

PONTE VEDRA RECORDER

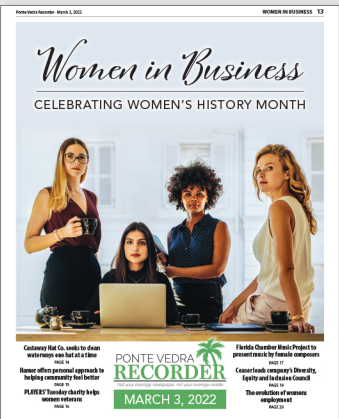
March 3, 2022
Volume 53, No. 18
75 cents

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PonteVedraRecorder.com



Insider's Tournament Guide
INSIDE



Women in Business
Pages 13-20



Kathy's Gardening Guide
Page 10

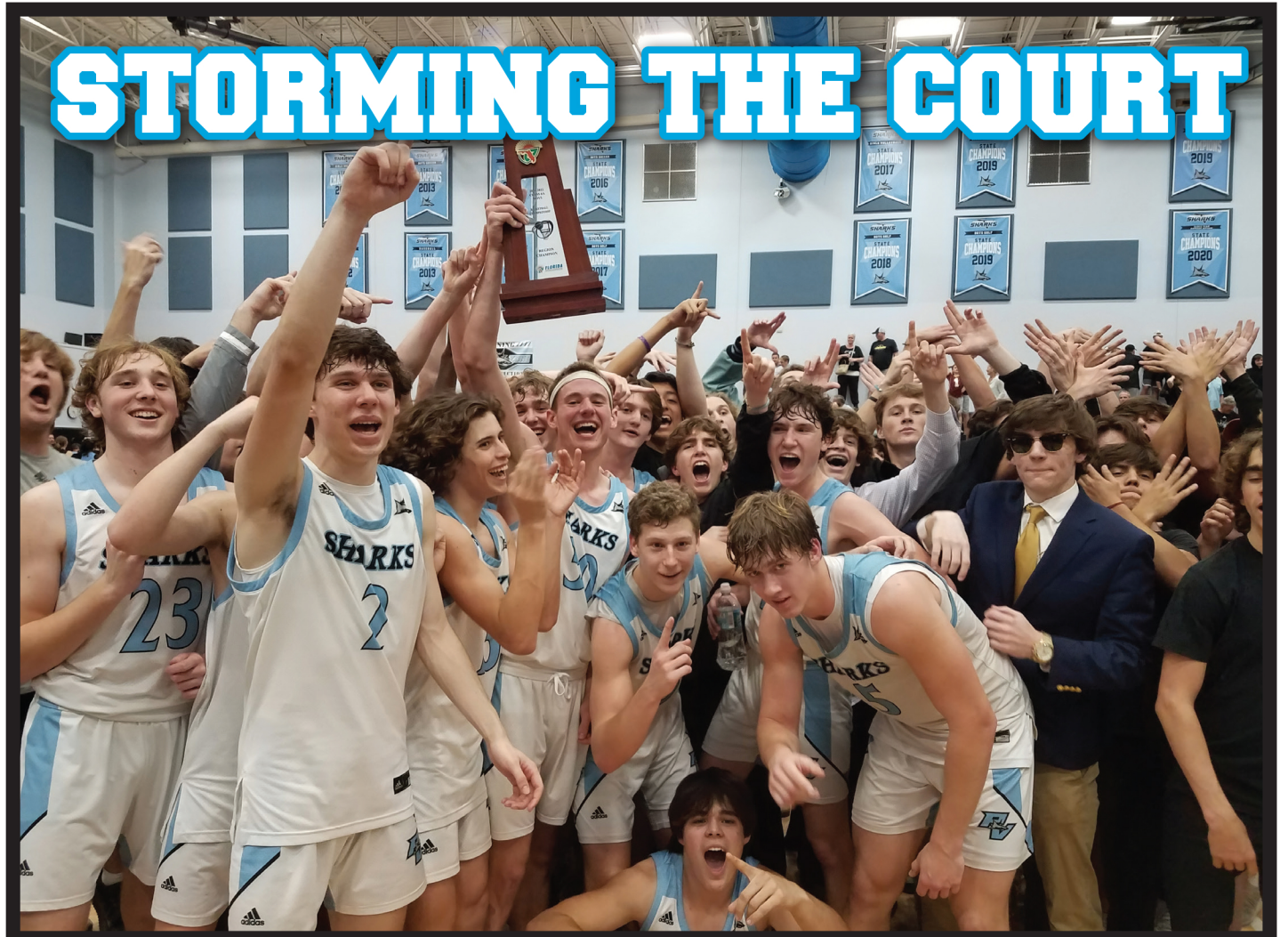


Photo by Anthony Richards

It was a raucous environment as students stormed the court and celebrated with players after the Ponte Vedra boys basketball team secured the first final four appearance in school history following a 60-49 win over Fleming Island in the Shark Tank Feb. 25. Read more on page 28.



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INSIDE

One of Us

Page 6

Business Weekly

Pages 25-26

In the Arts

Page 27

Sports

Pages 28-30

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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

BRIEFS

St. Johns County COVID-19 testing site closed Sundays

The St. Johns County COVID-19 testing site located at the Wind Mitigation Building is now closed on Sundays due to a decrease in testing numbers. The testing site remains open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, call 904-295-0562.

Democratic Club to meet

Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will hold its monthly meeting March 15 in Room 106 of Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach. Club Vice President Ed Warren will be the featured speaker and his topic will be "Vote your Pocketbook."

The 6:30 p.m. meeting will be preceded at 6 p.m. with Chat & Chew. For further information, email janetkary@gmail.com.

Mickler's Landing open for THE PLAYERS, spring break

Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park and parking lot will be open from 6 a.m. Saturday, March 5, through 8 p.m. Sunday, March 20, for pedestrian beach access.

After March 20, Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park will return to being closed Monday through Friday to allow crews to resume work on the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project. The park will remain accessible on Saturdays and Sundays.

For more information about the FEMA Dune Enhancement Project, go to www.sjcf.us/coastalprojects/FEMADunes.aspx.

St. Johns County seeks community feedback on service needs and gaps

The St. Johns County Health and Human Services Department is seeking resident feedback regarding service needs and gaps within our area. Responses will be utilized to identify high-priority funding objectives to optimize community services and enhance the overall health of St. Johns County residents. To take the Community Needs Survey anonymously, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MY2R5S8>. The survey will remain available through March 17. For more information, call 904-209-6143 or email ktaner@sjcf.us.

Bow Wow Walk raising funds for Community Hospice & Palliative Care pet programs

The second annual Bow Wow Walk, a monthlong virtual marathon is under way and will benefit the Community Hospice & Palliative Care pet programs.

To help patients with advanced illnesses to keep their pets at home, the pet assistance program helps

with nearly all the responsibilities of pet ownership, including feeding, dog walking, litter-box changing and more.

Teams in the pet therapy program visit patients. Studies have shown that pets can be physically and mentally beneficial for people of all ages.

Participants can support these unfunded programs while exercising and getting outdoors.

The virtual marathon is going on now and runs until March 26, culminating in the End-of-Walk Celebration. Throughout the challenge, there will be the "Top Dog" competition where the top fundraising team will be featured in next year's advertisements for the event and will receive a gift basket. There are weekly Yappy Hour socials hosted by Kanine Social, giving participants and their dogs a chance to socialize.

For more information or to get registered go to BowWow.CommunityHospice.com, email Dylan Hausmann, the special events coordinator, or call him at 904-407-6205.

Registration under way for Vilano Bridge Run

The 25th annual 2022 Vilano Bridge Run will be held at 8 a.m. April 2. There will be a 5K, 10K and fun run.

The event, hosted by the North Shores Improvement Association, supports community improvement efforts. A portion of registration proceeds will be donated to the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind. The last three races netted more than \$15,000 for FSDB.

Early registrants receive colorful race T-shirts with finisher medals awarded to all participants. Age group awards will be made for top finishers.

Participants and their families are encouraged to "stay and play" at the after-party with music, awards, family games, prize drawings and a 50/50 raffle. Visitors will have the chance to meet rescue pets and see exotic animals from the Alligator Farm.

While runners will each receive a complimentary post-race beer, additional food and drink will be available for purchase.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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Beaches Museum Chapel: 525 Beach Blvd. Jacksonville Beach
Free parking is available off Pablo Ave. Doors open at 2 p.m.

Briefs

Continued from 2

Top event sponsors include Serenata Beach Club, the Dilbeck Clan, Stillwater Insurance Group, Ancient City Brewing, Dog Rose Brewing Company and Beach 105.5/ St. Augustine Country 106.3, Vighetti Physical Therapy.

Register at www.1stPlaceSports.com or at 1st Place Sports stores by March 13 for a guaranteed race shirt, and discounted registration by March 19. Later, regular price registration will be available through April 1 with limited registration available at the start of the race on April 2. For more

information, contact vilanobridgerun@gmail.com.

Florida proposed Senate budget includes increase for VPK

The Florida Senate's proposed budget includes almost \$400 million in additional funding for Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) over the next three years, with a focus on increasing wages for the state's early learning teachers.

This funding will increase per-student school year funding from \$2,486 to \$3,294 through an \$808 supplemental payment to increase VPK teacher pay to a minimum of \$15 per hour from the current average salary of around \$12.50 an hour.

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Visit www.bbbsnefl.org or call 904-727-9797 if you live in Duval, Nassau, Volusia/Flagler, Clay, Baker or Putnam Counties

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Local residents return to Ukraine to help family member

To the editor:

My wife and I are U.S. citizens. Now we are in Ukraine in the city of Kyiv.

It is possible that you have heard in the news about events that relate to Ukraine. Everything is very difficult! The world is teetering on the brink of peace and war!

My wife Emma and I were born in Ukraine. And now we are in this country to issue immigration documents (family reunification) and take my mother-in-law (her name is Valentyna) to the USA. But to our regret, we found ourselves in a difficult situation. We cannot quickly resolve all issues with the execution of immigration documents. We are forced to stay in Kyiv until the first days of March. Then we will have to travel to Poland to conduct an interview at the U.S. Embassy.

The U.S. Embassy in Ukraine left Kyiv on Feb. 14. But I want to say that we were not abandoned. We have constant contact with representatives of the embassy and the State Department. We are very grateful for the care and

attention. But we are forced to stay in Kiev, because we cannot leave Valentyna alone.

In the current situation for us we can only hope and wait. Time is not in our favor now. War can start at any moment. But we're waiting for information from our lawyer. Then we will get to the Polish border.


My wife and I knew where we were going and how dangerous it was for us!


Valentyna is not a celebrity — she is a simple woman from a simple working-class family. She has seen little in her life! She was a hard worker and a good mother! We have no moral right to leave her alone and go back to the U.S. without her. We will be with her until the end!

Thank you very much!


Mykola Kubryakov

Editor's Note: Mr. Kubryakov is a resident of Ponte Vedra. He wrote this letter prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

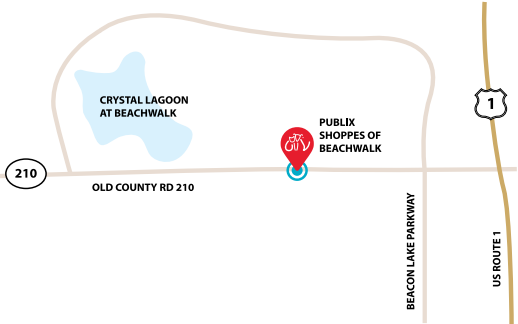



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Matt Welch is THE PLAYERS 2022 tournament chairman. In the role, he will oversee the roughly 2,000 volunteers working the week of the tournament, which he is familiar with, having been a volunteer with the event for 15 years himself.

