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PONTE VEDRA



# Recorder

December 2, 2021

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75 cents

PonteVedraRecorder.com

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

# One last time

Dom Henry leads fellow seniors Zach Harmon, Ben Bogle, Grant Stevens and Donovan Wilson onto the field prior to the regional final matchup against Gainesville Buchholz Nov. 26. A total of 36 seniors took the field for the final time in Panthers' uniforms that night.



Photo by Anthony Richards



### INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

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



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### Sports

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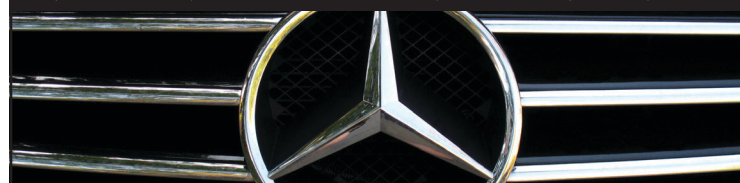
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# INSIDE

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## Send us your news

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



Visit our new website at [www.pontevedrarecorder.com](http://www.pontevedrarecorder.com)

Plus, find the Recorder on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder](https://www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder)

## ADOPT A PET

### Bells

Hi, I'm Bells, like "Jingle Bells," but the fun part! I am a 2-year-old female domestic shorthair that was brought to the Pet Center as a stray. I love it when someone stops by to visit me and give me chin rubs and cuddles. I am very affectionate, litter trained and ready to have a "forever" home. If you have room in your heart, I will fill it with joy this holiday!



### Merry



I am a 3-year-old domestic shorthair tabby with a very calm disposition. Please stop in and meet me. You will see I need a home. I am quiet and shy here at the Pet Center because I am missing my litter of kittens and would love to be under your Christmas tree this year where I will feel wanted. Won't you please make my wishes come true?

## St. Johns County Pet Center

Cat adoptions at the St. Johns County Pet Center 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 off U.S. 1 between County Road 210 and International Golf Parkway. Business hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. 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, call the **St. Johns County Pet Center at (904) 209-6190.**

## BRIEFS

### Free Nights of Lights shuttle continues through Dec. 30

The City of St. Augustine's free park-and-ride shuttle for the Nights of Lights will be available from 1 to 11 p.m. every Saturday in December — except Christmas Day — as well as the five days following Christmas, Dec. 26-30. On Dec. 4, shuttle operations will begin at 8 a.m.

Riders may park at any one of three locations: St. Johns County Health Department, 200 San Sebastian View; San Marco Lot (north city), 301 San Marco Ave.; and the Broudy's lot (corner of U.S. 1 and West King Street).

Drop off and pick up will be at the Visitor Information Center, 10 S. Castillo Drive.

For more information about the Nights of Lights go to [NightsofLights.com](http://NightsofLights.com).

### COVID-19 testing site closed Sundays

The St. Johns County COVID-19 testing site at the Wind Mitigation Building, 3111 Agricultural Center Drive, is now closed on Sundays. The testing site remains open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, call 904-824-5550.

### State of the Arts grant recipients recognized

The St. Johns Cultural Council recognized recipients of its 2021 State of the Arts Grants on Nov. 16 with a reception at the Lightner Museum's Radzinski Family Garden in St. Augustine.

This year's grant recipients include A Classic Theatre, the St. Augustine Boys and Girls Club, Flagler College and the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum to fund costs of the exhibition "Magic, Mirth and Mortality: Musings on Black Motherhood," the "Resilience: Black Heritage in St. Augustine" collaborative event, Saint Augustine Concert Band and Sebastian Middle School for a printmaking project for 400 students.

For more information go to [stjohnsculture.com/grants-awards/state-of-the-arts-grant](http://stjohnsculture.com/grants-awards/state-of-the-arts-grant).

### DeSantis signs legislation opposing COVID mandates

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

M	E	C	C	A	A	C	T			C	U	B	E						
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3	7	1	2	8	4	9	5	6
9	5	8	1	6	7	3	4	2
1	3	6	4	2	9	8	7	5
2	4	7	8	3	5	1	6	9



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Contributed photo

**Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty is collecting new, unwrapped toys for Toys for Tots at its Ponte Vedra Beach/Nocatee office. Pictured from left are Ilka Goitia-Sepulveda, Theresa LaPolla, Holly Hayes, Pam Belcher, Kathy Wussler and Bill Irwin.**

# Real estate firm collecting for Toys for Tots

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty is accepting donations for its annual Toys for Tots collection, supporting the program run by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

The real estate firm's Ponte Vedra Beach/Nocatee branch office is collecting new, unwrapped toys for children of all ages, newborn to 17 years old, until Dec. 13.

Gifts will be distributed to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them holiday gifts.

Donors may bring the toys to the

company's branch office in the Sawgrass Village Shopping Center, 333 Village Main St., Suite 670, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Donations also may be purchased online from the company's Amazon wish list (Berkshire Hathaway HSFNR Toys for Tots) and shipped directly to the branch office.

"We are proud to support Toys for Tots, and it is our hope that our community will partner with us to help ensure that no child goes without a Christmas gift," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty CEO Kevin Waugaman.

## Briefs

Continued from 2

Nov. 18 that will protect Floridians from losing their jobs due to COVID-19 vaccine mandates and protect parents' rights to make health care decisions for students. The bills were passed through a special session of the state legislature.

Where employers wish to require COVID-19 vaccinations, employees may make use of numerous exemptions and may opt instead for testing, the cost of which employers would have to cover. Employers in violation will be fined.

In addition, government entities may

not require COVID-19 vaccinations of anyone, including employees; educational institutions may not require students to be COVID-19 vaccinated; and school districts may not require face masks in school and may not quarantine healthy students.

Students and parents may sue violating school districts and recover costs and attorney's fees.

Also, state Attorney General Ashley Moody announced that Florida has filed a lawsuit challenging a mandate by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requiring health care workers at facilities accepting Medicare or Medicaid funds to be vaccinated.

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**5 Bedroom, 6 Bathrooms, 5 Half Bathrooms \$6,200,000**



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### Ponte Vedra Boulevard

An idyllic home in Old Ponte Vedra just steps from the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club across from the ocean on the Boulevard. The 3,300 sq. ft. residence is one of the last originals and sits on .54 acres on hole #3 of The Ocean Course. Huge front and back yards, circular paved driveway, and a separate guest suite. The possibilities are endless! **Main House: 5 Bedrooms, 4 Bathrooms, Guest Suite: 1 Bedroom, 2 Baths. \$4,415,400**



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*Toys must be dropped off by December 16<sup>th</sup> and Raffle Drawing held at noon  
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Contributed photo

The trees are decorated in white ribbons personalized with the names of loved ones.

## Community Hospice plans Tree of Life, candlelight service

Community Hospice & Palliative Care's 31st annual Tree of Life and Candlelight Services of Remembrance will be held from 5:45 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 2, and Tuesday, Dec. 7, to honor the memory of loved ones.

The event is an inspiring program of music, verse and reflection. Participants are invited to bring a photo of their loved ones to display on the memory table.

The Hadlow Campus will be illuminated with lights representing each patient served by Community Hospice since 1979. The Chapman Campus will also be adorned with lights, and both campuses will have evergreen trees decorated in white ribbons personalized with the names of loved ones.

"This year will be my 17th year attending the Tree of Life," said Melissa Schoolcraft. "I started going to honor my father and now have made it a family tradition as my mother now attends to honor her father. I gain so much at this service as it helps me deal with my grief, reflect on

fond memories, and makes me feel good knowing I'm honoring my loved ones."

Community Hospice invites area residents to remember their loved ones at the celebration.

The services are:

- Dec. 2 at the Earl B. Hadlow Center for Caring, 4266 Sunbeam Road, Jacksonville
- Dec. 7 at the Stephen R. Chapman Family Community Campus, 1355 U.S. 1 South, St. Augustine

A prelude performance will be held from 5:45 to 6 p.m., followed by the Service of Remembrance.

