RFCORD



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St. Johns homes still most costly

Thursday, October 19, 2023

By Shaun Ryan

Home ownership continues to be less attainable in St. Johns County than in any of the other five counties that comprise Northeast Florida.

According to the most recent report by the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR), St. Johns' housing affordability index for September was

The housing affordability index measures whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home. It's based on a number of factors: interest rates, median income and median home prices and presumes a 20% downpayment.

An index of 100 indicates that a family earning the median income has the exact

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

PonteVedraRecorder.com

Spell of creativity leads to witch broom business

By Anthony Richards

There are many crafty businesses that come about for the holidays, but one of the more creative ones is Demilune Brooms started by Yana Tarr, where she makes her own decorative witch brooms.

The idea to make brooms came about roughly five years ago after a couple of hurricanes came through the area in late September and early October and left a lot of debris and tree limbs in their wake.

For most people, that debris would result in angst having to clean it all up, but for Tarr and her creative mind, she saw it as an opportunity to do something different.

"I've always been crafty, and I remember seeing all that debris and sticks in the street, and I thought, 'I bet I could make some nice witch brooms out of that with my kids,' who at the time were about 10 and 3 years old. It was

BROOM continues on Page 10



Yana Tarr began making decorative witch brooms as part of her business Demilune Brooms about five years ago.

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Hugh Osteen

COO/VP

hugh@osteenmediagroup.com (904) 285-8831

Susan Griffin

Publisher

susan@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 686-3938

Shaun Ryan

Editor

shaun@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1202

Anthony Richards

Reporter

anthony@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1207

Don Coble

Contributor

don@claytodayonline.com

Amber Anderson

Page/Graphic Designer amber@pontevedrarecorder.com

April Snyder

Sales Assistant april@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1204

Kristin Flanagan

Account Executive kristin@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1206

Adele McGraw

Account Executive adele@pontevedrarecorder.com (904) 285-8831, ext. 1208

Chris Ratliff

Multimedia Specialist chris@osteenmediagroup.com (704) 640-8408

Joe Wilhelm

Circulation Manager joe@osteenmediagroup.com (904) 300-5374

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Visit our new website at **www.pontevedrarecorder.com**

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

BRIEFS

Treasures in the Trunk is Saturday

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will hold its fourth annual Treasures in the Trunk community sale to benefit local charities from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21, in the Coldwell Banker parking area, 240 Ponte Vedra Park Drive.

Net proceeds will benefit the Betty Griffin Center, BEAM, Port In The Storm, HUGS Across The County, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and college scholarships.

Shoppers will be able to buy from local artists, jewelers, gift shops and more.

Volunteers sought to help 'make a difference'

The St. Johns Housing Partnership will hold a countywide initiative on "Make a Difference Day," 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21.

The nonprofit will mobilize volunteers to spread out over St. Johns County to do exterior work on homes for veterans, the elderly or the disabled. Volunteers are needed for exterior house painting, yard clean up and to help build wheelchair ramps.

There is still time to sign up to volunteer or donate. Volunteer as an individual or family, or organize a team through a company, organization or church.

Call 904-824-0902, email info@sjhp.org, or go to sjhp.org.

Explore the Beach at GTM Research Reserve

The Guana Reserve will hold a beach exploration, 9-11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 21. Collect seashells, search for shark teeth and learn about coastal wildlife. Meet at GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Wear comfortable closed-toe shoes. Hat, insect repellent, water and sunscreen are recommended. The event is free but online registration is required. Register at gtmnerr. org/visit/events.

Alhambra managing partner to speak at luncheon

Coastal Friends will hold their monthly

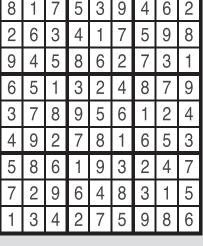
luncheon from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Nov. 1 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. The featured speaker will be Craig Smith, managing partner of The Alhambra Theatre and Dining.

The luncheon is open to members as well as the community and the menu consists of field green salad with dressing, turkey and gravy, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie with whipped

BRIEFS continues on Page 3









Homes

Continued from 1

amount needed to purchase a median-priced home. A value below 100 means the family does not have enough money. A value above 100 means it has more than enough.

The only county where the index was 100 was Putnam, the most affordable in Northeast Florida.

The indices of the other counties were: Duval, 76; Clay, 70; Nassau, 63; and Baker, 91

The median price for a single-family home in St. Johns County was \$536,493 in September, down 2.5% from August.

By comparison, the median prices for surrounding counties were: Duval, \$330,000; Clay, \$358,710; Nassau, \$395,000; Baker, \$275,000; and Putnam, \$255,000.

For those who cannot afford to buy, rents continue to pose challenges, as well.

RentCafe.com lists averages as of July. The average for St. Johns County was \$1,891 while the average for Duval County was \$1,537. The average in Ponte Vedra Beach was lower than the county's figure: \$1,826. But St. Augustine was higher, at \$1,928.

These averages do not account for the number of bedrooms, but a white paper on attainable housing released by the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce in September does break that down further.

That report found that a one-bedroom home had a median monthly rental price of \$1,623 at the time it was conducted. A two-bedroom home was \$1,795. A three-bedroom home was \$2,290, and a four-bedroom home was \$2,823.

The latest NEFAR report did find some indications that the housing market may be shifting slightly away from being solely a sellers' market.

In St. Johns County, the median days on the market rose 31.4% from August, and closed sales fell 12.1%. Meanwhile, pending sales rose by 1% and new listings rose 1.25%. Active inventory of

homes increased 8.7% to 1,642. This is a 4.2-month supply, which is greater than the low 3.1-month supply for all of Northeast Florida.

In Duval County, median days on the market rose 17.9%, while closed sales fell 13.5%. Pending sales were also down, by 15.1%. New listings increased 4.8%. Active inventory of homes increased 13.5% to 2,314. However, that indicates only a 2.7-month supply.

According to NEFAR, interest rate changes are impacting the decreasing affordable housing index figures in the region, as well as the increasing number of days on the market and a lower percentage of the asking price received.

Briefs

Continued from

cream. Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible. The deadline for \$25 checks to be received is Friday morning, Oct. 27.

Titanium Yoga plans Month of Giving

Each week during the month of November, Titanium Yoga in Ponte Vedra Beach will donate funds and supplies to local nonprofits. Donations from the community are welcome. Here's the schedule:

- Nov. 1-7, Pink Ribbon Jax [suggested donation \$300 = 1 mammogram]
- Nov 8-14, Friends of the Library [suggested donation \$20]
- Nov 15-23, BEAM [canned food drive from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.]
- Nov 24-30, The Jacksonville Humane Society [dog/cat food and supplies, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.]

For more information, go to titaniumyoga.com.

— Compiled by Shaun Ryan





Oceanfront Gem Built for Entertaining

Discover 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!

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Contemporary Oceanfront Oasis

Welcome to your contemporary oceanfront haven, a three-story masterpiece of design where privacy meets impeccable craftsmanship by the renowned local architect, Frank Shumer. This stunning property serves as a breathtaking backdrop for art enthusiasts and accommodates up to eight guests, making it perfect for family vacations or group getaways. Whether you're seeking a peaceful getaway or an artist's retreat, this beachside oasis offers the ideal setting for relaxing and entertaining.

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EnterCircle offers students a doorway to entrepreneurship

EnterCircle 2023 will invite students from four St. Johns County high schools to attend its Youth Symposium on Nov. 16. One of EnterCircle's goals is to cultivate entrepreneurship and educate students on the possibilities that exist locally and globally.

This year, students will hear from successful business leaders from a variety of industries on how they were able to "thrive with purpose" in their professional careers and personal lives.

Raghu Misra, founder of Sapna Foundation and the link, is dedicated to supporting the entrepreneurial pursuits of the youth in Northeast Florida.

"It is our duty and passion to pass on our practical knowledge and entrepreneurial life experiences to youth," Misra said. "We are excited to have students attend the youth symposium so they may learn from inspirational speakers."

To execute this mission to empower young entrepreneurs, Sapna Foundation has partnered with the St. Johns County School District to bring students to EnterCircle 2023.

Emily Harrison, director of career and technical education at St. Johns County School District, is excited to bring students to EnterCircle from the career academies of Ponte Vedra High, Pedro Menendez High, Bartram Trail High and Creekside High.

"Having EnterCircle with guest speakers gives another level of entrepreneurship interaction, and it gets students out into the field more and continues the conversation for longer. It makes the experience more enriching," Harrison said.

Speakers on this day of the summit aim to inspire the teens with topics and breakout rooms like how to find their purpose, design thinking and funding their business goals.

The inspiring lineup of speakers includes Father Rich Pagano of St. John Paul II; Nick Crouch, co-CEO of DYNE Hospitality Group; Scott Maynard, vice president of economic development, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce; Marc Montemerlo, senior recovery engineer at SpaceX; and more.

Harrison believes the speakers at En-



terCircle will offer valuable insights to the students that they can take with them into the rest of their careers.

"The interesting thing is that you never know when a speaker will say something that resonates," Harrison said. "People come back and say that this will be a defining moment. Any time we offer opportunities for guest speakers, you're hoping experiences will resonate with the students, and we hope that it will inspire them to continue with something."

Also on the agenda is a student pitch competition, where teams can pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges. From pitch to feedback, teams will have 15 minutes to share their vision.

EnterCircle has hosted an innovation competition for the past two years. Student teams developed a business plan and then pitched their ideas to judges, who offered feedback and tips for improving their products and pitches.

Some students took their ideas beyond the stage at EnterCircle by applying feedback from the judges and taking the next step toward making their project real.

"The competition gives students an opportunity to get feedback so that they can make adjustments to presentations and their ideas so that they can pitch it again," Harrison said. "EnterCircle became a third opportunity where they can get in front of judges and a crowd. That opportunity has now also translated to students filing patents. It's taking it to the next level."

More information on EnterCircle, the Youth Symposium and how to register for the pitch competition can be found on EnterCircle.zone.



ENTERCIRCLE 20 BUSINESS 23

November 15 at 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.



Unlock unparalleled networking opportunities at EnterCircle 2023 Business Expo, where exhibitors can connect with an exclusive gathering of philanthropists, industry leaders and award-winning entrepreneurs from Northeast Florida.



- > Cocktail for a Cause Networking: \$75
- ➤ Expo Table: \$150-\$250

 Includes networking admission and woman participants receive free admission to Women's Day Program on Nov. 17.
- Women's Day Expo: \$150

 For woman-owned businesses. Includes admission to program on Nov. 17.

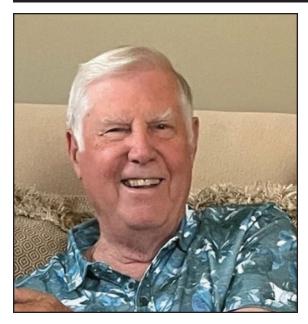


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OBITUARIES



David Grayson McLinden

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of our beloved husband, father and grandfather, David Gravson McLinden, who left this world on October 2, 2023, at the age of 85. He was born on August 17, 1938, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Dave was preceded into death by his parents, Fred and Phyllis McLinden, and his brother, Jeff McLinden.

