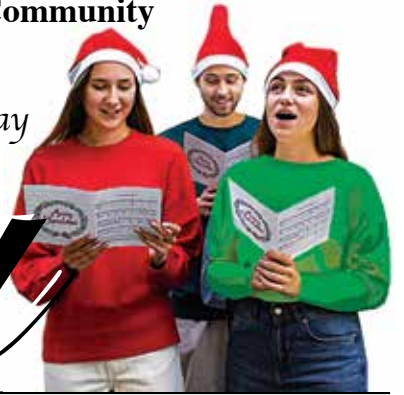


Warm up your vocal cords!  
December 20th is Caroling Day



# Palencia

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DECEMBER 2023

## Palencia Holiday Tree Lighting Is Friday Dec. 1st



**I**t's Beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Palencia's Holiday Tree Lighting will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on December 1st at the beginning of Market Street. There will be entertainment, vendors, Santa Claus and even an appearance by The Grinch.

A new twist to the Holiday festivities this year, Santa will hold a Photo Session on Saturday, December 9th from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Amenity Center. Palencia residents, sign-up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A044DAAA29A3F85-45412863-santa#/>.



### Join Us In Your Jammies At The Tooth Cottage

Pictures with Santa, Cookie Decorating and Soft Play are just part of the Santa experience at The Tooth Cottage, 250 Paseo Reyes Drive on Saturday, December 2nd from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Palencia. Wear your favorite holiday PJ's and help us welcome Santa.

## Share Space Event Highlights Market Street Businesses



**S**hare Space at Palencia recently welcomed new business members during an office reception at Village Square, 701 Market Street.

In attendance were Answer Aide answering service for all businesses needing direct connectivity to clients calling on them, Aquino Accounting for bookkeeping and tax preparation, Travis Smyczynski Financial for financial planning, Magnolia Oaks Clothing for all your holiday gifts, Graze Craze Charcuterie, Comanco Construction Services, Huntington Learning Centers Tutoring with ACT/SAT test prep and Triedata Government Software Services.

"It's great to offer business space for these folks who aim to serve our community and the surrounding communities," said Palencia resident Doug Senecal. "We, at Share Space Palencia, aim to support businesses of all sizes and those needing a private or virtual office to facilitate their business growth."

## Palencia Fall Festival Brings Crowds To Market Street

**F**ood trucks, music, Glow-in-the-dark mini golf, amusements, face painters, balloon artists, stilt walkers and more than 30 vendors helped Palencia's November Fall Festival come alive with family entertainment and arts. Residents of all ages filled the streets, hungry for celebration and good eats.


Palencia shoppers discovered a wide variety of vendors offering unique products and services. From clothing and accessories to home decor and handmade crafts, there was something for everyone.

A cherished tradition, the Palencia Fall Festival comes just three weeks before the yearly Christmas tree lighting on Market Street.



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Here's wishing you the fondest Seasons Greetings and continued happiness into the New Year.

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# Palencia Community Classified Ads

## St. Augustine Travel Club

The St. Augustine Travel Club will meet on Wednesday, December 6, at 3 p.m. at the Southeast Branch Public Library, U.S. 1 South, near SR 206. Presentation is Europe for Music Lovers. The club will celebrate the end of year holidays with beautiful music and attractive local sceneries from Italy, France, Ireland, Norway, and Austria's Salzburg, home of Mozart and Vienna's palaces, coffee houses, Strauss waltzes and Mozart. The Travel Club is free and no registration is necessary. Questions? Please call Peter Dytrych at (904) 797-3736.

## Grief Hurts!

The Village Church, 4229 Pacetti Road, provides a faith based GriefShare program that meets on Thursdays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Anyone in the community suffering through the loss of a loved one is welcome to join any week. To register visit: [griefshare.org/findagroup](http://griefshare.org/findagroup). Contact: Marilyn Costanzo at [marilyncostanzo@gmail.com](mailto:marilyncostanzo@gmail.com) or call 571-216-8190.

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## The Virgin Mary

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." -Luke 1:26-38

## The Palencia Press

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## Respect All, Fear None! Palencia Tennis "A" Team Out To Win

By Kimberly Maxwell, Palencia Resident



Back row: (left to right) Nancy Jeter, Stephanie Kinsey, Lizett Oosthuizen, Sarah Hall, Elizabeth Hall, Kendyl Jennings, Karen (Kiki) Kress, Sue Kansteiner, Jodi Stuckey, Patricia Brandler, Maria Welch and Danielle Stanley. Front row: Kimiko Stephens, Missy Nev-in, Jill Jabot, Kelly Frauenfelder (co-captain), Colette Sova-Wamsley, Kimberly Maxwell (captain). Not pictured: Mary Hosking, Cathy French, Barbara Lichtenstein, Lisa Davies, Ashley Hassan, Theresa Conroy and Paula Miller.

Palencia's tennis program flourishes, and is especially enjoyed by the ladies in the interclub A league. This year Palencia's A team is playing in the A2 division and they are working towards first place in their division. The first half of the season winds to a close at the

beginning of December, and the ladies will be back for the second half of the season to battle it out starting in January 2024. Wish them well as they enjoy fun filled matches both away and on our home courts most Tuesdays through April 2024.

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ographer for the First Coast Nutcracker and owner of River City Fine Arts Academy. For more information, visit [www.F13RCE.com](http://www.F13RCE.com) or call 904-891-1432.

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## What Is Dollar-Cost Averaging?

By Travis A. Smyczynski, CFP®  
Ausdal Financial Partners, Inc.

Every investor dreams of buying into the market at a low point, just before it hits an upswing, and garnering a large profit from selling at the market's peak. But trying to predict market highs and lows is a feat no one has ever fully mastered, despite the claims by some that they have just the right strategy that enables them to buy and sell at the most opportune times. Attempting to predict which direction the market will go or investing merely on market news can get you in trouble, or at the very least may cause you a great deal of frustration when you react, instead of being proactive. One strategy that may help you navigate these investing pitfalls is dollar-cost averaging.

