

# THE RECORDER



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July 13, 2023  
Volume 54, No. 37  
\$1.00

Serving Ponte Vedra, St. Augustine, The Beaches and Greater St. Johns County

PonteVedraRecorder.com



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Featuring Lawyer Spotlight &  
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**INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!**  
The Recorder's Entertainment  
EXTRA featuring TV listings,  
streaming information,  
puzzles and more!



Photo by Anthony Richards

The Caffeinated Cat is a unique coffee shop in Jacksonville Beach that offers animal lovers the opportunity to enjoy a drink with feline friends. A group of regular customers gather around the drink counter during a recent visit to the café. Read the full story in the "All About Pets" special section on page 15.

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# Send us your news

We welcome submissions of photos, stories, columns and letters to the editor. Let us know what's happening. If you have hard copies of photos you want us to feature, feel free to bring them to our office — we'll scan them and hand them right back. E-mail submissions to **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

### Coastal Friends welcomes new members

In March, Coastal Friends celebrated its 25th anniversary as a women's social club in the Ponte Vedra/Jacksonville area. Formerly known as Newcomers Alumnae, Coastal Friends was formed a quarter of a century ago as a result of women wanting to continue their friendships and activities after being required to graduate from another local Newcomers club.

Coastal Friends is a social group of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, St. Augustine and the surrounding area. Some of the many activities offered are: adventures and outings, book club, canasta, happy hour, periodic lunches at local restaurants, mah jongg and wine socials.

Additionally, monthly luncheons with an accompanying guest speaker are held at Marsh Landing Country Club on the first Wednesday of every month except for July and August.

New members are welcome throughout the year. Contact brookemeister@msn.com for more information on how to join.

### Democratic Club to meet

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will meet Monday, July 17, at the Ponte Vedra Branch Library, 101 Library Road. Chat and chew at 5:30 p.m., meeting at 6 p.m. The featured speaker will be Rachael Grage from the Democratic Women's Club with a legislative wrap-up of Tallahassee's 2023 bills.

For further information, email jkary@verizon.net.

### Palm Valley Market every Tuesday

The Palm Valley Market is held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday inside the Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Road. The market

offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more.

### Military families admitted free to MOCA Jacksonville

MOCA Jacksonville has joined forces with Blue Star Museums and CSX to offer free admission to the

BRIEFS continues on Page 3

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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# Briefs

Continued from 2

families of active duty and former military and first responders through Labor Day weekend. The Blue Star Museum initiative is a collaboration between the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense and more than 2,000 museums nationwide that wish to show appreciation for military families who face multiple deployments and reintegration challenges.

To take advantage of this program, bring valid military or first responder identification. Those who qualify are welcome to bring up to five family members. Learn more about visiting MOCA Jacksonville at [mocajacksonville.unf.edu](http://mocajacksonville.unf.edu).

### Access to broadband internet expanded

On Friday, July 7, Gov. Ron DeSantis awarded about \$247 million through the Broadband Infrastructure Program to connect more than 59,000 unserved and underserved businesses,

homes, farms and anchor institutions like hospitals and libraries to high-speed internet.

Infrastructure deployment through 63 strategic projects in 43 Florida counties ensures that Florida residents have reliable and efficient access to workforce, education and health monitoring opportunities for generations to come.

These awards are in addition to the \$226 million in Broadband Opportunity Grant funding already awarded to 53 counties to expand broadband internet access to unserved areas across the

state. That funding will connect more than 250,000 homes and businesses.

Some of the projects funded through the Broadband Infrastructure Program will be in St. Augustine and Hastings. In all, 25.8 miles of fiber optic cable will be installed to provide 141 unserved locations within St. Johns and Flagler counties with symmetrical download and upload speeds of 1GB. The cost for those projects is about \$1.4 million.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan



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### Oceanfront Gem Built for Entertaining

Uncover the comfort of oceanfront living in Ponte Vedra Beach. This 2-story coastal gem with 100 ft. of ocean frontage offers a private elevator for ease in access to each story, large media/game room, living/dining/kitchen/great room and a tri-level deck with summer kitchen, seating around fireplace, sun deck and play fort. There truly is something for everyone. Host unforgettable gatherings for family and friends and make memories for life!

**5 Bedrooms, 5 Bathrooms. \$3,595,000**



### Charming Pool Home in East Hampton

This exceptional home offers year-round outdoor living with a screened lanai and sparkling pool/hot tub with the lush preserve as its backdrop. It was thoughtfully designed with the family room, kitchen and casual dining area centrally located with open concept. This home boasts a prime location in the front of the East Hampton community located across from the community pool, clubhouse, soccer field, basketball court and tennis courts.

**4 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms, 2181 sq. ft. \$595,000**



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# MSD attempts to shine light on school bus stop safety

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District is looking into potentially adding streetlights, especially at places that are designated as school bus stops during the upcoming school year.

Trustee Charles Callaghan has been reaching out to Beaches Energy and although there are other school bus stops, there are four that are currently being focused on due to how dark they can get during morning hours as children wait for the school bus to arrive.

The four areas being considered include the intersections of 531 Le Master Drive and Poinciana Way (by the island); Le Master Drive and Waterbridge Place; Maria Place and Le Master Drive; and 33 Corona Road.

The points where Le Master Drive meets with Poinciana Way and Waterbridge Place are both middle school bus stops.

Callaghan has also been talking with Matt Brooks of Beaches Energy about the possibility of fixing some lights that are in place but not working throughout the district.

In other news, the MSD was informed that they will be getting \$25 million from the state to help with a future

dredging project for the north end of the Ponte Vedra Beach shoreline from the Guana Reserve to the Duval County line.

According to trustee Kitty Switkes, the project is expected to add 100 feet to the beach once completed.

“It looks like we’re finally going to get our beach back to where it was at prior to (Hurricane) Matthew,” Switkes said.

Trustee Mickey White did some research when it comes to road widths around the MSD and found that most of the older built roads are 19 feet wide, while the newer roads tend to be 22 feet.

According to White, he looked into the road widths because he thought it would be good info to have when determining which roads may need “no parking” signs along them.

White plans to take his inventory of data and talk with both the county fire marshal and road department before coming back with the next wave of info at the August MSD meeting.

“It (signs) gives the deputies the ability to tell people parking on the side of the road that they can’t and to get it moving,” White said.

He also brought up to the board that he is continuing



to pursue the early stages of hopefully fixing the drainage problem encountered by many in the MSD, who experienced flooding on their properties.

Some members of the MSD attended the meeting and voiced their concerns for the flooding as well.

According to White, unfortunately, the solution is not as easy as it looks when you have older neighborhoods with lakes behind them, where the excess rainwater can supposedly go.

“But there’s a legal way to do it and that’s not as easy,” White said. “This is going to take years to solve.”

However, the first step that must be taken is that he believes the Florida Department of Environmental Protection needs to grandfather in the MSD so that it can create new avenues for the floodwater to travel to the lagoons onto of the ones that already exist.

According to White, without that grandfathered ruling, the task of fixing the problem would become even more of an uphill battle to get the flooding situation corrected.

The MSD also agreed to approve a 0.27 millage rate for the 2024 fiscal year budget, which discussion will pick up about in the next couple of months.

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# Contract awarded for Vilano Beach renourishment

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Jacksonville has announced the award of a \$20.2 million contract on June 30 to Weeks Marine Inc. of Covington, Louisiana, for emergency renourishment of the St. Johns County Coastal Storm Risk Management Project at Vilano Beach.

The project will renourish approximately three miles of shoreline along portions of South Ponte Vedra and Vilano beaches to restore sand loss due to the November 2021 nor'easter and hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

The project includes construction of both a dune and beach berm. Planting of dune vegetation will take place as constructed segments are completed. Sand placed on the beach will be dredged from a borrow area that lies in federal waters approximately seven nautical miles offshore. As an approved Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies project, the beach renourishment will be 100% federally funded.

Weeks Marine is expected to begin mobilizing equipment to the beach in mid-August using the

designated staging areas at Surfside Park and along Euclid Avenue. Actual sand placement is expected to start a few weeks later in September. The renourishment completion date is projected to be in March 2024.

USACE requests residents in the project area to finish all repairs to walkovers and seawalls in accordance with federal, state and local regulations before operations commence. Residents are also requested to remove all temporary furniture, athletic equipment and similar items from the top and seaward sections of their dunes. This will facilitate planting vegetation in the restored areas to strengthen the dunes.

As the renourishment begins and progresses, USACE will post updated maps and scheduling information on its social media sites to alert residents to upcoming activity, as will St. Johns County. See the social media links below and the USACE project page at <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/StJohnsVilanoCSRM/>.

For more information concerning USACE studies and projects, go to [saj.usace.army.mil](http://saj.usace.army.mil).



Bulldozers distribute the sand to achieve the project design.

- Bulldozers operate on a 24-hour basis
- For safety purposes, back-up alarms are activated to run continuously during construction

The dredged material is sent to the placement area via a pipeline extended along beach.



A Tyrannosaurus Rex approaches.



A baby dinosaur steals a hat from a member of the audience.



A member of the team holds up a real dimetrodon skull.

Photos provided by Jurassic Quest

## Jurassic Quest tickets on sale now for July 14-16 event

Area residents will have an opportunity to see the nation's biggest herd of lifelike dinosaurs when Jurassic Quest is presented this weekend, July 14-16, at Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center. Visitors will walk through 165 million years of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods to learn about the creatures that once ruled the Earth.

There will be live dinosaur shows, interactive science and art activities including a fossil dig and real fossils like T-Rex teeth, a triceratops horn and life-size dino skull, a "Triceratops" soft play area for the littlest explorers, bounce houses and inflatable attractions, photo opportunities and more.

This year, Jurassic Quest is bringing more hands-on activities, education and fun. This will include an expanded Excavation Station and more Jurassic-themed rides and inflatables. Even the animatronic

herd has been expanded to include the Utahaptor and Giganotosaurus.

In addition to "The Quest," a self-guided scavenger-hunt-style activity where budding paleontologists can become junior dinosaur trainers, Jurassic Quest has launched a new video tour featuring Safari Sarah, Dino Dustin, Prehistoric Nick and Park Ranger Marty. It is available onsite and on smartphones via QR code. All expanded activities are included with general admission.

The Jurassic Quest animatronic dinos — from the largest predators to playful baby dinos — are displayed in realistic scenes and some move and roar, allowing guests to experience them as they were when they roamed Earth millions of years ago. Jurassic Quest works in collaboration with leading paleontologists to ensure each dinosaur is painstakingly replicated in every detail, from coloration to teeth

size, to textured skin, fur or feathers, drawing on the latest research.

Even after the dino herd departs, dinosaur fun will be available at home anytime with Jurassic Quest virtual resources. Join the Jurassic Quest dino trainers as they celebrate Dino Day and Fossil Day as well as activities such as Dino Storytime, Show & Tell, fossil lessons and more. Go to [youtube.com/c/JurassicQuestEvents](https://youtube.com/c/JurassicQuestEvents).

Families also can access craft activities, word searches, coloring pages and more provided for free at [jurassicquest.com/online-fun](http://jurassicquest.com/online-fun). Also, they will find an extensive Jurassic Quest dino directory at [jurassicquest.com/dinodirectory](http://jurassicquest.com/dinodirectory).

The Jurassic Quest theme song can be found at [youtube.com/watch?v=uNyPyy02SCU](https://youtube.com/watch?v=uNyPyy02SCU).