His legacy will forever be cherished by his devot-

ed wife, Suzanne (Rimmel), two children, Michele (Jim) Evanger of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL and Daryl (Kristen) McLinden of Chanhassen, MN, and three adoring grandchildren, Morgan McLinden, Sydney and Carson Evanger.

Dave was a devoted family man. He was a loving and supportive husband, a caring father, and a wonderful grandfather. His presence was a constant source of comfort, and his wisdom was a guiding light in the lives of those he held dear.

Dave was a man of passion and wonder, known for his deep fascination with the world of transportation. His love for cars, trains, and airplanes was a lifelong source of joy. He maintained a constant positive attitude with everything he did and everyone he met.

A memorial service to honor Dave will be held on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights, Illinois. Please join us in celebrating the remarkable life of a man who touched our hearts and left an indelible mark on our lives. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations to be made in Dave's honor to the American Heart Association, or to a cause close to your heart.

Dave, you will be deeply missed but never forgotten. Your spirit will forever soar alongside the airplanes you cherished, ride the rails of the trains you adored. May you find eternal peace on your journey, and may your memory continue to inspire us all.

DEATH NOTICES

Cynthia Stovall Akre

Cynthia Stovall Akre, 96, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Oct. 12, 2023. Arrangements by Ouinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 www.quinnshalz.com.

Raymond Alexander

Raymond Alexander, 94, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Oct. 12, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery - 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.

David Lee Alexander, Sr.

David Lee Alexander, Sr., 92, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Oct. 5, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. 904-249-1100 www.quinnshalz.com.

Antionette Cammarata

Antionette Cammarata, 71, of Ponte Vedra, Florida, died Oct. 10, 2023. Ponte Vedra Valley

Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery - 904-285-1130 – www.pontevedravalley.

Carol Christine Cassetta

Carol Christine Cassetta, 69, of Hortense, Georgia, died Oct. 12, 2023. Arrangements by **Ouinn-Shalz Family Funeral** Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Edward Paul Keifer, Jr.

Edward Paul Keifer, Jr., 76, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Oct. 11. 2023. Arrangements by **Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral** Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

Rita MaeRabjohn-Fincher

Rita MaeRabjohn-Fincher,74, of Jacksonville, Florida, died Oct. 13, 2023. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home & Cremation Centre. www.quinn-shalz.com. 904-249-1100

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6 ONE OF USPonte Vedra Recorder · October 19, 2023

Carl Cricco is the CEO of K9s For Warriors and has had the role for the past year. Having grown up in the New York city area, he and his family enjoy all that the First Coast has to offer and helping K9s For Warriors continue to achieve its mission of providing support to veterans locally.

Carl Cricco

As told to Anthony Richards

Tell us a little about yourself and your background.

I was born and raised in Hoboken, New Jersey, and spent most of my life in the New York city area.

Prior to joining K9s, I worked at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum as a senior vice president of marketing, ensuring that the stories from that day were never forgotten.

Living just blocks from the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, that day left an indelible mark, as it did for many. I have spent much of my career ensuring Americans never forget 9/11.

At K9s For Warriors, I am committed to ensuring that those who fought in conflicts resulting from that day and others are also not forgotten.

Before taking on the role of chief executive officer, I was the chief marketing and development officer at K9s for two years, effectively sharing the incredible impact of the K9s' mission on both veterans and dogs, also increasing revenues by 70% in a one-year period.

I have spent the last 10 years in executive leadership, primarily in marketing, with previous work featured by the Wall Street Journal and Advertising Week.

Early in my career, I worked at leading media companies, including ABC News, and hold a B.A. from New York University and an M.B.A. from New York University Stern School of Business, where I specialized in marketing.

More than anything, I am a family man, spending my free time with my two sons and amazing wife, Emily.

How long have you been involved with K9s For Warriors?

Three years. Two as chief marketing and development officer and one as chief executive officer.

What are your goals and objectives as CEO of K9s For Warriors?

The mission of K9s For Warriors is simple – to end veteran suicide through the healing power of service dogs. My goal is to continue fulfilling that mission by pairing more highly trained service dogs with veterans in need.

Unfortunately, roughly 20 veterans die by suicide each day and we are determined to change that. Since our inception we have paired more than 900 veterans with lifesaving service dogs, but we have only just begun to reach the veterans in need.

Graduates of the program are able to live a life that they previously did not think was possible. Many have reunited

with their families, gone back to school, found renewed enjoyment in life, and significantly reduced their medications.

The number of total successful warrior/ K9 graduate pairs is the best indication of our success in fulfilling our mission, which is why we are laser focused on getting more highly trained service dogs in the hands of veterans. We are about to go into the last months of 2023, and we are on track to graduate 160 warriors/K9 pairs, which would be the most ever for any year in our history – a proud feat we are able to meet after the opening of our Davis Family Mega Kennel, allowing us to rescue and train more than double our capacity before.

By focusing on quality and efficiency, we are on track to graduate our 1,000th warrior in 2024, a huge milestone for the organization that was founded in 2011, just 12 years ago.

To do this we need enough high-quality dogs to pass their final skills test and become service dogs to meet this need. This demands cross-organization coordination regarding training, kennel space, quality dog procurement, and effective warrior pairing.

What are the most rewarding parts about your job?

It's hard to express just how impactful and rewarding this job has been for me and for so many others passionate about K9s For Warriors. I have witnessed first-hand how our service dogs save veteran lives.

Every time a warrior steps foot onto our campus, overcoming doubts about whether or not this program will work for them, I have the privilege to witness that doubt transform into hope the moment the warrior meets their new companion. In the following days and weeks, I see the burden many of our veterans have carried for years gradually fade away because there is nothing more disarming than the unconditional love and loyalty of a service dog.

The physiological changes service dogs bring about in our warriors enable them to thrive, while limiting or eliminating the need for pharmaceuticals that only help them cope. Ninety-two percent of our veteran graduates report a reduction in medication and 82% report a reduced suicidal ideation, according to a survey done by Flagler College.

By the end of their three weeks on campus, our warriors have slowly, but surely taken back control, no longer allowing their PTSD to dominate their lives.

Fast forward to a year or three after their time at K9s, I have the pleasure of witnessing how much these warriors and their families' lives have changed, the ac-



Contributed photo

Carl Cricco is CEO of K9s For Warriors.

complishments they've achieved, all with their battle buddy by their side. These moments fuel my passion for my job. They are the reason why I, along with everyone at K9s For Warriors, continue to fulfill the mission – to instill renewed hope and independence in those who sacrificed so much for us.

What are some of the aspects of the industry that are more challenging that you have to account for?

What we do here at K9s For Warriors is not easy and it's truthfully not cheap. With a majority of our dogs being rescues, our procurement team works tirelessly to find the best service dog candidates across the country.

We believe wholeheartedly that everyone deserves a second chance. If we can save the dog, and the dog then saves the veteran, that's two lives saved. Ultimately, to rescue, meticulously train, and pair a service dog with a veteran with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and/or military sexual trauma, it costs roughly \$30,000, but we provide that service dog at no cost to the veteran. We rely entirely on donations from those who believe in what we do.

What are some of the ways K9s For Warriors gets involved with the community?

Since we are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we simply could not do what we do without the outpouring of support and donations from countless businesses, fam-

ilies, and corporations across the country who believe in the power of service dogs.

From people in the community putting on events to benefit K9s For Warriors, to our incredible volunteers who cook meals for our warriors when they come and stay with us for three weeks, as well as our incredible corporate partners who help raise awareness and funds for us, we truly could not fulfill our mission without them.

To learn more about our mission or if you know a loved one who may benefit from a service dog, please go to k9sforwarriors.org.

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

As someone who grew up in the New York city area, I love having space and access to the beach. Before our move we lived in a five-story walk up with no elevator. The quality of life is much higher.

My two kids have a backyard with a pool. Living in North Florida is a complete change in my lifestyle, and I truly love it. My wife and I cook a lot of fish (from Kyle's) and get to the beach anytime we can.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Whether we're barbecuing at home or going to the beach, my free time is spent with my wife and two little boys. I also have a lot of siblings and extended family who are always visiting. Ultimately, I am a big family man.

Neuropathy TIRED OF LIVING WITH PAIN?



SYMPTOMS OF PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

- Burning
- Electrical shock
- Loss of hot and cold sensation
- Disrupted sleep
- Sensitive skin
- Balance problems
- Cramping in legs and feet
- Tingling
- Feeling of pebble in your shoe
- Feeling of walking on pins and needles
- Pain can be worse at night
- Muscle weakness
- Beccoming harder and harder to walk

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5:00pm (904) 977-2401

816 Highway A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach, FI 32082

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

Crotons

"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul." — Alfred Austin



Kathy Esfahani

By Kathy Esfahani

As fall nears, the colorful leaves of croton plants begin to stand out around Northeast Florida. Crotons ("crow-tun") are tropical plants known for their bright and varied foliage featuring hues of red, orange, yellow, green and pink. There are an unlimited number of shapes

and colors of croton leaves. These plants are easy to maintain and perfect for adding a splash of color to a landscape!

Crotons are perennials in the warm, humid climate of a tropical environment. Because they love the heat, they may lose their leaves in cooler temperatures, but they will typically recover as warm weather returns. Northeast Florida's climate supports these plants, but they can struggle if temperatures stay too cool for too long — a freeze lasting several days will cause crotons



Crotons in landscape

to drop their leaves and may kill the plants.

Crotons look stunning when grouped together! They can be planted to line a walkway or fence, surround a palm tree or accentuate an entryway. In a landscape, crotons grow well with ixora, hibiscus, loropetalum, podocarpus and viburnum. Crotons are also successful in containers and can be potted to add interest to a patio, porch or pool area.

Consider the space available when selecting croton plants. There are dwarf varieties and also larger options that can grow up to 10 feet tall. When planting crotons, space the plants two to three feet apart. Crotons are well-suited to areas of full and/or shifting sun, but some varieties can tolerate partial shade. A reliable light source will allow the plant to develop and maintain its vibrant colors. Remember to water crotons regularly, but be very careful not to overwater. The plant needs water if the soil is dry to the touch or new leaves begin to wilt. The most popular croton varieties in Northeast Florida

Photos provided by Kathy's Creative Gardens & Nursery



Croton

are the "Mammy" and "Petra" crotons.

Although crotons can be a wonderful addition to a landscape, they can be dangerous to curious children or pets! All parts of these plants are poisonous to humans and animals, particularly the seeds. In addition, the milky substance that oozes from a damaged croton can be irritating to the skin. Careful consideration of placement can allow safe use of this beautiful plant.

Happy planting!

Flower of the Week: Croton

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





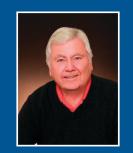


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Demilune Brooms started as a fun family project, and Tarr's family continues to be deeply involved.



