

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

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FEBRUARY 2019 Volume 6 Issue 2

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



NEW contest
page 3
BFF Best Furry Friend



page 5
Take Five



page 11
Get To Know...
Blake Ingram



page 12
Puzzles

Camera club captures Northeast Florida

By Angela Higginbotham
angela@floridanewslines.com

Photographs capture moments that are otherwise gone forever — and the Jacksonville Camera Club is passionate about sharing knowledge of what to practice behind the lens in an effort to make photographs even more beautiful.

Originally formed in 1935, the Jacksonville Camera Club has offered decades of encouragement and fun to residents interested in photography. Today, the club has approximately 90 members from all walks of life who share a common love for photography. Primarily an amateur club, the members learn from each other and enjoy making new friends.

“A lot of people are hesitant to come because they feel like they will be intimidated. This really is a place for any skill set,” said Jacksonville Camera Club President Brian Leonard.



Photo courtesy Bill McSherry
Jacksonville Camera Club members

Approximately 50 members attend meetings on a regular basis. Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of every month. Club member presentations of various topics of interest are presented during the meetings. The members also enjoy periodically formed

Camera club cont. on pg. 11

Lifelong animal lover Lisa DiDonato's future was influenced greatly by what she saw when volunteering at an animal shelter in her home state of New Jersey. Cats were in cages and a dog that she was particularly attached to had to be euthanized. When the opportunity arose for her to run her own animal shelter, she knew she didn't want to repeat either of these scenarios.

DiDonato opened Love Me True Rescue, reflecting her love of felines and Elvis Presley in April 2018, shortly after the closing of a similar shelter, Katz 4 Keeps, where she volunteered. A number of the other volunteers came to her and asked if she would start another cat shelter and she decided to go with her heart. The facility at 5150 Palm Valley Road officially opened its doors in September 2018.

“Our true mission is to rescue cats from high kill shelters,” DiDonato said. “I also have a sensitivity to feral kittens that I just term as ‘shy.’ I try to socialize and rehabilitate them.”

Presently, Love Me True cat rescue has approximately 15 cats ranging from kittens to adolescents to adults living in the bright, clean, and cheery shelter. Another six are in foster care. DiDonato said they just rescued nine felines from Palatka because that shelter doesn't have adoptions. In addition to taking these cats to try to find them forever homes, Love Me True Rescue is a true partner with the Palatka shelter and brought them food and dog bones.

LOVE ME TRUE RESCUE FULFILLS CHILDHOOD DREAM, SERVES COMMUNITY

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com



Love Me True Rescue founder Lisa DiDonato plays with Brian and Beret in the communal cat room.

“Due to our space, we have to keep our numbers down, especially for rescues,” DiDonato said. “I want to give all the cats quality care and love with no stress for the animals.”

To that end, the facility is mostly cage-free, with the exception of the isolation room where cats go first for observation and to receive medical care. After that, they live in spacious pens and cats of the same litter can live communally in one of two large rooms equipped with a variety of cat-friendly beds, hiding places and cat trees on which to climb and explore. A plug-in “aquarium” with attractive fake fish provides stimulation, as do the windows with ledges.

Volunteer coordinator Peggy Hatfield said that the rescue facility is completely run by volunteers. There is a vet tech, a vet tech support person, a CPA and a treasurer, along with a foster coordinator and 40 to 45 “clean and feed” volunteers.

“We are always looking for volunteers, particularly for the clean and feed,” Hatfield said. “Clean and feed takes place each morning and evening. Each volunteer does one shift per week, which lasts about two hours.”



Siblings Giovanni and Gia, taking turns at the scratching station.

She said another volunteer opportunity is a socializer. These are kids between the ages of 12 – 17 who come to the shelter to play with the cats and get them ready to be adopted. Socializers earn community service hours.

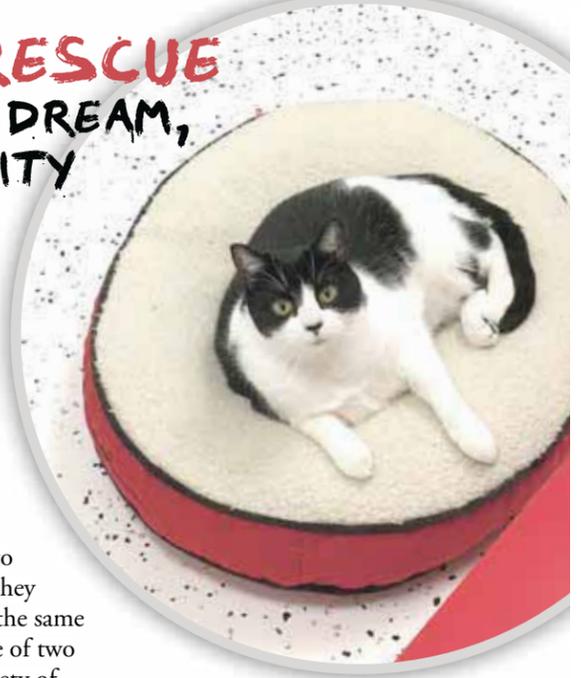


Georgio is shy but a belly rub from Lisa DiDonato calms him down.

DiDonato said they are pleased to have generally busy adoption Saturdays, which provides space in the shelter to rescue new cats.

“Unfortunately, we are unable to accept drop-offs, but would love for folks to visit us and find their feline soul mate,” DiDonato said.

Visit www.lovetruerescue.com or www.facebook.com/lovetruerescue/ for more information about donating or adopting.



Photos by Martie Thompson
Kleokatra enjoys her surroundings at Love Me True Rescue, but would prefer a forever home.

As a 501 c 3 organization, Love Me True Rescue relies on donations of goods (kitty litter is always needed) and money from sponsors and other fundraisers. Pet Supermarket in Ponte Vedra Beach graciously hosts an ongoing food drive for them.

Adoptions are held on Saturdays from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. or by appointment if necessary. An adoption counselor is on hand to ensure that the cat and the human adopting are the right fit.

“Our goal is to get the cats adopted out to the right home,” Hatfield said. “We don't want them returned. We want people to understand this is a forever decision and that the animals should become part of their family.”

