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Recorder

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MEGA MOVES



Members of the K9s For Warriors team grab their shovels and break ground on the future site of the Campus for K9 Operations during a ceremony on Wednesday, Aug. 4. The new facility will serve as a "mega kennel" capable of housing more than 150 service dogs-in-training. The nonprofit also announced Wednesday that it is expanding its service dog program to all-era veterans. Read more on page 4.

Photo by Anthony Richards



INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

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



Back to School

Pages 11-12

Leaders in Finance

Pages 13-17



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INSIDE

One of Us
Page 6

Business Weekly
Pages 13-17

In the Arts
Pages 18-19

Sports
Pages 20-21

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.

Visit our website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com



Find the Recorder on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder

NOTE TO READERS

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, my name is She-Boo. I am a 9-year-old female domestic short-hair cat. I am very friendly and good with other cats and children. I am also litter-box trained. When you meet me, you will notice I love head scratches and chin rubs. I came in as a stray and was microchipped but sadly, my owner never came to claim me. I am looking forward to a new home and a family I can call my own. Come see me at the Pet Center! #27669



DOG OF THE WEEK



Hi! My name is Julep! I am a 1½-year-old female Jack Russell-Italian greyhound mix. I am house-trained and the shelter is working with me to walk on a leash. I am getting really good! I am still young and will need a little training in other areas, but I am a good listener and I am ready to please. Come visit me at the Pet Center today! #59596

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

Crescent Beach FEMA Dune Enhancement Project town hall meeting

St. Johns County is hosting a FEMA Dune Enhancement project town hall meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 10, at the Southeast Branch Public Library, 6670 US 1 South in St. Augustine. The meeting will provide an overview of the upcoming FEMA Dune Enhancement project, the voluntary temporary easements, and the temporary closure of the Fort Matanzas beach access ramp. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions about the project and provide feedback. For more information, go to www.sjcf.us/coastalprojects/FEMADunes.aspx, email coastalprojects@sjcf.us or call (904) 209-0260.

Race Track Road and Durbin Creek Bridge improvement project continues

The Race Track Road and Durbin Creek

bridge improvement project, which includes maintenance and updates to the bridge deck, is scheduled for completion by the end of August. Minor construction impacts include the presence of construction vehicles and equipment, temporary lane closures and slow-moving traffic in the construction area. For more information on this project, call (904) 209-0184 or go to www.sjcf.us.

Woodlawn Road sidewalk project public meeting set for Aug. 12

St. Johns County is hosting a public meeting regarding the upcoming Woodlawn Road Sidewalk Project from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 12, at Heritage Park Amenity Center, 225 Hefferson Drive. The meeting will provide project details regarding the replacement of the current wooden sidewalk with a new concrete sidewalk and allow participants the opportunity to ask staff questions. For more information, call Nick Perpich, P.E. county project manager at (904) 209-0136.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.

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Tentative school tax rate reduced from last year

By Shaun Ryan

The St. Johns County School Board unanimously adopted the district's 2021-22 tentative budget and tax rate on July 27. The final tax rate will be approved on Sept. 14.

The tentative tax rate was set at \$5.81 per \$1,000 of a property's taxable value.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Read more school news, events and features in our Back-to-School section. **Pages 10-12**

This is a 14-cent reduction from last year's rate of \$5.95 per \$1,000 of taxable value, or a reduction of 2.4%.

In fact, this is the lowest tax rate in

more than a decade, made possible by the increase in the county's property values. Current property values are \$37,077,961,902 — or about \$2.96 billion more than last year.

Of each \$5.81, the district keeps 75 cents for discretionary funding and \$1.50 for capital projects. The rest is turned over to the state for redistribution. This practice ensures that poorer districts receive equitable funding.

Though the tax rate is lower than last year, it marks an increase in actual dollars over the rolled-back rate of \$5.69 per \$1,000 of taxable value. The rolled-back

rate is the tax rate that would generate the same amount of revenue as last year if applied to the current property tax roll.

The tax rate is mandated by the state and, if approved, would generate \$215,497,115 — or about \$12.4 million more than last year.

If the tentative tax rate of \$5.81 is approved, the owner of a \$400,000 home with a homestead exemption of \$25,000 would pay \$2,178.75 in school taxes next year. This is a reduction of \$52.50, or 2%, from what the property owner paid last year.

SCHOOL TAXES continues on Page 8

Boaters Paradise!

Imagine this life every day! Private townhome with its own entrance and 2-car garage. Peaceful marina and ICW views from almost all rooms and all 3 balconies — and yes, it has an elevator! Keep watch over your boat; a 40' slip is included at \$977,500.



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Don't miss the rare opportunity to live in the most exclusive luxury condominium in NE Florida. This 9th Floor oceanfront condo is unrivaled with its breathtaking water, sunrise, AND sunset views. \$1,460 sq. ft. of terraces on 3 sides, open floor plan, and too many upgrades to list. These don't come on the market very often and this one won't last long. **4 Bedrooms, 4 Full Baths, 1 Half Bath. \$3,300,000.**



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Live the ultimate beach lifestyle in this midcentury modern on double corner lot just one block from the ocean and only 6 blocks from Atlantic Beach Town Center. Large open great room and kitchen with barn door pantry looks onto private backyard with pool and outdoor kitchen. Spacious master, 3 additional bedrooms & bathrooms plus laundry upstairs. **4 Bedrooms, 4 Bathrooms, 1 Half Bathroom. \$3,600,000**

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EXPANDING ITS REACH

K9s For Warriors' mega kennel groundbreaking means more help for veterans



K9 Anna uses her paw instead of a shovel to help break ground on the future site of the Campus for K9 Operations during a ceremony on Aug. 4.

By Anthony Richards

Members of the K9s For Warriors team broke ground on its Campus for K9 Operations during a ceremony on Aug. 4, which once built will be the largest rescue dog training facility in the world.

Phase 1 of the project is expected to be done by March 2022 and the entire campus is projected to be completed and fully operational in March 2023.

“This has been like a rocket ship of love and support,” K9s For Warriors CEO Rory Diamond said. “Our job is to do it the right way every time and every day.”

Once completed, the training facility located just south of the U.S. 1 and Race Track Road intersection in Ponte Vedra will join the Shari Duval Campus and National Headquarters in Ponte Vedra, as well as campuses in Gainesville and the soon to open San Antonio, Texas facility.

According to Diamond, there are also talks going on to possibly open facilities in two other states.

“We have urgency, because we have a long wait list and veteran suicide is what we’re fighting,” Diamond said.

According to a press release, roughly 20 veterans die from suicide each day.

One of the major reasons for the construction of the “mega kennel” is to help with the long waiting list, which currently takes veterans about four years to get into the program.

Having more room for dogs to train means more dogs are then able to be paired with veterans.

“Everybody loves their dog, and if you’re a good American, everybody loves our veterans,” Diamond said. “You put those two together and it’s just magic that you can’t match.”

The Campus for K9 Operations will be capable of housing more than 150 service dogs for training at one time.

The primary purpose for the facility will be to train the dogs, which usually takes about six to eight months.



ABOVE: K9s in the program were on hand with their trainers during the ceremony. The new training facility will be able to house roughly 150 dogs once built.

LEFT: THE PLAYERS past chairman Murray Beard (far left), 2022 tournament chairman Matt Welch (second from right) and vice chairman Lee Nimnicht (far right) present a \$15,000 check to K9s For Warriors CEO Rory Diamond as part of THE PLAYERS Match4Military grant program.

Photos by Anthony Richards

Solid Waste Division discusses storm debris pickup

By Anthony Richards

Wendy Hicks and Ashley Mickler of the St. Johns County Solid Waste Division were the guests at the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition meeting on July 26.

The primary talking points focused on emergency debris and limb pickup during hurricane season.

According to Mickler, it is important to get the word out and inform the public what they can do to help expedite the pickup process following a storm.

“We’ve been experiencing some delay in yard waste collection,” Mickler said.

The delays are due to the national workforce shortage and an inability to find people willing to work.

However, Mickler assured that St. Johns County is working closely with Republic Services to find solutions to combat the problem.

“We understand that a lot of people are frustrated, and we are doing everything we can to figure out the best ways to handle it moving forward,” Mickler said.

Republic Services handles trash, recycle and debris pickup for 86,000 residential units in the north end of the county.

Part of making sure debris pickup is the most efficient it can be after a storm is often the steps taken prior to the storm hitting the area.

The following are guidelines for residents before a storm:

- Secure all garbage and recycling containers and place them in a secure location away from open spaces.
- Stop all yard maintenance and tree trimming activities.
- Bundle and tie down all loose trash including tree limbs, wood planks, and building and roof tiles. Place these materials in a location where they cannot become hazardous in the event of high winds.
- Advanced Disposal & Republic Services will continue to collect household garbage, recycling, and yard waste until sustained winds reach 35 miles per hour or local authorities instruct St. Johns County to suspend service.

“Make sure anything that could fly away is tied down, so that it won’t become a hazard for neighbors,” Mickler said.

Debris pickup will be suspended if sustained winds reach 35 mph.

The first major storm of the year to impact the state was Hurricane Elsa, which fortunately did not stress the debris pickup process very much.

“We were ecstatic not to be affected at all,” Mickler said. “All our departments are fully prepared no matter what. Our communications plans are done way ahead of time.”

Part of those plans include the solid waste division working closely with the St. Johns County emergency management team.

