

Life

travel · pantry raiders · gardening
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Get to Know . . .

Rhonda Gauger

By Angela Higginbotham
angela@floridanewslines.com

Rhonda Gauger grew up in Georgia surrounded by music. Both of her parents were musicians and she began playing piano while in the fifth grade. Gauger's passion for music carried on throughout her childhood and still remains today. She earned her bachelor's degree in piano and masters in education from Columbus State University. She met her husband, Bob, a music leader and piano technician, while pursuing her master's degree. They recently celebrated their 34th anniversary and are proud parents of Ben and Katie, who both serve in the Marine Corps.

Gauger's career in education started in 1988 in St. Mary's, Ga. and she immediately felt a connection and passion for working with children. She moved to the St. Augustine area in 1993 and has enjoyed her work as the music instructor at Hickory Creek Elementary for the past 13 years. She takes tremendous pride in her students and enjoys nothing more than watching them grow through the band and chorus programs at the school. A breast cancer survivor of 20 years, Gauger credits Buddy Check 12 with providing encouragement to perform self checks and volunteers time to encourage others to do the same.

1. What do you enjoy most about living in St. Augustine?

I guess my favorite thing would include the entire First Coast area. The people are what I enjoy most. We have some of the most generous, helpful and kind people around here. People who rush to respond in times of need. This area is so full of life and rich in history as well.

2. What is the success story and how many instruments are the kids exposed to in the fourth and fifth grade band at Hickory Creek Elementary?

The staff is encouraged to focus on the arts, both in the curriculum and through extracurricular activities. I've been blessed to teach at the opening of several schools, but I knew that Hickory Creek was a place that I wanted to be for a long time. This year will be our 11th band program. We had 52 members last year. The kids play flutes, clarinets, saxophones, trumpets, trombones, baritone and a couple of less common instruments. Every year we do a production of "The Polar Express." The band, chorus, and drama kids all work together and put on a big production. It takes an army to teach all these kids different instruments, but we have teachers and volunteers that go the extra mile. When the band first started it was just myself and my husband working with the kids. Now, we have so many people that want to be involved.

3. As a breast cancer survivor, what would you say you gained most from your journey?

Some things that I used to think were important, aren't. I started thinking about how I wanted my kids to remember me and I learned to let a lot of things go. If the beds don't get made every day, oh well. I had to retrain myself on how to play the piano because, as a result of the chemotherapy, the nerves on the ends of my fingers were damaged. I still can't feel the keys when I play. That journey taught me a lot about life and what's really important.

I was 35 years old and had no family



Photo courtesy Rhonda Gauger

Rhonda Gauger

history of breast cancer. My lump never showed up on my mammogram and it had spread to my lymph nodes. I found it on my own. I encourage women to check themselves often and not completely rely on their yearly exams. The doctor saw me once a year; I see myself every day and I knew something wasn't right.

4. What would you consider your greatest accomplishment?

Helping students that are struggling in the classroom find success through music. Children can learn and grow so much through music. One student I had was hearing impaired and I gave him a speaking part in the Christmas show. He was so proud of himself for that accomplishment and went on to join the band in middle school, and also later in high school at Bartram Trail. He could play in tune so well. I work to help make every child feel successful and good when they are learning music. I try to find what they are good at and it's great to see how much they have grown years later.

5. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

With my school work and activities, there's not a lot of extra time. I enjoy listening to a variety of music, of course. I spend some time representing Buddy Check 12 and I enjoy adult coloring books.

Consider selenium in cancer prevention

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Selenium is a trace mineral that can be very potent in cancer prevention. According to Susan G. Komen, selenium helps antioxidants work more effectively and may reduce cancer incidence as a result. Selenium also may kill cancer cells and help normal cells repair their DNA.

According to a Harvard study of more than 1,000 men with prostate cancer, those with the highest levels of selenium in their blood were 40 percent less likely to develop advanced disease over the next 10-plus years than men with the lowest levels of selenium in their blood. In addition, data from a five-year study from researchers at Cornell University discovered 200 micrograms of selenium per day resulted in 63 percent fewer prostate tumors and a 39 percent overall decrease in cancer deaths, among other benefits.