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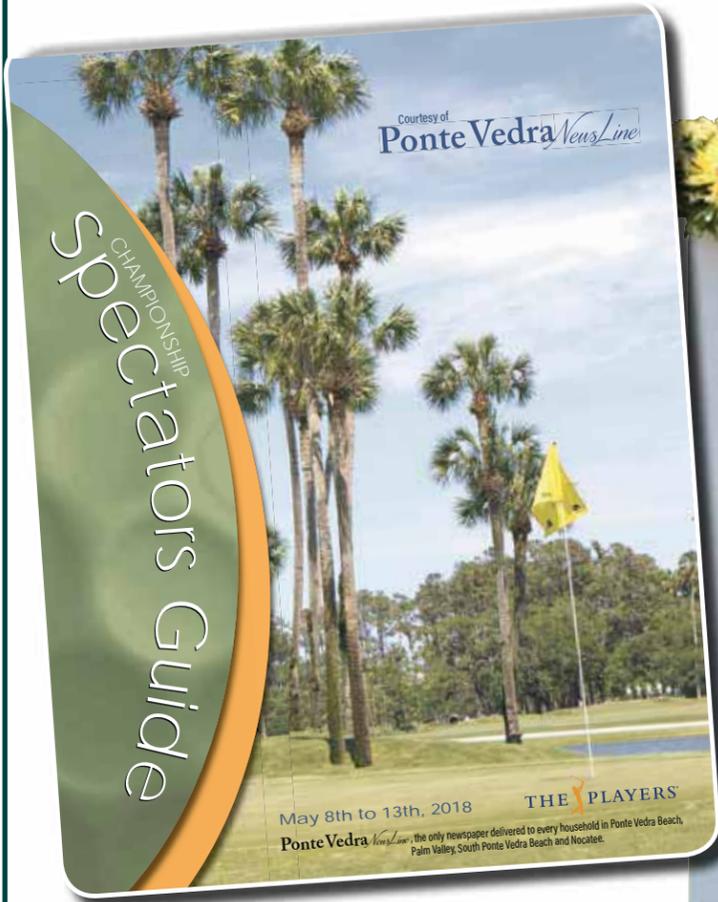
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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Einstein!



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FAVORITE TREAT:
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FAVORITE FRIEND:
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FEBRUARY Special Section

PG 10
LOVE & MARRIAGE

Table of Contents

- 4 Around Town
- 6 Q & A with Kelly Barrera
- 6 Inquiring Minds
- 7 Q & A with Jeremiah Blocker
- 7 Q & A with Cyndi Stevenson
- 8 Q & A with Eddie Creamer
- 9 St. Johns Business Monthly
- 13 Community Marketplace
- 14 Travel

MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?
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Last month's Mystery Photo was Crosswater Hall at Nocatee.
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Advertisers' Index

Ackerman Cancer Center.....	6	Silver Creek.....	15
Affordable Water.....	4	St. Johns County Property Appraiser.....	7
Anytime Fitness Ponte Vedra.....	2	Smiles by Glenos.....	8
Baptist Primary Nocatee.....	5	St. Augustine Flea Market.....	4
Birch Island Veterinary Center.....	1	Starling Nocatee.....	2
Dan Armstrong-Attorney.....	9	Tailored Living.....	14
Donna Mancini Interiors.....	11	The Cummer Museum.....	7
Edward Jones-Karsten Jacobson.....	9	The Right Cleaners.....	13
Jacobson Accounting.....	12	TPC Sawgrass.....	10
JJ's Liberty Bistro.....	7	Travel Leaders.....	14
Kitchen Design Cabinets.....	11	United Way of St. Johns.....	4
Obtain Health.....	15	Vicar's Landing.....	16
Ponte Vedra Animal Hospital.....	6	Westminster St. Augustine.....	8
River Garden Hebrew.....	5	Wild Birds Unlimited.....	10

around town

Feb

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

save the date!

March 2 - 26th annual Chocolate and Beyond, sponsored by RSVP
2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
First Coast Technical college, 2980 Collins Ave., St. Augustine
www.rsvpstjohns.com or (904) 547-3952

March 16 - Pets on Parade
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Faith Community Church, 3450 County Road 210
Sponsored by Helping Hands; proceeds benefit Canine Companions

March 29 - 30 - Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society, "Violets in Paradise"
Friday, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. ; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
San Jose Church of Christ, 6233 San Jose Blvd.
www.jacksonvilleviolets.org

Feb. 4
Current Events Discussion Group
10 a.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
New location: Amenities Annex, 625 Market St., Palencia
adsilby@yahoo.com

Feb. 7
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7
7:30 p.m.
St. Augustine Yacht Club near the St. Augustine Lighthouse
(904) 460-0243

Feb. 5
Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Ponte Vedra Chapter meeting
10:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
pontevedrachapternsdar@aol.com

Feb. 7
Florida Bluebird Society presentation
6:30 p.m.
Wild Birds Unlimited, 450 State Road 13 N
Free; RSVP: (904) 230-3242

Feb. 6
Toastmasters Club #5199 Ponte Vedra Beach
7:30 a.m. (repeating event on Wednesdays)
Players Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane
carmenjsardinas@gmail.com

Feb. 9
GTM Research Reserve new volunteer orientation
10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Environmental Education Center, 505 Guana River Road
(904) 823-4500

Feb. 11
Beaches Toastmasters Club
7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (Repeating event on Mondays)
Baptist Hospital Beaches, Wilson Epstein Building
cgsm13@yahoo.com

Feb. 14
Shorebird Walk at Matanzas Inlet with St. Johns County Audubon Society
9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Matanzas Inlet West Parking Lot, 8655 A1A S., St. Augustine
www.stjohnsaudubon.com

Feb. 11
Caregiver support meeting
12 p.m. - 1 p.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
Ponte Vedra Memory Care Center, 1048 A1A N.
(904) 297-0061

Feb. 16
Nocatee Farmers Market: Car Show
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Town Center Field, Nocatee

Feb. 11
Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District Meeting
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Ponte Vedra MSD Offices
www.pvmsd.org

Feb. 19
St. Johns CARES meeting
7 p.m.
Bartram Academy, 164 Everest Lane, Ste. 1
www.stjohnscares.org

Feb. 12
Open House with continental breakfast
9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Starling at Nocatee, 999 Crosswater Pkwy.
(904) 686-2000

Feb. 19
Newcomers of North St. Johns featuring "Mrs. Henry Flagler"
11 a.m.
Ruth's Chris Steak House, 814 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach
RSVP by Feb. 8: sjaird@comcast.net

