

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

JUNE 2020 Volume 7 Issue 6

Ponte Vedra, Palm Valley, Nocatee and South Ponte Vedra Beach

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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Drive-through food drive



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Samuel and Allison Moseley



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Puzzles

Nease named #1 NJROTC program in Northern Florida and all Georgia

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslne.com

The coronavirus pandemic has dampened the spirits of high school students across the area with the loss of spring sports, graduation and prom. Yet amid the shelter in place directives and social distancing requirements, a ray of bright news has shown down on Nease High School.

Commander Rustie L. Hibbard, Navy JROTC Area-12 Manager, announced Nease High School as the Most Out-



Photos courtesy Scott LaRochelle
Nease NJROTC's cadet staff lead the cadet corps during Annual Military Inspection.

standing Unit in Area-12, a region that encompasses 60 schools covering the 13 schools in northeastern Florida and the 47 across the entire state of Georgia. This marks the eighth time in the past nine years the Navy has recognized Nease NJROTC for its overall excellence.

The award is based on the total achievement of the program, which includes academic performance, community

Nease cont. on pg. 9

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Teen creates fashion line while helping environment

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewslne.com

When Ponte Vedra High School senior Scout Snell looks at a piece of second hand clothing, she sees a story and a lot of potential.

"You never know where these clothes are from and the life that they had before you," said Snell, who will attend New College of Florida in the fall. "You are continuing the life of these clothes, extending it to be something more."

Snell recently took her passion for thrifting and fashion and created Cut from the Cloth by Scout, a company dedicated to sustainable and handmade fashion. She sews her own clothing and upcycles her thrifted clothes, having produced three collections (drops) sold online so far. She described upcycling as the process of taking something old and turning it into something new and more useful.

"I have become very passionate about sustainability and the environmental impact of clothes and the impact of not buying from fashion retailers," said Snell.

Snell notes on her company website that, "According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 5 percent of landfill space is occupied by textiles. Only 27 percent of people donate their clothing and only 7 percent of people purchase used clothing. Let's change that."

After receiving a sewing machine from her aunt as an early graduation gift, Snell taught herself to use it by watching YouTube videos.

"I like how seamless it is as compared to just a needle and thread by itself. It is more streamlined and faster. It is different, and I gravitated to it," said Snell, who gathers inspiration from sustainable fashion YouTubers.

Snell also likes Japanese consultant Marie Kondo's concept of finding items that spark joy.

"I like to take clothes that you used to love and create something new, so that the clothes will last longer and continue to bring joy and love," said Snell.

Her top three consignment shopping spots are the Salvation Army off Beach Boulevard, BEAM Thrift in Jacksonville Beach and any Goodwill Store. Snell takes a methodical approach to shopping by going section by section, something she

recommends to any first-time consignment shoppers.

"Otherwise, it can be very overwhelming," said Snell. "You really have to look when you are in thrift

stores. You have to imagine yourself in the clothes and look for the potential since there are usually no mannequins there displaying different outfits."

Snell described her style as a mix of everything, sometimes soft pants and t-shirts for comfort (for example during the stay-at-home orders) and sometimes jeans and t-shirts for a classic casual look. She also loves girly casual pieces and graphic t-shirts, the latter being very easy to find in thrift stores.

Snell's favorite handmade items are her two-piece sets and her New College tie-dye pullover sweatshirts. She said she will often look at an outfit and create it visually or look for a pattern or a guide, taking measurements and working with different textures accordingly.

"It is fun to create my own college pieces and to make it any way that I want to," she said.

Snell, who currently works at a local ice cream shop, plans to bring her sewing machine with her to college and continue

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Photos courtesy Scout Snell
Scout Snell

pursuing environmental sustainability through fashion. She will also take some of her classes at the Ringling College of Art and Design.

Snell's mother, Tricia Booker, is proud of her daughter for both her fashion sense and her desire to make the world a better place.

"I'm most comfortable wearing whatever is most comfortable, so her ability to turn almost anything into a style has always astonished me," said Booker. "But her interest in sustainability and upcycling clothes just makes my heart soar. I love that she feels passionate about something that can literally help change the world."

During the pandemic, Snell started making face masks available for sale even when elastic was incredibly hard to find. She sewed the mask with four longer



Outfit from Cut from the Cloth by Scout

Fashion line cont. on pg. 5

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Briefs**Real estate sales down, pricing up in Northeast Florida**

As COVID-19 continued to assert itself throughout April, real estate activity in Northeast Florida kept to a steady pace. There were 2,334 closed sales, similar to February (2,348 sales) or November 2019 (2,354 sales), but a 22.9 percent drop from a year ago in April 2019.

While the quantity of sales were down, pricing took an opposite track. The median for April was \$250,000 and the average sales price topped out at \$298,438. Of all the sales that occurred in April, 15.2 percent were for more than the original listing price.

Surprisingly, although Realtors and others involved in the industry were faced with conducting business using vastly different methods than are considered traditional, sales still took place in an average of 67 days, the exact same number of days as a year ago.

Not surprisingly, the number of sellers adding their home to the market in April dropped 22.4 percent from a year ago, resulting in 3,107 new listings.

