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PONTE VEDRA



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75 cents

PonteVedraRecorder.com

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PLUNGING INTO 2022

The 13th Annual Nocatee Polar Plunge was held Jan. 8 at Nocatee Splash Water Park. Many residents welcomed the new year by dressing up in costumes and diving into the water park's main pool. Read more and see photos from the event inside on page 13.

Photo by Anthony Richards



INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

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



Looking & Feeling Good

Pages 8-12

School is Cool

Pages 14-17




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One of Us

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



Visit our new website at www.pontevedrarecorder.com

Plus, find the Recorder on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ThePVRecorder

ADOPT A PET



Cody

Hello! I'm a 2-year-old male terrier mix. I love to be outside, chase balls and explore the yard. I'm a very sweet boy who loves to give kisses. I was lost and the nice people at the Pet Center took me in, and now I'm ready to find my "forever" family. If you are looking to add a new pet to your family and think we might be a match, please stop by the Pet Center to meet me.



Spot

Hello! I am a 4-year-old male terrier mix that came into the shelter when my owner could not properly take care of me. I will need some housetraining, but I am very smart, and the Pet Center is already helping me learn! I am HW+ but that only means I need some medicine every month, and the Friends of The SJC Pet Center will not only sponsor my adoption, they will provide my new humans a \$250 voucher toward my treatment. I am truly a super sweetheart and well behaved. Please consider meeting me and making me part of your family in 2022.

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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

Growth management workshop to seek community input

St. Johns County has seen substantial growth over the last 10 years. The 2020 census revealed that the county grew by nearly 44%, placing it among the fastest-growing counties in the United States and the second-fastest-growing county in Florida.

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners will discuss topics related to managing future growth and addressing infrastructure needs at an upcoming growth-management workshop.

Residents and stakeholders are invited to provide comments after county staff completes their

presentations.

The four topics that will be discussed include: local government's role in managing growth, current growth trends and infrastructure needs, transportation planning and concurrency and additional considerations for new development proposals.

The workshop will be held at 9 a.m. Jan. 25 in the county auditorium, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine.

The board will not make policy deci-

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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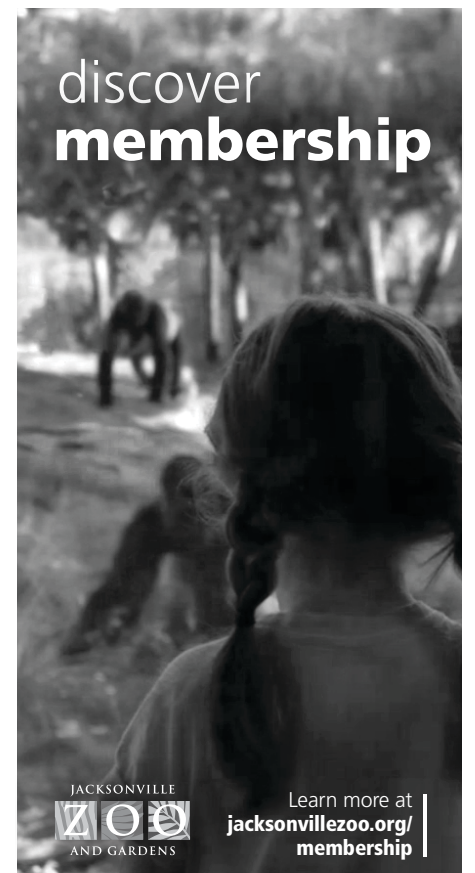
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Briefs

Continued from 2

sions at the workshop or vote on any item brought forth.

Artist plans presentation at library

The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library will feature Jim Draper, a multi-talented artist in drawing, painting, photography, video and writing on Tuesday, Jan. 18.

Draper has taught drawing and painting at Florida State College and Flagler College but is now retired and working

full-time in his studio.

He gets inspiration from journeys into the wild as well as myriad sources beyond nature in the form of conservationists, naturalists and other artists known as experts in observation of the natural world.

His work can be seen in hundreds of corporate and private collections such as Jacksonville Airport, Baptist Medical Center and United Nations Visitors' Lobby in New York City.

In his talk, "Defining a Radical Naturalism" with slides, the artist will define the intersection of the mind of our species and the balance of human

interaction.

Draper will exhibit his work in the library's entryway during January and February.

The program starts at 6:30 p.m. and the doors open at 6 p.m.

The program is free and open to the public.

Children's book sale at Ponte Vedra Branch Library

The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library is sponsoring a children's books sale in the library's foyer, near Seymour's Book Store, through Jan 24.

The sale is being held during the

library's normal hours of operation: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday-Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. The library will be closed Monday, Jan. 17.

The sale includes a selection of "gently used" books, priced between \$1 and \$6 dollars. There will be hardback and paperback titles for children of all ages. Only cash and checks will be accepted for payment. Proceeds will be used for new library materials, special programming, new equipment and furniture for patrons and more.

For more information, call the library at 904-827-6950.

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ELIZABETH HUDGINS

Off-duty patrol absent in MSD during holidays

By Anthony Richards

The new partnership between the Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District and the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, in which the MSD hires off-duty deputies for extra patrol has some kinks that need ironing out.

According to MSD chairman Brad Wester, he was informed that there had been no off-duty patrols in the area since the last board meeting Dec. 13, 2021.

Wester stated during the Jan. 10 meeting that the Sheriff's Office did not continue to post the off-duty patrol sheet over the holidays.

He said that he was surprised by the information he received, especially after specially talking to the Sheriff's Office about the need for holiday patrol.

Trustee John Cellucci asked if there is someone that could monitor the situation, so they don't have to wait until the end of the month before realizing it again.

Wester agreed that there should be a trustee assigned with tracking the off-duty schedule.

Also discussed, was an email Ben Bright with the St. Johns County Public Works Department sent to Wester that mentioned the county is looking into a study pertaining to traffic calming on San Juan Drive.

However, any study would not start until the waterline and paving project on Ponte Vedra Boulevard is complete.

Other approvals included the placement of a streetlight at the intersection of Maria Place and Le Master Drive. Trust-

ees Gary Jurenovich and Mack McCuller opposed the addition of the streetlight.

Jurenovich was not sure if all the residents with houses near that intersection would be in favor of it, but Trustee Holly Kartsonis assured that she went to each house and spoke with the owners, who were in favor of it.

The board also approved Trustee Kitty Switkes' request for \$840 to pay Bob's Backflow & Plumbing Company for work needed at the intersection of State Road A1A and Corona Road, as well as a resolution for the allowance of dual driveways along Ponte Vedra Boulevard for lots less than 150 feet wide that will be taken to the St. Johns County Commission for approval.

Kartsonis was the lone opposition to

the proposed dual driveway allowance.

The MSD also held the board's annual election of officers and Al Hollon was unanimously named the new chairman.

Hollon replaces Wester, who served back-to-back terms as chairman and will remain on the board as a trustee.

"I've learned a lot about myself," Wester said.

Hollon has held the role of chairman of the board in the past.

"It's certainly a high honor," Hollon said.

Switkes will replace Hollon as vice chair following a unanimous vote as well and Jurenovich will remain treasurer.