Dollar-cost averaging involves investing a set amount of money in an investment vehicle at regular intervals for an extended period of time, regardless of the price. For example, let's say you have \$6,000 to invest into an IRA. Instead of investing it all at once, you decide to use a dollar-cost averaging strategy and contribute \$500 each month, regardless of share price, until your money is completely invested. And through dollar-cost averaging you may end up purchasing more shares when prices are low and fewer shares when prices are high. (e.g. - You might end up buying 20 shares when the price is low, but only buy 10 when the price is higher) This strategy has the potential to reduce the risk of investing a large amount in a single investment when the cost per share is inflated. It may also help reduce the risk for an investor who tends to pull out of the market when it takes a dip, potentially causing an inopportune loss in investment. Also, the average cost per share may be reduced over time, which has the possibility to help you gain better overall profits from the stock market.

The bottom line is, that utilizing a dollar-cost averaging program could cause your average price per share to be higher than your average cost per share. This occurs because you purchased fewer shares

when the stock was priced high and more shares when the price was low. Dollar-cost averaging can also help you to avoid the annoyance and stress of continually monitoring the market in an attempt to buy and sell at "fortuitous" moments. This is especially true with investments that are longer term in nature.

Dollar-cost averaging is a long-range plan, as implied by the word "averaging." In other words, the technique's best use comes only after you've stuck with it for a while, despite any nerve-racking swings in the market. When other panicky investors are scrambling to get out of the market because it has declined and to get back into it when the market has risen, you can keep a cool head by continuing to invest a specific amount based on the interval you've set. While making sure your eyes stay on the end goal, and not being distracted by short term volatility and other outside financial news.

*Dollar-cost averaging does not ensure a profit in rising markets or protect against a loss in declining markets. This type of investment program involves continuous investment in securities regardless of the fluctuating price levels of such securities. Investors should consider their financial ability to continue making purchases through periods of low and high price levels. The return and principal value of stocks fluctuate with changes in market conditions. Shares, when sold, may be worth more or less than their original cost.*

*Neither the information presented, nor any opinion expressed, constitutes a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. Contact Travis A. Smyczynski, CFP®, at 904-395-4665. We are located at 701 Market Street, Unit 111, St. Augustine, FL 32095 (in Palencia). Please visit our website at www.SmyczynskiFinancial.com. Securities and advisory services offered through Ausdal Financial Partners, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. 5187 Utica Ridge Rd., Davenport, IA 52807. 563-326-2064.*

**Dollar-cost averaging involves investing a set amount of money in an investment vehicle at regular intervals for an extended period of time, regardless of the price.**

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## Girls Just Want To Have Fun

By Faye Peludat, President  
and Maria Nilsson, Vice President  
Women's Golf Association Of Palencia

Our annual Fall scramble was well rewarded with beautiful weather and represented by 32 lovely ladies, that just wanted to have fun. Bright colors and sparkling smiles. The tournament scramble was a bit more challenging this year. Well, every golfer needs a good laugh, so why not make the game more difficult. Just

kidding, the participating A and B players teeing off the whites and C and D players teeing off the reds. The ladies stepped up to the tee and showed no fear to scramble a round of golf. Lots of fun! Congratulations to all of you for showing us how its done.

We also recruited Kim Jakobs our club professional as one of the A players.



Palencia Women's Golf Association Fall Scramble group.



Past WGA President Earline Barnes in support of Breast Cancer awareness.



Second Place Winners of Fall Scramble: Kristen Cohen, Teresa Serano, Joanne Monahan, Monique Perna (not shown).



First Place and Kicker Cash winners of Fall Scramble Ann Bell, Ellie Chappellear, Chris McCoy, Kim Jakobs.



Third Place winners of Fall scramble: Lisa Procter, Christie Walters, Rhonda Demeno and Rosetta Smith.



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## Palencia Womens Golf Association

Continued From Page 6

Thank you Kim for taking the time to play in one of our events. The payouts were for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places and the kicker cash was a bonus prize given to the 1st place team. Congratulations to all the winners.

October was breast cancer awareness month and The Palencia Club altered the course throughout the month to have pink cups and pink flags on the greens to honor survivors and remember those lost to the disease. Many thanks goes to our golf course maintenance crew for manicuring our course to its best.

All the ladies looked great and thank you for your efforts in making this day special.

Our WGA members are so blessed to have a large group of 9-hole ladies organized by the Play Day Chair Ann Bell. The season for interclub has begun and Palencia was proudly represented at Ponte Vedra Inn for the first tournament. Well done ladies for your support. They had a terrific outing and enjoyed meeting other ladies of area clubs.

A friendly reminder to all the lady golfers of Palencia to please participate in our annual events planned for this month of December. Our very own Solheim Cup where the blue team vs the red team for a fun filled 2- day match play competition. Following that, we have the Holiday Scramble with kicker cash on Dec. 14th and to complete our yearly celebrations of 2023, please sign up for the Couples Club Championship on December 17th for a fun Sunday.

On behalf of the WGA, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone and their families a happy and healthy holiday season! Have fun ringing in the New Year in 2024!



Maria Cavanaugh and Pat Kazakis, breast cancer survivors playing in the Fall scramble.



New members enjoying the Fall scramble. Kristen Cohen, Kathleen Kriete, Lorraine Turcotte.



Ellie Chapple and WGA President Faye Peludat in colors supporting breast cancer awareness at our annual Fall scramble.



9-Hole Interclub ladies at Ponte Vedra Inn: Ann Bell, Indy Nelson, Joanne Monahan, Marge Stancill, Louise Starmann, Nancy Watson and Jennifer O'Connor.

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## Time: A Key Element Of Investing

By Lindsey Taylor, Edward Jones Financial Advisor

Who knows where the time goes? We've reached the end of another year, so it's appropriate to reflect on the nature of time and how it affects us. And time certainly is a key element in the pursuit of your financial goals.

As an investor, time can be your greatest ally. If you hold some investments for the long term, you could achieve an impressive cumulative growth in value. Furthermore, if you keep adding shares to these investments, possibly through a dividend reinvestment plan, you could attain "growth on growth" through the power of compounding. Of course, when you own equity investments, you will experience market fluctuations, but in general, the longer you hold these investments, the more you can reduce the effects of market volatility.

But you also need to consider aspects of time in these contexts:

- Checking progress on achieving goals – When you establish a goal, such as saving for a child's education or your own retirement, you know the end date of when you'll need the money, but it's also important to mark your progress along the way. So, each year, see how far along you are in meeting your goal. If you're falling behind, you may need to adjust your investment mix.

