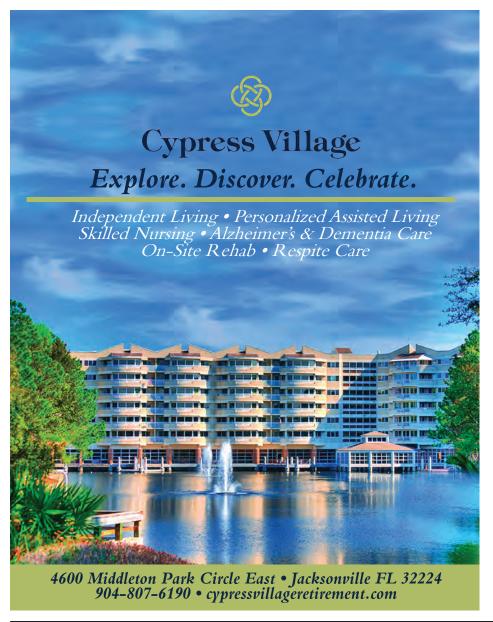
mailbox with an exact time and date they were scheduled to get the shot. Residents arrived at Egret Hall, the community's auditorium, and were seen within the hour by a pharmacist from CVS.

Louise Fonteccio moved to Cypress Village in August 2020, and got her shot in January,

"With all the news of everyone having to stand in line for hours, not being able to get appointments, it just makes me feel so fortunate that we can get the shot right here at Cypress Village!" she said.

When asked about side effects, several residents reported feeling tired or a slight soreness in their arm in the days following getting their vaccine, but no one reported any symptom that lasted more than a few days.

Cypress Village continues to host vaccine clinics for interested residents and staff, and, to date, has administered more than 750 shots, or over 70% of those who reside or work at the community. The fight with COVID-19 is far from over, but residents and employees of Cypress Village consider being vaccinated the beginning of the end. It has been an unprecedented time of social distancing, mask wearing and some major restrictions to how the commu-







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It takes a 'village' to cope with the pandemic

By Mary Anne Hughes

Special to the Recorder

This past year has been challenging individually, and collectively, as it was necessary to refrain from our usual lifestyles and adhere to the guidance of national, state and local officials. This is the story of our developing village.

Due to changing health needs, I left my country home in West Tennessee where my deceased husband, John, and I lived in retirement to transition from independent living to assisted living. As I taught elementary school for 30 years in South Florida, I wished to return and enjoy Florida living again. While visiting relatives in Northeast Florida, I fell in love with the area, and thus, fate led me to The Palms of Ponte Vedra, an assisted living facility located in beautiful Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

I was welcomed into the facility by a most competent and compassionate team who exemplified their mission, "To provide an environment where our residents will better thrive because loneliness and isolation are behind you and where your family and friends will be able to visit you, and whose goal is to provide exceptional services to residents and their families."

The transition was smoothly facilitated by The Palms' attentive and caring staff.

On arrival in late January, I was quickly ensconced into my four-room apartment with many favorite possessions. The unanticipated pandemic materialized in early March bringing mandated CDC guidelines and many changes to daily life. Restrictions to the outside world differed in that assisted living and nursing facilities were placed in a "lockdown" mode. Prior to the pandemic, residents en-



Photo provided by Mary Anne Hughes

Mary Anne Hughes celebrates her 85th birthday within her "village" at The Palms of Ponte Vedra.

joyed social activities in-house, including a beauty/barber shop, ice cream parlor, billiards and a 32-seat theater. It was necessary to restrict movement inside, including meal service in our apartments instead of the spacious dining hall, and curtailing of most social activities. Residents were unable to have visitors except "window" visits, and electronic visits via Zoom, phone, etc. Families who experienced a death were unable to participate in usual fashion.

The Palms became a real "village." The leadership team utilized creativity in adapting activities of daily life to the mandated guidelines of personal safety while negotiating new ways to maintain socialization. Individual apartments

took on new meaning as our primary existence occurred within their confines.

Our "village" is comprised of adults who require different levels of care based upon their health status. Life within this micro-system of collective personal histories continued to flourish. With limited accessibility to the outside world, encounters between residents and staff gained more importance. When possible, residents were eager to share their hobbies and earlier lives.

My great passion in life for horses began in childhood on the family farm where I first learned to ride. While living in South Florida, I had a thoroughbred gelding that I stabled and rode at every chance. Later, John and I realized our dream of breeding Tennessee Walking horses in Tennessee and were successful in raising the national champion filly at the National Celebration yearling halter colt category in 2003.

I rely heavily on my computer and correspondence with family and friends. As the pandemic raged on into the summer, fall and now into the new year, every opportunity for social contact took on new importance. As some restrictions where relaxed, window visits became possible which lessened feelings of isolation.

I celebrated by my 85th birthday this year, and the day was brightened by balloons, singing of "Happy Birthday" and congratulations by staff and residents.