Overall inventory dropped to 8,545 properties, or 14.2 percent less than the same month last year. Here's a breakdown, by price, of the 8,545 homes in inventory:

2,243: less than \$200,000
2,388: \$200,000 – \$299,999
2,263: \$300,000 – \$499,999
1,244: \$500,000 – \$999,999
407: \$1,000,000 or more
April 2020 real estate market reports for Northeast Florida are now on NEFAR.

com (Market Stats tab). The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors (NEFAR) provides professional development, political advocacy, professional standards administration, media relations, and promotional activities and exchange of information among its members.

Hospital nationally recognized with "A" rating for dedication to patient safety

Baptist Medical Center South received an 'A' rating in the spring 2020 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, a national distinction recognizing achievements in providing the safest health care for patients. Baptist Beaches, Baptist Nassau and Baptist Jacksonville also received A safety ratings.

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade assigns an A, B, C, D or F grade to hospitals across the country based on their performance in preventing medical errors, infections and other harms among patients in their care. Developed under the guidance of a national expert panel, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses 28 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to assign grades to more than 2,600 U.S. acute-care hospitals twice per year. The Hospital Safety Grade's methodology is peer-reviewed and fully transparent, and the results are free to the public.

"We're committed to providing quality care that exceeds the expectations of our patients and their families, especially when it comes to safety," said Nicole Thomas, FACHE, hospital president of Baptist South. "Our team members and physicians are dedicated caregivers, making sure they adhere to the highest safety

standards every day. We monitor, measure and make constant improvements year-round."

Baptist Health's safety and quality protocols have been further enhanced during the COVID-19 crisis through a number of additional measures. Separate respiratory care units for COVID-19 patients, designated staff and equipment for COVID-19 rooms, and using advanced UV technology for decontamination are among the many safety reinforcements.

Ponte Vedra Womans Club "Giving Hope"

The Ponte Vedra Womans Club had to cancel its last fundraiser, which was Caribbean Night scheduled for May 2. To help make up for the loss, the club's Ways and Means chairs set up a GoFundMe page to help the five charities the club supports. Donors were able to choose where their money was to go since all organizations are very much in need currently. Those receiving the \$6,025 donated were Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, St. Augustine Youth Services, Betty Griffin Center, Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry, and Expanding Your Horizons.

Underwood's Jewelers donated a gift certificate and an earring and necklace set for a drawing of donors. Mary Stewart won the \$150 gift card and Susan Plovnick won the necklace and earring set.

Utilities department recommends freshening water systems before reopening buildings

St. Johns County Utilities recommends

following EPA guidelines when reopening buildings that have been closed for an extended period of time. Stagnant water conditions can result in discolored water, lower chlorine levels, and changes in water chemistry due to little or no water running through building water pipes and fixtures. Building managers and business owners who are reopening buildings are recommended to follow these steps:

- Review and understand the plumbing configuration and water usage in your building.
- Inspect the plumbing to ensure it is functioning properly and in good condition.
- Review the potential impact degraded water quality might have on your building occupants considering their use of the building and the building's water systems.
- Flush the building's plumbing system.
- Drain and clean water storage facilities and hot water heaters.
- Follow appropriate regulations and policies for worker safety and health while performing all activities.

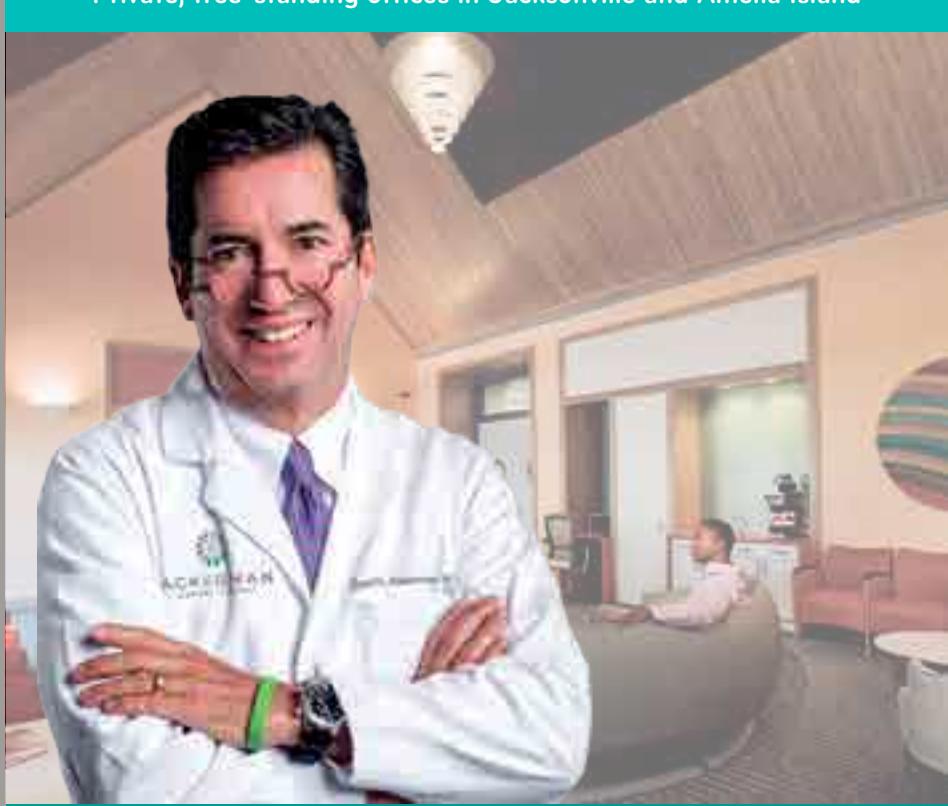
Building managers and business owners are encouraged to contact their water utility company with questions regarding the status and quality of the water in their distribution system.