Jacksonville Boat Show set for Jan. 28-30

The Jacksonville Boat Show will be held Jan. 28-30 at the Prime Osborn Convention Center in Jacksonville. It will offer three days of water-related fun, family-friendly activities and educational seminars — as well as deals on hundreds

of boats and thousands of accessories. Attendees will be among the first to see and board brand-new models of all types of watercraft, including fishing boats, cruisers, ski boats, pontoons, inflatables, personal watercraft and more. The show

is sponsored by VyStar Credit Union.

Highlights include:

- Seminar presentations on Jan. 29 and 30 by Capt. Tim Altman of Hoodoo Sportfishing Charters and founder of Wahoo Junkies. Seminar series is sponsored by Strike-Zone Fishing.

- Kids' fishing clinics hosted by Donna Frantz of Fishing 101 on Jan. 29 and 30. The first 100 kids to complete the clinic each day will receive a rod and reel combo courtesy of Barracuda Batteries by Continental.

"The New Year will kick off with a splash at the 2022 Boat Show," said Erin Johnson, North Florida Marine Association administrative director. "Our region is a boater's paradise, and at the show, boaters of all types and skill levels will find the vessels, accessories, resources and information they need to enhance

their on-water activities. We're also very excited to offer seminars, kids' activities and more. This is a can't-miss event for anyone who loves being out on the water."

Hours and Admission

Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center is located at 1000 Water St. Boat Show hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Jan. 28, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Jan. 29 and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Jan. 30. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$5 for children 12 and under and \$12 for seniors, military and first responders with ID. Food is purchased from the vendors and is not included with admission. For more information, go to boatjax.com.

Parking

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Marsh Landing enjoys snow day

The following photos from a “Snow Day” event held at Fletcher Park in Marsh Landing Jan. 8. More than 500 residents attended the two-hour event, which included eight tons of snow being produced for children and their families to enjoy. Dunkin’ Donuts supplied hot chocolate and coffee for those in attendance and Olaf from Disney’s “Frozen” was there as well.

Contributed photos



Newcomers Alumnae hold strategic planning luncheon

The Newcomers Alumnae rang in the new year with their monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club on Jan. 5. Instead of a regular speaker, the time slot was dedicated to holding the club’s first strategic planning session in many years so that all the attendees could share thoughts and ideas about the future of the club and how to make it better.

Nancy Scott, club parliamentarian, ran this portion of the program. Multiple topics were discussed, including a name change to highlight the club’s social activity and membership quotas. Additionally, as the current fiscal year will draw to a close on June 30 and a new executive board and various committee chairs will step down, many members eagerly volunteered to “grab the baton” to replace outgoing board members.

Once the nominating committee does its work, a new

slate of officers and committee chairs will be announced. During the strategic planning session, members feasted on caesar salad, chicken with penne alfredo and dessert.

The next monthly luncheon will be held on Feb. 2 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. The cost to attend the luncheon is \$23. Reservations must be made by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible to reserve a seat. The guest speaker will be Stacey Pierce from Waste Pro USA. The company provides recycling and waste disposal services.

For more information about joining Newcomers Alumnae, contact brookemeister@msn.com or click on www.newcomersalumnae.fl.wildapricot.org for additional information about the club.

Newcomers Alumnae is a social group comprised of



Contributed photo

Newcomers Alumnae members discuss the club’s future at their December meeting.

women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville, St. Augustine and the surrounding area.

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Kyle Baidas is an alum of Nease High School and currently serves as the student president of the Coggin College of Business Finance and Investment Society and the Osprey Sales Club at the University of North Florida. At 17 years old he began investing in the financial markets and also runs a basketball training company.

Kyle Baidas

As told to Anthony Richards

Can you please tell us a little bit about your background and what your goals are for the future?

My name is Kyle Baidas. I was born in West Palm Beach, where I lived for 14 years. In 2016, my family and I decided it was time for a change, so we looked around, and chose to venture up to Ponte Vedra.

I then attended Nease High School, where I played basketball, and served as the captain of the varsity team my senior year. After I graduated from Nease, I chose to stay local and attend the University of North Florida, and double majored in finance and financial planning.

My goals in the future are to work in wealth management and use my knowledge of investments to help people make the right decisions when it comes to planning for their financial goals.

Where does your interest in business and finance come from?

Funny story, for the longest time I imagined myself working in the medical field, possibly as a physical therapist, until that all changed when I was about 17 years old. Until then, I thought it would be my career.

One day however, I stumbled upon some motivational podcasts by an entrepreneur named Ed Mylett. He preached the idea of what it meant to be a high achiever in the business world, and that was all I needed to hear. I knew I needed to find my niche, and I managed to stumble upon the stock market.

So, at the age of 17, I began investing in the financial markets. Since then, I have thoroughly enjoyed developing my knowledge in the way markets function, as well as understanding what it means to have some big wins, and how to protect myself from large losses. Markets are tricky but figuring out what causes and effects exist in macroeconomic environments has been a lot of fun. Making a few bucks along the way hasn't hurt either!

What is it like being president of the Coggin College of Business Finance and Investment Society and the Osprey Sales Club?

Both organizations have been wonderful to lead. I have been able to develop very strong relationships with the faculty at the Coggin College of Business, and I have also been able to provide new opportunities to UNF students interested in both the financial and sales worlds.

Being tasked with leading both organizations has been quite enjoyable, and I am looking forward to what we have planned for the spring semester.

What are the most rewarding parts of your role as president of both?

There are certainly a few. For one, being able to open the eyes of my colleagues and provide them with employment and internship opportunities from quality companies in Jacksonville has been extremely rewarding.

Another would be having the opportunity to develop a team around me, almost like the way one would structure a company. Everyone has roles, and we work together as



Photo courtesy of Kyle Baidas

Kyle Baidas looks to one day use his financial insight to help guide others in their investment decisions.

a team to ensure that deadlines are met, and we always strive to be well organized and on the same page.

What are some of the challenges that you face in a position like that?

Time management is certainly a challenge that I have dealt with when it comes to holding those positions. Balancing schoolwork, my company, UNF organizations, along with many other things that come up along the way can be quite difficult. However, I would have it no other way- being involved in the college community and being able to have an impact has been so worth it.

I know you have a basketball training company as well. How did that get started, and what do you hope to achieve with it?

Great question. Just under five years ago, I was scrolling through my neighborhood's Facebook page, and there was a mom looking for a local basketball trainer to help her son learn how to play basketball.

A big lightbulb went off in my head like "I play basketball! I can coach it too!" So, I reached out, and I ended up coaching her son. That then grew into me coaching her son and two of his buddies- and then it grew into me coaching their team, and then word-of-mouth-referrals

started taking place.

Since 2017, I have had the pleasure to work with 100-plus athletes between the ages of 5 to 16. I still run the company today, and I really enjoy it. I hope to continue utilizing the business to give back to the community, inspire young athletes and build relationships with great people in the Northeast Florida region.

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

There are so many things to list here. From the beaches to the quality of people, to the warm weather, there are so many things to like. My No. 1 would have to be the quality of people I get to be around all the time. Compared to where I grew up, the folks here in Ponte Vedra are so friendly, and they have taught me so many valuable life lessons.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I enjoy spending time outdoors- playing tennis, hiking local trails and spending time at the beach. I also enjoy listening to podcasts, reading books, and of course, performing equity research.

