

Your Community Voice for 50 Years

PONTE VEDRA



Recorder

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75 cents

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

PonteVedraRecorder.com

IN THE NAME OF LOVE



K9s For Warriors recently renamed its Ponte Vedra Beach campus in honor of founder Shari Duval (third from left). Representatives of the nonprofit, including CEO Rory Diamond (second from left) and K9s for Warriors president and Duval's son Brett Simon (far right), were on hand to celebrate the unveiling of the campus' new name on Dec. 28. For more on the story, go to page 9

Photo provided by K9s For Warriors



INSIDE: CHECK IT OUT!

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



St. Johns County receives second shipment of COVID-19 vaccines

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Business Weekly featuring Dollars & Sense

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Hugh Osteen
Florida Market Manager
hugh@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831

Susan Griffin
Publisher
susan@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3938

Paris Moulden
Page Designer/Reporter
paris@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3943

Shaun Ryan
Reporter
shaun@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3941

Holly Tishfield
Reporter
holly@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831

Don Coble
Contributor
don@opcfla.com
(904) 686-3939

Ed Johnson
Senior Account Executive
ed@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3940

Kristin Flanagan
Account Executive
kristin@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3950

April Snyder
Sales Assistant
aprils@opcfla.com
(904) 285-8831, ext. 3937

Jonathan Bueno
Circulation Manager
jonathan@opcfla.com
904-463-4407

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Send us your news

We welcome submissions of photos, stories, columns and letters to the editor. Let us know what's happening. Email submissions to pvrecorder@opcfla.com or bring them by our office at **1102 A1A N., Unit 108, Ponte Vedra Beach**. Submissions may be published in the paper, on our website or on our social media platforms.

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Also, check out the **Ponte Vedra Recorder** channel on YouTube.

NOTES TO READERS

Don't miss an issue: In case social distancing requirements get more strict, we will email you your paper. Send your email address to pvrecorder@opcfla.com.

Weekly newsletter: The Recorder offers a weekly newsletter every Monday that outlines some of the top stories of the week, as well as providing access to our E-Edition and Entertainment EXTRA! To get the newsletter emailed for free, email don@opcfla.com. We'll add you to the list.

ADOPT A PET



CAT OF THE WEEK

Hey there. My name is Domino and I am a 3-year-old male domestic shorthair. I am a little bit of an introvert, but I do like humans. If you just give me a chance, I can show you that I will make a great companion. Hey, if you love to cuddle and I love to be pet, it's a win win for both of us! Come on in so we can meet. #56877



DOG OF THE WEEK

Hi! My name is Denali and I am a husky mix with beautiful eyes — wink, wink. I am 6 years young, and people are my thing, especially kids. I love to play, go for walks and just be around humans. One thing you should know is that I am heartworm

positive, but hey, my adoption fee is waived and you will receive a voucher good for up to \$250 towards the cost of treatment. How can you go wrong? Come on down and gaze into my eyes and you will be like "heartworm what?" #56852

Any new pet being introduced to a new home will need time to adjust to its new environment. Please reinforce house training and behavioral training, and be mindful of interacting with other pets.

St. Johns County Pet Center

Cat adoptions are \$30 for males and \$40 for females. Dog adoptions are \$45 for males and \$60 for females. Adoption fees include microchipping, neutering/spaying, rabies vaccinations and shots. The Pet Center is located at 130 N. Stratton Road in St. Augustine, off U.S. 1 between County Road 210 and International Golf Parkway. Business hours are Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center is closed to the public on Sunday. On Monday, the office is open by appointment only to claim a lost pet. **For more information, please call the St. Johns County Pet Center at (904) 209-6190.**

BRIEFS

St. Johns County accepting beach toll attendant applications

St. Johns County will begin accepting beach toll attendant applications between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Jan. 11, 13 and 15. Those interested in this seasonal position are encouraged to visit the St. Johns County Pier Pavilion at 350 A1A Beach Blvd. to obtain and complete an application. The season will begin the last week of February and end the last weekend in September.

ber. Toll attendants will be responsible for selling vehicle beach access passes and providing customer service for St. Johns County beach visitors. For more information, email slindblad@sjcfl.us or call (904) 209-0344.

Ponte Vedra Democratic Club to hold Zoom meeting Feb. 10

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will host a non-contiguous 2021 series on the three branches of government in a Zoom meeting Feb. 10.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

M	I	N	U	S	S	P	A	W	A	I	T
I	N	A	N	E	O	H	M	C	A	N	T
S	T	R	I	A	M	O	A	A	S	T	E
C	O	C	O	T	T	E	S	A	S	H	I
			N	E	W	I	S	L	E		
A	P	R	D	I	A	S	P	I	C	K	E
U	R	A	L	S	M	O	G	N	Y	A	L
J	I	B	E	T	I	T	H	E	S	K	I
U	M	B	E	R	D	O	E	S	T	A	T
S	O	I	R	E	E	P	E	S	T	S	E
			V	A	N	E	E	R	E		
T	E	M	P	U	R	A	G	N	O	C	C
B	L	A	R	E	B	A	A	L	L	O	Y
A	B	Y	E	S	O	L	D	L	A	R	D
R	E	A	P	B	A	S	S	T	E	E	L

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

Solutions correspond to last week's puzzles.



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Erin is a New England native, proud graduate of The University of Florida, and a Northeast Florida resident since 2008. Erin began her career in private club membership and marketing. She seamlessly transitioned from her position as a top sales professional who sold memberships for Luxury Private Golf & Country Clubs to selling real estate and joined First Coast Sotheby's International Realty after working successfully in the industry. Her Club experience not only provided extensive insight and knowledge about the local communities and the amenities they offer, but also highlighted her passion for helping guide her clients to find their dream home, including evaluating the lifestyle it can afford them. Sotheby's International Realty's mantra is: "For those who seek an exceptional home and lifestyle, there is only Sotheby's International Realty". In the local market customers can expect to experience this type of white glove service from Erin. She truly takes time to learn the needs of her customers and works tirelessly, promptly and reliably to exceed their expectations.

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Briefs

Continued from 2

The virtual event, scheduled for 6:30 p.m., will take a look at The White House and its role as the executive branch of government. What can — and can't — it do? Jacksonville University political science professor Dr. Austin Trantham will present. This meeting will also feature the vote to accept the slate of candidates for PV Dems Club officers and board members presented at the January meeting. To join the meeting, go to us02web.zoom.us/j/88047135915?pwd=b0dGTG5LZlp6dk5DeEMyQTl2YVvorQT09. For more information, contact Jan Kary at (202) 438-6750 or janetkary@gmail.com.

Sunshine Bus Company offers free rides to patrons with SJC library card

The St. Johns County Public Library is partnering with the St. Johns County Council on Aging to offer library patrons a way to travel around town easier. Beginning in January 2021, Sunshine Bus riders may present their St. Johns County Public Library card to the bus driver to receive a free ride on the first Wednesday of each month. Up to three children, ages 12 and under, may also ride with a qualifying adult at no cost. To sign up for or renew a library card, visit any branch library. For more information about the St. Johns County Council on Aging, including information about the Sunshine Bus and schedules, go to www.coajc.org.

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St. Johns County receives 2nd shipment of COVID-19 vaccines

St. Johns County received a second allotment of 800 COVID-19 vaccines on Monday, Jan. 4. Online registration to make a vaccination appointment will begin at 9 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 7.

The earliest appointments will be for Friday, Jan. 8. To make an appointment, go to the link provided on the website for the state Department of Health in St. Johns County. Go to sjcfl.us and click on the COVID-19 vaccination link to learn more.

The inoculations will be given at the Solomon Calhoun Community Center, 1300 Duval St., St. Augustine. Once an appointment is made, the vaccine recipient will receive the first dose on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday. The second dose will be administered Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

In accordance with an executive order signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis in December, only those falling into one of four categories may receive the vaccine at this time.

Those categories are: healthcare personnel with direct patient contact, long-term care facility residents and staff, people 65 years of age and older and people deemed by hospital providers to be extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.

The county received its first allotment of 3,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine on Dec. 28, but appointment slots quickly filled up. The only doses being administered prior to Friday will be given to those on a waiting list.

Should the second round of appointments also be filled, additional appointments will become available when the county receives more vaccines.

For updates regarding the county's COVID-19 vaccination program, go to www.sjcfl.us/coronavirusvaccinations or text SJC VACCINE to 888777.

For further information or assistance with registration, residents can call the county's vaccination hotline at (904) 295-3711. Callers must dial all 10 digits.



A map outlines the proposed location for the new Gate convenience store according to the St. Johns County Property Appraiser website.

Court denies petition by critics of proposed Gate station

Project currently in permitting stage

The Ponte Vedra Recorder

Plans for a new Gate convenience store, gas station and car wash in Ponte Vedra have survived a recent court challenge, and the project continues through the environmental permitting process.

On Dec. 17, the Circuit Court of the 7th Judicial Circuit denied a petition to nullify a May 12 decision by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners that had denied an appeal of sign and architectural variances granted to the project.