Photos by Anthony Richards

Tarr creates a variety of broom styles, including doing customized orders.

Broom

Continued from 1

something we could all do together as a family."

The grassroots family fun project quickly captured Tarr's passion for creativity and next thing she knew she was touring up and down the neighborhood to find sticks that would have the best potential of becoming a witch broom. "I ended up going absolutely manic that year and made like 30 of them for friends and family, because they were just really easy and weren't refined at all at that time and it was something that I could just throw together and make a bunch," Tarr said.

Over the years, Tarr has developed not just her styles but the approach she puts into the process of designing each broom.

"It has just kind of evolved, and by

the third year I started doing some popup booths at some smaller markets," Tarr said.

Since then, she has done Riverside Arts Market and recently has focused solely on Comic-Cons coming to the local area.

Part of that evolution in the process includes the way she goes about sourcing the wood for her broom handles; she no longer searches around for limbs in the neighborhood, but now she has a deal with someone in Tennessee that grows, cuts and ships the wood to her as blank branches.

"I was putting a lot of effort finding the sticks on my own and then treating them with natural pesticides, debarking them, sanding them and painting them," Tarr said. "It definitely saves me so much time and I can count on the consistency of my brooms being there."

However, one thing that has not changed is how much Tarr enjoys doing it and the reasons she started doing it in the first place.

"We have a ton of kids in the neighborhood, and they all just love it," Tarr said. "They call me the 'broom lady' and my son just loves to brag about how his mom is a witch, and I can't deny

it because I do have a garage full of brooms."

One of the things Tarr is proud of is that her brooms go far beyond Halloween and the fall months, and she can make custom brooms that people can hang up and enjoy as a decorative piece in their house all year long.

"For example, I had a friend recently reach out to me and ask if I could design her a coastal style broom, so, like aqua and beige colors with seashells or starfish in it," Tarr said. "I had never thought of doing that before, but I made it and realized how beautiful it is, so I started making more of them. It doesn't necessarily have to be a Halloween or harvest theme."

Tarr's company slogan is "a pumpkin lasts a season, but a broom lasts forever," and that is reflective in the array of decorative styles that her brooms can

Looking to the future, Tarr wants to continue to focus on attending her share of Comic Cons, as she has found that Harry Potter fans are fascinated with what she is doing.

To see her selection of various brooms or to place a custom order, go to the Demilune Brooms page at etsy.com.



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Recorder





Schemitz speaks about relationship violence on Ponte Vedra swim senior day

By Anthony Richards

The Ponte Vedra High swimming and diving team hosted its last regular season swim meet on Oct. 7 with Nease and Beachside High Schools also taking part.

The meet was senior day for Ponte Vedra High and included several festivities, including Madison Schemitz speaking with the three teams and their parents before the meet.

Schemitz shared her story and information about the One Love club that she started at Ponte Vedra High with the goal of helping raise awareness of relationship violence and what to look for.

"My name is Madison Schemitz, and as many or all of you know, this past summer I became a survivor of dating violence," Schemitz said. "I was stabbed 17 times resulting in a spinal cord injury that left me paralyzed from the chest down."

It was her tragic experience that led her to develop a partnership with the One Love Foundation, which is a nonprofit organization that was created by Sharon Love, whose daughter Yeardley Love was tragically killed by her ex-boyfriend at



Contributed photo

Madison Schemitz spoke about relationship violence awareness during the Ponte Vedra High swimming and diving team's senior day on Oct. 7.

the University of Virginia in 2010.

"They empower young people with the tools and resources they need to see the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships and bring life-saving prevention education to their communities," Schemitz said. "My goal is to help spread awareness of abuse throughout our community. You never know what people are going through. It's more than just romantic relationships, it's friends, families, parents, teachers, coaches and so on. One Love doesn't just provide you the education of what to do if you're experiencing

firsthand abuse, but also how to help someone else see the signs of it."

With October also being domestic violence awareness month, Schemitz has been making speaking appearances

SCHEMITZ continues on Page 13



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Schemitz shared her story and information about the One Love club that she started at Ponte Vedra High with the goal of helping raise awareness of relationship violence and what to look for.

Schemitz

Continued from 12

at various stops, including one at the University of North Florida as she strives to create awareness for those in college as well as for those in high school.

"My goal is to be here for as many people as I can be. Having the proper education could save a life. If you aren't yet a part of One Love at Ponte Vedra and are looking to, any and all are welcome. If you are looking to start a One Love chapter at your high school, I encourage you to do so. All of their information is on One Love's website, if you're interested in learning more about how you can get involved. Thank you all for having me, listening and learning more about One Love's mission. Happy senior night and Go Sharks!"



Contributed photos

She has also shared her message of awareness at other events, including one at the University of North Florida.

Schemitz has received much support from the community since her incident, with many using #madisonstrong on their social media platforms in order to show their support.

A gofundme account was created and remains in effect for anyone in the community looking to help Schemitz and her family as they continue to pay off the doctor bills that they accumulated following the incident.

Residents can go to www.gofundme. com/f/help-for-madison-schemitz-and-family to donate to the cause and help them as they continue to recover from that difficult day.

Schemitz is not allowed to give interviews due to the ongoing investigation but gave her permission for The Recorder to use the quotes in the story, which were part of the statement she shared during senior day.

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GUEST COLUMN

A community responds to terrorism

By Kellie Smith

On Monday evening, Oct. 9, the Northeast Florida community gathered for a vigil on the University of North Florida's campus to pray for and mourn victims after a surprise terrorist attack on Israel was carried out by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023 — during the celebration of the Jewish holiday Simchat Torah — causing carnage on both sides.

On Tuesday evening, Oct. 10, our community came together once again to stand united with our friends and

family in Israel at the Solidarity with Israel Community-Wide Gathering hosted at the Jacksonville Jewish Center; 875 individuals attended in person and the over 200 viewers watched the livestream online.

On Friday, Oct. 13, the Martin J. Got-

tlieb Day School organized a fundraiser, asking for donations in return for baked goods, wristbands and blue ribbons in support of Israel. The students will also be making cards and sending notes of support to soldiers.

Throughout the week, as we have painstakingly watched devastating tragedies unfold overseas, we have witnessed people of all religions, races and ethnicities from across the city of Jacksonville come together to support Israel and to combat hate-fueled terrorism.

In the wake of the horrific events in Israel, many have expressed concerns about their security and safety here in our own community, especially that of our children. Since the terrorist attacks on Oct. 7, Jacksonville, St. Johns and Clay County sheriff's offices have added additional patrols to all Jewish facilities and schools. The Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida and the Secure Community Network (SCN) are in constant communication with state, local and federal law enforcement officials regarding the tracking and evaluation of credible threats and all are being taken extremely seriously.

Community Security Director Alex Silverstein has been made aware of propaganda circulating on the internet and social media which calls for the targeting of the Jewish community with violence. All such threats have currently been determined to be unfounded but will continue to be closely followed — not only in relation to the terrorism occurring this past week, but in the overall rise in domestic antisemitism this past year.

This form of emotional terrorism

TERRORISM continues on Page 16

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TERRORISM

Continued from 14

is meant to deter us from our daily routines, activities, and adversely affect our emotional stability. This is hard to hear at a time like this, but if we allow them to intimidate us into not living our lives, they have won without firing a shot.

Let us show the power of our Northeast Florida Community by responding and leading with unity, with strength, with support and with love. This is not about sides; it's about humanity. You don't have to be Jewish. You don't have to be Israeli. As mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, brothers and sisters, collectively, our hearts yearn for non-violence.

Our community members, friends and family in Israel are in our hearts and minds as we send our thoughts and prayers for those who have been killed and injured, their grieving loved ones, and all who are still in harm's way. Together, with a shared belief in peace and justice, Northeast Florida can work together to create a beacon of hope for Israel, for innocent Palestinians and the many others affected by these heinous acts of terror.

What you can do to help:

Our local Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida's 2023 Israel Emergency Fund is supporting many of the greatest needs in Israel right now, including:

- Providing cash assistance to families of those who have been killed, wounded or kidnapped through the Jewish Agency's Victims of Terror Fund.
- Funding flights to bring Israelis traveling overseas back home to Israel to assist in humanitarian aid, security efforts and the rebuilding of destroyed infrastructure.
- Relocation support to people from the southern and northern border towns.
- Providing medical equipment to public hospitals in the south of Israel including Soroka Medical Center in the Negev, which to date has received nearly 800 wounded soldiers and civilians, and Barzilai University Medical Center, which sustained a rocket attack that caused significant damage. Despite this, they have treated more than 530 wounded to date.
- Supporting civilian organizations conducting emergency operations and recovery efforts, including Magan David Adom and United Hatzalah, which have treated thousands of victims of terror and have quickly depleted supplies that were meant to be used over months and not mere days. Also, Zaka, the only organization authorized by the Israeli police to identify and handle the

bodies of victims.

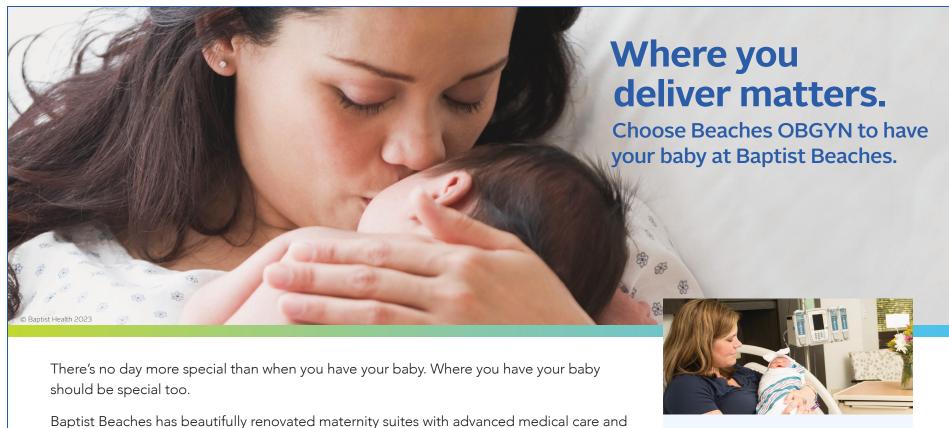
Please visit www.jewishjackson-ville.org/2023israelemergencyfund to donate.

Additionally, please mail in cards and/or drawings of support to their local office. They will be scanning in everything they receive and distributing them via care packages on the ground in Israel. The address is Jewish Federation & Foundation of Northeast Florida, 8505 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32217.

Other vital and trusted organizations that are mobilizing on behalf of Israeli:

- American Jewish Joint Distribution
 Committee (www.jdc.org)
- Magen David Adom Emergency Response (www.mdais.org)
- United Hatzalah Emergency Medical Response (www.israelrescue.org)
- The Jewish Federations of North America (www.jewishfederations.org)
- The Jewish Agency for Israel and Fund for Victims of Terror's Emergency Fund (www.jewishagency.org)
 - IsraAID (www.israaid.org)
- Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (www.fidf.org)
- Hadassah (www.hadassah.org)
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FLORIDA MAN GAMES A CRAZY NEW SPORTS COMPETITION

Fluff up your mullet, pull on your best pair of jorts and abandon all rational thought with an all-new event that promises to be the wildest competition sporting event on Earth. The Florida Man Games are coming to Francis Field in downtown St. Augustine on Feb. 24 and will feature the most unconventionally talented people around.