Most of all though, I enjoy spending time with great people.

Vigils provide opposing views of Capitol riot

By Shaun Ryan

The first anniversary of the Jan. 6 incursion into the U.S. Capitol as Congress met to count electoral votes cast into high relief a growing division among Americans. That division was just as apparent in St. Augustine as elsewhere in the nation.

A candlelight vigil on the west lawn of the Castillo de San Marcos, organized by Blue Guardians of Democracy, attracted several dozen people — including a small group of dissenters. The gist of the gathering was that the riot at the Capitol was an assault on democracy and that those who took part were insurrectionists.

Speaking at the vigil were representatives of the St. Augustine Black Caucus, the National Organization for Women Jacksonville, Blue Wave of St. Johns County and others.

League of Women Voters of Jacksonville President Lanelle Phillmon described three pieces of legislation related to voters' rights that vigil organizers encouraged



Marcus Nelson speaks to a large group gathered near the Castillo de San Marcos to observe the first anniversary of the riot at the U.S. Capitol.

attendees to support.

These were the Freedom to Vote Act, the Protecting Our Democracy Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Later, in the Plaza de la Constitucion, another group gathered for another candlelight vigil, this one in support of those who pieced the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Signs at this rally referred to those arrested after the



Photos by Shaun Ryan

A group of people gather in the Plaza de la Constitucion to observe the first anniversary of the riot at the U.S. Capitol.

riot as political prisoners. It was one of several such gatherings across the nation organized by Look Ahead America. The opening speaker was Pastor Kevin Tuck.

On Jan. 6, 2021, thousands of supporters of President Donald Trump attacked the Capitol to disrupt the joint session of Congress, which was assembled to formalize the victory of President-elect Joe Biden.

Pedigo named St. Augustine fire marshal



Abby Pedigo

St. Augustine Fire Chief Carlos Aviles has announced that Fire Safety Inspector Abby Pedigo was selected as the next fire marshal to succeed retiring Fire Marshal

Robert "Bob" Growick, effective Feb. 23.

A St. Augustine native, Pedigo graduated from St. Augustine High School in 2008, and went on to complete her associates of arts in English from Santa Fe College in 2009. She graduated from Flagler College in 2017 with a bachelor of science in public administration.

Pedigo joined the St. Augustine Fire Department in November 2014 as a fire-

fighter and paramedic.

"The office of the fire marshal plays a vital role in our overall mission, and with the position comes an immense amount of responsibility," Aviles said. "Abby is a loyal and dedicated professional who embodies and lives by our core values. I am confident in her abilities to continue to lead the department forward and face the challenges of future growth and redevelopment."

When asked about being selected as fire marshal, Pedigo said, "I am grateful for the opportunity to serve my city in this capacity and humbled by the outpouring of support from my department and our city administration."

In 2019, Pedigo was promoted to fire safety inspector, responsible for conducting fire and life safety inspections in busi-

nesses and short-term rentals, overseeing all public education, and reviewing building construction and engineering plans.

Among many other responsibilities as fire safety inspector, Pedigo also performed fire scene investigations, attended weekly special events and development

review committee meetings, led firefighters on pre-fire tours in new construction, coordinated with other city departments and officials to enforce the city's short-term rental ordinance, and served as a member of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Incident Management Team.

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Amara Med Spa welcomes new year with new procedures

By Anthony Richards

Amara Med Spa has a pair of new procedures it has recently begun offering that are designed to help people look and feel like their best self at the start of 2022.

The new year brings with it resolutions, many of which center around feeling better and more confident in one's appearance.

With that in mind, Amara now features

DiamondGlow and Emsculpt Neo body contouring to help on the path to making sure those resolutions get achieved.

"We're always trying to bring the best technology and procedures to the market," said Jenny Schroeder, Amara's executive vice president of business development. "We pride ourselves in that."

According to April Michalopoulos, a licensed medical aesthetician at Amara,

DiamondGlow is good for all skin types and the only time it cannot be used is on skin that is inflamed or has severe acne.

It uses physical exfoliations to revive dry or dull skin by removing dead skin cells and bringing the new cells to the forefront via suction.

"What makes it different is that it uses a physical diamond tip instead of chemical treatment," Michalopoulos said.

Products on the market that use chemicals cannot be used on women who are pregnant or people with sensitive skin.

"It's a gamechanger," Michalopoulos said.

One of the best things about DiamondGlow and Emsculpt Neo is that both procedures are also convenient and only take about 30 minutes to complete.

AMARA continues on Page 9

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Trantham joins Jax Beaches Family Dentistry

Jax Beaches Family Dentistry (JacksonvilleBeach-Dentist.com) has a new dentist, Dr. James “Jimmy” Trantham. He joins Dr. Michelle DeFelice Hucke and



Dr. James Trantham

Dr. Kelly Carrothers in the nearly 40-year-old dental practice located at 802 3rd St. in Neptune Beach.

Trantham has been a dentist for 15 years having graduated from the University of Florida School of Dental Medicine in 2006. He also received his undergraduate degree from the University of Florida.

Trantham has kept up with the latest techniques that he said make for a great “patient experience.” He has advanced training in cosmetic dentistry and is a leading implant dentist.

“I want my patients to benefit from the best technology in the world so they get amazing results and experience maximum comfort,” he said. “I’m proud to be a part of the Jax Beaches Family Dentistry team. This practice has a great decades-long reputation on Jax Beach, and I intend to work hard to maintain that standing. We will always be committed to the patient’s complete health and the very best in dental health outcomes.”

“We are very fortunate to have Dr. Trantham as part of the Jax Beaches Family Dentistry Team,” said DeFelice Hucke, practice co-owner. “He brings extensive cosmetic and implant dentistry experience to our practice.”

Trantham and his wife Whitney and their two children are local residents.

“I intend to be a part of the Jax Beaches community for many years to come,” Trantham said.

Amara

Continued from 8

There is a more advanced DiamondGlow approach, which takes up to an hour.

“You can literally go and have it done on your lunch break and no one will even know you had anything done,” Michalopoulos said.

She recommends routine skin treatment with DiamondGlow, as person’s skin cycle is every 28 days, which is when replenishment should take place.

Schroeder stated that the Emsculpt Neo is the only non-invasive technology on the market that uses radio frequency to fine tune muscles.

According to Schroeder, people see an average of 30% body fat loss and 25% increase in muscle by the end of the procedure.

However, she also wanted to remind the public that although the procedures are helpful toward feeling better, they are meant to be an addition to a healthy everyday lifestyle and not a replacement.

“It’s a really good jump start for the new year,” Schroeder said. “It strengthens your core and can build up your lower back.”

It takes about four treatments for Emsculpt Neo to begin to show results.

“Some devices can leave you swollen for months,” Schroeder said. “Emsculpt just makes it so quick and easy.”

The best way for residents interested in giving either procedure a try is to schedule an appointment by calling 904-686-7525 or by going to theamaramedspa.com. All consultations are free.