Visit the EPA website regarding restoring water quality in buildings that have been closed or call St. Johns County Utilities at (904) 209-2645 for more information

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Summer!



BREED:
Rough Collie

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Playing in the ocean waves

FAVORITE TREAT:
Coconut Ice Cream

FAVORITE FRIEND:
Jada

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:

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MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?

Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.

Last month's Mystery Photo was the Guana North parking lot entrance.
Our winner was Kathryn Moyer. Congratulations!

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Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 10

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Answers: A. fireworks B. lit C. display D. sparkle

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with St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer

Q: What is the status of your office in St. Augustine as of late May?

A: Our office is back open to the public, although we still as always encourage people to do business via our website or via telephone for convenience. Our staff will be wearing masks, we are encouraging social distancing, and we are disinfecting between customers. We are conducting business as usual and are on time and on schedule with submission of the county's tax rolls.

Q: Are staff from your office back to working in the field?

A: We had suspended field work, but now our workers are back in the field. They are always in clearly marked vehicles and wear clearly marked uniform shirts. I have asked them not to knock on doors or interact with the public to limit contact. So if someone knocks on your door, it won't be a worker from the property appraiser's office. Also, there are unfortunately a lot of scams going on right now, via telephone and door to door. If anything seems suspicious, contact our office right away.

Q: Have any of the deadlines for exemptions or filings been relaxed?

A: While there are imposed deadlines for applying for and receiving all the exemptions, they can be waived at the discretion of the property appraiser for "good cause." I believe the coronavirus is "good cause," so we have extended

the deadline to apply for any of the exemptions up to 25 days past the TRIM notices. This new deadline would then be in early September.

We also automatically extended the deadline for filing for Tangible Personal Property taxes for 45 days, so the new deadline was May 15. But again, with "good cause" this can be extended longer if requested. The property appraiser's office is trying to be flexible and considerate until TRIM.

Q: What else should homeowners be doing regarding their property at this time?

A: I'd like to encourage people to take some time to look on our website at the valuation and exemptions applied to their property. If there are any questions, please reach out to our office. We will fix a valuation if it is wrong and we will give an exemption if it is needed. Basically, if leeway is allowed, we will always decide in favor of the property owner.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you?

A: Our office is located at 4030 Lewis Speedway Ste. 203, (904) 827-5500. It is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Also, readers can email me at Eddie@sjcpa.us or call me at (904) 827-5500.



with St. Johns County Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon Patty

Q: To what extent is the Clerk of Court's office open at this point?

A: As of May 11, our office has been issuing marriage licenses and processing passport applications for St. Johns County residents by appointment only at our office in the St. Johns County Courthouse at 4010 Lewis Speedway in St. Augustine. Beginning in early June, we anticipate offering additional court functions and by early July, we tentatively plan for jury trials to resume. The vast majority of our offerings can be completed online, but we will share the expanded list of limited court proceedings via social media and our website as they become available for in person access.

Q: Can you clarify the duties of the Clerk of Court?

A: Since taking office in December, I've been focused on telling our story. The clerk's office is known, but not widely understood. We are basically the backbone of county government; we partner with the court system, we act as the county comptroller and are the custodian of county funds, and we act as the county recorder, including taking minutes at the Board of County Commissioners meetings. There are actually more than 1,000 different functions delineated in Florida Statute and in the Florida Constitution.

Q: What are you doing to get the word out about the duties of the clerk's office?

A: We have a weekly video series on our

Facebook page. Each video is about a minute to a minute and a half long and covers a Clerk of Court topic. I've also been speaking recently via Zoom call to Rotary Clubs. We just want to let the public know how we serve them.

Q: Are there any particular topics of interest?

A: With us being so connected with the court system, and in our position as a check and balance to maintain the integrity of county government, we are in a unique position to spotlight the lack of judicial capacity in St. Johns County and the need for additional county and circuit judges. St. Johns County hasn't added a new county judge since 1974, despite the huge population increase the county has experienced. The Florida Supreme Court uses a weighted case average as it considers adding judges, but these models don't consider some of our unique circumstances, including the enormous population growth. Over the next few weeks my plan is to release additional information and advocate with the state legislature in an effort to highlight the need for additional judicial capacity in our county.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you or your office?

A: A lot of questions can be answered by visiting our website, www.sjccoc.us. People can also email coc@sjccoc.us or call our main office at (904) 819-3600.