Residents social-distanced on the portico for a religious service provided by a local minister. Weather-permitting, we often went out for sun and fresh air. One beautiful spring day, an eagle's nest with newly hatched eaglets

VILLAGE continues on Page 17





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Scott Hetzinger, Vicar's Landing head of security and executive director of Lend an Ear, presents hearing aids to a Putnam County school teacher for people with low incomes who struggle with

Lend An Ear offers hope to hearing-impaired locals

people are living in a world of silence without hope. But a nonprofit organization that is part of Vicar's Landing is working to make the gift of hearing available to all low-income people in the community, beginning with seniors over the age of 60.

Lend An Ear Outreach Inc. was created in March 2012 by a group of four women who saw the impact of hearing loss on the elderly.

Advocates have found that hard-ofhearing and deaf seniors with low incomes have been forgotten in recent years. Medicare does not cover the cost of hearing aids; therefore, many seniors who could otherwise continue to be a valuable part of society are rendered helpless because they cannot hear and cannot afford the cost of hearing aids.

Hearing loss has been linked with a variety of medical, social and cognitive ills. A new research study by Johns Hopkins University suggests that hearing loss may be a risk factor for dementia, and using a hearing aid during the early stages may even prevent some forms of dementia.

Lend An Ear has found that used, or

easily recast and refurbished to fit another person.

In addition, there are audiologists who are committed to providing free examinations and, upon verification of need, have volunteered to recast and fit the used hearing aids for qualified seniors.

On June 1, 2016, Lend An Ear became part of Vicars Landing a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Ponte Vedra Beach. Both share the same board of

Since then, the organization has helped more than 250 recipients in the lower income level and given them the gift of

In the fall of 2019, 38 people in the Hastings area were fitted. Since 2019, Lend An Ear has been able to help recipients get brand new hearing aids with a one-year warranty through the Starkey Hear Now program or Phonak hearing

Lend An Ear is currently working with the Arlington Eye Clinic (Arlington Lions Club) with an audiologist once a month to fit hearing aids to those that qualify.

Village

peeking out was spotted at the very top of a 50-foot pine tree that had lost its upper branches. We watched until they gained enough courage to try their wings. Hopefully, she will return next spring and raise more chicks.

The entire staff has displayed an amazing attitude under difficult circumstances. Each department attacked the pandemic with solutions for the health and safety of all and deserve our heartfelt thanks for their diligence and concern. A huge benefit was the constant and ongoing positivity

demonstrated by the staff. The attitude of "we are in this together."

Mr. Rogers said, "Won't you be my neighbor?" We have found ways to share and enlarge friendships. Each resident apartment is integral to our village as each contains a lifetime of personal experience. What makes a "village?" I would attest that having common goals; i.e., based upon the previously referenced organizational goals and well as in the current timeframe of health safety is the backbone

Our village is thriving. We are receiving our vaccinations and looking forward with great expectation toward a return of normalcy.



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Contributed photo

Members of Girl Scout Troop 37 write letters to residents at Ponte Vedra Gardens. Front row, from left: Emma Verner, Charlotte Royer and Sofia Bushkell. Back row, from left: Bridget Conway (from left) Ellie White, Joley Hill, Isabella Bushkell and Sydney Pollock

Local memory care facility residents gain new pen pals thanks to Girl Scouts

Members of Ponte Vedra Beach Girl Scout Troop 37 have been busy the last few months initiating their new pen pal program with residents at Ponte Vedra Gardens, a memory care facility on Palm Valley Road.

When troop leader Suzette Bushkell came up with the idea, Jennifer McCormick, program director at Ponte Vedra Gardens, was hesitant about letting the girls write to her residents.

Ponte Vedra Gardens specializes in patients with dementia and Alzehimer's, so McCormick wanted the girls to know that this was not going to be a normal pen pal program, that the residents may not be able to offer much in return.

"I know that it seems like such a great idea in this pandemic, but because we are

LETTERS continues on **Page 19**



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Letters

an all dementia facility, [there are] complications that can arise.'

After Bushkell sat down with her troop, reading a detailed letter from McCormick explaining the possible difficulties of a pen pal program, the girls were still interested in the idea, and quickly began composing their first letters.

McCormick prepared the girls ahead of time with information about their new pen pals, such as hobbies and careers, so the girls could select residents they felt they would connect with through their letters.

The 14 members of Ponte Vedra Beach Troop 37 wrote out long introduction letters to residents at Ponte Vedra Gardens, including drawings and photographs. They did not have high expectations of responses, since most residents at the Gardens would need to have the letters read aloud to them and replied to by employees, but imagine the girls' surprise, when they each received

reply letters and photographs from their new pen pals in the mail.

"When we got Christmas letters back from them, the girls loved them!" said Bushkell, referring to the notes and ornaments each girl received from the residents.

Unfortunately, only a few months into the program, three of the girls have had their pen pals pass away, including Bushkell's daughter Sofia's pen pal. Bushkell said that she sat down the troop and had a very difficult but very honest conversation about the passing of their pen pals.

Despite the struggles, and despite having those heartbreaking conversations, both McCormick and Bushkell said that the program has had positive effects.

"The outcome is so very worth it," said McCormick.