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5 ways to pamper yourself more often

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many people scrambling for ways to unwind without risking their health or the health of others. For more than a year, opportunities to let loose and have fun have been stymied by the cancellation of concerts, theater shows, sporting events, family holidays, and so much more in the name of public safety. Individuals can look to coping strategies to find silver linings. Pampering oneself can be a healthy and enjoyable endeavor to explore.

Pampering means different things to

different people. Pampering involves indulging in self-care strategies to improve mental, physical and emotional health. Pampering can provide a respite from stress, enabling one to switch off his or her brain for a bit. Rest assured that pampering doesn't have to involve big expenses, and many pampering sessions can take place right at home. The following are five pampering ideas to explore.

1. Take a nap

Getting enough restful sleep is essential

for your overall health. The Sleep Foundation says people who work multiple jobs or for extended hours may not have enough time for sufficient sleep, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates one in three American adults do not get enough sleep. Getting seven or more hours of sleep per night is important, but you also can add to your sleep bank by taking short naps in the early afternoon. A nap can reduce stress and elevate the mood. Stick to a snooze of 30 minutes or less.

2. Indulge in a luxurious practical item

Instead of splurging on something that is whimsical or unnecessary, allocate some disposable dollars to something functional but put a luxurious spin on it. Think of buying a set of silk bedsheets or indulge on a high-end cut of meat for a family dinner. You'll feel rewarded without feeling guilty that you were wasteful.

3. Schedule a salon service

Hair, nail or skin services enable you to get away from home for an hour or more and devote time all to yourself. Plus, you'll have the benefit of walking out of the salon looking like the best version of yourself.



4. Take a hot bath

People may be pressed for time when engaging in their daily beauty and grooming routines. A 10-minute shower before work might not provide the relaxation and sense of escape you need. Set aside a time in the evening to soak in the tub and let stress as well as aches and pains melt away in the water. Scent the water with essential oils for a relaxing aromatherapy session.

5. Find a simple pleasure

Display fresh flowers on the table, listen to some favorite music while cleaning the house or plan a homemade meal for yourself accompanied by a fine wine. Planning for a simple pleasure once or twice a week gives you something to look forward to.

Pampering comes in many shapes and forms and is an effective way to reduce stress.

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Nocatee Polar Plunge carries on frigid tradition

By Anthony Richards

Nocatee held its 13th Annual Polar Plunge Jan. 8, and the water was just as cold as the first year they held the event, which has become a community tradition.

In fact, the temperature of the water in the Nocatee Splash Water Park pool was 61 degrees, which matched the temperature during the inaugural event in 2010, which was held in February.

Residents from all ages jumped into the pool, with some more hesitant than others before diving fully into the cold water.

Eight-year-old Leana Zunno took a calculated approach prior to getting into the pool.

“I waited for my brother (Nicholas, 10,) to jump in first, then I jumped in,” Zunno said.

Sadie Wagner was determined to not let the cold water bother her and was the first of her family to jump in.

The Perri family have taken the plunge in previous years, but this time around John Perri joined his children and embraced 2022 by diving in with them.

“I promised them that I would do it this year,” Perri said. “It was cold.”

Knowing of the shock value that comes with jumping into cold water, he knew going in slow was not an option.

“You have to just go for it and jump right in,” Perri said. “It would be too painful otherwise.”

His youngest daughter Leah Perri initially said the water was not that cold, as her lips shivered while she said it; however, after thinking about it she did admit that she felt much colder once she got out of the water than while she was swimming around in the pool.

Even joining in the fun was St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick, who attended the event and took the

plunge with a couple of deputies, uniform and all.

The high temperature on Jan. 8 got up to around 72 degrees, which doesn’t seem that bad, but it had yet to reach that point when the polar plunge took place at 8 a.m.

For Jimmy Knowles and his daughter Miranda, it was their first polar plunge.

“It was freezing,” Miranda Knowles said emphatically.

Each participant received a towel on their way into the park and the towels came in handy as many residents wrapped themselves in them both before and after the plunge.

“It’s pretty cool that they gave us towels, because it’s a pretty chilly morning,” Jimmy Knowles said.

Hot chocolate was also available, and many residents took advantage of that, especially after getting out of the pool.

Jimmy Knowles was one of many residents who wore a costume to the event, as he was dressed up like an elf.

Some of the other costumes included polar bears, ballerinas, hot dogs and even a father and son duo that were the characters Mario and Luigi from the Super Mario Bros. video game.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Some children could not wait to get in the water even before the official plunge.



Leana Zunno, Abby Wagner, Avery Leyland and Sadie Wagner try to warm up after taking part in the Nocatee Polar Plunge.



Even Sheriff Rob Hardwick took the plunge into the pool at Nocatee Splash Water Park.

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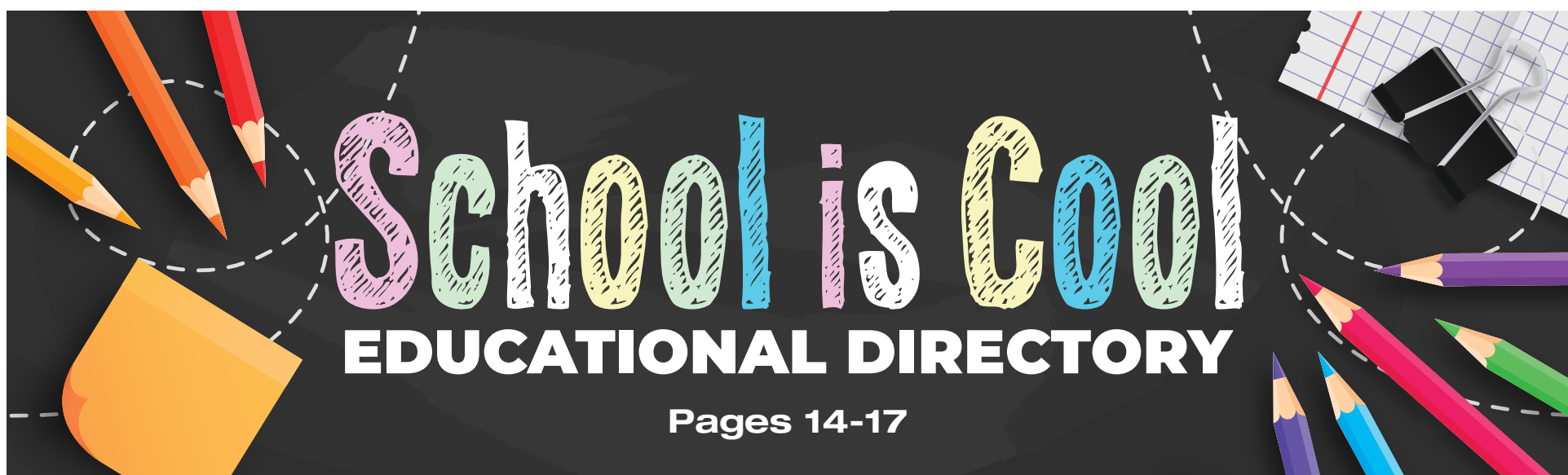
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Bolles students get a chance to play in the snow

Photos by Shaun Ryan

By Shaun Ryan

Students at The Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus enjoyed a rare opportunity to play in the snow Friday, Jan. 7, during the school's annual Winter Fest.