Tickets are available onsite and online at [jurassicquest.com](http://jurassicquest.com). Advance, online tickets are recommended.

Standard, senior and kids pricing are available. General admission tickets include access to the dinosaur exhibits, arts and crafts activities and dinosaur shows. There are rides and activities that require activity tickets available onsite, or guests can upgrade to the Kids Unlimited Ticket (the best value for children ages 2-10). Entry is free for children younger than age 2.

Guests can walk through the dinosaur experience at their own pace, and strollers are permitted. Socks are required for inflatable attractions. Some venues may have wheelchairs for use; contact the venue in advance to make arrangements.

Hours are: noon to 8 p.m. July 14, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. July 15 and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. July 16.

The Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center is located at 1000 Water St., Jacksonville.

*Maria Litwack moved to Ponte Vedra Beach more than 20 years ago and always dreamed about owning a store of her own. That dream became a reality when she created Coastal Elements in March 2020. Although the timing was not great starting a business in the middle of the pandemic, years later she found her concept of showcasing local artists and their creativity is something the community has gravitated to.*

## Maria Litwack

### As told to Anthony Richards

#### Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

It is hard to believe, but I have lived in Ponte Vedra Beach for over 20 years. I am originally from the Texas and Oklahoma area.

My degree is in fashion merchandising from Oklahoma State University. I have a background as a luxury resort retail buyer for many exceptional resorts and clubs in Florida and in the Bahamas.

I originally moved to the Ponte Vedra Beach area when I accepted a position as the retail director for the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club.

I feel extremely fortunate over the course of my career to have been given many incredible opportunities with some spectacular properties.

#### What led to the creation of Coastal Elements?

My dream has always been one day to open my own store. Over the course of my extensive buying career, I have been extremely fortunate to have discovered a collection of incredibly talented, local artists.

I always thought opening a store that highlighted the talent in the Ponte Vedra Beach area would be an amazing concept.

During my travel experiences I have enjoyed exploring local boutiques. It is fun to discover unique gifts and art that are exclusive just to that area. I felt that a concept like this was missing in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Coastal Elements originally started as a pop-up in the Sawgrass Village Shopping Center. We initially opened during TPC week of March 2020 with a select group of artists, authors and designers.

We wanted to take the opportunity to test the response of the concept during a busy time period. Unfortunately, our timing wasn't the best with COVID closing TPC that same week.

We were still ecstatic though with the positive support we received and encouragement to keep the pop-up open.

Originally the pop-up was to be only open for a few months but with the challenges of COVID we remained a pop-up for a little over a year.

We moved into our permanent location in the Tournament Plaza Shopping Center in November of 2022.

#### What are your goals and objectives for the business?

Our goal is to create an eclectic and unique shopping atmosphere that creates the best of the local art scene and complements the coastal lifestyle of the Ponte Vedra Beach and the surrounding area.

#### What do you enjoy most about your job?

I feel incredibly lucky to be able to have a career I love. There are many aspects of my job that I enjoy.

I am very blessed to be able to partner with so many local artists and companies. The creativity and vision of these artists consistently amazes me. I am extremely fortunate to have their support and to have them as part of our Coastal Elements Collection. I love being able to feature these artists for our beach community to enjoy.

It is extremely rewarding to assist a customer with finding a special gift for a friend or loved one as well as assisting a customer in discovering an amazing piece of art for their home. The relationships we have created with



Contributed photo

**Maria Litwack is the owner of Coastal Elements, which is located at 832 A1A North, Suite 10 in Ponte Vedra Beach.**

our incredible customers is truly a gift.

#### What are some of the aspects of the industry that are more challenging that you must account for?

One of our biggest challenges was opening Coastal Elements during COVID. Buying and sourcing merchandise, staffing and the ups and down of the retail world post COVID has been something that was quite unexpected. It has forced us to be more creative in our planning.

#### What kind of products do you specialize in at Coastal Elements?

We specialize in a wide collection of coastal gifts and art from local artists, designers and authors. Our collection is unique to the Ponte Vedra Beach area.

Some of our exceptionally talented artists include a beautiful coastal art collection from Lindsey Wood and Jasmine Wisz; wildlife photography from the extraordinarily talented Eloy Castroverde; beautiful hand-painted porcelain pieces from Mona H; a purse collection from Milly Kate Designs; a colorful collection of golf and tennis towels by Millie Rose Designs; jewelry designed by Sister Knots, Beyou, Coast and Cove and Gigi Bead; and lovely local candle companies include AO Fragrances, Grumpshine Candles and Sophie Kate Candles.

Local food fare is from Topsy Toffee, Makenu Chocolates, Minoracan Salsa and Hot Sauce.

We also carry a broad selection of ZIP code gifts, including mugs, hats, t-shirts, tumblers, stationery blankets, roadies and napkins.

A couple of services that Coastal Elements provides that are unique, include custom baskets and gift personalization and customization.

Many of our items, including art, can be customized by location, name, date and color. This makes a unique gift for the closing, arrival of a baby, wedding or a special gift for a loved one.

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

North Florida is such a beautiful area to live in. I love the change in seasons and temperature. You cannot find this in South Florida. I also love our beautiful beaches and friendly supportive community.

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

I enjoy spending my free time with my family, traveling, walks on the beach with my daughter and our pup Miles as well as exploring new restaurants.

# United Way awards \$600K to local organizations

United Way of St. Johns County has announced the recipients of its biannual Community Impact Grants, totaling \$600,000, to fuel positive change in the community. These grants, awarded to local nonprofit organizations, exemplify the local United Way's goal of promoting health, education and financial stability for all.

With a robust application and evaluation process and the help of volunteers, the local United Way identified organizations that showcased unwavering dedication and innovative approaches to addressing community needs. A total of 31 organizations submitted funding requests, amounting to \$1,384,009.63. After thorough review and careful consideration, United Way of St. Johns County is awarding grants to 35 partners.

Under the leadership of Cynthia Williams, community impact chair, the local chapter's team evaluated each application, ensuring adherence to submission guidelines and assessing alignment with United Way of St. Johns County's mission. The awarded grants will support vital programs across four focus areas: health, education — early childhood, education — youth success and financial stability.

"We extend our deepest appreciation to our community partners who work tirelessly to create meaningful change in the lives of individuals and families," said Williams. "These grants are a testament to their dedication and will play a pivotal role in advancing our collective impact in St. Johns and Putnam County."

The breakdown of the awarded grants is as follows:

- Health: \$177,500
- Education — Early Childhood: \$83,000
- Education — Youth Success: \$79,000
- Financial Stability: \$253,000

The funded programs encompass a diverse range of initiatives, including the Disaster Program from the Red Cross, the Tutoring Program for Adult Literacy from Learn to Read, and the Wild Flower Dental Program. By investing in these projects, the local United Way aims to empower individuals, strengthen families and foster a thriving community.

United Way of St. Johns County expressed gratitude to all the nonprofit organizations that submitted funding requests, as well as the volunteers and staff members who contributed to the evaluation process.

For more information about the awarded grants and local United Way's ongoing efforts to create a stronger community, go to [unitedway-sjc.org](http://unitedway-sjc.org) or contact Community Impact Director Jenny Harvey at [jenny.harvey@unitedway-sjc.org](mailto:jenny.harvey@unitedway-sjc.org).

United Way of St. Johns County is a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to improving lives and creating lasting change in the community. Through strategic initiatives, partnerships and community engagement, it focuses on promoting health, education and financial stability for all residents. It remains committed to building a brighter future for individuals and families in St. Johns and Putnam counties.

# MSD showcases patriotic spirit



Photo by Anthony Richards

Ponte Vedra Municipal Service District trustee John Cellucci oversaw putting up the American flags along Ponte Vedra Boulevard. Because the Fourth of July was on Tuesday, he decided to leave them up for the entire week to help get the whole community involved.

CHRISTMAS IN July

JULY 21st	\$2,100*
HIGH HANDS   12pm - 12am   Every 60 Minutes	
JULY 22nd	\$2,200*
HIGH HANDS   12pm - 12am   Every 60 Minutes	
JULY 23rd	\$2,300*
HIGH HANDS   12pm - 12am   Every 60 Minutes	

\*Players can win the high hand giveaways on the 21st, 22nd, & 23rd at Jacksonville, Orange Park or St. Augustine. MANAGEMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE/CANCEL THIS PROMOTION AT ANY TIME.

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# THE PLAYERS Championship launches 2023 Red Coats' grant program

*Applications accepted through Aug. 4, awards range from \$2.5K to \$15K*

THE PLAYERS Championship is seeking applicants for its annual Red Coats' community grant program, which awards funding to eligible nonprofits in Baker,

Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties.

The Red Coats are a group of civic and corporate leaders who oversee and manage the tournament's volunteer efforts and are committed to improving the quality of life in the five-county area. Their grants are awarded to organizations that promote youth services, education, character development, health, wellness and

sports and military support; grant awards range from \$2,500 to \$15,000.

"We're thrilled to support the work of grantees across Northeast Florida as they inspire positive change here in our communities," said Kevin Robbins, Captain of the Red Coats. "It is our honor to provide funding to these deserving organizations."

Red Coats' Grants Overview:

- Application timeline: Wednesday, June 28 to Friday, Aug. 4, at 11:59 p.m.
  - For complete guidelines and grant application, go to [theplayers.com/charity/info/grants](https://theplayers.com/charity/info/grants).
- THE PLAYERS 2024 will be held March 12-17. More information about THE PLAYERS' charitable efforts can be found at [THEPLAYERS.com/community](https://THEPLAYERS.com/community).

## Council on Aging gala, Island Doctors golf tournament set for Aug. 13, 14

Nonprofit St. Johns County Council on Aging (COA) has announced its 20th annual fundraising gala, An Evening on the Matanzas at River House, and companion tournament event, the Island Doctors Champions for Elders Golf Tournament to Benefit COA. The fundraising events will support critical services for seniors and caregivers in St. Johns County.

Guests are invited to attend the garden party-themed gala, An Evening on the Matanzas, on Sunday, Aug. 13, and enjoy dinner, dancing, live music and a charity auction at River House, a five-star events

venue overlooking the Matanzas River at 179 Marine St. in St. Augustine. Gala tickets are \$150 per person, and seating is limited. Tickets may be purchased online at [coasjc.org/gala](https://coasjc.org/gala) while seats are available until July 28. This year marks the first time since 2020's COVID-19 situation that the gala will be held in person.

The Island Doctors Champions for Elders Golf Tournament will be held the following day on Monday, Aug. 14, at The Palencia Club, 600 Palencia Club Drive in St. Augustine. Sponsors are invited to bring a team of four to enjoy a

day of golf followed by a celebratory luncheon or participate as a sponsor off the course and support the work COA does every day for local seniors and caregivers. Playing sponsorships that include a golf team of four and eight gala tickets begin at the \$2,500 level. Supporting sponsorships off the course are available starting at the \$250 level.

As a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, COA relies upon the financial support of members of the community, local businesses and community organizations to support its work.

"These two annual fundraising events are crucial to our ability to serve our community's growing population of older adults," explained COA Executive Director Becky Yanni. "We rely upon the generosity and good will of our entire community to come together and help us be there for our elders."

Individuals and organizations interested in participating as attendees, players, and/or sponsors may go to [coasjc.org/gala](https://coasjc.org/gala) and [coasjc.org/champions](https://coasjc.org/champions), or contact COA's Janel Graham at 904-209-3697 or [jgraham@coasjc.org](mailto:jgraham@coasjc.org) by July 28.