FYI Contact Numbers

St. Johns County Local Government (www.sjcfl.us)

Sheriff's Office: Sheriff David B. Shoar, dshoar@sjso.org, (904) 824-8304
Ponte Vedra Field Office: (904) 209-2215

Property Appraiser: Eddie Creamer, sjcpa@sjcpa.us; (904) 827-5500

Supervisor of Elections: Vicky Oakes, voakes@votesjc.com, (904) 823-2238

Tax Collector: Dennis Hollingsworth, taxcollector@sjctax.us, (904) 209-2250

Clerk of Court: Brandon Patty, (904) 819-3600

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

District 1: Jimmy Johns, bcc1johns@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0301
District 2: Jeb Smith, bcc2jsmith@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0302
District 3: Paul Waldron, bcc3pwaldron@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0303
District 4: Jeremiah Blocker,

bcc4jblocker@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0304
District 5: Henry Dean, bcc5hdean@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0305

St. Johns County School Board (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)
District 4: Kelly Barrera, kelly.barrera@stjohns.k12.fl.us, (904) 547-7510

State of Florida Elected Officials
Governor Ron DeSantis, (850) 488-7146

State House District 17: Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov, (904) 823-2300

State Senate District 7: Senator Travis Hutson, (386) 446-7610

Federal Elected Officials
U.S. Congress District 4: Representative John Rutherford, (202) 225-2501

U.S. Senate:
Senator Marco Rubio, (202) 224-3041
Senator Rick Scott, (202) 224-5274



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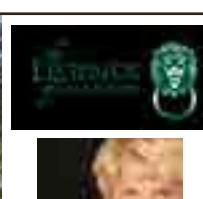
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Volunteers of the Year announced; PVHS student honored as Outstanding Youth Volunteer

By NewsLine Staff
mail@florianewsline.com

Ninety-three volunteers have been designated as 2019 – 2020 Outstanding Youth, Adult or Senior Volunteers for the St. Johns County School District. Their recognition reception slated for April 2 was canceled due to Covid-19.

Additionally, Chase Magnano, a senior at Ponte Vedra High School, was honored by Superintendent Tim Forson via video conference on April 28 as the district's Outstanding Youth Volunteer. His service in the areas of Sources of Strength, Freshmen Hacks Lunch and Learn, JaxThrive, Refugee Summer Leadership Program, Teens Take A Stand and many other areas has shown his determination to make the world a better place. Magnano was also chosen as the state's Region II Outstanding Youth Volunteer of the Year, making him one of the top five youth school volunteers in Florida.

Volunteers help with activities in schools including reading and math tutoring, taking part in booster clubs to ensure success for sports, music and art clubs, chaperoning field trips, mentoring students, and much more. This year 25,000 school volunteers provided more than 185,000 hours of service to the county's schools. This total would have been much higher if schools had not closed as the spring months bring many needs for volunteers.

Following are the outstanding volunteers (Youth, Adult and Senior) for northern St. Johns County schools (not all schools recognized all three classifications of volunteers):

Bartram Trail High School: Peyton Canaday (Y); Dana Casey (A)

Creekside High School: September Fox (Y); Sheila Sexton (A)

Cunningham Creek Elementary School: Rebecca Kerr (Y); Candice Moore (A)

Durbin Creek Elementary School: Nick Renacker (Y); Donna Huntsman (A); Mary Ann Clark (S)

Freedom Crossing Academy: Stacy Ross (A); Monica Osborn (S)

Fruit Cove Middle School: Kaden Hooker (Y); Angela Morris (A)

Hickory Creek Elementary School: Taylor Teaman (Y); Sommer Dolce (A); Deborah Alexandris (S)

Julington Creek Elementary School: Brandi Bales (A); Richard Barnett (S)

Alice B. Landrum Middle School: James Grossman (Y); David Solomon (A)

Liberty Pines Academy: Beau Willim (Y); Christy Beebe (A); Jeanette Listing (S)

Mill Creek Academy: Teresa Barkoskie (A)

Allen D. Nease High School: Taylor Freedle (Y); Catherine Prohofsky (A)

Ocean Palms Elementary School: Grayson Rigby (Y); Lawrence Lynch (A); Christopher Smith (S)

Pacetti Bay Middle School: Madison Stevens (Y); Staci Farrell (A); Judith Saathoff (S)

Palencia Elementary School: Emily Lemos (A); Mary Warren (S)

Palm Valley Academy: Reagan McCarthy (Y); Jill D'Amato (A); Carlos Fernandez (S)

Patriot Oaks Academy: Charlie Glover (Y); Kathleen Boothe (A)

Picolata Crossing Elementary School: Erin Beazzo (A)

PVPV/ Rawlings Elementary School: Katherine Brogdon (Y); Mary Shalz (A); Sue Mencke (S)

Ponte Vedra High School: Chase Magnano (Y); Sharon Zerwekh (A)

Switzerland Point Middle School: Justin Campos (Y); Christina "Tina" Tayag (A)

Timberlin Creek Elementary School: Lauryn Edel (Y); Lillian Nay (A); Jan Fowler (S)

Valley Ridge Academy: Bryce Douglas Ingle (Y); Jennifer Leigh Trinidad (A)

Wards Creek Elementary School: Nyah Farrell (Y); Erin Miller (A); Gail Rudolph (S)

Junior Achievement of North Florida to host Virtual Trivia Night

By NewsLine Staff
mail@florianewsline.com

Junior Achievement of North Florida will host a Virtual Trivia Night on June 9 to raise money to support local JA programs for students from kindergarten to 12th grade. JA of North Florida is currently signing up teams to participate in the online fundraiser, which will be held from 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. Individuals can join a team or create their own; visit janfl.org and click on JA Events.