Matt Welch

As told to Anthony Richards

Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

My enjoyment of being involved with large groups and golf tournaments comes naturally being born and raised in Augusta, Georgia, as a member of a fantastic family including six sisters and three brothers.

I guess you could say joining “the ranks of the volunteers” for THE PLAYERS Tournament was an easy transition. I graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and relocated to Jacksonville in 1982 and have called Fleming Island my home for the past 32 years.

I retired as president of Elkins Constructors, Inc. in 2015 after working my entire career with Barry Allred, who hired me fresh out of college.

Throughout my career it was important to me to maintain an eye towards community, serving on a variety of boards and chamber groups ranging from the Clay County Utility Board of Supervisors to Catholic Charities Board of Directors.

How did you get involved with THE PLAYERS?

My story is probably similar to a lot of our volunteers. I attended THE PLAYERS for many years as a patron and drank my share of cold beers watching golf from the hill on the 17th hole.

A couple of vice chairmen at the time asked me if I would be interested in joining them as a volunteer. While I was aware of some of the charitable works the tournament supported, I was amazed to learn the full scope of financial impact on the Northeast Florida region and the critical role the volunteers play in making it all possible.

The more I learned, the more I wanted to dive in. That was 15 years ago. I’m very thankful to have had the opportunity to contribute to the incredible growth of the tournament and its ever-expanding impact on the larger community.

What do you enjoy most about what the event offers and your current role?

As noted above, the tournament has had a positive impact on addressing an expansive list of needs in our community. And my volunteer leadership position has allowed me the incredible opportunity to see firsthand how individual lives are changed by what we do.

There is no more rewarding feeling than a “Red Coat Rideout” to organizations in our community and supporting them with the tools to help move others forward in life. As fantastic as the tournament is for golf, and make no mistake, I am a huge golf fan, the smiles on the kids’ faces or the grateful eyes of a military veteran is a humbling experience.

I think we can all be proud of the way THE PLAYERS touches lives in Northeast Florida.

What are some of your goals as tournament chairman?

I am extremely proud of how the volunteers have worked through the many difficulties associated with the pandemic to date. At this point I am working to re-focus the best volunteers in golf on delivering the gold stan-



Photo courtesy of Matt Welch

After going to THE PLAYERS for years as a fan, Matt Welch began volunteering and has seen firsthand the impact the event has made on the local community.

dard of golf tournaments now that things are thankfully moving back towards normalcy in terms of tournament attendance and social venues.

The theme I see for our 2,000 volunteers this year is we are making lives in Northeast Florida better by volunteering, and it’s all about having fun while doing it!

Through the tournament, I have developed many friendships over the years, even though some of them I only see once a year. But I have found that common goals make great friends!

How have you seen THE PLAYERS impact the local community over the years?

As a member of the board of directors for Catholic Charities I have been a recipient of THE PLAYERS generosity at Camp I Am Special and can testify to how it has changed lives.

THE PLAYERS has helped more than 300 local charities since its inception and there is no reason to expect anything less going forward.

In addition to the impact it has on our local charities, the impact it has on our business community is unmatched. The annual economic impact is estimated to be in excess of \$212 million.

We experience over \$115 million in off-site spending by attendees, have greater than 80% occupancy in our local hotels and over 500 local, national and international companies that use THE PLAYERS hospitality venues to expand their businesses. Now that’s impact!

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

Tough question! As I mentioned, being a golfer you can’t find many places better than Northeast Florida. I also love the river and when you get tired of that view you can just go take a walk on the beach.

Everything is at your fingertips. I have family living in Tennessee and Michigan too, so it’s always fun messing with them during the winter months as well.

When you get right down to it, I believe we are a community that cares and that helps make Northeast Florida a great place to call home.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I’ll tell you in April. Haven’t had much free time preparing for THE PLAYERS, and I’m quite happy about that.

DEATH NOTICES

Christine Anne Cox

Christine Anne Cox, 81, died Feb. 21, 2022. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Mary Anne Hughes

Mary Anne Hughes, 86, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Feb. 17, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Jose “Joe” Mato

Jose “Joe” Mato, 70, of St. Johns, Florida, died Feb. 18, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

John McMenamy

John McMenamy, 77, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Feb. 15, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Frances Pisano

Frances Pisano, 111, of St. Augustine, Florida, died Feb. 18, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

Ronald Rosenfeld

Ronald Rosenfeld, 67, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Feb. 25, 2022. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravally.com

OBITUARIES

Helen Shulman

With love to you — Helen Shulman
April 7, 1922 – February 19, 2022



Here’s to you Mother — daughter, wife, mother, aunt, grandmother and great grandmother. Helen Shulman was almost at her 100th year ... her life spanned a century. Your stature and natural beauty was always about perfection, not bigger than life. And always by her side our father Abraham, her loving & caring husband.

Dying on a Saturday is saved for people who are righteous. Doing the right thing. Caring about others. Yes, Mother was a ‘peacemaker.’ We could tell her life story of a thousand vignettes from decades beyond imagination. How she set

her course along with her husband’s dreams, how they made their fortune, raised their family — with dedication.

Mother didn’t possess any amazing talent but she did talk about doing a piano concert while in her teens, although she never played the piano one day during her years with us. We all knew one fact — that moving and owning many homes was Mom’s style — Buying new houses, changes of address always brought US a smile. As we updated our address books, one thing remained constant — new homes were always with your touch, always happy, never a fear.

Mom’s early Brooklyn life from 1922 through her marriage to Dad (secretly) in 1939 was her legacy. She cherished her Aunt Elsie and Uncle Ned Nelson who became her guardian angels after her father died at a very early age. She loved her beautiful mother Bessie and older sister Geraldine! But it was THAT summer in the Catskill Mountains that changed the course of her entire life — meeting Abe during the summer of 1938.

Their early years together in Long Branch, NJ found them welcoming two children Leigh & Bruce. They became an important couple in the shore town’s center of sociability. These were the young years when Mother loved knitting her children sweat-

ers, creating hand-made afghans, cooking from a ‘readers digest’ cookbook and nurturing her family from the small red Hadassah Holiday Cookbook. She was the dentist’s devoted wife and she loved it.

From home to home, town to town, New Jersey to Florida and back, they had wanderlust — never thinking twice about making decisions together to pick up and move! Mother supported Dad in his dental and orthodontic practices, keeping an eye on him AND the business. By the 1970s they retired; for 30+ beautiful years they lived the life of riley — finding big band music and places to dance. Mom’s expectations were simple — making dad happy, traveling through Doc’s Tours and ALWAYS taking a chance.

They traveled the world, lived on a kibbutz in Israel, survived years in Las Vegas, played tennis from Florida to Vegas. As they trekked her favorite stories were how they met — falling in love, a secret wedding and onward.

Today’s technology was never Mom’s thing — until after Dad’s passing when she realized that the mainline to her family was her flip cellphone. Her technical consultant was her loving granddaughter Sue. And her interior design consultant — grandson Dave!

Mom’s memory was keen; even a week before she passed — she was still the family historian that we could call to connect the dots.

How will we remember our Mother? There isn’t a book big enough to share our memories and love. The final years were the most difficult when being alone was her life. Every day she prayed to be with Dad, although I knew we couldn’t part with her yet. We will think of you every day, look up in heaven and chuckle about the little things that made you happy — Jay and I will always keep a bowl of jelly beans and oreo cookies within arm’s length. Now you’re at a table in Heaven; so save me a seat Momma and please share your plate of shrimp lo mein!

This week by your bedside on your long journey to heaven, You quietly and calmly passed into heaven just like Dad did — with peace and dignity. We are so proud of you!

Daughter Leigh Cort — Son Bruce Shulman — Son-in-Law Jay Greene — Granddaughter Susan Lomba — Grandson David Lomba — Granddaughter Parker Shulman — Great Grandson Zack Serebin



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OBITUARIES

Elizabeth (Betty) F. Cox



Elizabeth (Betty) F. Cox passed away February 15, 2022 at the too young age of 96.

She was born June 4, 1925 to Margaret Downs and John Ernest Fisher, joining her older brother Jack.

Growing up in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, Betty first worked for the Walter Kidde Company in New Jersey where she met her husband to be as he returned to civilian life after piloting a B-17 in WWII. She later worked as a legal secretary for New Jersey Bell in Newark, N.J.

Betty was married in 1947 to Harry F. Cox, the love of her life, and during their 66 years together they raised two daughters, both attorneys, Kathryn and

Nancy, in Wyckoff, N.J. and later in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL and Westport, N.Y. She and her husband owned and operated Cox Chevrolet in Fair Lawn, New Jersey for many years until their retirement to Florida and continued to own Westport Airport on Lake Champlain in New York.

Betty was elected President of the Mother's Guild of the Academy of Mt. St. Vincent in Tuxedo Park, N.Y., was a member of Hackensack Golf Club in Oradell, N.J. and the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, as well as a being a long time member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

She was a juried artist in New Jersey where she composed beautiful oil paintings, as well as watercolors and Sume'. She enjoyed playing golf, antiquing, solving crossword puzzles and traveling anywhere and everywhere with her family.

Betty is survived by her daughter, Kathryn C. Danzeisen, her grandson, David Paul Danzeisen, Jr., her granddaughter, Summer Paige Danzeisen Badanowski (Mark), and her devoted friend and caregiver, Pamela Van Guilder. She was sadly predeceased by her husband, Harry and her daughter, Nancy Cox DeSheplo.

Betty, a member of the "Greatest Generation" lived a long and happy life, but for all the many family and friends who loved her, she did not live long enough.

Barbara Ellis



Barbara Ellis, whose maiden name was Barbara Ann Caskey, died at the age of 86 on January 25th, 2022 from natural causes.

Barbara Ellis was born on December 27, 1935 in the idyllic town of Coudersport in Northern Pennsylvania to Mary and Paul Caskey. Raised under the watchful and loving eyes of her maternal grandparents, Lawrence and Katherine Pesock, Barbara graduated from Shinglehouse High School in June 1953.

Barbara pursued her dream of being a nurse by immediately enrolling at Bradford Hospital School of Nursing in Bradford, PA. With the emotional and financial support of her aunt, Miriam Caskey Johnson, Barbara obtained high marks and was regarded as ambitious and fun-loving by her classmates. Barbara graduated as a registered nurse in 1956 and began her career at Bradford Hospital. The following year she married Fred Colosimo and gave birth to Mark Colosimo. Barbara stayed in Bradford for 12 years during which time she blossomed into a caring nurse, a supportive mother and a devoted friend to many, especially her sidekick Leona Colosimo.

In 1969, Barbara traded in her snow tires for a beach umbrella when she moved to Pompano Beach, FL with her son. While Barbara continued her nursing career in the operating rooms of North Broward Hospital she met and married the beloved surgeon, Dr. Woodrow "Doc" Ellis in 1976. Barbara and Doc, or Woody as she called him, spent the next 15 years in Lighthouse Point, FL.