The following are emergency storm debris guidelines:

- Place storm debris in piles along the curbside.
- Pile storm-related debris un-bagged at the curb. (No leaves or small items)
- Place storm debris at least three feet

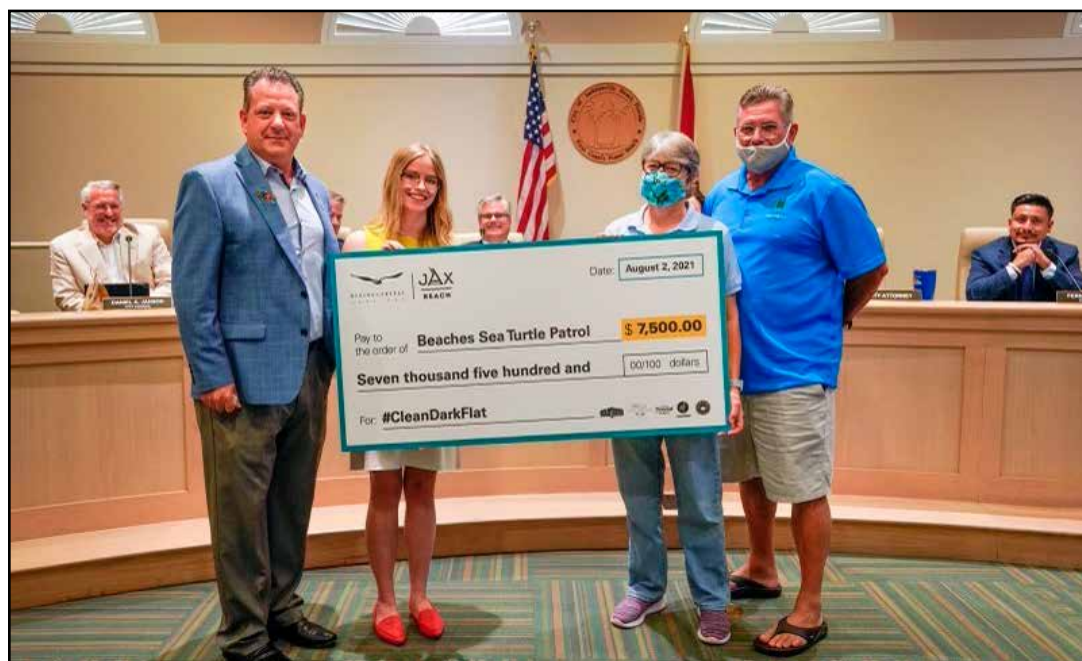
from utility boxes, mailboxes, poles, fire hydrants and other obstacles.

- Separate vegetation from all other storm-related debris.
- Normal household garbage, recycling, and bagged debris of any kind will not be picked up with storm debris. Please continue to follow your normal garbage removal schedule.
- No chemicals or hazardous waste will be collected curbside. All hazardous waste may be brought to Tillman Ridge or Stratton Road Transfer Stations for disposal during operating hours

“Storm debris is one of the first things people ask about after a storm,” Mickler said. “They want to know when their debris is getting picked up and when are their lights coming back on.”

According to Mickler, the meeting seemed to go great and members of the Beaches Coalition in attendance seemed to appreciate all that they had to say.

“At the end, a lot of them had good things to say and were very positive,” Mickler said.



Contributed photo

Allen Putnam (from left) with Beaches Energy, Fran Losito with Shepherd Agency and Jen Burns and Kevin Brown with Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol hold a check for \$7,500, which was the amount raised as part of this year’s sea turtles campaign.

Annual sea turtles campaign raises \$7.5K

Beaches Energy Services, the City of Jacksonville Beach and the Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol have concluded their annual public awareness campaign to protect sea turtles during nesting season on local beaches.

For the second year, the local agencies have collaborated to raise awareness about how to best protect sea turtles nesting in the area and raise funds to donate to the Beach Sea Turtle Patrol. This year, \$7,500 was donated.

Part of the campaign included specially designed mugs that were sold at local coffee shops with the proceeds contributing to the cause.

The mugs were sold out in less than six weeks. In addition, monetary donations were accepted at the participating coffee shops and at the Beaches

Energy Services office at Jacksonville Beach City Hall. The mug sales are a part of a larger awareness campaign called #CleanDarkFlat. The hashtag is an easy way to remember and share on social media what people can do to help the threatened species.

For sea turtles to successfully build nests, hatch and return to the ocean, their nesting grounds need to remain:

- Clean:** free of litter, including trash, chairs, umbrellas, and other debris
- Dark:** free of artificial light
- Flat:** free of holes or sandcastles that trap turtles

TURTLES continues on Page 9

Registration open for Lighthouse 5K Run/Walk & Fun Run on Sept. 18

The Junior Service League of St. Augustine will host the Lighthouse 5K Run/Walk & Fun Run at 4 p.m. Sept. 18, beginning and ending at the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum, 81 Lighthouse Ave., St. Augustine.

To register, go to jslstaugustine.org/about/events/lighthouse-5k.

The League hosts the annual event to support the St. Augustine lighthouse. The inaugural race in 1983 was titled “The Bud Light Twilight Lighthouse Run.”

The Lighthouse 5K is a chipped race that serves as a qualifier for the Gate River Run. An awards ceremony follows the race on the lighthouse grounds. Each year the staff at the lighthouse provides activities for the children, such as face painting, arts and crafts and more.

Visitors may climb the tower for free during Night Fest, a community event that coincides with the race and is held from 4 to 8 p.m.

Proceeds from the Lighthouse 5K Run/Walk & Fun Run benefit numerous JSL service projects and provide financial support for local nonprofit organizations.

RACE DETAILS

The 5K will start at 4 p.m. Sept. 18, and the Fun Run will begin at 5 p.m. The award ceremony will begin at 5:30 p.m. The race course is a flat 3.1 miles through the historic Lighthouse Park and Davis Shores. Parking is available at, or across from, the lighthouse and outside the nearby soccer fields off Red Cox Drive.

Online registration closes at 10 a.m. Sept. 17. Register early and save on the entrance fee. Registration is \$35 before Sept. 1 and \$40 through Sept. 17. The Fun Run registration fee is \$15. The entry fee is non-refundable.

Packet pick-up will be on the front porch of the St. Augustine Lighthouse from 4 to 7 p.m. Sept. 17. Packets will also be available on race day. Walk-up registration will be open from 2 to 4 p.m. on the day of the race.

Awards will be given at the post-race celebration on the lighthouse grounds. The top overall male and female runners will be awarded \$100. The top three participants in each age group will receive awards.

Lisa Johnson has been involved with the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition since 2015 and is the organization's current president. She enjoys the passion the group has toward preserving the natural resources and way of life that she and her sons have come to love.

Lisa Johnson



Photo provided by Lisa Johnson

As told to Anthony Richards

Can you briefly tell us about your background?

I was born in New York City and raised in Phoenix. I received an art degree from Scripps College in Los Angeles and then went on to work in the art industry in Santa Monica, Houston and Greenwich Village. I then moved to Ponte Vedra to run an art publishing company and I have called it home since then! I have always enjoyed getting involved with local politics and continue to work on art projects that support the local arts.

What inspired you to get involved with the Beaches Coalition?

I got involved with the Ponte Vedra Beaches Coalition in 2015, after working on a county issue with past county commissioner, Dr. Mary Kohnke. Mary opened my eyes to all the interesting and complicated issues and people that comprise the successful campaigns that have shaped St. Johns County. I respect how the Coalition brings together all walks of our community.

What differences have you seen been made in the community during that time?

I have witnessed our group, along with the other community and civic organizations, have a serious impact on our county commissioners' decisions. We have protected our sign ordinance and stopped digital LED billboards from being approved in our backyards. We have pushed for increased bed tax and the right to allow the community to put tax increases to a vote. We have worked on zoning issues with emphasis on smart growth. We follow the annual budget hearings and focus on maintaining the lifestyle that residents and tourists have become accustomed to.

What is the most rewarding and difficult parts of being Coalition president?

It is challenging being a board member/president of the PVB Coalition, as it is for our entire board, because we are a highly involved group of volunteers. There are always so many pieces of the puzzle to monitor with all zoning issues, tax implications and all aspects involved that define the present and future. We are lucky enough to live in a geographically dynamic area but that brings with it its own set of challenges and obstacles.

My focus is to be voice and advocate for the community. I have had the privilege of learning about the history of our county and the stages that made it possible to be here today. My goal is to continue to build our community based on our established rules and lifestyle dreams.

What do you enjoy most about living in the North Florida area?

What I enjoy most about living in North Florida, are our natural resources. We are surrounded by amazing bodies of water and a year-round outdoor lifestyle. Raising my boys here has been an idyllic situation that I don't feel can be found elsewhere. Our beach community is comprised of locals and people from all over the U.S. and I believe this makes for a great blend. I love the beauty of the landscape and having both the ocean and Intracoastal in our backyard.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I enjoy what free time that I have, and my first priority is time with my kids! We love to travel and create life experiences. I am still involved with art and enjoy promoting local artists and creating jewelry and pottery.

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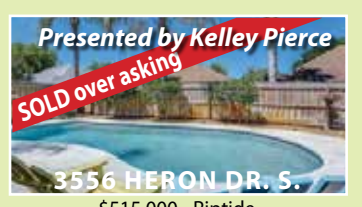
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All properties listed are in Ponte Vedra unless otherwise noted.

OBITUARIES

Kevin Winford Ellis

On April 2, 2020, the world stopped and God lowered his hand to lift Kevin Winford Ellis into his loving, merciful arms to eternal peace. As we try to find our way in this world without him, we only hope that we are able to honor Kevin in the way he would like to be remembered.



Kevin Winford Ellis

In his 50 years, Kevin was a proud graduate of Florida State University (Go Noles!) and later earned his MBA from

University of North Florida at the top of his class. He was a two-time Ironman finisher, a Half Ironman finisher, an ultra-marathoner, marathoner and an avid inshore fisherman. Everyone who knew Kevin had a story. He was so incredibly funny and reveled in uncomfortable humor. He did not judge others, could find anything to talk about, quote movie lines like nobody's business, and had the biggest heart. He left an impression on you. He never forgot a face and had an incredible memory. He was very intelligent, hardworking and deep in his thoughts. And, did we mention he was funny?