### DID YOU KNOW?

## FLORIDA DIVORCE LAWS CHANGED ON JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>

**Alimony and Adultery** are addressed by new laws that went into effect on July 1, 2023. Register for our upcoming classes to learn more about these changes and other divorce laws and financial considerations.



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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

# Bromeliads

"There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments." — Janet Kilburn Phillips

By Kathy Esfahani



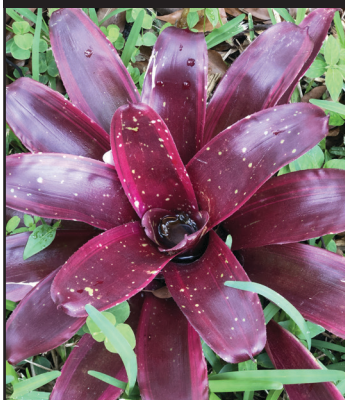
Kathy Esfahani

Tropical landscapes gain interest and color with the addition of bromeliads. These unique plants feature decorative leaves in red, green, purple, orange and yellow. Leaves may have stripes, spots or bands and often form rosettes that can hold water.

Bromeliads can grow up to three feet tall, but they are slow growing and may take one to three years to mature. Although bromeliads only flower once before dying, they produce a bloom that is stunning and unique. The main plant also produces "pups" that can be cut off and cultivated into new plants.

There are two types of bromeliads. The majority are called epiphytes, or "air plants" and include the well-known Spanish moss. These bromeliads grow on trees, rocks, logs and other plants. Air plants cling to other plants for support, but they are not parasites. They get their own energy through photosynthesis, absorbing nutrients into their leaves. The smaller bromeliad

### Flower of the Week



Royal burgundy bromeliad

of bromeliads enjoy full sun — such as dyckia — most prefer partial, filtered sun for best growth.

Bromeliads love humidity, but be careful not to overwater. If growing a terrestrial bromeliad, keep the soil consistently moist but not soggy. If your plant's leaves form vase-shaped rosettes, add water to these cups at the base of the leaves. These cups should stay full of water, but you can flush them out by adding and dumping clean water before refilling. Bromeliads can be very low maintenance — just place them under a shady tree and enjoy!

Several popular types of bromeliads in our area include:

- Lila — This tropical beauty loves humidity! It is a

category grows in soil; an example of these terrestrial bromeliads is a pineapple.

As a natural rain forest plant, bromeliads love a hot, moist environment. When selecting a bromeliad for your home, be sure to check the amount of light in the location you are considering.

Although some types



Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery

Bromeliads

great choice to add color and texture to beds and borders. Lila is an air plant that will produce new pups off the main clump.

- Royal burgundy — Hence the name, royal burgundy bromeliads have long, deep red leaves that feature green spots. Royal burgundy is an air plant that can attract butterflies, and the cup often becomes a home for insects and frogs.

- Tiger — Another air plant, the tiger bromeliad is known for dark bars of color on light green leaves. It requires little maintenance and enjoys a humid climate. Tiger makes a nice ground cover, accent plant or border in a bed that receives at least partial sunlight.

Happy planting!

### Flower of the Week: Royal burgundy bromeliad

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



## Sore joints losing you points?

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- 4 Difficulty putting on shoes and socks
- 5 Swelling

Why live with joint pain? Schedule an appointment today.

📞 904-JOI-2000 (564-2000)

🌐 [totaljointjax.com](http://totaljointjax.com)



# Wolfson Children's Christmas in July now under way

*Toy, donation drive returns for 12th year*

Wolfson Children's Christmas in July, presented by Subaru of Jacksonville, is once again accepting donations this year, giving people the ability to spread joy and support Wolfson Children's Hospital patients through a variety of donation options. The annual month-long toy and donation drive ensures all patients at Wolfson Children's have the comfort of toys and a reason to smile as they navigate procedures and treatments. Donations are being accepted through July 31.

Members of the community can browse Wolfson Children's Amazon wish list for toys specially requested by the Wolfson Children's Child Life team or make a financial gift at ChristmasJuly.com. This year, the Child Life team is placing an emphasis on sensory toys and gift card donations in small increments, which are used as rewards for teens and as assistance for patient parents. Requested gift cards include Starbucks, UberEats, Publix and more. For more information, go to ChristmasJuly.com.



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Community members who wish to can drop off new, unwrapped toys at Subaru of Jacksonville, 10800 Atlantic Blvd., through Monday, July 24, at 4 p.m. Gift card drop-offs can be scheduled directly with the Family Support Services department at calendly.com/wolfsonchildlifedepartment or they can be sent electronically to Child.Life@bmcjax.com.

Toys are an integral part of the healing and understanding process for patients of all ages at Wolfson Children's Hospital. Children learn through play, so toys, art activities and musical instruments not only instill a sense of normalcy and comfort, but also help babies and younger

children continue to develop on track during hospital stays.

At Wolfson Children's, certified Child Life specialists and Master's-prepared music therapists use toys and instruments as tools to help children understand their conditions and prepare for medical procedures such as blood draws and MRIs. By easing stress and anxiety, they help kids gain a sense of control in the hospital and emergency department environments. Christmas in July allows Child Life specialists and music therapists to restock their toy shelves and identify their most-needed items, which this year includes sensory toys.

# PulteGroup hosts school supply drive

The Northeast Florida Division of PulteGroup, one of the nation's leading home builders, in partnership with Innovative Construction Group (ICG), has announced a Back-2-School supply drive to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida. Through July 21, Pulte is collecting donations of backpacks and school supplies at the following Pulte Homes and Del Webb sales offices, and ICG's locations, in Northeast Florida:

- Del Webb Nocatee, 73 Glenhurst Ave., Ponte Vedra
  - Preserve at Bannon Lakes, 205 Cedar Preserve Lane, St. Augustine
  - Summer Bay at Grand Oaks, 41 Hickory Pine Drive, St. Augustine
- Donations made to The Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida will benefit elementary, middle and high school students throughout the community.

For more information, go to bgcnf.org.

"We want to give our young people at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida the tools they need for a successful school year," said Justin Cook, division president of PulteGroup's Northeast Florida Division. "Donations to our Back-2-School Supply Drive can help ensure every student has a positive start to a great school year."

For more information about PulteGroup in Northeast Florida, go to pulte.com/jacksonville.

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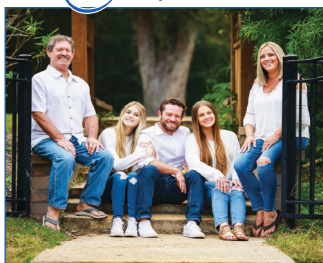
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# Registration opens for 2024 DONNA Marathon Weekend

In celebration of The DONNA Foundation’s 20th anniversary, the organization announced registration will open Thursday, July 13, for the 2024 DONNA Marathon Weekend, the 17th annual running of the event set for Feb. 2-4.

The foundation has helped more than 19,000 families living with breast cancer through The DONNA CareLine, contributed more than \$3.3 million toward groundbreaking breast cancer research and celebrated survivorship with more than 140,000 athletes across DONNA finish lines, including The National Marathon to Finish Breast Cancer.

This year’s theme, “Destination: Hope,” reinforces DONNA Marathon Weekend as a destination race that appeals to both local and international runners, while envisioning a future defined by something brighter than any one place or race — a future where love always wins out over fear. It celebrates the progress and resilience required to reach the finish line of a world without breast cancer.

“2023 is a monumental anniversary year for the foundation, celebrating 20 years of progress — and we are confident that our next two decades will bring even more milestones,” said Amanda Napolitano, executive director of The DONNA Foundation. “This year’s theme of ‘Destination: Hope’ celebrates where we’ve been and looks forward to the finish line we run



toward every day. We can’t wait to celebrate survivors for our 17th annual DONNA Marathon Weekend.”

“This 20-year journey has been one of hope,” said Donna Deegan, founder of The DONNA Foundation. “Every day, we encourage patients and families to choose love over fear. Breast cancer patients know the true meaning of perseverance — and their journeys inspire every step forward that we’ve made since 2003. I’m honored to have gotten to know and run alongside so many survivors and friends, and I look forward to doing it again for the 2024 DONNA Marathon Weekend. We will keep running toward the finish line of breast cancer, while remembering to stop and celebrate every step of progress along the way.”

By the end of May, the foundation had served more than 1,900 patients this year and had provided \$873,000 in debt relief, including \$60,000 in direct financial aid.

Among the aid distributed is the most impactful case the foundation has served in its 20-year history. A woman in her 50s who was recently diagnosed with stage II, triple negative breast cancer turned to The DONNA Foundation in March when her insurance company denied her treatment claim submissions. After a consultation with the patient, representatives from The DONNA CareLine assessed the billing structure, found the insurance company had a benefit exclusion that prevented the success of the claims appeal and outlined a plan to address her immediate and long-term needs.

The case manager worked diligently, making calls on the patient's behalf to negotiate discounts for outstanding bills and set up affordable payment plans. The foundation ultimately secured \$294,443.85 in debt relief, reducing the patient’s out-of-pocket costs significantly.

Registration for 2024 DONNA Marathon Weekend events and the second annual DONNA 110 Mile-A-Day Challenge opens at 1 p.m. Thursday, July 13, at BreastCancerMarathon.com. On opening day, registrants can take advantage of 10% off all registration fees.

For more information, or to sign up for a race, go to [thedonnafoundation.org](http://thedonnafoundation.org).

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Contributed photo  
Emma Benoit will share her insights following a special screening of the film “My Ascension.”

# Film to spotlight suicide prevention efforts for youth

Recent research released by the CDC shows a staggering increase in mental health struggles for teens, especially girls. Additionally, the rate of teen suicides is rising — suicide is the second leading cause of death of people ages 15-24 in the United States.

To help reduce stigma around mental health and suicide, EPIC Behavioral Healthcare and other local organizations are advocating for suicide awareness and prevention by screening the film “My Ascension” at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 5 at Toco Creek High School auditorium.

“My Ascension” chronicles the story of 16-year-old high school varsity cheerleader Emma Benoit, who was paralyzed by a suicide attempt, which propelled her on a mission to use her painful experience to help others find hope and stay alive.

The documentary highlights Emma’s inspiring journey. The film also shares the stories of two remarkable young people who tragically did not

survive their attempts, and we learn first-hand from their families, friends, school officials and suicide prevention experts about the devastating effects of suicide and what can be done to prevent it.

The screening will be followed by a discussion on youth suicide prevention and mental wellness with Emma herself and local mental health and suicide prevention experts. Additionally, there will be resource tables sharing important information on mental health and suicide prevention.

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare has partnered with the St. Johns County School District, United Way of St. Johns County, Big Brothers Big Sister of St. Johns County, LSF Health Services, Betty Griffin Center and St. Augustine Youth Services to bring “My Ascension” to St. Johns County.

Toco Creek High School auditorium is located at 11200 St. Johns Pkwy., St. Augustine.

For more information, call 904-829-3295.

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# Angelwood receives Underwood's trunk show donation

Underwood's Jewelers in Ponte Vedra Beach presented Angelwood, a local charity that serves children, adults and families living with disabilities, with a check for \$6,000.

This donation represented the proceeds from the trunk show featuring Penny Preville jewelry that Underwood's hosted in the spring. It was the eighth year that Underwood's has partnered with one of their designers to benefit the organization.