Had the petition been successful, it would not have stopped the project but rather would have moved the approval process back a step. The court's authority was limited to the validity of the county's denial of the appeal and did not encompass the points of disagreement between the County Commission and critics of the project.

The project is designed to create a convenience store, gas station with 24 fueling positions and an express car wash at 330 A1A North within the Ponte Vedra Overlay District. Included in the project are the creation of a Fresh Kitchen restaurant and a Yobe Frozen Yogurt shop.

The 6.79-acre parcel is part of a 31.4-acre tract owned by PV Commercial Properties and is adjacent to The Shoppes at Ponte Vedra.

The project has drawn opposition from some residents of nearby Dolphin Cove and C.X.C., the limited



Robert A. Hardwick takes the oath Tuesday, becoming the new sheriff in St. Johns County.

Contributed photos

Hardwick sworn in as St. Johns County sheriff

Robert A. Hardwick was officially sworn in Tuesday as the new St. Johns County Sheriff. He follows David B. Shoar, who served four terms beginning with his initial election in 2004.

Hardwick had received 69% of the vote in the primary contest against opponent Chris Strickland. He won the general election with 96% of the vote against a write-in candidate.

"This morning, with my family by my side, I officially took the oath of office as your sheriff of St. Johns County," Hardwick said Tuesday. "As



St. Johns County Sheriff Robert A. Hardwick and wife Kendell stand for a photo with their family.

SHERIFF continues on Page 5

PETITION continues on Page 5

New K-8 school under construction in Nocatee

Change in attendance zones means longer commute for Town Center students

By Shaun Ryan

A new K-8 school is set to open in Nocatee for the 2021-22 school year, though not all parents are happy with the attendance zone changes approved by the St. Johns County School Board.

The school, identified as MM until a permanent name is chosen, will be located at 805 Pine Island Road near the extreme southern edge of Nocatee.

In considering which students will attend the new school, the board examined two zoning proposals. The plans are identical with one exception: zoning for most of the Town Center community.

According to the plan approved by the board in December, students living in the Twenty Mile communities, Kelly Pointe, The Palms, Oakwood, Willow Cove, The Reserve and along Ranch Road will continue to attend Palm Valley Academy, located at 700 Bobcat Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Students living in the Crosswater Village communities, Coastal Oaks, Tidewater, Snowden Village and along Pine Island Road will attend the new school.

Generally, this means that Palm Valley Academy will continue to serve the northern areas of Nocatee while the new school will serve the communities to the south.

But Town Center lies at the border



Photo by Shaun Ryan

The new K-8 school on Pine Island Road is under construction and is expected to open for the 2021-22 school year.

between the zones. In one plan, all of the students living there would continue to attend Palm Valley Academy. In the other, all but those living in the west end of Town Center would go to the new school. The board unanimously approved the latter.

A group of residents calling themselves the Nocatee Town Center School Rezoning Coalition opposed the plan. The coalition was founded to give people living in the six neighborhoods at Town Center a unified voice, according to co-chair and parent Melissa Cancio.

“I think we were all disappointed that another solution could not have been found,” said Cancio. “We live so close to their current school, and the new school that they’re being rezoned to is quite a bit of a different distance for us.”

Currently, the commute for Palm Valley Academy students living in Town Center

is between one and three miles. The commute for those same students to the new school will be about 10 miles.

Students in Tidewater face a similar situation, though neither zoning plan has them attending Palm Valley Academy.

One of the parameters under consideration by the School Board in making its decision was to assign students to the closest school “to the extent practical.”

“Unfortunately, that is not always possible,” Nicole Cubbedge, executive director for planning and governmental relations, told the board at the Sept. 22 meeting when the plans were presented.

The new attendance zones are meant to plan for growth and relieve overcrowding. The latter is especially apparent as Palm Valley Academy has more than 2,000 students but a capacity of only 1,490.

Under the plan approved by the board, an estimated 1,209 students would remain

at that school in 2021-22, while 826 would move to the new school.

The other plan would have left 1,425 students at Palm Valley Academy in 2021-22 and move only 610 to the new school.

Cancio said she doesn’t think this arrangement will last. She expects the new school to be at capacity in a very short time and that the students may have to be moved again.

“We’re a growing community, and so I get that we’re going to have to grow and our kids may have to move,” she said. “I just don’t think that this was the right solution.”

The new school will occupy the fourth such site donated to the district by Nocatee’s developer. The other three are Palm Valley Academy, which opened in 2018; Valley Ridge Academy, which opened in 2014; and Ponte Vedra High School, which opened in 2008.

Sheriff

Continued from 4

we embark on the 200th anniversary of the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office, I am honored to have the opportunity to lead this agency. The St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office is full of great men and women who put the safety and well-being of our citizens and visitors first.”

Hardwick’s law enforcement career expands 26 years. Most recently, he served as the St. Augustine Beach chief of police, a position he had held since 2013.

Prior to that, he served in the 7th Judicial Circuit State Attorney’s Office, the St. Augustine Police Department, the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office and the Florida Department of Corrections.

He is a combat veteran with 25 years of service in the U.S. Army and Florida Army National Guard. He and his wife, Kendell, have been married for 29 years and have two adult sons. They worship at St. John Paul II Catholic Church.

“I am excited to get to work as your sheriff and continue to serve our great county,” Hardwick said. “It is my number one priority to ensure St. Johns County remains the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.”

Petition

Continued from 4

liability company that initially appealed the variances and subsequently filed the unsuccessful petition. The petition lists C.X.C. as the owner of The Shoppes of Ponte Vedra.

Critics say much of the property is designated as wetlands and that signage and building size do not conform to the architectural code for the district.

Of these issues, signage figured most prominently in the appeal filed by C.X.C.

The district’s signage regulations limit businesses to one wall sign no larger than 24 square feet and one ground sign no larger than 80 square feet for each face. When there is more than one business, each may have a wall sign no larger than eight square feet.

In its application for a zoning variance, PV Commercial Properties requested an 82-square-foot Gate wall sign, a 78-square-foot car wash wall sign, a 65-square-foot Fresh Kitchen wall sign and a 46-square-foot Yobe Frozen Yogurt wall sign. Signs

were also being planned for the fuel canopy.

In addition, the business requested authorization for an additional ground sign: one for the gas station and one for the car wash. These signs would not exceed 32 square feet per face, a size that may or may not comply with district regulations. The regulations are contradictory in this matter.

PV Commercial Properties contended that, because the business is set back from the road, signs within the approved sizes would be illegible from S.R. A1A. C.X.C. countered that the set-back was a “self-created” hardship, the result of a restrictive covenant the property owner signed when it sold the parcel containing The Shoppes of Ponte Vedra to C.X.C.

The county also granted a variance allowing a 145-foot car wash building, exceeding the 120-foot limit. The extra length would be used to house some of the equipment.

On Dec. 18, 2019, the county Architectural Review Committee approved the design. On Jan. 6, 2020, the Ponte Vedra Zoning and Adjustment Board approved the variances. The commission denied the appeals May 12 and approved the variances.

On another front, a change.org petition asks the County Commission to reverse its decisions. The petition, which has been signed by 9,768 people at this writing, addresses wetlands concerns held by some of the project’s critics.

According to the county’s property appraiser website, more than 86% of the total tract is designated as wetlands, though 3.09 units are described as vacant commercial.

In a Recorder article published in July, county Environmental Department Director Jan Brewer was quoted as saying the wetlands developed after commercial use. Sometime after 1999, settling ponds there laid fallow and wetland vegetation began to populate the site. How much, if any, of this area is exempt from wetlands protections on the basis of its origins may have to be determined.

Asked whether there are any wetlands issues regarding the property, a spokesperson from Gate Petroleum Co. responded via email that, “We have received approval from the Army Corps of Engineers and should soon complete the review and approval process with the St. Johns River Water Management District.”

Mike Roberts is the senior vice president and general counsel at Crowley Maritime Corp., which is based in Jacksonville. He is also the president of American Maritime Partnership and a Ponte Vedra Beach resident.

Mike Roberts

As told to Holly Tishfield

Can you please briefly tell us about your background?

I grew up near Kalamazoo, Michigan, and attended Michigan State University. My junior-year internship was at the U.S. Courthouse in D.C. I was fascinated with Washington and returned to D.C. after graduation. I worked briefly for a U.S. senator and landed a Justice Department job where I met my wife Barb. After graduating from night law school, I practiced transportation law in D.C. for several years. Our children were born in 1988 and 1990, and in 1991, I joined Crowley Maritime as counsel for the container shipping division. I've been with Crowley in one format or another ever since.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

My role has narrowed recently. For 10 years, I served as the company's general counsel. Today, I focus more exclusively on government relations and also lead a key industry coalition, the American Maritime Partnership (AMP). What I enjoy most is working with extremely talented teams to help solve significant and often difficult challenges. Crowley does very interesting work in many different areas. (Check out the Crowley.com website — it's a lot!). Much of that work involves complex policy issues, which puts the legal and government relations team right in the middle of it. Crowley's can-do, public-service mindset — grounded in safety and integrity — means there's no shortage of interesting projects to work on. It also makes helping the Crowley team succeed a real privilege.