Feb. 13
Aging Parent Support Group
6 p.m.
First Atlantic Bank building, 100 Corridor Road S., Ste. 280
Limited space; RSVP to Karen Feliciano, (904) 907-7880

Feb. 22
Food Truck Friday
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Nocatee's Splash Waterpark

Feb. 13
Ponte Vedra Democratic Club Meeting
7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd.
Newcomers welcome; Facebook.com/PonteVedraDemocrats

Feb. 28
Alzheimer's Family Support Group
6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Starling at Nocatee, 999 Crosswater Parkway
(904) 686-2000

Feb. 13
Newcomers of the Beaches luncheon
11 a.m.
Sawgrass Beach Club, 975 Summer Place
RSVP: www.newcomersofthebeaches.com

Feb. 28
Ponte Vedra Woman's Club New Member Social
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Email membership@pontevedrawomansclub.com for details

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Native plant program offered

A workshop on yard enhancement and attracting wildlife with Florida native plants will be held on Feb. 13 at the GTM Research Reserve, 505 Guana River Road from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Attendees will learn how to give character to their yards, preserve resources and attract birds and butterflies from habitat designer Renee Stambaugh. Hands on learning in pollinator garden will take place from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Attendees may bring gardening hand tools. This program is free and open to the public. For more information visit www.nativeplantconsulting.com for more information or call (904) 671-2880.

GTM Research Reserve announces 20th annual State of the Reserve event

The GTM Research Reserve will host its annual State of the Reserve symposium with the theme “Celebrating 20 Years” on Feb. 1 at the GTM Research Reserve, 505 Guana River Road. The day will include workshops from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., a scientific symposium from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. and a poster reception from 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Long-term research projects, research on local fishes and lizards, habitat mapping efforts, mangroves and saltmarshes, and wave, current and wind measurements of the Reserve’s beaches and water quality will be highlighted.

The event is free and open to the public. Visit gtmnerr.org for more information about how to reserve a spot for morning workshops and register for scientific symposium and poster reception.

FL511 aims to assist travelers, improve safety

The Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) Florida 511 (FL511) Advanced Traveler Information System is the state’s official source for traffic and travel information. It provides current road and travel conditions, including updates on accidents, congestion and construction, so drivers can make choices about their travel plans. FL511 also provides camera views on major Florida roads, so users can see road conditions throughout the state. The goal is to increase driving safety and reduce travel time. Before heading out, drivers should check the FL511 App or interactive road map on FL511.com for important traffic information and incident alerts. The FL511 mobile app, available from the Apple App Store or Google Play, features an interactive map showing traffic congestion and incidents and camera snapshots on roads around the user’s location. Travelers can follow FL511 on 13 Twitter handles, on Facebook @FL511, and Instagram @Florida_511. Visit www.FL511.com for more information.

Volunteers needed to report right whale sightings

Marine Resources Council (MRC) has been training and coordinating a dedicated volunteer sighting network of coastal residents to identify and report right whale sightings off the coast of Florida since 1995. MRC is seeking shore-based volunteers in northeast Florida to report whale sightings. This will help protect them from collisions with vessels, initiate a disentanglement response (if necessary), help researchers gather photo-ID, genetic, and behavioral data; assist with tracking their migration and more. Right whales can be seen very close to shore. How do you tell a right whale from another whale? Right whales have:

1. Rough, white patches of skin on the head called callosities;
2. Short, stubby, black flippers on the sides of the body;
3. Triangular black tail with smooth edges and a deep notch in the middle;
4. No dorsal (back) fin;
5. V-shaped blow of water.

Report whale sightings as soon as possible to MRC’s right whale sighting hotline at 888-97-WHALE or (888) 979-4253 from December through April. Visit www.mrcirl.org for more information.



Photo courtesy Marine Resources Council (MRC)
Right whale tail.

Ponte Vedra Woman’s Club announces meetings

The next general meeting of the Ponte Vedra Woman’s Club will be Feb. 19 at Aqua Grill. Registration will begin at 6 p.m. and the meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. Visit PonteVedraWomansClub.com and click Events to register or to learn about the work this organization does on behalf of the community. The club’s New Member Social is planned for Thursday, Feb. 28 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Email membership@pontevedrawomansclub.com for more details.



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Inquiring Minds want to know!

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Are you puzzled about something going on in Ponte Vedra or wondering about whatever happened on a topic from a previous issue? Email your question to us at editor@floridanewsline.com by the fifth of the month and we will do our best to track down the information for you.



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

Q: Can you give us an update on the growth of Palm Valley Academy?

A: When we built Palm Valley Academy, we knew it would be one of the district's fastest growing schools and it is. The school was built for 1,500 students on a larger than usual site. As of October, there were more than 1,300 students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Valley Ridge Academy, which was built for 1,100 students, has 1,400.

Q: Is growth a major focus of the school board?

A: Meeting the needs of population growth is not just the construction of new schools, but also hiring the best teachers, leaders, and non-instructional staff. So yes, this is a continual focus of the district. We also strive to provide safe and secure schools. As an update, the Fortify FL app has been well received. All community members may download and use the app, and when a report is made, an alert goes out to the school's principal, the sheriff's office and district personnel. Some of the reports we've received so far have been more for dangerous student behaviors rather than safety of a school site, but that's ok. We are happy to get the information to work on.

Q: What is the school board working on?

A: First, we are excited about St. Johns County's 93.3 percent graduation rate, recently released by the Florida Department of Education. This is amazing.

On the last day of preplanning, principals and assistant principals heard Mike Mattos speak about professional learning communities — the idea that everyone learns and works together for the good of the whole.

We are now halfway through the school year and looking forward to a strong second half of the year.

Finally, the board is intentionally and thoughtfully continuing to work to develop partnerships with organizations in our community to provide what is needed for all students. These organizations include but are not limited to the Youth Crisis Center, EPIC, Children's Home Society, daniel kids, the Department of Health and area hospitals and mental health care providers. We are thankful to all these organizations.

Q: What events are coming up this month?

A: On Feb. 13 – 14, First Coast Technical College will host the St. Johns County Science Fair. On Feb. 22, PVPV Rawlings Elementary will hold its 60th anniversary celebration. On Feb. 23, the Renaissance Jax Robotics League Championships will be held at the Prime Osborn Center and finally the All County High School Art Show will held from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the St. Augustine Art Association on March 1.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

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with Jeremiah Blocker, St. Johns County Commissioner (District 4)

Q: Regarding the recent Board of County Commissioners vote in favor of the MSTU for beach renourishment in Ponte Vedra Beach, can you share how you voted and why?