The loving pair moved to Port Orange, FL in 1991. Barbara and Doc nurtured a family that included their children Karen, Keith, Mark, Butch, Kim and Suzanne and their grandchildren Billy, Dominic, Ethan, Kate, and Shelby. Yet, Barbara continued to create mayhem with her friends including her beloved Aunt Jane Caskey. After an illness she moved to Starling at Nocatee where she spent her final three years constantly entertaining the staff.

Barbara was an avid reader, always loving a good laugh from a Stephanie Plum novel. She was also an indiscriminate cinephile. Her truly impressive collection of movies allowed ample excuses for one of her favorite pastimes: gathering in the living room with her family and friends with endless bowls of candy and popcorn. Her other hobbies included shopping and keeping tabs on her favorite celebrities, most notably the famous "50 Shades of Grey" stars Jamie Dornan and Dakota Johnson.

She will be dearly missed. In lieu of flowers or donations, be kind and tolerant to those around you; you never truly know the afflictions that underlie those beside you.

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Registration under way for Betty Griffin Center 5K race fundraiser

Final registration is under way for The Run for Peace 5K, benefitting Betty Griffin Center, which takes place at 8 a.m. April 9 at the St. Augustine Pier, located at 350 A1A Beach Blvd.

Runners and walkers can sign up at www.runforpeace5k.org through April 8. Registration is \$30 for adults and \$20 for students, and supporters can sign up to take part virtually for \$25.

"This is one of our major fundraisers for the year, and we're excited that this will be held as an in-person event for the first time since 2000," said Betty Griffin Center CEO Kelly Franklin.

Major sponsors for the event include the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation,

Heidi Eddins Jimmerson, Vystar Credit Union, St. Augustine Beach Police, Volkswagen of St. Augustine, Burkhardt Sales and Service, Ameris Bank, Gwanda, Flagler Health +, Embassy Suites by Hilton and Robin Arnold/Endless Summer Realty.

Other sponsors include Gordon Dental, EasySociAbility, Restaurant Times, Rulon International, Diane's Natural Foods, Hams Nursery, Panache, Metro Diner, Harbour Dental, Pro Show DJ Services, The Locals Guide to St. Augustine, Mellow Mushroom, Antigua Ortho, Nissan of St. Augustine and the St. Johns Sheriff's Office.

Tesori Foundation continues to give kids fun day of golf

The Tesori Family Foundation's All-Star Kids Clinic offers 25 children with special needs an opportunity to experience golf in a whole new way (oftentimes it will be the very first exposure many of these children have had to golf).

Utilizing volunteer coaches, the clinic provides access to both typical and adaptive golf equipment to be used at four stations: driving, chipping, putting and Golfrilla (a huge, inflatable gorilla).

Groups of All-Stars rotate to each station getting one-on-one instruction from some of the area's best, including a

special appearance by at least one PGA TOUR professional.

What started as a goal to have one or two All-Star Kids Clinics has turned into a dream shared by not only the Tesori family, but several tournament directors and the leadership of the PGA TOUR, to host a multitude of clinics in cities served by the PGA TOUR.

The All-Star Kids Clinic presented by The PLAYERS Championship on March 9 is full. However, there will be a second clinic in October at TPC Sawgrass.



Photo courtesy of The Tesori Family Foundation

The All-Star Kids Clinic gives children with special needs a chance to experience golf.

Link launches new membership tiers

The link has introduced a new way to maximize membership and minimize members' costs. The facility at 425 Town Plaza Ave., Ponte Vedra, is a 22,500-square-foot co-working space, innovation incubator and cultural centerpiece in Nocatee Town Center.

To date, there have been two levels of membership, which admit members to the atrium lobby, fast WiFi access, activities, events and programs, as well as other local and online perks.

Individual memberships are \$100 per year and family memberships (bronze level) are \$240 a year.

Now three additional tiers are being offered, bundling services and programs that result in a savings for those who are more than occasional visitors to the link. These new levels allow people to pay just a membership fee rather than paying for programs a la carte.

The silver tier is a family membership that offers 24 Kids' Nights Out, a weekly pass for kids' summer camps, two hours' use of the Flagler Health+ 360-degree Immersive Studio and 10% off all event space booking. The cost is \$100 per month and represents a saving of 46%.

The gold tier comes with all that but adds one floating desk, unlimited programming for one person and priority access to VIP events. It also increases the number of summer camp passes, hours in the immersive studio and savings on space booking. The cost is \$500 per month and represents a cost saving of 47%.

The platinum tier is a family membership that offers two floating desks, unlimited activities and classes, unlimited Kids' Nights Out, 12 hours of studio event space, 12 hours in the immersive studio, concierge service and voting rights on all programming. It also offers 30% off lobby event bookings, as well as four weekly summer camp passes and discounts on events and workshops. The cost is \$1,000 per month, which represents a 51% savings over these items when purchased individually.

All memberships are a one-year commitment, and availability is limited.

The link is also planning to offer Kids' Night Out every two weeks. These give parents some time to themselves while the kids are having fun at the facility.

The new membership options are

particularly beneficial to families with children who want to do a lot at the link.

"That way you're not worrying about where to take the family any day of the week," said link co-founder Raghu Misra. "The goal is to fill at least five of the seven days with something interesting for all age groups."

In addition, the link is conducting a contest. Those who refer new members

earn points based on membership levels. The more points, the greater the chance of winning one of the prize gift cards after the contest ends on July 14.

First place wins a \$2,500 gift card. Second place wins a \$1,500 gift card. Third place wins a \$1,000 gift card.

For further information on membership or the contest, go to thelink.zone/membership.



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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: GETTING READY FOR SPRING

By Kathy Esfahani

"Love is the flower of life, and blossoms unexpectedly and without law, and must be plucked where it is found, and enjoyed for the brief hour of its duration." — D.H. Lawrence



Kathy Esfahani

The Groundhog says spring is not coming early; but never fear ... there are still ways to get your yard or lovely garden ready for the spring season:

- First, it's important to know our zone and what is best to plant locally. We are located in the 9A Zone here in Northeast Florida, so you'll need to ensure items you purchase can thrive in Zone 9A.

- Don't forget the next step: an early spring cleanup! Clean up the mounds of plant debris that may be in your garden beds, including any annuals you failed to remove last fall.

- This time is also great for transplanting any plants or trees you've been dying to relocate. The cooler, wet months of late are ideal for finally making the transfer.

- Be sure to prune all of your plants and trees in the next few weeks, or as long as temperatures don't go below freezing in the forecast of at least 32 degrees, or less, just to ensure the majority of cold nights are over for the season. This will not only aid in producing maximum growth in the next few months, but the effort will be more than worth it come spring.

- Fertilize flowers and plants, including all sodding during the month, most especially before the heat sets in.

- Weed and mulch to refresh your flower beds or postings. Mulch discourages weeds and moderates the soil temperature. It also creates cohesion for your landscaping pageantry.

- Tools: Please ensure that you purchase or clean and sharpen any gardening tools you need to ensure you're ready for spring.

- Although warm weather may be later than normal this year, it's still time to get prepared with the materials you'll need, especially to be prepared for a freeze or two before the coast is clear.

Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Gazania



Photo provided by Kathy Esfahani

Gazania

Email Kathy at 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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FSDB is PLAYERS charity for Wednesday

Photos provided by the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

School offers students tools for success

By Shaun Ryan

Since 1885, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind has ensured that deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired and deafblind students in the Sunshine State receive an education on par with that of their peers.

“Our job,” said school President Tracie Snow, “is to prepare them for a lifetime of success.”

In part, that means academics. But it also means learning about leadership, self-determination, emotional well-being and all the things that help a child or youth become a successful adult.

Essentially, FSDB is a public school based in St. Augustine. Enrollment runs from pre-K (age 3) all the way up to graduation. The school is fully accredited and tuition-free. In fact, the state also funds student boarding, transportation and food services. In addition, the school has counselors, social workers and a health-care center to serve students.

But life is about more than just the essentials, and donations are always welcome to help make up the difference. They allow the school to offer things beyond that which is funded by the state, things that help enrich students’ lives.

And if donations follow public awareness, this should be a good year for the school. THE PLAYERS Championship has selected FSDB to be its Charity of the Day for Wednesday, March 9.

“We look forward to our partnership with THE PLAYERS,” said Snow. “I think that’s just a huge honor.”

A student perspective

Students come from all over the state, though occasionally a few from South Georgia will enroll. There is an appli-

cation process, and once students are accepted, they may continue their education at FSDB for as long as they want. As with other public schools in Florida, they may remain until the age of 22. This could help a student earn an industry certification or an associate’s degree.

Enrollment currently stands at about 500. About 60-70 students graduate each year.

Teachers are dual certified: in their field of instruction and in the specifics of teaching students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired.

As with other public schools throughout Florida, there are numerous extracurriculars.

“FSDB provides so many amazing electives,” said senior Cassidy Dainty.

And she should know. Cassidy has been active in volleyball, basketball and flag football. She is a class officer, having been class president and vice president and, currently, sergeant of arms. She also has a job on campus in the technology department, is on the honor roll and is involved with the dance troupe, which she said is helping to build her confidence.

“I’m making so many precious memories and developing friendships with other people,” she said. “And they are just going to be lifetime friends for me.”

Participating in so many activities, Cassidy has realized one of the ways FSDB is preparing her for life: it is teaching her time management skills.

Cassidy hopes to attend Rochester Institute of Technology in New York, though she hasn’t focused just yet on what major she would like to pursue.

“I wouldn’t mind getting involved in leadership or management-type fields,” she said. “Some career that I can make a positive difference in people’s lives.”

Team spirit

In 2021, THE PLAYERS gave FSDB a charitable contribution that was used to purchase sports equipment for the athletic department.

Unfortunately, students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing



Photos provided by the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind

Athletes from the FSDB Deaf Department are all smiles. Senior Cassidy Dainty is in the center.



The FSDB cheerleaders made it all the way to the state competition this year. Thanks to a charitable donation from THE PLAYERS, the team was able to get new uniforms and practice mats.

often lack the opportunity to participate in structured athletics. But FSDB provides this opportunity and allows its students to compete, interact with peers and develop motor skills while building self-esteem.

Assistant Principal Donna Johnson, who oversees the phys ed and athletic departments, pointed out how donations have helped with the sports program.

The boys and girls goal ball teams, comprised of players from the Blind Department, did so well this year that they traveled to Austin, Texas, to compete in the Youth Nationals. Both teams came out winners.

Donations were also used for the school’s competition cheer team, which needed new uniforms and practice mats. The team made it all the way to the state

competition this year.

Snow called FSDB “an incredible resource” in the state of Florida. Yes, it provides its students with a quality education and beneficial life experiences, but it also works with districts all over the state.

“As part of our mission, we provide outreach and services to the local school district,” said Snow. “And local means the entire state.”

She invited parents wondering whether FSDB would be right for their children to visit and take a tour.

“I would say that 99.99999% of the people who come here and see this school will submit an application,” she said.

To learn more about the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind or to donate, apply for a job or apply for admission, go to fsdbk12.org.