What are some of the challenges that your industry/company is facing?

Certainly keeping ahead on technology and talent acquisition are key challenges almost any growing company faces. I'll respond, however, in the context of the American maritime industry with my Crowley hat on (Crowley hires more American mariners and has invested more in American ships than any other company) and as president of AMP. American maritime needs to move out smartly on two long-term challenges. One is the need to adapt and lead as the world transitions toward sustainable energy resources and away from fossil fuels. The second is the need to help drive perhaps radical policy changes to respond specifically to China's maritime ambitions. Studies released this year show that the Chinese government invests about \$15 billion / year in Chinese commercial shipping and shipbuilding companies, maybe 30 times more than what the U.S. government invests in American shipping and shipbuilding. This gross imbalance raises serious national security concerns that need to be addressed.

What are your primary roles/responsibilities?

My job is to build relationships with U.S. senators and congressional representatives and senior officials in the administration so that they understand the issues that matter to Crowley (with 6,000+ direct jobs) and the American maritime industry (which produces 650,000 jobs nationwide). Our approach is to be educators vs. the traditional view of lobbyists. We are fiercely non-partisan, trusting that government leaders will connect with and care about our company and industry regardless of political affiliation. They usually do. [We should also be reminded occasionally that



Photo provided by Mike Roberts

policy differences do get resolved almost every day on Capitol Hill, usually at the staff level, which almost never makes the news.] I've also enjoyed my service as president of AMP. I've been on the AMP Board since its founding 25 years ago. It is now one of the largest coalitions of maritime interests ever assembled. It is focused on supporting the American domestic maritime industry and the shipping law (the Jones Act) that governs our domestic maritime trades.

What do you enjoy most about living in the Ponte Vedra area?

My wife Barb and I are splitting time between D.C. and PVB. We enjoy being in the city and all that it has to offer. But we love coming home to PVB. The outdoor lifestyle, fitness opportunities, beach ... I feel so much

healthier after a week in PVB vs. a week in D.C. We've developed some great friendships through work, the church, the club and our wine club. We've also discovered more local entertainment options in recent years, enjoying the different concert venues, theaters and some really interesting restaurants. Our hope is they all come back stronger than ever in '21!

What do you like to do in your free time?

I enjoy playing golf with friends, playing a little guitar, and DIY projects around the house — building a wine cellar, reorganizing the garage (no painting or plumbing!) I also enjoy supporting my wife's work in a few areas — producing musical theater at Christ Episcopal Church, work on the PV Community Association (including its first-ever parade Dec. 6), and in other volunteer activities.

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All properties listed are in Ponte Vedra unless otherwise noted.

Golf tournament raises \$300K for child safety

Funds raised at a recent golf tournament will help keep children safe from bullying, abuse and related dangers.

The Monique Burr Foundation for Children has announced that \$300,000 was raised at the Dream Finders Homes (of Northeast Florida) MBF Champions for Child Safety Pro-Am Golf Tournament presented by Lennar at The Palencia Club in St. Augustine. The annual tournament offers corporate teams and individuals the opportunity to golf with professional golfers.

The tournament chair was M.G. Orender. Fred Funk, Jim Furyk and Mark McCumber served as honorary chairs.

The event raised funds for programs that help better protect children from bullying, cyberbullying, all forms of child abuse, digital dangers, human trafficking and exploitation.

“We appreciate the support of our sponsors, participants and honorary chairs, and we wouldn’t be able to make the impact we

are making across the globe without it,” said Lynn Layton, MBF president and CEO.

Tournament proceeds support MBF Prevention Education Programs, a series of comprehensive prevention programs that educate and empower children and teens with strategies to prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to bullying, cyberbullying, online dangers, child abuse, exploitation and child trafficking.

To date, MBF has trained more than 5,000 facilitators who have delivered MBF Child Safety Matters and MBF Teen Safety Matters lessons to more than 4.5 million students within 25 states, Washington, D.C., and three countries.

Since the tournament began in 1997, it has raised more than \$4.2 million for the Monique Burr Foundation for Children Inc.

For more information about the Monique Burr Foundation for Children Inc., go to www.mbfpreventioneducation.org or call (904) 642-0210.



The Dream Finders Homes MBF Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament presented by Lennar raised \$300,000 for the Monique Burr Foundation for Children. Pictured from left are Jim Furyk, MG Orender, Ed Burr and Mark McCumber.



The MBF Champions for Child Safety Pro Am Golf Tournament was held in December at The Palencia Club. Pictured from left are Austin Burr (GreenPointe Communities), Gregg Kern (GreenPointe Communities), Batey McGraw (Dream Finders Homes) and Denny Doyle (State Farm).

Photos provided by Monique Burr Foundation

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Illustration: Gildas Pennec

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Riverwood Men's Club charity golf event raises money for local homeless youth center

The Riverwood Men's Club conducted its fifth annual charity golf tournament on Monday, Nov. 2, at Palencia Golf Club. The event helped raise more than \$20,000 for Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center in St. Augustine.

The Riverwood Men's Club, The Palencia Club and the 2020 Tournament Committee partnered together to make this year's event one of the best ever. Despite planning issues related to COVID-19 and some windy on-course conditions, 112 golfers turned out to support the charity. Their participation, along with generous contributions from The Hayes Family Trust, The Shin Family, Home Team Pest Defense, Ray and Carole Lanzi and other donors helped the club exceed its financial goals during this challenging year.

Port in the Storm is an arm of the St. Francis House helping young adults ages 18-24 who are struggling with significant challenges in their lives. It is an outreach organization that offers a safe place to get off the streets and learn daily life skills,



Photo provided by Sonny Kirkwood II

The Riverwood Men's Club holds its annual charity golf tournament Nov. 2 at Palencia Golf Club to help raise money for the Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center.

basic needs, job skills, housing assistance and more. With the right support, guidance and compassion, the lives of these young adults can be significantly transformed. The facility currently has 16 beds for young adults needing a place to stay. Go to www.stfrancishelter.org to learn more.

Over the past five years, the Riverwood Men's Club charity golf event has raised more than \$125,000 for local charities.

K9s For Warriors renames campus to honor founder

Ponte Vedra Beach-based facility will now be The Shari Duval K9s For Warriors National Headquarters

By Holly Tishfield

K9s For Warriors, a nonprofit organization that provides military veterans suffering from severe PTSD, traumatic brain injury and military sexual trauma with service animals, recently changed the name of its main campus to honor its leader and founder Shari Duval.

Duval began K9s For Warriors in 2011 after her son returned from two tours in Iraq with intense PTSD. Duval wanted to create a way to help her son, and help other military veterans like him, in the easiest way possible. After researching canine assistance for PTSD survivors, K9s For Warriors was born.

The nonprofit quickly became the nation's largest provider of service dogs to veterans, rescuing thousands of dogs over the last 10 years and providing over 650 graduates with capable service animals. The program is run by a board of directors and dozens of volunteers who train and prepare the dogs to assist veterans with disorders.

The three-week long program takes place on the main campus where veterans learn how to re-enter civilian life,



Photo provided by K9s for Warriors

K9s for Warriors founder Shari Duval speaks to guests during a Dec. 28 ceremony renaming the nonprofit's Ponte Vedra Beach-based campus in her honor.

and leave with a service animal once they graduate the program. It is at no cost to the veterans, as the organization's main goal is to help the veteran and their dog bond and heal together.

At the beginning of the new year, K9s For Warriors held a ceremony in which it renamed its main campus, located in Ponte Vedra to The Shari Duval K9s For Warriors National Headquarters.

"Shari is leaving a legacy for generations to come by creating K9s For Warriors," said Brianna Bentov, public relations manager for the organization. "It only seemed appropriate to at least rename the national headquarters

after her."

Volunteers, staff and multiple board members made an appearance at the renaming ceremony. Judge Ron Swanson, a board member, gave a moving speech about the importance of Duval's work, and Duval herself also took a moment to speak about her plans for the organization's future.

Affectionately dubbed "Mom" by warriors at the organization, Duval has made a lasting impact on thousands of lives in creating K9s For Warriors.

"Our men and women of our military fought for our tomorrows," Duval said, "so we fight for theirs."



Oceanfront Beach Escape

Located between The Lodge and the Cabana Beach Club, this second-story condo gives elevated views of the beach while maintaining the unit's privacy and security. Includes a large covered balcony and ground floor storage. **3 bedrooms & 3 bathrooms \$1,585,000**



Atlantic Beach Retreat

Ideally located in Atlantic Beach, this 3-story townhome is only two blocks away from the ocean as well as the Beaches Town Center. Enjoy the home's rooftop deck or the easily maintained backyard oasis complete with a 6-ft privacy fence, covered patio, and relaxing hot tub. **3 bedrooms, 2F/2H bathrooms \$810,000**



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JaxTHRIVE helps needy First Coast families during holiday season

JaxTHRIVE, a volunteer, nonprofit organization with a mission to educate and inspire refugee and low-income children, coordinated an initiative over the holidays to deliver customized baskets to needy families all over the First Coast.