A: This is a great opportunity and I'm glad the residents stepped up. But this is not just a Ponte Vedra Boulevard issue; the beaches are important to the entire county. We have to find a way to have an annual, reoccurring beach renourishment program, but this MSTU gives the county options and a starting point. Another important point is that the county gets a lot of tax revenue from houses on the beach, so, like all property values in the county, we want to keep values up. I really felt this vote was the best decision for the county.

Q: What exactly will the MSTU fund?

A: It will fund a two-year study that is required before beach renourishment can take place. We might have to expand the MSTU so we have ongoing capacity. One critical component missing now is an organized beach management department as part of St. Johns County that would oversee all aspects of the beach, including renourishment and recreation. Other coastal counties have such a department. We will hopefully address this in the next budget cycle.

Q: How will the actual beach renourishment be funded after the two year study?

A: We don't have all the pieces in place, but it will probably be a combination of the MSTU, state and federal funding and possibly some FEMA funding. The county will also have to come up with some money.

The most important part of all of this is that if any readers have an opinion on this or any other issue, I need to hear from them. As county commissioners, we are tasked with weighing all sides and then making the best decision we can. It's helpful if I can hear from people as to what they are thinking.

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

A: Going along with wanting to hear from residents, I am looking at possibly having office hours in Ponte Vedra Beach, possibly one to two days per month, for residents unable to make it to St. Augustine. We are looking at potentially using the library or the county annex as a meeting place. I think it is important to be as accessible as possible. Stay tuned as there is more information to come, once we iron out the details.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc4j-blocker@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 679-2620.



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with Florida State Representative Cyndi Stevenson, District 17

Q: Can you give us an overview of what is happening in Tallahassee now?

A: Session starts in March. As of now (mid-January) we are in committee weeks, where much of the work on bills is done in advance of session, which only lasts 60 days. I was pleased and honored to be named chair of the Insurance and Banking Subcommittee and vice chair of the Children, Families and Seniors Subcommittee.

Q: What are some of the upcoming bills that you feel are noteworthy?

A: There are a couple I would like to share with the readers. The first is a bill that I am supporting: HB 45, Bill Hands Free Florida. This is the distracted driving bill that aims to prohibit the operation of a motor vehicle while using a hand held device. Basically, a driver wouldn't be able to touch a

Cyndi Stevenson cont. on pg. 9

FYI Contact Numbers

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

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

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

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

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

Clerk of Court: Hunter S. Conrad, (904) 819-3600

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

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

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

St. Johns County School Board (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)

District 4: Kelly Barrera, kelly.barrera@stjohns.k12.fl.us, (904) 547-7510

State of Florida Elected Officials

Governor Ron DeSantis, (850) 488-7146
State House District 17: Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov, (904) 823-2300

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

Federal Elected Officials

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

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

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Eddie Creamer

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with St. Johns County Property Appraiser
Eddie Creamer

Q: Can you give us the basic information for homestead exemption in Florida?

A: Between now and March 1, it is time for qualifying homeowners to file for homestead exemption. To qualify, you must have owned the property as of Jan. 1, 2019 and occupied it as your primary residence. Evidence of this is your Florida driver's license with that address. You may not claim or be eligible to claim a homeowner's tax exemption in Florida or any other state.

Q: Why is it important to apply for homestead exemption?

A: It's important because it reduces your property's taxable value by \$50,000 — which can result in a savings of approximately \$650 for the average homeowner in Florida. It also sets the base for the 3 percent "Save our Homes" cap, which limits the taxable value of your home from rising more than 3 percent per year. Already this year we are seeing property value increases that are higher than this cap.

Q: How should a homeowner file for homestead exemption?

A: Homeowners can file in person in our office or online at www.sjcpa.us. Presently, about 50 percent of homeowners are filing online, compared to about 10 percent just two years ago.

Q: Are there other exemptions?

A: There are many different and specific exemptions designed to provide tax relief to certain homeowners. Examples include exemptions for widow/widowers, totally and permanently disabled veterans or first responders, those who are blind or have other permanent disability, deployed service members, surviving spouses of first responders, and seniors with an adjusted gross income of \$29,450. Please call our office for more information if you think any of these might apply to you.

Q: What is the most important thing to remember?

A: It is mandatory that you apply for

Eddie Creamer cont. on pg. 12

Answers to puzzles on page 12

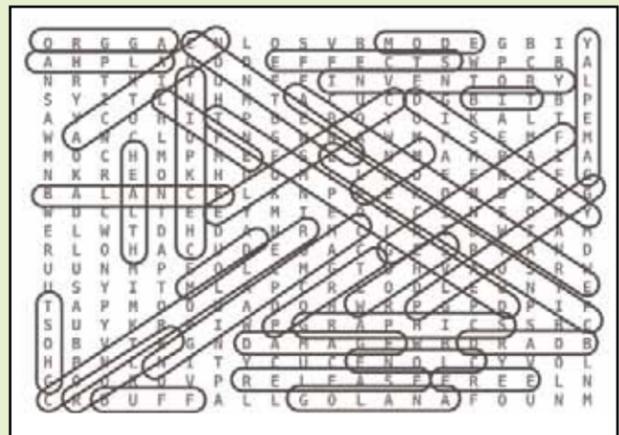
Answers

to our

Puzzles



Answers: A. game B. controller C. action D. system



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Your Money or Your Life

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

Ossip Bernstein was born in Imperial Russia in 1882. He was a lawyer, a banker, and a pretty good chess player. He prospered under the reign of the Tsar. Like many, he lost everything during the Communist Revolution. And like many, he fled to Paris and started a new life. A year later he was back in the Ukraine, during the Ukrainian War of Independence in 1918. He was arrested by the secret police and sentenced to death for being a lawyer. He and the other bankers and lawyers were lined up against a wall awaiting the firing squad when one of the senior officers noticed his name on the list of the condemned.