Participants of Angelwood were treated to sodas and a visit with the staff of Underwood's Ponte Vedra Beach location before the check presentation.

"We are so appreciative of our partnership with Underwood's," Angelwood CEO Diane Tuttle said. "As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we are reminded that we have been successful because of the generous support of our long-standing partners. Underwood Jewelers has been so generous to our organization, and we are grateful they are part of our caring community."

Underwood Jewelers is also supporting Angelwood by selling raffle tickets at the Ponte Vedra Beach store for a Penny Preville stardust cluster bar necklace.

Tickets are also available online and at The Angelwood, an annual celebration being held on Aug. 19 at the Sawgrass Marriott.

The winner will be drawn at the event,

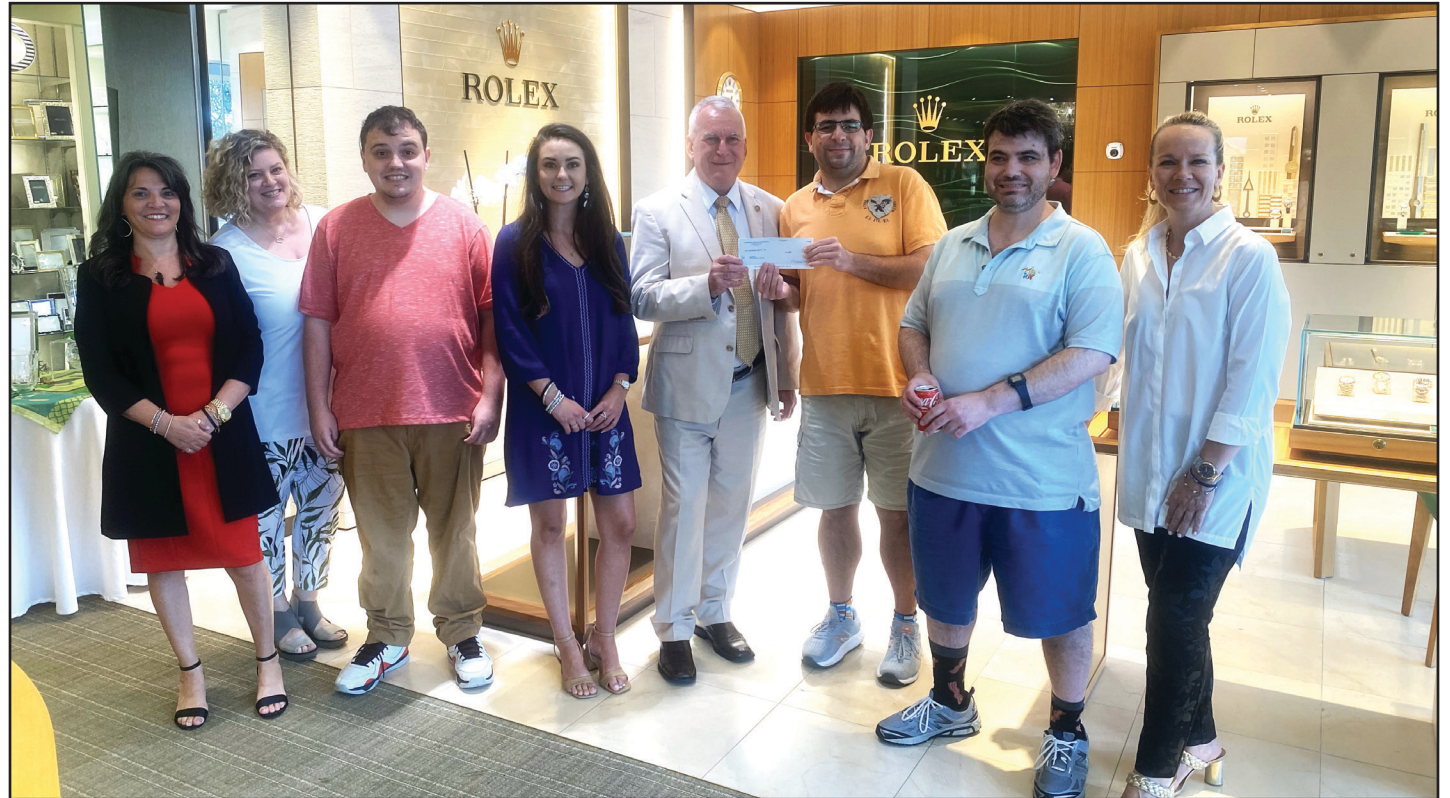


Photo courtesy of Angelwood

Underwood's Jewelers manager John Rutkowski and staff members at its Ponte Vedra Beach location present Angelwood participants with the proceeds from the Penny Preville trunk show.

and they do not have to be present to win.

Go to [angelwoodjax.org](http://angelwoodjax.org) for event info and to purchase a chance to win the beautiful \$3,000 necklace. There are only 300 chances available.

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# ALL ABOUT PETS



## Final weeks of Pin Up Paws Calendar Contest approach

By Anthony Richards

The voting for the St. Augustine Humane Society's 2024 Pin Up Paws Calendar is underway with just less than a month before voting in the contest ends on Aug. 12.

However, there are new dogs constantly being entered into the 13th annual contest and some are starting to really make their push toward being included in this year's calendar.

The public has until Aug. 10 at 8 p.m. to enter their pets into the contest by going to [gogophotocontest.com/pupcalendar24](http://gogophotocontest.com/pupcalendar24) and clicking on the "enter contest" tab on the right of the website, which is also the best way to vote for a certain pet.

This year's theme for the contest is "Best Buds," and the calendar will feature the top 12 vote-getting pets in various flower garden settings for each month of the year, which will be cap-

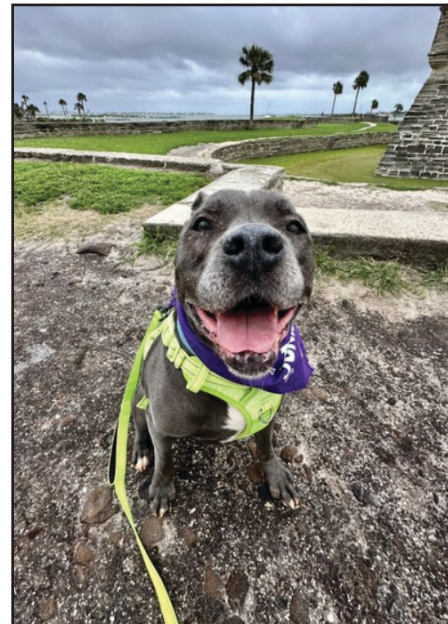
tured as part of a professional photo shoot by world-renowned photographer Addison Fitzgerald, who will partner with fine artist and graphic designer Maribel Angel to create the calendar's memorable designs.

Each year as it approaches the final weeks of the contest a PUP primary party is held to feature the pets that have reached more than 200 votes at that point in the contest.

This year's party is scheduled to take place at Island Wing Company at Bartram Park on July 21 from 5 to 8 p.m. That means to be included on the night an entered pet must have reached 200 votes by 5 p.m. on July 20.

Individual ballot boxes will be on display for guests of the party to place more votes for those pets featured.

Island Wing Company is a pet-friendly establishment, so the St. Augustine Humane Society is inviting owners to bring



their pets with them and solicit those in attendance for possible votes.

There are currently 11 nominated pets

that have surpassed 200 votes, but there are eight more that have more than 100 and are getting closer to being included in the special event.

The calendar is one of the St. Augustine Humane Society's largest fundraisers annually.

This year's goal is \$30,000 and each vote cast is \$1 donated to the organization to help in their continued efforts to provide resources that strengthen lifelong human and animal bonds within the community.

That includes striving to eliminate the need for families to relinquish their pets to shelters, while enabling pets to live happy and healthful lives.

The Pin Up Paws Calendar Party will be held on Nov. 3 at Embassy Suites Hotel in St. Augustine Beach. All proceeds from submissions, vote donations and sales will benefit the St. Augustine Humane Society and its programs.

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# The Caffeinated Cat gives felines another chance at life

By Anthony Richards

Lovers of cats and coffee have a place to call home in Jacksonville Beach and it is called The Caffeinated Cat.

The quaint café opened about four years ago and quickly became a part of the community for so many with its unique concept of grabbing a drink while hanging out with cats.

According to owner Tammy King, the proceeds from the drinks sold at the café help support her mission of providing a loving place for cats dealing with issues to call home instead of being out on the streets.

“Everything we do is for the cats, and we never lose sight of that,” King said.

The majority of the cats at the café have issues either mentally or physically and are not likely to be adopted as a result.

One of the staples of the café since it opened was Flerken, who garnered the title of CEO and served as the official spokes cat for The Caffeinated Cat before he passed away in March.

“He was here before we even opened, and he was the reason we realized we had to have a place like this,” King said. “He

was a seriously abused cat and had to have four surgeries and spent three months in the hospital, but he survived and it was amazing.”

According to King, he was a shining example of what the café is all about, which is giving cats a second chance at life and the opportunity to enjoy what life they have remaining to the best of their abilities.

“This is the last stop for many of these cats, and we’re happy to provide them with that,” King said. “I just knew that we had to have a spot for these cats that have been abused and can get medical attention. There’s no other option for a lot of them.”

Flerken’s fighting spirit and memory have lived on since his passing, and his legacy lives on as King started Flerken’s fund, which people in the community can donate towards to help in the effort to raise money to one day build a medical space to go along with the café to more quickly tend to cats in need.

“Unfortunately, offering the help we do, you deal with death so much, but you have to have another way to look at it and another way to deal with it,” King said.

“You have to expect it as a part of life and



Photo by Anthony Richards

Rader gets pets from visitors while sitting on his spinning wheel.

continue because there are always going to be those out there that still need our help.”

Many come and visit looking to spend some time and pet the cats while sipping on a drink, which includes options more than just coffee, such as flavored teas,

lemonades and ginger ales.

Allie Christensen and Mark Young both stopped into The Caffeinated Cat because they had a feral cat that the café had offered a home to about a year ago and they

CAT continues on Page 16

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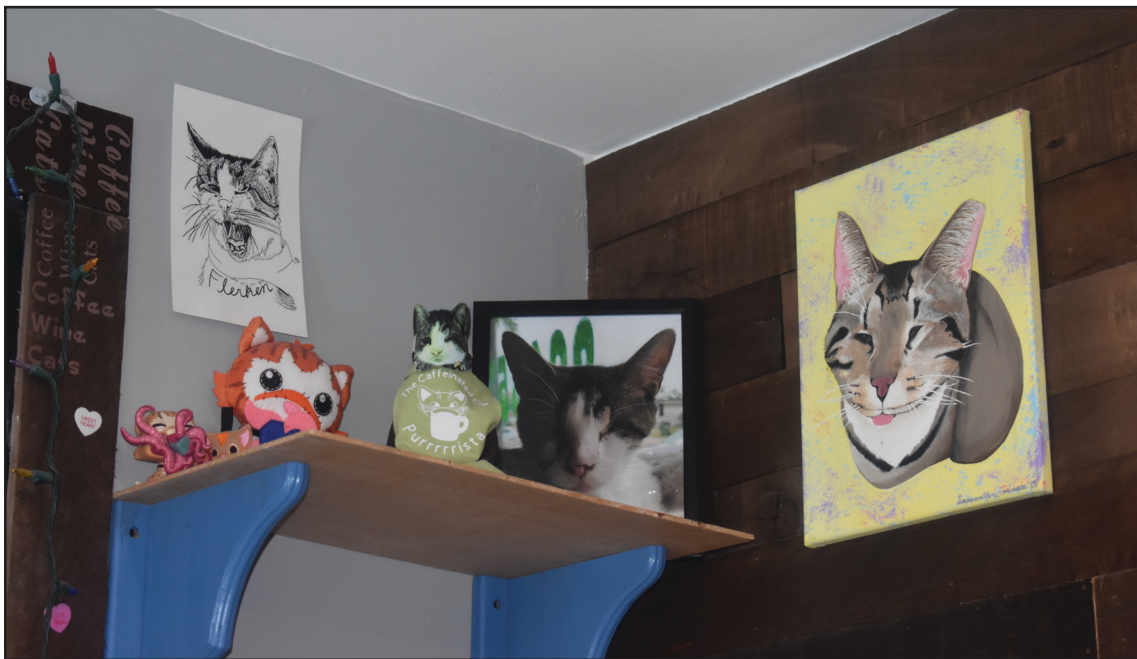


Photo by Anthony Richards

Flerken's legacy lives on with several photos around and the creation of the Flerken's fund.