Selenium is found in Brazil nuts, yellowfin tuna, halibut, sardines, and many other foods.

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School Briefs

Palencia Elementary welcomes students back to school

On Aug. 10, Palencia Elementary opened its doors and welcomed back the school's largest class ever with 829 students.



Photo courtesy Emily Turner

Palencia Elementary School's fifth grader Claire Madsen.

There is a new state mandate this year that requires 20 minutes of recess every day as well as 150 minutes of Physical Education per week. The American Academy of Pediatrics says that "Recess serves as a necessary break from the rigors of concentrated, academic challenges in the classroom. But equally important is the fact that safe and well-supervised recess offers cognitive, social, emotional, and physical benefits." In addition to this needed recess break the kids will be receiving some form of PE every day, from Coach McMahon and Coach Brougham or in different forms in the classroom, including yoga sessions and boot camps.

The Palencia PTO has worked hard to fill the fall calendar with fun opportuni-

ties for people to get involved with the school, or just join in for fun events. The year already kicked off with the ever popular Boosterthon. Coming up is the Fore the Kids Golf Tournament, a Family Movie Night, Grandparents Day and several kickback events, from Bruster's Ice Cream, Chick-Fil-A and even J.Crew.

The Fore the Kids Golf Tournament will be held on Oct. 9. Registration will begin at 11 a.m. with a 1 p.m. shotgun start at the Palencia Club. There will be an awards dinner on the upstairs lawn of the Palencia Club and will feature music, prizes, raffle, silent auction and a delicious dinner.

Family Movie Night will be held on Nov. 9 on the soccer fields at Palencia. This is a community event that is put on by the PTO and is free of charge. Bring your chairs and blankets and enjoy a movie under the stars with your family and friends. There will be food and snacks available for purchase.

Grandparents Day at Palencia Elementary will be held on Nov. 20 and 21. The students enjoy inviting their grandparents to share a meal with them and show off their amazing school. All grandparents must be approved volunteers; visit <https://stjohns.keepntrack.com/apply/> for the application.

Free meals for students at St. Johns County Schools

St. Johns County is one of the 37 counties designated in the FEMA Major Disaster Declaration.

All students in St. Johns County can receive free school meals (breakfast and lunch) through Oct. 20, 2017. A la carte menu items will still be available for purchase.

Call (904) 547-8931 for additional information.

Liberty Pines Academy starts school year with new principal



Photo courtesy Leonard's Studios

New Liberty Pines Academy principal, Traci Hemingway.

The school year has had a terrific start at Liberty Pines Academy and everyone came back in August buzzing with excitement over new principal, Traci Hemingway. Hemingway is fitting right in, with nothing but positive words coming from faculty, students and parents.

Fall sports are in full swing and the community is invited come out to support the Liberty Pines Academy Wolves. Boys' and girls' volleyball games are held on most Tuesdays and Thursdays, and boys' football games are on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Visit www.lpa.stjohns.k12.fl.us for more information on game times and locations.

The school recently concluded its Book Fair with all profits going towards funding additional books and media resources for Liberty Pines Academy. The students, teachers and parents had a wonderful time and the selection was better than ever.

Unfortunately, the school year also started off with the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, but Liberty Pines Academy families pulled together and organized a donation drive, which succeeded in providing toothpaste, toothbrushes, canned goods and blankets.



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Preparing students for life beyond high school

By Delaney Cantrell

If Bartram Trail High School students want to know how their school has changed since its inception, they need to look no further than Mary Mullen, 10th grade English and Creative Writing teacher. Mullen has been at Bartram since its opening and to say that she is fully invested in what is best for her students would be an understatement.



Photo courtesy Delaney Cantrell
Mary Mullen, 10th grade English and Creative Writing teacher at Bartram Trail High School.

Originally from Louisville, Ky., Mullen met her husband, Alvin, in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where they were both stationed with the Navy. After spending many years in Detroit, Mich., the Mullens decided to escape to a warmer climate and fortunately for Bartram students, St. Johns provided that perfect escape. After raising two children, the Mullens now focus their parenting skills on their basset hounds.