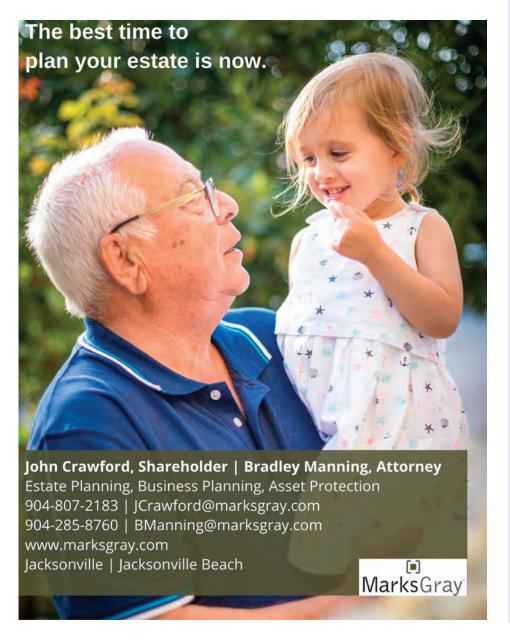
In the future, McCormick and Bushkell hope to arrange a way for the sets of pen pals to meet in person but, as residents at Ponte Vedra Gardens are often encouraged to do, for now they will live in the present moment, and enjoy these special experi-



Vaccine

nity operates, but residents are hopeful that we can soon get back to normal life with the help of the vaccine.

"When I reflect on the last year at Cypress Village, I am proud of what we have faced and overcome as a community and a family," Morgan said. "One year ago today, none of us could have predicted what we would be facing in this time. Understanding the sacrifice required in these past months, I am proud of the initiative that both residents and staff have taken to maintain their personal health and safety, and that of others within our community."



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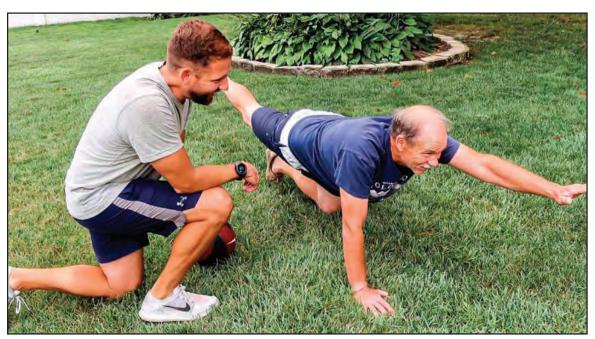
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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 202

Love Your Smile: How to encourage kids to maintain healthy teeth

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Daniel Piastuck (left) works with a First Coast Function client. The new service offers in-home and online personal

New business offers personal training to locals age 55 and older

By Shaun Ryan

After a decade of building and managing athletic and recreational facilities throughout the country, Daniel Piastuck has along with wife Gemma — launched a personal training venture locally.

First Coast Function helps people age 55 and older to improve their health and fitness while in their own homes or preferred outdoor spaces, eliminating the need to join a gym.

Piastuck assists clients in building and maintaining their balance, mobility and strength. The service specializes in functional movement and resistance

The need to keep fit is especially relevant as selfquarantining has meant reduced activity for many. And some people are concerned about their ability



Daniel Piastuck

to maintain social distancing in public exercise spaces, giving the at-home service a special appeal.

The need to stay fit is particularly an issue for older people. Strength, mobility and stability begin to decline after age 30, a reduction that deepens as a person ages.

First Coast Function's service is customized for the individual and is for people of all fitness levels. It creates

"Every program is individual to the person: their needs, their wants, their goals," said Piastuck.

healthy habits one step at a time.

Piastuck helps the client progress through six levels: stability, mobility, balance, coordination, movement and strength.

TRAINING continues on Page 22

At-home workers, seniors have new option to alleviate computer confusion

Mobile computer service offers safe at-home training and repairs

By Holly Tishfield

The pandemic has changed many things about the way the world works, but perhaps one of the most notable is the fact that working from home has become a societal norm.



Photo provided by Cassadee Hierlmeier

Cassadee Hierlmeier's business, Computer Nerdess, helps people navigate computer systems.

Working from home comes with its perks, such as less exposure to the virus and an opportunity to stay in pajamas all day, but it also comes with some difficulties. Especially for those who are unfamiliar with advanced computer systems/softwares.

Thanks to a new mobile computer service, Jacksonville Beach and Ponte Vedra residents struggling with computer maintenance and usage now have somewhere to turn.

Cassadee Hierlmeier started her business, Computer Nerdess, about five years ago in a county near Tampa Bay. She

got into the hang of computer repairing/teaching from her father, a former coding and software specialist in the military who began his own mobile computer service business nearly 15 years ago.

The focus of Hierlemeier's business is to help clients learn operating systems, but she also offers services for virus removal, slow softwares, cabling, CCTV/camera installation and the

COMPUTER continues on **Page 22**



Farah Mansouri

Local teen turns passion for cake baking into online business

When quarantine began last March and the entire world went on lockdown, Farah Mansouri occupied her time the same way most people did — by binge-watching shows on TV and picking up new hobbies. Except, for Farah, this little hobby turned into a business opportunity.

A sophomore in high school, Mansouri had

been helping her grandmother create assortments of baked goods for years, and attributes this to where she gained her love for the kitchen.

During the lockdown, she began obsessively watching cake-decorating shows, paying close attention to the details, and decided to give it a go on her own.