## Cat

Continued from 15

wanted to stop by and finally visit the place that had offered to help when no one else would.

"We were going to Florida State University, and we had basically saved two litters from the area we were living in, but we had a tough time getting them in humane societies because a lot of time they would be turned down because they were feral," Christensen said. "We had to come back home and this was the only place in Jacksonville that would

take her."

Both Christensen and Young are graduates of Ponte Vedra High School and still call North Florida home.

"We had never been here before, but always wanted to stop in and see the place that offered to help and allowed us to save a cat's life," Christensen said. "I'll always be happy for The Caffeinated Cat for that."

The café is closed on Monday but open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. It is located at 331 1st Ave. North in Jacksonville Beach.

# Dr. Baxter's Back to School Bash is Aug. 19

Furever Vets Central will host its first ever Dr. Baxter's Back to School Bash from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 19. This event will be open and free to all community members.

During Dr. Baxter's Back to School Bash, kids, teens, pets and pet "pawrents" from the community will be invited to celebrate the new school year. There will be educational tours, various outdoor games, arts n' crafts and a scavenger hunt with Furever Vets' mascot, Dr. Baxter. BFn'D food truck will be onsite for lunch. Admissions and all activities are free, though lunch is available only for purchase.

Furever Vets will use this opportunity to give educational tours and bring awareness to the new urgent care facilities. Children will have the opportunity to read books to their pets or one of the friendly staff cats. There will be painting for both pets and children, immersive games and a bounce house for the children along with a pool and splash pad for the pets.

During this event, staff will accept donations of all types of school supplies to help with another community project: helping kids get the school supplies they need as they prepare to go back to classes. Once supplies are collected all of the veterinarians will work together stuffing the backpacks and distributing them in the community.

Furever Vets Central, Urgent Care and Pet Resort is located at 11030 Baymeadows Road, Jacksonville.

For further information, go to <https://fb.me/e/2KEJCB8Z9>.

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The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 54 years of community news excellence, launched our fifth annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32081 & 32082.**

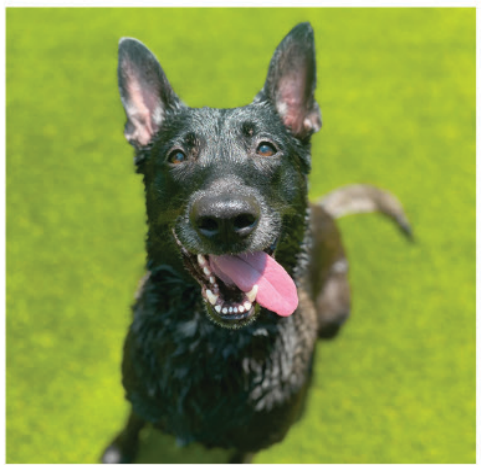
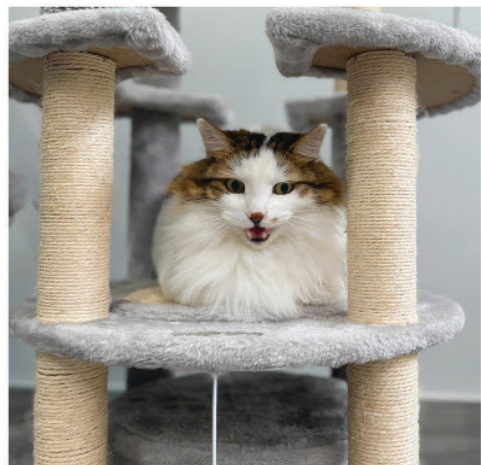
Readers have nominated their favorite businesses, organizations, professionals and more in over 250 categories online. **Online voting ends July 24.** Readers can vote for their favorite business in each category once per day.  
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[www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2023/index.html#//](http://www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2023/index.html#/)





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# Rethinking sleepovers one tent at a time

By Anthony Richards

Sleepovers are a part of growing up for so many children and Tentastic Parties, a local business based in Nocatee, came up with a new twist on the traditional party style.

As the name conveys, they use tents to help capture the essence of a sleepover.

According to Michele Keller, we started off by making tents for our families and friends and ended up with a bevy of tents after years of doing that.

“My wife made our daughter her own teepee when she was 4 (years old), so we always had a teepee in the house,” Stuart Keller chuckled. “It really grew from there.”

She and her husband Stuart are business partners along with Lindsey and Jim Tracey, whom they met because their daughters both danced and the families became good friends over the years.

“Our girls were at the age where they were getting big into sleepovers, so we wanted to do something related to that,” Michele Keller said.

The couples got together and thought they had a fun idea that they figured the public would love as well, and the business got underway in January as a result.



TENT continues on Page 20

Tentastic Parties has several different themes that can be chosen from for the next sleepover party.

Photo courtesy of Tentastic Parties

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# Teen, family launch bounce house business

By Shaun Ryan

When teen entrepreneur Rogan Drainer was considering what type of business he would like to start, he remembered seeing all the bounce houses at the park across the street in Nocatee as he was growing up. To a child, these big, colorful, inflatable playgrounds mean one thing: fun. But to a young man with entrepreneurial aspirations, they represent opportunity.

“It just kind of clicked,” Rogan said.

Rogan, currently a rising senior at Nease High School, and his family began looking into the business, what would be involved. Rogan started by talking the idea over with friends, looking for valuable feedback. Then, he and his parents — Samantha and Adam White — did a lot of research. His mom, having owned a business, was familiar with the process of creating a limited liability company and handled that aspect.

Getting insurance proved to be a challenge at first. Even companies willing to insure such an enterprise wanted very specific details about the actual bounce houses the family would be using — in some cases even before the units in question had arrived.

The inflatables themselves were purchased from two manufacturers: Magic Jump Inflatables and Big Top Inflatables of San Antonio, Texas. High quality products were, in Rogan’s words, “super-important.”

Also important was pricing.

“We want to make sure that we have the best prices available,” Rogan said.

Eventually he and his family navigated the process of setting up this business and on April 7, Stars N Stripes Inflatables LLC was born, with operations really getting under way by the end of that month.

The service rents out some of the most creative inflatables around. There are water slides and bounce houses combined with water slides. There are two different obstacle courses — including a very popular



Rogan Drainer and his family at K9s For Warriors where they had just made a donation. Pictured from left are: Adam White, Eli White, Samantha White and Rogan.

50-foot “Star Wars” version. There’s also a large balloon dome — basically a giant bubble with special air vents that blow balloons around inside it. They can be rented for a little as four hours or for multiple days.

And safety is always a top priority.

“If there are severe storms, we won’t be able to set up that day,” Rogan said. “We would offer a refund and a chance to reschedule.”

Stakes are clearly visible, and an alarm system alerts everyone should there be an unscheduled deflation.

Important to note is that there’s more to Stars N Stripes Inflatables than profits.

“A big thing that this business allows us to do is be a bigger part of the community, especially the veteran community,” said Rogan. “That’s important to us. My dad, he’s in the military, active-duty Navy. So, we love to be involved with veteran charities.”

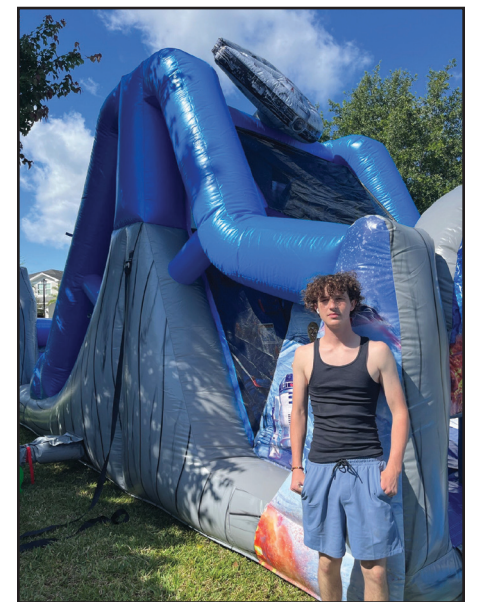
Every quarter, the company donates a portion of the rental money it earns to local charities, both military and nonmilitary.

Recently, the family made a donation to K9s For Warriors.

Adam White, who helps his 17-year-old son with the physical part of the operation — dropping off and picking up — said he was inspired by Rogan’s strong work ethic.

“It’s a lot of labor-intensive work,” White said. “It’s hot, and it’s exhausting. But he doesn’t complain about it. He’s like, ‘All right. Let’s go!’”

He said the goal was to hand the business over to Rogan when he is of age to let him



Contributed photos

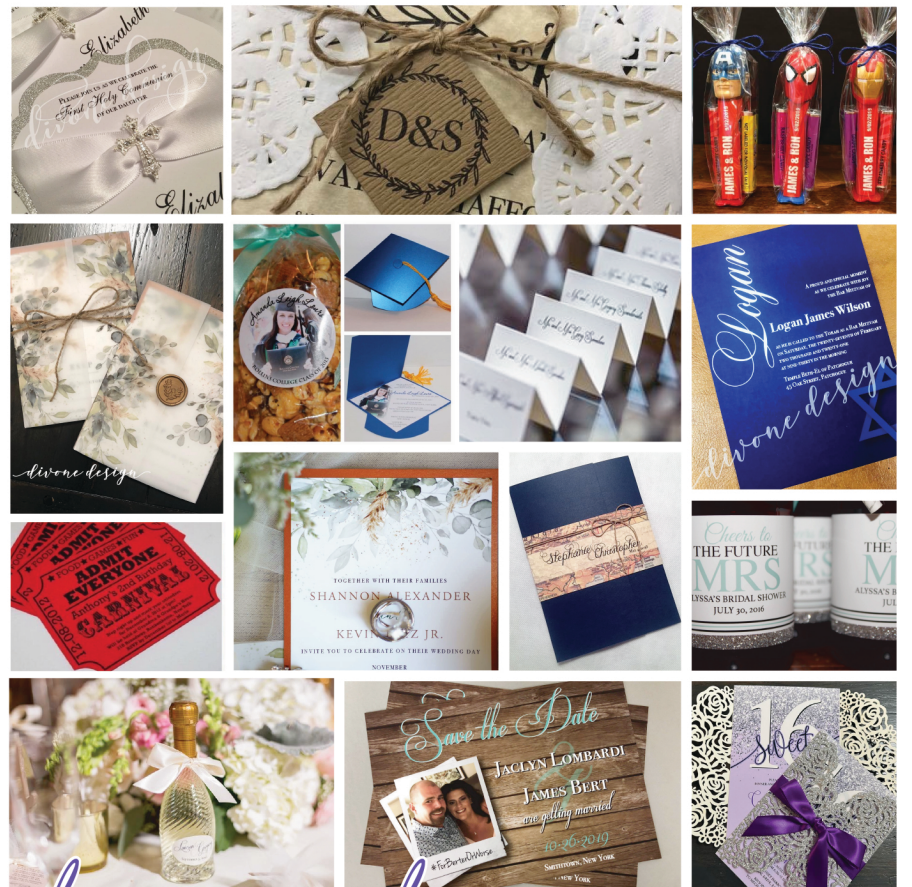
Rogan Drainer stands next to “Star Wars” themed obstacle course, one of the “bounce houses” rented by Stars N Stripes Inflatables.

own and operate it.