Mullen's love of writing and teaching is obvious when speaking to her. "Writing is a life skill but it is also something deeply personal and meaningful," said Mullen.

Mullen, along with her first creative writing students, formed "The Oracle," a group that focuses on the publication of their creative works. Over the years, "The Oracle" has transformed from publishing school magazines to hard-bound literary journals to books that are currently available to purchase online.

Mullen said, "The goal of The Oracle Staff (Creative Writing III-V) is to seek out and nurture new talent and to support the arts in St. Johns County."

The writing students are always looking for submissions of fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, art, and photography. They then use their editing, graphic designing, desktop publishing and book

layout skills to complete the project.

"They have built a student-run business around their efforts," Mullen said.

Mullen gave a sneak peek at "The Oracle's" latest project, a book entitled, "All the Colors in Black and White." The students hope this book will give a voice to those individuals in society who are often overlooked or ignored. Their goal is to show the struggles and the humanity of different segments of society, such as the homeless or those who have been denied their basic human rights. They welcome submissions from all St. Johns County middle and high school students to be considered for this project.

While Mullen has seen many changes throughout her years at Bartram Trail High School, she said that the one constant is that the staff and teachers of Bartram truly care deeply about the students. It is obvious that Mullen fits in well among that group. She believes it is essential to teach the students to write well and read deeply so they can take those valuable skills "beyond the walls of Bartram" and into the world where they are equipped to conquer their own endless goals.



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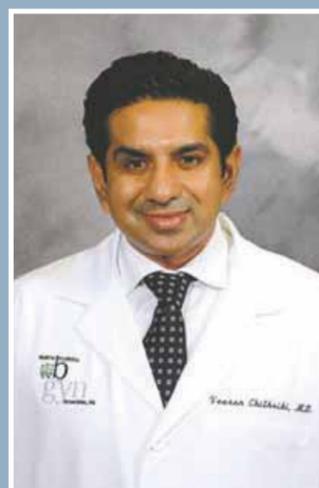
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Fifth annual Fore The Kids golf tournament to be held Oct. 9

By Emily Turner
mail@floridanewsline.com

It's that time of year again where Palencia Elementary School invites all community golfers to get out their clubs in support of our school. Palencia Elementary School's fifth annual golf tournament will be held on Monday, Oct. 9. Registration will begin at 11 a.m. with a 1 p.m. shotgun start at the Palencia Club.

The awards dinner will take place on the upstairs lawn of the Palencia Club and will feature music, prizes, raffle, silent auction and dinner. Everyone should plan to come early to participate in pre-tournament putting contest for a chance to win tickets to the 2018 Master's Tournament. There will be complimentary food and beverages on the course as well as proximity prizes like sports tickets and even cruises.

Last year's tournament was a great success for the Palencia Elementary PTO, raising a net profit of \$20,900. This money was put towards purchasing a sunshade structure for the school's PE court.



Photo courtesy Emily Turner

Golfers enjoy last year's FORE The Kids golf tournament.

The price per individual player is \$200 or \$700 per foursome and registration is all inclusive. Visit www.Palenciaforethekids.com to register or for sponsorship opportunities.

Emily Turner is a member of the Palencia Elementary School PTO.

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Strength training important to women's health

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Women's bodies are built different from men's to accommodate the changes of pregnancy and childbirth. Although women may store fat differently and have less muscle mass than men, it's still important that women include weight resistance training in their exercise routines.

Lifting weights is an important part of staying fit, yet many women do not pick up weights out of fear of bulking up and gaining weight. In a 2011 opinion poll conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), less than 20 percent of women said they accomplished the CDC's recommended 2.5 hours of aerobic exercise and two periods of strength training each week.