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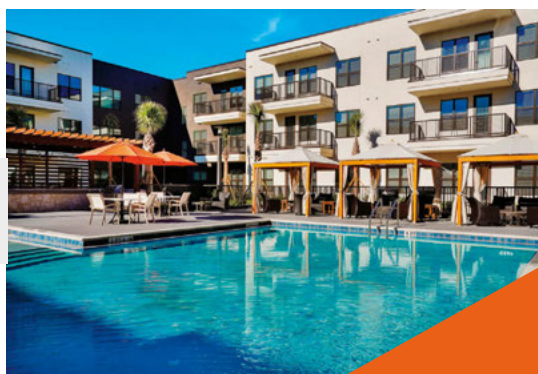
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- Nina

Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation meets people where they are

Mobile ministry is a doctor's office on wheels

By Shaun Ryan

For those who are not able to regularly access health care, the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation Mobile Health Outreach Ministry is a life saver.

Essentially a fully equipped doctor's office on wheels, it is one of 24 programs supported by the foundation.

"We provide funding for all of the work that goes to serve the underserved in our community outside the walls of the hospital," said Virginia Hall, the foundation's president and chief development officer.

The Mobile Health Outreach Ministry has five components.

There's a rural outreach ministry that serves underprivileged families who work in agricultural areas of St. Johns and Putnam counties. There's an urban outreach ministry that serves homeless, uninsured patients and their families in Duval, Clay and Nassau counties. There's a pediatric component that serves students at 23 schools in Duval County, a senior program that visits low-income



Photo provided by the Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation

The Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation Mobile Health Outreach Ministry meets people where they are with its "doctor's office on wheels." THE PLAYERS sponsored the bus in 2017.

seniors in three HUD housing complexes and a dental outreach ministry that serves uninsured families across the five counties.

Last year, the foundation provided 3,700 school and sports physicals to students for free. It also provided more than 1,600 dental procedures and 490 clinics throughout the five counties.

"We're meeting people where they are," said Hall.

But offering these services is costly — last year, the total care offered through its clinics was valued at \$1.8 million — and the foundation counts on donors to help it

carry on its mission.

"For every donated dollar we receive, we provide \$2.84 in free health care services to the underserved in our community," Hall said.

The foundation has partnered with THE PLAYERS since 1994. In 2017, THE PLAYERS sponsored a new mobile health medical van for the foundation's use.

And on Thursday, March 10, the foundation will be THE PLAYERS charity of the day.

"THE PLAYERS has been so generous with us," said Hall. "They're so generous

and really serve so many organizations in our community. I feel very honored that they selected us."

In addition to health care, the foundation provides other essentials, such as free medications, food, some clothing and backpacks. It provides patients with medical equipment, medical supplies, hygiene supplies and prayers.

Ascension St. Vincent's is part of Ascension, the largest not-for-profit Catholic health care system in the United States.

Those wanting to make a donation can contact the foundation. Go to givevincents.org to learn more.

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Women in Business

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Castaway Hat Co. seeks to clean waterways one hat at a time

PAGE 14

Hamer offers personal approach to helping community feel better

PAGE 15

PLAYERS' Tuesday charity helps women veterans

PAGE 16

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MARCH 3, 2022

Florida Chamber Music Project to present music by female composers

PAGE 17

Ceaser leads company's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council

PAGE 19

The evolution of women's employment

PAGE 19



Castaway Hat Co. is excited with beach season right around the corner.



Castaway Hat Co. has hats for adults and children.

Castaway Hat Co. seeks to clean waterways one hat at a time

By Anthony Richards

The Castaway Hat Co. was created in November from owner Meghan Storck's love of being around the water.

"I had been wanting to do my own thing, and then I got laid off, so I figured, 'We're going for it,'" Storck said. "It was hard with COVID, because we've got two young kids and were working from home. I thought I could put in the work but do it on my terms."

She tapped into the passion she has felt since an early age anytime she's near or out on the water.

"I've always worn a straw hat as a way to keep the sun off me growing up in Florida and going surfing with my dad," Storck said. "Every year they would wear out, and I just got tired of buying someone else's."

According to Storck, she has learned a lot in just the first couple of months since opening, especially with it being the first time she has ventured into owning her own business.

"In November we had a soft launch for friends and family and then really opened it up more in January," Storck said.

Not only does she now find herself as a small business owner, but she is taking a unique approach of looking to make a living and a difference in the world at the same time by selling hats that are fashionable and functional, but also represent a greater cause.

"I'm very passionate about keeping our waterways clean so that my kids and their kids can enjoy it like I did," Storck said. "We were already forming Castaway when I went to the sea turtle hospital in Islamorada this year on vacation. I knew it was bad, but it was pretty enlightening and made me even more aware that it's worse than I thought it was."

As a result, Castaway Hat Co. pledges to clean up a pound of trash and plastic from the ocean with every hat sold.

"We work with a couple of companies that we know, and we're always cleaning up the ocean ourselves as well," Storck

said. "I hope it can help make people a little more conscious of what's going on."

Various patterns are printed on the bottom of the straw hats. The "keeping it real" print, a nod to fishermen, has been one of the most popular.

Storck welcomes feedback from the public and is always looking for new designs to add as part of their selection.

Another addition coming soon is hats designed for people with a larger head size or that have a lot of hair. It will be sold along with the "one size fits most" and kid sizes that are currently sold.

It takes about 45 days to produce roughly 2,000 hats after going through the creation and design processes.

"Before we chose how we were going to manufacture them, I sampled a lot of hats and were able to mess with the straw," Storck said. "A lot of these hats tell you not to get them wet, but you naturally wear them outside and often around water. People have been surprised at how they hold up after getting a little wet."



Photos courtesy of Castaway Hat Co.

There are several different designs to pick from when ordering hats from Castaway Hat Co.

The company also sells dog collars available in many of the same print designs as the hats.

All the products can be viewed and purchased by going to castawayhatco.com.

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Hamer offers personal approach to helping community feel better

By Anthony Richards

Dr. Erika Hamer always knew that she wanted to go into the medical field and that dream became a reality 18 years ago when she founded Ponte Vedra Wellness Center located at 100 Corridor Road S., Suite 220 in Ponte Vedra Beach.

“When I first went into college, I was a biology and pre-med major and really wanted to be a pediatrician,” Hamer said.

However, while in college, she started a Hippocrates club, which is a medically based club.

One of the areas she oversaw was bringing in different health care disciplines and alternatives to traditional medicine.

A chiropractor came in to speak with the club and at the time was also looking for someone to work in their office, which was nothing new to Hamer, as she worked throughout college, but saw it as a step up from the grocery store she was working at.

According to Hamer, the time she spent in the practice’s office helped verify that

chiropractic work was where her passion was.

“The intention was to branch out and do something different,” Hamer said. “I saw all these patients getting well and thought, ‘This is pretty amazing.’ They took the time to teach me a lot of what went on in the office, and I eventually gravitated toward that path.”

Hamer graduated from chiropractic school at Life University in Marietta, Georgia.

What she loves most about the profession is the fact that she can really get to know her patients and discover who they are as people as well as the issues they are dealing with.

“I really enjoy the fact that it is such a hands-on profession,” Hamer said. “I get to know my patients, which is fun and definitely different from other settings.”

One of the ways she does this is by striving to make the patient experience as comfortable as possible, which includes having the walls painted in bright colors, having an inviting and open lobby and



Photo by Anthony Richards

Dr. Erika Hamer opened Ponte Vedra Wellness 18 years ago and six years ago added a Nocatee location to go with the one in Ponte Vedra Beach.

offering flavored waters as well as regular water.

“The little things make a big difference,” Hamer said.

Even though she did not become a pediatrician, she still gets the opportunity to work with children by seeing patients of a wide range of ages, from children to their parents and grandparents.

“We are really helping the entire community to get better,” Hamer said. “I’ve found that over my 18 years, I’ve been able to watch families grow up and now their families are coming here. Yes, you help people, and you get your patients better and might dismiss them from care,

HAMER continues on Page 18

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PLAYERS' Tuesday charity helps women veterans

By Shaun Ryan



Dee Quaranta

THE PLAYERS Charity of the Day for Tuesday, March 8, is Northeast Florida Women Veterans, a unique organization founded in 2012 by retired U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Deloris “Dee” Quaranta.

She was inspired to carry out this mission when she was unable to find another organization addressing the unique needs of women veterans.

“We basically help women get on their feet,” she said. “We are providing supportive services. We provide workshops. We provide food, clothing — we actually have an emergency shelter now. Whatever it is that they need to get on their feet. And it’s also about professional and personal development.”

Having spent 20 years in the military herself, Quaranta understands the challenges associated with the transition to civilian life.

“That transition is not always easy,” she said. “So, we try to lighten that load by making sure they have the tools they need.”

Life in the military is structured, and active-duty personnel are usually not required to consider such things as when the light bill is due, when the rent is due and scheduling doctors’ appointments.

Employment also poses challenges, especially for women who already face child-care demands. And some of the women must also confront post-traumatic stress disorder, military stress disorder or military sexual trauma.

To help women veterans, the organization offers advocacy and community outreach; herTOTALwellness, a six-week program designed to empower women veterans on their path to self-sufficiency by addressing their holistic needs; Operation Hand Up, which provides nonperishable food and personal hygiene items; HerBIZ, a six-month program to help women veterans become self-sufficient through business ownership; and HerHEALTHYLIFE, a six-month program empowering woman veterans to adopt healthier and sustainable lifestyles.

The organization helps women veterans find legal assistance, rent assistance, counseling and more.

“Just come in and talk to us,” Quaranta said. “We are a safe space. Everything’s confidential.”

Quaranta and her small staff of five provide these critical services across a five-county area. And their work is being noticed beyond the immediate area.

“We get calls from other parts of the state; we get calls from other parts of the country,” Quaranta said. “From women who either need help or who are interested in trying to do what we do.”

She is seeing successes that arise from her efforts. Program graduates go on to buy homes and earn college degrees. But one of the most important things the



Photos provided by Northeast Florida Women Veterans

Northeast Florida Women Veterans is there for women entering the civilian life following their service in the U.S. military.

VETERANS continues on Page 18

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Florida Chamber Music Project to present music by female composers

The Florida Chamber Music Project will present a concert featuring all-female composers on March 20 — a first for the group. The concert is scheduled for 3 p.m. at the Beaches Museum Chapel in Jacksonville Beach. It will be in memory of classical music benefactor Robert Jacoby.

The concert includes Jennifer Higdon’s “Southern Harmony,” Caroline Shaw’s “Punctum for String Quartet,” Florence Price’s “Five Folk Songs in Counterpoint” and Rhiannon Giddens’ “At the Purchaser’s Option.”

“Though our audience may not be familiar with these pieces, I’m sure that they will recognize some of the tunes,” said Artistic Director Susan Pardue. “These composers have a special place in American music that is not always

recognized.”

All of the composers were over-achievers as far as their works and place in music.

Shaw is a New York-based violinist and vocalist who won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 2013.

Rhiannon Giddens is a Grammy and MacArthur Genius Grant Award winner. She is the founding member of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, where she is the lead singer, fiddle and banjo player. She also was an actor in the television series “Nashville.”

Jennifer Higdon has also won the Pulitzer Prize for music and is a three-time Grammy Award winner.

Florence Price was the first African-American woman to be recognized as a symphonic composer. Many of her works



Contributed photo

Violinists Susan Pardue, Patrice Evans, Siyu Zhang and Ann Hertler and cellist Laurie Casseday of the Florida Chamber Music Project will present a concert on March 20 featuring the work of four female composers.

were inspired by folk tunes. She composed more than 300 pieces in the first half of the 20th century.