- Choosing an appropriate strategy –

The time needed to achieve a goal should drive your investment strategy for that goal. For example, when you are saving for a retirement that won't happen for three or four decades, you will need to invest for growth by placing a reasonable percentage of equities and equity-based investments in your portfolio, based on your comfort with the various types of risk, including interest rate risk, credit risk and market risk. You will experience some bumps along the way — keep in mind that the value of investments will fluctuate and the loss of some or all principal is possible — but you likely have time to overcome the "down" periods. On the other hand, when you are saving for a short-term goal, such as a vacation or a new car or a wedding, you'll want a set amount of money available precisely when you need it. In this case, you may need to sacrifice some growth potential for investments whose principal value won't fluctuate, such as certificates of deposit (CDs) and bonds.

Keep in mind, though, that when you're investing for long- and short-term goals, it doesn't have to be just one strategy or the other. You can save for retirement with primarily growth vehicles but still have room in your portfolio for shorter-term instruments. And even when you're

**Continued Below Right**



## How Does My Other Insurance Work With Medicare?

Carol Bogart, Palencia Resident  
904-648-6488  
Carol@AskCarolB.com

When you have other insurance (like group health plan, retiree health, or **Medicaid** coverage) and Medicare, there are rules for whether Medicare or your other coverage pays first.

If you have <b>retiree</b> health coverage (like insurance from your or your spouse's former employment)...	Medicare pays first.
If you're 65 or older, have group health plan coverage based on your or your spouse's <b>current</b> employment, and the employer has <b>20 or more employees</b> ...	Your group health plan pays first.
If you're 65 or older, have group health plan coverage based on your or your spouse's <b>current</b> employment, and the employer has <b>fewer than 20 employees</b> ...	Medicare pays first.
If you're under 65 and have a disability, have group health plan coverage based on your or a family member's <b>current</b> employment, and the employer has <b>fewer than 100 employees</b> ...	Your group health plan pays first.
If you're under 65 and have a disability, have group health plan coverage based on your or a family member's <b>current</b> employment, and the employer has <b>100 or more employees</b> ...	Medicare pays first.
If you have group health plan coverage based on your or a family member's employment or former employment, and you're eligible for Medicare because of End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)...	Your group health plan pays first for the first 30 months after you become eligible for Medicare. Medicare pays first after this 30-month period.
If you have TRICARE...	Medicare pays first, unless you're on active duty, or get items or services from a military hospital or clinic, or other federal health care provider.
If you have Medicaid...	Medicaid pays first.

**IMPORTANT!** If you're still working and have employer coverage through work, contact your employer to find out how your employer's coverage works with Medicare.

Here are some important facts to remember about how other insurance works with Medicare-covered services:

- The insurance that pays first (primary payer) pays up to the limits of its coverage.
- The insurance that pays second (secondary payer) only pays if there are costs the primary payer didn't cover.
- If your group health plan or retiree health coverage is the secondary payer, you'll likely need to sign up for Part B before your insurance will pay.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions. Again, I am here to help or explain... at no charge! [Carol@AskCarolB.com](mailto:Carol@AskCarolB.com) Text: 714-930-7165 Direct: 904-648-6488 [www.AskCarolB.com](http://www.AskCarolB.com). FL License #: W756153.

## Time: A Key Element Of Investing

**Continued From Top Left**

specifically investing for some short-term goal, you can't forget about your need to save and invest for retirement.

And here's one final point about the relationship between time and investing: Your risk tolerance can, and probably will, change over the years. As you near retirement, you may feel the need to adjust your portfolio toward a more conservative approach. That's because you may want to consolidate any gains you might have achieved while also recognizing that

you simply have less time to bounce back from down markets. Still, even in retirement, you'll need some growth potential in your portfolio to help you stay ahead of inflation.

When you invest, one of your biggest considerations is time — so use it wisely.

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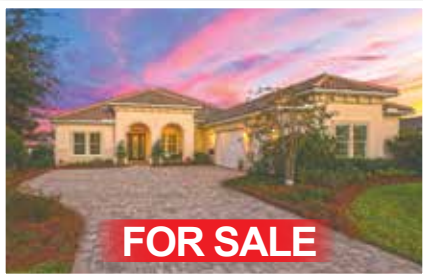
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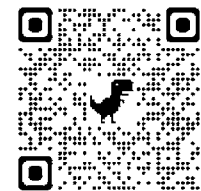
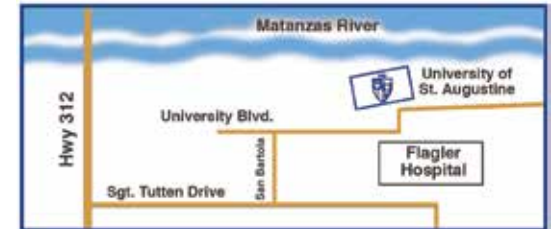


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Aviles Dental Care is collecting preschool age toys for children in need this holiday season. All collections will be donated to TOYS FOR TOTS and will be gifted to disadvantaged children in our area. Bring new, unwrapped toys to the Aviles Dental office Monday through Friday. The Toy Drive runs through December 10th. Donate a toy and show that Palencia cares!



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## What Is Blood Flow Restriction

By Rob Stanborough  
PT, DPT, MHS, MTC, CMTPT, FAAOMPT  
First Coast Rehabilitation  
(904) 829-3411

Blood Flow Restriction, or BFR exercise is not new. In fact, as with many treatments, even penicillin, it was discovered by accident. Yoshiaki Sato, a Japanese exercise enthusiast noticed swelling in his leg after prolonged kneeling and recognized the same feeling in his legs he experienced while working out. From this experience, he developed what he called KAATSU, or “training with added pressure.” He applied these principles to his own rehabilitation in 1973 after experiencing severe injury to his legs and made a wonderful recovery.

Fast forwarding, his methods became popular in the body building community of the 1970’s, which led to preliminary research up through the 90’s. This was followed by a research explosion in the early 2000’s as the technique increased in popularity. It gained increased notoriety from professional sports and related media coverage.

Fortunately, for us today, the research has produced a sizeable body of knowledge, and brought more consistency to equipment standards and treatment protocols. And although BFR is not a cure-all, nothing is, there is a strong scientific basis for using BFR treatments, not just in sports but also in rehabilitation.