Kevin had an ability to make you feel special and listened to - he had a sixth sense about people and could see into your soul. One friend shared, "Kevin would send me positive messages whenever I really needed it, like he somehow sensed it." Another said, "Kevin was a person who naturally would exude outward leadership and display encouragement and guidance to others around you to do the right things. He was kind, loving, protective, smart and funny." He was intuitive, vulnerable and deep and an observer of human behavior. "He loved, he laughed and he lived."

Growing up, the role of leader and protector to his siblings and cousins was one that he took seriously, and his juniors often appreciated his frontline position. He set a tone for the family that was viewed with admiration. Kevin played many roles in his life, but none more important than father to Harper May. She is

the perfect amalgamation of her parents - strong, smart, beautiful, witty, thoughtful, athletic and she stands with confidence. Oh how we wish you were here to see her grow up, but promise she will continue to be raised to live her life in manner that would make you proud - she has a village behind her.

Kevin suffered from depression and anxiety for many years, and he openly sought out the newest treatments and therapies for help. Kevin lived openly and honestly with his struggles, and he was always available to those wrestling with their own sobriety and depression demons to provide support and encouragement. Several have shared how Kevin helped them through very difficult times in their own lives.

Throughout his later years, Kevin fought to live...he tried so hard to live through his pain, but a depressed mind is a lying mind - one that tells you things that are not true. Kevin's last year here on earth was an act of love for his very close family. He fought to get up each day and try to live for his daughter, his wife, his parents and his loved ones. On April 2, 2020, we can only imagine that hopelessness overcame him and it was just too much to bear.

Kevin was preceded in death by his brother, Jesse Ellis, and grandparents, Win and Margaret Ellis and Bill and Josephine Kreisl. He is survived by his wife of 21 years, Lisa, and their daughter Harper May, his parents, Rear Admiral (Ret.) Jerry and Rosemary Ellis, sister Karri (Terrill) Smith, brother Chris (Vanesa) Ellis, mother in law Alma Thomas, brother in law Dene (Jennifer) Thomas, aunts and uncles, Carolyn (David) Yon, Carol (Frank) Coughlin, Bill (Michele) Kreisl, Annette (Tuck) Masker and a myriad of beloved nephews, nieces, cousins and extended family.

Kevin, your memory and light will live on in all of us.

A Celebration of Life will be held promptly at 2:00 pm on Saturday, August 7, 2021 at Crosswater Hall at Nocatee in Ponte Vedra, Florida.

The family asks that you please consider making a donation in Kevin's honor to:

Wolfson Children's Hospital – <https://giving.baptistjax.com/give/261865/#!/donation/checkout>

(Select Wolfson Children's Hospital – Hope Starts Here – Children's Critical Care Tower)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/donate/>

K9s for Warriors – <https://www.k9sforwarriors.org/ways-give-k9s-warriors>

Depression does not have to be a terminal illness. Please make your mental health a priority, for yourself, the ones you love and those that love you.

And wherever you've gone
And wherever we might go
It don't seem fair - Today just disappeared

Your light's reflected now, reflected from afar

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Pearl Jam, "Light Years"

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School taxes

Continued from 3

The only way a property owner will see an increase is if the property value has risen since last year, according to figures from county property appraiser's office.

The total tentative school district bud-

get for 2021-22 is \$1.02 billion. Of this, \$438,916,200 will go toward the general operating fund. Revenue comes from property taxes, federal grants, a half-cent sales tax and more.

The tentative budget includes a 6% increase in capital outlay funds for motor vehicles. The district is planning to purchase 41 new school buses this year.

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

KATHY'S GARDENING GUIDE

"I put the fun in fungus."



THERE'S A FUNGUS AMONG US!

This time of year in North Florida involves frequent rain and much humidity. Both of which cause fungus on flowers and plants.

In order to control fungus and pests in the garden, there are many different chemicals and organic products on the market. It can be overwhelming when you see all of the options but we can help with a general rule of thumb: One chemical product can be used for each category of fungus.

Insecticide: Malathion (used on fruits,



Flower of the Week: Pentas

Photo provided by Kathy Esfahani

vegetables, landscaping and shrubs to control pests)

Fungicide: Daconil (used to treat over 75 diseases on flowers, landscaping, fruit and shade trees)

There are more natural ways to treat pests and fungus in the garden, but they require extra attention and continuous effort. This recipe may need to be applied

weekly until you attain results for pests and disease.

DIY organic spray: 1 teaspoon vegetable oil, plus 1 teaspoon non-degreasing liquid dishwashing detergent per gallon of water.

With different types of sod in Northeast Florida, is it recommended to discuss sod treatment with a lawn-care company or sod expert for what products will be best for your yard.

Once we move out of the rainy season, you will not need to treat pests and fungus as frequently for the remainder of the year.

Happy gardening!

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

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

K9s For Warriors

Continued from 4

"We have an entire procurement team that scours the country looking for dogs," Diamond said. "We have a network of about 100 rescues that also help us, and we've got great partnerships with places like the Jacksonville Humane Society and San Antonio Animal Control."

By being able to train more dogs, it will allow the K9s For Warriors to begin offering its services to all veterans instead of just those post 9/11.

"There has been a huge spike in Vietnam era suicide, and we felt like

we had to get off the sidelines to help in that fight," Diamond said. "The stories from the warriors in the program are so overwhelming and so beautiful. We're just trying to do our part."

K9s For Warriors founder Shari Duval died from cancer in February, but it was obvious during the ceremony that her spirit and memory continues to live on.

"She knew the mega kennel was coming and I'm sure she would have loved to see it today," Diamond said.

Since Duval founded the organization in 2011, nearly 700 warriors have been matched with dogs and more than 1,300 dogs have been rescued.

Members of THE PLAYERS Cham-

pionship were on hand and presented Diamond with a check for \$15,000 as part of its Match4Military grant initiative.

"The timing of it was just perfect with them having the groundbreaking," 2022 Tournament Chairman Matt Welch said. "They've done a great job of leveraging the community and it's amazing what they do. Just a great program all the way around."

Turtles

Continued from 5

"It has been a pleasure to witness residents and local business owners coming together to protect the sea turtles," said Jen Burns, executive director of Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol. "Without the enthusiasm of the community around the campaign and the local coffee shop owners support, our campaign could not be as successful. When we come together, we can make a difference in protecting our natural resources and the animals that inhabit them."

The awareness campaign builds on a longstanding collaboration of Beaches Energy Services and the Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol to be good stewards of local natural resources.

Residents who are served by Beaches Energy Services have received information about #CleanDarkFlat as a friendly reminder and encouragement to practice good beach stewardship. Beachgoers may also notice some unlit streetlamps through October, which is the end of nesting season. That's because Beaches Energy works with the Beaches Sea Turtle Patrol to dim or darken streetlamps

that are near an active nest.

"Our goal as a local utility company is to ensure we are doing what we can to protect our sea turtles and our charge has been looking at ways to keep the areas of the beaches where there are nests dark," Beaches Energy Services Director Allen Putnam said. "We plan to install new lighting and have been studying other beach communities to ensure that we are in line with the best practices. We know it takes the entire community to make a difference."

For more details about the #CleanDarkFlat initiative and the local efforts to protect the sea turtles, visit www.BeachesEnergy.com/CleanDarkFlat.



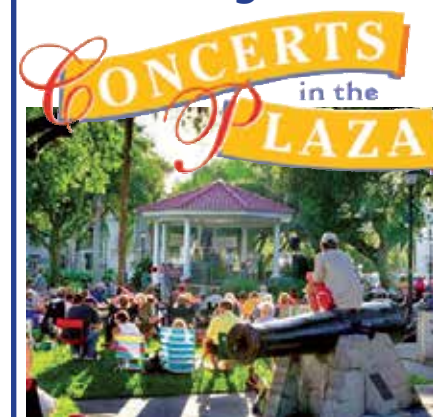
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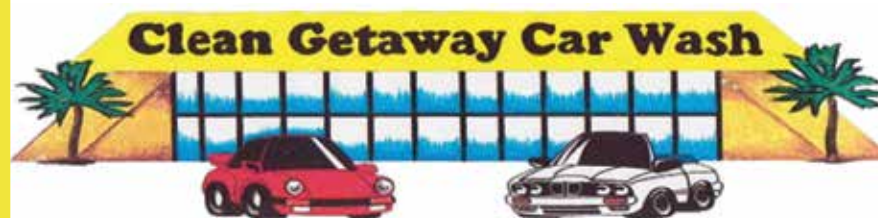


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Back-to-School **TIME**

Classes set to begin for 2021-22 school year

By Shaun Ryan

The 46,000 students in the St. Johns County public school system will return to classes Aug. 16 for the 2021-22 academic year.

Teachers will precede them for five days of planning beginning Monday, Aug. 9.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the district has posted its health and safety protocols for the coming year. With the availability of three coronavirus vaccines, some of the measures have been relaxed.

Face masks will be optional both in school and aboard buses.

On July 30, Gov. Ron DeSantis issued an executive order ensuring that parents

have a choice on whether their children wear masks.

“The federal government has no right to tell parents that in order for their kids to attend school in person, they must be forced to wear a mask all day, every day,” said DeSantis. “Many Florida schoolchildren have suffered under forced masking policies, and it is prudent to protect the ability of parents to make decisions regarding the wearing of masks by their children.”

In addition, temperature checks will no longer be a daily routine, and desk shields will no longer be mandatory in St. Johns County public schools.

However, social distancing will continue to be observed and the protocols mandate

that classrooms provide adequate space to keep student seating at least three feet apart. Maximum capacity of stadiums, auditoriums, cafeterias and gymnasiums will be 75%.