In addition to attending one of the ceremonies, people can purchase one of the gifts available to commemorate someone dear to them as part of this special evening and to help support quality, compassionate care for the patients and families who are helped each day.

For more information, call 904-886-3883 or go to TOL.CommunityHospice.com.

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*Clare Berry*

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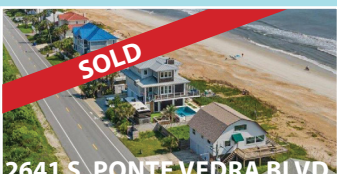
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All properties listed are in Ponte Vedra unless otherwise noted.



*Bruce Jones has been CEO of Vicar's Landing since 2012. Over the years he has embraced the challenge of overseeing the community's future growth, which includes the current construction going on at the new Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge.*

## Bruce Jones

### As told to Anthony Richards

#### Can you please tell us a little bit about your background and how you got to where you are?

I knew I wanted to work in health care and after graduate school, I had the opportunity to work for a real estate investment trust that invested in senior housing properties.

As the due diligence manager, I was able to visit wonderful communities all over the country and see the great work they were doing.

That piqued my interest in operations, so I left to become licensed as a nursing home administrator. After running a nursing home in Gainesville, I was invited to run the health care at Vicar's Landing and fell in love with the community.

After my predecessor left in late 2012, I was asked to take over as CEO and have enjoyed the challenge and the opportunity to be a part of the growth of Vicar's Landing.

#### What are the most rewarding parts of being CEO at Vicar's Landing?

There are so many rewarding parts of this career. I get to be a part of providing exceptional care and services to a community of fascinating people, I work alongside a dedicated and compassionate staff, and now we have the excitement of growing at Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge to meet the huge demand for our product.

I love what we offer, too, as we provide peace of mind for the future and a vibrant quality of life for today!

#### What are some of the projects and future plans you are working on?

Our most obvious project at the moment is the new construction at Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge.

Once built out, we are planning on having 175 additional homes for independent living and 60 high-quality assisted-living homes, some of which will be purpose-built to care for those residents with dementia.

We will also have two dining venues, fitness spaces, plenty of outdoor activities, and, with shuttle service between the two campuses, our members can take advantage of all we have to offer.

Besides the Oak Bridge project, we are always looking at how we can add value for residents of Vicar's Landing. Projects have ranged from improvements to our member woodshop to our croquet and bocce courts to our latest safety improvement of converting to electronic locks.

#### What are some of the challenges that you face with your job?

The biggest challenge right now is the same for every business - finding excellent staff.

We are proud to have been a Great Place to Work, to have the Governor's Gold Seal Award of Excellent in Long Term Care, and to be accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and have a lot to offer as an employer, but there are not enough workers available to meet the demand for open positions.

Another challenge is that we fall under regulations from several federal and state agencies, so keeping up with changes due to the pandemic has been interesting.



Photo courtesy of Bruce Jones

**Bruce Jones is the CEO of Vicar's Landing in Ponte Vedra Beach. It is a position he has held since 2012.**

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

I was born and raised on the Space Coast and lived in Orlando for several years.

What I love about being a bit further north is that we have seasons up here! I enjoy the friends I have made, and the amenities offered in greater Jacksonville.

It's been a great place to live and raise my kids.

#### What do you like to do in your free time?

When away from work, I spend time with my family and support my kids' activities.

My daughter is a senior and is a competitive Western equestrian and leader in our church youth group and worship team. My son is in his last year of middle school and plays golf and baseball, plays in the school band, and is in a community theater production this December.

I can't forget our active dog we adopted from another great local organization, K9s for Warriors. They all keep my wife and me quite busy.





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# Amara Med Spa adds locations, grows vision

By Anthony Richards

Amara Med Spa opened its initial location in Ponte Vedra March 15 as a vision of owner Greg Smith.

That vision has quickly grown with a location in Avondale opening recently and another set to open at St. Johns Town Center at the start of the new year.

According to Smith, the idea behind the spa came from his travels and having the opportunities to spend time in various spas throughout the country over the years.

Smith has called Ponte Vedra home since 1987, and after visiting places like Miami and Aspen, Colorado, he realized there were certain services and an atmosphere that he wanted to bring to the people of Ponte Vedra and the surrounding areas.

"I felt like North Florida needed state-of-the-art and cutting-edge options," Smith said. "It's all about capturing a true spa experience, and not just feeling like you're



Amara Med Spa opened its first location in Ponte Vedra in March.

going to the doctor."

Since he began the venture in March, he has been happy with the fact that they have received a warm reception from the clients they have interacted with.

A common feedback Smith has received is by people telling him what a different experience it was from anything they had been through.

"It is very comfortable for them," Smith said. "The goal is to take them into an aesthetic journey."

Smith's background is not in the spa world but in the medical device industry.

However, he sees himself as an entrepreneur and has welcomed the opportunity to present something special to the community.

He understood that to achieve customer satisfaction it starts with the quality of the employees that the customers interact with.

"Our moto was to assemble the best staff in the area," Smith said. "Once you've done that, a lot of the rest will take care of itself."

Smith believes the company has done just that and is proud of the level of the staffs that have been assembled.

As locations continue to pop up at a quick rate, Smith keeps his eyes on the future and hopes to add plastic surgery as an option down the road.

Some of the services provided include cosmetic injections, body contouring and hair restoration and removal.

For more information and a full list of options available go to [theamaramedspa.com](http://theamaramedspa.com) or call 904-686-7525.

The spas are open weekdays 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Photos by Susan Griffin

Amara Med Spa's goal is to offer a true spa experience to its customers.



Several people showed up as part of the ribbon cutting ceremony after Amara Med Spa joined the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce.




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# Holiday party, Santa visit and more at the link

Celebrate the holidays with the whole family on Dec. 18 at the link. Meet Santa, ride the polar express train, enjoy sweets and treats and watch a performance at the Pavilion in Flagler Health+ Village. Admission is free. To RSVP, go to [eventbrite.com/e/holiday-party-meet-santa-in-a-winter-wonderland-tickets-219197705237](https://eventbrite.com/e/holiday-party-meet-santa-in-a-winter-wonderland-tickets-219197705237) or at [bit.ly/3pesNIU](https://bit.ly/3pesNIU).

Here's the schedule for the festive event:

- **4-6 p.m. Party at the link.** Meet Santa in the Flagler Health+ Immersive Studio. Watch a skit performance by Sapna Academy students based on a "Polar Express" theme. Sweets and treats and magical decorations will bring out the holiday spirit in all.
- **6-7 p.m. Polar express train ride.** Flagler Health+ Village parking lot only for registered attendees.
- **7-8:30 p.m. Holiday music concert in the Nocatee Performance Pavilion in**

## Flagler Health+ Village.

For further information, email [sales@thelink.zone](mailto:sales@thelink.zone).

The link is located at 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra Beach.

## More fun planned

Looking for more holiday excitement? Here's a look at some of the upcoming activities and events this month at the link:

### • Saturday, Dec. 11 — First Regional Gingerbread House Competition

The link & Flagler Health+ will host this inaugural competition. Bring your imagination and supplies so that your team can build your ultimate gingerbread creation. Teams will have three hours to complete their projects.

All creations will be on display for a week so people can cast a vote for their favorites. Go to [thelink.zone](https://thelink.zone) for more details. Registration is required; go to [eventbrite.com/e/215711738617](https://eventbrite.com/e/215711738617).

### • Sunday, Dec. 12 — Dance Master Class

This Dance Master Class will include precision dance technique and choreography. In addition, there will be a great one-on-one Q&A with a former Radio City Rockette. Parents are encouraged to arrive 10 minutes before the end of the class to watch kids perform the learned choreography. Ages 7 and older.

Space is limited. Go to [thelink.zone](https://thelink.zone) for

more details and to register.

### • Winter Camps will continue at the link during break.

Kids' Culinary Camp is Dec. 22-24; LEGO Robotics Camp is Dec. 23-30; Tumble / Dance Camp is Dec. 27-29; and Olympic Style Fencing Camp is Dec. 27-29.