Muscle strength and hypertrophy, or any tissue, depends on progressive loading. Targeted tissue is challenged by increasing loads producing mechanical tension, muscle microtrauma and metabolic stress. In return, the body adapts with increased density or increased strength. Historically, progressive loading meant using high loads (>80% 1 max rep or 80% of what can be lifted 1x), repeating to the point of fatigue/failure. But higher loads have also meant injury to both the healthy athlete and those trying to heal through rehabilitation. But what if the same results could be achieved, generating the same positive adaptations using much lower loads? If applied correctly, BFR, using exercise loads 20-30% 1 max rep, can produce similar results – muscle fatigue, increased metabolites, and increased growth hormone – with less

chance of tissue damage.

Without getting too technical, but in case you were curious, these results are achieved by partially and temporarily restricting blood flow with pressurized cuffs. The restriction promotes an inflammatory response similarly seen using heavy weights. The inflammatory response causes the production of myokines, which are cytokines produced in skeletal muscle. One specific cytokine, interleukin 6 (IL-6), is responsible for the acute phase of protein synthesis. And what is of particular interest, muscle damage is not required to bring about increased levels of IL-6. Additionally, it is hypothesized that muscle fatigue from BFR triggers a higher motor unit recruitment earlier in the exercise, which results in greater muscle activation, similarly produced when using higher loads.

What are the downside and safety considerations? Your therapist should do a thorough examination, including a medical history, to ensure BFR is indicated for your condition. But if indicated and if applied correctly, the most common side effect is muscle soreness as with most types of exercise.

BFR is a proven training option for the athlete but is also making waves in rehabilitation. It may be a viable tool to help you with your recovery and healing. Hopefully with the little bit of information provided in this column you can do some of your own research, bring questions to your healthcare provider or call us at First Coast Rehabilitation north US 1: (904) 829-3411 or south US 1: (904) 907-1122.

*Rob Stanborough is a physical therapist serving St. Augustine for nearly 20 years and has presented both nationally and internationally. He was one of the first PT's to be permitted to use DN in FL and has been doing so since 2017. He has trained others in DN since 2010 as a Senior Instructor for Myopain Seminars (www.myopainseminars.com). He is a co-owner of First Coast Rehabilitation (www.firstcoastrehab.com), and co-author of Myofascial Manipulation: Theory & Application, 3rd ed by Proed Inc.*

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## Holiday Stress, Sleep Loss, And Hormonal Health:

A Timely Reminder For Christmas And New Year Celebration

By Anna Moyer, Board Certified Pharmacist  
Bluebird Pharmacy  
904-600-4099

### The Sleep Deprivation Epidemic

In our fast-paced and demanding lives, it's no surprise that many Americans struggle with sleep loss. About 80 to 90 percent of adults with clinically significant sleep-disordered breathing remain undiagnosed. The prevalence of sleep deprivation in the United States is a growing concern, and its effects on our overall health are becoming increasingly apparent.

Sleep is often sacrificed in the hustle and bustle of modern life. Whether it's due to work commitments, family responsibilities, or simply the allure of late-night entertainment, sleep loss has become a common phenomenon in America. The consequences of this sleep deprivation are far-reaching and extend beyond just feeling groggy in the morning.

As Christmas, and New Year approach, many of us eagerly anticipate quality time with loved ones, delicious feasts, and festive celebrations. However, amid the joy of the holiday season, there's often a less talked-about aspect that comes into play: stress. The combination of holiday preparations, social obligations, and the potential for disrupted routines can cause significant stress, which, in turn, can lead to sleep loss. Stress and sleep are closely intertwined. When we're under stress, our bodies often find it challenging to relax, leading to difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep.

### Hormones: The Unsung Heroes

Hormones play a pivotal role in our bodies, regulating a wide range of vital functions, metabolism, and stress response. The research suggests that sleep plays a critical role in regulating the release of hormones that are essential for maintaining metabolic functions, such as insulin, cortisol, growth hormone, and thyroid hormones. When we don't get enough sleep, these hormonal rhythms go haywire, potentially leading to metabolic imbalances, insulin resistance, and obesity. It reveals that sleep is not just about feeling rested; it's about ensuring our hormones function properly.

### The Call to Prioritize Sleep

Understanding the link between sleep loss and hormonal disruption is a wake-up call for everyone. Prioritizing sleep is not just a luxury but a necessity for maintaining overall health. A good night's sleep is not just about feeling refreshed; it's about keeping our hormones in check and health on track.

### Finding Natural Solutions for Stress, Hormone Regulation, and Quality Sleep at Bluebird Pharmacy

We understand the importance of nurturing your health naturally, especially during this festive time. That's why we offer a range

of professional-grade supplements designed to address stress, hormone regulation, and support quality sleep.

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**L-Theanine:** Found in tea leaves, L-Theanine is known for its calming effects. It can help reduce stress and improve sleep quality.

**Resveratrol:** This powerful antioxidant offers various health benefits, including potential hormone regulation. It may help balance hormonal fluctuations.

**Sleep Perfect Formula:** A blend of natural ingredients, this formula is designed to promote restful sleep and support a healthy sleep cycle.

**Ashwagandha:** An adaptogenic herb, Ashwagandha helps the body adapt to stress, potentially aiding in hormonal balance.

**Relora:** This herbal blend can help manage stress and anxiety, supporting overall well-being.

**CBD:** Cannabidiol has gained recognition for its potential to reduce stress and improve sleep. We offer high-quality CBD products for your wellness needs.

### Hormone Solutions for Women

Bluebird Pharmacy also provides tailored solutions for women with menopause or perimenopause experiencing sleeplessness. Our pharmacist can set up consultations to explore bioidentical hormone therapy, a more natural approach to addressing hormonal imbalances and insomnia.

### Moving Away from Conventional Sleep Medications

We also dispense conventional sleep medications like Ambien, Temazepam, Amitriptyline, or Trazodone. These medications may offer short-term relief. However, they often come with unwanted side effects such as dry mouth, constipation, falls in elderly, memory loss and are not ideal for long-term use. At Bluebird Pharmacy, we encourage a holistic approach to addressing sleeplessness. It's essential to identify the root cause of sleep disturbances and help your body regulate its hormones naturally.

We believe in empowering you with the knowledge and access to natural, professional-grade supplements that can make a real difference in your overall well-being.

This holiday season, let's celebrate with health and vitality. Come visit us and explore our range of supplements, or schedule a consultation with our pharmacist to embark on a journey towards a more balanced and peaceful you. Bluebird pharmacy is located at 145 Hilden Rd., Ste 102, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081. Call us at 904-600-4099.