The first decorated cake she made, she said.

was not the best, but now Mansouri can create many dazzling cake designs with delicious flavors, such as Oreo with vanilla buttercream frosting and pistachio with cream cheese whipped frosting. Her favorite though - chocolate — makes an appearance in a variation of ways throughout her Instagram in the form of

Computers

selling/building of new computers.

In the past it was primarily seniors who contacted Hierlemeier for her assistance, but since the pandemic she said the demographic of clients has changed.

"If you are not in college, or you are not working anymore, then who teaches you how to work a computer?" said Hierlemeier. "I like helping others who need a little bit of help.'

For her services, Hierlemeier enters a client's home to sit down with them for however long they need to get the hang of computer systems and softwares, but when it comes to hardware repairs she will take the machinery back to her home workshop until they are fixed. Safety wise, she said she always arrives prepared with a mask and gloves, and tells clients that they can sit at a distance for the lessons if they prefer.

As a relatively new North Florida resident, Hierlmeier said she is looking forward to bringing her assistance to those in the community that need it.

Her mobile computer service charges by the hour. Interested clients can arrange a consultation phone call, and decide on a course of action for lessons/repairs. Contact Hierlmeier by email at computernerdess@gmail.com or by phone at (352) 585-0533.

Training

Typically, a client purchases a package of four or eight sessions, which are normally conducted on a weekly basis.

"I feel if you give us the opportunity to meet with you four to eight times, you'll feel there has been an improvement," Piastuck said.

The person may then choose to renew the service for another four to eight sessions to continue further along the path

to better fitness.

The business also offers a mobile application through which Piastuck can coach people.

Piastuck is an ACE (American Council on Exercise) certified personal trainer, an ACE functional training specialist and a Zibrio balance specialist. He is a former NCAA Division I swimmer. He operated a swim school in New York and managed recreation and aquatic centers for companies in Manhattan, for Walt Disney World and for the New York City Department of Parks

and Recreation.

The Piastucks purchased a home in Nocatee two-and-a-half years ago after visiting the area.

"We fell in love with the community on a quick weekend trip down here," Piastuck said.

Currently, the service is available in St. Johns and Duval counties. Piastuck hopes to grow the business to add a staff and enlarge its coverage area.

To contact First Coast Function, email info@firstcoastfunction.com or call (631) 523-3589.



otos provided by Farah Mansoul

Local teen Farah Mansouri makes creative cakes and sells them on her Instagram page.





Nutella frostings, hot fudge drippings and full Oreo cookies.

She created an Instagram page to sell her cakes, now has more than 100 followers and has served many happy customers in the Northeast Florida area.

Recently, Mansouri started working



with the Homeless Coalition of St. John's County to donate some of her magically decorated cakes to children on their birthdays.

"I love decorating, and I have been active with the Homeless Coalition before, so it was something that I could use my skills to help with," she said.

As Mansouri finishes up her classes for the day, she can work on any cake orders the moment she completes her work, which she makes entirely from scratch in her kitchen.

Although she is not sure how far this hobby will continue, she plans to open a Facebook Business page, where she can also sell/get word out about her cakes. For now, you can find her cake decorating business on Instagram at @sweetsbyfarah.

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How to encourage kids to take care of their teeth

Parents of young children know that getting kids to brush their teeth can sometimes feel like pulling teeth. Kids have a long history of disliking dental care, which can frustrate parents who know the importance and long-lasting benefits of proper dental hygiene.

While many youngsters may never excitedly run to the bathroom to brush their teeth, parents can try various approaches to get kids to embrace proper dental care.

■ Start early. Parents should not hesitate to begin cleaning kids' teeth once the first tooth appears. The earlier dental care is part of a child's routine, the more likely he or she is to accept it as part of everyday life. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends using a soft-bristled brush with a small head. Ideally, use a toothbrush designed for infants, brushing teeth once per day at bedtime. The AAPD advises taking kids to visit a pediatric dentist when the first tooth appears, or no later than the child's first birthday.

■ Make it a group effort. Young children love to imitate their parents' actions and behaviors, and moms and dads can use that adoration to their advantage when trying to get kids to brush their teeth. Brush teeth together as a family, making it seem like an enjoyable twicedaily activity. Get down on kids' level and show them how to brush. If kids are resistant, engage them in conversation while brushing so they don't even realize they're cleaning away.



Photos provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

■ Involve kids in choosing their dental care products. While parents should be mindful of the type of toothbrush their children use, always sticking with products recommended by their child's pediatric dentist, let youngsters choose their toothbrush and toothpaste. Kids might prefer a particular flavor of toothpaste, and a colorful toothbrush with a

favorite film or television character might make kids more enthusiastic and less fussy about brushing.

■ Compliment kids after positive dental appointments. When pediatric dentist appointments go well, compliment children and express your pride in them for taking dental hygiene as seriously as

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Vilano Beach resident marries poetry, photos in unique way

By Holly Tishfield

Dean Stecker, a Vilano Beach resident, spent his working years moving all around the world.