"We encourage everyone to grab friends, co-workers or family members for a fun night of trivia while helping support the future of our youth," said Tiffany Mackey Guthrie, director of development for JA of North Florida. "Teams can set their own fundraising goals and work together to reach those goals. Each \$25 raised will help support one student. We hope we can raise enough to help at least 300 students learn financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship."

Teams can have up to six people and the

event will be limited to 20 teams. Each team member will be given access to a fundraising site that will allow them to easily reach out to others for support to help raise money for JA of North Florida.

On Tuesday, June 9, team members will get together on the conferencing platform of their choice and check in to the live JA trivia broadcast at 5:45 p.m. Each round will have 30 questions from various categories. The team will discuss each answer and the team captain will submit the answer via Kahoot after each question.

Prizes will be given for the first, second and third place trivia teams. There will also be a prize for the top team fundraiser and top individual fundraiser. The JA Virtual Trivia Night was created to replace the bowl-a-thon that was set for June 9 before the COVID-19 pandemic. Contact Tiffany Mackey Guthrie at tiffany@janfl.org for more information.



with St. Johns County School Board Member, Kelly Barrera, District 4

Q: Can you comment on the unique circumstances surrounding the graduation of the Class of 2020?

A: I'd like to give a community shout-out to our Class of 2020 students, parents and administrators at our high schools. The way they came together and celebrated our seniors is heartwarming. I'm impressed with their creative ideas like signs in yards and car parades. You can tell the kids are appreciated even in the midst of these unusual times. From a school board perspective, senior graduation means that we have completed our mission. It's a joy.

In addition to the virtual graduations, each school has been given latitude to honor their seniors in a way that makes the most sense for them. Principals are gathering input from student class officers and teachers, but are awaiting continued guidance from the CDC and local health agencies before they move forward.

Q: Can you give us a construction update on the new schools?

A: Everything is moving forward with both K-8 School MM and High School HHH. In fact we received a fantastic update in mid-May that the tilt walls are getting ready to go up for the high school.

Q: What is the school district doing to prepare for next school year?

A: The district is in the process of teacher recruitment. Positions will be posted

on the website throughout the summer as they are identified. We have also put together an internal task force to consider all the possible ways school could look next year. This task force contains district employees from different departments, but we plan to add community stakeholders like parent and community partners, probably over the summer.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 4?

A: I'd like to give a couple of shout-outs, first to Ponte Vedra High School senior Chase Magnano, who was named Youth Volunteer of the Year for both St. Johns County and the state's Region II. He also served as the president of the senior class at PVHS. He is a great representative of our students, by taking an active leadership role in both his school and community.

Also, congratulations to the Nease NJROTC cadets for being named the #1 NJROTC program in Northern Florida and all Georgia.

I'd like to encourage early registration of new students, including kindergarteners for next year. The vast majority can be done online at www.stjohns.k12.fl.us. Also, the new school year calendars have been posted on the district website.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

A: They can email me at kelly.barrera@stjohns.k12.fl.us or call me at (904) 547-7510.

Fashion line cont. from pg.1

strips to be tied on the back of the head. She jokingly used a cow pattern, calling them "moosks," and the name stuck. Snell admits to loving a good pun.

To learn more about Cut from the Cloth by Scout, to place an order or to purchase a gift card, visit www.cutfromtheclothbyscout.com. Also, Cut from the Cloth by Scout is interested in any old clothing donations that may be otherwise thrown away.

"Anything you send us will be used in some shape or form when upcycling our clothing. Anything is appreciated. We will handle the shipping. All you have to do is



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drop it at your local USPS," said Snell.

Anyone interested in donating should contact Snell at cutfromtheclothbyscout@gmail.com.

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Photos courtesy Jennifer McCormick

Mothers celebrated with car parade

Ponte Vedra Gardens Alzheimer's Special Care Center held a special Mother's Day car parade on May 8 to honor residents and to help them feel connected to their families, according to Program Director Jennifer McCormick. She said approximately 12 cars participated in the event, and there were a lot of smiles, laughter and tears.

Should you walk or run with traffic or facing traffic?

By Beverly Webb
mail@floridanewsline.com

Which side of the road does one use when walking or running on a road that has no sidewalk? Even if a driver is strictly obeying the 25 mph speed limit in many neighborhoods, blind curves can prevent a driver from seeing a pedestrian until it may be too late. With the recent beautiful weather and people trying to stay fit during the "Safer at Home" order, it has become even more important that walkers, runners, and skateboarders, all of which are considered pedestrians, do their part to be safe. A driver and a pedestrian facing each other are much more likely to be aware of each other's presence.