The officer approached Ossip and asked if he was the same Bernstein who had won the Moscow City Chess Championship a few years before. Ossip averred that he was, but the officer was skeptical. He devised a plan to determine the truth. He proposed a game of chess. If Ossip Bernstein won, he would go free. If not, he would be shot with the rest of the capitalists. According to the legend, Ossip won that game with ease. The game itself continues to fascinate chess fans. Did it really happen or is it just another one of those crazy stories that crazy chess players often tell? William Steinitz, the first World Chess Champion, once announced that he was playing a game with God Almighty by telegraph, and he was winning!

No record exists of the moves of the game — but chess players have often mused about how one would play if one were playing for their life. It

must put extra pressure on a game that is already one of the most psychologically stressful of human activities. The consensus is that you would not want to play too aggressively or too timidly. A mistake could be very costly.

It is unimaginable that any of us will ever play a game of Chess for our lives, or a game of Monopoly or Candyland at such weighty stakes either; however, each of us is engaged in the life-long “game” of preparing for retirement. It is an important game for us to “win.” Like Ossip, we do not want to be too aggressive or too timid. A mistake in either direction could be extremely costly.

According to Benjamin Graham, who taught Warren Buffett, our goal in building wealth should be to compound over time at a reasonable rate of return and at a reasonable risk. Graham annually suggested portfolio weightings that ranged from 75 – 25 percent stock. In no instance did the Columbia professor suggest that his institutional clients should seek to get 100 percent of the potential return. Why? Because Graham felt that investors did not want to take 100 percent of the risk either. There is a valuable lesson here. We do not want 100 percent of the return, because we do not want 100 percent of the risk. Like Ossip, the consequences are just too great. That is why we diversify.

Scott A. Grant is President of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.

Cyndi Stevenson cont. from pg. 7

mobile device except when stopped and doing so would be a primary offense. A driver would be able to use a hands free device such as Bluetooth. This obviously doesn't cure everything as drivers can still be distracted in other ways ... grooming, eating, operating onboard systems.

Secondly, I am introducing a bill (HB 281) that will protect the privacy of information of minors who have pre-registered to vote. Voter registration information is public record and as such can be used for things like sales solicitations or other general purposes. We get a lot of complaints about this and so this bill would make the personal information of 16 – 18 year olds not appear in public records.

Q: Can you give us a budget outlook?

A: The one thing we must do each year is pass a balanced budget. Beginning in the fourth quarter of last year, we began to see signs of a slowing in our state economy, mostly due to national items including tariffs already enacted and the increase in interest rates. The Florida economy is still growing though, at a projected 3.5 percent growth rate.

It's important to understand that the state's economy is driven by a robust tourism industry, so we are vulnerable to anything that puts a chill on this industry. Sales tax, paid in part by tourists, makes up 78 percent of the state's general revenue. The problem is that recurring revenue, such as sales tax, is mismatched with entitlement costs, which are fixed. In three years, because of increasing entitlement costs for healthcare, we anticipate the need for an additional \$9.5 billion in recurring revenue. This will make it very difficult to fund new services, unless there are

existing items in the budget that can be cut.

Q: What are the major categories of income and expenses for the state budget?

A: The entire state budget for 2019 – 20 is approximately \$89 billion. Income for the state is roughly in thirds: general revenue, state trust funds, and federal funding. Roughly 42 percent of the funding goes towards entitlements, which has overtaken education (29 percent) as the number one expense. The state's share of existing Medicaid commitment alone is \$30 billion, while we spend \$26 billion on education. Just like a business or a household, the state government is having a hard time affording health care costs; we are trying to still provide affordability, access and quality.

Additionally, we are dealing with the impacts of hurricanes Irma and Michael. The state has advanced funds for Irma damages that it expects to (eventually) be reimbursed by the federal government and we are still estimating damages from Michael. It is expected that these damages will require more state resources than Irma, due to the total devastation of rural counties with little or no reserves and many uninsured homes.

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

A: Readers can email me at Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov or call my local office at (904) 823-2300. Please note that my office location has changed to the northern part of the county, 309 Kingsley Lake Drive, Suite 902, located just west of Interstate 95 off County Road 210.

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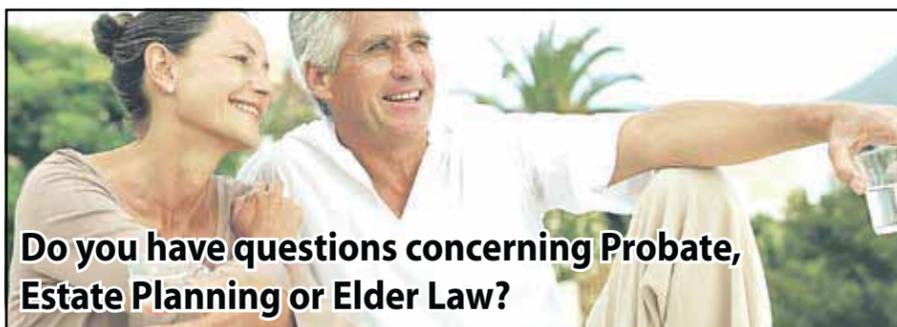
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LOVE MARRIAGE



Valentine's Day numbers to know

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Valentine's Day is one of the most popular days of the year to celebrate. Here's a look at some interesting numbers associated with this day to celebrate the love people have for one another.

400: The year that Pope Gelasius declared Feb. 14 a day to honor Saint Valentine.

62: The percentage of adults who say they celebrate the holiday.

1.7: The amount, in billions, that is spent on candy for Valentine's Day, according to the National Retail Federation.

512: The average dollar amount spent per person for Valentine's Day.

58: The number of pounds, in millions,

of chocolate bought during Valentine's Day week.

150: The number of cards and gifts, in millions, sent each year for the day of love.

1: The dollar amount, in billions, that Americans are expected to spend on Valentine's Day cards.

61: Percentage of men who purchase flowers or plants for Valentine's Day.

15: Average cost, in dollars, of a box of chocolates.

8.6: Amount of dollars, in millions, spent on sparkling wine for Valentine's Day, making it the second most popular occasion, after New Year's Eve, to enjoy some bubbly.

150: The average amount, in dollars, men spend on gifts. Women spend an average of \$74 on gifts.

2: The ranking of red roses in compari-

son to other types of flowers gifted.

Sources: NRF, Greeting Card Association, National Confectioners Association, U.S. Postal Service, USDA.