He grew up in New York, attended an undergraduate university in Virginia, volunteered for the Peace Corps in Thailand, received a masters degree in Ohio, lived and taught in France, taught in Palm Beach County and eventually retired with his wife in Vilano Beach.

Between his travels and his two degrees, Stecker admitted that one thing remained his passion throughout the years: poetry.

While in the workforce, Stecker would often jot down work related notes on napkins while unwinding after the day, until eventually he began writing small poems on the napkins, as well. His poems had to be short to fit on the small surface, so Stecker became accustomed to condensing his thoughts to their core meaning in Haiku-style poems. Hence Cocktail Napkin Thoughts was born, a powerful yet concise way for his poetry to find life.

In finding inspiration for his poems, Stecker would often take photographs on



Photos provided by Dean Strecker

Dean Strecker sits at his workstation in Vilano Beach, where he combines poetry and photographs to sell through his Etsy shop.

his cell phone of things that caught his eye. Sunrises through the trees, bicycles in empty corridors, plants resting on windowsills, small but important things that he felt might be missed in a normal circumstance.

"Right from the very beginning, I have tried to look at little things that people

Tucked behind the wholesale seafood shop,
The tall-grassed muddy bank
Of the San Sebastian River,
The derelict shrimp boat
dragged onto shore,
And the heron fishing in the

early morning light,
Reveal to me intrinsic splendor somehow.

Poem by Dean Strecker that accompanies the above photo

would tend to overlook," Stecker said.
"Things that people do not see the beauty
of, but there is beauty."

Stecker began marrying his poetry to the photographs he took, working hard to ensure that the two illustrated one another evenly. Once he discovered that he loved taking photos almost as much as he loved writing poems, Stecker went back to these places with a professional camera to take better quality photographs.

Today, Stecker runs an Etsy page, VilanoImages, where he sells his photography to the public. He found, after many years of experimentation on Etsy, that people didn't want to buy poetry, they wanted to buy photos.

POETRY continues on Page 25





Poetry

With each sale of a photograph, Stecker includes a handwritten note card detailing the history of the photo and the poem coordinating with it.

"The poems are important to me," he said. "I do not want them to be left out."

Besides running an Etsy page, Stecker's real love lies with running his poetry/ photography blog titled, "Vilano Images." Every two weeks he uploads a new poem paired with a photo that he took. Even now, post Cocktail Napkin Thoughts, he keeps his poems on the shorter side. They begin as Haikus, and he will gradually add more if he needs to, but he has found

that other bloggers enjoy his shorter work.

After retiring to Vilano Beach in the early 2010s, Stecker found that he had time again to explore his creativity. He enjoys waking up before sunrise and wandering the streets while they are empty, capturing all the tiny details that come to life with the dawn.

"If we keep ignoring small matters that have inherent beauty in them, then we are really cheating ourselves," he said, "because that is pretty much all we ever get in life -- the small things. They are always offered to us, and we tend not to see them."

To find Stecker's work on Etsy, go to www.etsy.com/shop/VilanoImages, or keep up with his blog by following him at vilanoimages.com.

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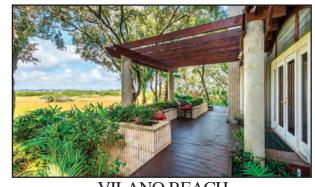
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'The Food of Love' finds new ways to get creative

Phase Eight Theatre Company production provides occasion for a romantic Valentine's at home

By Holly Tishfield

Broadway theater district and other theaters around the world closed their doors in March of last year and have vet to reopen.

Since then, theater companies have gotten creative in finding ways to reimagine the classic theater productions that so many people know and love. Some companies choose live-streams, others choose pre-recordings, but for a local theater in Jacksonville, the future of their performances have taken a turn to the radio.

Phase Eight Theater Company's 2021 production of "The Food of Love" is now solely performed as a radiobroadcast style recording, and will premier to the public on Feb. 13, just in time for Valentine's Day.

"The Food of Love" is a modern day, queer, gourmand rendition of Edmund Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac, a tale of unrequited love in which two suitors vie for the same woman's affection. In the original version, the main character composes poems to woo Roxanne, the woman he is in love with, but Phase Eight's spin on the tale turns the poems into meals, which the audience eats at the same time Roxanne does.

Back in 2019 and the beginning of 2020, the produc-

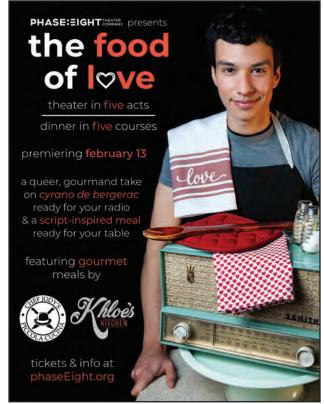


Photo provided by Phase Eight Theatre Company

tion was performed at MOCA in downtown Jacksonville, where chefs from the MOCA kitchen cooked up fivecourse meals for audience members at the same time

actors on stage were eating, but with the COVID-19 pandemic throwing a monkey wrench in production, Phase Eight was forced to halt performances.

"The biggest challenge of the 2021 version was whether or not it would actually happen," said Andres D. Bravo, co-writer and lead actor in the show.