Not only is it safer for pedestrians to walk facing oncoming traffic, it is Florida law. According to Florida Statute 315.130 (4), where sidewalks are not provided, any pedestrian must walk facing traffic. Law enforcement officers

generally do not make these noncriminal pedestrian violations a top priority for ticketing, but per Florida Statute 318.18, the amount of penalty for a pedestrian violation is \$15 and a possible court appearance.

News stories of injury accidents caused by distracted drivers happen almost daily. Walkers and runners should keep distractions to a minimum. Wearing headphones with inspirational music is popular, but the volume should be low enough as to not drown out sounds like bike bells or warnings from other walkers and runners. Texting while walking on a roadway is as dangerous for the walker as texting while driving.

Pedestrians need to stay aware of everything around them when they walk or run. Most importantly, always walk or run facing traffic. It is the law.

Drive-through food drives benefit local food pantries

By Lorie Shvets
mail@floridanewsline.com

St. Johns County, in partnership with United Way of St. Johns County, recently held two drive-through food drives to restock critically-low local food pantries. The events took place on two Saturdays in May at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre and the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall. More than one thousand cars were welcomed and tens of thousands of pounds of non-perishable items were collected to benefit 16 local food pantries.

"Our role in this community is to fight for those that are food insecure in our community every day," said Melissa Nelson, President/CEO of United Way SJJC. "Now, more than ever, we un-



Photo courtesy United Way of St. Johns County

derstand that many of our neighbors are counting pennies due to the pandemic. We all would prefer that they don't have to count servings for their children, as well."

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MarketInsight



The Wolfsons

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

The Wolfson family moved to Jacksonville from St. Louis just before World War I began in Europe. Samuel Wolfson was four, younger brother Louis, just one year old. They were the sons of a Jewish immigrant from Lithuania. The father, Morris David Wolfson, was in the scrap metal business. One man's trash is another man's treasure. Trash was very profitable for the Wolfsons.

Sam and Louis followed their father into the junk business. They made their first big score in a deal with department store magnate J.C. Penney. The great depression had stopped construction at Penney Farms out near Starke. Sam and Louis bought a pile of plumbing fixtures from Penney for \$275. They would later resell them for more than \$100,000.

Sam Wolfson is best remembered for his forays into baseball. In 1953, Wolfson bought the local baseball team, the Jacksonville Tars. Sam affiliated the club with the Milwaukee Braves, who had just moved from Boston, and moved the

newly minted Jacksonville Braves into the venerable South Atlantic League. The son of a Jewish immigrant then made the momentous decision to integrate the Deep South's "Sally League."

Three black players joined the club. One of those players, 18-year-old second-baseman Hank Aaron, led the league in just about everything. Ironically, the field was integrated, but the stands were not. Many white fans booed, released black cats onto the field, and wore mops on their heads. Out in the colored section in the left field bleachers, it was a different story. Fans whooped and hollered like "they had won the World Series." So many African-Americans showed up at one road game that the bleachers collapsed.

Louis Wolfson made his first million at the age of 28. He was known, in some circles, as the "Wizard of Wall Street." One of Wolfson's companies built the USS Kitty Hawk, another financed Mel Brook's film "The Producers." In 1967,

Louis was convicted of stock fraud and sent to jail for nine months. For the rest of his life, Wolfson would vehemently complain that the charges were politically motivated.

In 1957, having made his point and already suffering from the ill health that would take his life at 54, Sam Wolfson sold the Braves to a group of investors led by Hall-of-Famer Bill Terry. The former NY Giant great retired here after his baseball career and bought a Buick dealership. Bill Terry Buick was an iconic Westside landmark for decades.

Later in life, Louis took a fancy to race-horses. He had a big horse farm out near Ocala called Harbor View. He raised thoroughbreds. One of his horses, Affirmed, won the Triple Crown in 1978, finishing first in the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont Stakes. Until

recently, Affirmed was the last horse to win all three races.

In 1946 Morris Wolfson, the scrap dealer, wrote a letter to his sons announcing his intention to found a children's hospital in Jacksonville and endow it with \$500,000 (roughly \$6.5 million in today's dollars.) "Pops" passed away before his vision could be realized, but his sons fulfilled his wishes and in 1951, they broke ground. Wolfson Children's Hospital opened in 1955 as a place for all children to be admitted and treated without regard to creed, religion, race, or financial position. That original mission remains today.

Scott A. Grant is a local author, historian, columnist, and speaker. He is president of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.

ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

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A graduation photo showing several students in caps and gowns throwing their caps into the air. The text "Congratulations 2020" is overlaid on the left, and the school logo "BK HS" with the website "www.bishopkenny.org" is on the right.

Travel

A Ferry to Dry Tortugas National Park

By Debi Lander
mailto:floridanewsline.com

"You're standing in front of Dr. Mudd's cell," said the park ranger at Dry Tortugas National Park. "He was an inmate for four years." During the Civil War, Fort Jefferson served as a prison and physician Samuel Mudd, found guilty of conspiracy in President Lincoln's assassination (he claimed innocence), was its most famous prisoner. He's the doctor who set John Wilkes Booth's broken leg.