Beaches Museum Chapel is wheelchair-accessible and has free parking along Pablo Avenue near 4th Street North of Beach Boulevard. Guests are required to wear masks.

The Florida Chamber Music Project was founded nine years ago by violinist

Susan Pardue. Joining her are violinists Patrice Evans, Siyu Zhang and Ann Hertler and cellist Laurie Casseday. All are members of the Jacksonville Symphony.

For advance tickets online, go to <http://flchambermusic.org>. Follow Florida Chamber Music Project on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (@FLChamberMusic).





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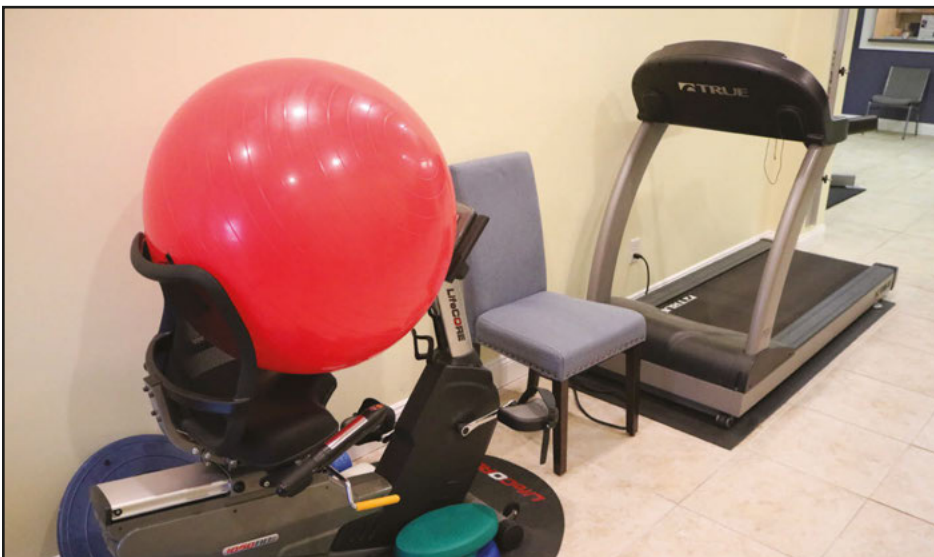
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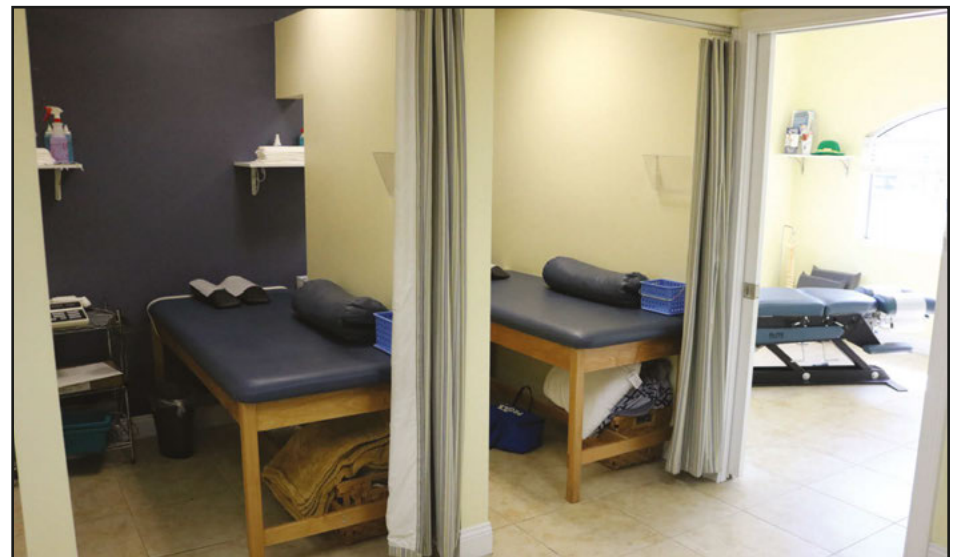
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Chiropractic care is the primary focus of Ponte Veda Wellness, but other services are also offered to help in a person's rehabilitation.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Massage therapy stations and recovery rooms are on site.

Hamer

Continued from 15

but ultimately people have new injuries as life happens and things come up, and they come back or refer others."

Hamer expanded her practice six years ago by opening a practice in the Nocatee

community located at 205 Marketside Avenue, Suite 200 in Ponte Veda, which Hamer believes helped fill a void for that community at the time and it continues to this day.

She has a staff of eight employees between the two offices and has strived to find people that are just as passionate about their job as she is.

Although chiropractic care is the primary focus, the facilities offer several services and are equipped to heal any part of the body that a patient needs help with.

Some of the services offered are cold laser therapy, spinal decompression therapy and massage therapy, each of which are non-invasive practices.

Cold laser therapy is designed to im-

prove blood circulation and speed up the healing process. It is recommended as a safe treatment for tendonitis, sprains and strains.

Spinal decompression therapy realigns a person's spinal joints and discs to improve pain and reduce inflammation in the process.

Veterans

Continued from 16

organization inspires is self-esteem.

"We show women that if you keep saying, 'I can't,' it will never happen," Quaranta said. "At least try. Life is a risk. Just try. If you don't succeed, you get up and you try again."

Northeast Florida Women Veterans opened a seven-bed emergency shelter in June with the cooperation of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church By-the-Sea in Jacksonville Beach.

Quaranta said she is looking forward to Women Veterans Recognition Week,

which will be held June 5-12 in Jacksonville. There will be several ceremonies and activities during that week.

Those seeking the services offered by the organization or looking to make a donation or purchase a brick in its Wall of Honor can do so by going to the website: forwomenvets.org.

"We're very, very grateful to THE PLAYERS for featuring this organization," Quaranta said. "We've been at this for a while, and it's nice that someone actually sees the work that we're doing. My motto is always: Just do the work and that recognition, if needed, will come. The funding will come if we just keep our heads down and just work."



Photos provided by Northeast Florida Women Veterans

Women veterans take part in a community food distribution.

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Graduates celebrate their completion of the Northeast Florida Women Veterans' HerBIZ program.



Contributed photo

Margaret Ceaser, human resources manager, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty

Ceaser leads company's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty has announced the promotion of Margaret Ceaser to human resources manager.

"Margaret understands that people are our number one priority," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty CEO Kevin Waugaman. "Her support of our employees, leadership, attention to detail and collaborative spirit make her an invaluable member of our team."

Ceaser joined the company in 2001 as a human resources and accounting administrator. As the company has grown over the years, Ceaser has taken on additional

responsibilities. In her new role, Ceaser is leading the company's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council.

"Our goal is to increase diversity education and awareness within our company and throughout the local community," said Ceaser. "We want to make a significant impact in our efforts while continuing to create a welcoming and diverse environment where our customers, Realtors and employees are treated with respect and feel welcomed, valued and included."

Ceaser has a master's degree in business administration, human resources management, from Columbia Southern University

and a bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University. She earned a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate from the University of South Florida. The program focuses on ways for organizations to increase employee diversity, embrace equity and foster inclusivity.

Ceaser is a member of the Society of Human Resources of Jacksonville, where she serves as co-chair of its diversity board. She is a member of the Florida Diversity Council (Jacksonville Chapter).

For more information about Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, go to FloridaNetworkRealty.com.

The evolution of women's employment

Women have made great strides in various industries over the last several decades. Despite those strides, women still face many obstacles in the professional arena, including the gender pay gap. Business Insider reports that the median full-time, year-round female worker made just 81.6 cents for every dollar her male counterpart made in 2018. Furthermore, the salary resource PayScale indicates research shows that the uncontrolled gender pay gap has decreased by just \$0.07 since 2015.

Though the pay gap must be addressed, women have made strides unrelated to compensation. For example, a report from the U.S. Department of Labor released in January 2020 indicated that 95 percent of the net jobs added in December 2019 went to women. At the same time, women held just over half of all payroll jobs in America for only the second time in the country's history. The first period was during the

Great Recession, when layoffs predominantly affected male workers.

According to NPR, the growing number of women on payroll could reflect a long-running evolution away from male-dominated industries toward the service side of employment, where women seemingly have an advantage. However, this may not be the only reason why women had been slowly edging out men prior to COVID-19.

The popular social media network and career resource LinkedIn analyzed more than 20,000 job applications on the job-hunting site MoveMeon back in 2016. Some trends emerged during that analysis. Women were more likely to be invited for an interview after applying to a job, but they were also performing better at those interviews. Data indicated each application made by a woman was 35 percent more likely to result in a female hire compared to a man. Furthermore, women viewed 20

percent fewer jobs than men and were still finding success getting hired. The research indicated men were competing more for jobs but being hired less often.

An area where men still excel regards getting recruiters to open their social media/job-hunting profiles. In 2019, LinkedIn indicated recruiters were 13 percent less likely to click on a woman's profile on the site when she showed up in a search, and 3 percent less likely to send a woman an InMail after viewing her profile. To combat this bias, more companies in the future may implement hiring that removes key identifiers like names and photos from candidates' applications to judge applicants solely on their merits.

Despite the advances women have made in the professional arena, the United States Department of Labor indicates that females accounted for the overwhelming majority of all job losses in December 2020 due to the pandemic's ongoing effect on the economy. The National Women's Law Center says that, since February 2020, women have lost a net 5.4 million jobs due to the economic fallout from the pandemic.

Further analysis of women's mark on the employment sector may be skewed until the economy recovers from the pandemic. But while the pay gap needs to be addressed, women have made great strides in other areas.

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First Tee will be highlighted during second round

By Anthony Richards

First Tee will be the charity of the day at the 2022 THE PLAYERS Championship during the event's second round Friday, March 11.

"It's such an honor to be recognized like that by THE PLAYERS," said Jen Weiler, senior vice president of network relations with First Tee. Our platform is golf, but we aim to teach life skills as well."

This year marks First Tee's 25th anniversary. During that time, it has grown to reach more than 3.6 million children annually across the country and worldwide, including 110,000 served in the Northeast Florida area alone.

Weiler has been with First Tee for 21 of those years and she has seen the difference it has made in children's lives firsthand.

Having been around for two and a half decades, Weiler has seen parents that were members of the organization growing up, now having children of their own and wanting them to be a part of it as well.

One member locally is Manyi Ngu, who is 18 years old and has been part of the First Tee for 12 years.

"It was my mom's idea to join," Ngu said. "It has been a great experience and I've been granted so many opportunities as a result."

Those opportunities included Ngu being very busy over the summer attending the organization's Game Changers Academy in Philadelphia and PGA Tour Superstore leadership summit in Montana.

"She's such an impressive young woman, and

FIRSTTEE continues on **Page 22**



Thanks to the First Tee Manyi Ngu has had several opportunities to attend leadership conferences and is thinking about pursuing a career in the golf world.



Photos courtesy of Manyi Ngu

Manyi Ngu is 18 years old and has been a member of First Tee for 12 years.

Boys & Girls Club named charity of the day during THE PLAYERS final round

By Anthony Richards

THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida would not be what it is today without the support of the golf tournament.

That makes it only fitting that the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida will be the designated charity of the day at THE PLAYERS this year on Sunday, March 13, which will also be the final round.