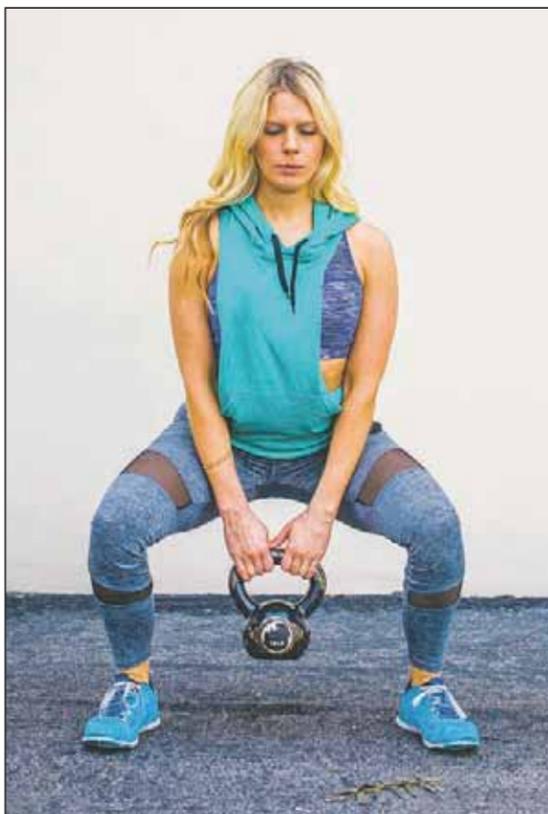


Photo courtesy Metrocreative

Contrary to popular belief, women who weight train will not turn into the bulking behemoths of competitive weightlifting. The Women's Heart Foundation says that high levels of estrogen make it quite difficult for women to become overly muscular. When they strength train, rather, women's muscles will improve in tone, endurance and strength instead of size.

Resistance training provides an efficient way to build strength and burn calories. A study from researchers at the University of New Mexico found that the body will take between 15 minutes and 48 hours after exercise to return to a resting state. That means that a person continues to burn calories after exercising, a phenomenon known as "after-burn" or "excess post-exercise oxygen consumption." The more intense the workout, the longer the after-burn may last.

Studies performed at the Quincy, Mass., South Shore YMCA found that the average woman who strength trains two to three times a week for two months will gain nearly two pounds of muscle, but lose 3.5 pounds of fat. With that lean muscle addition, resting

metabolism increases and more calories can be burned each day.

The following are some additional benefits of strength training.

- Reduces risk of heart disease by lowering LDL cholesterol and increasing HDL cholesterol.
- Builds stronger muscles and connective tissues that can increase joint stability.
- Improves the way the body processes sugar, which can help reduce the risk of diabetes.
- Reduces rates of depression. A Harvard University study found that 10 weeks of strength training reduced clinical depression symptoms more successfully than standard counseling. Women who strength train commonly report feeling more confident and capable.

Women with no strength training experience can consult with a personal trainer who can teach them proper strength training form. This ensures that the exercises are being done efficiently while reducing the women's risk of injury.

The Pantry Raiders

Turn dinner time into family time.

By Melissa Cooper
mail@floridanewslines.com

It's Fall y'all — and you know what that means ... pumpkin season has officially arrived. This yummy recipe will satisfy all those pumpkin cravings and your kitchen will smell heavenly while the bread bakes. You can thank me later!

Pumpkin Cranberry Bread

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp. plus 2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 ½ tsp. salt
- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 can pumpkin (15 ounces)
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup orange juice
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup walnuts, optional



Photo by 123RF.com
Pumpkin Cranberry Bread

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease and flour two 9 x 5 inch loaf pans.

Combine flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking soda and salt in large bowl. Combine sugar, pumpkin, eggs, oil and juice in large mixer bowl; beat until just blended. Add pumpkin mixture to flour mixture; stir just until moistened. Fold in cranberries. Spoon batter into prepared loaf pans.

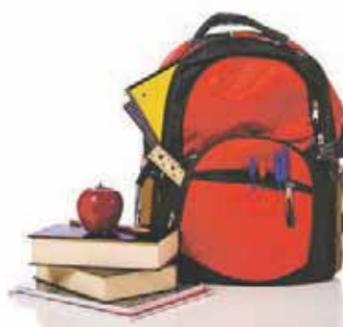
Bake for 60 to 65 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks for 10 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.

For three 8 x 4-inch loaf pans: Prepare as above. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes.

For five or six 5 x 3-inch mini-loaf pans: Prepare as above. Bake for 50 to 55 minutes.