The Pantry Raiders

Show your love through dessert this Valentine's Day

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Romantic sentiments are expressed in many ways come Valentine's Day. Gifts may include sparkling jewels or personalized prose, but a homemade dessert from the kitchen can win over some hearts as well. Even though chocolate may be expected on Valentine's Day, tiramisu can be a welcome and delicious alternative. Tiramisu is an Italian layered

dessert, and the name translates to "pick me up" or "cheer me up." It is made from spongy cookies soaked in coffee and liqueur, nestled among dollops of rich mascarpone cheese. Requiring no baking at all, it is an easy treat to offer a sweet-heart. Enjoy this recipe for "Tiramisu" courtesy of the American Dairy Association.

Tiramisu

(Yield: 9 servings)

- 6 egg yolks
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 ¼ cup mascarpone cheese
- 1 ¾ cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 12 oz packages Savoradi Lady Fingers
- ½ cup cold espresso or strong coffee
- ¼ cup coffee flavored liqueur (optional)
- 1 tbsp. cocoa for dusting



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Tiramisu

Combine egg yolks and sugar in the top of a double boiler, over boiling water. Reduce heat to low and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring constantly. This is your sabayon. Remove from the heat and whip yolks until thick and lemon colored. Add mascarpone to whipped yolks, and beat until combined.

In a separate bowl, whip cream to stiff peaks. Gently fold the whipped cream in the mascarpone-sabayon mixture and set aside.

Mix the cold espresso with the coffee liquor, and dip the lady fingers into the mixture just long enough to get them wet; do not soak them! Arrange the lady fingers in the bottom of an 8-inch square baking dish (or 6X9). Spoon half the mascarpone cream filling over the lady fingers.

Repeat the process with another layer. Refrigerate four hours or overnight. Dust with cocoa before serving.



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Get to Know . . .

Blake Ingram

By Ken Gillespie
mail@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Ken Gillespie
Blake Ingram and friend.

Movie buffs may recall the 1967 James Bond thriller, “You Only Live Twice.” Nancy Sinatra sang the bewitching theme which went on to become a hit: “You only live twice, one life for yourself and one for your dreams.” The song’s lyrics describe our featured resident this month, Blake Ingram. One part of him lives a predictable life, enjoying a stable position as head of First Coast Technical College’s automotive services program in St. Augustine. But his dream life can be summed up by a personal philosophy: “A bird is safe in its nest, but that’s not what wings were designed for.”

1. Tell us about your role at the college.

The First Coast Technical College serves more than 1,400 students with 19 career and tech education programs in Industrial Arts, Health and Human Services, Public Safety, Culinary, and Adult Education. The diverse student body ranges from high schoolers to mature adults looking to expand their skills. Taking “shop courses” used to be a path for those not capable of university level academics. Things are changing. Students, parents and high school guidance counselors are rediscovering vocational education. My demanding 14-month full time automotive curriculum blends theory with hands-on practice. Eighty percent of our graduates are offered immediate employment by dealerships and service centers with salaries running to a high of \$38,000. Tuition is a modest \$8,000 with generous financial grants available.

Get to Know . . .

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

2. What path led you to automotive?

I joke that when I was young I could take things apart, put them back together, and not have any left over parts. My tech dad passed on his genes and skills. I earned a bachelor’s in construction from the University of North Florida, but the job market for builders tanked the year I finished. I fell back on my part time job at Publix. I often helped customers walk groceries to their car. One day a Mercedes owner casually remarked that his automatic window wouldn’t operate. I said I can fix that. Impressed, he came back several times with other issues. He spread the word with his high-end car friends. I quickly had so much business that I moved out of my residential garage into a rented bay, effectively starting my new career and business. I named it the Metric Systems Garage, servicing British and European vehicles. Running the shop taught me skills needed to manage a business and people. This real-world experience enables me to teach future techs all they need to know to go above and beyond in automotive.

3. How do you unplug from life’s routine?

Several ways! I often hop onto one of my two motorcycles and head for the open road. On a bike you can’t really think about more than where you are. There’s a freedom that comes with that . . . from stress, worry, and sweating the small stuff. In college I learned to sail, becoming captain of UNF’s sailing program. I’ve clocked many hours on the St. Johns river, Intracoastal, and even ventured out to the Atlantic. I also like to travel, often by myself. Visiting

places off the beaten path is great and while there I like to strike up conversations with total strangers. Over the years I’ve built a country-wide network of new-found friends.

4. You’ve described yourself as a social butterfly

It’s kind of ironic. I was born with a cleft palate, which affected my speech. It took years of therapy to improve. It appears these therapists did too great a job because now you can’t shut me up. I was definitely the class clown when I was a kid. Interpersonal skills are a tremendous gift to have as an educator. I enjoy swing dancing, singing my heart out with karaoke, and participating in full-contact origami. Friends know me as someone always quick with a joke or story, or composing a clever toast at gatherings.

5. What’s next for you?

I keep thinking there must be something else out there for me — but I don’t know what that might be. For now I like to teach, but other ideas run through my head, everything from becoming a project manager for large scale construction work to selling everything I own and moving to the Bahamas, where as a boat captain I would run sunset sails for honeymooners.

Camera club cont. from pg. 1

interest groups in order to elevate members’ experience in certain areas such as portraits and lighting.

The Camera Club also plans one to two outings per month. Most of the outings are local and last two to four hours. During the year, the club usually has one or two road trips to various locations, including bird shoots in South Florida, fall foliage trips to the Smokies and Western North Carolina. Weekend trips to Savannah, Ga. and other areas of interest in the Southeast are occasionally planned for members. Members find that the outings are a great way to socialize as well as a great opportunity to practice newly learned skills.



Photo courtesy Brian Leonard
Beautiful waterfall

Quarterly print and digital contests are also a highlight of each year. Ribbons are awarded for the best images.

“The best part of the competitions is to see the level of skill in various club members as well as hear comments and critiques from the judges,” Leonard said. “This is a very beneficial way to develop new skills. We are also starting contests using cell phone cameras, which seems to be getting more and more popular.”

The Camera Club is currently forming groups to welcome new members and to help others become aware of the resources offered within the club.

“We always have members that are willing to go out in small groups or do one-on-one sessions to help members improve their skills,” Leonard said.

Jacksonville Camera Club meetings are held at the Shepherd of the Woods Church (Lakeshore Location), 6595 Columbia Park Ct., near the intersection of Greenland Road and Philips Highway. Anyone interested is invited to attend. Visit <https://jax.jaxcameraclub.com> for more information.