Ask A Certified Master Gardener

## The History Behind Our Favorite Holiday Plant

By Norie Flowers, Palencia Resident  
norie.flowers@outlook.com

The holidays provide an opportunity to enjoy one of the most beautiful plants available one time each year – the Poinsettia. It is not only considered the top of the list as a gift, but it has an interesting history.

Poinsettias are named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first U.S. Minister (Ambassador) to Mexico. An avid gardener and amateur botanist, Poinsett was serving as a congressman from South Carolina when he was appointed as the first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, a position he held from 1825 to 1829. While in Mexico, Ambassador Poinsett observed this bold red flowering species and sent plants back to his greenhouse in Charleston. By 1836 the plant was widely referred to as the "Poinsettia."

Until that time, this species was unknown

outside of its native range of Mexico and Guatemala, where it was referred to as flor de nochebuena (Christmas Eve flower). In Mexico they were also given the botanical name *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, which literally means "very beautiful."

It is also known here by many common names including Christmas flower, Christmas star, lobster plant, painted leaf, and Mexican flame leaf.

Ambassador Poinsett was one of the co-founders of the National Institute for the Promotion of Science and the Useful Arts, a predecessor of the Smithsonian Institution.

The whorl of brightly colored poinsettia structures we think of as flower petals are actually bracts — modified leaves, which function to attract pollinators to the relatively small and inconspicuous actual flowers at the center of the plant. If you compare a bract with one of the leaves, you will notice they are similar in structure but different in color. In wild poinsettias, the bracts are typically bright red, but horticulturists have now bred varieties with bracts in varying shades of white, pink, purple, orange, and yellow. There are now more than 100 varieties, and

poinsettias can grow up to 12 feet tall. Contrary to some popular belief, they are not poisonous, although some people are mildly allergic to their white, milky sap.

We generally think of poinsettias as temporary holiday gifts. However, they can also be enjoyed permanently by planting them in your landscape where they will turn a beautiful red every December. They retain their rich color for months with simple care and a little occasional pruning and

can grow from a small potted plant to a large, beautiful bush.

Poinsettias are a "short day" plant, meaning they bloom when days are short, and nights are long. The extended period of darkness is a natural trigger for flowering. They can be planted either in full sun or partial shade but keep them away

from the illumination from porches, windows, or streetlights. If exposed to too much extended light, they are less likely to bloom – to turn red.

If you elect to plant your poinsettia, simply remove the faded red bracts, and leave as many of the green leaves as possible and trim the poinsettia back to within 12 to 18 inches from ground level. Water your plants early in the day to keep the leaves dry and prevent insect infestation. When you fertilize, use a fertilizer with balanced amounts of nitrogen and potassium and low phosphorus. A layer of good mulch is also beneficial to retain moisture.

Very few plants are as closely associated with any holiday as poinsettias, and as mentioned, we only have one yearly opportunity to enjoy them, so turn your landscape into a red canopy this December.

Lastly, as you think about those on your holiday gift list, please remember to include the guys who pick up our recycle, yard and garbage debris. They perform a tough job very few would elect to do, and they keep our Palencia community beautiful! We need them!



## Water Problems? Ask Polly!



Polly Swindull

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## Palencia Elementary School Honors Teacher And Rookie Of The Year

By Sara Seifert, Palencia Resident  
Palencia Elementary PTO

Each year the staff at Palencia Elementary School honors two of their esteemed peers with Teacher of the Year and Rookie of the Year awards. This year, Cheryl Kerekes, a long-time Kindergarten teacher, and Heather Murray, a Second-Grade Associate Teacher are being recognized for their dedication to education, students and PES.

Teacher of the Year, Cheryl Kerekes, has always loved working with children from her start as a Pre-K teacher after college graduation, in her role as a mother caring for her two children and then her eventual return to the classroom at Palencia Elementary School as a Kindergarten

education sector, working at Sylvan Learning Systems. She and her husband later started a successful International Golf Travel company. Three years ago, she decided to revisit her education background and yearned to interact and work with children to make a difference in the lives of young students. Mrs. Murray's daughters both attended Palencia Elementary School for K-5 so she knew she was stepping into a strong learning environment with outstanding staff and administration. Recalling how she knew she was in the right career, she said, "I really enjoy seeing the 'light bulb moment' for kids; I just love making a difference in students' lives." And that she does.

Both recognize that teaching in 2023 has its challenges and there is a lot more than meets the eye in terms of training and certifications. Says Murray, "Teaching requires many hours of preparation and there is quite a bit of continuing education that is required of teachers. Recertification, on-going trainings are things that teachers need to complete on top of their usual classroom workload." Mrs. Kerekes says, "People should know- and I think most people do understand this- that although teaching is a hard profession, as educators we love what we do and we want to make a difference. We are so thankful for our relationships with the families of our students and appreciate the team effort that goes into educating their children."

There is no greater recognition than receiving acknowledgment from your peers at both a personal and professional level. This year's nominees acknowledged that they are in great company at PES and appreciate the school's growth mindset culture that exists because of all the school's staff. Both Mrs. Kerekes and Mrs. Murray both feel lucky to be part of a community of talented, innovative and inspiring teachers.

If you ask me, we are the lucky ones to have these teachers guiding our children.



Mrs. Kerekes surrounded by her fellow Kindergarten teachers.

teacher. My oldest was lucky enough to have her as his teacher so I can say firsthand that she exudes kindness and is the type of teacher you want your child to have in their first year of elementary school. Her love of education and children is palpable and recounts a special memory when she knew that she was meant to teach Kindergarten. "One of my favorite moments was in our first year here at Palencia. I had a student who had not attended Pre-K and this was his first time in a school. He struggled and it was not an easy transition for him. Around the end of the second quarter, I was assessing him, and he was keeping track of his learning by coloring in the letters he had mastered in a graph. He was able to compare the amount he had learned since the previous quarter, which was substantial. When he saw how far he had come, and how much he had accomplished, it was an incredible moment for him and for me. He was so full of pride and joy. I will never forget it."

Rookie of the Year, Heather Murray, had a different path that led her to the classroom. She started out with a degree in Primary & Elementary Education 25 years ago which brought her to the private edu-



Mrs. Murray and her fellow Second Grade teachers.