“It’s fun to see him grow in this business,” White said.

To learn more about Stars N Stripes Inflatables, go to [www.starsnstripes904.com](http://www.starsnstripes904.com). Rentals can be arranged there and by text or phone call to 904-572-8836. The company can also be found on Instagram and Facebook.

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# Consider food allergies when planning a catering menu

Catering is a big factor to consider when planning a wedding or large event. For guests who have food allergies or require specialized diets, dinner can be memorable for all of the wrong reasons. But it doesn't have to be.

Individuals with allergies and dietary restrictions warrant extra caution. Any food can cause an allergic reaction, but eight types in particular, often referred to as the "Big 8," are responsible for the greatest numbers of adverse reactions. Milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soy comprise the Big 8. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Food Allergy Research and Resource Program says the Big 8 accounts for about 90 percent of all food allergies in the United States.

- **Ask about allergies on the response card.** Some couples or event planners request that guests choose their food preferences on their RSVPs. Include a spot where guests can mention serious food allergies.

- **Choose a caterer very carefully.** Caterers are increasingly adapting to common food restrictions. Express specific food avoidances or what you want to be included and find a caterer who specializes in this type of cooking.

- **Offer allergen-free appetizers.** Martha Stewart Weddings suggests serving customized bite-sized hors d'oeuvres during cocktail hour to allow for easier customization. This gives guests with allergies the ability to pick and choose their pre-entree bites.

- **Label foods and let guests with severe allergies dine first.** Buffets should be clearly labeled so those with allergies can avoid certain foods. Also, those with severe food allergies should have first shot at the buffet to limit cross-contamination from serving utensils.



- **Create separate meals.** A caterer may be able to make separate meals for certain guests, particularly if they have advanced notice. They can often prepare separate plates for special diets, such as gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian. When planning your event, speak with your caterer beforehand to ensure they can accommodate any special needs and requests.

- **Don't forget desserts and drinks.** Allergens can be included in drinks and desserts as well. Offer gluten-free desserts and gluten-free beer as well.

Dietary restrictions are another factor that none must consider when planning a wedding, party or large event that involves food.



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## Tent

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Although it has not yet been a year since starting the business, Michele Keller has been quite surprised and happy with how the community has gravitated toward their unique approach to sleepover parties.

"We were expecting to get a lot of people in the Nocatee area, but since we launched it, we've been receiving interest from all over and have been down to World Golf Village already for parties," Michele Keller said. "We've even had parties with up to nine people."

There is an additional charge for parties outside a 10-mile radius of Nocatee.

The setup includes each partygoer getting their own inflatable mattress with a tent to go over it and each tent is personalized with their name on it.

The tents also come decorated with lights so that the tents and beds can stay illuminated even when the lights in the room go out.

Because the business is still in its first year and early on in the process, every party they do offers a degree of learning as they continue to perfect their approach.

"Each time we think about something we can do better and we're always thinking of new theme ideas," Michele Keller said.

The current selection of themes they have to choose from includes pretty in Paris, gamer, sweet shoppe, Valentine's Day, cotton candy, tropical vibes, and

Boho Dreams.

"I'd just love to see it continually grow with more themes introduced as we go or where we can customize a party based on the preferences of the person hosting it," Michele Keller said.

The themes can be tailored for both girls and boys, and the age ranges can vary from very young to teenagers.

"We're working on getting to a place where we can do parties of five to 10 each weekend," Stuart Keller said. "It would be nice to standardize it and maybe even get to the point of hiring on someone full-time to help manage it."

The best way to reach Tentastic Parties and inquire about a possible party setup is by going to [tentasticpartiesfl.com](http://tentasticpartiesfl.com) or their Facebook or Instagram pages.



Photo courtesy of Tentastic Parties

**Tentastic Parties has several different themes that can be chosen from for the next sleepover party.**

# Business Weekly

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## Jacksonville Area Legal Aid lawyers recognized for efforts



**Adam Thoresen**

Of the 16 lawyers in Florida who have received the Consumer Protection Lawyer of the Year Award from The Florida Bar’s Consumer Protection Law Committee, four

either work at Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA) currently or did at the time they received the award.

That is more than any other law firm or government agency in Florida.

“The fact that JALA makes up a quarter of that list is truly remarkable,” said JALA President and CEO Jim Kowalski. “It really speaks volumes about the impact of our work and how widely it is recognized within the organized Bar.”

JALA’s latest recipient is Adam Thoresen, division chief of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid’s Consumer Advocacy and Litigation Unit, to whom the award was presented June 22 in Boca Raton at The Florida Bar’s annual meeting. Thoresen was also the recipient of the National Consumer Law Center’s Rising Star Award in 2021.

“Adam continues to distinguish himself as a tenacious litigator dedicated to protecting tenants and consumers from

exploitation,” said Rich Dubois, executive director of the National Consumer Law Center. “In so many areas of consumer law — from auto fraud to debt collection to foreclosures and evictions — Florida consumers are fortunate to have Jacksonville Area Legal Aid fighting for justice on their behalf.”

At JALA, Thoresen leads a team of four lawyers and two paralegals who not only help individual clients put their nightmares in the past, but also work to effectuate broad change through individual and class action litigation and policy advocacy involving the mortgage foreclosure process, payday lending, title lending, fair credit reporting, tenants’ rights and other consumer issues.

Lynn Drysdale, one of the unit’s other attorneys and its former chief, received the award in 2014. In consumer protection practice for more than 30 years, Drysdale represents consumers in individual and class-action cases and has provided expert testimony to the Florida Legislature, two U.S. Senate Committees, the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Reserve Board.

She also engages in legislative advocacy and litigation relating to debt collection, payday loans, motor vehicle sales and financing, military lending and litigation protections, small lending products and forward and reverse

mortgages.

She teaches foreclosure defense litigation to consumer law attorneys nationwide and has taught consumer law at the University of Florida Levin College of Law for more than 10 years.

Kowalski was one of three recipients of the award in 2011, the first year it was presented, “for outstanding work protecting the legal rights of Floridians facing foreclosure and helping fellow practitioners of consumer law.”

That was the year before he joined JALA, where he still engages in the type of work he did at the time, when he was a litigator in private practice in Jacksonville. He is particularly well-known for his work in preventing wrongful foreclosure.

In private practice he also handled consumer fraud, complex personal injury, wrongful death and premises liability litigation. Kowalski previously served as an assistant state attorney in the Fourth Judicial Circuit, where he was on the on-call homicide team, division chief of the Public Corruption Unit and County Court, and as senior trial attorney in the Special Assault/Sex Crimes Unit.

One of Kowalski’s co-recipients in 2011 was April Charney, who at the time was a JALA staff attorney also known for her foreclosure prevention work.

## INK! names new directors, executive committee members

The St. Johns County Education Foundation operating as Investing in Kids (INK!) has announced the appointment of new members to its board of directors and executive committee. As the direct support organization to the St. Johns County School District, the INK! Board of Directors leads the nonprofit in fulfilling its mission to promote the academic success of all St. Johns County public school students.

For the 2023-24 fiscal year, the INK! Board of Directors and Executive Committee will be led by President Holly Hill, Flagler College; Vice President Hamilton Neal, Bridgewater Wealth Advisors; and Treasurer Thomas Wolf, Photoarchitectural LLC. Paul Ray with Enhanced Voting will remain on the executive committee as immediate past president and member-at-large. Members-at-large on the executive committee include Jim Richardson, PNC Bank; Molly Rinnert, Northrop Grumman; and Christina Upchurch, St. Johns County School District.

The board recently voted in two new directors, Hank Klein of Herbie Wiles Insurance and Marissa Lenius of RSM USA LLP. Board members remaining with the organization include Christopher Barrett, Synergy Support Services; Bonalyn Boyd, Carlisle Interconnect Technologies; Lori Brandel, VyStar Credit Union; Claudia Dencer, Leonard’s

INK! continues on Page 23

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# When things seem out of control, control things you can

**Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors**

During times of heightened stress, such as when there's extreme market volatility, a person can quickly become overwhelmed and struggle to do things that

might be considered simple or obvious. It can be helpful to focus on the things you can control, identify actions that you can take and complete those action steps.

Here are four action items for you to consider:

**1. Review your investment plan**

Before you start making changes to your investment portfolio, consider your goals. Are you saving for retirement? Do you need to build a college fund for your children? Did a recent event create a need

to adjust your plan?

If your goals have changed or if you haven't updated your plan in a while, review and, if necessary, update your

**INVESTMENT** continues on **Page 23**

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# Investment

Continued from 22

investment strategy to support reaching your goals.

## 2. Understand your risk tolerance

Risk is a key principle in investing. Some investments are riskier than others, but every financial decision involves risk. Since risk is inescapable, the key is to understand your risk tolerance and manage how much you are taking, which should be based on your long-term financial goals. If your tolerance for risk has changed, review your strategy and make sure you are still comfortable with the amount of risk you're taking.

## 3. Stick to your plan

When the market gets volatile, investors often react emotionally and may want to pull out of the market to try to avoid loss. However, remember that moving or selling investments during a market decline will likely lock in losses; staying invested may allow you to benefit if the market comes back. Before reacting, take time to step back and try to respond using logic rather than emotion.

## 4. Organize and update important documents

Are your important documents up-to-date and accessible to those who may



need them?

Create a reference list of your documents and consider making a digital version for easy storage and accessibility. Also ensure that your beneficiary designations for investment accounts, life insurance and other accounts are up to date to reflect any new circumstances such as marriage, birth, death or divorce. Beneficiary designations typically supersede your will or trust, so you'll want to confirm that they are current and accurate.

**Our firm does not provide legal or tax advice. Be sure to consult with your tax and legal advisors before taking any action that could have tax consequences. Any estate plan should be reviewed by an attorney who**

**specializes in estate planning and is licensed to practice law in your state.**

**This article was written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Jamie Seim, CFP, Senior Vice President – Investment Officer in Ponte Vedra Beach at 904-273-7917.**

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# INK!

Continued from 21

Photography; Tim Forson, superintendent, St. Johns County School District; Daniel Lang, Sunshine Realty; Sabrina Papovitch, Community First Credit Union; Victor J. Raymos, St. Augustine and St. Johns County Board of Realtors; and Karl Vierck, RESG Commercial Properties. Board members stepping down from service are Steve Blalock, Northrop Grumman; Michael DeHaven, FPL; Ralph Klein, Herbie Wiles Insurance; and Ryan Goodwin, Equitable Advisors.