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Nease NJROTC cadets tend 18th pin at American Junior Golf Association championship

By Scott LaRochelle
mail@floridanewsline.com

Nease NJROTC cadets tended the 18th pin at TPC Sawgrass during the final round of the American Junior Golf Association championship over Labor Day weekend. After putting out on hole 18, the junior golfers, among the best from all over the world, along with their caddies, stopped to shake hands and thank the cadets for their service within the Navy JROTC program, but in a greater sense to pay tribute to the United States military.

Nease cadets Troy Barber, Heather Jett, Ryan Landeweer, Konnor Matthews, Will Moore and Erin Sass participated in the pin tending ceremony.

“It was wonderful to be thanked by all these golfers,” said Jett, a junior cadet. “All the golfers and especially the international golfers really took their time to say thank you as they were coming off the 18th green.”



Photo courtesy Scott LaRochelle

Nease NJROTC cadets Erin Sass, Troy Barber, Will Moore and Ryan Landeweer participated in the #18 hole pin tending during the final round of the American Junior Golf Association championship at TPC Sawgrass during Labor Day weekend.

Nease cadets have tended the pin at this American Junior Golf Association event at TPC Sawgrass every year since 2014.

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Cross country season openers dominated by Creekside girls

By Shelley Howard
mail@floridanewsline.com

The high school cross country season opened on Aug. 26 when Flagler Palm Coast High School hosted the Spikes and Spurs Classic. In attendance were 23 schools and more than 800 girls and boys who ran at record-breaking speeds. Perhaps the most notable local group were the Creekside girls, as they finished in third place overall with their leader, Claire Openshaw, sweeping the top two to win first place for individuals.

One week later on Sept. 2, Bartram Trail High School hosted its signature Bale & Trail run on home territory, inviting 29 high schools to participate. Parents served a pancake breakfast as guests customized t-shirts commemorat-

ing the event. Bales of hay were lined throughout the route and students ran in a divide of varsity and junior varsity.

Once again, Creekside girls dominated the course, finishing three varsity runners in the top five while, as a team, they took second place in varsity and third place in junior varsity. Creekside's success continued with the JV boys team taking first place and varsity boys finishing in a solid fifth place.

Host team Bartram Trail was not far behind with JV boys taking fifth and varsity boys finishing in seventh place. The girls placed sixth for JV and fifth for varsity.



Photos courtesy Shelley Howard

Claire Openshaw beat out her opponents with an average pace of 6 minutes 2.7 seconds for a complete time of 18:47.9 and smiled graciously as she accepted her prize awards following the meet. (also pictured Rafaella Gibbons, Isabella Bartczak, Mya Bodrato and Jennifer Coddington)



Race for the finish is close competition even against teammates



Creekside girls' varsity placed second at Bale & Trail



Bartram Trail boys post-run cooling down

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Faith News

Oct. 3: In His Image Ministry presents Planting Hope, a faith-based support group for families with special needs children. This group meets the first Tuesday of every month at Fruit Cove Baptist Church, ROC-22 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Childcare is available by reservation. Contact Barbara Campbell at barbara.inhisimage@gmail.com for more information regarding this ministry or to register.

Oct. 7: United Methodist Women will host the 28th annual Fall Craft Festival at Mandarin United Methodist Church, 11270 San Jose Blvd. on Saturday, Oct. 7, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The event will include 100 craft booths, a bakery and a Country Store full of handmade items from jellies and Kickin' Pickles to quilts and painted holiday decorations. The Children's Christmas Shop will be open for children to shop by themselves for gifts for family and the Family Life building will be open and offering lunch for sale. Visit www.mumc.net for more information.

Oct. 11: GriefShare meets Wednesday evenings from 6:15 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Fruit Cove Baptist Church in Building 3, Room 3. If you've lost a spouse, child, family member, or friend, GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. Many GriefShare alumni say the program helped them move from deep grief to peace and a sense of joy again. You don't have to go through the grieving process alone. Childcare is provided. Call Cecille Hammond at (904) 859-6098 for more information or to register.