Bravo and fellow writer/Phase Eight member Kelby Sibbons almost completely re-wrote the show for the 2021 season, not only altering it to fit a radio broadcast format, but also to fit a new narrative following the main character (Alex aka Cyrano) being a trans-man.

Interested parties who purchase a ticket for the audio production before February 6th can select the option to receive a full five course meal coordinating with the show for the Feb. 13 broadcast, prepared by chef Wesley Nogueira of Khloe's Kitchen. Tickets purchased for any broadcast between Feb. 13 and Feb 28 will receive detailed recipe cards, shopping lists and instructions to home cook the meals.

Theo Canty, popular YouTuber and owner of channel "Canty Cook It," will provide video instructions for how to prepare any and all coordinating meals.

In terms of the future for Phase Eight Theater Company, it has not yet decided if productions will remain broadcasts or return to live performers.

"I think there's a charm to both mediums," Bravo said. "There are a lot of limitations to both, too. It creates a challenge, but that is also the fun part."

Go to www.phaseeight.org to purchase tickets and view menu options.



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ACROSS

1. *Ouiz show whistleblower, ____ Stempel 5. Time std.

___ Like it Hot"

12. Walkie-talkie word 13. Wild hog

14 Blender setting

15 Coniferous tree

16. Of long ago

17. Gastric problem

18. *A show that had

20. Surveyor's map 21. Changes to a manuscript

22 Mai follower

23. Get a move on 26. *Superman por-

29. Knot-tying words 30. Like unskilled

work 33. Play with a bow 35 New Mexico's

state flower 37. Will Ferrell's Christmas classic

38. On the radio 39. Nobel Peace Prize

capital 40. Beat around the bush

42. Toddler

43. SAT administrator

45. Software plug-ins 47. Facebook photo option

48. Indulgence of impulses 50. Brees or Barrymore

52. *"Dragnet" sergeant

56 Old Brazilian coins 57 Pakistan's official

language 58. *"Your Show of Shows" comedian Reiner

59. Novelist Zola 60. Not made up

61. *"The ___ Night"

62 Extinct bird 63. Call minus c

64. Gloom's compan-

DOWN

1. Arizona tribe 2. Bad to the bone 3. Nevada city near Lake Tahoe

4. Warrant for officer promotion with no

5. As opposed to stav in 6. Chagall and Anthony

7. 3-pointer in basketball 8. *"Toast of the Town"

host 9. Willy of "Free Willy"

10. Track event 11. Always, to a poet

13. Reference to the

14. Between larvae and adults 19. Allergic reaction

to bee sting 22. _ Aviv 23. *Ranger's call to

Silver

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.

24. Sunbaked, archaically speaking 25. Wall or pedestal support 26. Kon-Tiki, e.g. 27. One of the Muses 28. Offspring 31. Getting warm 32. Not in good

health

34. Tiny leftovers 36. *Abbott's comedic

partner 38. Online purchase 40. *Marjorie Reynolds in "The Life of Rilev" 41. Scolding

44. Schoolmarm's whip

46. Defrosted 48. Popular winter boot brand

49. Put it to the metal 50. Audition tape

51. SWAT attack 52 France/Switzer-

land border mountain

53. Carpenter's groove

54. Ben Affleck's 2013 Oscar winner

55. Original matter 56. *Buttons or

Skelton

Local writer discusses book at Churchmen luncheon

Quang Pham details personal story as a Vietnam refugee in 'A Sense of Duty: My Father, My American Journey'

By Holly Tishfield

The Churchmen, a non-denominational men's group started more than 40 years ago, held its first in-person luncheon on Jan. 28 at the new Sawgrass Country Club Members Clubhouse.

The pandemic forced the group to change their monthly luncheons to a virtual event for the last year or so, but about 45 men showed up to the socially distanced event a few weeks ago, including new chairman Jim Ross.

Ross and other members of the board are responsible for selecting a guest speaker to appear at each luncheon. These speakers vary from CEOs of big companies to medical professionals to local politicians, but they are always people with a good story.

Last month's speaker was Quang Pham, a Vietnam refugee and Marine Corps pilot veteran from Ponte Vedra.

"I thought Pham's story was very, very interesting,"



Photo provided by Quang Phar

Churchmen Vice Chair Roland Gomez (from left), keynote speaker Quang Pham, Sawgrass Country Club general manager C.W. Cook and Churchmen Chairman Jim Ross.

Ross said. "He is an excellent speaker and he is very sincere."

Pham shared his incredible but true story of his journey as a Vietnam refugee in America, and the challenges/personal duties he felt while becoming a citizen. Seeing

as the Churchmen group is made up of a wide majority of veterans, Pham's speech inspired many.

While wanting the speech to remain informational, Pham also felt it was important to include an air of storytelling. Pham wrote a book in 2007 titled, "A Sense of Duty: My Father, My American Journey," which he detailed in his speech to the men at the luncheon, as well as his experience living between both Florida and California on a regular basis.

According to Chairman Ross, the response to Pham's speech was overwhelmingly positive. Another member of the Churchmen emailed Ross personally to tell him that Pham's presentation was the best speech he had seen since he became a member of the group.