Students who become sick will be taken to a designated isolation space, and parents or guardians will be notified to pick them up.

The practice of posting COVID-19 numbers on the district’s dashboard will be re-evaluated. In the final posting for the 2020-21 school year, made June 10, 238 students and no employees were under quarantine.

Pine Island Academy will open this year at 805 Pine Island Road in Nocatee. The

K-8 school — the “home of the Dolphins” — will welcome 826 former Palm Valley Academy students living in the Crosswater Village communities, Coastal Oaks, Tidewater, Snowden Village and along Pine Island Road.

Pine Island Academy is the district’s 49th school.

The school district is the largest employer in St. Johns County, with 5,298 full and part-time employees, 2,931 of whom are instructional staff.

The county is also home to 18 private schools. The first day for students at The Bolles School is Aug. 12. Classes begin one day earlier at Palmer Catholic Academy.

Organization awards 12 high school scholarships

2 Ponte Vedra High School students, 1 Nease student among recipients

The Defense Acquisition University Alumni Association Jacksonville Florida Chapter recently awarded scholarships totaling \$13,000 to 12 St. Johns and Clay county high school graduates.

The scholarship winners were treated to a Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp game, where the scholarship winners plus their families enjoyed an evening of baseball. The association’s board of directors and the major business and community scholarship sponsors also attended.

This year’s winners were Lauren Kurlowitz from Ponte Vedra High School, who will attend the University of Florida; Simone Wannamaker from Stanton College Prep, who will attend Florida State University; Chloe Spencer from Fleming Island High, who will attend Ohio Valley University in West Virginia; Mason Romero from Ponte Vedra High, who will attend Santa Fe College over the summer and then the University of Florida; Brooklyn Potter from Creekside High, who will attend the University of South Florida; Madalyn Wong from Fleming Island, who will attend the University of Central Florida; David Gapinski from Creekside, who will attend the Georgia Institute of Technology; Madalyn Moore from St. Augustine High, who will attend Central Florida; Tyler Reimer from Fleming Island, who will attend Florida State; Alexandra Diaz from Nease High, who will attend Central Florida; Allison Korahais from St. John’s Country Day School, who will attend the University of Florida; and Brandon Kaman from Pedro Menendez High, who will attend Florida State.

The association’s Jacksonville chapter was established in 2005 and has awarded more than \$78,000 in scholarships since its inception. The drive behind the scholarship program was from Elizabeth Nealin, who is on the chapter’s board of directors. The purpose is to invest in high school graduates within Northeast Florida with the goal of improving the future workforce.

There are different types of scholarships that can be applied for: STEM, Business and Leadership, Patriot



Contributed photo

The Defense Acquisition University Alumni Association Jacksonville Florida Chapter recently awarded scholarships totaling \$13,000 to 12 area high school graduates.

(parents/guardians are active-duty military), Founders (new scholarship offered the first time this year and awarded to Madalyn Moore) and the Elizabeth Nealin STEM scholarships. Each scholarship is for \$1,000 except the Founders, which is \$2,000.

The Jacksonville chapter partners with the local businesses and community for the funds to award the scholarships.

Those major scholarship sponsors are Andromeda Systems, Orange Park Mall, Tillman Foundation, Thomas University, Orange Park Rotary Sunrise, NMCRS Jacksonville, USO Greater Jacksonville, First Command Financial, Tory Hamlin Allstate, Select Health and Wellness, Tony Conard, Herron Real Estate, Subaru Jax, Brooks Rehab, A10 Auto Detailing, Crunch Fitness, Signature Consultants, Anderson Trade Group, Caldwell Bankers Cares, BestBet, Quimby Law, Ron McCann State Farm, JAX Jumbo Shrimp,

Fields Cadillac and Dez Combs Real Estate.

Scholarships are given out as joint scholarships between Jacksonville chapter and the major scholarship sponsor.

The scholarship awards are based on grades, school and community activities and a written essay. This year’s selection board involved application reviews from about half of the major scholarship sponsors and the majority of the Jacksonville chapter board of directors.

Scholarship applications are online at the chapter website at www.dauaajax.org or by contacting Chapter President Duane Mallicoat at duanemalli@comcast.net or via cell at (301) 769-8206.

The chapter will have the 2022 scholarship application link on the website by September, and the date for submitting is May 20. Plans are to increase the number of scholarships awarded in 2022 to 20.

PVHS student devotes 100 hours to tutoring refugee children

Roberto Lachner is 1 of 4 chosen for Bank of America Student Leader program

By Shaun Ryan

Roberto Lachner knows what it's like to find himself in a new country, learning to navigate a new culture at a young age. The Ponte Vedra High School student came to the United States from Costa Rica when he was 6 years old.

So, a few years ago, when an opportunity arose to help immigrant children facing those same challenges, he readily volunteered.

Since then, he has devoted more than 100 hours to mentoring and tutoring refugee children and youths as part of JaxTHRIVE, a local nonprofit that helps these students succeed in the classroom and flourish in the community.

"They're in a new place, and everything's unfamiliar to them, so I like being able to create at least some comfort or friendship for them," he said.

Roberto's commitment has not gone unnoticed. This summer, he was selected for a paid, eight-week internship with a local nonprofit as one of four Student

Leaders in Jacksonville by the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

The program, launched in 2004, is open to rising juniors and seniors. According to Martha Barrett, vice president of market development for Bank of America in Jacksonville, the foundation receives about 50 applications a year from St. Johns, Duval, Nassau and Clay counties.

The field of applicants is ultimately whittled down to four who then go on to an internship with Communities in Schools, a nonprofit that works with schools to help at-risk students stay in school and perform well.

Joining Roberto this summer is Manas Adepu, who attends Allen D. Nease High School and, as the youth president of the Rural Library Foundation — which builds libraries in India — has managed media and created a website for that nonprofit, started a digital donation service, managed a newsletter and more. The two other Student Leaders this year are Jessica Malosh of Stanton College Preparatory School and Daisy Valdivia of Sandalwood High School, both in Duval County.

Through the internship, Student Leaders learn about the vital role nonprofits

STUDENT LEADER continues on **Page 12**

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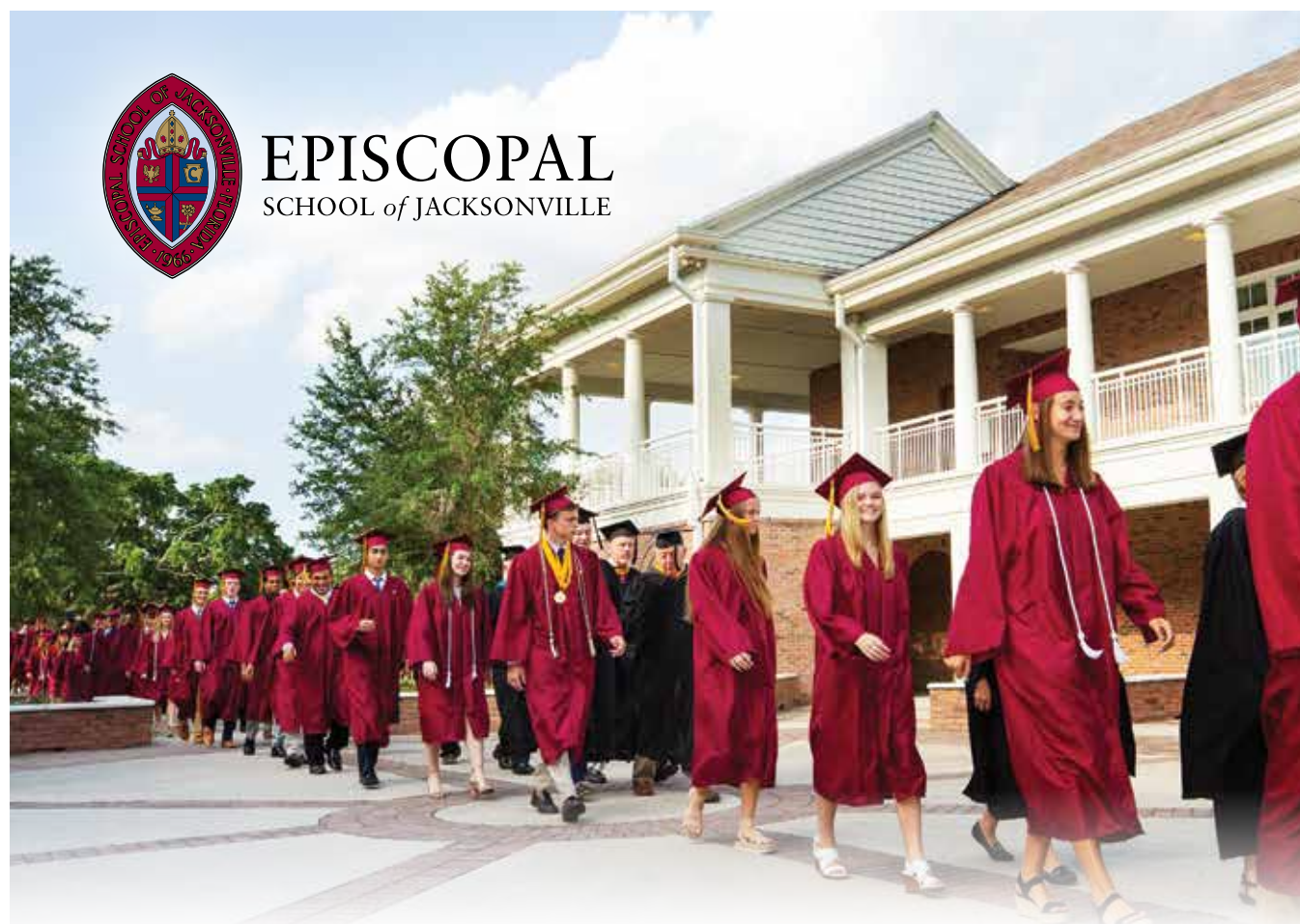
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Nease senior attends cybersecurity academy

By Shaun Ryan

In the future, who will protect America from ransomware cyberattacks like the one that crippled Colonial Pipeline in May?