Impromptu snowball battles broke out and snowmen arose from the large patch of snow as the children, dressed in winter coats and hats, laughed and chattered and played.

Nearby, a crew of snowmakers from Gentleman's Ice occasionally renewed the "snow" to keep it frozen among the springlike temperatures. A machine crushed up bags of ice and sprayed it out of a large hose onto the play area behind the school, mimicking the winter wonder so familiar to residents of northern states.

Fifth-grader M.C. said she has seen real snow during visits to Michigan, but that didn't mute her enthusiasm for the unseasonably frosty fun here in the Sunshine State, which she called "magical."

"It's just really fun for us, because we live in Florida," she said. "It's so crazy to feel ice on the ground instead of sand."

According to Stacey Hendershot, head of the Lower School, Winter Fest is an annual tradition.

"It's a time for our community to come together," she said. "Our families get to see each other, and our kids get to interact."

The event was presented by the Bolles Parent Association, "so a great big thank you to them," Hendershot said.

Though the snow was the big draw for the students, there were plenty of other fun activities throughout the campus. The children — and even a few adults — lined up to ride the train that took them on an excursion around the grounds. There was a bounce house, tattoos and face painting, a balloon-twisting artist, games and more.

The campus was adorned with festive wintry decorations, but none outshone the many smiles on students' faces.



Crushed ice was sprayed onto the play area behind the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach buildings to create a field of snow for the students to play in.



Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach students build a snowman during Winter Fest.



Snowballs weren't the only things to throw. At this table, students tossed whipped-cream "pies" at fearless classmates.



The Winter Fest train was very popular among the students.

Teacher of the Year awards event set for Jan. 20

INK! (Investing in Kids), the direct support organization benefiting St. Johns County School District, announced the five finalists for the 2021-22 Teacher of the Year award on Dec. 21 in a county-wide “Prize Patrol” visit to each of the finalists’ schools.

INK! promotes academic success for all St. Johns County public school students through innovative programs, classroom grants and teacher support initiatives. The annual Teacher of the Year celebration is a special recognition program to honor educators in the county. The teachers were nominated by their peers from every school in St. Johns County.

On Jan. 20, INK! board members, staff and volunteers along with St. Johns County School District Superintendent Tim Forson and officials will recognize veteran and rookie teachers during an event to announce the winning Teacher of the Year and Rookie Teacher of the Year.

Nominees will also be in attendance for their outstanding demonstration of instructional skills, student interaction, professional excellence and importance in the lives of hundreds of students. The recognition will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a banquet and program at World Golf Village Renaissance St. Augustine Resort, 500 S. Legacy Trail in St. Augustine.

Teacher of the Year finalists include Andrew Burk, band director at Valley Ridge Academy; Veronica Fuata, second-grade teacher at Cunningham Creek Elementary School; Robie Hagan, instructional literacy coach at Wards Creek Elementary School; Patricia McElhone, academic interventionist at St. Johns Virtual School; and Sharon Warwell-Murden, fifth-grade teacher at R.B. Hunt Elementary School. The countywide awards program will commemorate recipients as local scholastic leaders who help to build community awareness of the region’s best educators.

All finalists were honored during the surprise visits in December by school officials and 2020-21 St. Johns County Teacher of the Year Ali Pressel from Creekside High School. Visits also included program sponsors and supporters who provided flowers, applause and accolades at each school with school principals, staff members and students. Beaver Toyota St. Augustine hosted the day with its Bucky the Beaver mascot on prize patrol. Old Town Trolley Tours provided transportation with Leonard’s Photography donating photographs.

The educator named as Teacher of the Year 2021-2022 will have an opportu-



Contributed photos

St. Johns County School District Superintendent Tim Forson and Andrew Burk, band director at Valley Ridge Academy.



Victoria Fuata of Cunningham Creek Elementary School.



Donna Lueders, executive director of INK!, and Sharon Warwell-Murden, R.B. Hunt Elementary School.

TEACHER continues on Page 16

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Valley Ridge sixth-grader wins district spelling bee

Deeksha Hariharan, a sixth-grade student at Valley Ridge Academy, won the annual St. Johns County School District Spelling Bee held Dec. 15 at First Coast Technical College. She won by spelling the word “Truckee” correctly.

Deeksha is the daughter of Palayapalayam Ganapathi Hariharan and Jarapriya Jayakumaran.

It took 14 rounds for the winner to be

determined. The participants were congratulated by Michael Degutis, chief of staff, and School Board members Kelly Barrera and Beverly Slough.

Forty-eight elementary and middle school students from 32 public, four private and one home school competed for the honor of representing St. Johns County in the First Coast Regional Spelling Bee scheduled to be held virtually on

April 1.

The winner of the regional spelling bee will advance to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee scheduled for May in Washington, D.C.

Rebecca England, program specialist for elementary language arts, served as the spelling bee coordinator. The pronouncer was Linda Villadoniga, retired St. Johns County teacher. Judges for the

event were Jay DiMartino, secondary language arts program specialist, and Cheryl Freeman, director of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

The Spelling Bee will be available for viewing at a later date on St. Johns Educational Access TV channels 99 or 262 and stjohns.k12.fl.us

Teacher

Continued from 15

nity to apply for the Florida Teacher of the Year program and receive various awards, including a new car to drive from Beaver Toyota St. Augustine.

“We invite the community to be a part of the honors by supporting INK!’s annual Teacher of the Year celebration,” said Donna Lueders, INK!’s executive director. “This year highlights our teachers who bring out the brilliance in students. During the event, we will recognize and revere the contributions of outstanding classroom teachers who are dedicated and contribute to the future of our children.”

Sponsorships are available with a variety of benefits including reserved tables and guest tickets, name and brand recognition, signage, program opportunities,



Robie Hagan of Wards Creek Elementary School.

and more, starting at \$375. For information, contact Lueders at 904-547-7120 or email Donna.Lueders@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

Investing in Kids (INK!) provides innovative resources to support academic success for all St. Johns County public schools to benefit 44,000 students and approximately 2,785 teachers. The office is located at 1 Christopher St. in St. Augustine. For more information, go to ink-stjohns.org.



Contributed photos

Donna Lueders, INK! executive director; Bucky the Beaver; Patricia McElhone, St. Johns Virtual School (with flowers); Ryan Erskine, school principal; and St. Johns County School District Superintendent Tim Forson.



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Early Learning Coalition launches five senses program

In December, the Early Learning Coalition of North Florida launched a new Five Senses Program throughout St. Johns County. It introduced children to touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. This themed early literacy program is presented by the Early Learning Coalition of North Florida's outreach team staff and volunteers in local preschools.

The program consists of a highly interactive story time filled with music, followed by a period of hands-on learning activities. The children get to learn about animals that have super senses, such as bats. They also learn about sounds and vibrations by making sounds with their bodies and musical instruments. The kids test their seeing skills by looking at pictures of items up close and trying to guess what they are. They challenge their sense of smell by trying to guess smells put in mystery jars. At the end of the program, the children make their own touch book filled with differently textured items.

All participating children receive a free copy of the book "My Five Senses" by Aliko Brandenberg, and each classroom teacher receives a large bag of teaching materials relating to the five senses theme.