“We thank our previous and current officers, board members and leadership for bringing their unique enthusiasm, intellect, experience, skills, knowledge and resources to move INK! forward,” said Donna Lueders, INK!’s executive director. “We look forward to continuing to work together to provide innovative programs, classroom resources, and teacher support to benefit the thousands of students enrolled in St. Johns County School District,” she said.

The St. Johns County Education Foundation provides innovative programs, teacher support and classroom resources to benefit more than 50,000 students and approximately 3,200 teachers. For more information, contact Lueders at Donna.Lueders@stjohns.k12.fl.us or 904-547-7120. Or go to ink-stjohns.org.



## R. Scott Costantino

*Board Certified Civil Trial Lawyer*

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(904) 355-3023

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**scott@costantinolawfirm.com**



## R. Scott Costantino The Costantino Law Firm, P.A.

Scott Costantino is Board Certified by the Florida Bar in Civil Trial Law. He is also Board Certified by the Florida Bar in Civil Trial Law. He is also Board Certified in Civil Trial Advocacy by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. He has received an AV rating from the Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory and has over 34 years' experience in civil trial practice.

Mr. Costantino has been inducted into the International Society of Barristers and serves as its Secretary-Treasurer. He is also a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates and was selected as the ABOTA~Jacksonville Chapter's Lawyer of the Year for 2012. He served as the statewide President for FLABOTA in 2019 and is currently an ABOTA National Board Representative.

Mr. Costantino has been selected by his peers for inclusion in the publication The Best Lawyers in

America. The Costantino Law Firm, P.A. has also been named a Best Law Firm in Jacksonville by U.S. News - Best Lawyers® "Best Law Firms" for 2023. Mr. Costantino has also been selected for inclusion in Super Lawyers magazine.

The Chester Bedell Inn of Court has designated Mr. Costantino as a Master of the Bench. He has also been named a Life Member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum.

Mr. Costantino represents clients in complex personal injury matters, including wrongful death, professional liability as well as car, trucking, motorcycle, scooter, one wheel and bicycle accident cases. Mr. Costantino received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Florida. He is the managing shareholder of The Costantino Law Firm, P.A.

# Benchmarks of Success

*A look at major career developments in the area*



**Buck Poderski**

## Poderski joins NAI Hallmark

NAI Hallmark, a commercial real estate brokerage and property management firm in Jacksonville, has announced the appointment of Buck Poderski as vice president of multifamily investment sales.

Prior to joining NAI Hallmark, Poderski most recently served as a managing director at GREA in Dallas, Texas, focusing exclusively on value-add multifamily sales. During that time, he was involved in the sale of \$250 million in assets working closely with an array of private equity, high-net-worth individuals and family offices. His keen advisory and problem-solving ability have helped his clients achieve top-of-market sales, and in doing so, built himself a solid reputation on a strong work ethic and detailed market knowledge.

Poderski is a Florida native who spends his free time surfing and fishing. He earned dual bachelor's degrees from the University of North Florida in economics and finance.

## Jacksonville Symphony Associate Conductor receives award

Jacksonville Symphony Associate Conductor Kevin Fitzgerald has been selected as one of 22 conductors to



**Kevin Fitzgerald**

receive the 2023 Career Assistance Awards by The Solti Foundation U.S. Fitzgerald joined the Jacksonville Symphony in 2022. "These grants provide funding for young conductors to invest in their craft and to develop as artists and leaders," said Fitzgerald. "I would not be the conductor I am today without the support

of the Solti Foundation, and I encourage anyone who is interested in the future of classical music to support them in their mission. It's an honor to be selected once again."

The awards help provide monetary assistance to young conductors in the early stages of their careers for creative projects, educational endeavors, masterclasses and more. In addition to financial assistance, the awards also serve as conduits for the continued growth of the classical music genre. As a 2021 Tanglewood Music Center Conducting Fellow and now four-time recipient of Career Assistance Grants from The Solti Foundation U.S., Fitzgerald is at the forefront of the next generation of conductors. Recently, Kevin was invited as one of the 20 conductors to participate in the 2023 Mahler Competition with the Bamberg Symphony.

## Community Foundation for Northeast Florida Selects Next President

Following a nationwide search, the Board of Trustees of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida



**Isaiah M. Oliver**

(TCF) recently announced that it has unanimously selected Isaiah M. Oliver as TCF's new president, effective July 31.

Oliver will continue the foundation's focus on donor stewardship and strategic philanthropy that improves lives in the six-county Northeast Florida region. He will serve as the third president of The Community Foundation, stepping into the role after more than nine years at the Community Foundation of Greater Flint (Michigan), where he currently serves as president and CEO.



**Nina M. Waters**

Oliver will succeed TCF President Nina M. Waters, who retires after 22 years with the foundation. Under her leadership,

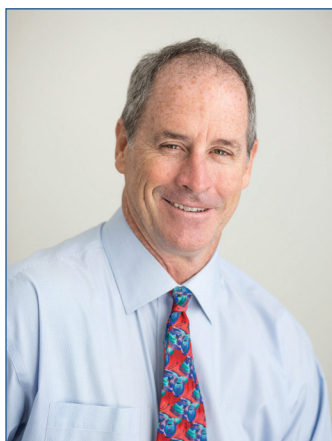
The Community Foundation has established itself as a premier philanthropic anchor institution, with more than \$1 billion in total gifts since its founding, an engaged network of 660-plus fundholders and donors, and a record \$57.7 million in grants distributed in 2022.

Oliver is a graduate of Flint Northwestern High School and earned his Bachelor of Applied Arts degree from Central Michigan University, where he now serves as chairman of the board of trustees.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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# Steps to take before applying for a mortgage

Mortgages are a vital component of home ownership for the vast majority of buyers. Mortgages are loans obtained through the conveyance of property as security. When homeowners pay off their mortgages, the title of the property officially transfers to them from their lenders. A host of factors affect mortgage terms, and there's much prospective homeowners can do to secure the best agreement possible.

• **Recognize why a low interest rate is important.** Mortgage interest rates have drawn considerable attention in recent years, as rising inflation has led to rates that have reached their highest point in more than a decade. Even a seemingly small difference in interest rates can save or cost homeowners thousands of dollars, if not tens of thousands, over the course of a loan. For example, the financial experts at Bankrate.com note that the difference between a 5.5 percent interest rate and a 6 percent interest rate on a \$200,000 mortgage is roughly \$64 per month. That might not seem like a lot, but over the course of a 30-mortgage the borrower who gets the 6 percent loan will pay in excess of \$23,000 more in interest than the borrower who secures the 5.5 percent loan.

• **Work on your credit score.** So how can borrowers get the best possible rate?

One way to go about it is to improve credit scores. Average mortgage interest rates vary significantly by credit score, with higher scores earning borrowers significantly lower rates. By bolstering their credit scores before applying for a mortgage, prospective homeowners can improve their standing in the eyes of mortgage lenders, which can potentially save them tens of thousands of dollars over the life of the loan.

• **Identify how much you want to spend.** Prospective home buyers may be approved to borrow much more money than they think they will qualify for. That's because lenders do not consider factors like utilities, insurance, day care, or other expenses everyone has. That means it's up to borrowers to determine how much those expenses will be, and how much they should be spending on a home. Though it might be tempting to borrow up to the amount lenders approve you for, in general it's best to stay below that amount so you can capably meet all of your additional obligations.

Mortgages enable millions of people to buy homes each year. Some simple steps before applying for a mortgage can help prospective homeowners secure the best terms.




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# In the Arts



Send your arts news to  
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THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023 • PAGE 26 www.PonteVedraRecorder.com



Photo credit: Noeth Films

Melissa Noeth, owner of The Art House



Photo credit: Rob Futrell Photo

The ceramics instructors at The Art House.



Photo credit: Noeth Films

Studio manager Mati Hutchins teaches a young student ceramics.

## The Art House celebrates new location to bring art to community

St. Augustine has long been home to a vibrant and diverse artistic community. With its countless galleries and a liberal arts college, the historic city has no shortage of artists. But there is a need for open studio space for the community and

consistent, accessible art classes where local artists, young and old alike, can share their skills and help shape the next generation.

Enter The Art House, a 2,000-square-foot space, with a grand opening 4-8 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 3, at 3920 A1A South in St. Augustine Beach.

“I wanted to create a space that I had wanted to see available in the community,” says Melissa Noeth, owner. “I wanted to start throwing pottery again after a long absence because I recognized that even though I didn’t consider myself artistic, I would definitely benefit from a creative outlet. And after the last few years, I’m betting I’m not the only one. I realized that St. Augustine didn’t have a place where the community and visitors could just drop by on a whim and start creating.”

The Art House will focus on two main purposes. The first is offering open studio space and a gathering place for beginners and artists to experiment with creative

expression. The second is to offer classes and workshops for those looking to try something new, and if they like it, utilize the open studio to practice their new skill set. The Art House will start with beginners’ classes in ceramics, watercolor painting and drawing as well as private lessons in woodburning and sewing. They will also offer multimedia classes for toddlers in the morning, older children after school and open studio time where families can paint pottery together.

Noeth said that another core reason for founding The Art House was local families.

“My husband, Jon, and I have been raising our three kids here, locally, over the past eight years,” she explained. “I wished there were more opportunities for kids to get involved with art and I hope this can be a gathering place where parents can bring their young kids to help keep them entertained and have fun.”

The Art House will also offer a small, curated collection of unique, locally made art, as well as art supplies and beverages for purchase such as cold brew coffee, kombucha, sparkling waters and, coming soon, beer and wine.

The Art House grand opening will feature demonstrations, live music, drinks and hors d’oeuvres and face painting. The studio is located at 3920 A1A South, Suite 8, St. Augustine Beach. The space will be available for private event rental on a limited basis outside of normal business hours.

The Art House offers art classes for all ages and open studio space for all experience levels. The studio is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, noon to 8 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

  
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# Women's Chorale open for auditions



Contributed photo

The North Florida Women's Chorale announces the new season, September 2023 to 2024. They are open for auditions during July and August. This season, the 35-voice women's choir will perform during December and May. There is a special opportunity to join the chorale on a trip to sing in Ireland in June 2024. Go to [womenschorale.org](http://womenschorale.org), North Florida Women's Chorale on Facebook, or email [kfradley@hotmail.com](mailto:kfradley@hotmail.com) to request an audition.

## ON STAGE

A roundup of musical acts appearing through Aug. 11 at local venues

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Purchase tickets at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre box office or [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

For further information about each act, go to [pvconcerthall.com/events](http://pvconcerthall.com/events).

- **Andrew McMahon In The Wilderness** — With special guest Flor. 7:30 p.m. July 18
- **A Gamble Rogers Festival Showcase featuring Willi Carlisle** — With special guests Remedy Tree and Aslyn and The Naysayer. 7 p.m. Aug. 5
- **Moon Taxi** — With special guests The Stews. 8 p.m. Aug. 11



Image from The St. Augustine Amphitheatre  
**John Fogerty will perform at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre on July 28.**

### ST. AUGUSTINE AMPHITHEATRE

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Box office hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets sold at the box office are available via credit- and debit-card only. A valid ID is required for all box office transactions and ticket purchases must be made in person.

Tickets may also be purchased at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com). For further information about each act, go to [theamp.com/events](http://theamp.com/events).