Chances are, it will be someone like Braden Holmes, a Nease High School senior who recently attended the U.S. Advanced Cyber Academy.

In fact, the pipeline attack was one of the topics discussed at the academy, a weeklong educational program held at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

“It was really fun,” Braden said. “I met a lot of people that were all incredibly nice. It was run very well. The instructors were very knowledgeable on the topics we were talking about.”

Braden is involved in his school’s CyberPatriot team and is the unit STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) commander with the Nease NJROTC. When he saw an opportunity to attend the academy, he signed up.

The program is specifically designed for trainees who have a passion for computer technology. Braden spent the week building computers and networks, learning how to defend systems from cyberattacks and meeting professionals in the field of cybersecurity.



Contributed photo

Nease High School senior Braden Holmes recently attended the U.S. Advanced Cyber Academy at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

“We’d go in the morning and mostly learn about different fields of cybersecurity and how that applies to recent events in the real world,” he said. “Then, we’d move into more hands-on stuff — working with programming and other things that are very useful skills going into that career field.”

But he said he learned the most when he got to speak with people who already worked in the field.

Braden is planning to apply to colleges in a couple of months, and he’s got his eye on Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

“They have a great master’s program in cybersecurity,” he explained.

He has looked into the U.S. Air Force, which he said has a very good program on the topic and offers a good career path, but ultimately decided he does not have a strong interest in joining the military.

Braden said he was inspired by his father, Don Holmes, who has his own cybersecurity business.

“I kind of grew up around his work, and I just find it incredibly interesting,” Braden said. “The way everything operates and just, in general, everything that they do I just find incredibly cool.”

As Braden researched the field his interest grew, and he began to attend camps that allowed him to learn more. In fact, he recently attended a weeklong, virtual CyberPatriot advance camp. CyberPatriot competition teaches participants the basics of hardening — making sure there are no entrance points or vulnerabilities that could be exploited by malicious third parties.

Braden praised the experience he had with the U.S. Advanced Cyber Academy.

“If anyone asked me about it, I’d definitely recommend it to them if they’re interested in the field,” he said.

To learn more, go to www.spacecamp.com or call (800) 637-7223.

Local student graduates from Aviation Challenge

Emma-Grey Dawson of Ponte Vedra Beach, recently attended Aviation Challenge Mach II at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, home of Space Camp, Space Camp Robotics, Aviation Challenge and U.S. Cyber Camp. The Rocket Center is a Smithsonian Affiliate and NASA Marshall Space Flight Center’s Official Visitor Center.

The week-long educational program promotes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), while training students and with hands-on activities and missions based on teamwork, leadership and problem solving.

This program is designed for students who have an interest in military aviation and the mechanics of flight. Students learn principles of aviation and put their knowledge to the test in a variety of flight simulators. Taking the role of fighter pilots, Dawson and team ran control systems and scenario-based missions as well as trained in water and land survival. At the end of the week, Dawson and crew returned in time to graduate with honors.

Aviation Challenge opened in 1990 in Huntsville, Alabama, and uses fighter pilot training techniques to engage trainees in real-world applications of STEM subjects. Students sleep in quarters designed to resemble military bays.



FORMER NEASE NJROTC CADET NAMED HONOR CANDIDATE

Commander of Naval Service Training Command, Rear Admiral Jennifer Couture congratulates former Nease NJROTC cadet Amber Vidler as the Honor Candidate of the 316 officer candidates completing the four-week New Student Indoctrination at Great Lakes Naval Station, Illinois, on July 22. Vidler will be attending the University of Maine this fall on a Navy ROTC Scholarship.

Photo provided by Nease NJROTC

Student leader

Continued from 11

play in advancing community health, the importance of public-private partnerships to advance social change and a focus on building financial acumen.

Starting June 24, Roberto worked as a counselor at a summer camp for children. The camp, funded by Communities in Schools, provides the children with two meals a day and opportunities to have fun with friends and learn things along the way.

Roberto said the experience taught him not just how to be a good leader,

but also how to be a good follower. It also instilled a lot of work ethic experience that he said he probably would not have gotten elsewhere.

“I think this is a life-changing experience,” said Barrett. She said past Student Leaders have written the foundation, grateful for what they cite as their first leadership opportunity.

One of the foundation’s past Student Leaders was Chase Magnano, founder of JaxTHRIVE. He was recognized in 2019, the same year Roberto got involved.

In addition to his volunteering, Roberto has been involved with his school’s newspaper and SAT prep

tutoring and has been a piano teacher and team captain of the HighQ quiz team.

Looking ahead, Roberto is keeping his options open. He is applying to colleges but not yet committing to a major because, as he said, “There’s not really any field I would be unhappy in. I’m one of those people who, at school, likes every subject.”

Whatever career path he chooses, however, he wants to contribute to the world.

“One of the things I want to do with my life after high school is just leave the planet, the world as a whole, a better place than I found it,” he said.

Business Weekly

PAGE 13

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Real estate company's annual event raises more than \$15K to benefit local nonprofits

Page 16

Dr. Eddy Gutierrez of Baptist Health receives the COVID-19 vaccine in December 2020. Baptist Health is now requiring COVID vaccines for all team members and medical staff.

Photo provided by Baptist Health



Baptist Health requires COVID vaccines for all team members and medical staff

Health care giant cites 'ethical responsibility' as reason for the decision

Given the dramatic rise in COVID-19 hospitalizations in North Florida and in anticipation of full FDA approval of COVID-19 vaccines before year-end, Baptist Health announced Tuesday that it will require full vaccination for its team members and professional staff by Nov. 15.

In keeping with the organization's flu-shot policy, Baptist Health will grant ex-

emptions for medical contraindications and sincerely held religious beliefs.

New variants have contributed to a 300% increase in hospitalizations — and, among Baptist Health patients, more than 90% of those hospitalized in recent weeks have been unvaccinated.

"While we respect personal choice, the aggressive rates of infection resulting from the Delta variant have made it necessary to take this step," said Michael A. Mayo, president and CEO of Baptist Health.

"We have been considerate of those with deep concerns about receiving the

vaccination," Mayo continued. "But the time has come to provide a deadline.

Consistent with our mission and core values, it is our ethical responsibility to do all we can to protect the health of our patients, team members and the communities we serve."

"In our defense against new variants invading our region, vaccination is the most powerful tool we have," said Dr. Timothy Groover, interim chief medical officer at Baptist. "The evidence strongly confirms that COVID-19

BAPTIST continues on Page 16

Murray Bros. CaddyShack to host charity pro-am party of PXG Women's Match Play Championship

Manifest Distillery, Proximo Spirits, St. Francis Winery to co-host as official beverage partner

Murray Bros. CaddyShack at World Golf Village will play host to the Pairings Party for the INK! Charity Pro-am presented by Davidson Realty, the official charity pro-am of October's PXG Women's Match Play Championship.

The pairings party will be held at 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 24, the evening before the official pro-am tournament, being held at King & Bear Golf Course.

Investing in Kids (INK!) is the event's charitable beneficiary. A not-for-profit organization, INK! raises money for notably underserved public schools in St. Johns County. The pro-am will feature 32 teams, each consisting of three ama-

teurs and one of the professional female players participating in the PXGWMPC. In the scramble format, the professional player's ball is actually "in play" for the team and there is prize money on the line, guaranteeing the amateurs seeing some great playing. Invited to the Pro-am Pairings Party will be all the amateurs participating in the tournament, and all 64 of the professional women golfers participating in the championship, which begins on Oct. 26. Sponsors and other VIPs will also be in attendance, including members of the St. Johns County Commissioners and its committees.

"The pro-am is designed to be a meaningful day for INK! and a fun time for the players, professional and amateur. Who

PRO-AM PARTY continues on Page 17

Panic at the bank



Scott A. Grant
Guest Columnist

On Sept. 17, 1819, John L. Harper and his accomplices stormed into the Bank of the United States in Chillicothe, Ohio, and extricated \$120,000 in currency at gunpoint. Harper and his gang were not bank robbers. They were "tax collectors" commissioned by

the state of Ohio. Harper and his gang were paid \$2,000 for collecting a \$100,000 tax levied by the Ohio State Legislature. The \$20,000 overage was returned.

The Bank of the United States was unpopular in many parts of the country. It lent money freely to sodbusters moving west. But, during periods of economic downturn, the bank protected itself and cut back on lending leading to foreclosures. This often led to what was called a "Panic." Prior to World War I, we referred to our recessions as "Panics," because they were often precipitated or exacerbated by "Panic" runs on the banks.

After the War of 1812, the nation suffered its first great depression, the Panic of 1819. The citizens of Ohio were angry, and they blamed their suffering on the Bank of the United States. Their legislature passed a law taxing the bank \$50,000 for each of its branches in the state. The bank, of course, refused to pay. So, the state hired Harper and his gang to collect. The tax was unconstitutional. It violated a recent precedent declaring that "the power to tax involves necessarily the power to destroy." The Supreme Court ruled that Ohio had to return the money, with interest.

The Bank of the U.S. was the brainchild of Alexander Hamilton. It was supposed to act like the Bank of England. From the beginning, it was controversial. Andrew Jackson led a populist campaign against the bank that led to his election as president, in 1828. He had the bank's charter revoked in 1836. That led immediately to the Panic of 1837 and several decades of economic turmoil known as the era of Free Banking or "Wildcat Banking."