"These games are just like the Florida Man headlines," says Pete Melfi, festival organizer and owner/ founder of St. Augustine-based news outlet The 904 Now. "As someone who covers Florida news, you think you've seen it all, and then something comes along that still manages to surprise you! I thought, let's embrace this and make it fun. This is a legal way for all to enjoy the Florida Man lifestyle. And we're doing some good while we're at it."

The Florida Man Games will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, at Francis Field, 25 W. Castillo Drive in downtown St. Augustine. The festival features a host of crazy and irreverent games, including the Evading Arrest Obstacle Course; A Catalytic Converter, Two Bikes, And A Handful Of Copper Pipes Race Against Time; and Beer Belly Sumo Wrestling, to name a few. The festival will also feature entertainment like a mullet contest, as well as cultural demonstrations featuring alligators, datil peppers, SWAT



vehicles and more.

The Florida Man Games will benefit the Jimmy Jam Community Outreach, a local 501(c)(3) that helps local residents in need. Tickets are currently avail-

able for purchase. Field tickets cost \$45 per person and are limited. For the true Florida Man experience, grab VIP tickets at \$145 per person that guarantees reserved bleacher seating during the games, plus drinks, climate-controlled VIP area and restrooms and celebrity meet & greets. For an additional \$50, festivalgoers can get a selfie and an autograph with the esteemed judges.

"With a competition this off-the-walls, we knew we needed some refs that were used to wild situations," said Melfi. "Who better than the hardest-hitting former American Gladiators in the game: Dan "Nitro" Clark and Lori "Ice" Fetrick? As crazy and wild as this all sounds, these will be some intense games! Our competitors will have to really let their inner Florida Man loose."

Tickets for The Florida Man Games are on sale now. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to thefloridamangames.com.

Looking to compete? Teams of five can sign up for a chance to compete at the games — only those with peak Florida Manliness (and Womanliness!) will be considered. Teams must consist of five members, and all must be 18 years of age or older, with at least one being 21 years of age or older. To sign your team up, go to thefloridamangames.com/about-4.







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Pink Ribbon Jax prepares for soiree Oct. 21

By Anthony Richards

Pink Ribbon Jax has its sights set on raising awareness for breast cancer by promoting screenings and raising money to provide free mammograms throughout the year, but October is probably it busiest with it also serving as breast cancer awareness month.

The all-volunteer nonprofit organization's biggest fundraiser is the Pink Ribbon Soiree and the 2023 event is scheduled for Oct. 21 beginning at 7 p.m.

As has been the case in the past, the event's presenting sponsor is Fields Auto Group and it will be held at Jaguar Land Rover Jacksonville located at 11217 Atlantic Blvd.

Proceeds from ticket sales of the event go toward supporting Pink Ribbon Jax's ongoing mission to help eliminate breast cancer by offering free mammograms to those living locally that cannot otherwise afford it.

The organization's free mammogram program is made possible through a partnership with Baptist Health and the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville.

Tickets for the event are \$250 and cocktail attire is recommended to be



The Acosta Bridge lit pink.

worn by all those attending. Go to pinkribonjax.org and search the events tab to buy tickets for the soirce.

The fun elegant evening will include a toast to "warriors in pink," which are all those who have battled and are currently battling breast cancer in attendance.

Both silent and live auctions will be held on the night, as well as drawings that will serve as other means of raising funds for the cause.

Pink Ribbon Jax's 2023 goal is to

raise enough money to fund 1,500 mammograms for uninsured women and men. Each mammogram costs about \$300.

Although the fundraiser is the organization's largest of the year, they have shown an ability to bring the community together to support the cause.

There is none more evident than Pink Ribbon Jax's "light Jax pink," in which they worked with the City of Jacksonville and private corporations to



Photos courtesy of Pink Ribbon Jax

San Marco Lions Fountain took part in helping Pink Ribbon Jax spread the word of breast cancer awareness during October.

shine pink lights on their buildings and bridges during the week of Oct. 1-8.

Some of the participants in this year's "light Jax pink" campaign, were Maxwell House, Dailey's Place, the San Marco Lions Fountain, the Acosta Bridge and Atlantic Beach city hall.

Noc'n Out Breast Cancer donates \$20k to DONNA Foundation



Contributed photo

Noc'n Out Breast Cancer presented a \$20,000 check donation to Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan and The DONNA Foundation during the DONNA 5k at TPC Sawgrass on Oct. 7.

Painting With a Twist teams up with Pink Ribbon Jax



Photo courtesy of Pink Ribbon Jax

Painting With a Twist in Ponte Vedra Beach hosted a Pink Ribbon Jax fundraising event that raised donations for free mammograms as well as promoting awareness through a fun social event.



Here's a look at a few fun local autumn and Halloween events coming up soon.

Halloween Harvest in Nocatee

The theme of this week's Farmers Market in Nocatee is Halloween Harvest. Sponsored by Lovelace Family Dentistry, there will be kids' crafts, vendors, live music from STR8UP and more. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21.

Trunk or Treat event is Sunday

Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns will host a free Trunk or Treat Boo Bash from noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 22, at 205 Trinity Way, St. Johns.

There will be candy, prizes, food trucks, face painting and more. Costumes are encouraged. Don't forget to bring a treat bucket.

Fall Festival to offer fun for the whole family

There will be food trucks, live music, a bounce house, hayrides and more during the St. Francis Fall Festival, which will start at 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 22, at

The Hope Pavilion, 895 Palm Valley Road, Ponte Vedra. Sponsored by Smart

Hastings plans Fall Festival of Art

The inaugural Hastings Main Street Fall Festival of Art will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 25, at the Historic Stanton Ford Building, 301 N. Main St. and surrounding areas in downtown Hastings.

This collaboration between Hastings Main Street and the St. Augustine Art Association promises a fusion of artistic expression, cultural celebration and community engagement. There will be food trucks, live music, vendors, a kids' zone and lots of art.

Railroad historian and author Dr. Seth H. Bramson will discuss "The Florida

East Coast Railway: America's Speedway to Sunshine for Over 125 Years." Also, two of the original Highwaymen artists, R. L. Lewis and Curtis Arnett, will give live art demonstrations and make guest appearances.

Admission to the juried art show is \$1.

Admission to the Outdoor Fall Festival is free. For more information, go to hastingsfl.org/festival-of-art.

- Compiled by Shaun Ryan





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22 SCHOOL IS COOL Ponte Vedra Recorder · October 19, 2023



Ponte Vedra High School's theatre department will perform their version of "Romeo and Juliet" Oct. 19-23.



Photos by Anthony Richards

A unique twist will include performing "Romeo and Juliet" in a rock-and-roll version.

PVHS set to rock'Romeo and Juliet'

By Anthony Richards

The story of "Romeo and Juliet" is a classic, but the Ponte Vedra High School theatre department is set to put their spin on the production, and it involves rock and roll.

The play will be performed in a five-day stretch from Oct. 19-23, with showtime set for 7 p.m. each of the days,

except for Oct. 22 when it will begin at 2 p.m.

Many of the students involved in the play believe that their rock-and-roll version will add a new element to the age-old tale and be something that the audience will appreciate and gravitate to.

"The whole rock-and-roll take has been so much fun, because when you typically think of a Shakespearean play, it can seem kind of grueling to do on stage, but this has been such a blast," said Cairo Maughan, playing Lord Capulet.

When theatre teacher Jason Nettles first introduced the idea, freshman Leina Warren, playing Juliet, was intrigued by what she was hearing and was just as excited to see how it all comes together as she believes the audiences will be.

"I like it a lot, because he's allowed the audience to be more engaged," Warren said. "I've found that sometimes when people are going to a classical Shakespeare show it is a very similar audience a lot of the time, but I think if you're trying to put on, especially a high school production, it has to cater to a lot of various audiences. I feel like the costumes and the music and dancing will capture a wider range."

Despite the modernization with the rock-and-roll theme, the old language associated with the time period of Shake-spearean plays is being kept, so that it maintains that form of authenticity.

According to Maughan, it turned out to be a perfect mix of both new and old vibes.

"It is very unique, but also very original at the same time," Maughan said.

The production is something that takes months of work and planning behind the scenes to make happen, from the lines and dance moves having to be learned by those acting on stage to the frantic stage setup that takes place behind the curtain from scene to scene.

No one understands the hard work and dedication that goes into making it happen more than those who are entrenched in the process.

However, all that work is also what makes opening night and each production so memorable.

"It makes you feel so proud because it's something that you've been working on for such a long time, and now you reach the point where it's done and ready to be presented," said Rigel Gruberg,



The performance has been in the works with planning and preparation for the past couple of months

who plays Tybalt. "It's a lot of fun to be up there collaborating with your friends like this."

Gruberg is one of many students that have been a part of the theatre department since freshman year, and looking back, the senior credits his time in the department for who he has become as a person over the past several years.

"Acting has caused me to grow so much as a person," he said. "A lot of school is very factual, but acting is one of those things that also requires you to gather an emotional intelligence because you have to be able to put yourself into a character's shoes. It allows you the opportunity to see how other people behave the way they do and in turn look closer at yourself and why you do the things you do."

Although Warren is a freshman, she has her share of experience to lean on, having been in past productions in seventh and eighth grades.

However, this is by far the most predominant role she has had, and with that comes more lines to learn, but it is something that she knew going in and believes that she has put in the work at home to study the script and is confident her efforts will come to fruition when it's showtime.

"The amount of lines is quite crazy, but it's awesome because I've always really had a love for Shakespeare," Warren said. "I'm so happy I got picked for this role, and I'm ready for the lights to shine."





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Publix donates \$37K to support **INK!'s Tools 4 Schools program**

The St. Johns County Education Foundation Inc., which operates as Investing in Kids (INK!), has received a donation of \$37,187.84 from Publix Super Markets Inc. to benefit the nonprofit's Tools 4 Schools program.

Barry Rickelman, Publix district manager, along with representatives from the management teams at local Publix retail stores, recently presented Cathy Newman, INK! executive director, and staff members the charitable contribution.

"Publix is honored to support INK!'s efforts to help provide school supplies to students in need so they can focus on what's most important, learning," said Hannah Herring, Publix media relations manager. "We are grateful to our customers and associates for their generous giving, which made this donation possible."

According to a 2023 national survey conducted by AdoptAClassroom.org, on average, teachers across the country each spend \$860 of their own money to purchase school supplies for students and classrooms. The purpose of INK!'s Tools 4 Schools program is to minimize expenses for educators and provide the

academic supplies necessary for success with a goal of serving approximately 3,200 teachers and 51,000 students countywide.