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## Ugly Birds Filled With Stuff

By Wrigley Steck  
A Dog About Town In Palencia's Village

Well, here we go again. It's that crazy time of year when all the "walkers" get caught up in happiness. It all starts with the bird day. When we walk by the public store, all the walkers are bustling about with their multicolored, pictured, different sized personal carry bags full of great treats to eat.

They eat the big ugly birds filled with stuff. They eat the colored tater tots, the jellied thingamajigs, all the colored fruity stuff.

After that they finish up with cakes and pies and candies.

And, this is the beginning of the happy times that goes on until the boomers

and blasts that will celebrate the next year!

But the eating..... it never ends until the dreaded, after eating promises they make to put their tummies back in shape. Oh yes. The dreaded workouts needed to get the old body right.

But it must be worth all that eating and happiness! It only comes once a year and, best of all, they always give their furry friends a little bit of that happiness and special treats to eat. Yeah.

Ah man... we all look forward to celebrating the holidays with our families and friends around the table. What a happy time! Have a wonderful Holiday Season. Dig in!



## Short Game

Tips from Laura Baugh  
Certified PGA Teaching Professional  
The Palencia Golf Club  
laura@laurabaughgolf.com.

As our fall season opens, let's embrace our short game to save strokes and lower our golf score!

There are two important keys to hit a great pitch or chip shot in golf:

1. The first key is that you don't look up too quickly, so don't be anxious - relax and trust it. Do not look up too soon!

2. The other key is to keep your club face the same at impact as you have chosen at address that will give you the loft and the direction - those are two simple keys that will start you on your journey of confidence and consistency, you can do it!

**Choose equipment that allows you to hit the type of shots you want.** You should have at least these two basic wedges in your bag:

**A 58 or 60 degree wedge** - this wedge is good for high shorter shots and also out of green side bunkers. You will have decided how much bounce you want. The less bounce you have the easiest the shots will be around the greens. But the bounce is nice to hit out of bunkers but restricts shots around the green.

**And a wedge of 54 - 50 degree**



- this wedge will give you a bit more distance and be not quite as high in the air as the 58 or 60 degree. These are the two basic wedges you should have besides your pitching wedge. The pitching wedge goes further and has a lower trajectory than the creative wedges. You will notice that I refer to these wedges by the degree of loft, not gap, sand, or lob, because it's all about the degree of loft not the name a company may call it because most companies have different standards to determine their lob, sand, or gap wedges.

If you need help on your short game, please contact me at [www.laurabaughgolf.com](http://www.laurabaughgolf.com)

### Help Around The Home In Palencia

Help around the home with things (basic repairs, painting, garage epoxy, pressure washing, etc) you'd typically ask husband, son or son-in-law to do!



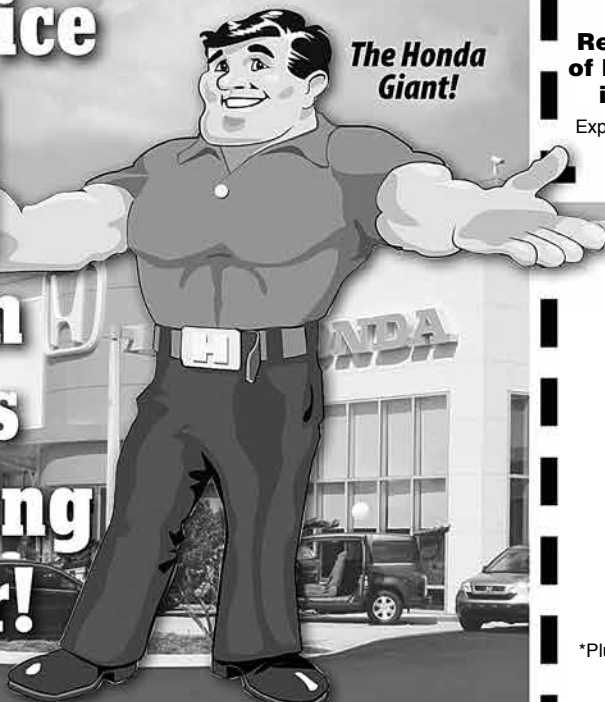
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## The Holidays: A Time For Creating Shared Meaning

By Michael Brown, MSC, LMFT  
904-289-2954

[www.happycoupleshealthycommunities.com](http://www.happycoupleshealthycommunities.com)

The Thanksgiving meal, decorating the Christmas tree, the Nativity creche, lighting the menorah candles, the exchange of gifts, the meals, worship, gatherings of family and friends, New Year's Eve traditions, etc.: The holiday season is rich in symbols, rituals, and meaning that are both universal and particular to each marriage and family. These symbols and rituals are part and parcel of the shared meaning of a marriage and family. Creating shared meaning is the attic of a sound relationship where our important dreams, narratives, myths, and metaphors about our relationship and family find a home.

John Gottman, Ph.D., the pre-eminent researcher on relationship stability and divorce prediction in our times, has identified "Create Shared Meaning" as the last of his "Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work" and as the attic of the Sound Relationship House, a theory and model for making marriage work based on his over 40 years of multi-dimensional and extensive research with over 3000 couples. The Sound Relationship House begins with friendship and moves through managing conflict to the higher goals of making each other's life dreams come true and creating shared meaning. The supporting walls of the House are Trust and Commitment.

According to Gottman, marriage has a spiritual dimension that has to do with creating an inner life together:

"Marriage isn't about just raising kids, splitting chores, and making love. It can also have a spiritual dimension that has to do with creating an inner life together—a culture rich with symbols and rituals, and an appreciation of your roles and goals that link you, that you to understand what it means to be part of the family you have become." (Gottman & Silver, 1999).

How do we create shared meaning in a marriage and family? The "Masters of Relationship," who John Gottman identified as two people who stay together, who report high relational satisfaction and who like and enjoy one another, create shared meaning by intentionally talking about:

1. Rituals of Connection (formal and informal),
2. Shared goals,

3. Supporting each other's life roles,
4. Agreeing about basic symbols, such as what a home means.

Rituals of Connection include how we eat together, how we part at the beginning of the day and how we greet each other at the end of the day, how we say good-night, how we spend our weekends and vacations, how we celebrate holidays, etc. Shared goals include our goals as a couple and a family. Our life roles include our roles as husband and wife, father and mother, professional roles, etc. Our basic symbols include photographs or objects that show who we are as a family, our family histories, the meaning of a home, and objects and activities that symbolize our philosophy of life.