JaxTHRIVE encouraged teen volunteers to create the baskets for 54 families from St. Augustine to Jacksonville. They partnered with the Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County Inc., Jewish Family Community Services, Kim's Open Door and JaxTHRIVE's current student base to identify the families for this initiative.

In addition to holiday baskets, masks donated from Masks4JAX (<https://masks4jax.com>) and feminine hygiene products (from the Ponte Vedra High GenWOWClub and Renewing Dignity, www.renewingdignity.org) were also delivered to the families.

A few JaxTHRIVE volunteers personally delivered their baskets so they could finally meet the students they have been tutoring since COVID-19 forced Jax-



Photo provided by Elizabeth Paul

Teen volunteers created baskets for 54 area families this holiday season.

THRIVE to move its tutoring online.

JaxTHRIVE volunteer Aaron Shumer, 17, appreciated this experience.

"I really enjoyed meeting Patrick in person and learning about the culture of his family," Aaron said. "The family welcomed me into their home and provided me with a look into their everyday life. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in JaxTHRIVE and getting to know Patrick's family."

JAXTHRIVE continues on Page 11

Former PVB resident earns prestigious Rangel Fellowship

On Dec. 4, former Ponte Vedra Beach resident Jane Viviano was awarded a 2021 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship following a highly competitive nationwide selection process.

The Rangel Fellowship, funded by the U.S. Department of State and administered by Howard University, supports extraordinary individuals who want to pursue a career in the Foreign Service of the U.S. Department of State. The fellowship will support Viviano through a two-year master's degree in an area of relevance to the Foreign Service. It will also provide extensive professional development opportunities, including internships, mentors and skills training.

As part of the Rangel Program, Viviano will intern with a member of Congress on issues related to foreign affairs in summer 2021. In summer 2022, the U.S. Department of State will send her overseas to intern in a U.S. Embassy or Consulate to get hands-on experience in U.S. foreign policy and the work of the Foreign Service. Upon successful completion of the program, Viviano will become a U.S. diplomat in summer 2023. She will work to advance U.S. interests, protect American citizens, and promote

peace and prosperity around the world.

Viviano was born in Massachusetts and raised in Ponte Vedra Beach. As a high school student, she studied abroad in Istanbul, Turkey. At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Viviano worked as an office assistant and research assistant for the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, a center offering classes in lesser-spoken languages. She was also a Fulbright Scholar who taught business English at the National School of Architecture in Rabat, Morocco.

Viviano's journey has now led her to the Rangel Fellowship, and she is excited to prepare for her career in diplomacy.

"I am thrilled to join the Foreign Service through the Rangel Fellowship and serve my country as a U.S. diplomat in the near future," Viviano said. "In 2011, Rotary Youth Exchange presented me with an opportunity to live in Turkey, and since then, I've committed to studying, working and learning languages abroad. I am immensely grateful to the mentors in my life and U.S. government-funded programs that recognized my potential to succeed in my endeavors."

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United Way, local agencies help Ponte Vedra man overcome hardships

Twenty-eight months. That's how long Richard K., a Ponte Vedra resident, lived in his home without running water.

His plumbing problems started with what he thought was a bad well pump. He spent his entire savings on a replacement only to find out it was not the pump, but a broken main line.

The new pump compounded the problem and caused the pipes to fill with sand. Richard then spent more than two years without being able to shower, use the bathroom in the privacy of his own home or prepare himself a home-cooked meal.

His sense of hopelessness spiraled into depression.

During a short hospital stay, Flagler Health+ Care Connect became aware of Richard's situation and reached out to United Way of St. Johns County for assistance. Understanding that Richard's situation was more complex than a broken pipe, United Way-SJC contacted several other St. Johns County agencies, such as St. Vincent de Paul Nocatee Chapter, The Krewe of the 13, St. Johns Housing Partnership and Humana.

"When we were contacted by United Way about Richard's situation and what the coalition of organizations wanted to do, The Krewe of the 13 knew that this was a case where we could live up to our mission of 'Helping People in Dire Need.'" said Allen Cole, The Krewe of the 13 quartermaster. "The Krewe of the 13 doesn't just

want to solve a short-term problem but change a person's or family's situation. With this coalition we not only provided Richard with clean water and sewer, but also the tools for him to change his overall situation."

After dozens of Zoom calls, the organizations were able to assist Richard in paying two years of back property taxes, household budgeting for future sustainability, applying for his water utilities installation, re-plumbing his entire home, pumping out the septic tank, installing a new hot water heater, disconnecting the existing well and weatherizing his home.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St. John Paul II Conference serves neighbors in need in the Nocatee and surrounding areas, typically helping families with rent, utility and food assistance.

"It was a unique opportunity for us to join other local organizations to assist our neighbor, Richard," said a representative of the St. Vincent de Paul Nocatee Chapter. "Hopefully, the effort of each of the many generous and caring hands will contribute to a healthy and better future for him."

"Bringing together the organizations needed to turn Richard's nightmare situation around is what we mean when we say Live United," said Bev Slough, chair of the United Way of St. Johns Board of Directors. "Together, we can do so much more."



Photo provided by Elizabeth Paul

Holiday baskets brought smiles to the faces of area children, thanks to the work of teen volunteers from JaxTHRIVE.

JaxTHRIVE

Continued from 10

Volunteer Melissa Marino, 15, said, "I felt good planning a Christmas surprise for a little boy. Even though I didn't know him, it felt like I was shopping for a family member."

JaxTHRIVE recently created a GoFundMe account to raise funds so it can continue its tutoring endeavors. To learn more about JaxTHRIVE or to donate to the campaign, go to www.jaxthrive.net.

Wish you were
HERE

Almost won the 9-ball tournament in The Hatch Bar, but Miriam defied the laws of billiards physics with a triple bank shot that beat me – again. Hey! 2nd Place in Paradise is still Paradise!

Wish you were here!
Joe

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Leadership Jacksonville accepting applications for Class of 2022

Leadership Jacksonville, an organization that educates, connects and inspires diverse leaders to build and strengthen their communities, is accepting applications for its adult Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2022.

The year-long program brings together more than 50 leaders from throughout the First Coast community to build relationships with other leaders, explore community issues and perspectives and work to become better community trustees.

The Leadership Jacksonville program creates a collaborative space for open dialogue between leaders with diverse perspectives to address major areas of community concern such as poverty, education, arts, economic growth and more.

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

This Leadership Jacksonville class will begin on Aug. 27, 2021, and continue through June 2022. The program includes nine program days and two weekend retreats.

Applications are accepted online through Jan. 25. To apply or learn more about Leadership Jacksonville and its programs, go to www.leadershipjax.org or call (904) 396-6263.

“Participants from 44 classes have completed this flagship program with a better understanding of our community’s issues and assets,” said Jill Langford Dame, chief executive officer of Leadership Jacksonville. “They continue to use their new connections and what they learn to make a positive difference.”

LOCAL LAW FIRM HELPS SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER TO AREA SENIORS



Every year the Jacksonville Bar Association organizes a Holiday Project that sponsors local senior citizens from the Meals on Wheels program. These seniors provide a wish list, which includes everything from cakes and cookies to electric blankets and pajamas. Local law firms and attorneys volunteer to fulfill these wishes. This year, the lawyers at Dunlap, Ravis & Miller sponsored 14 senior citizens and helped to deliver gifts throughout Jacksonville and the Beaches. “The joy to behold on the faces of some of these elderly men and women when we show up with gifts in hand makes you truly remember what the season is all about,” said Holly Green Dunlap of Dunlap, Ravis & Miller.

Photo provided by Holly Dunlap

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OBITUARIES

Ruth P. Conley

Ruth P. Conley, 100, of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, died at Vicars Landing Health Care after a brief illness. She was born in Seattle, WA, to John and Esther Pearce. Her mother was the lead soprano for the Seattle Opera and was the first inspiration of the vocation that would invigorate Ruth's life. After graduating from the University of Washington in piano performance, she was engaged as the stage manager for the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. With the outbreak of WW II she enlisted in the Women's Army Corps. Ruth was assigned as a recruiter and events planner where she met her future husband Paul A. Conley who was serving in the Army Air Transport Command. They were married at Bolling Field, Washington, D.C., and spent 48 years together before Mr. Conley's death in 1993. They had moved to Ponte Vedra from New York City in 1972. Once moved, Ruth took up where she left off in New York organizing lectures, recitals and anything else musical. She was the biggest cheerleader for the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, where her spirit will live on in the music at Jacoby Hall.



Ruth P. Conley

She was a member of the board of directors (emeritus) of the Jacksonville Symphony and the St. Augustine Music Festival. Her help and encouragement to young and aspiring musicians and the many venues where music was important is probably the greatest legacy of her life. She was a member of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church and Tuesday Bible Study at The Plantation in Ponte Vedra. She is survived by four children: Paul (Jane), Omaha, NE; Deborah Bower (Edward), Peterborough, NH; Christopher (Sarah), Hillsdale, MI; and Anne Ondrey (Thomas), Chardon, OH; nine grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren. The family would like to thank the staffs at Vicars Landing Health Care and Community Hospice of Jacksonville for the good care they took of their beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Because of the pandemic PRIVATE FAMILY SERVICES will be held.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests contributions in honor of Ruth be made to the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church or The Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine.