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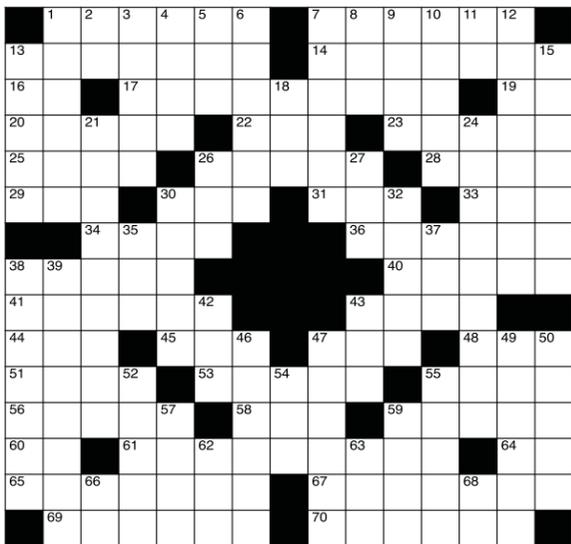
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Puzzles

Answers to puzzles on page 8
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Got paid
7. Sets free
13. Domestic hybrid cattle
14. Quality of one's character
16. Doctor's helper
17. Not holding back
19. Type of degree
20. Short but severe
22. 007's creator
23. Linguistics icon
25. Large integers
26. Upset
28. Former
29. Peyton's younger brother
30. An Irish dance
31. Title of respect
33. Small lump
34. Baroque musical instrument
36. The third sign of the zodiac
38. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet

CLUES DOWN

1. Nix
2. Indicates position
3. Quantitative facts
4. Strong and healthy
5. Former measure of length
6. Dads tend to be this
7. Parts of a movie
8. An animal's foot
9. Expression of sorrow or pity
10. Saudi Arabian money
11. One billion gigabytes
12. Smallest musical interval
13. A rugged box (usually made of wood)
15. Cheese dish
18. An ugly, evil-looking old woman
21. Widely used
24. Makes into pages
26. Afflict in mind or body
27. Set up
30. Toilets
32. "Life of Jesus" theologian
35. A big deal on Wall St.
37. Western Thai people
38. Free from contamination
39. Type of dog
42. Revolver
43. High schoolers' exam
46. San Diego ballplayers
47. Hit the sack
49. Suitable for crops
50. Red mineral
52. Yellowish-brown
54. Lowest point between two peaks
55. Late TNT broadcaster
57. Thin strip to align parts
59. Swiss wind
62. A way to chill
63. Jewel
66. Rhodium
68. The top lawyer in the land



Solve the code to discover words related to video games. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 1 = e)

A. 7 3 10 1
Clue: Form of play

B. 11 26 6 20 4 26 16 16 1 4
Clue: Directs action

C. 3 11 20 9 26 6
Clue: Process of doing something

D. 8 2 8 20 1 10
Clue: Hardware components

GAMEPLAY WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- ABANDONWARE
- ACTION
- AGGRO
- ALPHA
- ANALOG
- BALANCE
- BIT
- BOARD
- BUFF
- CAMPAIGN
- CHECKPOINT
- CLONE
- CONSOLE
- CONTENT
- CONTROLLER
- DAMAGE
- DEVELOPMENT
- DISPLAY
- EFFECTS
- ELECTRONIC
- FARMING
- FREE
- GAMEPLAY
- GHOST
- GRAPHICS
- HEALTH
- INVENTORY
- LIFE
- MAP
- MOD
- MODE
- PLAYING
- PORT
- RELEASE
- ROLE
- SHOW

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

Eddie Creamer cont. from pg. 8

any exemption by March 1. Even if you qualify, if you don't apply for it — we can't grant the exemption. Florida Statute is clear that the homeowner must apply.

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

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

At annual Change of Watch, Flotilla 14-7 recognizes successful year

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Members of U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7 held their annual Change of Watch event in December at the Allegro on Anastasia Island to recognize the achievements of the members for 2018 and install the slate of officers for 2019. Among the honored guests recognized at the function was the Coast Guard Commander of Station Mayport, CWO Jason Fealy, who addressed the gathering.



Photos courtesy Dylan Calwalader, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Carmen Gautille, VFC and Bill Candeletti, FC, 2019 elected officers sworn in by DCDR David Patrick.

Members and guests celebrated the achievement of flotilla members who, in 2018, collectively contributed 7,480 hours actively supporting Team Coast Guard.

"Our members volunteered their time and unique talents this last year to support recreational boating safety interests at local marinas all over St. Johns County," said Flotilla Commander William Candeletti. "We visited 495 partners including invitations from WestMarine and marinas to exhibit items we provide free to the public, meeting one-on-one with visitors to those locations."

Candeletti said that by year end, members of Flotilla 14-7 performed 159 Vessel Safety Checks for the boating public and were on the water for 328 hours, working with vessel owners to maintain their safety gear.

"We expect to improve our participation in 2019," Candeletti said.

Trained members of Flotilla 14-7 provide free vessel safety checks on recreational vessels and conduct About Boating Safety classes. The flotilla meets on the first Thursday of each month at the St. Augustine Yacht Club, 442 Ocean Avenue, near the St. Augustine Lighthouse. The next meeting is Feb. 7 and starts with a social at 6:30 p.m. followed by the meeting at 7 p.m.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of the U.S. Coast Guard and supports the Coast Guard in nearly all its service missions. The Auxiliary was created by Congress in 1939. Visit www.mysafeboating.com for more information about Flotilla 14-7 or visit www.cgaux.org for more information about the U.S. Coast Guard.

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\$30 billion is set aside for asbestos victims with cancer. Valuable settlement monies may not require filing a lawsuit.



Photo courtesy St. Johns County

St. Johns County recycles Christmas trees

A total of 364 Christmas trees were recycled at various locations around St. Johns County for the Parks and Recreation Department's third annual Tree-Cycling Program. Held over five days in January, the program accepted decoration-free trees at Al Wilke Park in Hastings, St. Johns Golf Club in Elkton, Ron Parker Park in St. Augustine Beach, Cornerstone Park in Ponte Vedra, and Mills Field in St. Johns. The nearly 400 trees will be chipped and the resulting mulch will be spread around county parks.