We are each philosophers trying to make some sense out of this brief journey through life and every committed relationship is a cross-cultural experience in which we blend together each partner's legacy, culture, values, and beliefs to entirely new culture. Even within a particular culture, racial, or ethnic group, there are vast differences in family culture. The intentional sharing and blending of diverse family cultures and the creation of a new one can be enriching for a relationship and a family. This holiday season, take time to create shared meaning in your relationship and family by celebrating and talking about the symbols and rituals in your marriage and family.

Reference: Gottman, J. & Silver, N. (1999, 2015). The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work. New York, NY: Three Rivers.

*Michael Brown is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a Certified Gottman Therapist, Couples Workshop Leader, and Clinical Trainer. If you would like to learn more about the "Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work" or about Creating Shared Meaning or want to repair or enhance your relationship, consider attending an Art and Science of Love Weekend Workshop for Couples in Jacksonville or seeing Michael for couples therapy. For more information, contact Michael at 904-289-2954 or visit [www.happycoupleshealthycommunities.com](http://www.happycoupleshealthycommunities.com).*

## Palencia Residents! Send Us Your Newsworthy Notes

Are there any anniversaries marriages, engagements, military members, school or athletic awards in your family? Drop us a note about your family's good news along with a photo, if available. You may email the information to the following address: [thepaper@comcast.net](mailto:thepaper@comcast.net).



Michael Brown,  
MSC, LMFT

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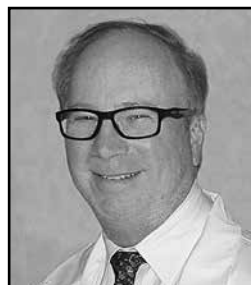
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## December Speaks Of Christmas

By Rev. Michael Legaspi, Associate Pastor  
The Village Church  
4229 Pacetti Rd., World Golf Village

December speaks of Christmas to me! The magi following the star, the prophecies of old, the shepherds and angels, Mary and Joseph, the manger and the baby Jesus. It all culminates with anticipation, along with the challenges and finally the hope.

Advent is the season of anticipation. The word advent comes from the word "adventus" which means arrival or coming. In the church this signifies the arrival of Christ.

Christmas time comes at the end of the calendar year but in the Liturgical year it inaugurates the beginning. It is a time of anticipation and preparation for observing the birth of Christ. This preparation begins weeks before the birth of Christ and the period is called Advent.

The sights and smells of the season are now present as we begin many preparations. What are your must haves like a family meal, a candlelight service and presents under a tree that will have your focus this year? What will you change and perhaps refocus to preserve a little peace of mind or even make Christ the reason for the season?

My prayer is that you would find the

season special and meaningful. That it would be full of delight and build family and memories to last the year long.

For some, it may be a difficult time to celebrate without the presence of a loved one. Let this bring an opportunity to be kind and introduce a special effort to include others. Let the scheduled events bring you joy and not added stress. Be at Peace and remember those not able to find peace because of conflicts or war.

Here at the Village Church of World Golf Village let me invite you to experience "Unity Through the Nativity" as we display over 100 nativity scenes from around

the World. See how other cultures celebrate the season and get a bigger sense of what unites us all. Visit 4229 Pacetti Road, St. Augustine:

December 15th 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Walk through the presented Nativity displays

December 16th 3:00 pm - 8:30 pm  
Bonfire, Carols, Hot Chocolate, 3:30 pm Piano Concert, and Live Band at 5:00 pm.

Here's wishing that you and your family have a very Merry Christmas!



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---

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**NEW YEAR'S EVE**

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## Dry Or Wet Food, Which Is Better?

By Dr. Jacob Vencil, Veterinarian  
Palencia Pet Clinic  
904-824-1622

In this month's article, we're diving into the age-old debate of wet food vs. dry food for cats. Just like us, our furry friends have unique dietary needs that evolve throughout their lives. It's essential to make informed choices about what we feed them to ensure they lead healthy, happy lives. Let's weigh the pros and cons of both wet and dry cat food.

### Wet Food: A Hydration Hero

Wet cat food is often praised for its high moisture content, which can be incredibly beneficial for our cats, especially in sunny Florida. Cats may not drink enough water when left to their own devices, so wet food can help keep them hydrated. Proper hydration supports kidney health and can even reduce the risk of urinary tract issues. Older cats or those with medical issues may require wet food to help manage their conditions.

Additionally, wet food tends to be more palatable to cats due to its strong aroma and flavor, making it a great choice for picky eaters or cats with dental issues. It's also easier for kittens and senior cats to consume due to its soft texture.

### Dry Food: Convenience and Dental Health

On the flip side, dry cat food has its ad-

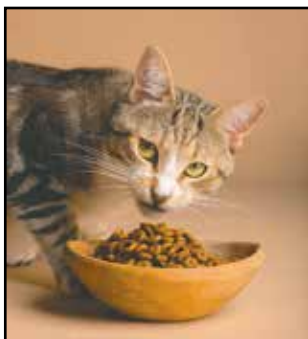
vantages. It's incredibly convenient, with a longer shelf life and easy portion control. For households with multiple cats, dry food can simplify feeding routines.

From a dental perspective, some argue that dry food can help clean a cat's teeth by reducing plaque buildup. However, research shows this effect may vary depending on the individual cat and the specific kibble size and texture, with most dry diets not showing any significant difference in plaque accumulation vs wet foods. Purpose-made diets are best if you are hoping to reduce the incidence of dental disease in your kitty via diet.

### The Balance Is Key

So, which is the winner in the wet food vs. dry food battle? The answer lies in balance. Ideally, for an otherwise healthy cat, a combination of both wet and dry food can provide your cat with the best of both worlds. Wet food helps with hydration, while dry food can be a convenient and supplementary source of nutrition. It's crucial to consult with your veterinarian to determine the right balance for your cat's specific needs, taking into account their age, health, and preferences.

Until next time, give your furry friends an extra cuddle from all of us here at Palencia Pet Clinic.