Please visit her Tribute online at www.quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Family Funeral Home.



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Pellegrino Patsy Porraro (Bill)

Pellegrino Patsy Porraro (Bill), 95, passed away December 23, 2020 at home in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Bill was a first generation American, born of Pasquale (Patsy) Porraro and Natalina Nigro in Paterson, New Jersey, on October 26, 1925.

He graduated from LaSalle Military Academy as a 2nd Lieutenant and joined the Army as the youngest commissioned officer ever in World War II. He served in the European Campaign and was wounded in the Huertgen Forest and received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for heroic and meritorious service.

He returned home and attended Lehigh University graduating in three years with an engineering degree, also lettering in track and football.

After graduating he began his long and successful career with Prudential Insur-



Pellegrino Patsy Porraro (Bill)

ance Company culminating as President of District Agencies and Executive Senior Vice President. He managed offices all over the world and opened Prudential's first offices in Italy and Japan. On February 23, 1952 he married Dona Jane Mohr (deceased 2007), his wonderful wife and mother of their 3 children, Jette Wood (Mark), Mark Porraro and Tina Spina (Mark). During his career at Prudential they moved many times and twice to Jacksonville finally retiring and moving to The Plantation at Ponte Vedra in 1987. Bill became one of the first Presidents of The Plantation for 1993-1994, and was instrumental in the conversion of the club to equity ownership. He was an avid tennis player and golfer with 3 holes in one! He never met a stranger and with his great sense of humor was an admired friend of all.

He was an accomplished pianist and could never pass a piano without tickling the ivories. He made sure that he exposed the grandchildren, playing chop sticks was a requirement, ultimately making a CD of his favorite songs. He was a strong supporter of the UNF Music Department, especially the Jazz Program where he regularly attended many concerts.

He is survived by his younger brother, Dr. Richard Porraro, his three children, Jette, Mark and Tina, nine grandchildren

and four great-grandchildren and his loving companion, Sandra Catallo.

He was a treasure of a man and anyone who met him walked away feeling better about themselves. A true gentleman and one of the last of the "Greatest Generation."

He will be missed by all.

A celebration of his life will be held in his honor at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to the UNF Jazz Music Scholarship Fund, Attn.: UNF Foundation, Alumni Hall, 1 UNF Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224 or at <https://give.unf.edu/COAS>., K9s for Warriors.org. or a charity of your choice.

Please visit the Tribute online at www.quinn-shalz.com. Arrangements by Quinn Shalz Family Funeral Home.



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Phone: 904.249.1100 Fax: 904.241.7554

Barbara "Bobbie" Tribble Holding

Barbara "Bobbie" Tribble Holding, 86, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Dec. 30, 2020. Arrangements by Quinn-Shalz Family Funeral Home, (904) 249-1100, www.quinn-shalz.com.

Paul Matthews

Paul Matthews, 80, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, died Dec. 24, 2020. Ponte Vedra Valley Funeral Home, Cremation Center & Cemetery – (904) 285-1130 – www.pontevedravalle.com

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Business Weekly

PAGE 14

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2021

www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Column: Financial moves to make in the New Year

Page 16



Photo provided by Spencer and Megan Vidal

Kookaburra Coffee has six locations in St. Johns County, which serve a wide array of coffees and baked goods made in-house.

Coffee company breaks new ground

Kookaburra expands in-house menu as well as locations, which includes Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee

By Holly Tishfield

The Kookaburra Coffee brand has come a long way since opening its first 420-square-foot store in 2012.

Spencer and Megan Vidal founded their shop with a dream of mixing great coffee and baked goods with a welcoming familial atmosphere. Spencer Vidal, a dual citizen of both America and Australia, chose to open the shop with a name reminiscent of his maternal heritage.

All pies and other goods produced in the shop are family recipes, passed down in Vidal's family through his grandmother, his mother, and then to him.

The downtown shop, located in St. Augustine on Cathedral Place, began by sourcing its coffee from the popular Jacksonville distributor, Bold Bean, and working with a local baker to serve pies. The shop became a hit, drawing members of the community together in the small building for good coffee and even better conversation.

But as of about four years ago, The Kookaburra started creating its own products in-house. It now roasts its own coffees, makes its own syrups and chai, and has constructed kitchens in-house to bake its own pies, too.

"Pretty much anything that we can make in-house, we do," Megan Vidal said.

The extensive menu boasts more than a dozen different options of freshly brewed coffee, such as the Aussie Iced, an ice-brewed coffee with housemade vanilla and

KOOKABURRA continues on Page 15

Pain has purpose! Believe it ... then heal it!



Harry Pappas
Columnist

I don't know what your struggle is but I know you have one. No matter how one appears, everyone has a dark side, such as shame, loneliness, regret, hardship or heartbreak. Therefore, none of us are strangers to the pain of struggle.

If you are in the midst of a major setback and are discouraged and about to give up, turn this up! At the risk of appearing like the Dalai Lama or Mother Teresa in word or deed, I put forth that suffering is an essential part of life, and is neither good nor bad. Our response to adversity is paramount; it will decide if we will be a victor or a victim.

Distress causes far too many folks to lose hope, become incredibly fearful and question God. It's easy to get frustrated, discouraged and bewildered when the messenger of misery pays us a visit, but wallowing in our tears and asking, "Why me?" is not a recipe for progress.

I suggest that evangelist and teacher Oswald Chambers was spot on when he said, "No sin is worse than the sin of self-pity." When we remove ourselves from this worldly sorrow (self-pity) and believe that sometimes it takes the worst things done to us to bring out the best in us, the magic appears.

I hope the following words offer a fresh supply of motivation, inspiration and hope for those going through a life storm. I argue that our biggest roadblocks to healing our pain is our lack of faith.

Faith is everything! Faith believes healing will happen when there are no signs that it will happen. Faith says, "I trust even though I don't understand."

I do not profess any special wisdom about why terrible things happen to people, but I have unwavering

PAPPAS continues on Page 17

Baptist Medical Center Beaches earns top mark for patient safety

Baptist Medical Center Beaches earned an 'A' rating in the fall 2020 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, joining the top third of more than 2,600 evaluated health care systems selected to receive the highest achievement possible for protecting patient safety. This is the fourth consecutive time Baptist Beaches has received an 'A' safety rating.

"Each day, our team members and physicians work diligently to ensure that our patients receive the highest level of quality patient care, no matter the circumstances," said Joe Mitrick, FACHE, hospital president of Baptist Beaches. "We are grateful to be recognized with the highest possible recognition as we continue to develop new

initiatives to keep our patients safe."

Developed under the guidance of a national panel of experts, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses up to 27 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to assign an 'A-F' letter grade to acute-care hospitals across the United States. The grade incorporates metrics such as infection, error and accident rates to assess health systems for patient safety, helping consumers and their families make the safest choice for care possible.

Baptist Jacksonville, Baptist Nassau and Baptist South also received 'A' ratings, making Baptist Health a 'straight A' system for the second consecutive time.

"As we faced unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19, our system remained committed to the highest level of patient safety," said David Rice, M.D., senior vice president, chief medical officer and chief quality officer for Baptist Health. "Our dedication to providing consistent, cutting-edge care using all available protective measures will continue to reassure patients that their safety comes before all else."

The Leapfrog Group is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality and safety of American health care. The Hospital Safety Grade's methodology is peer-reviewed and the results are free to the public.



Photo provided by Spencer and Megan Vidal

Kookaburra opened its first location in downtown St. Augustine in 2012 (pictured), and has since added five other locations, including its newest at the Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee.

Kookaburra

Continued from 14

cream, or the Honey Badger, a latte with honey, cinnamon and vanilla. Some of its baked goods include the True Blue Brek-kie Pie, which contains eggs and cheddar topped with rosemary, or the Traditional Meat Pie, which has minced meat and onions in a tomato gravy.

Business at The Kookaburra became so successful that the Vidals opened another five locations, stretching all throughout St. Augustine. Most recently, The Kookaburra opened the doors to its sixth shop in the new Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee.

“They reached out to us,” said Vidal, “and we were so thrilled that they would want us to be a part of this.”

Flagler Health+’s Village at Nocatee opened in early December. Here, The Kookaburra shop can offer unique treats and coffees to the visitors of the health center and the residents of Nocatee.

Though the original downtown shop

remains their most popular location, the Vidals say that having the new shop in Nocatee is a perfect way for them to explore branching out of the St. Augustine area.

“Even though Nocatee is pretty close, it is still far enough that we have to really think about logistics,” said Vidal.

The Kookaburra brand offers wholesaling through their website, as well as a list of their coffees and pies available for purchase at any of their six branches. Go to www.thekookaburracoffee.com for more information.