The Early Learning Coalition of North Florida regularly puts on themed literacy programs like this throughout the year with the goal of sharing quality programming and materials with local preschools.

To learn more about the Early Learning Coalition of North Florida, go to elcnorthflorida.org.



Contributed photo

Students from Turning Point Christian Academy in St. Augustine show off their copies of the book "My Five Senses" by Aliko Brandenberg during a program presented by the Early Learning Coalition of North Florida in December.

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Dantiel W. Moniz
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Dantiel is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize, a MacDowell Fellowship, the Alice Hoffman Prize for Fiction, and has been named a "Writer to Watch" by Publishers Weekly and Apple Books. Her debut collection, *Milk Blood Heat*, is an Indie Next Pick, an inaugural Roxane Gay Audacious Book Club pick, and has been hailed as "must-read" by *TIME*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Buzzfeed*, *Elle*, and *O, The Oprah Magazine*, among others. Her work has appeared in the *Paris Review*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Tin House*, *One Story*, *American Short Fiction*, *Ploughshares*, *The Yale Review*, *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* and elsewhere. Moniz is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Jacob Skiles
Class of 2016, Instrumental

Since graduating from DA, Jacob has studied piano under 1997 Van Cliburn silver medalist, Yakov Kasman at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). In 2018, Jacob made his orchestral debut performing with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and gave a recital in the historic house of Romanian composer George Enescu. During college, Jacob participated in and won numerous solo and Concerto competitions in Alabama. In addition to his piano studies, he conducted research on mathematical analyses of rhythm in Baroque dance forms while in the Science and Technology Honors Program at UAB. Since graduating in spring of 2020, Jacob will be continuing his studies at Florida State University, pursuing a Masters in Piano Performance with a graduate assistantship in teaching.

For more information visit DA-arts.org • 2445 San Diego Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32207

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Sunland Acres Pet Boarding team manager Tish Finnieston and owner Lynn Lamoureux at the facility.



Sunland Acres Pet Boarding offers grooming and dog training as part of its list of available services.

Photos by Anthony Richards

Sunland Acres continues to expand beyond boarding

By Anthony Richards

Sunland Acres Pet Boarding Camp in Fruit Cove has been offering a place for owners to leave their dogs and cats since 1976, and it continues to be a fixture in the North Florida area.

Lynn Lamoureux bought the business at its Fruit Cove Road location five years ago from original owner Marjorie Winchester and has expanded the boarding facility to include a grooming service.

The business has been in its current location for so long that houses were built around it over time and now it is in a quaint setting tucked in amongst a neighborhood.

“Every dog needs attention, but different dogs need different things,” Lamoureux said. “We hire people that really just love working with dogs and have the

patience and want to be doing this kind of work. It takes a special person to be good at reading the dogs.”

Eight members currently make up the Sunland Acres staff, including team manager Tish Finnieston.

“The most important thing is having the right culture, and that means having the right people in place,” Lamoureux said.

As a result, Lamoureux is always on the lookout for passionate animal lovers that have an interest in their program and learning the ropes as either a groomer or pet receptionist at either of the facilities.

“It’s like dropping your child off at daycare,” Finnieston said. “These owners are dropping their pets off and trusting that everything is going to be good and happy.”

One of the things that spurred the addition of the grooming service at Sunland

Acres was going through the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a period where not many people were traveling, and therefore they did not have to board their dogs.

There was so much interest that the grooming option has continued, even once people started traveling more.

“This year people started traveling again and even more people wanted their dogs groomed,” Lamoureux said. “It was a new challenge of how to gear up for the extra work that quickly. That’s where Tish does an amazing job of verifying that all the things are lined up and running correctly.”

Sunland Acres consists of 48 rooms and some dogs that come together can stay together, which means they can house more than 48 dogs at one time depending on the situation.

The rooms inside each have a door on

a pulley that can be opened and allow the dogs to go back and forth from their inside room to their individual fenced-in space outside.

Lamoureux also owns Green Dog Spa on Baymeadows Road in Jacksonville, which has been open 10 years and focuses solely on grooming of dogs and cats.

“We work with the National Dog Groomer Association of America to follow the guidelines and perform the specific breed profile haircuts,” Lamoureux said.

Each dog that is boarded at Sunland Acres gets groomed right before they go home to their owner.

“We love it, because we love to see them (dogs) looking pretty and getting all fixed up with bandanas and bows,” Lamoureux said.

Leadership Jacksonville accepting applications

Leadership Jacksonville, an organization that educates, connects and inspires diverse leaders to build and strengthen their communities, is accepting applications for the Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2023.

The year-long flagship program brings together more than 50 leaders throughout the Jacksonville community, building

relationships with other leaders, exploring community issues and perspectives and working together to become better community trustees.

The Leadership Jacksonville program creates a collaborative space for open dialogue between leaders with diverse perspectives to address major areas of community concern such as poverty, edu-

cation, arts, economic growth and more.

To be considered, applicants must complete an online application and may be invited for an interview. The selection is highly competitive with an effort to select participants who represent a broad cross-section of the community.

The Leadership Jacksonville Class 2023 will begin on Aug. 12 and continue

through June 2023. The program includes nine program days and two weekend retreats. Applications are accepted online at leadershipjax.org through midnight Jan. 20.

For further information, go to the website or call 904-396-6263.

Officials break ground on public golf course project



Photos by Shaun Ryan

Golf course designer Erik Larson speaks during a groundbreaking ceremony for the renovation of the St. Johns Golf Club.



Ceremonially breaking ground for the \$8 million project to renovate the St. Johns Golf Club are, from left, course Superintendent Anthony Baur, designer Erik Larson, County Commissioner Christian Whitehurst, Assistant Personnel Services Director Sarah Taylor, Director of Golf Wes Tucker and County Commissioner Henry Dean.

By Shaun Ryan

If all goes according to plan, St. Johns County residents and visitors will begin teeing off in October at a newly renovated, “must-play” public course in Elkton.

On Wednesday, Jan. 5, county officials, staff and members of the public gathered at St. Johns Golf Club for a groundbreaking ceremony marking a new chapter in the life of the 33-year-old course. The project will give the landmark venue a major facelift.

In April, the County Commission approved funding for the renovation, with that money coming from recreation impact fees, the transportation trust fund, the utility fund, the bed tax and the general fund.

The project will cost \$8 million with \$6.2 million for course renovation performed by Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. of Plainfield, Illinois, and about \$900,000 for clubhouse and cart barn renovations performed by DiMare Construction of St. Augustine.

The need for the project is manifest. The course and clubhouse are showing the effects of heavy use — 1.8 million rounds have been played there since they opened in 1989. The clubhouse, built to serve 35,000 people annually, saw use by 62,000 last year alone.

Statistically, 65% of rounds played on the course were from local golfers, with the remainder being visitors. In addition to individual golfers, the course has been used by teams from Pedro Menendez and St. Augustine high schools and St. Joseph Academy. It has also operated in partnership with First Tee of North Florida, and four leagues call it home.

But the course’s popularity and the ravages of time have left the drainage and irrigation dysfunctional, the grass

brown and various attributes in need of re-creation.

According to course director Wes Tucker, the contractors will re-do the greens, tees, fairways, irrigation, drainage, bunkers and cart paths. The clubhouse will be roomier and ADA compliant.