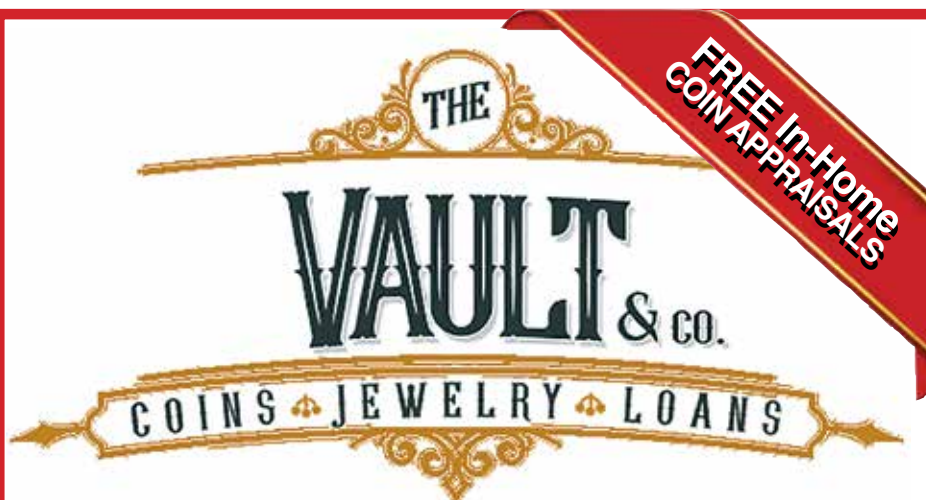
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## How To Deal With Parking Lot Accidents

It's only a common fender bender, but all parties involved should know what to do.

Especially during the holidays, but even on many typical weekends, parking lots at malls and supermarkets are packed, increasing the possibility of a fender bender and door dings on your car, truck or SUV.

If you hit, scrape or otherwise damage a parked car — or if you're the victim of such an accident — don't panic. Here are some simple steps you can take:

### What to do when you hit someone's car in a parking lot

Don't drive away from the scene of the accident, no matter how minor. If another customer or a surveillance camera spots you, you could be punished with hit-and-run charges.

Track down the other car's owner. Head into the store and speak to someone at the customer service desk. Describe the car to the employee, and have him or her announce it over the store's loudspeaker.

Leave a note. If you're unable to learn the other driver, jot down basic information — your name, phone number and a brief explanation of the accident — and place it in a secure spot on the car. Write down the license plate number and take a photo of the damage if you have a camera or smartphone

with you.

Call the police (if necessary). Depending on how extensively the car has been damaged, you may want to involve the police. They'll document the accident and they may help you find the other car's owner.

### What to do if someone hits your car in a parking lot

Contact your insurance agent. Let him or her know what happened as soon as possible. Your agent will help you determine the next steps.

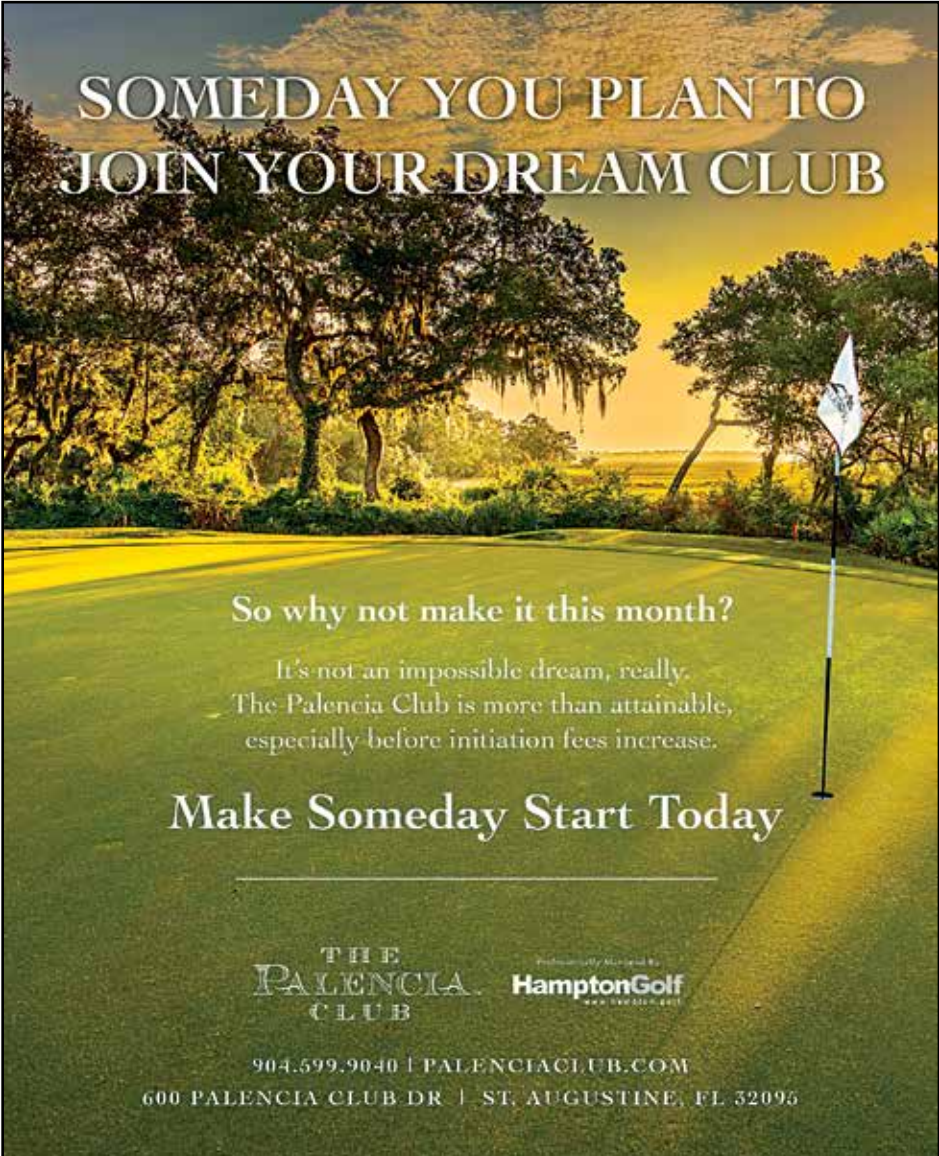
Record evidence. Take pictures of the damage with your phone or a camera, if you have one on hand.

Take thorough notes. If the other driver is still around, jot down his or her name, address, phone number, driver's license number and insurance company. Gather as much information as possible.

### What to do if you witness a crash in a parking lot

Provide assistance. If the offending driver is gone, help the other driver document the damage. Give the driver your contact information, in case his or her insurance agent or the police need to contact you for further comment.

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