"It was neat to see the men gather in person," said Pham. "There have been a lot of virtual programs but there is nothing like being in the same room."

The Churchmen group made a donation in Pham's honor to the Volunteers In Medicine organization, of which Pham is on the board.

To learn more about Pham's memoir and his journey, go to www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/130449/asense-of-duty-by-quang-pham/.

Players by the Sea production 'Once on This Island' to stream live Feb. 13

Don't miss the Players by the Sea's first streamed production, "Once on This Island," at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13.

"Once On This Island" takes place in the French Antilles in the Caribbean. In brief, it's a coming of age tale of Ti Moune, a peasant girl from a poor village, her love interest Daniel, a wealthy light-skinned boy, the inherent struggles of a love between different classes, and the power

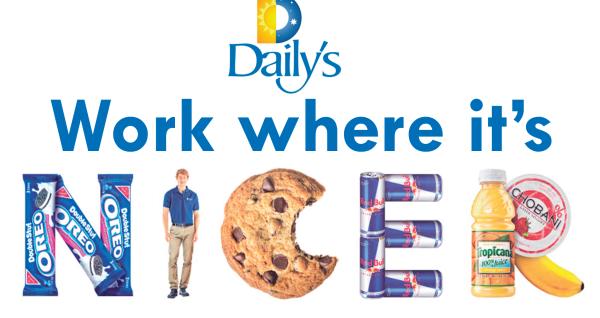
of destiny vs. freewill. The gods of the Earth, water, love and death have their hands in the story, and in the end, Ti Moune must make the ultimate choice to choose her love or her life.

Tickets can be purchased to access the online streamed event. Viewers can experience the story from the comfort of their own home. To purchase and ticket and receive a link, go to www.playersbythesea.org, click on "Learn More" on the "Once on this Island" banner on the homepage, then click "Buy Tickets" and follow the prompts. A link will be sent via email. Then log in at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 13, and enjoy the show. This event is one night only.

For questions, call PBTS box office at (904) 249-0289 or email ramona@playersbythesea.org.

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Nease edges Ponte Vedra in OT to win series

Rivals end regular season in other close showdown; head to district playoffs

By Jim Moyes

Special to the Recorder

In yet another classic, the Ponte Vedra-Nease basketball game played Friday, Feb. 5, in the regular-season finale of this bizarre boys' basketball season, the Panthers would go into overtime to earn their second win over the Sharks in three matchups with a 51-47 victory.

Each of the Panthers' victories over their arch-rivals have come in similar fashion. Twice the Panthers saw double digit leads in each contest evaporate due to some intensive defensive pressure applied by the Sharks. Holding a 14-point lead late in the third quarter, the Sharks put up a furious rally, taking a brief 42-41 lead following a Nate Bunkosky steal and a layup with 2:40 left in regulation.

The two teams combined to only score three points the rest of the way to send the game into overtime knotted up at 43-43. The Sharks had a golden opportunity to win in regulation, but a 3-pointer spun around and out, and then a put-back rebound also failed to find the mark to send the two teams into the extra session.

The Panthers tallied first in overtime with 2:15 showing on the clock on a nifty driving layup by Matt Guzzie. The Sharks' Bunkosky, who led Sharks scorers with 17 points, tied the game at 45 by making 2-of -3 free throws. The Panthers' Logan Ryan, the leading scorer on the evening with 18 points, tallied on a driving layup as Nease regained the lead

at 47-45. Fouled on the play, Ryan would miss his free throw, but the Panthers' Gabe Bonilla grabbed the rebound and was then fouled by the Sharks' leading scorer on the season, Luke Pirris, who fouled out of the game. Bonilla, who had entered the game for the first-time only moments earlier, made one of his two free throws in what would prove to be the game winner.

Rory Mayer, who finished in double figures for the Sharks with 10 points, cut the lead to one on nifty pass from Jack Polian. That would prove to be the last points earned by the Sharks despite a number of opportunities in the game's final 40 seconds. However, the Sharks committed two turnovers, missed on all four of their free-throw attempts and failed to covert on a pair of 3-pointers as Nease held on to claim a well-earned 51-47 victory.

The win capped off a great run to the end of the regular season as it was the ninth victory in 10 contests for head coach Josh Bailens and the Panthers.

The regular season didn't end all that well for the Sharks. After posting wins in 19 of their first 21 games, they dropped their last two games to finish the regular season at a still impressive 19-4 record.

Both teams are seeded No. 1 in the district playoffs that take place this week and drew opening round byes.

The host Sharks beat Deltona 74-49 in the 4-5A district semifinals on Tuesday night to advance to the district championship. The advanced to play host St. Augustine at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12.

Nease played Oakleaf in the 1-7A district semifinals on Wednesday, Feb. 10, at Bartram Trail. (Note The game was not over by press time).



Photos by Eric Morris

Ponte Vedra's Nathan Bunkosky shoots a 3-pointer in overtime against the defense of Nease's Cameron Davis during the final game of the regular season Friday, Feb. 5.



Nease's Logan Ryan breaks the Sharks' press during last Friday's game.

Tennis great and Ponte Vedra resident Tony Trabert dies at age 90



Photo provided by the International Tennis Hall of Fame

Tony Trabert is handed the Wimbledon trophy in 1955, the year he won three of four majors and was ranked No.1 in the world.