"The kids entrust us in hearing their thoughts and feelings," said Lendward Griffin, senior unit director with THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida. "It boils down to the people we have working here. Building relationships is a huge thing."

According to Griffin, THE PLAYERS put forth \$750,000 to start up the program, which opened in 2010, and has continued to be a supporter of the club.

As a result, roughly 100 children are served at the club each day. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida has been around for 60 years and consists of 38 clubs that serves more than 3,500 young people each day in Duval, St. Johns and Alachua counties.

THE PLAYERS even helped install a golf putting green at the club.

Boys & Girls Clubs welcome children from first grade to seniors in high school to be part of the program.



Photo courtesy of THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida

Members pose on the golf putting green that THE PLAYERS installed at that the club in St. Augustine.

CHARITY continues on **Page 23**

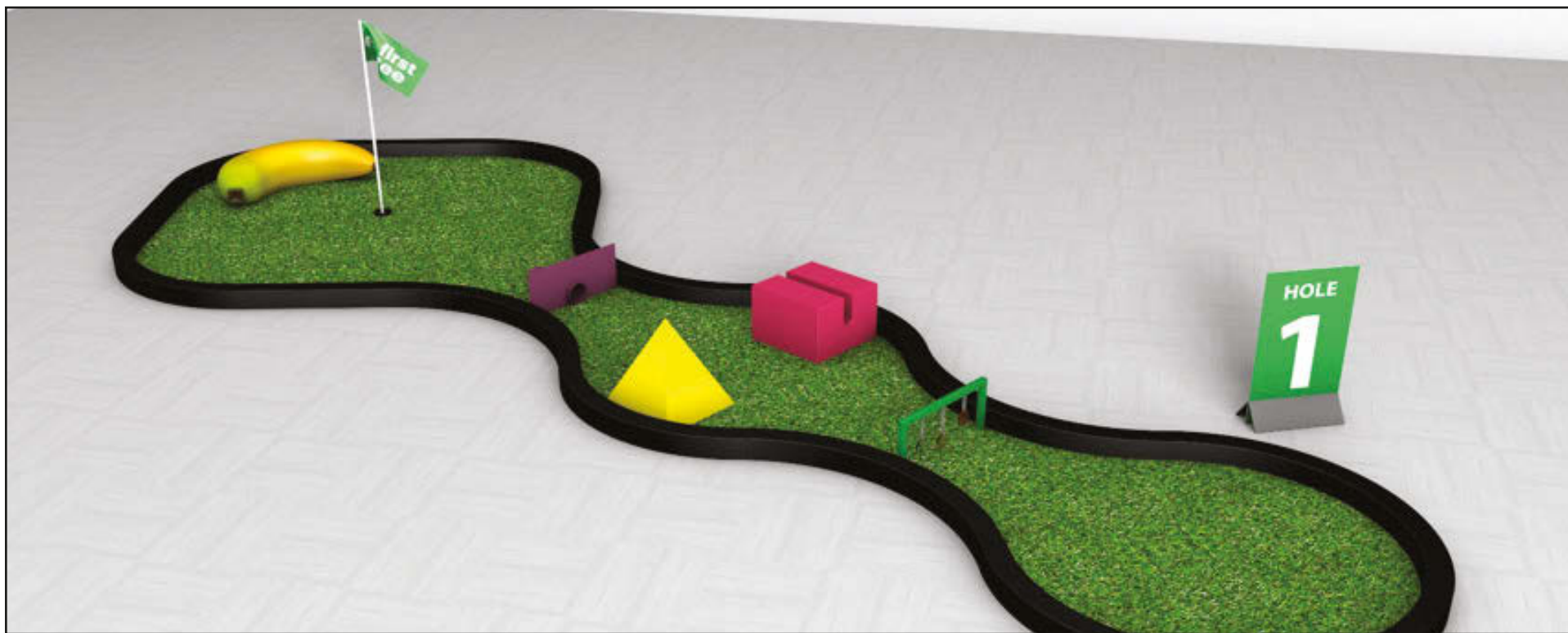


Photo courtesy of First Tee

The hole that First Tee member Manyi Ngu helped design. It will be part of the Morgan Stanley Eagles for Impact along the 18th fairway.

First Tee

Continued from 21

she takes everything she gets involved in very seriously,” Weiler said.

Ngu is a senior at Stanton College Prep and is now interested in possibly pursuing an eventual career in the golf industry

due to her time at First Tee.

“The things I’ve learned will have an even further impact on my life down the line,” Ngu said.

If anything, she believes that her ability to play golf will help her as a female in the business world.

“A lot of business deals are done on the golf course,” Ngu said. “That’s one thing

I do know.”

Her connection with the First Tee allowed Ngu to work with another fellow First Tee member to come up with the design used for one of the holes of a miniature golf course exhibit that will be on display at THE PLAYERS this year.

“The whole time, we wanted to make sure it was a course anyone could play

and also have a good time,” Ngu said.

The putting green will be one of many that will be unveiled as part of the Morgan Stanley Eagles for Impact tent along the 18th fairway.

“Their creativity will be on display during THE PLAYERS, which is great to see,” Weiler said.

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Charity

Continued from 21

Connecting with a child takes a different approach depending on the age of the child, but it is something the organization is well equipped for.

“We have a great group of staff that are able to work with all age groups,” Griffin said. “It’s all about giving opportunities and encouraging growth.”

One example of growth he has seen over the years is that older children, who have been in the program for years, get to the point where they embrace more roles as leaders and role models for the younger members.

In fact, he encourages that because he has found that it has a much more lasting effect and becomes much more easily relatable for the members.

“It comes off a lot more real when it comes from someone their age,” Griffin said.

Ambrosia is a 10th grader who has been a member at THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida for seven years.

“My time at the club has shaped me to be the confident, outgoing and loving person I am today,” Ambrosia said. “Through my time here at THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club, I have been able to come out of my shell and not be so shy in unknown situations. I have been able to tackle challenges with confidence and use my voice to speak up and speak out. I love the person that I have become.”

Her favorite memory was finishing in second place in the FIRST LEGO League STEM regionals competition. She is looking forward to bringing



Photo courtesy of THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida

Ambrosia was the nominee for Youth of the Year by THE PLAYERS Championship Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida.

home a first-place trophy before she graduates high school.

According to Griffin, for the 2019-2020 school year, 94% of children in Boys & Girls Clubs successfully graduate to the next grade level before summer school and 98% do not enter the juvenile justice system and no members became teen mothers.

“We want them all to dream big,” Griffin said.

What’s on your tournament bucket list?

Here are some great ideas for getting the most out of a visit to THE PLAYERS

Everything about THE PLAYERS was designed with a fans-first approach, from the stadium-style seating to the outside-the-ropes experiences, the new venues and the food and beverage offerings every year.

In an effort to make the experience at the tournament as easy, fun and memorable as possible, the PLAYERS team created “bucket lists” based on fans’ personal interests. Each list details the top things to do while visiting. Don’t forget to tag @THE-PLAYERSChamp along the way.

FAMILIES

- Stop by the PGA TOUR Fan Shop at THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience to stock up on golf balls, hats and pin flags for getting autographs.

- Take a picture (or a selfie) on the 17th hole with the iconic Island Green in the background.

BUCKET LIST continues on Page 24

Art with a Heart in Healthcare
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Bucket List

Continued from 23

- Visit the autograph zones at the practice grounds and the scoring area behind 18 green.
- Check out the Kids Zone presented by Nemours Children’s Health (near 8 green), with fun games and activities for kids of all ages.
- Visit The Family Suite Presented by Wolfson Children’s Hospital (near 8 green), an open-to-the-public venue that serves as a comfort station for mothers, fathers and their little ones and will be giving out free diapers!
- Stop by the Morgan Stanley Eagles for Impact tent (along 18 fairway) for fun putting activities.
- Head over to The 17th Hole Challenge presented by Optum, Morgan Stanley and Grant Thornton in THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience, where you can take two free shots at the replica Island Green.
- THE PLAYERS has tons of local food vendors on site to please kids’ palates. From Tacos on 12 featuring Taco Lu to Mini Bar doughnuts at Sawgrass Square to the food Trucks on 10, there’s something for everyone.
- Stop by the Fan Bleachers presented by Daily’s to watch the pros try to drive the green on the 12th hole. These bleachers are double-sided, so you can also watch the pros try to make a hole-in-one on the par-3 13th hole!
- Go to the 16 Fan Bleacher featuring TruGreen Backyard, with fun backyard-style seating.

GOLF FANATICS

- Watch guys warm up on the practice grounds: the mound by number 3 tee
- Check out the jumbo videoboard to see how far each player is hitting it and to stay up-to-date on what’s happening out on the course.
- Watch an almost private practice session: Back side of the practice grounds (left of number 4 green)
- Get away from the crowds and get really close to the action: number 6 green
- Watch players tee off and putt on a testy par 3: number 8. Thanks to elevated mounding behind the green, this hole is the perfect place to watch players hit their tee shots and putt on this undulating green. If you’re 21 or older, grab a seat in the Wine Lounge presented by Meiommi Wines.
- Watch players drive the green: number 12. The excitement is sure to unfold on this drivable par-4. Where to sit: The Fan Bleachers presented by Daily’s are double-sided and covered.
- Watch players “thread the needle” off the number 15 tee. This dogleg right par-4 presents players with a tough and tight tee shot through a chute of trees and over water.
- Watch players go for the green in two shots: number 16. Since 1983, there have been 6,930 birdies and 467 eagles made on the 16th hole.
- Witness the “Defining Moment” at number 17. This hole is “better than most,” for more reasons than one ... the iconic hole, the incredible views, the amphitheater atmosphere and the do-or-die drama all unfolding before your eyes.

- Get a few swings in and channel your inner PGA TOUR pro: Test your skills on a replica of the famed 17th hole at The 17th Hole Challenge presented by Optum, Morgan Stanley and Grant Thornton, located in THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience.

- Stock up on exclusive merch at the PGA TOUR Fan Shop at THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience. New in 2022, autographed copies of popular video game 2K21 featuring defending PLAYERS Champion Justin Thomas will be available for purchase. All proceeds from the sales will support the Justin Thomas Foundation.

SOCIAL SCENE SEEKERS

- Go to The Military Appreciation Day Ceremony and Concert. The ceremony starts at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8. Tuesday tickets already include access to the concert. Plan ahead to arrive a few hours early.

- Sit on the hill overlooking the Island Green 17th hole: The place to see and be seen.

- Stop by the PGA TOUR Fan Shop at THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience to stock up on exclusive gear.

- Try the Sawgrass Splash — the signature drink — at The Oasis featuring Tito’s Stillhouse Lounge near the 18th tee box. You must be at least 21 years old.

- Sip, savor and swing: Head over to Wine & Dine on 9 presented by Meiommi Wines to sip and savor some of the best varietals from Meiommi and enjoy gourmet plates from Bonefish and take a few swings in their golf simulator while here. (There’s also the Wine Lounge Presented by Meiommi Wines on 8 green).

- Birdies and brews: Check out the craft beers on tap at the Bier Garden presented by Hoptinger (behind 16 green).

FOODIES

- As soon as you enter THE PLAYERS Welcome Experience, there are plenty of options at the Food Court, including Homespun Kitchen, Firehouse Subs, Bono’s Pit Bar-B-Q, The Local and Tropical Smoothie.