Space is limited. Go to [thelink.zone](https://thelink.zone) for more details and register for camp via the link's app.

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**OBITUARIES**

**Evan T. Bell**

Evan T. Bell passed away on November 21, 2021. He was born on July 2, 1974, in Hazleton, PA. He attended Hazleton Area High School and Bishop Hafey High School, and then attended Stetson University in Deland, FL. After school, he lived and worked in Orlando for General Electric before moving to the Jacksonville, FL area. He began working at CSX in the year 2000. Evan married Rebecca (Hopper) on March 8, 2003, in St. Augustine, FL. In his spare time, Evan loved to watch and play sports, including basketball, golf, softball and cheering on his beloved Jaguars. He loved boating and fishing and all things outdoors. Evan coached and rooted on his children in their sports. He loved to play trivia with his family and friends.

Evan is survived by his wife Rebecca and their three children: Lucas, Trevor and Vivian; his sister, Janet (Bell) Rohatgi, Nazareth, PA; and his brother, Jonathan Bell, Keylares, PA. He is preceded in death by his parents John and Ruth (Price) Bell. Evan served on several boards, including his Fraternity, Delta Sigma Phi, as well as on the board of directors for various rail industry groups, such as GoRail and Rail Marketplace. He donated to several charities annually, including his childhood YMCA in Freeland, PA.

A memorial service will be held in his honor on December 3, 2021, at 11 am at Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, 4750 Palm Valley Road Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.

# Holiday tours offered at 18th-century house

The Ximenez-Fatio House Museum in St. Augustine is offering its "Holiday Traditions by Candlelight" tour on various dates this month and in January.

Held during the city's popular Nights of Lights, this family-friendly nighttime event will feature holiday stories of the 1800s. The house dates back to circa 1798.

The 45-minute tours will begin at 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8

p.m. on Dec. 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18 and 31; and on Jan. 1, 7 and 8.

Tickets are \$15. Reservations are required. RSVP at [ximenezfatiohouse.org/holiday2021](http://ximenezfatiohouse.org/holiday2021).

The Ximenez-Fatio House Museum is located at 20 Aviles St., St. Augustine. For more information, go to [ximenezfatiohouse.org](http://ximenezfatiohouse.org).

Photo provided by the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum



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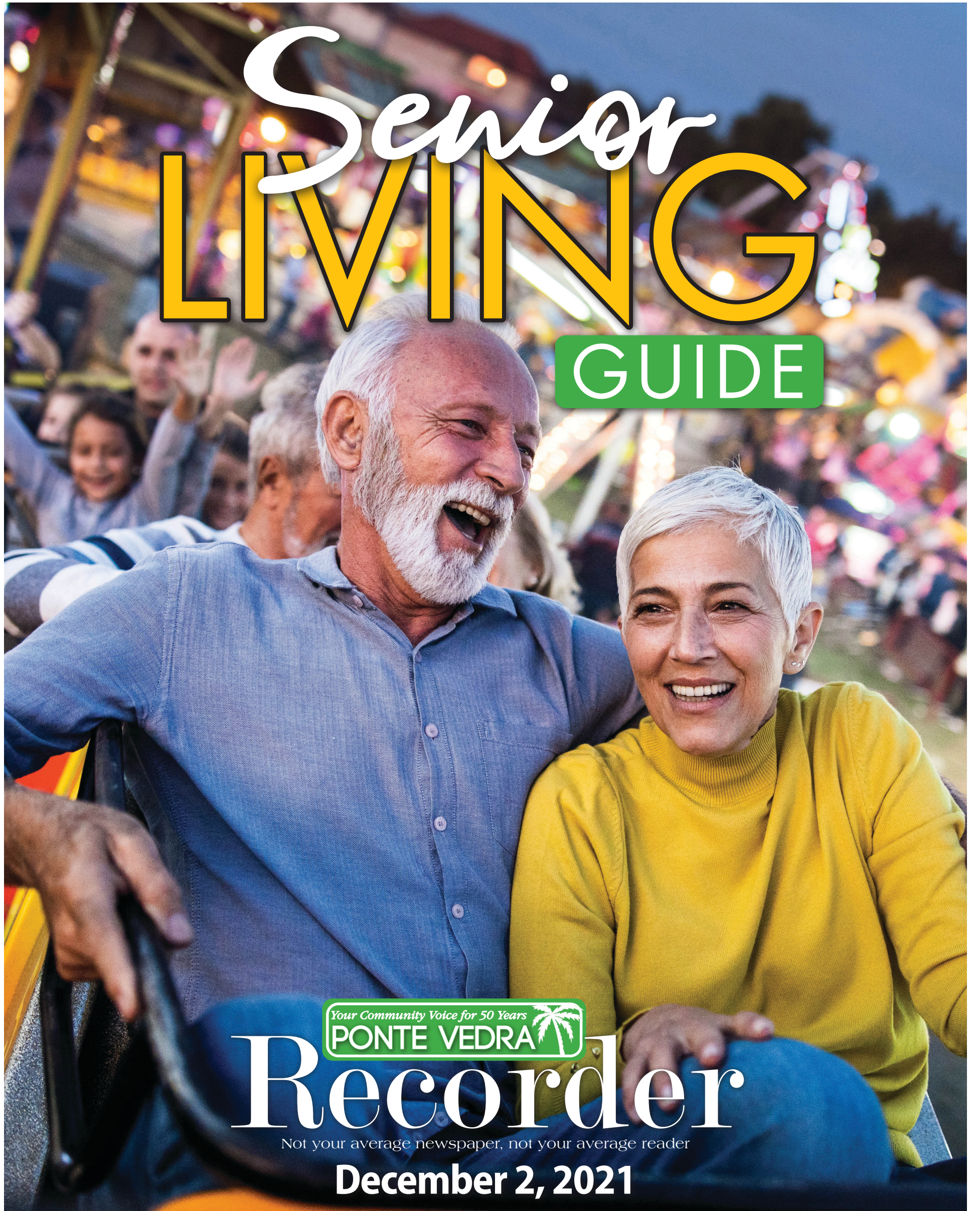
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# Senior LIVING GUIDE



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# Recorder

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

December 2, 2021



# Cypress Village honors those who served

## Veteran's Wall unveiled

Each year at Cypress Village the community's Veterans Committee holds events honoring veterans who have made Cypress Village their home. This year for Veterans Day the community celebrated the unveiling of the new Veteran's Wall and hosted the annual Veterans Day dinner to honor the dedication and commitment of the 124 current veterans, as well as the spouses and widows of those who served our country – many of whom served during World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars.

At 11 a.m. in the Cypress Village Train lobby filled with veterans, their families, residents and employees, Veterans Committee chair Bill Wirth led the community in the unveiling of the new wall.

"Somewhere near the beginning our adult lives," he said, "many of us had the opportunity to serve our country as a member of one of the Armed Forces. Most of us would look back and understand that it was an experience that gave early and lasting shape to our character... After those years of service ended, we were better individuals than we were before our service began. We are nostalgic about our comrades, and we try to regain just a taste of those friendships when we gather on patriotic occasions here at Cypress Village to share some of our military history with other veterans."

The wall was created as a collaboration

CYPRESS continues on Page 19



Contributed photos

Attendees recite the Pledge of Allegiance.



Cypress Village holds its Veterans Day dinner.

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# Caregivers Resource Forum to be held Dec. 2

Council on Aging (COA) will hold a Caregivers Resource Forum from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 2, at COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra.

Members of the public are invited to attend the free event and learn more about the resources, education and support services available to caregivers in St. Johns County.

Advance registration is required as space is limited.

To register, email Catherine Tupper at ctupper@coasjc.org, or call 904-209-3700.

Presentations and services will include:

## Integrative Memory Enhancement Program overview

9:30-10 a.m. Presented by Catherine Tupper, COA IMEP manager, and Myra Fisher, COA IMEP coordinator

IMEP, the Integrative Memory Enhancement Program, is COA's groundbreaking program designed to slow the progression of memory loss and dementia, and boost cognitive reserves. The program provides stimulating group activities in a relaxed, classroom environment that encourages fun and camaraderie.