- **Apex Theatre Studio's Bard Bus presents "Twelfth Night"** — 7:30 p.m. July 14 and 15
- **Barenaked Ladies** — Last Summer on Earth 2023 — With special guests Five for Fighting and Del Amitri. 6 p.m. July 16

- **Young the Giant** — With Milky Chance. 6 p.m. July 20
- **Michael Franti & Spearhead** — Big Big Love Tour 2023 — With special guest Fortunate Youth. 6 p.m. July 23.
- **John Fogerty** — 7 p.m. July 28
- **Underoath & The Ghost Inside** — With support from We Came As Romans and Better Lovers. 6 p.m. Aug. 5
- **Counting Crows** — With special guest Dashboard Confessional. 6:30 p.m. Aug. 8
- **Stephen Marley** — Babylon By Bus Tour — With special guest Skip Marley and Artikal Sound System. 7 p.m. Aug. 11

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan

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**17** SEPTEMBER  
2023  
*String Quartet in A Major, Opus 18, No. 5* • Ludwig van Beethoven  
*String Quartet in E-flat Major, Opus 74 "Harp"* • Ludwig van Beethoven

NOVEMBER **19**  
2023  
*String Quartet, Opus 11* • Samuel Barber  
*String Quintet in G minor, K. 516* • Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

**28** JANUARY  
2024  
*String Quartet in D Major, K. 499* • Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
*Crisantemi* • Giacomo Puccini  
*String Quartet in E minor* • Giuseppe Verdi

FEBRUARY **25**  
2024  
*Langsamer Satz* • Anton Webern  
*Valencia* • Caroline Shaw  
*String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Opus 13* • Felix Mendelssohn

**07** APRIL  
2024  
*String Quartet in G Major, Opus 77, No. 1* • Joseph Haydn  
*String Quartet in F Major, Opus 41, No. 2* • Robert Schumann

JUNE **02**  
2024  
*Selected solo piano pieces*  
*Piano Quintet in F minor, Opus 34* • Johannes Brahms



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# Link announces summer schedule of camps, classes and events

*What's happening at the link this summer? Here's a look.*

## Coworking Space July Promotion

July is a great time to become a member at the link, which is offering a July promotion with coworking space on the secure second floor. Floating desks or dedicated desks for a six-month or 12-month term are \$100 off, and 24-hour access is available with app access on your phone. Contact Elaine Raby to schedule a tour or acquire a desk. Email [sales@thelink.zone](mailto:sales@thelink.zone)

## Kids Night Out — July 15

This very popular Kids Night Out program happens twice a month all year round. Kids make new friends while enjoying the PJ pizza party, movies, fun and games, arts and crafts and more. To book a spot, go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone). Member and non-member prices are available. Remember, Kids Night Out equals Parents Night Out.

## Immersive Dining Experience — July 16

The link is planning another in its series of Immersive Dining Experiences, this one featuring Congaree & Penn. The concept is fresh farm-to-table dining.

Enjoy the Southern Coastal menu inspired by various locations including the Caribbean, Georgia, South Carolina and New Orleans. This dining experience has limited seating and will sell out. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for menu details, chef bios and to book seats. Member and non-member prices are available.

## Summer Camps — Now through Aug. 7

Instructors are hosting various camps for the rest of this summer including full-day LEGO robotics and drones with Coach Ivan; culinary arts camps, both morning and afternoon sessions, with Chef Corrina; Sapna Creativity STEM camp for morning sessions with Miss Jo; and a three-day Olympic-style fencing camp with Coach Alan. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for more details, instructor bios and to book a spot. Available for members and non-members.

## Fitness/Strength Training — Saturday mornings

This 45-minute boot-camp-style workout focuses on building strength and cardiovascular conditioning with functional training movements using bodyweight and kettlebells. The workout is custom-



ized and modified to each participant's individual fitness level. The link will provide a small number of kettlebells; if you have your own, feel free to bring it. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for more details, instructor bios and to book a spot.

## Stretch & Sculpt — Monday afternoons

This popular Stretch & Sculpt class happens each week. It is a great class to tone and sculpt, promote body awareness while having fun at the same time. This audience-friendly class is included with link memberships and available on a drop-in basis for non-members. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for more details, instructor bio and to book seats.

## Drone Classes for Kids — Saturdays

This eight-week course follows a STEAM-ready curriculum. From coding a flight path to delivering pizza to planning a search-and-rescue mission, drones are helping make life's biggest challenges easier. Learn a new skill and become a remote "PIC" Pilot in Command. Fly UVA's missions to understand real-world applications and get ready to race obstacle courses. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for more details, instructor bio and to book spots. Drop-in dates are also available.

## Collisions & Coffee Networking Meetup — Aug. 2

Check out this very popular Networking Meetup on the first Wednesday of each month. Grab a cup of coffee and a

bagel and meet some new people in exciting industries. Fuel the entrepreneurial ecosystem in North Florida as you watch your business grow. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) to register for this free meetup.

## Level Up Dance Company — Starting early August/year round

LUDC at the link has wrapped up the summer camp program and now will start concentrating on the competition teams. Reilly and Maddie will start recreational dance and tumble classes in early August. Check out [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for class schedules, instructor bios and to book classes. All classes available to link members.

## Sparkle Cheerleading — Saturday mornings/year round

Join Coach Tiffany to perfect your cheer skills preparing for recreational school cheer, competition cheer or just for fun. Two different age groups: Little Cheerleaders and Middle School Cheerleaders. These year-round classes will help you take your skills to the next level. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for details, instructor bio and to register.

## Olympic-Style Fencing — Starting early August/year round

Coach Alan will be teaching twice at the link. Experience the thrill of swordplay and Olympic fencing in classes designed specifically for individuals with little or no prior experience. From beginners to intermediate, prepare for an

action-packed and enjoyable program that will introduce you to the fundamentals of this captivating sport. Check out the classes at [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone). All classes available to link members.

## Cosmic Soundbath sensory immersive experience — Aug. 13

This sound journey and sensory experience will be led by Julie of Wise Waves Wellness in the Flagler Health+ 360 Degree Immersive Studio at the link. This experience is 75 minutes in length. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) to reserve a spot. Open to members and non-members.

## Floral Design Workshop — Coastal Breeze — Aug. 17

Take in the coastal vibe with these flowers offering soothing shades of a seaside retreat. Whether you're a seasoned florist or a complete novice, this hands-on experience is perfect for anyone looking to learn something new and have some fun in the process. Bring along your favorite bottle of wine and a few glasses to share and get creative with a stunning array of flowers and foliage. Go to [app@thelink.zone](mailto:app@thelink.zone) for more details, instructor bio and to book spots. Available for members and non-members.

## the link Dog Festival/International Dog Day — Aug. 26

Details coming soon. Go to [thelink.zone](http://thelink.zone) and sign up for the eNewsLetter so you don't miss the announcement.

# Sports

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## Team USA gold medalists to host flag football camp

By Anthony Richards

Flag football continues to grow as a fun way to learn the game of football, especially for those at a younger age and for parents who want their children to learn the game of football without the complete physicality that's often associated with the sport.

There have already been several camps throughout the summer that have been offered for local St. Johns County children to take advantage of by St. Johns Flag Football & Agility Training, including the latest of which, that will take place July 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Veterans Park's turf field.

There are lots of aspects and techniques that can be covered through the game of flag football, and it can be a unique way of preparing players so that all they have to do is learn how to tackle once they get to the high school level.



Photo courtesy of St. Johns Flag Football & Agility Training

**St. Johns Flag Football & Agility Training is set to host its latest summer camp July 19 at Veterans Park.**

Flag football is something enjoyed no matter a child's age and no matter whether they are boys or girls, and St. Johns Flag Football & Agility Training is doing its part

to teach them the ins and outs of the sport.

One of the things the training outfit does is setting up camps with professional flag football players who have played the game

firsthand and understand what it takes to be successful.

The camp teachers will be the pair of Jamie Kennedy and Laval Davis, who are both a part of the USA flag football national team.

The camp will be unique because it will be a defensive back vs. wide receiver camp that will spend a lot of time working on the one-on-one battles that defensive backs and wide receivers encounter during a game.

Parents can register their children by emailing at [trainflag.com](mailto:trainflag.com), and the price of the four-hour camp is \$40 per child.

As members of the national squad, Davis is a two-time gold medalist and Kennedy is a gold medalist as well, which gives them a unique experience to pass along to the children attending the camp.

The two are recent gold medal winners after Team USA brought home the gold medal during a flag football tournament in North Carolina in early July.

## Premier Martial Arts hosts summer belt graduation

Photos courtesy of Premier Martial Arts



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Readers have nominated their favorite businesses, organizations, professionals and more in over 250 categories online. **Online voting begins June 12.** Readers can vote for their favorite business in each category once per day. **Help your favorites win and VOTE!**

[www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2023/index.html#//](http://www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2023/index.html#/)

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**Miscellaneous**

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NATIONWIDE WITH ONE BUY!**

## CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10				
11					12						13	14	15	
16					17				18					
19				20	21			22	23				24	
25						26						27		
28					29					30				
				31	32					33				
34	35	36	37						38					
39						40	41	42						
43					44						45	46	47	48
49					50					51	52			
53			54					55						
56		57					58					59		
60					61	62						63		
				64								65		

- ACROSS**
1. Database management system
  5. Medical procedures
  11. \_\_\_ Clapton, musician
  12. Defender
  16. Exert oneself
  17. Indicates position
  18. Prevents river overflow
  19. Atrocities
  24. Mister
  25. Ends
  26. Slope or tilt
  27. Taxi
  28. The very ends
  29. Actor Sean
  30. Japanese persimmon
  31. Sours
  33. Beneficiary
  34. Baseball official
  38. Muddy, boggy ground
  39. Not worldly
  40. Actress Lathan
  43. Soil
  44. \_\_\_-Cola
  45. Asleep
  49. \_\_\_ Angeles
  50. Give birth to a child
  51. Beach shelter
  53. Commercial
  54. Taste property
  56. Local jurisdictions
  58. It cools your home
  59. Dismounted from a horse
  60. Charge with a crime
  63. Close in
  64. Spoke
  65. Famed garden
- DOWN**
1. Draw a scene
  2. Its sultan is famous
  3. Unlucky accident
  4. A way to ski
  5. Abba \_\_\_, Israeli politician
  6. Saw
  7. "Westworld" actor Harris
  8. Belonging to me
  9. Shoelace tube
  10. Takes to court
  13. Early multimedia
  14. In a way, produces
  15. Bowlers
  20. Of I
  21. Equally
  22. Gets some sun
  23. A place to stay
  27. Town in Galilee
  29. Aronofsky film
  30. Klingon character, "Star Trek"
  31. Equal to 100 square meters
  32. Atomic #58
  33. Arrived extinct
  34. Loosen grip
  35. A distinctive odor that is unpleasant
  36. Membranes
  37. Some is poisonous
  38. Partner to Pa
  40. Small brown gray rail
  41. A salt or ester of acetic acid
  42. Sodium
  44. Military official (abbr.)
  45. Lighted
  46. Took off
  47. All
  48. Ohio city
  50. More abject
  51. A radio band
  52. Controversial tech product (abbr.)
  54. Monetary unit
  55. Passed with flying colors
  57. A way to win a boxing match
  61. The Golden State
  62. Home of the Longhorns

## SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

**Here's How It Works:**

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



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