Thousands of Wildcat banks, chartered by accommodating state legislatures sprang up all over and failed almost as frequently. Each bank issued its own currency. The value of currency varied wildly. Stronger banks currency was worth more, weaker banks less. Many

GRANT continues on Page 14

Grant

Continued from 13

railroads started their own banks to finance expansion and pay their workers. This was at the time of the first railroad boom. When a railroad failed, its bank failed as well. This system of decentralized finance was an unmitigated disaster. During the Panic of 1857, every bank in Oklahoma went out of business.

In 1862, Congress authorized a system of National Banks to finance the Civil War. National Banks issuing their own notes sprang up in seemingly every town. The notes were backed by the Treasury and are considered collectibles today.

The Panic of 1907 nearly bankrupted the country. Only the intervention of JP Morgan saved us from financial ruin. In his day, J. Pierpont Morgan was as wildly popular as Elon Musk or Warren Buffett. As a result of that Panic, Congress authorized the Federal Reserve to regulate commerce and the currency. The Fed put us on the Gold Standard. For the next six decades, the dollar was backed by gold held at Fort Knox. To keep the value of the dollar from fluctuating, we fixed the price of gold.

Today, we hear a lot about the idea of decentralized finance. The idea is popular with believers in crypto-currencies like bitcoin. They believe that fiat currencies like the dollar are actually worthless because they are only backed by the taxing power of the United States. It was better, they say, in the old days when dollars were backed by gold and then the price of gold was fixed. (It wasn't!). Most people know about bitcoin, but did you know there are over 2000 different crypto-currencies out there. None of them are worth the same. To me this sounds a lot like the Era of Wildcat Banking. I don't see how letting anyone, anywhere, create their own money ends well.

Scott A. Grant is a local historian and fiduciary asset manager. He is a frequent contributor to the Recorder.

Getting to know leaders behind one of the First Coast's top mortgage brokerages

By Jenn Kjellman

Whether you've been considering a move or looking to lower your monthly rate, finding a trusted lender to help you navigate the process can be tough, especially in today's crazy real estate market. Traditionally most people tend to turn to their financial institution or bank when in need of lending because it may seem easier and not require research in terms of finding the right partner, but you could be losing out on tremendous benefits that come with working with a mortgage broker by doing so!

That's where working with a team like First Coast Mortgage Funding could be your best bet.

WHO IS FIRST COAST MORTGAGE FUNDING

First Coast Mortgage Funding was established in March of 2020 by Jason Kindler and Aaron Bacus, right before the pandemic wreaked havoc nationwide. With a combined 50+ years in residential lending, they saw a gap on the First Coast when it came to reliable partners homeowners could trust for their lending needs, leading them to launch their own business. Having previously worked for a variety of lenders, they felt the frustrations of not being able to get their clients the best the market had to offer, which is why when they launched First Coast Mortgage Funding they decided to open as a mortgage brokerage. As a brokerage, they have access to numerous options, meaning their clients not only get the best rates but also are presented options when working with them.

It's no surprise that since opening a little over a year ago, First Coast Mortgage has seen tremendous success under Jason and Aaron's leadership. Besides being able to meet the foundational lending needs of their clients, Jason and Aaron have created a culture that is incomparable to others in the industry. With a customer centric focus, Aaron and Jason have not only been able to process over \$240 million in loans since opening in early 2020 but also have attracted some of the top lending talent on the First Coast, with the team now boasting four loan officers, a relationship partner and a number of top tier support staff.

LEADERS IN THE INDUSTRY

While First Coast Mortgage may be a newer company, that has not stopped them from achieving great recognition within their industry as top financial leaders out of the gate. Recently they were recognized as a Diamond Status Lender by one of their lending partners, United Wholesale Mortgage, making them a key account. Recognized as the #2 largest lender in the nation, United Wholesale Mortgage (UWM) is definitely a top source to be recognized by in today's residential lending arena. As a Diamond Status Lender for UWM, First Coast Mortgage President Jason Kindler was even invited to ring the bell on the stock market as UWM went public in late July. Does all of the above sound foreign to you? The following stats may help put everything in perspective. Currently

MORTGAGE continues on Page 17



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Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices FNR donates backpacks, funds to local nonprofits

Real estate company raises more than \$15,000 at annual fundraising event

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty raised more than \$15,000 and donated 547 backpacks filled with school supplies for Northeast Florida children during its 22nd annual Backpack Challenge.

The backpacks filled with school supplies were donated to Northeast Florida schools and family/youth-centered organizations including Dreams Come True of Jacksonville, AMI Kids, the Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Florida, Grace United Methodist Church in Lawtey, the Department of Juvenile Justice, Mayport Elementary School, Operation New Hope, Osceola Elementary School in St. Augustine, the USO of Greater Jacksonville and World Golf Village area schools.

During the campaign, monetary donations as well as new backpacks and school supplies were collected at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty offices throughout Northeast Florida. The company used the donated funds to purchase additional backpacks and school supplies for local students in kindergarten through grade 12.

The company's Beaches branch office collected \$5,000, which was matched by an anonymous donor, for a \$10,000 donation. In addition to purchasing backpacks and school supplies, the company presented five \$1,000 checks to AMI Kids, the Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Florida, the Department of Juvenile Justice, Mayport Elementary School, and Operation New Hope for the organizations to use as needed.

With the support of her contributors, Realtor Donna Hodges of the company's Mandarin branch office donated more than 68



Photo provided by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices FNR

Representatives from Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices FNR's Ponte Vedra office, Kimberly Donahue (from left), Holly Hayes, Elizabeth Hudgins, Liz Snead, Nely Lanier, Sarah Alexander and Ann King, participated in the annual Blessings in a Backpack fundraiser.

backpacks to the Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Florida. The donation marked a new personal record for Hodges, who has participated in the company's Backpack Challenge for many years.

"Words cannot express how much we appreciate the numerous donations and generous funding we received from our Realtors, employees, clients and the community during The Backpack Challenge," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty CEO Kevin Waugaman. "It is so important for students to have the tools they need for success, and we truly appreciate the support to help make a difference in the lives of children and families in our communities."

Baptist

Continued from 13

vaccination reduces hospitalizations, severity of illness and deaths. In order for us to care for the community, we must remain healthy ourselves."

The decision to require COVID-19 vaccination for health care workers is supported by numerous medical organizations including the American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Nurses Association, American College of Physicians and more.

"This is an extension of current infection control policy; we already require annual vaccination against flu," said Dr. Vincy Samuel, system director for Employee Health at Baptist Health. "This year, we will offer COVID-19 vaccines at the same time as annual flu shots, so it will be easy for our team members to get both done at once."

"With more than 12,500 employees, Baptist Health is the area's largest private employer, and we feel an obligation to lead by example," Samuel added. "Given the fact that North Florida is considered an 'area of substantial or high transmission,' we have to do it all — vaccination, physical distancing, hand hygiene and masking — to truly protect ourselves and others."

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Pro-am party

Continued from 13

better than the folks at CaddyShack to provide the perfect back drop to what will be an inspiring day on the course the following day?" said Mark D. Berman, who's MediaShare Consulting Group is producing the PXG Women's Match Play Championship and the Pro-am.

Added Mac Haskell, owner and CEO of Murray Bros. CaddyShack: "We're going to celebrate the kickoff of this unique Championship, and the young professional female athletes and guests will certainly be treated to a first-class experience."

Co-hosting the Pairings Party is Jacksonville company Manifest Distillery, Maestro Dobel Tequila and St Francis Winery, Sonoma. Each will be providing spirits

and wine for the event and serve as official beverage companies for the championship.

The PXG Women's Match Play Championship is one of 14 official events on the Women's All Pro Tour. The WAPT is the official qualifying tour for the LPGA's Symetra Tour, providing more opportunities for women to play professional golf and offers its winners exemptions into Symetra Tour events. The PXG Women's Match Play Championship will feature 64 female professionals who are pursuing their dream of playing on the LPGA Tour. The golfers will battle it out over two weeks in two separate, but connected, tournaments. The first week will feature a 54-hole stroke-play format on the King & Bear course, which will also seed the second week's event, a 64-woman match play championship at Slammer & Squire. There will be no cut in the stroke-play event and

all players will advance to the match play tournament. Each tournament will have its own prize purse and the winner of the match play event will also earn the title PXG Women's Match Play Champion.

The tournament will also celebrate women's initiatives by providing programming such as leadership forums, executive networking, and education. The programming is being developed and provided by Generation W, a national nonprofit founded and led by Donna Orender and based in Jacksonville Beach.

In addition to Title Sponsor, PXG, the tournament proudly celebrates its Founding

Partners: the Murgado Automotive Group and its Bentley Jacksonville and Maserati Jacksonville dealerships, SQAIRZ Golf Shoes and OnPoint Ball Markers. Official Media Partners include Kessler Creative, ActionNews FOX30 and CBS 47, the Jacksonville Business Journal and the Ponte Vedra Recorder.

Information on elevated hospitality opportunities, pro-am spots, tickets, key sponsorships and volunteering is available at www.PXGWPC.com and by calling MediaShare Consulting Group at (904) 838-4962 or by emailing at mberman@mediashareconsulting.com.

Mortgage

Continued from 14

Aaron is ranked No. 4 in all of Florida and number 118th nationally as a top performing loan officer, with Jason close behind him at No. 7 in all of Florida and 207th nationally. These guys know what they're doing and have the success to prove it!

WORKING WITH FIRST COAST MORTGAGE

When you choose to work with First Coast Mortgage for your residential lend-

ing needs, you can rest assured you'll be receiving the best rates and service on the First Coast! With offices located in Nocatee, it's easy to pop in for any needs you may have or you can call them any time at (904) 217-5450 to explore what options are best for you. Right now the market is hot and rates are historically low. If you haven't already, you should definitely reach out to Jason or Aaron to see what your options could be for getting the best rate on your new or existing home.

For more information, go to www.firstcoast-mortgagefunding.com.