## Mayo Clinic's HABIT Program overview

10-11 a.m. Presented by Dr. Melanie Chandler, Ph.D., Mayo Clinic

Chandler is board-certified clinical neuropsychologist at Mayo Clinic Florida. Her professional responsibilities include a mixture of research, patient care and teaching. She co-founded the Healthy Actions to Benefit Independence and Thinking program that provides behavioral interventions and rehabilitation techniques in patients with mild cognitive impairment.

## Community-Caregiving Caregiver Resources

11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Presented by Paulette Kozlowski, RN, COA adult day health care and community care-giving manager

Has your loved one been diagnosed with dementia? Facing problems and need someone to talk to? Not sure what to do next? COA's Community Care-Giving program is here to help. It is a free, confidential service for St. Johns County residents and their families.

# December events at COA center in Nocatee

The following programs will be held at COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205, Ponte Vedra. Registration is required as space is limited. Unless otherwise noted, call 904-819-3234 or contact pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com to register.

## CLASSES:

**French for You:** This class is for all levels. At 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays starting Dec. 7. Runs for four weeks. Register at coasjc.coursestorm.com/category/coa-center-at-nocatee.

**Game Day:** Bring your favorite game and friends or come alone and meet new ones. From 9:30 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Dec. 7. Advance registration required.

Call 904-819-3234 or email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com.

**Holiday Bingo:** Play bingo and win prizes. From 2 to 3:30 p.m. Dec. 28. Advance registration required. Call 904-819-3234 or email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com.

## FREE CLUBS AND MEETINGS:

Meetings will be self-guided by the group, except for the Caregiver's Support Group. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required by calling 904-819-3234 or via email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com.

**Widows and Widowers:** Social group meeting the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



**Caregiver Support Group:** Meets 1-2 p.m. Dec. 7 and 21. A trained facilitator is present at every meeting to guide the group.

**Community Crafting:** Bring your craft and work on it with friends. Get new ideas and socialize with other crafters. This group meets from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. every Wednesday.

**Genealogy Group:** A genealogy expert will be present to guide attendees from 1 to 3 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month.

**Mah Jongg:** For experienced players. No instructor present. From 1 to 3 p.m. Dec. 1, 8, 14, 22 and 29.

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Contributed photo

Pictured from left are association president Tracie Parson; event co-chair Theresa Shane; Amanda Patch, Beaches Council on Aging board member; event co-chair Lynn Moody; and Bruce Mohler, head golf professional and shop administrator.

# Ghost, Goblins and Golf raises money for seniors

Jacksonville Beach Ladies Golf Association held its Ghost, Goblins and Golf Invitational on Oct. 26. Volunteers provided a raffle of about 20 items and a 50/50 cash drawing. Theresa Shane and Lynn Moody were co-chairs.

There were overall winners, flight winners and special awards given out at the luncheon that followed.

The association raised \$1,000, which was donated to the Beaches Council on Aging program, Dial A Ride.

Dial A Ride has been assisting Beaches homebound seniors since 1975. The free service includes door-to-door service to seniors (age 62-plus) who can no longer drive, as well as disabled adults from Mayport to Ponte Vedra Beach.

“I am honored to be surrounded by such community-minded, giving individuals and, along with Bruce (Mohler) and the pro shop staff, we hosted close to 50 golfers who were so excited to play our course and support our charity,” said association president Tracie Parsons.

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# Fire station donated by Ponte Vedra couple saving lives in Israel

A fire station in Israel donated by a Ponte Vedra Beach couple proved its worth as fires raged in the country's north in November.

The station was the donation of Penny and Stephen Rosen, previously of Brooklyn Heights, New York. It is located in the northern Jewish-Arab city of Ma'alot Tarshiha.

Twenty-six fire crews recently responded to a large-scale brushfire in the Hacienda Forest while more than 100 houses were evacuated.

The Rosens donated the state-of-the-art fire station through Jewish National Fund-USA (JNF-USA) in memory of their late son, Adam, as part of their ongoing philanthropic support for the land and people of Israel. They were on hand in 2019 for the station's dedication.

"We are saddened to hear of another fire in the Hacienda Forest," said Penny Rosen, who is a JNF-USA Fire and Rescue Task Force co-chair. "However, we are also proud that the fire and rescue station that my husband, Stephen, and I built in our beloved son Adam's memory was in place to respond. These devastating

fires are a stark reminder as to why we need to keep building and helping equip as many areas in Israel as possible with modern firefighting equipment."

Alon Mazar, spokesperson for Israel's Fire and Rescue Authority, added that despite popular belief, summer is not necessarily the peak time for fires in his country.

"Spring and fall are in fact the most dangerous times of year for the rapid spread of fires," Mazar said. "For example, in 2010 we had the Carmel disaster, and again in 2016, the Carmel region had another major fire. Then, in 2019 we had large fires in Mevo Modiin. All three events that were not in the summer – May, November and December. In our case, they are the most dangerous seasons that are characterized by winds coming in from the east – strong winds that do not come from the sea. They are eastern winds from the interior of the country and are characterized as dry and strong. It is enough to turn a small fire into a major catastrophic event."

**FIRE STATION** continues on **Page 17**



Contributed photo

**Stephen and Penny Rosen with JNF-USA CEO Russell F. Robinson, from left, attend the 2019 dedication of the fire station.**

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# A cheerful performance

Photos courtesy of Starling at Nocatee Independent Living

The following photos are from a Nov. 16 visit from the Palm Valley Academy and Pine Island Academy cheer squads for the residents at Starling at Nocatee Independent Living. The teams performed dance routines and spent time playing games with the residents.



Members of the Palm Valley Academy cheer squad show off their dancing skills.



The visit provided quality time between younger and older generations.



Residents and the cheerleaders shared in conversation and played games during their visit.



It was a day full of cheer at Starling at Nocatee Independent Living thanks to a visit from the Palm Valley Academy and Pine Island Academy cheer squads.



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## Caregivers

Continued from 13

### Complimentary caregiver neck and shoulder massages

11 a.m.-2 p.m. Courtesy of Aesthetix Plus Medical Spa

Aesthetix Plus Medical Spa will offer complimentary caregiver neck and shoulder massages in the Caregivers Forum meeting room to help relieve tension and stress from your day. They will also offer complimentary facial consultations.

For more information on resources available for caregivers and upcoming events at COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, go to [coajc.org](http://coajc.org) or call 904-209-3700.







Contributed photo

The Ma'alot Tarshiha Deputy Fire Commissioner Shimon Ben Ner speaks at the fire station dedication in 2019.

## Fire station

Continued from 15

Israel's Fire and Rescue Authority along with volunteer firefighters are already getting ready for the summer months.

"We are updating our plans and preparedness in cooperation with the government and relevant authorities," said Head of Security for Israel's Eshkol Region Ilan Isaacson. "And thanks to Jewish National Fund-USA, we have the equipment that we need to reduce our response time to fires as well as the tools to effectively fight fires."

Through its Fire and Rescue Task Force, JNF-USA has been a primary partner to the Israel Fire and Rescue Authority, outfitting Israel's firefighters with state-of-the-art lifesaving equipment such as oxygen tanks, fire-retardant suits, firefighting vehicles and fire station facilities.

The organization has also invested in enhancing and rebuilding Israel's volunteer fire fighter program, which trains and provides safety equipment and gear to volunteers who serve as the first line of defense in the remote communities of northern and southern Israel that are difficult for authorities to reach in times of emergency.

## Libraries host 'Giving Trees' to help nonprofits

In the spirit of the holiday season, the St. Johns County Public Library System is once again hosting St. Johns CARES Inc. "Giving Trees" at four branch libraries through Tuesday, Dec. 7. This annual initiative has been held each year since St. Johns CARES was established in 2007 as an all-volunteer organization committed to assisting local charities in St. Johns County.