Flagler Health+ names Vincent Johnson chief of operations across enterprise

Vincent Johnson, MBA, has joined Flagler Health+ as executive vice president and chief operating officer.

In this role, Johnson is responsible for overseeing all aspects of operations across the Flagler Health+ enterprise, including existing and future inpatient hospitals and ambulatory sites.



Vincent Johnson

“We are extremely fortunate to have Vincent Johnson join our team during this pivotal time of growth in our history,” said Flagler Health+ President and CEO Jason Barrett. “In addition to Vincent’s broad experience and proven operational acumen, he brings with him a spark that lights enthusiasm

for achieving even the most challenging and dynamic efforts. Vincent’s leadership will play a key role in our ability to engage our team members and further advance the physical, social and economic health of the communities we serve.”

Johnson holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Virginia and a master’s in business administration from Averett University. Reporting to Johnson are EVP and Chief Clinical Officer Nangela Pulsfus, EVP of Ambulatory Enterprise, John Franks and VP of Operations Donald Crist. To learn more about Flagler Health+, go to flaglerhealth.org.

Johnson has served in senior leadership roles in several top-ranked academic health systems as well as some of the largest healthcare companies in the United States.

Most recently, Johnson held several positions for United Health Group/Optum, including senior vice president of provider operations and strategic initiatives and vice president, technology for the medical group. Prior to that he was executive vice president and COO for University of California, San Francisco Health System. Earlier in his career, Johnson worked for UF Health Jacksonville as vice president of administration.

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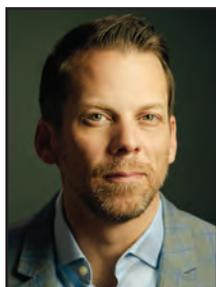
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Financial New Year's resolutions to make now



Abel Harding
North Florida market president, IBERIABANK

The New Year is a great time to establish your financial goals for 2021. Last year's Coronavirus pandemic shed light on the importance of financial responsibility and stability for your home and business. Here are a few things to consider as you assess your bottom line and make fresh resolutions this year.

CREATE A BUDGET

Whether you keep a spreadsheet or prefer an app, there are plenty of resources available to help track and manage your spending. First, review your monthly income. Then, identify all of your monthly expenses. Identify the bills that have to get paid first, and then bucket out additional spending for the month like gas and groceries, even morning coffee runs and meals out. Your budget can be as specific as you'd like.

What's important is that you're aware of where your money is going so that you can be in control of your own spending habits. You'll also want to compare how much you're making to how much you're spending each month and ensure you're able to include savings in your total budget.

PRIORITIZE SAVING

There are several ways to save, as well as many things you're likely saving for at once. Be it a down-payment on a car or house, a vacation, retirement or emergency savings — the important aspect is that you are saving money separate from the checking account you're regularly trans-



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnections.com

acting from. When it comes to where and how to save, your options vary from traditional savings accounts to investment portfolios. Be sure to consult with a financial advisor to see what best fits your goals and circumstances.

KEEP CASH ACCESSIBLE

A rule of thumb for emergency savings is to keep approximately three to six months of your expenses in an accessible savings account. Once you've worked out a budget and have an understanding of your total monthly expenses, you'll want to set aside or start to build a sav-

ings account specifically for emergency savings. This has proven especially important throughout 2020, as many Americans faced unexpected financial hardship due to the pandemic.

REDUCE DEBT

Another way to practice financial responsibility in the new year is to reduce or eliminate debt. Start with the smallest credit card or loan balance, and consider which debt has the highest interest rate. Once you've paid off one line of debt, apply the funds you were using to pay that debt toward another. Tackling debt in this way keeps you motivated to stay on track toward the goal of being debt free.

MAXIMIZE RETIREMENT PLANS

Part of saving includes saving for retirement, and you can never start too early. If you have the opportunity to save for your retirement through a 401(k), 403(b) or 457 plan provided by your employer, put aside as much as you can each month. Take full advantage of employer matched contributions, making sure you're contributing the fully matched amount from each paycheck.

These contributions are typically set-up and automatically taken out of each of your paychecks — pre-tax. In addition to the retirement plan you may have through work you can also consider contributing to a Traditional IRA or Roth IRA. Be sure to consult a financial advisor regarding your particular tax situation.

If we learned anything in 2020, it's that we must be prepared for curveballs. Let 2021 finally be the year you take control of your finances once and for all.

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Pappas

Continued from 14

and steadfast conviction that there are divine reasons for our pain.

Therefore, I consider struggles a beautiful thing and urge all of us to carry our black-and-blues proudly. Isn't part of the excitement of overcoming our hardships to look back at all the obstacles that we overcame and the pain we endured?

Maybe these words from an old Amy Grant song, "Life is hard . . . and it might not get easier," are true, but so what?

Those of us with strong faith know greatness is on the other side of the pain, and we have faith and trust that we will rise out of the ashes because we were born warriors! We view setbacks as a classroom where we deepen our faith and build our character while becoming more humble, more compassionate and more patient. There is little doubt that if we truly believe that our pain has purpose and we are determined not to just "go" through our hardship but to "grow" through it, we will have a remarkable testimony to share that underscores the power of faith and trust. The fruit from our testimony will put the hunger and passion in our soul to help others through his or her emotional pain! So, please don't ever tap out to pain. Pain is our friend. We must embrace the darkness! I believe our healing begins on our knees where we let go and let God! When we

feed our faith, our fear will starve. Our struggle is real, but so is the God that will deliver us!

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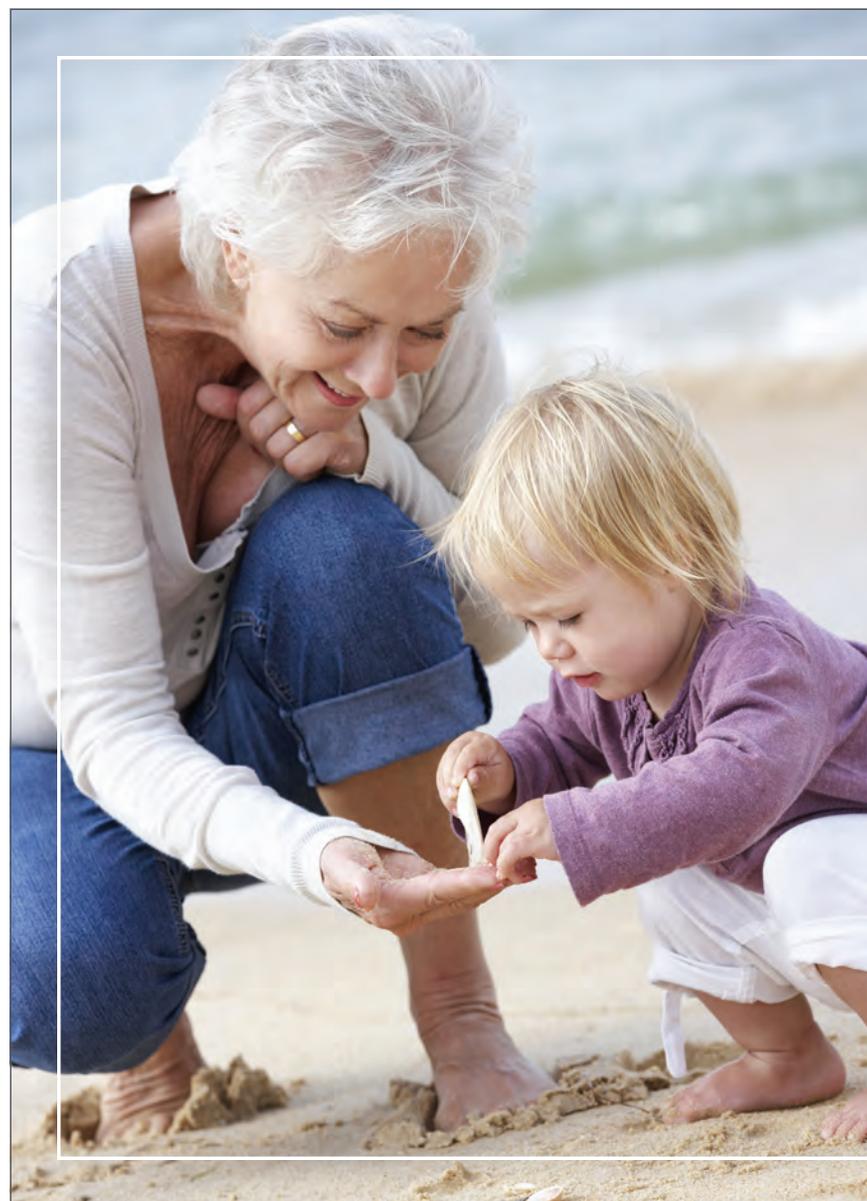
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PulteGroup announces new St. Johns County project

PulteGroup, one of the nation's leading home builders, has announced plans for its latest project, The Preserve at Bannon Lakes, in northern St. Johns County.

The community will consist of approximately 450 single-family homesites within the established Bannon Lakes master-plan community. The announcement marks the company's largest Pulte Homes community in Northeast Florida in over a decade.