- Start your engines ... it’s food truck time. Trucks on 10 offers flavors from renowned local food trucks, including returning favorites Mama’s, Tikiz, What’s the Catch and Twisted Okie BBQ and Tacos and newcomers 904Burger and Saffron Mediterranean Kitchen.

- Stay local! Head to Taste of JAX (behind 12 tee), which offers local flavors from some of your favorite Jacksonville restaurants, including Cousin’s Maine Lobster, Mojo’s BBQ, ABBQ and new in 2022, Silkie’s Chicken & Champagne Bar. Enjoy some craft cocktails while you’re here from the Taste of JAX bar featuring Tito’s at the Turn.

- Head on over to Tacos on 12, featuring dishes from Jacksonville’s most popular Baja Mexicana, Taco Lu. Take a few swings in the CDW golf simulator while you’re here.

- Grab a slice of V Pizza in The Patio (near 10 tee), which also features a Mich-elob ULTRA bar.

- Stop by Sawgrass Square to taste some delicious donuts from Mini Bar and BBQ from 4 Rivers Smokehouse. While you’re here, check out the sweet merch at the walk-up PGA TOUR Fan Shop.

- Visit Wine & Dine on 9 presented by Meiommi Wines to sip and savor some of the best varietals from Meiommi and enjoy gourmet plates from Bonefish. For the full experience, visit the Wine Lounge Presented by Meiommi Wines on 8 green. You must be at least 21 year of age.



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PAGE 25

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Orca Bags: Killer Custom Style

By Kathy Bissell

Erica Bennett is one half of the entrepreneurial duo that started Orca Golf, a company that specializes in several styles of custom golf bags in a variety of price ranges. Stand bags, cart bags, small carry bags, even sport tote/carry-on bags.

As she likes to say, the orcas all have individual tails, and with Orca bags, you have a one-of-a-kind individual look.

“If it’s a cart bag, we give you options of cart bags. If it’s a stand bag, we give you options of that, and then we make it yours,” Erica explained. “I personally subscribe to the theory that when you look good, you feel good. We feel with a golf bag we can do the same thing.”

Erica, and her partner Deb Bennett, started their company for the reason many new companies do. They couldn’t find what they were looking for anywhere else.

“There was one company that did it, but it was so expensive that we thought, if we want such a bag, there are other golfers who want it as well,” Erica Bennett explained.

In other words, they saw an untapped, underserved market for reasonably priced — considering it’s custom — golf bags.

But deciding to go into business and actually having a business are two different things. First, the duo spent two years researching everything there was to know about the manufacturing of golf bags.

Then Deb Bennett, who had already spent 30 years in the technology industry, utilized her expertise in business plans, projections and strategic planning to plot the way forward on paper.

Erica already had a background as a television anchor, speaker and author, a creative personality. She and her son do the design work for customers.

“One of the best things for us is when a customer gets a golf bag, and they go ‘Wow! I love my bag!’ That’s all we want to hear,” Erica added.

The business owners insist that their bags cannot be anything average-looking, in part because they are not priced like an off-the-rack bag from a big box store. They need to be very special, and the women do everything they can to punctuate the design properly.

“We design with every customer. We give them a concierge service,” Erica said. “You can reach us any time. You can text us. You can email us. You can call us. You can send us a message on Instagram, on Facebook.”

Their line starts with a small carry bag that could even be a junior golfer bag and goes up in size to a tour bag. Color and pattern can be added, depending on

the bag size and price. It’s easy to see the kind of choices that can be made by looking at their website: orca-golf.com/pages/custom-bags

On the tour-sized bags, there are as many as 11 places where custom designs, logos, names and colors can be used.

The idea for Orca customization has



Contributed photo

Orca Golf bags can be customized in a number of ways.

ORCA continues on Page 26

ST. JOHNS COUNTY
PROPERTY APPRAISER
Eddie Creamer



NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF TAX ROLL

Pursuant to Sections 193.122 and 197.323, Florida Statutes, Notice is Hereby Given that the Tax Roll for St. Johns County was Re-Certified to the St. Johns County Tax Collector on the 24th day of February, 2022, for the Collection of 2021 Taxes, to reflect all changes made by the Value Adjustment Board.

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For additional information, please visit our website at www.sjcpa.us or contact us at (904) 827-5500

Orca

Continued from 25

been proven right as former Masters Champ Charl Schwartzel debuted an Orca bag at the 2020 November Masters. Annika Sorenstam ordered a custom-designed Champions Bag for the winner of the AJGA's Annika Invitational USA Junior Girls Championship.

Prices for the custom creations include placing the customer's name or logo or design on various places on the bag as well as all the personalized, one-to-one, back-and-forth consultation on design that goes with a bespoke product.

Once the design is approved, then the customer sends payment and work begins on the new creation.

Here are the places that the top-of-the-line golf bag, the Orca Apex (for Apex predator!), can be customized:

- The left and right large side pockets.
- The front of the bag, which is the largest space.
- Pocket above the front of the bag.
- Two ball pockets.
- Two accessories and/ or valuables pockets.
- Bottom ring of the bag.
- Bag strap.
- Bag club cover.

Pricing starts at about \$120 and goes up to about \$895, plus shipping costs. It's the absolutely perfect gift for the golfer you think has everything. Most golfers absolutely do not have this!



Contributed photo

Deb Bennett is seen at a PGA show in front of the Orca Golf booth.

Major grocer donates \$250K to aid Ukrainians in need

Southeastern Grocers Inc., parent company of Winn-Dixie grocery stores, Fresco y Más and Harveys Supermarket, together with the SEG Gives Foundation, is donating \$250,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross to support Ukraine and its citizens as they fight to defend their country.

The grocer will also donate 100% of the proceeds from its private label Ukrainian vodka to the cause for the next 31 days as a nod to Ukraine's

official declaration of independence nearly 31 years ago.

"At Southeastern Grocers, we are guided by doing the right thing; we recognize the people of Ukraine need our help, and they need it now," said Anthony Hucker, president and CEO of Southeastern Grocers. "That's why we are immediately directing funds to the International Committee of the Red Cross to support the victims of the war in Ukraine. This decision is a natural extension of our belief that

there is greater power in unity than there is in division; we believe that we are all stronger together."

Through its longstanding partnership with the American Red Cross, the grocer has aided the organization in countless disaster relief missions. With the support of its customers, associates and vendor partners, the company and the foundation have donated more than \$11 million to the American Red Cross to support communities in times of need.

Mega Open House Weekend is March 5-6

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty has announced that its Mega Open House Weekend returns on Saturday and Sunday, March 5-6.

The event offers dozens of open house viewings of the company's listings of available homes. The listings encompass homes in a wide range of prices, styles and neighborhoods throughout Northeast Florida.

"With current low inventory and market demand, our Mega Open House Weekend makes it possible to view several homes and neighborhoods in one weekend," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty President Ann King. "For sellers, the event is an outstanding way to showcase your home to prospective buyers."

To see a list of open houses, go to OpenHouseNEFlorida.com. To view the homes virtually during the event, go to the company's Facebook page, facebook.com/FloridaNetworkRealty, and Instagram, instagram.com/FloridaNetworkRealty.

For more information about Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, go to FloridaNetworkRealty.com.



Contributed photo

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty's Mega Open House Weekend returns March 5-6.



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THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022 · PAGE 27

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Bad Boys of Opera on stage March 19 in St. Augustine

EMMA Concert Association will present the “Bad Boys Of Opera,” a new touring concert production featuring four highly-acclaimed male vocalists, on Saturday, March 19.

The performers have individual performance credits that include The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Philadelphia Opera Company, as well as appearance at Carnegie Hall, with the Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony and more.

The concert will take place at 7 p.m. in Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College, 14 Granada St., St. Augustine.

Repertoire, with piano accompaniment,

is comprised of instantly recognizable arias, duets and trios, Neapolitan songs and favorites from Broadway, popular standards and contemporary hits.

Tickets purchased for the cancelled Siberian Virtuosi concert, originally scheduled for March 19, are valid for this performance.

For tickets, go to <https://emmaconcerts.com/event/bad-boys-of-opera/>.

Parking is not available at Lewis Auditorium for this concert season. Free parking will be offered at the St. Johns County Council on Aging, 180 Marine St. Guests will then be transported to and from the concert venue by complimentary shuttle service. This is included with the ticket price.



Photo provided by EMMA Concert Association

The “Bad Boys of Opera” will perform a variety of songs March 19 at Lewis Auditorium.

Haiku contest deadline March 25

The St. Johns Cultural Council is planning its 2nd Annual Haiku Contest in preparation for National Poetry Month, which is in April. Contest submissions are due by 3 p.m. March 25 for students age 12 and younger, students ages 13-17 and adults age 18 and older.

The theme of this year’s contest is “spring” and up to three haiku entries are permitted. Winners will be selected and notified no later than April 8 and will be recognized during St. Augustine Poet Fest on April 9 at Flagler College.

Three winners will each receive a \$100 prize, and the winning haiku will be published on the website www.stjohnsculture.com, in the Cultural Council’s electronic newsletter, and in the AC

PAPA literary journal produced by St. Augustine’s Ancient City Poets, Authors, Photographers and Artists group.

Six honorable mentions with two in each age group category will also be published on the website and newsletter. Each honorable mention will receive a \$25 gift certificate to a local bookstore. To apply and review contest guidelines, go to <https://stjohnsculture.com/news/st-johns-cultural-councils-2nd-annual-haiku-contest>.

The St. Johns County Cultural Council is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and the designated local arts agency for St. Johns County. For further information about the Cultural Council, call 904-434-0959 or go to stjohnsculture.com.

Gallery plans Earth Day community art project

Butterfield Garage Art Gallery, 137 King St., St. Augustine, is hosting its second annual Open Community Art Project as a way to celebrate artists in the community. Anyone interested is invited to celebrate Earth Day 2022 by creating and exhibiting artworks related to the beauty of the planet and protecting its environment in the gallery’s “Celebrating EARTH” open invitational exhibition.

Draw it, paint it, collage it ... your choice. Canvases and entry forms can be picked up at Butterfield Garage Art Gallery. Entry fee is \$10 per entry and

includes an 8-by-8-inch canvas. Works created with materials other than the canvas must conform to the 8-by-8-inch dimensions.

Entry forms are available at the gallery, or on the Butterfield Garage website butterfieldgarage.com. The gallery is open every day, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All entries must be received at Butterfield Garage Art Gallery no later than March 27. The opening reception will take place April 1, and the exhibit will continue through April 30.



Bad Boys of Opera



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Tickets include free parking at the St. Johns County Council on Aging, with a shuttle to and from the venue.



Sports



THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022 · PAGE 28

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Depth of talent guides Sharks to first final four

By Anthony Richards

What makes this year's Ponte Veda boys basketball so dangerous is the depth of playmakers they have on the roster and the confidence they have in each other and with their own game.

"Victories are nice and we celebrate them, but I want these men to learn is that life is all about winning and losing battles, but it's also about not being scared and not listening to critics. None of them play hesitant or scared and that's

awesome," head coach Kevin Whirity said.

That depth has been on display throughout the postseason run the team is on that has them playing in the Class 6A final four against Winter Haven at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 3 in Lakeland. It is the first time in school history that boys basketball has reached the final four.