Patrons are invited to fill "wishes" placed as paper ornaments on seasonal trees. Each ornament contains a client wish from one of 40 local nonprofit organizations serving the elderly, veterans, those experiencing homelessness, children and animals in St. Johns County.

"Communities come together through the library and this program is one we

look forward to each year," says Heather Sostrom, branch manager of the Anastasia Island Branch Library. "We are proud to partner with the volunteers from St. Johns CARES Inc. again to make the holidays a little brighter for community members in need."

Collection boxes and "Giving Trees" are located at the Ponte Vedra Beach, Anastasia Island, Bartram Trail and Southeast branch libraries. Donations will be collected, sorted and boxed for the nonprofit organizations by St. Johns CARES. Monetary donations are accepted and will be used to purchase unfulfilled wishes and needs.

For additional information about St. Johns CARES or to make a monetary donation, go to [stjohnscares.org](http://stjohnscares.org).



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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

*"The palm tree that sways in the breeze stays standing the longest"*



Kathy Esfahani

By Kathy Esfahani

### PALM TREES

As we see all around us in Florida, palm trees are a popular staple for our landscaping. The very tall, thin palms you see everywhere are sabal palms (also known as cabbage palms) and are native to Florida.

However, there are many other beautiful types of palms that can flourish in our zone. Here are a few of our favorites at Kathy's Nursery:

• **Sylvester Palms (Phoenix Sylvestris)** – These come in a variety of heights to fit most landscapes and create a beautiful ambience. They have a neat diamond-cut trunk but are large trees that need to be a distance from the home.



Sylvester palm

• **Queen Palms** – These palms are stately with bright glossy leaves that are gorgeous in the wind. Their fronds cascade over, which creates a tropical vibe. Bright

orange dates hang in ornamental clusters. They are common around patios and pool areas of relaxation.

• **Bismarck Palms** – These silvery blue-green palms are a show stopper with their huge fronds and robust trunks. Their fronds can span up to 16 feet. They are fast growers and thrive in full sun. Certainly a focal point of your landscaping.



Robellini palm

• **Sago Palms** – These wide-trunk palms are dark green and lush. They will not grow to be too high with their large cone of seeds growing out of the middle. The seeds are poisonous to pets, so we tend to keep them out of our fur-friendly homes.

• **European Fan Palms** – These palms are very hardy and slow growing. They are not sensitive to cold weather and grow 8 to 15 feet tall. Their fronds are fine textured, which makes them stick out in landscaping, and the color can range from dark green to silver.

• **Majestic Palms** – This palm loves humidity, which is perfect for our Floridian climate. The fronds' fullness can fan out to 15 feet in height. They are also slow

## FLOWER OF THE WEEK

Snapdragons



Photos provided by Kathy Esfahani

grows that don't mind some shade, but love water and naturally wet areas.

*Flower of the Week: Snapdragons*

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

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# Cypress

Continued from 12

with Cypress Village management and the Veterans Committee. The display was created by resident Mike Boutin and the Community Life Services Department to include the names of all active veteran residents and employees, widows and widowers, along with their branches of service.

The vinyl presentation of the United States flag along with the iconic scene of the flag raising at Iwo Jima was designed by Fast Signs in Jacksonville. The bronze crests of each branch of service were special-ordered by the residents through Metal Designs NY. And the hand-stained wood frame was the work of resident Floren Fisher as a part of the Cypress Village Wood Workshop.

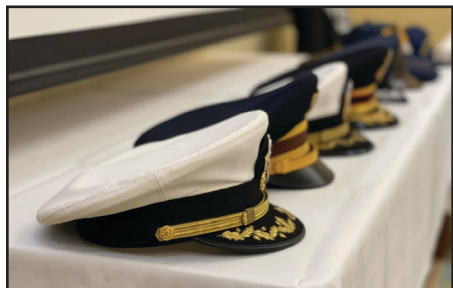
After the unveiling, residents and their families gathered for photographs, shared stories of their service, and participated in friendly banter between the different branches of the Armed Forces that were present. Jim Jandreau, a member of the Cypress Village Veterans Committee, also showcased the newest Army standard uniform – a homage to the WW II uniform, bringing back the traditional pinks and greens.

That evening, all 124 resident veteran service members were invited to a special presentation in Egret Hall to honor their hard work and celebrate their service to the country. Additional remarks were heard from Wirth and the Veterans Committee, the colors were presented by the Cypress Village Color Guard, a special thank you was given from Ty Morgan, executive director of the community, and all the residents joined in singing the different service songs for each branch.

A lone table sat empty, set to remind those in attendance of the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who have never returned from the conflicts America has endured over its history.

This year's dinner consisted of three courses, including filet mignon and seared shrimp, and a chocolate bomb desert mousse. Cypress Village's executive chef Patrick called it an honor to be able to serve such a group of residents, and many in attendance listed this as their favorite event of the year.

"We are so thankful for our veterans" said Morgan. "It is our honor and our privilege to serve them as they have done so willingly for us. It is events like today that remind us why we do what we do, and who we are doing it for."



Veterans Day branch caps



Contributed photos

**A lone table sits empty, set to remind those in attendance of the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who have never returned from the conflicts America has endured over its history.**



U.S. Army veteran Tom and Jettie Johnston



U.S. Army veteran George Wilson



U.S. Navy veteran Bill Wirth



U.S. Army veteran Jim Jandreau



TABLE TALK

# Transformed Hakka Kitchen welcomes gourmet chef

Contributed photos



By Leigh Cort

The House of Leaf & Bean, has transformed its dining experience in only 12 days!

Now the Hakka Kitchen, Wen Raiti's dream restaurant, has a beautiful new ambience, new menu and dynamic new chef, Marshall Ziehm.

Leigh Cort

The Hakka influence comes from Chinese characters that mean "guest families." Wen and Marshall are collaborating to maintain her philosophy of plant-based Chinese countryside cuisine, along with the chef's dynamic style of cooking and presentation.

The contemporary vibe invites you to enjoy lunch and dinner at cozy pillowed banquettes, tables for two, "social" tables where you can dine with other discerning guests or at the appealing counter where you can enjoy the aromatic dishes that come steaming from the kitchen.

For five years, Wen has proudly preserved her tiny meditation room for patrons and friends who enjoy taking a moment from their busy days to relax in tranquility. Her incredible knowledge of teas and tea ceremonies will continue to lure people to learn about the extensive teas that Hakka Kitchen loves to pair with dining and also offers on its tea wall.

The new collaboration between Wen and Chef Ziehm is a perfect blending of Wen's philosophy of healthful, healing dishes that are delicious and affordable. She



Marshall Ziehm

believes that what we eat and how we prepare our food should be simple, sustainable and beneficial not only for our health but also for our environment. Chef sees the Hakka Kitchen also as a community to educate and offer the most beautiful and delectable foods that adhere to the plant-based Asian countryside theme.

All of the dishes use either USDA-certified organic ingredients, vegetables sourced from local farmers who



Wen Raiti

practice organic farming or seafood that is wild-caught, not farm-raised. They don't use preservatives or chemical additives or products that include them. They are proud to serve and deliver healthy, fresh and organic meals in their beautiful restaurant.

One of the unique ingredients that Chef Ziehm and

**HAKKA** continues on Page 21

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Hakka Kitchen meditation room





Zeng's Cui Pi Doufu



Southern Expedition Baozi



Bao Gong Black Tofu

## Hakka

Continued from 20

Wen offer is their popular tofu, which they make in-house, following traditional Chinese recipes. It's always fresh, organic and made with the highest quality organic soybeans. The exciting menu finds tofu surprising in so many various ways from crispy tofu bites or steamed buns filled with organic black tofu to soft tofu marinated in mushroom soy or pan-fried tofu in a spicy red curry sauce.

Here's a look at the selections:

- Zeng's Cui Pi Doufu (Crispy Tofu Bites with Chi-

### nese Garlic Sauce)

Inspired by a Fujian snack food named after Zeng Jinyan, a Hakka daughter from Fujian and a famous blogger. Zeng was named one of Time Magazine's 100 People Who Shaped Our World in 2007.