"Based on the significant growth in St. Johns County, the market demand for new homes and the tremendous overall success of Bannon Lakes, we expect strong home buyer interest for The Preserve at Bannon Lakes in early 2021," said Clint Ball, division president of PulteGroup's North Florida Division. "Bannon Lakes is a wonderful community for families of all ages to live with beautiful homesites, completed amenities and convenient access to excellent schools, employment centers, entertainment



Map provided by The Preserve at Bannon Lakes

and outdoor recreation."

Pulte has already begun development of the project after closing on phase one earlier this month. The company will begin construction of model homes in the summer of 2021 and open for sales in the fall of 2021. The Preserve of Bannon Lakes will consist of 40-, 50-, and 60-foot-wide homesites.

Bordered by 20,000 acres of pristine preserve land, yet only half a mile from Interstate 95, Bannon Lakes offers a variety of amenities including a resort-style pool, clubhouse, fitness center, sport courts and more. Bannon Lakes is within the A-rated St. Johns County Public School District.

The Preserve at Bannon Lakes is the latest of multiple new projects for Pulte in Northeast Florida. Early this year, it announced three new communities scheduled to open for sales in early 2021, including Bradley Pond and Timber Cove in Duval County and the Trails at Grand Oaks in St. Johns County.

"Northeast Florida is one of the strongest markets in Florida with buyers who are seeking a combination of value, location and amenities," Ball said. "We believe these communities represent an outstanding opportunity for Pulte to expand our presence in area."

Go to www.pulte.com for more information.

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra names new director of golf

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra and its board of directors recently announced the appointment of Brad Nelson to the position of director of golf, effective Dec. 30, 2020.

Nelson is a Jacksonville native, a 2009 graduate of the University of North Florida with a B.S. in political science, and was a four-year member of the UNF men's golf team.

During his 10-plus-year career as a PGA professional, Nelson has held positions at some of the world's finest clubs, including Saucon Valley Country Club and Muirfield Village Golf Club. He most recently served as the head golf professional at Cedarbrook Country Club in Philadelphia. Additionally, Nelson worked as a golf professional at Sawgrass Country Club and Atlantic Beach Country Club.

Nelson brings a strong passion for the golf industry to his new position. His experience, leadership skills, industry knowledge and personality will be instrumental in moving The Plantation forward. He succeeds Nancy Maunder, who was one of his mentors early in his career. Maunder is retiring after serving as the director of golf for 20 years.

"It's been a dream of mine to return home to Jacksonville and work at The Plantation," Nelson said. "I look forward to continuing the legacy Nancy has maintained here for so many years."

Janet E. Johnson, P.A.

Criminal Defense Attorney



Janet Johnson is committed to aggressively defending people accused in all criminal matters in state and federal court. In practice since 1994, she is a member of the Florida Bar, The Federal Bar, Colorado Bar, as well as the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She has been on the faculty of FACDL "Blood, Breath & Tears" annual DUI seminar. Ms. Johnson has been awarded the AV preeminent rating™ from Martindale-Hubbell® and was named a fellow to the prestigious Litigation Counsel of America™, as well as one of the ten best criminal defense attorneys nationally for client satisfaction by the American Institute of Criminal Law Attorneys. She also appears as a legal commentator on CNN and HLN.

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Contributed photos

Mike Fitzpatrick's art draws from a life lived on the water.

Lifelong love of marine life inspires featured artist's work

Butterfield Garage's featured artist for January is Mike Fitzpatrick, who fishes and paints with equal enthusiasm.

He spent Tuesday, Jan. 5, at the gallery painting and discussing his vibrant marine life paintings.

He has spent his life on the water, growing up in South Florida where he could be found fishing from the beaches or piers, in canals and the Intracoastal, offshore or in the Bahamas. When he became a "Florida Gator" he added inland lakes, rivers, creeks and roommates' aquariums to his list of favorite fishing spots.

After graduating from the University of Florida, he became a U.S. Coast Guard licensed boat captain. He spent the next 30-plus years running and maintaining private pleasure and tournament sport

fishing boats from Cape Cod to San Salvador and all over the Gulf of Mexico.

He painted marine life off and on over the years for family and friends or to donate as awards for fishing tournaments, and in 2017 he let his hidden artistic talent out of the fish box for everyone to enjoy. He is now fulfilling his lifelong desire to paint professionally and has created dozens of "Fitz Originals," some complemented by his own unique handcrafted wooden frames.

In vibrant colors, his self-taught and evolving style depicts the beauty and energy of sea life. Fitzpatrick's enthusiasm is infectious, and his paintings reflect his great love for both painting and the underwater life in the sea.

Butterfield Garage Gallery is located at 137 King St.

Authors Olga Grushin and Karen Fowler to appear at virtual event

Award-winning author Olga Grushin will appear for The BookMark's virtual author event at 7 p.m. Jan. 15. She will introduce her new book, "The Charmed Wife," and will participate in a conversation with author Karen Fowler.

"The Charmed Wife" has been described as a "spellbinding, sophisticated literary fairy tale for the 21st century."

Part dark epilogue to the story of Cinderella, part feminist revenge fantasy, Grushin's subversive fourth novel picks up with the eponymous heroine 13 years after her marriage to Prince Charming brought her the seemingly perfect life — and the princess wants out.

The novel upends conventional wisdom about one of the most well-known stories in modern history, begging the question: What really comes after Happily Ever After?

Brimming with insights about love, desire and romantic expectations, "The Charmed Wife" deconstructs traditional fairy tale tropes about marriage and happiness to deliver a fresh perspective on

contemporary womanhood.

Moscow-born Grushin moved to the United States when she was 18. She is the author of three previous novels, "Forty Rooms," "The Line" and "The Dream Life of Sukhanov." The latter, her debut novel, won the New York Public Library Young Lions Fiction Award and was one of The New York Times' Notable Books of the Year. Her work has been translated into 16 languages.

Karen Fowler is the author of six novels, including Booker Prize finalist and international bestseller "We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves," "Wits End" and "The Jane Austen Book Club."

For the link to reserve your spot and join the crowdcast, go to facebook.com/bookmarkbeach and click "events." For more information about this BookMark event, go to www.bookmarkbeach.com, send an email to bkmrk@bellsouth.net or call 904-241-9026.

The BookMark is located at 220 First St., Neptune Beach.

THEME: FAMOUS DUOS

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- Timothy Q. Mouse's friend, in Disney classic
- River in Germany
- Bridle parts
- Whatsoever
- Like tuna tartare
- Plural of #3 Down
- Hardware store
- "Gladiator" setting
- *Ferb Fletcher's stepbrother
- *Mr. White's unfortunate student
- Welcome spot for weary traveler
- It shall, for short
- Cul de ____
- Young herring
- Dieter's cuisine, for short
- Gator's cousin
- French "place"
- Chunk of iceberg
- St. Louis monument
- Like new TV set
- Front of ship
- Singular of loci
- Additional
- Reality TV's Spelling
- *Assistant to regional manager Michael Scott
- Missing a limb
- More, in Madrid
- Like acne-prone skin
- Pimple fluid
- *Shirley's roommate and fellow bottle-capper
- *Rory Gilmore's mom
- Make an effort
- Legal org.
- Long stories
- Scottish valleys
- Doctor Dolittle, e.g.
- *One of The Carpenters duo
- Bone-dry
- Opposite of WSW
- Red or orange announcement
- *Amy Poehler's comedic partner
- Welsh alternative to Siobhán
- Was almost out of gas, e.g.
- Source of indigo dye, pl.
- "____ Be Home For Christmas"
- In the best possible way
- Coffee burn, e.g.
- *Bow and ____
- Spherical bacteria
- *Corona's main squeeze?
- What willow did
- Read-only chip
- Greek bazaar
- *Clark's fellow traveler
- College party chant
- Celestial bear
- Dancer's beat
- Daisy dukes, e.g.
- "Wizard of Oz" man
- Archimedes' exclamation
- Furlough
- Flower part
- Frog delicacy
- Wheel shaft
- Swerve
- European sea eagle
- *David and Paul on the "____ Show"
- Italian currency, pl.
- Maple genus
- Negative contraction
- *Jerry's fellow treat-maker

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DOWN

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- Skirt length
- Shrovetide dish
- *Mary-Kate and Ashley
- Geologists' studies
- * ____ and cheese
- Moved under the rug
- "All ____ , no bite"
- Footnote word

Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Sports

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2021 · PAGE 20

Send your sports news to
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www.PonteVedraRecorder.com

Despite 12-day hiatus, PVHS boys basketball improves to 13-1

Sole loss so far this season is to rival Nease at holiday tournament

By Jim Moyes

Special to the Recorder

After completing their best start in school history with 13 wins and just one defeat, the Ponte Vedra Sharks are hoping the New Year will bring continued success for their program. Although the Sharks had lots of company during this unparalleled pandemic, they too were presented with many challenging obstacles.