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021 • PAGE 18 www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Visionary blues star Selwyn Birchwood to perform Aug. 14 in Jacksonville Beach

Groundbreaking young blues visionary Selwyn Birchwood will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 14, at the Blue Jay Listening Room in Jacksonville Beach.

Birchwood's latest release is his highly anticipated third "Alligator" album, "Living In A Burning House." Birchwood calls his original music "electric swamp funk'n blues," defined by raw and soulful musicianship played with fire-and-brimstone fervor. His gritty, unvarnished vocals draw his audience inside his unforgettable tales of love, passion, pain and pleasure.

No other band on the current blues scene is built quite like Birchwood's. In addition to Birchwood's electrifying guitar and lap-steel playing, the other featured instrument is Regi Oliver's driving baritone sax. The group is rounded out by bass, drums and, for the first time, keyboards.

For "Living In A Burning House," Birchwood wrote and arranged 13 new songs, and brought in famed Grammy Award-winning musician/producer Tom Hambridge (Buddy Guy, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, Susan Tedeschi) to produce. From the rocking opener "I'd Climb Mountains" to the sweet soul of "She's A Dime" and "One More Time" to the hair-raising "Revelation," "Living In A Burning House" features some of the most vividly striking writing on today's blues scene. Birchwood's voice and vision are clear, his sound is edgy and compelling, and his stories are memorable and lasting.

Since the 2014 release of his Alligator Records debut, "Don't Call No Ambulance," Birchwood's meteoric rise from playing small Florida clubs to headlining international festival stages is nothing short of phenomenal. The album received the Blues

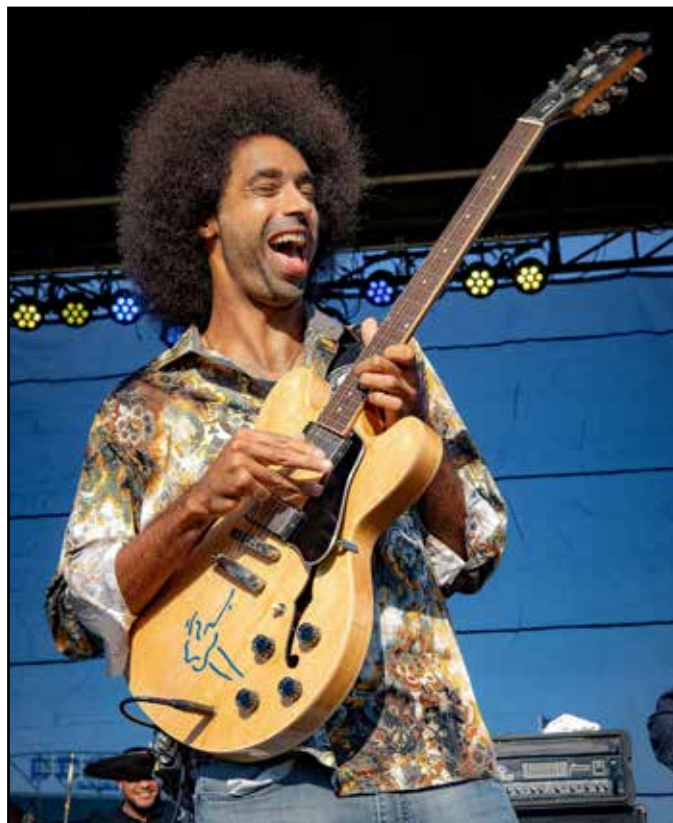


Photo provided by Alligator Records

Blues star Selwyn Birchwood will be performing at the Blue Jay Listening Room in Jacksonville Beach on Aug. 14.

Music Award and Living Blues Critics' Award for Best Debut Album Of 2014, and Birchwood won the 2015 Blues Blast Rising Star Award.

Rave reviews ran in numerous publications, including Rolling Stone, The Wall Street Journal, The Chicago Tribune and The San Francisco Chronicle. He followed in 2016 with "Pick Your Poison."

"There's a deep-seated power about Birchwood's singing and six string/lap steel guitar work...and there's an unmistakable emotion and honesty linking him to forebears like Muddy

BIRCHWOOD continues on **Page 19**

Steve Earle & The Dukes on stage Aug. 20 at Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

Country maverick Steve Earle & The Dukes will appear on stage Aug. 20 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall for a seated, full-capacity performance.

Earle is one of the most acclaimed singer-songwriters of his generation, heir to Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark, his musical mentors.

Over the course of 20 studio albums, Earle has distinguished himself as a master storyteller, and his songs have been recorded by a vast array of artists, including Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, Joan Baez, Emmylou Harris, the Pretenders and more.

Earle's 1986 debut album, "Guitar Town," is now regarded as a classic of the Americana genre, and subsequent releases like "The Revolution Starts... Now" (2004), "Washington Square Serenade" (2007) and "TOWNES" (2009) all received Grammy Awards.

Restlessly creative across artistic disciplines, Earle has published both a novel and a collection of short stories; produced albums for other artists; and acted in films, TV shows and on stage. He currently hosts a radio show for Sirius XM.

In 2019, Earle appeared in the off-Broadway play "Samara," for which he also wrote a score that The New York Times described as "exquisitely subliminal."

Each year, Earle organizes a benefit concert for the Keswell School, which his son John Henry attends and which provides educational programs for children and young adults with autism.

When asked about what drove him to craft his deeply evocative new album, "Ghosts of West Virginia," Earle said he was interested in exploring a new approach to his songwriting.

"I've already made the preaching-to-the-choir album," he said, alluding to his 2004 album, "The Revolution Starts... Now."

But he has come to believe that these times might benefit from something that

EARLE continues on **Page 19**

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Village Arts Framing and Gallery names Sandra Hughes its artist of the month

Sandra Hughes' interest in art began at an early age and was largely influenced by her curiosity of three small European watercolors of Bruges, which hung over her grandmother's sofa.

The artist described the arched doorways, gates and buildings with very few strokes, directly and confidently. The technique looked effortless and transparency intriguing. Hughes wanted to step into the paintings and, with that said, a desire to express her visual and emotional stimulation through art began.

Hughes' knowledge of art has been acquired through many hours of rigorous self study as well as studying with nationally known artists and painting with instructors in Paris while living there for two years. Sketching in the Louvre, painting in Monet's gardens and around Paris, fed her desire to describe the beauty

around her and prompted her to open a successful gallery in Fernandina Beach in 2003 after returning to the states.

Although her preferred medium at that time was watercolor, she also worked in acrylic, pastel and occasionally oil. After 20 years of watercolor, Hughes has transitioned to oils as a means of growth which is vital and ongoing.

Collections of her art can be found around the country, as well as Europe and Asia and this month she is the featured artist at Village Arts Framing and Gallery in Sawgrass Village.

Village Arts owner Pamela Keegan welcomes visitors to the gallery from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday to view Hughes' work, as well as works of many other local and renowned artists.

Go to villageartspvb.com/index.html for more information.



Photo provided by the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

Country maverick Steve Earle & The Dukes will perform Aug. 20 at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

Earle

Continued from 18

addresses a different audience, songs written from a point of view that he is particularly capable of rendering.

Tickets to see Steve Earle & The Dukes are on sale now at The St. Augustine

Amphitheatre box office and Ticketmaster.com. Ponte Vedra Concert Hall box office remains closed at this time. All tickets are digital.

The St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays.

Only debit and credit cards are accepted for payment.

Birchwood

Continued from 18

Waters. Thoughtful, persuasive and rugged." wrote DownBeat.

Rolling Stone wrote, "A remarkable, contemporary bluesman...a powerhouse young guitarist and soulful vocalist...a major player...highly recommended."

Birchwood and his band have crisscrossed the U.S. and Europe repeatedly, delivering unforgettable live performances, and earning new fans everywhere they go.

"I write and sing what I know," said Birchwood, whose musical innovations

are as expansive as his influences are deep. "They say everything is better when it's made with love. That's how we play our music and that's how we made the new album. I want my audience to say, 'I know exactly what that feels like,' when a song hits them. Because that's when it stops just being music and starts being medicine. After all, we are all stricken with the condition of being human."

Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$45 at the door. To purchase tickets online, go to www.904tix.com/events/selwyn-birchwood-at-blue-jay-listening-room-8-14-2021. For more information about the Blue Jay Listening Room, go to www.bluejayjax.com

THEME: TV THEME SONGS

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ACROSS

1. _____'s razor
6. Credit card-related acronym
9. Goes with rave
13. Garlic mayo
14. "Jack and the Beanstalk" exclamation
15. Echo sounder
16. Beauty shop
17. European Economic Community
18. Falstaffian in body
19. *Scooby-Dooby-Doo, where are you? We got some work _____
21. *So no one told you life was gonna be _____
23. Pocket watch chain
24. Uncouth one
25. Place to get a massage
28. Boozer
30. Pie nuts
35. Sharpen
37. Orange powder drink mix
39. Tennis-affected joint
40. Bright thought
41. Reputation-damaging gossip
43. Symphony member
44. Famous Beethoven symphony
46. Microsoft browser
47. "Young Frankenstein" leading actor
48. Dines at home
50. Telephoned
52. Up to present time
53. Neat
55. Diamond stat
57. *Gee, our old _____ ran great, those were the days"
61. *Let's ride with the family down the street through the courtesy of Fred's _____"
65. Loosen laces
66. Opposite of vend
68. Kind of artery
69. One Beatle
70. Recipe amt.
71. Opposite of atonal
72. *Where the kisses are hers and _____ and his, Three's company too"
73. Sigma Alpha Epsilon
74. Rosetta Stone, e.g.
24. Without a trace of moisture (2 words)
25. *Everybody's got a special kind of story, everybody finds a way to _____"
26. Podium, pl.
27. Concerning, archaic
29. *Sometimes you wanna go where everybody knows your _____"
31. Heidi's "Magic Wooden Shoe"
32. The Beatles' _____ Road"
33. Not a soul (2 words)
34. *Sunny day, sweepin' the clouds away on my way to where the air is _____"
36. "Good _____" cooking show
38. Lady née Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta
42. Extend subscription
45. Infamous German leader
49. Naught
51. Barley kernels
54. Financial woes
56. Where there's trouble?
57. Verdant
58. Initial stake
59. Hollywood Walk of Fame honor
60. A snob puts them on
61. Use a keyboard
62. Marine eagle
63. Bibliographical abbr.
64. *Just sit right back and you'll hear a _____"
67. *Oh boy it's swell to say, Good morning _____!"

