



Ponte Vedra NewsLine

NOVEMBER 2022 Volume 9 Issue 11

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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Photos courtesy Sean Coleman

Homecoming Week Friday with Gabe Coleman's Alzheimer's video being shown at Bolles Ponte Vedra.

Walking to raise awareness about Alzheimer's

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Gabe Coleman has put his heart into raising awareness about Alzheimer's disease by walking, asking others to join him and raising money. Through every step and every dollar, the Bolles High School junior is honoring his grandmother and all those who suffer from the disease. Awareness and raising money are his top two goals, and he is well on his way on both fronts.

Coleman's grandmother, Pat, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2017, and ever since, Coleman has been on a mission to help find a cure. Pat turned 82 in September, marking four-and-a-half years since she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's/dementia. She celebrated with her family by having cupcakes and watching some football at Starling at Nocatee, an assisted living and memory care facility.

Coleman has partnered with the Alzheimer's Association and the

Coleman cont. on pg. 19

On the move: Celebrating senior life

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

When Dottie Cunningham arrives at Ponte Vedra Gardens, an Alzheimer's Special Care Center, she comes prepared to share her love of tap dance with residents who wish to learn. That includes bringing slip-on tap shoes that allow everyone to fully experience the sound and movement of tap dancing.

Cunningham, who runs Tip Tap Shape, got the idea to teach tap dancing at senior facilities after reading an article from the American Medical Association about how tap dance is one of the best things seniors can do to preserve memory and to prevent dementia. She has been dancing and teaching dance to children her entire life, so she decided to put the two ideas together.

"I love it. You just see them light up, interacting with each other and having a good time," said Cunningham, adding that tap dancing promotes brain reconditioning by activating multiple



Photo courtesy Janice Richardson

Diane O'Donoghue leading a yoga class at Vicar's Landing.

cognitive functions such as perception, emotion, decision-making, memory, and motor skills.

can. It is not about the steps. It is totally fine to just clap your hands and socialize."



Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps

Karen shows off her tap dance shoes during a class at Ponte Vedra Gardens.

Cunningham said after warming up with stretches, she teaches basic tap moves, three to four steps at a time. The goal is to put all the steps together into one dance, usually one dance per four sessions. Some residents prefer to watch at first and just enjoy the music. Eventually, everyone eases into the routine, she said, some even recalling tap from their earlier years.

Starling at Nocatee Director of Engagement and Zumba instructor Jana Alexander also finds that music and dance have a way of lifting spirits. Alexander teaches Zumba once a week to residents with a focus on fun, not the choreography.

"The residents really love it because of the rhythm," said Alexander, who has been a certified Zumba instructor for 12 years. "I always say to just do what you

Alexander said the facility will often have a themed Zumba event such as a Halloween Zumba class in which caregivers, grandchildren and staff members will participate just to "spice things up a bit."

"It is really fun, and the residents enjoy the interaction," said Alexander.

Over at Vicar's Landing, Yoga instructor Diane O'Donoghue teaches chair yoga to help improve posture, range of motion, relieve stress, improve mental clarity and function, improve foot health, increase lung capacity, and decrease back pain. O'Donoghue has been practicing yoga for 19 years and teaching for 18.

"I want all of these things for my students," said O'Donoghue, who has been teaching at Vicar's for nine years. "My goal, for all my students, is for them to feel good about themselves, physically, mentally, and spiritually; and life. It is a blessing for me to teach at Vicar's

Celebrating seniors cont. on pg. 17

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Ponte Vedra NewsLine Community Newspaper is a free monthly publication distributed via bulk mail to all addresses in Zip Codes 32081 and 32082. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2022.



BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Phoebe!



Breed:
Long haired mini Dachshund

Favorite Activity:
Chasing her favorite stuffed toy (an iced donut) around the house.

Favorite Treat:
Chicken wrapped rawhide

Favorite Friend:
She prefers humans to other dogs, so her favorite friends are four little boys named Finn, Callum, Henry and Jack.

How did your BFF get her name:
She's such a pretty little girl so we thought Phoebe was a fitting name!

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in Ponte Vedra NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Ponte Vedra NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.

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Can you guess where this is?
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Last month's Mystery Photo was the building housing Pusser's and Ruth's Chris on A1A.

Answers to our Puzzles

PG 14

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November

Community Calendar

What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

Council on Aging offers interest groups at the COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee. Meetings are free and self-guided except for the Caregiver's Support Group. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required; email pbrunell@Stjohnscoa.com or call (904) 819-3234. Tuesday clubs include: Caregiver Support Group, 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.; and Widows and Widowers social group, second and fourth Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Wednesday groups include: Mah Jongg Meet-up, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.; and Genealogy Group, 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Palm Valley Market is held inside the Palm Valley Community Center at 148 Canal Road, every Tuesday from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more. Visit the Palm Valley Market Facebook page for more information.