**Do you have any
Faith News?**

email to:
**Editor@
floridanewslines.com**

Mom To Mom is back



Photo courtesy Suzanne Vierling

Mom to Mom at Creekside Christian Church kicked off its fourth season with a welcome back party on Sept. 7. Attendees enjoyed reconnecting with former members and making new friends with fun fellowship, prayer, and delicious food. Mom to Mom is a nationwide ministry based upon Biblical principles of women mentoring other women with their roles as moms and wives. Moms in all stages of life, with newborns, grown children, and in between are invited to join us on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Childcare is provided for toddlers, preschoolers, and a limited amount of homeschoolers. Contact Creekside Christian Church at (904) 287-2777 for more information.

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Cimarrone Ladies Golf Association to host Pink Ribbon Golf Tournament

By Brenda Bailey
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Cimarrone Ladies Golf Association is hosting the 19th annual Pink Ribbon Golf Tournament on Saturday, Oct. 21 at Cimarrone Golf Club, 2800 Cimarrone Blvd. All proceeds will benefit Baptist Health Foundation, Cimarrone Endowment. Last year the tournament raised \$12,000. Baptist will match 100 percent of monies raised, which will stay local at Baptist Medical Center South.

The golf association is seeking donations of gift cards/gift certificates, merchandise or services to be

used in the charity raffle and silent auction. Hole sponsorships are also available; Gold sponsors are \$500 (includes paid entry for four players), Silver sponsors are \$300 (includes paid entry for two players) and Bronze sponsors are \$100. All hole sponsors get a signage on the course in recognition of their support.

The golf tournament will be a four-person scramble with a shotgun start at 8 a.m., followed by lunch and prize raffle/silent auction. Registration begins at 6:45 a.m. and the en-

try fee is \$85 for non-members and \$65 for members. Chef Tom will be offering a special Breakfast Buffet for \$5 plus tax from 6:30 a.m. – 8 a.m.

For registration, hole sponsorship or donation information, visit <http://clga.info> and then click on the Pink Ribbon download menu or contact at Brenda Bailey at Brenda.bailey55@comcast.net or (904) 287-0723.



Photo courtesy Brenda Bailey
Last year the Pink Ribbon Golf Tournament raised \$12,000 to benefit Baptist Health Foundation.

Brenda Bailey is President and Rally Coordinator of the Cimarrone Ladies Golf Association.

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Golf tips from T Shot Ranch

Golf in the Fast Lane

By Janie C. Farina
mail@floridanewsline.com

“The only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once.” – Einstein

Does life can feel like we are racing in the Daytona 500, where time feels like everything is happening all at once — job, family, friends, and golf — while staying on the track going the speed of light?

So, who has time for golf these days?

Unless we can pull over in the pit stop and watch the other cars fly by, finding golf time in our hectic lives can be a luxury, not a necessity, like filling a flat tire and changing the oil would be.

Time averages for golf, including the beer in the clubhouse after, can take up to half of our day. (Not including practice time during the week.)

Positioning our schedules to include the “fast track to golf” can take maneuvering, but it can be done with help from your head pro and golfing buddies:

Consider playing nine holes. Enlist your local head pro to promote a nine hole league for not only ladies, but working, busy, and physically challenged people.

When playing with golf buddies, try a scramble format off the tee, where both hit, pick the best shot, then continue only hitting from the best shot.

Alternate shot, or Scotch 2-Ball, is another time-trimming golf format, where both hit from the tee, pick the best shot, then alternate hitting for the entire round, or just until the next hole, where both drive the ball once

again.

Play from 200, 150, or 100 yards in, depending on skill and time required to finish your round in record time. Tee the ball up from the desired yardage and play in from there.

“Winter Rules” can also speed up play by rolling the ball a scorecard length up to one club length from the ball’s original position up to the green. This gives the player an advantage from bad lies, penalty situations, and severe slopes.

Cross Country Golf, or playing holes not in a consecutive order, with permission from the Pro Shop, of course, can downsize an 18 hole round to 15, 9, 6, or 3 holes depending on course layout and time restrictions.

Bingo, Bango, Bongo is a fun way for golfing buddies to change things up. Scoring is first on the green, first in the cup, and closest to the pin on the approach to the green. No need to finish putting if a player has already holed out before others. Trim off the time by using this format from the forward tees for men, 150 yards or 100 yards in for novice players.