"We greatly appreciate this donation from Publix and Publix customers," said Newman. "During the 2022 to 2023 school year, Tools 4 Schools filled more than 1,950 supply orders for public school classrooms in St. Johns County saving teachers approximately \$130,000 in out-of-pocket costs to provide materials for their students. The donation from Publix will fund the purchase of much needed educational supplies for teachers and students throughout the county."

INK! launched the Tools 4 Schools program 14 years ago to provide public school teachers in St. Johns County access to free school supplies for their students. Teachers can order needed supplies online directly from INK! during the school year. Once an order is received, volunteers fill each order and deliver items to the teacher's school. During the last two school years, teacher supply orders have increased by 40% each year. For the 2023-24 school year,



Publix Super Markets Inc. recently donated more than \$37,000 to INK! for school supplies.

INK! projects the savings to teachers will be approximately \$150,000.

INK! promotes success for all St. Johns County public school students and teachers by providing innovative programs, teacher support and classroom resources to benefit more than 51,000 students

and approximately 3,200 teachers. INK! is a 501(c)3 education foundation with offices located at 1 Christopher St. in St. Augustine.

For more information, contact Newman at catherine.newman@stjohns.k12.fl.us or 904-547-7120 or go to ink-stjohns.org.

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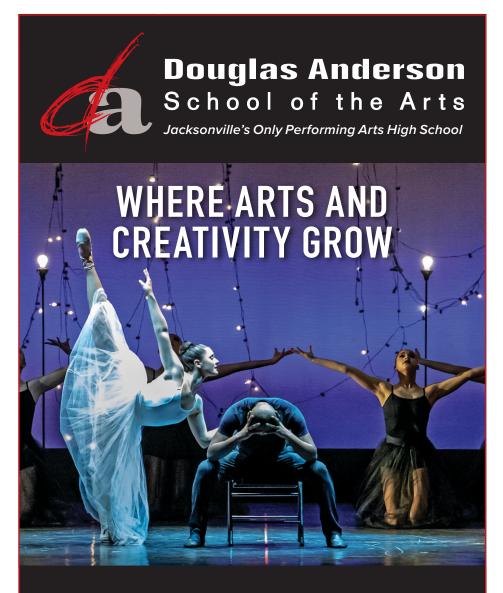
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Contributed photos

Cultures, community celebrated at Bolles

The Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus held its third annual International Festival on Oct. 11, with 12 families offering presentations about 10 countries, cultures and international experiences.

The day began with a globally focused opening ceremony in George Hall, which included the introduction of the students and parents who would be sharing their cultures. Grade five students also sang the traditional Spanish language folk song "De Colores," led by lower school language teacher Linda Farber, and the entire student body enjoyed a colorful performance by dancers from the Venezuela Marka Foundation.

Then, the students began 20-minutes rotations through campus classrooms, visiting the parent cultural presenters who shared demonstrations with students throughout the rest of the morning.

International Festival presenters and the countries/cultures they represented included: the Zuluaga family, Mexico; the Barakat family, Egypt; the Prado/ Iuliano families, Italy; the Kalinski family, Ukraine; the Kahanda family, Sri Lanka; the Singh family, Germany; the Johnson family, Chile; the Jenkins family, Louisiana; the Lebow family, Hungary; the Zucconi family, Italy; and the Gruenbaum family, Israel.









Contributed photo

Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus students prepare to welcome the USS Detroit.

Bolles students welcome home USS Detroit

During Bolles Homecoming Week, students on the Middle School Bartram Campus took part in a different kind of Homecoming activity — celebrating the return of the USS Detroit (Littoral Combat Ship 7) to Naval Station Mayport.

Bolles middle school math teacher Ashlyn Watson organized the students as they made patriotic posters and gathered Gatorade, water and snacks for the Sept. 27 military homecoming celebration, where she welcomed her husband Lt. John Watson home from deployment.

According to Lt. Watson, the USS Detroit is the sixth ship of the namesake for the city of Detroit, Michigan, and is commanded by Commander Kyle Hickman. The current crew of the USS Detroit has proven themselves to be one of the most successful crews in the history of the LCS program. On the morning of Sept. 29, the USS Detroit became the fifth LCS to decommission from active service in the United States Navy.



Contributed photo

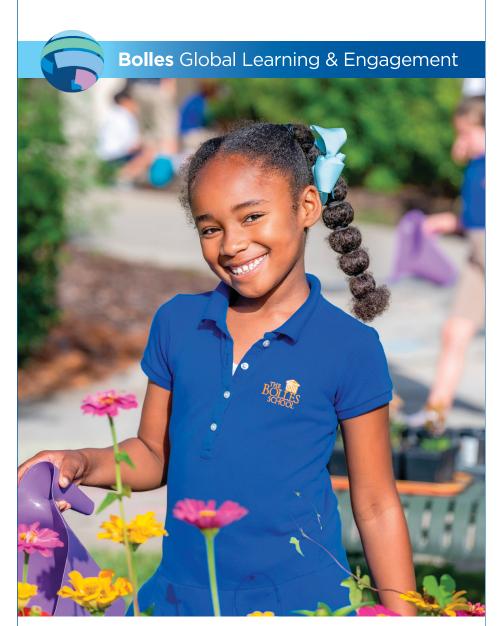
Meteorologist Garrett Bedenbaugh speaks to third grade students at Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus.

Meteorologist speaks to Bolles third graders

Action News Jacksonville meteorologist Garrett Bedenbaugh stopped by the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus on Oct. 10 to speak with grade three students about what it takes to become a meteorologist.

Students listened excitedly to Bedenbaugh's presentation, in which he discussed the different career paths of those who study meteorology and said he knew he wanted to become a meteorologist when he was in third grade. Bedenbaugh also gave the Bulldogs insight into what a day in the life of an on-air forecaster looks like, from reading and interpreting data to delivering information to audiences using a green screen.

Ponte Vedra Beach Head Stacey Hendershot joined lower school teachers Amy Coles '98 and Pam Ganiel for his visit. Forecast says sunny skies for future meteorologists in attendance!



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Learn more about Bolles GL&E program





Bolles.org

Pre-K through Grade 12, Day & Boarding School

Ximenez-Fatio House Museum receives grant

The Ximenez-Fatio House Museum in St. Augustine has been awarded a Small Museum Grant from the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS). It will allow the museum staff to develop a process of research and analysis of its current marketing and promotion process. The end goal is to create a state-of-the-art marketing and promotion plan that will continue to evolve with the museum over time.

This will help us to determine what is benefiting the museum's goals, what is new and successful in the media world today and what will best suit the museum to increase awareness. increase guest visitation and increase donor support and participation for the sustainability of the museum," said Payson Tildon, executive director. "The museum is grateful and excited for this opportunity to work through the IMLS in order to develop staff skills in communication, digital promotion and utilization of the best media methods to ensure the continued success of our museum."

The Ximenez-Fatio House Museum was completed in 1798 by Spanish merchant Andrés Ximenez, made of coquina stone. It became a boarding house throughout the 1800s, owned and operated by women. The National Society



of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Florida purchased the property in 1939 and began the decades-long process of meticulously restoring and furnishing the home with the intent of making it a historic house museum. The Dames still own and operate the museum today.

"As pillars of our communities, libraries and museums bring people together by providing important programs, services and collections. These institutions are trusted spaces where people can learn, explore and grow," said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. "IMLS is proud to support their initiatives through our grants as they educate and enhance their communities."

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NOVEL GIFTS FOR BRIDESMAIDS

Brides- and grooms-to-be select people who are near and dear to their hearts to be special parts of their momentous days. So the chance to participate in a friend's or family member's wedding is a great honor.

A wedding party plays a key role in both the ceremony and reception. Participants do everything from helping couples make decisions to addressing invitations to providing emotional support. As so much is asked of the wedding party - particularly the maid/matron of honor and bridesmaids - it's customary to bestow gifts on those people who devoted so much time and effort to the wedding. These potential bridesmaid gifts can serve as a thoughtful and unique to way to thank bridesmaids for all that they've done.

- Photo books: Gift the bridesmaids with photo books of carefully curated photographs taken throughout the wedding planning experience. Pepper the books with other photos, such as images of you with the bridesmaids at fun moments throughout your lives together.
- Portrait wine or champagne glasses: Beverage glasses customized with the bridesmaids' likenesses painted or printed onto them make for great gifts. Bridesmaids will enjoy sipping their



favorite drinks in special glasses for years to come.

- Personalized phone cases: Who doesn't rely on their mobile phones these days? Treat your bridesmaids to something special with colorful phone cases with their names embossed or printed on the outsides.
- Wellness or spa gift card: After all of the running around for the wedding, bridesmaids may need a little extra pampering. Gift cards to a local spa can fit the bill.
- Birthstone jewelry: Necklaces, rings or earrings become that much more special when they're customized to the recipients. Purchase jewelry with your bridesmaids' birthstones so they'll be as unique as each woman.
- Friendship bracelets: Gift each bridesmaid with beaded friendship bracelets that features all of the ladies' initials. Be sure to keep one for yourself, and you all can enjoy nights on the town showcasing your special bracelets.
 - Monogrammed robes or purses: A

customized pocketbook, robe or another item bridesmaids will use every day can make for an extra-special item that will serve as a daily reminder of how much you appreciate them.

Bridesmaid gifts are a great way for brides to thank their bridesmaids for all that they've done to make a couple's wedding day special.

The most popular honeymoon destinations

Couples have different ideas regarding what makes a great honeymoon destination. Some couples may want to spend their trips with toes in the sand as they relax on a secluded beach, while others might want to traverse rapids in a tandem kayak. Couples looking for inspiration can consider the 10 most popular honeymoon locales as determined by a recent survey from Expedia.com.

1.United Kingdom
2. Dubai, United Arab Emirates
3. Paris, France
4. Florida
5. Los Angeles
6. Madrid to Seville, Spain
7. Rome, Naples and Amalfi Coast, Italy
8. St. Lucia
9. Iceland
10. The Maldives

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28 COMMUNITY NEWS Ponte Vedra Recorder · October 19, 2023



NOMINATIONS BEGIN OCTOBER 6TH

The Recorder presents the first ever **Best of the Beaches**, featuring your favorite businesses in Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach and Ponte Vedra Beach! This includes businesses in zip codes 32250, 32266, 32233, and 32082.

Readers will have the chance to nominate their favorite businesses in various categories online, such as auto & transporation, home & finance, food & drink and more! Online voting will begin once nominations are complete.

Give your favorite business the recognition they deserve, and nominate them as the Best of the Best in their category!

NOMINATIONS START:

October 6th - November 6th

VOTING STARTS:

November 7th - December 7th

WINNERS ANNOUNCED/ WINNER'S CIRCE PUBLISHES:





www.pontevedrarecorder.com/ bestofthebeaches

Caring For Kids raffle to benefit local causes

Palm Valley Rotary Club is conducting a Caring for Kids raffle. It will benefit:

- Peace of Heart, a residential group home for young people with autism.
- Blessings in a Backpack, whose mission is to provide weekend food for school-aged children
- Foundation of the Rotary Club of Palm Valley Charities.