- Southern Expedition Baozi

Steamed buns with black tofu, shiitake mushrooms and organic vegetables. Legend attributes the creation of baozi to the famous general Zhuge Liang's Southern Expedition in the early third century.

- Bao Gong Black Tofu

Soft tofu marinated in mushroom soy, stuffed with roasted garlic, steamed, with stir-fried crunchy vegetables. Black tofu is a house original inspired by the flavors and ingredients of the Hakka heritage.

Or sample a few of these menu items:

- **Popo's Jiaozi:** Handmade dumplings with organic tofu, potato, mushroom or Mayport Shrimp

- **Suns' Award-Winning Vegan Chili** (organic tofu and black beans)

- **Grandma's Secret Peanut Pancakes:** Desserts fusing traditional ingredients with modern innovation.

Join Wen Raiti on her "Journey to the East" and dine on family favorites created by Chef Marshall Ziehm.

For further information about Hakka Kitchen — Under the House of Leaf & Bean Brand go to [LoveHakkaKitchen.com](http://LoveHakkaKitchen.com).



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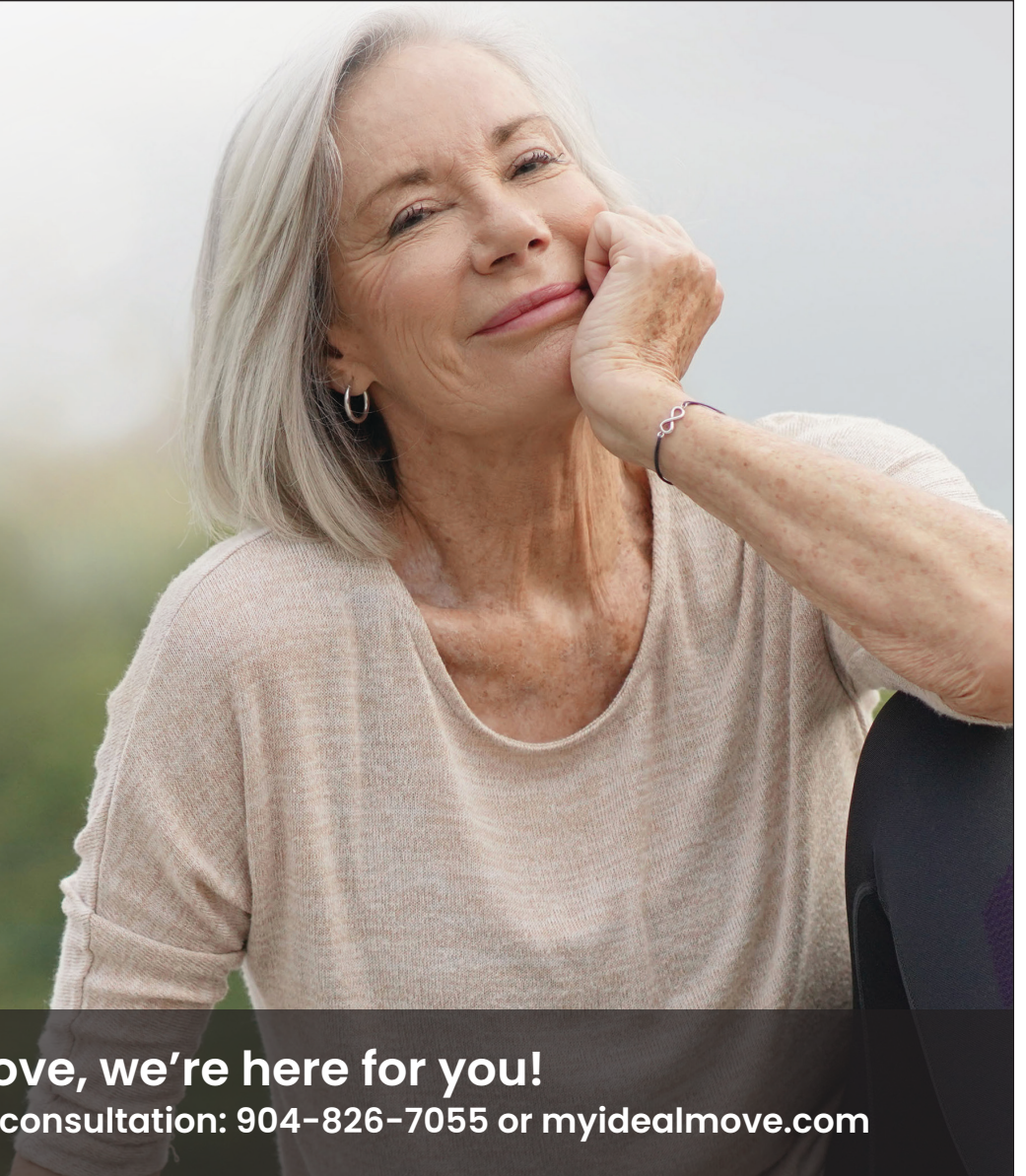
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# Business Weekly

For MORE business news, go to [facebook.com/ThePVRecorder](https://www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder)

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

## Underwood Jewelers hosts annual Ippolita trunk show



John Rutkowski, Ippolita Rostagno and Christy Bromberg.

Photos by Kristin Flanagan

By Anthony Richards

Underwood Jewelers continued its recent run of having some of the top designers in the business visit its Ponte Vedra Beach location to host trunk shows.

This time the honored guest was Ippolita Rostagno, who was on hand during the Nov. 18 showing for customers to meet with in person.

A special collection of unique pieces by Ippolita were on display for guests to view and purchase.

The Ippolita brand was founded by Rostagno in 1999, and she credits being born and raised in Italy as the inspiration behind her jewelry.

According to Rostagno's website, she views herself as an artist first and a jeweler second, and this mantra is what she has in mind when designing her jewelry.

The Ippolita trunk show has become an annual event hosted by Underwood at its Shoppes of Ponte Vedra location.



Illyse Greene and Sam Morley look over the jewelry selection.



Ellie Baumer and Jill Doyle were among many on hand to peruse the Ippolita Jewelry trunk show.



Carol Maurer and Rhendy Rowe.

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The NIGHTS OF LIGHTS and the park and ride shuttle are produced by the City of St. Augustine with funding assistance from the St. Johns County Tourist Development Council, but the success of the NIGHTS OF LIGHTS would not be possible without the wide participation of the St. Augustine Community.





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# RH Jacksonville opens in St. Johns Town Center

By Shaun Ryan

RH Jacksonville, The Gallery at St. Johns Town Center officially opened its doors Nov 19.

DeMonty Price, RH president and chief operating, service and values officer, told those gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony that he was proud to be in Jacksonville for the store's opening and excited for those assembled to see what the company had for them.

"I think it's really a tribute to the city of Jacksonville that they've chosen us, and they've chosen this location, and they see us as a growing, innovative community that really ties in with what they're trying to do with their brand," Kirk Wendland, executive director of Jacksonville's Office of Economic Development, said.

RH Jacksonville, at 4831 Village Shops Way, is housed in a three-story, 70,000-square-foot building. It is part luxury home furnishings store, part art and interior design gallery, part restaurant.

From the moment one steps through the 25-foot threshold of retractable glass-and-steel doors and enters the central hall with its 14-foot ceilings, it is obvious that this is no ordinary furniture store.

The central hall shows off the furnishings to advantage in a setting reminiscent of the most luxurious of homes. Natural light enters the hall from a large skylight three stories overhead, augmented by the radiant emanations of chandeliers. A grand, double floating staircase invites visitors to the second floor.

To either side, passageways lead visitors to sample rooms featuring RH Interiors collections from renowned designers.

Some of the featured lighting is the work of master glass designer Alison Berger, whose award-winning creations have been exhibited at some of the pre-eminent art and design museums.

Where the first floor is devoted to RH Interiors, the second floor focuses on furnishings in the RH Modern collection, exhibited in a 9,000-square-foot space. Here, customers will find compatible lighting, textiles and décor in addition to furniture.