“It will basically be a brand new golf course when we finish,” Tucker said.

County Commissioner Henry Dean predicted that, once done, the course will be one of the better ones in Northeast Florida.

The new course has been designed by Erik Larson of Ponte Vedra-based LarsonGolf.

“The golf course must have, in my opinion, its own identity and its own character unlike anything around,” he said, adding that he wanted it to be a “must-play” course.

He projected that construction would take between six and seven months and that growing would take about three months.

The course is par 71, with par 35 on the front nine, par 36 on the back.

County Commissioner Paul Waldron said he was at the original opening and called the course a “great asset to the county.”

On the club’s surplus property, the county plans to build a new fire station and sheriff’s substation.

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In the Arts

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Lineup changes to Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series announced

The Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series has announced updates to the lineup for the upcoming event, including the addition of New Orleans jazz-funk artist Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue, which will perform Feb. 26.

Also, due to unforeseen circumstances, Taj Mahal and Christian McBride were forced to cancel their performances that had been set for Feb. 11 and 12. Refunds for Taj Mahal and Christian McBride will be available via point of purchase.

Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue's music respects Crescent City traditions while pushing the boundaries of those traditions, adding pop, rock and hip-hop influences.

"Allen Toussaint told me, 'Learn everything you can, take everything you can from us, but don't be us,'" Shorty said. "The responsibility put on me is to move the music forward."

Trombone Shorty's new album opens with a dirge, but anyone who thinks the bandleader, singer, songwriter and horn-blower born Troy Andrews is coming here to mourn, they're wrong.

Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series is a collection of five performances taking place Feb. 18-26 at Fort Mose Historic State Park. The series honors the history and celebrates the cultural significance of the first free Black settlement in what is now the United States.

Proceeds of this series will support the construction of an on-site fort representation and development of additional interpretive resources. The original fort was destroyed during the Battle of Bloody Mose in 1740.

Previously confirmed artists include two-time Grammy Award-winning jazz artist Gregory Porter, the legendary 18-time Grammy Award-winning Count

Basie Orchestra, breakout Americana and roots singer-songwriter Amythyst Kiah and New Orleans' deep-groove R&B and jazz group Tank and the Bangas.

The Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series is produced by the St. Johns County Cultural Events Division, which operates The St. Augustine Amphitheatre and Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, with support from St. Johns County Tourist Development Council, St. Augustine Distillery, St. Johns Cultural Council, Fort Mose Historical Society and Flying Saucer Presents.

Tickets are available online at Ticketmaster.com and in-person at The St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office. Box office hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday. The St. Augustine Amphitheatre Box Office accepts credit and debit card payments only.

Fort Mose Jazz & Blues Series Schedule

FEB. 18

The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra, directed by Scotty Barnhart

Tickets: \$65-\$115

[ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62C018C580](https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62C018C580)

FEB. 19

Amythyst Kiah

Tickets: \$45-\$65

[ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62B8D5C4AB](https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62B8D5C4AB)

FEB. 24

Gregory Porter

Tickets: \$70-\$120

[ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62B704C460](https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62B704C460)

FEB. 25

Tank and the Bangas

General admission standing tickets: \$40

[ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62B59DC43B](https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/22005B62B59DC43B)

FEB. 26

Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue

Tickets: \$65-\$115

[ticketmaster.com/event/22005B91E755C7FD](https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/22005B91E755C7FD)

Celtic festival, St. Patrick parade set for March

Plans are under way for the St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival, which will be held in March.

The festival was first produced in 2011 and has grown in popularity each year while winning multiple awards for best music festival and best food festival in St. Johns County and the Jacksonville area.

Centuries of Celtic heritage will be highlighted during the festival's Highland Games with athletes demonstrating and testing their strength and endurance, and Celtic clans displaying their ancestral pride.

Vendors will offer Celtic cuisine and additional food and beverages, handmade and imported Celtic crafts, workshops, lectures and more. Top touring bands from Scotland, Ireland, Canada and around the United States will play traditional songs and Celtic rock throughout the two-day festival.

Starting on March 11 with a whiskey tasting from 7 to 9 p.m., the festival will continue March 12-13 with events, food and activities from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. All activities will be held at Francis Field, 25 W. Castillo Drive in St. Augustine.

A highlight of the festival weekend includes the only St. Patrick Parade in

Northeast Florida, starting at Francis Field at 10 a.m. March 12. The parade has its roots in St. Augustine's history. The city's first Irish vicar, Father Thomas Hassett, led the area's initial St. Patrick procession in 1601. It is the first recorded St. Patrick's parade in the world.

This year's parade will feature The City of St. Augustine Pipes & Drums, Coastal Florida Police & Fire Pipes & Drums, Jacksonville Pipes and Drums and Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department's Pipes and Drums along with local talent and parade participants through the downtown.

Parade participation and registration begins on Saturday, Jan. 15. To register, go to celticstaugustine.com/parade.

The 2022 Grand Marshal of the parade will be The Sisters of St. Joseph representing the Miguel O'Reilly House, which has been in the care and ownership of the Sisters since 1866.

The unique history of the house and its tradition is an important part of the history of St. Augustine. Father O'Reilly, an Irish priest, was vicar to the Spanish colonists in the city, which was Spain's capital in La Florida.

The Sisters opened The O'Reilly House,



Photo provided by Romanza-St. Augustine

The St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival features traditional music and Celtic rock bands.

known officially known as the Father Miguel O'Reilly House Museum, and the House of Don Lorenzo de Leon as a museum and fundraising site at 32 Aviles St. On Oct. 15, 1974, the house was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

For more information, vendor participation and online ticket sales and locations, go to celticstaugustine.com or [\[celticstaugustine.com/performer-lineup\]\(https://celticstaugustine.com/performer-lineup\).](https://celticstau-</p>
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The St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival and the parade are produced by Romanza-St. Augustine Inc. Proceeds of the festival are used to promote the arts, culture and heritage of St. Augustine. For more information about Romanza Festival of Music and the Arts, go to romanzafestival.com.

Sports



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Cranking up the pressure

Relentless defense fuels Sharks blowout victory over Crusaders

By Anthony Richards

The wave of momentum the Ponte Vedra Sharks have been on of late continued with an emphatic 61-31 win over Bishop Kenny High School in the Shark Tank Jan. 7.

The 30-point victory was rarely in doubt as the Sharks opened the game with a 13-2 run and led the Crusaders 40-15 at halftime.

“This was a big game coming in and everybody knew it,” senior J.T. Kelly said. “Everybody stepped up.”

Everything was clicking for the Sharks on the night, especially on the defensive side, where their relentless full-court pressure frustrated the Crusaders and resulted in turnovers and easy points in transition.

“This past week we really worked in practice on getting our trapping angles right, and tonight we really saw that come to fruition,” Kelly said.

The Crusaders struggled at times just to get the ball past the half-court line against the swarming team defense of the Sharks.

Senior Ross Candelino had a huge scoring night for the Sharks with 24 points against his former team, which he played for prior to transferring to Ponte Vedra this season.

Ben Ritchie added nine points and Luke Pirris tallied eight.