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11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	

- Teacher Optional Planning
- Teacher Planning (non-student day)
- Teacher Inservice (non-student day)
- Classes Resume
- Student/Teacher Holiday
- End of Quarter
- Underline = testing dates

Travel

Exploring Panama beyond the canal

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

Mention Panama and thoughts of the famous canal come to mind. A glance at the world map underscores the country's strategic location between north and south. One can easily see why the isthmus of Panama was chosen for construction of a 50-mile waterway. The marine shortcut saves transportation time, distance and costs, plus provides a safer route.

The plan to link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans faced one of the greatest environmental challenges: excavating through ponderous mountains and dense jungles. The French, who had successfully built the Suez Canal, began

work in 1880, but financial problems and tropical diseases halted the project. When Panama gained independence in 1903, the United States stepped in to continue the endeavor. The engineering feat was not only costly, but thousands lost their lives (22,000 French alone). From its opening in 1914 until December 1999, the United States administered the Canal and then turned operations over to Panama. Work to double the capacity and space for larger vessels commenced 2007 to 2016.

Many curious travelers take a cruise that includes passage through the locks of the Panama Canal; however, I suggest

you instead consider a land-based exploration of the country. Nonstop flights from Orlando and Miami make it easy to get there. While the destination seems exotic, there's no need to change American money or time zones. Panama rests within the Eastern time zone and accepts US dollars.

Arrive in Panama City, not to be confused with Panama City, Florida, and tour the historic area much like Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, complete with a fort resembling St. Augustine's Castillo. Colorful shops, historical monuments, squares and restaurants dot the narrow cobblestone streets of the old town.

Recent building in the downtown city center displays an ultramodern skyline that looks like Miami or a smaller version of Dubai. Panama's economy depends on the highly successful management of the canal, and new wealth appears evident. Glass and steel high-rise office buildings and apartments border the coastline, parks intermingle with business quadrants and traffic is problematic.

Lodging options run from boutique hotels in the old town to name brand hotel chains downtown. Considered an urban oasis, the Santa Maria Hotel and Golf Club recently opened at the far end of the city. Yes, a luxury hotel and golf course right in the city!

Of course, a tour of the Panama Canal Visitor Center is mandatory. You'll get a close-up view of ships entering and exiting the locks. A video highlights footage from the complex construction and a small museum displays fascinating artifacts. Afterward, take a boat excursion



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Hiking in the rainforest.

on Lake Gatun. On my two-hour outing, I passed massive container ships transiting the waterway and rainforest wildlife including three different species of monkeys, a wide variety of tropical birds and lush jungle scenery.

Another day my group left the city to explore the mountainous Anton Valley area where the highlight was a close encounter with a tree sloth in the wild. The eco-lodge offers meals and overnight accommodations. Guided hikes within the rainforest range from a short 30-minute outing to half and full days.

If you'd like to experience Panamanian paradise, hire a driver to take you to Buenaventura Golf and Beach Resort area, about two and a half hours out of the city. The colonial architecture blends with authentic local arts and decor. Relax around the sparkling pools, a meandering lagoon or the black sand beaches. The more energetic will find plenty of sports such as golf, tennis and boating.

I wasn't expecting to give Panama such high praise, but I now feel it offers real value and a chance to explore beyond the ordinary.

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

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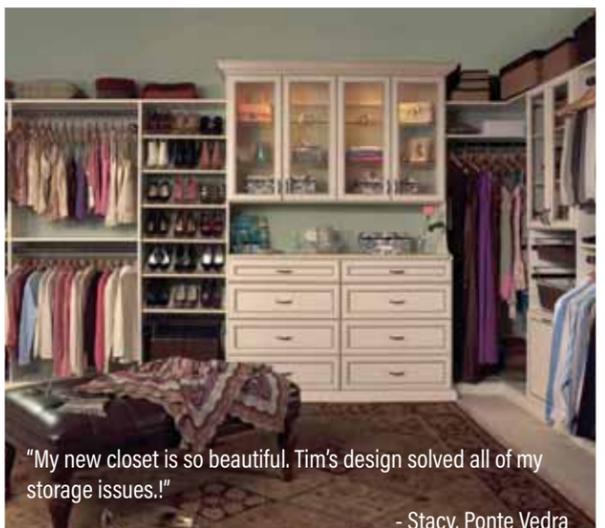



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Home, Home on the Range...

By Janie C. Farina
mail@floridanewsline.com

*"O give me a home where the buffaloes roam
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Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day"*
-Lyrics by Bill Staines

How many students of the game of golf feel "at home" on the golf course? What makes playing on a golf course a comfortable experience vs. an embarrassment? Recently, a novice student of mine described her last round at a local golf course, a far cry from "where the deer and the antelope play" like this: "We were rushing all the time!"

How and where do novice players go to relax and play?

I remember being a novice at pickleball, and how nervous I was learning how to play, let alone keeping up with the experts. Every team I played on lost because I was on it.

Playing on a golf course as a rookie can be just as intimidating.

"Feeling at Home" playing on the course requires a plan.

1. "When in Rome do as the Romans do." Dress the part! Ask about dress codes before showing up in jeans and a tee shirt at the country club.

2. Know the rules. Playing golf has rules just like any other sport; it doesn't take skill to educate and be informed. Walking on your teammates putting line and teeing off in front of the markers will not get you points.

3. Stay in pace with the players on your team. Be ready with club in hand when it's

your turn. Rushing the shot will not be effective.

4. Organize your tools. A golf bag with clubs haphazardly thrown in is a recipe for disaster. It takes more time to search for the desired club this way, let alone recognizing it's been left on the last hole in front of the green. Going back to get it will require holding up golf traffic.

5. Take your time looking over putts. While walking to the green, look. While waiting for your turn, look. Watch what happens when the other players putt. This eliminates mistakes on speed and direction. Players who play golf on a regular basis know this is not where you rush. Four-putting takes more time than reading a green.

6. Use your comfort clubs. Dragging out the driver on a golf hole the width of dental floss may result in out of bounds. How embarrassing to re-tee after landing in the resident's pool!

7. Lastly, practice at a driving range. Play a par three course. Here there will likely be rookies as yourself, searching for ways to develop the skill to become a better player.

So finding that "down home feeling" while playing golf can depend on where you play, whom you play with, and not how you play, but *how you are* when you play. Happy trails to the golf course!

Janie C. Farina is a 26-year LPGA teaching and club professional in St. Johns County. Email her at hitthedirt2@gmail.com with comments or questions for future articles.



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