Today, the fort, an immense structure of repetitive brick columns and arches, lies within Dry Tortugas National Park, pretty much in the middle of nowhere. Not surprisingly, it's one of the least visited National Parks.

I boarded an early morning National Park ferry in Key West, already the southern-most tip of the U.S., for the 70-nautical



mile ride farther out. The day trip includes breakfast and lunch, as no food or water is available on the island. No sooner had I finished my cup of coffee when the

boat crossed into a flatness of water. I felt like a shrunken sailor, minimized by the surrounding gray skies and a watery abyss. I could see nothing in any direction except for the fog and the sea.

About two and a half hours later, the captain announced our impending arrival. Ahead, the skeletal remains of the fort rose from the Gulf like a ghost town set within tropical terrain — the bizarre ruins of Fort Jefferson encompassing nearly all of the small island.

I joined the others leaving the ferry and unpacked my camera despite the dark clouds and drizzling rain. I'd come to investigate a National Park few are fortunate

enough to see. And fortunate I was; soon the clouds cleared and the sun began to shine.

As I wandered around the grounds, the walls of this behemoth six-sided structure began to speak. They moaned with pain and hardship from those who died here due to the lack of freshwater and rampant yellow fever. Dr. Mudd helped out during the yellow fever epidemic and was later pardoned; however, he was never accepted back into society, which many believe is the origin of the phrase "your name is mud." A quick check reveals the falsehood.

Today, the National Park in the Gulf of Mexico protects 64,000 acres, but only 93 of those acres float above water. It's the farthest offshore National Park in the U.S. system. Transport by ferry boat or seaplane is the only way to arrive.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander

a 45-foot-high, three-level hexagon, whose 2,000 archways run half a mile around. Still unfinished after nearly 30 years of on-and-off construction, the nicknamed 'Gibraltar of the Gulf' succumbed in 1874 to yellow fever, hurricane damage, and the new rifled cannon, which rendered its eight-foot-thick walls obsolete."

The fort was revived in 1898 as a Navy coaling station and then permanently abandoned in 1907. In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt named it a national monument, and it became a U.S. National Park in 1992. A visit makes a great escape.

Check for park opening/closing information: <https://www.nps.gov/drto>

Florida Keys information: <https://fla-keys.com>

Visit www.bylandersea.com to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.

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The park survives mainly as a bird and marine sanctuary, drawing birders to the migration of terns. Snorkelers and scuba divers like to explore the shipwrecks and some of the most pristine coral reefs in North America. The islands sport more loggerhead and green sea turtle nests than anywhere else in North America. Unobstructed dark starry nights attract some astronomy enthusiasts who camp out with park permits. Historians love the site, too, but most are day-trippers.

The park ranger's guided tour tells the story of 16 million bricks. "The structure is



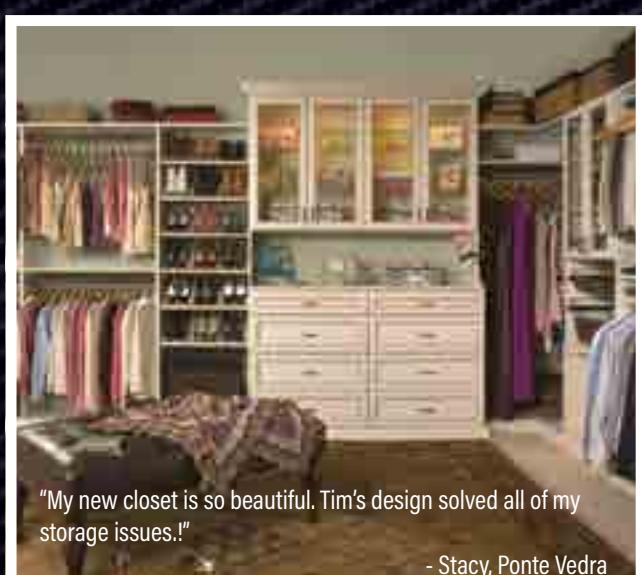
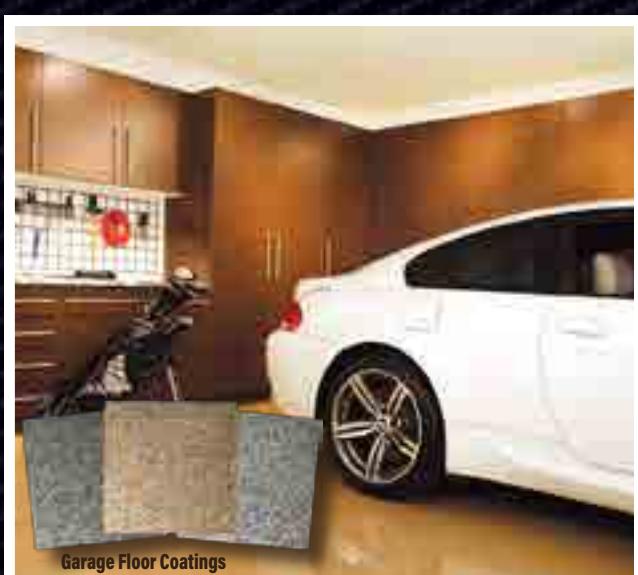
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Get to Know . . .