Although Candelino was the only player in double figures on the night, the Sharks have four players averaging 10-plus points on the season.

“It’s my first time playing on a team where everyone in the starting five pretty much averages 10 points a game or more,” Candelino said. “It’s just a bunch of unselfish guys wanting to win, and that’s awesome.”

Not only was Candelino a threat to score, but he also grabbed his share of rebounds and drew a couple of charges on defense.

“We look to build our offense off of defense,” Candelino said. “That’s the biggest building block we have on our team.”

There was no doubt that the game carried a little more emotion for Candelino playing against his former school.

“I know all the guys coming from over there, and it was just a crazy atmosphere,” Candelino said. “They’re a great team, and we were able to get them on the right night.”

The victory was just the latest for the Sharks and the first since winning the Kelleher Law Holiday Hoopfest Tournament down in Naples.

According to Candelino, the trip and the tournament has gone a long way in improving the team’s chemistry.

“I believe chemistry off the court definitely helps the play on the court,” Kelly said.

Junior Israel Nuhu put an exclamation point on the contest with a two-handed dunk with about two minutes remaining that brought the crowd to its feet one last time.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Ponte Vedra’s J.T. Kelly and Gus Jordheim trap a Bishop Kenny ball handler in the back court. Pressure defense was key to the Sharks’ success.



Ross Candelino of Ponte Vedra splits defenders and is fouled on his way to the basket. He finished with 24 points against his former school.



Luke Pirris drives to the basket. He finished with eight points on the night.



From left, J.T. Kelly, Ross Candelino, Gus Jordheim and Luke Pirris gather on the court during a break in the action.

CROSSWORD

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THEME: THE GRAMMY AWARDS
- ACROSS**
1. Chunk of land
 6. Sail alternative
 9. Female sheep, pl.
 13. Oak, in Spanish
 14. Nucleic acid acronym
 15. "___ under fire"
 16. Permeate
 17. Internet meme move
 18. *Number of 2022 Grammy nominations for Doja Cat or H.E.R.
 19. *Justin Bieber's stuff from Georgia
 21. *Gaga's partner
 23. Mauna ____, Hawaii
 24. Cartoon Coyote's first name
 25. Lawyers' grp.
 28. Marine eagle
 30. Like Roger Rabbit
 35. Boisterous play
 37. Ore deposit
 39. Davy Crockett's last stand
 40. U.S. city and lake
 41. Tossed starter
 43. F.B.I. operative
 44. Group of nine singers, e.g.
 46. Gardner's gear
 47. In the middle of
 48. Arctic-wear
 50. Porcini mushrooms
 52. In the manner of, in French
 53. *Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak, a.k.a. ___ Sonic
 55. Decimal system base
 57. *2022 Grammy nominations leader
 61. *"Bad Habits" performer
 65. Lacking sense
 66. Unit of electrical resistance
 68. Low landform
 69. Grassy mound
 70. Recent or new, prefix
 71. Los ____, CA
 72. Peasy precursor
 73. .0000001 joule
 74. Earp of the Wild West

DOWN

1. LSD consequence?
2. City on the Tiber
3. *Swedish band with one 2022 Grammy nomination
4. Exclamation from a coop
5. Tittering laugh sound
6. Bookie's quote
7. Registered nurses' org.
8. Torah expert
9. Female name or a name for Ireland
10. Worker's reward
11. Not counterfeit
12. Cobblestone
15. Genus, pl.
20. British peers
22. Will Ferrell holiday movie
24. Matrimony
25. *2022 Grammy event venue, Crypto.com ___
26. B on Mendeleev's table
27. Type of acid
29. *Grammy host's last name
31. Aquarium dweller
32. #3 Down's 1975 hit "___ Mia"
33. Means of communication
34. *Kanye's album
36. Source of pressure?
38. Facilitate
42. Profoundness
45. Tip of lion's tail
49. First aid one
51. Up and down playground attraction
54. Sergio of westerns
56. Very recently
57. Triathlon ride
58. Tolstoy's Karenina
59. New Mexico art colony
60. Inwardly
61. Dirty air
62. Common "pro" follower
63. Loads
64. Egg storage
67. *"Fight for You" performer

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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.

Local clubs compete in inaugural women's interclub season

By Anthony Richards

The inaugural Florida State Golf Association Women's Interclub season has begun and TPC Sawgrass and Ponte Vedra Inn & Club have teams competing. The competition consists of six weekly fourball match play contests between local clubs in specific regions throughout the state from Jan. 5 to Feb. 9.

In week one, the TPC Sawgrass grouping of Kristin Jewell, Chris Karbowski, Dot Peck and Jane Rollinson defeated Atlantic Beach Country Club (Lisbeth Boudreaux, Eva Denbesten, Jo Geeslin and Karla Stuart) on their home course 9 to 3.

The Ponte Vedra Inn & Club team of Denise Bench, Peggy Fleming, Liz Kelly and Jill Ouellette visited the Golf Club of Amelia (Anita Comisky, Connie Nickolson, Cathy West and Janet Woodward) and lost 7 to 5.

Points are tallied over the six-week period with highest point-getters advancing to the regional playoffs for an opportunity to play in the state finals at TPC Treviso Bay April 12-13.

"The best score is taken hole by hole,"

Rollinson said. "It comes down to one hole sometimes."

Not only does the event get the competitive juices flowing, but it is also an excellent platform to meet fellow women golfers and create new bonds of fellowship.

"There are a lot of very fine women golfers in this state," Rollinson said.

According to Rollinson, she had not played that much match play, but the experience has her wanting to play even more.

"Match play is very enjoyable," Rollinson said. "You could get a 10 on a hole and lose the hole, but it doesn't matter as much, because it is only one hole, and you get another chance on the next hole."

The two local clubs represented are in Division 2 of the three-division First Coast Region.

Twelve women make up the team with the players rotating spots to form the team each week.

"We're trying to get everyone in at least once," Rollinson said. "It is all about having fun at the end of the day. Most people are good sports about it."

Growing number to play in JAGA First Coast Amateur

Entering its sixth year, the Jacksonville Area Golf Association's (JAGA) First Coast Amateur continues to enjoy growing appeal and popularity among the nation's top amateur golfers. The Conservatory at Hammock Beach Golf Resort and Spa will host the event for the third year.

Interest in the upcoming (Jan. 15-17) championship was so strong this year that 140 players signed up within four weeks of the Nov. 1 start of registration. That number grew to as many as 177 in December.

Thirty-seven of the 96 available playing spots were allocated based on seven exemption categories. An additional 10 committee picks were awarded Dec. 23 to round out the field.

With interest growing nationally in the 54-hole stroke-play event, the field

for 2022 will be its strongest ever. This year's event will have more players ranked inside the top 2,000 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking than any previous First Coast Amateur.

The 96 players hail from 17 countries, 22 states and 34 colleges and universities. The latter figure is four more than any of the five previous tournaments.

Local representation is strong with Flagler College, the University of North Florida and Jacksonville University having five, four and three team members, respectively, in the field.

Once again, JAGA has extended two exemptions to the North Florida Junior Golf Tour. Representing the junior tour will be Connor Hess, 16, of Episcopal School of Jacksonville and Adam Vermont, 18, of Wolfson High School.

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