Also located here is RH Interior Design, where designers work one-on-one with customers to determine what works best for them. Interactive RH Design Ateliers feature a large selection of fabrics and leathers, as well as furniture and lighting finishes. The RH Rugs Showroom focuses on hand-knotted and hand-woven rugs.



Photo provided by RH

RH Jacksonville, located at 4831 Village Shops Way, is housed in a three-story, 70,000-square-foot building.

Throughout the exhibition spaces, visitors will find works from notable artists. Many of the pieces are prints made with new 3-D technology that captures the authentic brushwork, texture and technique of the originals. These works are presented in cooperation with art collector Portia de Rossi, founder of GENERAL PUBLIC, an art curation and publishing company.

Continuing to the third floor, visitors encounter the Rooftop Restaurant. The seating is largely housed inside a steel-

and-glass atrium with French doors opening onto garden courtyards and terraces.

The Wine Bar features 60 curated wines, 40 of which are sold by the glass. Among the offerings here are rare wines from Napa Valley — normally unavailable in Northeast Florida.

RH Jacksonville is open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

**NOTE: This is an abridged version of the article. To read the entire story, please go to [pontevedrarecorder.com](http://pontevedrarecorder.com).**

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# In the Arts



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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

## Village Arts Framing and Gallery marks 46 years

Village Arts Framing and Gallery, located in Sawgrass Village, is celebrating 46 years in business.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 11, it will host its annual holiday open house. Visitors will find many paintings influenced by plein air depictions of Florida as well as still lifes, abstracts and portrait art.

Several artists will be in attendance that day to talk about their art and processes.

“Discovering our gallery of original oil paint-

ings, pastels, watercolors and photography is a surprise to many visitors and area residents,” said owner Pamela Keegan. “When people stop in to browse, I hear them say, ‘We didn’t realize you have such wonderful art here on exhibit.’ I tell them, ‘Yes, we are the best kept art secret in Ponte Vedra Beach.’”

Village Arts Framing and Gallery features works by local and regional artists, several who are award-winning and classically trained. It has more than 150 works on display.

“Many of our artists will work with clients to create larger commissions for their homes, too,” said Keegan.

Keegan and gallery manager Lisa Cederberg are both artists and have a combined framing experience of more than 50 years.

“We make framing art a friendly and enjoyable process,” said Keegan. “We invite you to discover our Ponte Vedra Beach ‘holiday artwalk.’”

For additional information, go to villageartspvb.com.



Contributed photo

**Village Arts Framing and Gallery owner Pamela Keegan and gallery manager Lisa Cederberg.**

## Jacksonville Symphony to feature renowned pianist in concert

Internationally renowned pianist Alessio Bax will join the Jacksonville Symphony this week to present “Mozart’s Dream: Piano Concerto No. 21,” a part of the David M. Hicks Mozart Piano Series.

The symphony’s new concert grand piano will once again take the stage for these performances. The concert will be conducted by symphony Music Director Courtney Lewis.

Bax has been called one of “the most remarkable young pianists now before the public” by Gramophone magazine. He is a familiar face on five continents as a recitalist, chamber musician and concert soloist. He has appeared with more than 150 orchestras worldwide.

In addition to Mozart’s vibrant and

comedic Piano Concerto No. 21, the symphony will perform Bedřich Smetana’s zesty “Overture from The Bartered Bride,” a “vigorous and energetic work that celebrates the sheer joy of being alive,” according to Laurie Shulman, program annotator. Closing out the program is Antonín Dvořák’s “Symphony No. 7,” the inner movements of which are both “expressive and glorious.”

The concert will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 3, and Saturday, Dec. 4, at Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, 300 Water St., Jacksonville.

Tickets can be purchased at jaxsymphony.org or by calling the symphony box office at 904-354-5547.

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# Letters to Santa



We're accepting children's Letters to Santa for publication in The Ponte Vedra Recorder throughout December.

Letters can be hand-written and scanned or sent via email to [news@pontevedrarecorder.com](mailto:news@pontevedrarecorder.com). You can also mail an original letter to The Ponte Vedra Recorder office at 1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082.

Please send your letters by December 6th for inclusion in our weekly holiday content.

Letters will be edited if necessary for publication. Please include your phone number in case there are questions.

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File photo

The Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet will hold its 26th annual performance Dec. 11 at the University of North Florida's Lazzara Performance Hall.

## Christ Church Nutcracker set for Dec. 11

By Anthony Richards

This year marks the 26th Annual Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet, which is scheduled for 6 p.m. Dec. 11 at the University of North Florida's Lazzara Performance Hall.

The showcase is a passion of Felicia Rhoden's and has been since she started it as part of her creation of the dance ministry at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra Beach.

According to her daughter Claire Duffy, the scale of the performance has drastically grown over the years.

It began with about 12 participants in its first year and it was held at the church's parish hall, but now has more than 200 local performers, most of which come from Ponte Vedra Beach or the beaches area.

The fact that most of the performers are local has helped make it into a community holiday tradition.

The money raised from the show will go toward benefiting Dreams Come True, Community Hospice, St. Jude Children's Hospital and an orphanage in Bolivia that is a charity initiative at the church.

Members of those respective organizations will be on hand for the show.

"It's a great cause," Duffy said. "It teaches the children not just about dance, but what it means to give back. It reflects the true meaning of the season and makes your heart happy."

Performers from all ages will take part, including some that are regulars and play

a role each year.

According to Duffy, the play has reached the point in its 26th year that past performers are now having children that are set to join in the production, as well as some who are teenagers but have been involved with the play since they were 2 years old.

"It's a very family-oriented atmosphere," Duffy said. "It resembles everything that the Ponte Vedra community is all about. This is our show."

The play has become such a fixture in Rhoden's life that she continues to do even as she gets older.

"She is in her mid-80s now, but she still goes like the Energizer bunny," Duffy said. "She puts all of her time and effort into it."

That includes holding the play last year even after having to push it back to May and having a limited crowd due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"She was determined to have the show," Duffy said.

Duffy is happy to have this year's show be back to normal, taking place in December and having availability for a full crowd.

Tickets for the event are still on sale and can be purchased by going to [missfeliciasdance.com](http://missfeliciasdance.com) and clicking the "buy tickets" button. Doors will open at 5 p.m.

The Lazzara Performance Hall is a 1,300-seat facility located at Building 45, Suite 2400 on the UNF campus at 1 UNF Drive in Jacksonville.



# Sports



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## Panthers 'remarkable' season ends in elite eight

By Anthony Richards

Nease football's magical run came to an end following a 37-14 loss to Gainesville Buchholz on the road in the Class 6A regional finals.

Although the outcome was not what the teams and its fans wanted, it does not take away from the fact that they were one of the best eight teams throughout the state and have revitalized the program.

"There's a culture being built here," senior Aiden Kipp said. "The drive and the want are there."

It was a path that not many outside the walls of the Nease football facilities saw coming after the team had gone 1-9 each of the past two seasons.

"It's been a once-in-lifetime type of experience," senior Creed McClafferty said. "Nobody expected us to what we did after what we had been through. That adversity is what builds character, and

you can see it in this team. We bonded and stuck together, that's what really carried us."

However, something changed for the Panthers and according to head coach Collin Drafts, the credit for the improvement starts and ends with this year's senior class, which included 36 players, most of whom had endured the rough times that accompany two wins in two years.

"When you look back in the grand scheme of things at what we were able to accomplish was remarkable and legendary," Drafts said. "To go from one win to nine wins and the third round of the playoffs, those 36 seniors should be proud. I couldn't have asked for a better group of kids to coach."

According to senior Ben Bogle, the chemistry of the team began being

**PANTHERS** continues on **Page 29**



Photo by Anthony Richards

The Nease defense swarms to tackle a Gainesville Buchholz ball carrier.



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# Running to the top

## Sharks claim first girls cross country state title

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra girls cross country team kept getting faster as the season went along and the end result was the group winning the program's first state title.