To enter a drawing to win a private dinner for up to six people prepared by Executive Chef Cameron Walton, with relaxing soft chamber music provided by St. Augustine Symphony's Bella Costa String Quartet, in the stately Wine Room at Ponte Vedra Beach's Lodge and Club, go to palmvalley-rotaryclub.org/page/caring-for-kids-raffle.

Also, there are 25 other raffle prizes, all of which are worth as at least as much as the \$100 cost of one raffle ticket. Because only 250 tickets are being sold, the odds of winning a prize are greater than 10%.

Cash prizes are:

- Two ticket holders will win \$250 cash.
- One ticket holder will win \$200 cash.
- Three ticket holders will win \$100 cash. Other prizes include:
- Marsh Landing Country Club Golf for
 Court
- Youthful Medical Spa Microneedling Gift Certificate

- First Coast Register Magazine half-page
- Underwood Jewelers Guy Harvey pendant necklace
- TPC Valley Course Golf for four
- Youthful Medical Spa Hydrofacial Gift Certificate
- Three Peace of Heart Garden Certificates
- Two Alhambra Tickets for the Christmas show
- Four Jacksonville Zoo tickets
- Youthful Medical Spa cool sculpting gift certificate
- Two Jacksonville Symphony tickets
- \$300 Ruth's Chris Steak House gift certificate
- Guided Tour of Brumos Car Museum for two
- Guided Tour of Flagler College for four
- Guided Tour of TPC Headquarters for
- \$100 Valley Smoke or Palm Valley Fish Camp gift certificate
 - \$100 Costco gift card
 - \$100 Restaurant Medure gift certificate
- Ponte Vedra Beach Restaurant variety pack gift certificates

The raffle drawing will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 15. You can watch the drawing live at PalmValleyRotaryClub.org/page/Caring-For-Kids-Raffle.



The Rotary Club of Palm Valley Presents a Fundraising Event

BENEFITTING:

- Peace of Heart A residential group home for young people with autism.
- Blessings in a Backpack Whose mission is to provide food on weekends for school aged children.
- The Charities of The Foundation of the Rotary Club of Palm Valley Inc.



Grand Grize Dinner for 6 on Friday, January 19, 2024, at

7:00pm in The Wine Room at the Lodge with Executive Chef Cameron Walton. Entertainment provided by the St. Augustine Symphony's Bella Costa String Quartet.



Raffle Information

Raffle Ticket Donation: \$100 Maximum Number of Tickets: 250 Last Date to Purchase Tickets:

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023

Live Drawing: Wed, Nov, 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Zoom Meeting Name:

Caring for Kids Raffle Drawing

Zoom ID: 82901390021

Order Tickets Here: 回歸證回



Https://PalmValleyRotaryClub.org/page/CaringFor-KidsRaffle/

Rotary Club of Palm Valley

Additional Prizes

(None worth less than the cost of your raffle ticket)

Marsh Landing Country Club Golf for 4
TPC Valley Course Golf for 4
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2 Alhambra Tickets for the Christmas Show
4 Jacksonville Zoo Tickets
\$\$

• 2 Jacksonville Symphony Tickets \$\$

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• \$100 Costco Gift Card \$
• \$100 Restaurant Medure Gift Certificate \$

Ponte Vedra Beach Restaurant Variety Pack

AND CASH PRIZES:

- 2 ticket holders will win \$250 cash!
- 1 ticket holder will win \$200 cash!
- 3 ticket holders will win \$100 cash!

AND MORE!



Ukrainian surgeons visiting the Mayo Clinic to study advanced pain management techniques for wounded soldiers share their experiences at a panel discussion at the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club. The discussion was sponsored by medical supply equipment Janz Corp. in partnership with August Mission, a veteran-founded humanitarian aid nonprofit.

Ukrainian surgeons share wartime experiences at panel discussion

By Jennifer Logue

Ponte Vedra residents had a chance to learn firsthand about the situation in Ukraine last week when a team of Ukrainian surgeons shared their experiences at a panel discussion and reception held at the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club.

The surgeons — who are studying advanced pain management techniques at the Mayo Clinic — described the challenges they are facing in treating soldiers who have been severely wounded in the ongoing war with Russia.

"The situation is absolutely catastrophic," said Dr. Andrii Strokan, chief clinical medical officer at Feofaniya Hospital in Kyiv, Ukraine. "It's unimaginable when you see 20,000 young guys without arms

Many of the soldiers who have had am-



Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach President Jennifer Logue presents friendship banners to Ukrainian surgeons Dr. Andrii Strokan, Dr. Oleksandr Klymenko and Dr. Roman Ilyuk. The doctors shared the challenges of operating in a war zone with Rotary members at their Oct. 12 meeting.

putations, the doctors noted, have returned to the fighting, necessitating new and more effective pain management techniques.

"When I talk to soldiers, they told me they were not afraid to die," Strokan said. "They were afraid to be left on the battlefield, to be wounded with no care. If they know they will be taken care of, they will fight."

The continuing war has made transporting and treating wounded soldiers even more difficult, the doctors said, noting that often a wounded soldier will have to be transferred between four different hospitals in two days to access the specialized care needed.

Neurosurgeon Dr. Roman Ilyuk, meanwhile, described the heartbreak of seeing how a soldier's psychological trauma impacts not only the soldier but also his family.

"It is haunting to see the trauma in the children's faces," he said. "But it is better to have a sick father than no father."

International Health Care Summit

The panel discussion and reception were sponsored by the Janz Corporation — a veteran-owned medical equipment supply company — in conjunction with August Mission, a nonprofit founded by Army veteran Bruce Roberts to provide humanitarian aid in war-torn regions such as Ukraine. The two organizations have joined forces to sponsor an international health care summit to be held in Kviv. Ukraine, in November that will bring doctors, researchers and experts from around the world to share knowledge and cutting-edge medical techniques to assist Ukraine in improving and expanding its medical care.

"Addressing global health issues in challenging localities is at the heart of our mission," the health care summit website states. "Through this summit, we strive to foster international collaboration, breaking down barriers and promoting the exchange

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Contributed photos







John Paul Whi

The Driftwoods

Standing on the shoulders of a giant

Concert series, festival to celebrate Florida legend Gamble Rogers

The St. Johns Cultural Council, the organization that promotes arts, culture and heritage in St. Augustine, has announced the second annual Live from The Waterworks: A Gamble Rogers Concert Series to commemorate Gamble Rogers, a renowned musician and storyteller who is regarded as the ambassador of Florida folk culture.

The intimate monthly performances, beginning Oct. 21, will support the annual Gamble Rogers Folk Festival, taking place April 14-16. Live from The Waterworks will celebrate the legendary recording artist, whose balladry and storytelling shaped American folk music.

"Gamble Rogers is one of Florida's most iconic musicians and we're thrilled to host this event to celebrate his life and legacy," said Christina Parrish Stone, executive director of the St. Johns Cultural Council. "Rogers' contributions to the

state's music scene were immense, but his influence extended far beyond, inspiring generations of musicians across the country. This event will feature not only amazing folk music, but also stories about Rogers and his enduring legacy."

Known as the "Florida troubadour," Rogers popularized the state's folk traditions in music, storytelling, writing and philosophical humor. He inspired many artists, including Jimmy Buffett, to expand their capacity for storytelling and their musical talent.

Rogers first gained national attention as a lead singer and guitarist, both acoustic and electric, for the band The Serendipity Singers. His solo career earned national acclaim, and he appeared on talk shows across the country, hosted numerous music specials and continued to play his whimsical, spellbinding music.

At the age of 54, Rogers died trying to save a drowning man at Flagler Beach. He is remembered today through the Gamble Rogers Memorial Foundation and the Gamble Rogers Folk Festival.

Beginning in October, on the third Saturday of each month, a local musician will open for a nationally known act at The Waterworks, 184 San Marco Ave. in St. Augustine. The venue was built in 1898 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The schedule includes:

Live from The Waterworks: The Driftwoods featuring Christian Ward, Oct. 21

The Driftwoods are a musical family of friends who perform original contemporary and old-time tunes. Their song variety is one of the hallmarks of their stage presentation. The group has been performing together in Northern Florida and the Southeast for more than 30 years. Eric Searcy is on the banjo and dobro, Gabriel Valla on mandolin and guitar, Elisabeth Williamson on rhythm guitar and banjo, and Lon Williamson is on the upright bass.

Live from The Waterworks: Jordan Tice, Nov. 18

Jordan Tice is a singer, songwriter and guitarist who combines witty, well-crafted songs with deft fingerstyle and flat pick guitar playing. His performances have been compared to those of musical legends including Leo Kottke, John Hartford and David Bromberg for their mix of virtuosity and playfulness. His songs have been compared to those of writers Bob Dylan and John Prine for their humor, introspection and philosophical nature.

Folk fans might recognize Tice as a member of the instrumental bluegrass supergroup Hawktail, as well as his sideman work with many other artists in the folk and bluegrass genre such as Dave Rawlings, Andrew Marlin (Mandolin Orange), Yola, Tony Trischka and comedian Steve Martin

Live from The Waterworks: John Paul White, Dec. 16

John Paul White grew up in tiny Loretto, Tennessee, and now lives in Florence, Alabama, close to Muscle Shoals. He has cultivated a music career in Nashville for two decades, first as a songwriter for a major publisher, then half of The Civil Wars, a groundbreaking duo that won four

CONCERT continues on **Page 31**



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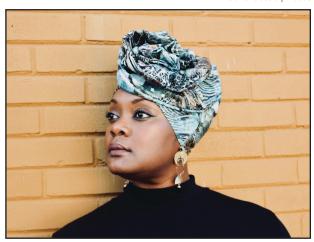
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Kyshona

Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley

Concert

Continued from 30

Grammy Awards before disbanding in

White's album "The Hurting Kind" draws on the lush, orchestrated music made in Nashville in the early 1960s. Yet, his songs retain a modern feel, whether he's writing about overwhelming love, unraveling relationships or fading memories of a loved one.

Live from The Waterworks: Richard Smith, Jan. 20

Richard Smith picked up the guitar when he was 5 years old and soon became a child prodigy. He formed the Richard Smith Guitar Trio with his brothers Rob and Sam. He married American cellist Julie Adams and moved to Nashville. Tennessee. Smith was the winner of the National Fingerstyle Guitar Championship, held in Kansas in 2001.

In 2008, Smith was the Thumbpicker of the Year, a title given by The National Thumbpickers Hall of Fame where he was inducted in 2009. In 2011, the Association of Fingerstyle Guitarists presented Smith with its Golden Thumbpick Award.

Live from The Waterworks: Jontavious Willis, Feb. 17

Jontavious Willis was born and raised in rural Georgia, an environment with deep cultural roots that provides the

inspiration he has continuously drawn upon to create his unique sound. An early phenom, his passion for the blues was sparked at age 14 when he came across a YouTube video of Muddy Waters playing "Hoochie Coochie Man." He achieved widespread acclaim when living legend Taj Mahal invited him to accompany him onstage in 2015, with Taj describing him as his "Wonderboy."