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

DOWN

1. Brewer's kiln
2. "Ta-ta!" in Italy
3. *If you're out on the road feeling lonely, and so _____"
4. Remote in manner
5. S.S. _____ of "Gilligan's Island"
6. Not many (2 words)
7. *Movin' on up to the east side, we finally got a piece of the _____"
8. Right-hand page
9. Schneider and Reiner
10. Afresh
11. Astronaut's insignia
12. Three pointer
15. Evening party
20. Sad newspaper notices
22. Goes with skip and a jump

Sports

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021 · PAGE 20

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Send your sports news to
pvrecorder@opcfla.com

Jarred Garcia of Jacksonville lines up a putt on the ninth green during the opening round of the Billy Horschel APGA Tour Invitational presented by Cisco on July 30. For more photos from the event, go to pontevedrarecorder.com.

Wave of momentum

Mack wins Horschel Invitational, eyes PGA TOUR shot

By Anthony Richards

The career year Willie Mack III has been having continued when he won the Billy Horschel APGA Tour Invitational presented by Cisco on July 31.

"It's been a great year," Mack said. "Four PGA TOUR events, two Korn Ferry... the confidence is at a high level right now."

The 31-year-old's success this year coincides with the fact that he switched to Todd Anderson as his coach seven months ago.

Anderson works at the PGA Tour's performance center at TPC Sawgrass and is also tournament host Billy Horschel's coach, which made the victory in the event even more meaningful for Mack.

"I think Willie should be on the PGA Tour and it's just a matter of time," Horschel said. "From the minute I saw him hit balls with Todd Anderson I saw some things, he had the talent level, the ball striking level, everything in the sense of talent and athletic ability to be on the PGA Tour. Sometimes it just takes



Photos by Anthony Richards

Mulbe Dillard discusses things with his caddie prior to putting.

a coach or someone you meet that's had the success to tell you that and give you that little extra confidence in yourself."

Having the opportunity to develop a relationship with Horschel has been special for Mack and he has leaned on him for advice at times, especially heading into the weekend's event.

"I think just working with Todd Anderson the last seven months and being able to get close to Billy, he's given me some advice the last couple of weeks," Mack said. "It's always

good to have somebody like that in your corner."

However, Horschel's advice heading into the tournament was pretty simple, but something that Mack found himself thinking about throughout the two days of competition.

"Just go out and have fun," Mack said. We've played together before, so he said I have the game to be out there. Just got to get those opportunities."

INVITATIONAL continues on Page 21

As Jaguars begin training camp, who is worthy of a roster spot?

By Mike Bonts

Special to the Recorder

Training camp for the Jacksonville Jaguars is just a little over a week old, but if enthusiasm and energy account for anything the Jaguars should be noticeably improved heading into the NFL season.

Urban Meyer came out of retirement and will try his hand in the NFL after 17 years as a head coach in the college ranks.

Jacksonville averaged just 19.1 points per game last season. But Meyer has the rookies and veterans looking ahead. And not in the rearview mirror.

An early focus is on first draft pick Trevor Lawrence at quarterback and a work in progress. Tim Tebow's transition from quarterback to NFL tight end.

Both have received words of encouragement early in the camp.

Lawrence's battle is not as uphill as Tebow's. He's competing against Gardner Minshew, C.J. Beathard and Jake Luton. And I will go out on a limb and say he is roster worthy. A starting nod is the only suspense.

"A guy that's always asking questions and wants to get better," associate head coach Charlie Strong said of Lawrence. "And here he is, a guy that comes in as the first pick, and it hasn't bothered him at all. The players respect him for how he goes about it and how he carries himself. It's a big deal how you carry yourself."

JAGUARS continues on Page 21



Photo by Nancy Beecher

Jaguars quarterback and No. 1 draft pick Trevor Lawrence practices during training camp last week.

Ponte Vedra flag football team caps perfect year with national title

By Anthony Richards

Perfection is hard to achieve in any sport, but that is exactly what a squad full of Ponte Vedra area fifth and sixth grade flag footballers recently did.

The Ponte Vedra Raiders consisted of 12 players, all from the local area, and finished 36-0 on the year and won the Under Armour Under the Lights Flag Football National Championship on July 25 at IMG Academy in Bradenton.

The team played their home games at Davis Park.

“I realized how special of a group they were when I saw how quickly they bonded and became a team,” head coach Alex Campbell said. “We can tell them what to do, but to actually see it is something else.”

The Raiders’ success was not just this summer but was something that carried through the entire year, as they won the fall and spring seasons before laying claim to the state title in March.

Campbell could not help but be impressed by the consistency and maturity his team showed, despite being so young.

“We preached composure to them,” Campbell said. “It’s all about being the best you can be when things are high and the best when things are at their lowest.”



Photo provided by Alex Campbell

The Ponte Vedra Raiders went undefeated en route to the Under Armour Under the Lights Flag Football national title on July 25.

During the two-day showcase, the Raiders team won all seven of the games it played against teams from across the nation and put a cap on the weekend with a 26-7 victory over the Patriots from Dallas in the final.

The Raiders jumped out to an early lead and maintained it throughout thanks to a

stellar defensive effort that coincided with the offense scoring on nearly every possession of the contest.

“Every individual on the team stepped up,” Campbell said.

Flag football can favor the offensive side of the ball at times, which makes allowing just seven points in a contest quite the feat.

Just like in tackle football, pulling the flag of a ball carrier comes down to having proper form and positioning.

“The game of flag football is very fast-paced,” Campbell said. “We work a lot on fundamentals and technique.”

According to Campbell, one his proudest moments was when the league’s director told him how impressed he was with how respectful the Raiders were both on and off the field during the tournament.

“A lot of it was just having a good group of kids,” head coach Alex Campbell said. They developed good friendships with one another. They were all each other’s biggest fans.”

Some of the kids had played together in prior season, which made for an easy transition for those new to the team.

The team included J.T. Campbell, Jake Contner, Bryce Lapenes, Mic Pfaff, Noah Wozniak, Jacob Otzel, Maddox Tepper, Camden Tietze, Ryan Ortbals, Tucker Henderson, Truett Henderson, and Matt Mazzella.

Although it was the players that did the work on the field, Campbell also credited the players’ parents for the support and involvement they provided all year long.

“The parents help make the experience,” Campbell said. “This team had a great group.”

Invitational

Continued from 20

Mack did just that as he pounced on those opportunities when they arose on both days.

He shot 69 to lead Troy Taylor, Kamaiu Johnson and Mahindra Lutchman by two strokes at 3-under.

Mack was the only player to post a round in the 60s and he did so on both days, as he followed up his first-round performance with another 69 in the final round and finished ahead by four shots at 6-under.

A pair of 69s proved too much for the competition to keep pace with, although 21-year-old Troy Taylor II, who is about to begin his senior season at Michigan State, made a run at Mack to finished second with a 2-under tournament.

“Getting to play this golf course from the tips where they play at THE PLAYERS. It was awesome,” Taylor said. “Just to see where I need to work on my game because this is a hard, demanding golf course.”

Mack and Taylor were the lone players to total scores under par.

“I saw Troy play in the pro-am and I said, ‘Wow, this kid’s pretty good, this kid’s really good,’” Horschel said. “He’s got a lot of talent. He’s a big kid, 6-(foot)-2-(inches), and he’s got a lot of clubhead speed. Hits it a mile, swings beautifully... to see how well he played a course like this against professional golfers which he



Photo provided by PGA Tour

Willie Mack III holds his first-place trophy next to invitational host Billy Horschel following the final round on July 31.

doesn’t play against, in tough conditions today, and to play well until the last hole, it was really cool. The kid’s got a very bright future and I think he’ll be another guy that is going to be on the PGA Tour when he does turn pro.”

Not only did Mack win a tournament by conquering the legendary TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course, but by doing so, he also earned \$25,000 as part of the largest purse ever handed out at an APGA Tour event.

According to Mack, he hopes to carry the momentum and achieve his goal of becoming a full-time member of the PGA Tour.

“Hopefully I can use these last couple of weeks to prepare for Q-School and the future,” Mack said.



Photo by Nancy Beecher

Jaguars head coach Urban Meyer watches the team during training camp practice.

Jaguars

Continued from 20

Jacksonville has keen competition for a roster spot at tight end. The position is vital in establishing an anticipated expanded running game.

Chris Manhertz is known as an exceptional blocker. Another blocking tight end is Luke Farrell, a fifth-round pick from Ohio State. Along with Ben Ellefson, veteran James O’Shaughnessy, Tyler Davis and Tebow.

“He has good hands. In his drill work, he’s great, but when you get in a competitive moment, just [because of his]

lack of experience he wants to body the ball,” Meyer said of Tebow. “When you get to a point where two people are going after it, you have to go get the ball.

He is fighting through that a little bit, but he has the skill set to catch the ball.”

Tuesday was the first padded practice of Jaguars ‘21 training camp.

“It was good,” wide receiver Marvin Jones Jr. said. “We got after it. It was physical. We got after it before, but it’s always good to have pads to see who really has it or not.”

So, the position battles continue to see who is in black and teal and will start at quarterback on Sept. 12 in the season opener at Houston.

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