"This is something PV has never done, but I want to take it one step further and

SHARKS continues on Page 30



Photos by Anthony Richards

Ross Candelino shows his excitement as fans run onto the court to celebrate the school's first boys basketball final four appearance.



Luke Pirris was a man on a mission against Fleming Island en route to 24 points and 10 rebounds.

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Panthers look back on magical season

By Anthony Richards

What a memorable season it was for the Nease girls basketball team, who notched big win after big win on its path to the Class 6A final four.

Some seasons are defined by a run that a team went on, but for the Panthers the season got off to a fast start and they were able to pretty much maintain the momentum throughout.

Right out of the gate the Panthers won five of their first six games, with the wins coming against stiff competition, such as Oakleaf, Orange Park and Gainesville Buchholz.

“Coming in, nobody had as high of expectations as we did for ourselves,” Sydney Gomes said.

However, it was the loss to rival St. Augustine in the seventh game of the season where senior Alli Fifield felt the team really come together and discover what they were made of.

“From then on, we knew even though no one thought we would end up winning all the games that we did,” Fifield said.

The Panthers responded by winning 17 of their next 18 games to set the tone for the season as a whole.

That was not the only time the Panthers showcased their mental toughness and responded from a tough defeat by stringing together victories.

The Panthers lost in the district tournament to rival Ponte Vedra, which was a big blow, but were able to quickly refocus and defeat the Sharks one week later to open what would be the first of three-straight playoff triumphs.

“Having to watch them play on our

home court and win a district title was tough,” Fifield said.

It was a magical season for players, coaches and fans of the team, and it could not have gone much better for the senior class that included Sydney Gomes, Savannah Gomes, Madison Crawford and Fifield.

“It was everything I wanted in my senior year,” Fifield said.

Although they finished two wins shy of a state title, the Panthers are happy with the final four trip because it proves that all the hard work they put in during the offseason and in practice throughout the season came to fruition.

“Not many people get to play on that court (at RP Funding Center in Lakeland),” Fifield said. “It is the dream of every (Florida) high school basketball player.”

Both Fifield and Gomes credit head coach Sherri Anthony and the Nease coaching staff for helping them improve their game to the point where they will both be playing college ball.

“I knew the coach she was and the history she had of producing some great players,” Gomes said. “We’ve grown pretty close and leaving her is probably the toughest thing about being a senior.”

Being the third Nease team Anthony has guided to the final four is something the group will never forget, and for the underclassmen returning, now that they have tasted the final four, they are going to be hungry to get back again next year.

“It’s always going to be something that’s brought up by not just us, but hopefully the girls in the future can use it as motivation,” Gomes said.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Alli Fifield saw a difference in the team after suffering an early season loss to rival St. Augustine.



Sydney Gomes led the team in several statistical categories and credits head coach Sherri Anthony for helping in her progression as a player.

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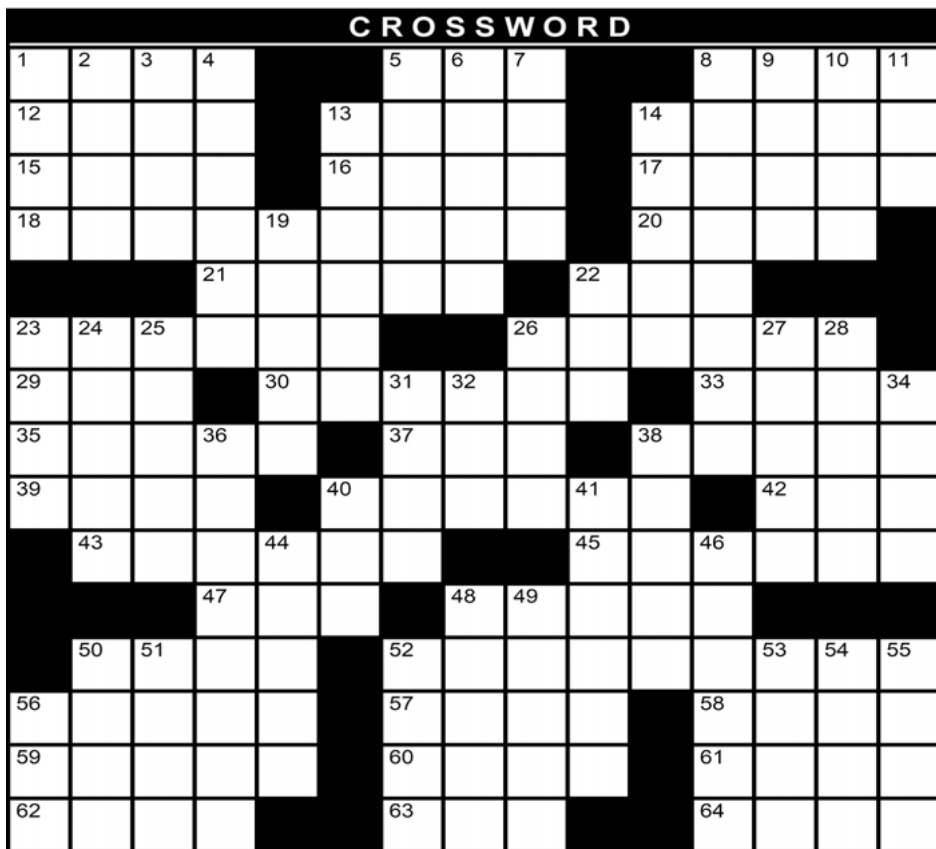
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THEME: MARCH MADNESS

- ACROSS**
- In ill humor
 - Like a ship?
 - Repeating word on South Pacific map
 - Man-eating fairy tail giant
 - Newspaper piece
 - Pertaining to the ear
 - Family group
 - Not the life of the party
 - Andean animal
 - *Like Sunday, the day of announcements
 - Bodily disorders
 - 19th century Robber baron Jay
 - Architect's software, acr.
 - Articulates
 - Soak up
 - Cuban dance step
 - Auditory canal, e.g.
 - Needlefish, pl.
 - *Star Wars' creator
 - Swindle
 - March edition, e.g.
 - Rest or settle
 - Johnny Cash's "Get _____"
 - *It never ends this way
 - Another word for acetylene
 - High or hilly land
 - Grazing spot
 - Copying machine
 - ____ code
 - *Those remaining in last week-end (Two words)
 - Gives off
 - Afghanistan's western neighbor
 - Beginner
 - Send in payment
 - Halfway around links
 - Besides
 - Biz bigwig
 - *D-____ schools only
 - Swedish shag rugs

- DOWN**
- ____ Brown and "What's Up, _____?"
 - Gawk at
 - River in Orenburg, Russia
 - Weasel out
 - Go bad
 - Massacre of the Innocents king
 - "I Dream of Jeannie" star
 - *Last year's runner-up from Washington
 - Like word of mouth
 - Those born under Aries
 - Chicken _____ king
 - Between 90 and 180 degrees
 - Spy's cover
 - Crocus bulbs, e.g.
 - *Network
 - *School with most titles
 - Car rack manufacturer
 - Like an implied agreement
 - Your mom's sister
 - Haile Selassie's disciple
 - Boston hockey player
 - Heart pain
 - Ken or Barbie, e.g.
 - *Placement
 - *First A in NCAA
 - Motivate
 - Biology class acronym
 - Benevolent
 - Leavening agent
 - Another word for golf club
 - Rice wine
 - Lacking sense
 - NYSE MKT, formerly
 - Frost design on a window
 - Porto _____, Italy
 - Like acne-prone skin
 - Bear constellation
 - Fish eggs, pl.
 - Before, archaic

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2019 champion McIlroy commits to THE PLAYERS

With the strongest field in golf set to reconvene next week at THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass, 2019 PLAYERS Champion Rory McIlroy is the latest to join the championship commitment list.

McIlroy's victory at TPC Sawgrass marked the championship's return to March for the first time since 2006. In what was his 10th career start at THE PLAYERS, McIlroy's 16-under total bested Jim Furyk by one stroke and eclipsed his own career-best 72-hole score at TPC Sawgrass by seven.

The win was one of three titles McIlroy claimed during the 2019 season, which concluded with him lifting his second career FedExCup title as the PGA TOUR

season's champion.

The 20-time PGA TOUR winner will arrive at TPC Sawgrass having already visited the winner's circle during the 2021-22 season. He claimed the CJ CUP @ SUMMIT in his season debut in October in his first of two starts before adding a T10 in his most recent appearance at The Genesis Invitational.

Currently ranked No. 5 in the Official World Golf Ranking, McIlroy will return to action at this week's Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard before making the short drive north to TPC Sawgrass for THE PLAYERS.

Players have until 5 p.m. March 4 to commit to the championship.

Sharks

Continued from 28

win a state title," Junior Nate Bunkosky said.

At any moment, any player on the team can step up and deliver a performance of a lifetime, which is exactly what senior center Luke Pirris did during the Sharks' 60-49 win over Fleming Island in the regional championship Feb. 25.

"We've been underdogs this entire season, but our goal has been to win a state championship all along and we've never expected anything else," Pirris said. "We're out to prove everyone wrong."

The Golden Eagles presented a definite size advantage down low, but instead of shying away, Pirris attacked their big men and used his quickness and footwork skills to take over the game.

"I knew coming in that they were some big boys, but I'm not scared of anyone," Pirris said. "They blocked my shot a few times, but I adapted and found my groove early."

He played like a man on a mission throughout the contest and doubled his scoring and rebounding averages on the night as a result. He finished with a game-high 24 points and 10 rebounds.

"He felt that kid out on his first drive, because I think he got a piece of it and knocked it out of bounds," Whirity said. "From there, Luke judged his speed, his angles and his height and went on to

make his next four or five layups. He's a sick athlete, and the reverse layup he made in the first half with his left hand was something I didn't know he had."

Fifteen of Pirris' points came in the first half and played a major in the Sharks having a 31-30 halftime lead.

Senior J.T. Kelly buried scored nine of his 12 points in an explosive second half that saw the Sharks extend their lead for good.

"We were able to get past the first wave (of defense) and were then able to attack the second and third layers, and we were just knocking them (shots) down," Whirity said.

Each playoff round has had different players step up with clutch performances and are prime examples of how difficult the Sharks are to defend and prepare for, because there is not just one player an opponent can shut down and feel confident about.

In the regional semifinals against Crestview, Bunkosky had 15 points and four steals, while Ross Candelino was six of eight from the field and had 18 points.

Senior Gus Jordheim shot 83% from the field en route to 11 points during the Sharks' blowout victory over Booker T. Washington in the regional quarterfinals.

"I've never had this much fun playing basketball in my entire life," Bunkosky said. "I've played with a lot of these guys my whole life and sharing this moment with them is an amazing feeling."

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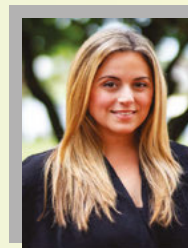


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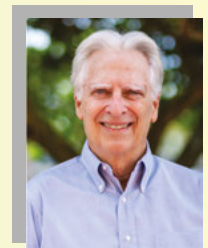
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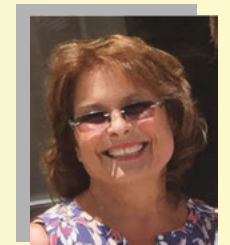
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