Match Play vs. Stroke Play, where twosomes play each other hole-by-hole, while applying their handicap. This game can become a shorter version of a round, and can narrow the differences of skill levels of players playing together. Strokes are awarded on each hole of the players, and the goal is to play under the allotted strokes to beat the opponent by net score or handicap score vs. gross score.

Booking afternoon or twilight tee times also promise smooth sailing down the golfing freeway.

Pay attention! Sounds like a no brainer, but a player should be ready to hit when it’s her turn, place her bag or golf cart out of the way and read the green while walking on the way to the ball and back from the cart position.

Note that these time saving golf shortcuts cannot be counted towards

your USGA handicap unless it’s a nine-hole round, or “winter rules” approved.

Speedy golfing!

Janie C. Farina is a 26-year teaching professional recently who relocated to the St. Johns area. She is now available for golf instruction at two local golf courses. Email her at hittedirt2@gmail.com with comments or questions.



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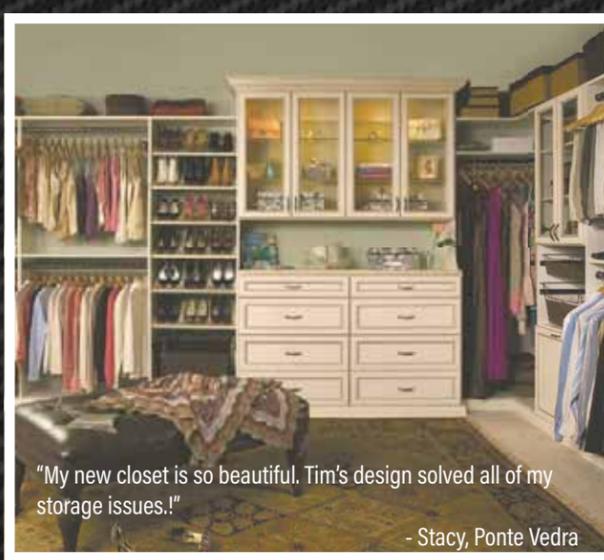
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Travel

Travel: Edison and Ford Winter Estates worth a drive

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

I've lived in Florida since 1997, but a certain light bulb never went off in my head until recently. I'm a travel writer, yet I never visited one of Florida's most noteworthy historical landmarks: the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers.

I revved up my motor and headed down to Fort Myers. The winter homes of the two titans of American industry sit side-by-side on 20 acres of lush botanical gardens bordering the Caloosahatchee River. The property straddles McGregor Boulevard, a street lined with tall palms. Edison planted more than 2,000 Royal Palm trees along McGregor Boulevard, offering to maintain them for two years if the city would care for them thereafter. Today, Fort Myers, "City of Palms," boasts hundreds of the trees more than 75 feet in height.

A walk from the parking lot to the entrance winds past an amazing Banyan tree, planted by Edison around 1925. That four-foot tree now covers almost an acre of the grounds.

Thomas Alva Edison (1847 – 1931) is considered one of America's greatest inventors. He developed many devices that became part of everyday life, such as the phonograph, a motion picture camera, and of course, the electric light bulb.

Dubbed "The Wizard of Menlo Park," Edison holds 1,093 US patents including a stock ticker, a mechanical vote counter, a battery for an electric car, and recorded music. He developed a system of electric-power generation and distribution allowing homes, businesses, and factories to enter the age of industrialization. Manhattan, N.Y. became the site of the Edison Illuminating Company's first power station.

As a young man, Henry Ford worked for Edison, who encouraged the young engineer's ideas. Ford later became the founder of the Ford Motor Company, revolutionizing transportation by making affordable cars widely available. Although Edison was 20 years his senior, the two became good friends. Ford made trips to Florida to visit his mentor, eventually buying the house next door.

Guided tours of the property are rich in information about the two and about the research that interested both — like tires for example. The tour includes a peek inside Edison's home, guesthouse, the Ford home, and other outbuildings. A knowledgeable guide offered memorable stories about the lives of Edison and Ford families and their friendships.