Willis is resolved in his mission: to reinvigorate today's blues with the spirit of the past. Inspired by a time when the blues were plentiful and rhythm reigned supreme, Willis leverages his unique sound, a synthesis of his Georgia heritage and reverence for traditional blues to get the world dancing again.

A Grammy-nominated musician and songwriter, Willis performs original, toe-tapping tunes in the style of Delta, Piedmont, Texas and gospel blues. Dynamic vocals, technical prowess and an abundance of Southern charm keep Willis sending jolts of vitality through the blues community.

Live from The Waterworks: Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley, March 16

Take a 15-time International Bluegrass Music Association Dobro Player of the Year and a Tennessee-born guitar prodigy who made his Grand Ole Opry debut at the age of 11, and you have Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley, a powerhouse acoustic duo that has electrified the acoustic music scene. Known for their white-hot pick-

ing, stone country vocals with soul and world-class live musicianship, Ickes and Hensley meld together blues, bluegrass, country, rock and other string band music of all kinds to form a signature blend of music that defies restrictions of genre.

28th Annual Gamble Rogers Folk Festival, April 14-16

The 28th Annual Gamble Rogers Festival will be a weekend of folk, Americana and bluegrass music by renowned singers, songwriters and storytellers who were influenced by Gamble Rogers' music. The entire music festival showcases dozens of national, regional and local musicians and storvtellers.

In addition to the musical performances, there will be workshops, youth crafts, pony rides, a petting zoo and more. Food trucks and vendors will be available. Festival attendees have the option to stay and camp at the venue with reservations. Camping reservations must be made in advance and day-of festival tickets will be available at the gate.

Live from The Waterworks: Peter Rowan, May 18

Grammy-award winner and member of the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame Peter Rowan is a singer-songwriter with a career spanning more than five decades. From his early years playing under the tutelage of bluegrass veteran Bill Monroe to his time in Old & In the Way and his breakout as a solo musician and bandlead-

er, Rowan has built a devoted, international fan base through a solid stream of recordings, collaborative projects and constant touring.

Live from The Waterworks: Kyshona Trio, June 22

Kyshona is an artist ignited by untold stories and the capacity of those stories to thread connections in every community. With a background as a licensed music therapist, the curiosity of a writer, the resolve of an activist and the voice of a singer, Kyshona is unrelenting in her pursuit for the healing power of song. Kyshona blends roots, rock, R&B and folk with lyrical prowess. She is a soughtafter collaborative vocalist working with artists like Margo Price and Adia Victoria and is a burgeoning performer in her own right with her 2020 release "Listen," voted Best Protest Album of 2020 by Nashville Scene.

Ticket prices for Live from The Waterworks performances begin at \$20 and may be purchased through Eventbrite and at gamblerogersfest.org.

The event is supported by the Gamble Rogers Folk Festival, a registered 501(c)3 established to commemorate Americana folk music and the St. Johns Cultural Council, which promotes arts, culture and heritage activities and events in St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and the beaches.

For more information, go to historiccoastculture.com.

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HAPPY HOMECOMING FOR ALL AGES

Nease High School held a homecoming parade on Oct. 8 for the local community a week prior to their homecoming football game against Flagler Palm Coast on Oct. 13.

Photos by James Vernacotola















Business Neekly For MORE business news, go to facebook.com/ThePVRecorder

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GUEST COLUMN

Are you prepared to handle a personal financial crisis?

Written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors

Individuals who are married or in a committed relationship face the possibility they'll end up managing complicated finances alone at some point. Unfortunately, the first time many experience this is during a personal crisis following divorce or a spouse's or partner's death.

Here's a list of thought-provoking questions pertaining to financial fitness and crisis preparedness. Use them as a starting point to check on how prepared you are to handle a personal financial crisis. Begin by reviewing the questions, determine what you've already done, and check those items off the list. For the questions you need to address or take action on, seek the advice of professional advisors and trusted family members.

Asset management

- Do I have a clear picture of where my assets are located?
- Will my retirement assets provide a comfortable retirement for my life expectancy?
- Do I have a well-diversified portfolio?
- Are my investments appropriate in today's economy?



- Are my assets titled properly?
- Do I have an emergency fund?
- Am I taking advantage of techniques to reduce my taxes?

Estate planning strategies

- Do I have a will?
- Is my will current?
- Have I determined what my family may owe in estate taxes?
 - Have I funded my estate-tax liability?
- Have I explored and taken advantage of wealth-transfer techniques?
- Do I wish to provide for charitable giving?
- Are my power of attorney, living will and beneficiary designations up-to-date?

Debt management

- Do I know my credit rating?
- Could I get a loan if I applied?

Insurance

Do I have enough insurance coverage

- Cover medical expenses?
- Provide for disability/long-term care?
- Provide for family members' security?
- Fund an estate-tax liability?

In addition ...

• Have I coordinated my advisors' (attorney, CPA, banker) activities?

- What changes in my life are likely to occur within the next three years?
- Do I know the status of my parents'/ children's financial situation and the implications for my financial well-being?
- Would I be prepared for a family emergency if it happened tomorrow?

Our firm does not provide legal or tax advice. Be sure to consult with your own 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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NAI Hallmark brokers \$1.8M sale of commercial property

AI Hallmark, the largest locally owned full-service commercial real estate brokerage and property management firm in Jacksonville, has announced the sale of 1931 Blanding Blvd. in Jacksonville for \$1.8 million. Vice President and Retail Specialist Austin Kay brokered the transaction on behalf of the seller.

"We were pleased with the market's response to this prime retail site at the corner of San Juan and Blanding," said Kay. "Ultimately, the highest and best

use was indeed a car wash. The buyers, Brightwork Acquisitions LLC, were able to meet our goals and perform accordingly to get the site in a developable position. Car washes have exploded across Northeast Florida and another void in the market has been filled."

Located on highly trafficked intersection of San Juan and Blanding Boulevard in Jacksonville's Westside Submarket, this commercial property is comprised of 1.12 acres zoned CCG-2.





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In the Arts

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Cathedral Arts Project acquires Connecting Thru Music

The Cathedral Arts Project (CAP) recently announced the acquisition of Connecting Thru Music (CTM), a non-profit organization that offers in-school and afterschool music therapy programs for children and young adults with disabilities.

The acquisition was finalized on Sept. 12. Under this agreement, CTM's music therapy services will be integrated into CAP's CAPabilities program — broadening the availability of these offerings to increase access to arts education for students with disabilities in Northeast Florida.

"Connecting Thru Music's mission and vision align with our mission to empower every child's creative spirit, elevate arts educators in their field and advocate for access and equity in arts education," said CAP President and CEO Rev. Kimberly Hyatt. "We are excited to bring it under our umbrella and expand our CAPabilities programming to include music therapy and reach more children with disabilities in our community."

Duval County Public Schools has

18,565 students with disabilities enrolled in schools this year. This does not include students who only have speech impairment or are gifted. Connecting Thru Music currently serves 276 students at 13 Duval County Public School sites during the school year, and 415 students at 15 sites during the summer months.

The organization's mission is to provide music therapy and related services to enhance the cognitive, communicative, emotional, physical and social development of children with disabilities throughout Duval County and the Northeast Florida region. Music therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized nonmusical goals to support learning and development.

The CAPabilities program offers sensory art programs and art counseling. With this acquisition, CAP will be able to expand this program by offering music therapy provided by high-quality, board-certified music therapists.

Karen Demuth, co-founder and executive director of Connecting Thru Music, will join CAP's staff as director of music



Karen Demuth

therapy expansion. This new role will center on advocating for the benefits of music therapy. Demuth's work will include expanding private pay opportunities and driving initiatives to reach children with disabilities, furthering CAP's mission to empower every child's creative spirit.



Kimberly Hyatt

"The Cathedral Arts Project is a model organization providing access to arts education in our region," said Demuth. "The demand for music therapy programs increases every school year. Moving under the CAP umbrella, we will be able to serve more students across Northeast Florida with its benefits."

'Untold Stories' returns for third season at the Florida Theatre

The Florida Theatre will present the third season of its storytelling series, "Untold Stories," with the first performance, "Untold Stories – Fall," at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 9, at the Florida Theatre in downtown Jacksonville. Individual show and season tickets are available at floridatheatre.com or 904-355-2787. Patrons who purchase season tickets will receive a 25% discount.

The schedule is: Nov. 9 — Fall Theme, Feb. 15 — Winter Theme, May 30 — Spring Theme and July 11 — Summer Theme

Those who are members of the Florida Theatre at the Cameo level and up will receive two complimentary tickets to each quarterly performance. The storytellers for "Untold Stories — Fall" are Jasmine Chanae, Ron Rothberg, Drew Brown, Allison Galloway-Gonzalez, Eva Grayzel and Reign Supreme. Music curation by Willie Evans Jr.

Honoring the tradition of oral storytelling in a modern context, "Untold Stories" showcases six local storytellers in quarterly thematic story evenings featuring personal and transformative tales told by a diverse range of voices, both natives and residents of Northeast Florida.

A casting call went out on Sept. 1. North

Florida residents can still apply to become a cast member of "Untold Stories." For information, go to floridatheatre.com/events/untold-stories.

"Untold Stories" is a project of the nonprofit Florida Theatre. The 2023-24 season of "Untold Stories" is curated by Artistic Director Barbara Colaciello of BABS'LAB.

"'Untold Stories' is not an open mic night," said Numa Saisselin, president of the Florida Theatre. "It is a professionally curated evening of storytellers whose work has been thematically organized to make a compelling and entertaining evening. That said, everyone is local, and all the storytellers come from different backgrounds and experiences. They're you and me."

"These evenings are not merely a collection of individual stories but rather a cohesive whole, akin to a series of mini plays, taking the audience on a roller-coaster ride of emotions, from laughter to tears, from introspection to inspiration," said Colaciello. "Something new this season is that our musical guests will create a soundscape throughout, intertwining the magic of music with the power of storytelling."

PAStA Fine Art Gallery receives award

The Professional Artists of St. Augustine (PAStA) Fine Art Gallery, of 214 Charlotte St., St. Augustine, has received the St. Augustine Best Gallery third place award from the 2023 Official Community Choice Awards.

Each year, the Best of St. Augustine Community's Choice Awards recognizes more than 450 businesses and organizations. The awards program starts with public nominations, and from the top five nominees in each category, the voting round selects the finalists and winners.

"We are thrilled to be awarded the thirdplace finalist in the Best of St. Augustine Art Galleries," Valarie Pothier-Forrester commented. "And we want to thank all our many patrons and tourists that continue to visit our gallery and for supporting local art."

The PAStA Gallery was founded in 1982 by Jean Wagner Troemel, a Florida resident and international award-winning artist. Troemel's efforts included St. Augustine's First Friday Art Walks, expanding St. Augustine's reputation as an art community.