Samuel and Allison Moseley

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Allison Moseley
Samuel and Allison Moseley

Samuel and Allison Moseley, married for 20 years, share a passion for the ocean and for service to others, particularly seniors. Living in Ponte Vedra Beach, they are delighted to be able to indulge both. The pair grew up in Birmingham, Ala., and attended the University of Alabama at Birmingham before graduating from Flagler College – Tallahassee, he with a degree in physical therapy and she with a degree in English and a particular interest in sales and marketing. As newlyweds, they settled in Ochlockonee Bay, Fla., just east of Apalachicola. They had two children and then said they felt called to go into mission work. The Moseleys spent eight years living both domestically and internationally before life dealt them a double blow when both Samuel's mother and Allison's father were diagnosed with dementia. They came to the conclusion that the best thing would be to move to Florida with both sets of parents and take care of them.

Today, Samuel is a senior living lifestyle counselor at the newly built Discovery Senior Living and Allison is the director of sales at Sunrise Senior Living. Their son Eli is a sophomore at Florida Atlantic University and son Silas is just finishing his junior year at Ponte Vedra High School.

Q: How did you two meet?

Allison: We met at a bluegrass concert

at a club. We were set up by a mutual friend and decided to meet at the concert.

Q: How did you come to live in Ponte Vedra Beach?

Samuel: We were based in Kansas City, Mo., when we were doing our mission work. In 2014, we learned that both my mom and Allison's dad were experiencing cognitive decline that was eventually diagnosed as dementia. We decided to move south and take care of our parents and miraculously, in the summer of 2014 I was offered a job with a senior housing facility in Jacksonville. So, we all moved here.

Allison: As soon we found out we'd be moving to the area, we knew we had to live at the beach. We live and breathe the beach and have saltwater running through our veins. A friend of ours who lived in the area knew we were looking for a house to rent and so she found one in Ponte Vedra Beach and sent us a picture of it. We ended up renting it for six months and then found our fixer-upper house and we still live there now. I love living in Ponte Vedra Beach because I feel safe here and it's so easy to be outdoors.

Q: After deciding to shift your previous backgrounds in customer service/hospitality to the senior living community, what do you do in your present jobs?

Samuel: As a senior lifestyle counselor, I guide and advise families and loved ones in senior living placements. What is best for them? Our parent company, Discovery Senior Living, is based in Bonita Springs, Fla., but this is our first facility in Jacksonville. We have been

pre-leasing since mid-January and our first residents are moving in mid-May.

Allison: After staying home with the kids and homeschooling them before we moved to Florida, I wanted to make sure that our and our parents' transition to Ponte Vedra Beach went well. Initially, my parents moved to a neighborhood and then ultimately we made the decision to move my dad to a senior community, so I have experience on that side and thought I could help others in the same situation. My current role with Sunrise Senior Living is as an advisor. As director of sales, I'm the first point of contact when a family member calls in during this very emotional time for the family. I'm also a Certified Dementia Educator.

Q: What advice would you give to adult children looking for a senior facility for aging parents?

Allison: The hardest thing for families to deal with at this time is the guilt of the perception of "turning a parent over" to senior housing. Most facilities today are not what we used to think of as "nursing homes" ... they are comfortable and homey — and some are like resorts, with many things to do. Especially with the social aspect, many seniors' lives become more vibrant living in senior housing.

Samuel: The benefits of living in a senior community often far outweigh the loneliness and stress of living alone.

Nease cont. from pg. 1

outreach, campus leadership, graduation plans, physical fitness and competition results.

"We (seniors) came into JROTC as the number one program back in 2016," said former Battalion Commander Anna Hampton who will be attending Northeastern University in the fall. "And our goal and our legacy was to leave the unit on top. Mission accomplished."

Among Nease's noteworthy achievements this past year: First place championships at McFarland Drill Meet, Mandarin Drill Meet, Terry Parker Drill Meet, Sprayberry



Nease NJROTC cadets celebrate one of their eight championships during 2019-2020.

(GA) Drill Meet, Area-12 Drill Championships, Bishop Kenny Academic Brain Brawl, Bishop Kenny Drone Challenge, and Lee Ultimate Challenge; qualifying for both Drill and Academic national championships, graduating seven seniors with Service Academy appointments or ROTC Scholarships; and the completion of more than 13,000 hours of community service.

By virtue of finishing #1 in Area-12, Nease is now competing for the Most Outstanding Unit in the Nation.

"This achievement is the result of a total Nease family effort put forth by disciplined and hard-working cadets, engaged parents and a supportive school administration," said Captain Scott LaRochelle, senior naval science instructor. "The character and leadership demonstrated by these extraordinary young men and women never ceases to amaze me."

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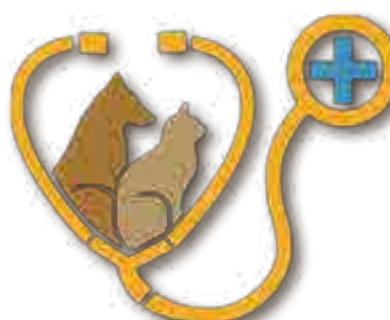
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