By Joel Drucker

ITHF Historian At Large

American tennis great Tony Trabert, a 10-time major champion and 1970 International Tennis Hall of Fame inductee whose lifelong devotion to tennis was seen across an immense body of work in the sport, has passed away. Trabert died Feb. 3, at the age of 90, at his home in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Trabert's life in tennis covered just about every stage imaginable — all at the highest levels of the game. As an amateur, he won ten major titles, including three of the four singles majors in 1955. Also that year, he was ranked world No. 1

Soon after, Trabert turned pro, as he and his fellow pros

barnstormed across the world and kept the candle burning for Open tennis — the quest for players to be able to make a living competing as professionals. Later came a term as U.S. Davis Cup captain, Trabert leading the American squad to two titles. For more than 30 years, Trabert was one of the sport's preeminent broadcasters, most notably as the voice of the U.S. Open for CBS, as well as for Australia's Channel Nine. He shared his passion for the sport with players of all levels, running a prominent tennis training camp for children. In 2001, he became president of the International Tennis Hall of Fame and served for 11 years, also in the role of chairman of the Hall's Enshrinee Nominating Committee.

Trabert

But Trabert's accomplishments came second to the strength of his character. Trabert was renowned for the class and sincerity he brought to any endeavor. In a sport where factionalism is rampant, Trabert constantly saw the big picture, always possessed of sound logic, kindness and a no-nonsense manner that made him both easy to like and respect.

Current Hall of Fame President Stan Smith, who was on two U.S. Davis Cup teams captained by Trabert commented, "I had big shoes to fill coming into this role after Tony, but that is exactly what Tony's life in tennis was. He was not only a terrific example to us all on how to be a great champion, but also as a wise coach and mentor, a fair and effective leader, someone who gave back to the sport, and an allaround terrific ambassador for tennis. He was a good friend to me and to so many and he will be greatly missed."

Born on Aug. 16, 1930, Marion Anthony Trabert came of age in Cincinnati, Ohio. His roots were humble, to the point where Trabert's father, Arch, took out loans to cover his son's trips to national junior tournaments. As a youngster, Trabert caught the eye of another Cincinnati native, world-class player Bill Talbert. Impressed by Trabert's work ethic, Talbert took him under his wing, most notably when the two traveled to Europe together in the spring



U.S. Davis Cup champions Stan Smith (from left), Bob Lutz, John McEnroe, team captain Tony Trabert and Vitas Gerulaitis pose with the Davis Cup trophy in 1979.

of 1950. The Talbert-Trabert doubles team dominated the clay circuit that year, capped off with a victory at Roland-Garros.

In 1951, he clinched the NCAA singles championships for the University of Cincinnati, where he was also a starter on the basketball team.

Trabert's tennis career paused while serving two years in the Navy during the Korean War. In 1953 though, he commenced a productive run that saw him virtually sprint to the top. Between 1953 and '55, Trabert won 38 singles titles, including five majors. Twice came victories at Roland-Garros ('54 and '55) and the U.S. Nationals ('53 and '55), where he won without the loss of a set. Trabert also won Wimbledon

in '55 without dropping a set, a feat only since accomplished three times by a male

Adding to his 1950 Roland-Garros doubles title with Talbert, Trabert partnered with Vic Seixas to win four more major doubles titles - Roland-Garros '54 and '55. the U.S. Nationals in 1954, and the Australian Championships in 1955.

Of all Trabert accomplished in his career, he would remain most proud of his commitment to Davis Cup. In two consecutive Davis Cup finals — then known as the "Challenge Round" - versus Australia in 1953 and '54, Trabert faced the agony and the ecstasy of sport.

In '53, in Melbourne, the U.S. led the

Aussies 2-1. Trabert lost a heartbreaker to Lew Hoad, 7-5 in the fifth set. The next day, Ken Rosewall beat Vic Seixas to clinch the victory for Australia. As Trabert recalled, "In the ceremony afterwards one of the Australian officials said, 'Yesterday was Lew Hoad's day and today is Ken Rosewall's day.' And when I got on the microphone I said, 'And I guarantee you next vear will be my day."

A year later, in Sydney, in front of crowds exceeding 25,000, Trabert and Seixas each avenged their respective singles losses to Hoad and Rosewall. The next day, in the doubles, the Americans sealed the deal.

A skilled and astute broadcaster, Trabert thrived most of all in partnership with Pat Summerall during CBS' coverage of the U.S. Open. The Trabert-Summerall duo's most notable effort came on September 8, 1984 – the famous "Super Saturday" at the US Open when the two of them were on the air for 12 straight hours.

In his role as Hall of Fame president from 2001-2011, Trabert was dedicated to refining the work that is at the core of the organization's mission – celebrating excellence. He gave tirelessly of his time to strengthen the enshrinement processes and set an example of service to the sport that gave him so much. Trabert also stayed active in the sport as the operator of a premier tennis camp for juniors.

Tony is survived by his wife Vicki, son Mike, daughter Brooke, three stepchildren, 14 grandchildren and six great-grandchil-



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