"It is a testament to Jean Wagner Troemel's legacy, that her founding gallery continues to thrive in the vibrant art culture she nurtured here in St. Augustine," Pothier-Forrester added.

Stay up to date with all that is happening at PAStA by visiting the website, Facebook, or Instagram page. Join the email list for the latest information about our artists.

Writers' topic is ghostwriting



Vic DiGenti

Ghostwriters have been around for thousands of years, writing anonymously for pharaohs and kings. Today's ghostwriters pen books for celebrities, sports figures and politicians, as well as more ordinary folk. Vic DiGenti, a novelist and sometime ghostwriter, has written client biographies for multi-millionaires, jazz musicians and retired executives. He'll share what he's learned about the demands and rewards of writing biographies at the FWA Ponte Vedra Writers meeting on Oct. 28. The meeting is set for 11 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

In his presentation, "The Not-So-Secret Life of a Ghostwriter," DiGenti provides details about what it takes to be a successful collaborator, using his books and writing history as examples. He'll talk about some of the more successful celebrity ghostwriters and the books they've written and provide a checklist of caveats about the ghostwriting business.

DiGenti is the award-winning author of six novels, including the Quint Mitchell Mystery series published under the pen name Parker Francis. He also works as a ghostwriter, biographer and publisher using his imprint, Windrusher Hall Press. He's a longtime member of the Florida Writers Association, serving as regional director for NE Florida and is on the Board of the Beaches Museum. Go to windrusherhall-press.com for more information.

The meeting is free and open to members and nonmembers alike. For information on FWA go to floridawriters.org.

Renovated Florida Theatre to reopen Oct. 28

The newly renovated Florida Theatre in Jacksonville will reopen at 8 p.m. Oct. 28 for "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." Mayor Donna Deegan and other dignitaries will participate in a ribboncutting at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 27 inside the lobby/auditorium.

The Florida Theatre has been closed since mid-July to renovate the 96-year-old facility. All the flaking and peeling decorative plaster in the auditorium has been repaired; the lobbies and the auditorium have been painted with fidelity to the 1927 color palette; the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system has been replaced; the electrical vault has been moved to the third floor; and the public restrooms have been updated.

These projects build upon previous ones, including replacement of the theater's 1,865 seats, doubling the wheelchair seating capacity, installing a new assistive listening system, improving the aisle lighting and handrails, installing a new concert sound system and lighting system, and repurposing the second floor

as the Remedy Lounge.

All of the projects, under the banner of the Centennial Capital Improvement Plan, which started in 2019, aim to prepare the historic Florida Theatre for its 100th birthday in 2027. The City of Jacksonville has matched private donations for the renovation.

"The Florida Theatre is one of downtown Jacksonville's gems," said Deegan. "With its 100th birthday approaching, this is an exciting time to restore the theater to its full splendor. I look forward to seeing the theater's facelift and supporting our city's vibrant performing arts scene by attending a show when it reopens — and I encourage everyone to do the same."

Auld and White Constructors was the general contractor for this project. Sauer Mechanical did the HVAC work. Ever-Greene Architectural Arts did all the plaster/paint work and restored the tapestries. And Beacon Electric moved the electrical vault from the first to the third floor so it would no longer be a flood risk.





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WEEK 9 FOOTBALL PREVIEW

The calm before the storm for Sharks, Panthers

Photos by Anthony Richards



The Sharks' defense has their sights set on making life difficult for the Orange Park High offense when they face the Raiders on Oct. 20.

By Anthony Richards

We are just two weeks away from a major matchup between the Ponte Vedra Sharks and Nease Panthers on the football field, but before then there is some business to take care of.

The Sharks travel to Clay County to face the Orange Park Raiders (3-4) on Oct. 20 at 7 p.m. in a non-district showdown that will present the squad with a nice test prior to taking on the Panthers a week later.

The Raiders are a common opponent for both teams, with the Panthers already having racked up a 27-14 comeback victory over the Raiders on Sept. 22.

One of the positive things the Sharks have been able to do for much of their six-game winning streak is the ability to get ahead early and carry a lead into the halftime break.

This is something that they will strive to accomplish once again against the Raiders, as it is something that can take so much pressure off an offense and defense anytime they are given the opportunity to play from out front and in turn dictate the flow of the game.

The Panthers found success both on the ground and through the air against the Raiders, so look for the Sharks to do much of what they have been doing of late, which is a balanced attack that can hurt opponents in a variety of ways.

Cam Smith finished with 97 rushing yards in the game for the Panthers, which means another big day could be in the forecast for Sharks' running back Brian Case, who has made hitting the



Maddox Spencer is congratulated by coaches as he comes off the field after surpassing 1,000 yards receiving on the season against Flagler Palm Coast.

century mark for yards on the ground seemingly a common goal from game to game.

The defense for the Sharks has reached a point in the season where they feel confident about any opponent they face, but especially against a Raiders offense that has been shut out on two occasions already this year.

The Sharks will be looking for their seventh consecutive win this season, while the Raiders seemed to get back on track after a back-to-back loses with a 36-12 win over Ridgeview last Friday.

It will only be the third home contest of the season to date for the Raiders, who are 1-1 in their previous two games in front of their home fans.

For the Panthers, they have a bye this week prior to facing the Sharks.

The bye week comes at an ideal time for the Panthers, as it not only gives them extra time to prepare for the Sharks, but just as importantly, it gives them some needed time for their players to get healthy in time for the showdown.

This is especially needed on the defense side of the ball, where they have had several key starters dealing with injuries in recent weeks.

With the mega matchup between the two on the horizon, every fan on both sides wants to see each team at their best and as close to full health as possible, because it is a game that truly deserves both squads being at their peak of performance and that means as many playmakers in their arsenals as possible when they take the field on Oct. 27.



Local racer finishes 12th at American E-Kart Championship

By Don Coble

Alese Piety, a sophomore in the automotive program at Florida State College in Jacksonville, represented North Florida at the American E-Kart Championship in Illinois last weekend. The Ponte Vedra native finished 12th overall. She hopes to gain experience and eventually drive a sports car in the International Motor Sports Association.

Piety's racing career shifted into a higher gear at the American E-Kart Championship last weekend at Mokena, Indiana.

The racer who moved from Ponte Vedra to Green Cove Springs last March learned consistency is more important to maintain momentum than mashing the gas pedal.

"I learned so much," she said after finishing 12th. "It was a good trip. I want to get my racing license. My goal is to be in a Porsche. I'm really into IMSA. I always go to Daytona (for the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona). I think I'm going to be a good fit for that "

Piety was one of 19 regional winners at the national championship. She quali-



Contributed pno

fied at the Autobahn Indoor Speedway in Jacksonville and was the only woman at the finals.

The National Championship was a four-day event on two indoor circuits. Racers were provided electric-powered karts from the World Karting Association, and the organizers switched karts after each round, similar to the old International Race of Champions Series. That way, if one kart was faster than the others, each racer had the benefit of driving it. Last weekend's championship was the only event for electric-powered karts approved by the WKA.

The tracks — Monaco and LeMans — were slick and twisting, Piety said. It took less than 21 seconds to complete a lap. The difference between Monaco's fastest qualifier and Piety was just 0.34 seconds — less time than a sneeze.

"I moved up some positions, and I had some really good times (on Day 3)," Piety said. "We had 16 heat races and the finals. I realize you have to be consistent to keep your momentum. I want to keep racing."

Sharks, Panthers rack up huge district wins



Ben Burk drops back to pass for the Sharks against Tocoi Creek.

By Anthony Richards

Alese Piety waves during the American E-Kart Championship.

The Ponte Vedra Sharks and Nease Panthers both handled business in big ways with dominant district wins on Oct. 13.

The Sharks rolled past Tocoi Creek 38-6, as they continued to ride the momentum they have had with their sixth straight victory, while the Panthers found themselves in a shootout for the second consecutive week and defeated visiting Flagler Palm Coast 58-43.

Photos by Anthony Richards



The Nease defense converges on a Flagler Palm Coast ball carrier.



K.J. Perry of Nease breaks into the open field.



Nease celebrated homecoming night.



The Panthers take the field.



The Sharks are riding momentum with six straight victories.

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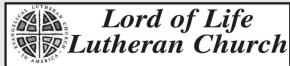
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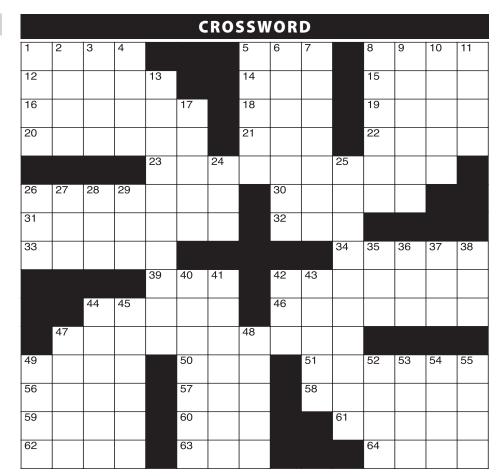
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ACROSS

- 1. A device to disengage without a key
- 5. Subdivision
- 8. Network of nerves
- 12. Lounge chair
- 14. Ocean
- 15. C. European river
- 16. Bowl-shaped cavity
- 18. __ Caesar, comedian
- 19. Lyric poems
- 20. Tia's sister
- 21. A way to develop
- 22. Cows collectively
- 23. Areas close by
- 26. Slightly disreputable
- 30. Made a mistake
- 31. One who cites
- 32. Food stall: __ pai dong
- 33. Narrow valley between
- 34. Members of people living mainly in the Congo
- 39. More (Spanish)
- 42. Classroom implements
- 44. Cognizant of
- 46. One who tells on others
- 47. Free from slavery
- 49. Thick piece of something
- 50. Containing two nitrogen atoms between carbon atoms
- 51. Removed entirely
- 56. Late rocker Turner
- 57. Appreciated
- 58. Observation expedition
- 59. Opposite of subtracts
- 60. Unit of work
- 61. Wreckage on the sea bed
- 62. Affirmative! (slang)
- 63. Witness
- 64. River in England

- 1. A dissenting clique
- 2. Japanese city
- 3. Spiritual leader

- 4. Second letter of Greek alphabet
- 5. Musical term
- 6. Ruled over
- 7. Fortified wine
- 8. First year player
- 9. Moved in a circular way
- 10. Adolescents
- 11. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
- 13. Someone who serves in the armed forces
- 17. Bring up
- 24. Factual written account (abbr.)
- 25. Having three sides
- 26. Annov
- 27. Hustle
- 28. American WW2 leader
- 29. Stale atmosphere

- 35. US Treasury 36. Sound unit
- 37. They_
- 38. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 40. Places to play video games
- 41. Medical event
- 42. When you hope to arrive
- 43. Fixed prices
- 44. Popular Boston song 45. Valley in Indiana and
- Illinois 47. Omit when speaking
- 48. German explorer of the Congo Basin
- 49. Stick around
- 52. From a distance
- 53. Heroic tale
- 54. Amounts of time 55. Eat

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

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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