Coach Kevin Whirity's Sharks traveled to Creekside without four regulars, but persevered by defeating a one-loss Creekside team 46-38. Whirity got some welcome support from his reserves, including 13 points from senior Aiden Frien who had not even tallied a single point leading up to the tilt with Creekside.

Sporting a perfect 9-0 record and scheduled to appear in a holiday tournament beginning Dec. 21 at Orange Park, the Sharks were forced to cancel their 3-game outing due to COVID-19 exposure for an unknown number of players.

However, thanks to their friends at Clay County, the Sharks were last-minute invites to Clay County High's

Holiday Tournament. However, one more obstacle stood in the way: The tournament started on Dec. 28 and the Sharks were not cleared from quarantine until Dec. 29. In order to pave the way for the Sharks to compete, not only would the Sharks have to play two games on Tuesday, Dec. 29, but so would the host Blue Devils.

"While we were physically separated for 12 days, we kept in close contact via Zoom and even received words of encouragement from guest speakers," Whirity said. "And the on the 12th day of Christmas, Clay High School graciously gave our Sharks the opportunity to reunite and

SHARKS continues on Page 21

Jaguars begin search for new coach following 20-14 loss to Colts

Marrone fired after 1-15 season

By Mike Bonts

Special to the Recorder

INDIANAPOLIS | On Monday, after four-plus seasons, the Jacksonville Jaguars fired Doug Marrone as head coach.

"I am committed and determined to deliver winning football to the City of Jacksonville," Jaguars owner Shad Khan said in a statement. "Realizing that goal requires a fresh start throughout our football operations, and with that in mind I spoke this morning with Doug Marrone to express my gratitude for his hard work over the past four seasons as the head coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars."

The sacking came one-day after Jacksonville wrapped up the season with a 20-14 loss at Indianapolis and finishing with a 1-15 record.

"I'll always appreciate Doug's passion, grit and class, and I'm confident he will enjoy success in the next chapter of his career," Kahn added. "As the search for our new general manager continues, now the quest begins to find a head coach who shares my ambition for the Jacksonville Jaguars and our fans, whose loyalty and faith are overdue to be rewarded."

The Jaguars own the No. 1 pick in the 2021 NFL Draft, which is scheduled for April 29-May 1 in Cleveland.

On Monday, the Jaguars signed linebacker Nate Evans, wide receiver Josh Hammond, offensive linemen Garrett McGhin, Austen Pleasants and Tre'Vour Wallace-Simms, cornerbacks Nate Meadors and Josh Nurse, punter Cameron Nizialek, defensive end Aaron Patrick, running back Craig Reynolds and defensive tackle Gabe Wright to reserve/future contracts.

Next season's home and away opponents were also announced. The Jaguars will host the Houston Texans,



Photo provided by Jacksonville Jaguars

Jaguars running back Dare Ogunbowale is tackled by Colts linebacker Darius Leonard during last Sunday's game in Indianapolis. The Jaguars lost to the Colts 20-14 and fell to 1-15 for the season.

Indianapolis Colts, Tennessee Titans, Buffalo Bills, Miami Dolphins, Arizona Cardinals, San Francisco 49ers and Denver Broncos.

The Jaguars will travel to play the Texans, Colts, Titans, Cincinnati Bengals, New England Patriots, New York Jets, Los Angeles Rams and the Seattle Seahawks.

The Sunday highlights for the Jaguars included a pair of touchdown passes from starting quarterback Mike Glennon to rookie wide receiver Laviska Shenault Jr. Glennon completed 26-of-46 passes for 261 yards.

The Colts sacked Glennon six times.

Running back Dare Ogunbowale, subbing for an injured

Greg McGarity named Gator Bowl Sports president, CEO

Former Georgia AD replaces Rick Catlett, who served 29 years in role

Gator Bowl Sports Chairman John Duce and the Board of Trustees announced Tuesday, Jan. 5, that Greg McGarity has been named as the president and CEO of Gator Bowl Sports, a role he will assume March 1.

McGarity joins Gator Bowl Sports following a 43-year career in college athletics which began at the University of Georgia in 1977. The University of Georgia served as the launching point of McGarity's career where he served in multiple roles through 1992 when he left for the University of Florida. While at Florida, he served in several leadership roles and was a staple in all Florida vs. Georgia operations. In 2010, McGarity returned to Athens as the athletic director for the Bulldogs until he announced his retirement in December 2020.

McGarity will replace Rick Catlett who has served 29 years as president and CEO of Gator Bowl Sports. In his upcoming role, McGarity will oversee all operations of Gator Bowl Sports including the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl, JAXSPORTS Council and Gator Bowl Charities. He will continue to position the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl as a premier bowl in the country. In addition, McGarity will assist with Gator Bowl Sports strategic partners

JAGUARS continues on Page 21

GATOR BOWL continues on Page 21

Jaguars

Continued from 20

James Robinson, rushed for 50 yards on 14 carries.

Jaguars safety Andrew Wingard intercepted veteran Indianapolis QB Philip Rivers in the third quarter.

Colts running back Jonathan Taylor clinched the win with a 45-yard TD run. Taylor rushed for 253 yards on 30 carries.

Rivers completed 17-of-27 passes for 164 yards and one touchdown with an interception. The Colts outgained the Jaguars, 436-283.

The Colts finished the season 11-5 and are headed to the playoffs. The Jaguars' loss extended their franchise-record losing streak to 15, the worst season-ending record in franchise history.

Marrone was 23-43 record over four-plus seasons. He took over as an interim coach for the final two games of the 2016 season before a 2017 march to the AFC Championship game.

"What has evaded the Jags is a franchise quarterback," said Khan, pointing out the six different starting quarterbacks over the past three years. "We have the ability to make a choice and it will define the franchise moving forward."

Gator Bowl

Continued from 20

such as the City of Jacksonville, Jacksonville Jaguars, JAX Chamber and local corporate partners to ensure that Jacksonville remains forefront in collegiate sporting events for years to come.

"When the Gator Bowl Sports Board of Trustees were tasked with finding a replacement for Rick, we prioritized growth of our organization both locally and nationally. To do that, it was imperative that we find a candidate with strong relationships throughout college athletics and within Northeast Florida," said Gator Bowl Sports Chairman John Duce. "Greg brings with him long-term relationships and respect

not only in college athletics, but also with Gator Bowl Sports stakeholders from years of working in partnership on the Georgia vs. Florida game. He is a tremendous asset to our organization and we look forward to building a future with him at the helm."

"I look forward to joining the Gator Bowl Sports team and furthering a legacy that is 76 years in the making," McGarity said. "I have had the privilege to work with Rick and many others who are instrumental in the Jacksonville sports scene throughout my career and am excited to join and contribute to a vibrant sports community."

McGarity and his wife Sheryl recently relocated to Northeast Florida. They have one son, Alex, a graduate of the University of Florida and the University of Georgia.

Sharks

Continued from 20

jump back in the water head-first."

The Sharks not only went 12 days without a game, but they went 12 days without a practice. In their opening game of the tourney, the Sharks understandably got off to a frigid start and trailed 14-6 after the first quarter. The Sharks recovered and rallied to defeat the Blue Devils 55-39 with junior Luke Pirris scoring a career-high 26 points.

The Sharks, after defeating Clay in a noon start, returned later that night to face their archrivals from Nease High School. It appeared the Sharks were in for a long night against the Panthers as they missed an unprecedented 19 consecutive attempts from 3-point range. Nease coach Josh Bailen had a superb game plan against the Sharks, who had defeated Nease 19 days earlier, 48-41. Clogging up the middle, to prevent patented Pirris drives to the rim paid off huge dividends for Nease as the Panthers held the Sharks' leading scorer to a single field goal in a 43-41 win.

The Sharks trailed by 13 points with two minutes remaining in the contest when Whirity employed a desperate, but very effective, full-court press against Nease. Coming up with a number of steals and finally able to convert their only 3-pointers on the

evening, the Sharks trailed by only two points with a half minute remaining in the game.

"Knowing the toughness of our guys, our staff didn't bat an eye at playing two games in one day," Whirity said. "However, the level of grit they put on display in the last minutes of their eighth quarter of the day even shocked me."

The Sharks had a couple of good looks during the game's final moments but neither of their shots for the win found their mark.

Not to be deterred with the loss against Nease, the Sharks returned to the court the next day and played perhaps their best game of the season, an impressive 65-49 victory over an athletic Orange Park team. Balanced scoring was the key for the Sharks as Pirris (19), Alex Madson (16) and sophomore Nathan Bunkosky (14) all were in double figures.

"While we've built a strong foundation, our challenges ahead will only intensify and necessitate an elevated level of play," Whirity said. "We're looking forward to increased practice time in the second half of the season."

The Sharks returned to action this week with another busy three-game schedule. PVHS dominated Trinity Christian in a 54-16 win on Monday night, and defeated Bolles 61-52 on Tuesday. The Sharks will host Fletcher at 7:30 p.m. Thursday.

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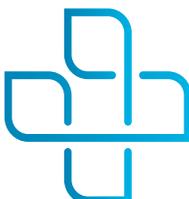
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