The potential was there for something special to take place as the Sharks entered the Class 3A state meet at Apalachee Regional Park in Tallahassee as the No. 1 seed.

"We knew we were seeded No. 1, but we didn't want that to go to our heads," sophomore Amelia Tackling said. "We just wanted to treat it like any other meet."

When it was all said and done, the Sharks were able to do just that and pulled out some of their best performances of the season on the biggest and brightest stage.

The Sharks showcased the quality of their depth across the board with seven runners finishing the 5K run among the top 84 places.

Freshman Sofia Bushkell had the highest individual finish for the Sharks with a time of 18:34.9 and a fifth-place result.

Bushkell's pure talent and determination has not gone unnoticed, especially

among her teammates.

"Every photo you see of her running, on her face is this mean look," Tackling chuckled. "That's because she really wants it and is so good at what she does."

Senior Ellie Moritz ended her career with a 19:17.1 and a strong 15th-place finish and was followed by Tackling in 29th (19:52.9); Daisy Ross in 33rd (20:01); Lindy White in 45th (20:12.8); Hilaree Vega in 76th (20:39.4); and Aida Trejo in 84th (20:45.5) to round out the scoring.

Together the Sharks combined for 114 points, which was 16 points lower than runner-up Seminole Osceola.

"Everyone just works so hard," Tackling said. "When you put your heart into it, you'll do everything it takes to get it."

The top individual was Caroline Wells of Winter Springs with a time 16:56.6.

What makes the state title even more impressive is that the Sharks are such a young team with only two upperclassmen among their top runners in Moritz and Trejo, who is a junior.

"I'm excited to see who comes into the team (as freshmen) in the future, and how good these girls can continue to get," Tackling said.



Contributed photos

Ponte Vedra's Amelia Tackling, left to right, Ellie Moritz and Sofia Bushkell run during the district meet. They were the top three runners for the Sharks at state.

According to Tackling, she sought to replicate the same support and encouragement to the incoming freshmen as she received last year from the veterans on the team, including taking Bushkell "under her wing."

The close-knit nature of the team is something that continued to develop throughout the season and Tackling believes was the root to all their success.

Moritz was the one in charge of organizing many of the team bonding opportunities, which included getting their nails done and pasta parties.

"She's always been a role model for me," Tackling said.

For the full version of the story, go to [pontevedrarecorder.com](http://pontevedrarecorder.com).



The Sharks won the 2021 Class 3A girls cross country team title. It was the first in program history.

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# Panthers

Continued from 27

formed during the offseason.

“Last offseason, us seniors sat around in a circle, and we all said that we were going to buy in and go for it,” Bogle said. “From then on, we’ve just been going hard in the weight room and holding everybody accountable.”

Kipp transferred to Nease from Creekside just as fall practice began, and although he was new to the squad, it did not take the senior long to feel right at home.

“I came in and instantly everybody was so friendly, and it was like a family,” Kipp said. “It took me like a week to get to know everybody and I had already become friends. I’ve enjoyed every second

of this ride.”

Grant Stevens dealt with his own share of adversity this season after missing most of the regular season after having ankle surgery a couple of weeks into the season.

However, he went through the rehab process and was able to get back on the field in time during the Panthers’ playoff run and became instantly involved in the offensive game plan once again.

“I told the guys during the regular season to just get me to the playoffs and I’d be there to show up for them,” Stevens said. “I’m just thankful.”

Nease finished the season with a record of 9-4 and advanced to the elite eight of the state playoffs for the first time since 2008.

“I left it all on the field and I know my boys did too,” Bogle said.

## Mignerey serves up November student-athlete honor

By Anthony Richards

Volleyball is a vital part of who Kendall Mignerey is, but it is her performance in the classroom that has allowed her play on the court to shine even brighter, as she was named Ponte Vedra High’s November student-athlete of the month.

“An award like this shows who you are as a person, and it’s not just all about what you do on the court,” Mignerey said. “It means a lot to see all my hard work pay off.”

Mignerey is a senior and has been a major cog in the Sharks’ volleyball squad that won back-to-back state titles and recently played for a third straight.

However, she understands it is her good grades that have allowed her the opportunity to sign with Florida Atlantic University to play beach volleyball once she graduates this year.

Finding the balance between practicing and making sure her homework is done for school the next day has been something that has come with time.

“I remember during my freshman and sophomore years being so stressed out with school, because there is a lot more workload and a lot of responsibility on yourself to study and earn those grades,” Mignerey said.

One of the things that has stood out to Mignerey since she was given the honor, is the overwhelming support she has received from her volleyball teammates.

“To know that they have always been there for me along the way is pretty great,” Mignerey said.

She is not sure what she wants to pursue as a career after college, but she is leaning toward a path into the medical or environmental science fields.

Her weighted GPA is 4.39 with math and science being more of her strong suits. “Ever since I was little, I’ve always enjoyed math and doing number games in my head,” Mignerey said.



Photo by Anthony Richards

**Senior volleyball player Kendall Mignerey was named the Ponte Vedra High November student-athlete of the month.**

Her interest was peaked after taking an AP environmental science course last year at PVHS.

“It was a very different than any other science class I had ever taken,” Mignerey said. “I enjoyed it because it was real world and talked about the stuff going on around us. I’m really into environmental science because I think it’s so relevant to society today.”

Mignerey’s sister Logan already attends FAU as a sophomore and is studying biology and looking into the marine aspects of it. She also plays beach volleyball for the Owls.

Mignerey has been playing indoor volleyball as long as she can remember, but I probably got serious about playing on a team in second or third grade.

According to Mignerey, the biggest differences between indoor and beach volleyball is that there are only two players in beach compared to several on the court at the same time in indoor.

“On the beach you kind of have to do it all,” Mignerey said.

She was part of the inaugural season for the beach volleyball program at Ponte Vedra, and the hope is to do it again this year.

“Volleyball is honestly just like a way of life,” Mignerey said. “It has given me with all of my closest friends, and it has just provided so much for me.”

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- Make a scene
- Rubik's puzzle
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- Cone-shaped dwelling
- White Swan in "Swan Lake" ballerina
- \_\_\_-Wan Kenobi
- \*Decorate with wreaths and holly, e.g.
- \*Either dessert or source of heat (2 words)
- \* \_\_\_ Day, or second day of Christmastide
- Land parcel
- Strauss of denim fame
- Broadband access overseer, acr.
- Clarified butter
- Acute one and obtuse one
- Southeastern Asian country
- Jouster's breastplate
- Shrewdness
- Caspian basin river
- \*Pasadena's Tournament of \_\_\_
- Tel \_\_\_\_, Israel
- Native American emblem
- "Why not?"
- Hitchhiker's quest
- Omits when speaking
- Hard to find
- Bear's winter quarters
- Hoodwink
- Scepter's partner
- \*Number of days in Christmastide
- \*"Ugly" holiday party garb?
- Prepare a letter
- "Bingo!"
- Hunger for
- Pass-the-baton race
- \*Cranberry sauce sometimes comes from it
- Same as tori
- Raise the roof
- German river

**DOWN**

- Whiny and miserable
- Shade of beige
- Finish a ceiling, to a plasterer
- Marlboro alternative
- Not digital
- Bug-eyed
- Not Uber
- Social group
- Ghana monetary unit
- Second word of many fairytales
- Cause of Titanic's demise
- Poetic "even"
- Burdensome
- Not this or that
- Lab eggs
- Time off
- \*Champagne holder
- \*Wassailing composition
- Raccoon's South American cousin
- Feeling of superiority, pl.

- \_\_\_ gum, food additive
- Furiously angry
- Exclude or omit
- \*Number of candles in kinara, Kwanzaa
- \*Troika vehicle
- "Will be," according to Doris
- Asian goat antelope
- Potpourri
- Chevy Suburban, e.g.
- Builds
- \*Popular holiday wish
- Munchausen's title
- \*Bedecked arbor
- Shakespeare, to his friends?
- And others, for short
- Minus
- Tropical edible root
- Anon's partner
- Take a load off
- Like some humor
- \*Traditional main holiday dish

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