The guide explained that Edison arrived in Fort Myers in 1885 and decided to purchase the property. At the time, Fort Myers was virtually inaccessible by land. The few visitors who arrived came by boat from the Gulf of Mexico and then up the Caloosahatchee. When widower Edison married Mina in 1886, Fort Myers became their honeymoon haven and winter home.

Three decades later during WWI, Edison, Ford and another entrepreneur, Harvey Firestone, built a Botanical Research Lab. They hoped to find a cheap method to obtain rubber. As a result, Edison and his researchers established many of today's estate plantings. (I did not take the guided tour in the laboratory, but a look inside gave the feel that it might come alive when Edison got back after the weekend.)

The museum houses many interesting artifacts developed by Edison and Ford. Visiting auto enthusiasts will find the displays of old Ford cars satisfying.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander

Edison's lab appears to look much as he left it.

Those wishing to spend a full day at the estate can stroll to the marina and board a newly built passenger vessel for a cruise on the Caloosahatchee River. The boat trip includes certified naturalists or historians from Pure Florida and the Edison Ford Estates.

A drive to Fort Myers from Jacksonville takes about five hours. A weekend getaway can include a night on nearby Sanibel Island or some time exploring Sarasota, St. Petersburg or Tampa along the Gulf Coast.

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



Statue of Edison



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Gardening

Wild Weather

By Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

Like many Floridians, I left Jacksonville with my family to escape hurricane Irma. I began writing sitting in our friends' sunny dining room in Atlanta, while Irma was moving along the coast of Cuba. It had already destroyed many of the Caribbean islands that were in its path, and millions of Floridians were awaiting their fates.

People who love their trees were hoping they would hold up in the coming winds, and others were watching nearby creeks, wondering how high they would rise. For some folks, the next 48 hours would define the coming months, or longer.

Thinking about gardening, then, was both a welcome distraction, and yet another reminder of how frail are our human constructs: nature will always take its own course, and our part seems to be to make our way despite obstacles.

Now the clean-up begins, and this blog post (<http://tinyurl.com/yawlNrge>) explains how to deal with your trees and lawn after a storm. If you have large trees that are damaged, make sure to consult a qualified arborist. Some types of damage can be managed and trees may be saved, but it takes skill to recognize that and a plan to continue to monitor a tree's development for several years after the event. An arborist will help you choose the best course of action. This article gives tips on how to choose a reputable tree company: <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/arborist.shtml>.

Early fall is usually a good time to be thinking about reviving the tired summer garden. Clearing out storm debris and assessing what plants need to be replaced will become part of my early autumn gardening, assuming our house is in one piece. Since I know that — at the very least! — some of my seedlings will have drowned, I've collected some seeds of *Baptisia australis* (false indigo) and Stokes' aster (*Stokesia laevis*) to sow when I get back to town. Generally, summer- and

fall-blooming wildflowers can be sown in October and November, which is what would happen naturally, as their seeds mature. If you prefer to sow seed in the spring, dry seed keeps best refrigerated in sealed plastic bags. For more information, check out <http://flawildflowers.org/planting/>.

The cool season vegetable garden needs attention too. It's a good time to plant brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, collards, kale and radish), beets, mustard, spinach, and Swiss chard. For more information, see the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>). If you buy transplants, be scrupulous about avoiding diseased plants, particularly brassicas with browning leaf edges. They are carrying a soil-borne disease which will plague your vegetable garden long after they are harvested and removed. (I've learnt that the hard way.)

Preparing a bed for new plants requires fertilizer. Sandy soils are readily leached of nutrients, especially after torrential rain. Choose a slow release fertilizer with micronutrients to help the soil's microbial residents, and apply it according to the label on the package, usually a week or two before planting. Add organic matter such as shredded leaves and compost to the soil, and use an organic mulch around plants. The healthier the soil, the stronger will be your plants.

After a storm, flowering plants that have been battered down won't be any use to hummingbirds, so if you can, supply them with a feeder until you have flowers again. Everyone needs help now and then — now more than usual. Take care, everyone.

Lesley Arrandale is a Master Gardener with the Duval County Cooperative Extension Service/City of Jacksonville Agriculture Department, which is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and the City of Jacksonville.

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