1st: Vicar's Landing November Boutique Sale will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 1 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The public is welcome. The Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives all of the proceeds. Cash or checks only please. Contact Rose Murdock at (904) 891-1777 or Ginny Elliott at (904) 608-6198 for more information.

2nd: Coastal Friends (formerly Newcomers Alumnae) will host its monthly luncheon on Nov. 2 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be SJSO Deputy Sheriff Jonathan Wagner, who will discuss fraud prevention and personal

safety issues. The program will include a question and answer period. The cost of the luncheon is \$25 and reservations must be made in advance by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible. Visit <https://coastalfriends.wildapricot.org> for more information.

3rd: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will host its annual fundraiser on Nov. 3 from 4:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. - Retail Therapy at Linda Cunningham Designer Boutique, located at 1049 Kings Avenue in Jacksonville. There will be designer fashions to shop together with your new friends from the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club, and afterward some of the members will walk over to the Chart House for dinner at 1501 Riverplace Blvd. Visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more information.

3rd: Bingo will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Thursdays from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. for three weeks beginning Thursday, Nov. 3. Contact Amanda Jones at (904) 280-3233 or ajones@coasjc.org for more information and to register.

4th: The GTM Research Reserve will hold a new volunteer orientation on Nov. 4 from 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Learn about volunteer rules and responsibility as well next steps to volunteering. Complete the volunteer application online (www.gtmnerr.org) before attending. Contact Shannon Rininger at Shannon.Rininger@FloridaDEP.gov to assure that your application was received.

12th: The Northeast Florida Chapter of Sisters in Crime will meet

on Nov. 12 at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. (FOL Room). Doors open at 10 a.m. and the meeting starts at 10:15 a.m. The program will be Mini-Workshop No. 2: "Developing Characterization: A tool for helping the development of your writing skills." Bring your coffee and bring a friend. Visit www.nefloridasistersincrime.org for more information.

12th: The November Speaker Series presented by the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library will be held in the FOL Room of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library on Nov. 12 beginning at 2 p.m. In a "hands-on" program this month, attendees will create a holiday wreath with acrylics on canvas set up by Painting with a Twist. Call Jan Bialka at (904) 285-1114 and give your name and telephone number before Nov. 7 to reserve your spot; bring \$20 in cash to cover materials.

15th: Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 6 p.m. for Chat & Chew before the 6:30 p.m. meeting at Christ Episcopal Church, Room 106, 400 San Juan Road. The program will feature an Election 2022 recap. Email jkary@verizon.net for more information.

15th: Healthy Holiday Meals will be held on Nov. 15 from 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. at the Council of Aging Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205. Carla Defuria, registered dietitian and health coach at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, will demonstrate how to cook healthy holiday food for your family and friends. Register by email: pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling (904) 819-3234.

16th: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club November General Meeting will be held on Nov. 16, from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. Mingle with like-minded women of the beach community who want to organize efforts to give to local charities and have fun serving the community. This meeting will also showcase the local theater of Players By the Sea, the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, and the Florida Theatre. Registration is on the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club website under Events at www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php.

17th: "How to Handle Your Kids on Legal Issues" will be presented by St. Johns County Legal Aid's Megan Wall, Managing Attorney on Thursday, Nov. 17 at 11 a.m. at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Call Amanda Jones at (904) 280-3233 for more information.

19th: The Nocatee Farmers Market will feature a Fall Festival and will be held on Saturday, Nov. 19 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

26th: GTM Research Reserve will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, Nov. 26 from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. No registration is required; meet at the Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Visit gtmnerr.org for more information.

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with State Attorney, 7th Judicial Circuit,
R.J. Larizza

Q: What are grand juries?

A: A grand jury is a group of 21 people who are selected to serve a six month term. Each county has its own grand jury. In the 7th Circuit, we have four counties, so we have four grand juries.

They are created statutorily, and are responsible primarily for issuing indictments on first degree murder charges. In Florida, it is required to have an indictment by a grand jury to bring a first degree murder charge.

Q: What do grand juries do?

A: They hear evidence to determine if probable cause exists to bring an indictment, which is a formal charge. They also perform investigations and can make indictments in other cases, although primarily they are called for first degree murder cases. Sometimes it is useful for a prosecutor to present a case to the grand jury to get the perspective of 21 residents of a community. They are a very useful tool in our criminal justice system.

But it's important to note that the grand jury has no say and cannot consider the death penalty. All they are responsible for is to determine if prob-

able cause exists to charge someone with first degree murder. They don't make any other determination.

Q: How are grand juries selected?

A: The State Attorney's Office selects the grand jury and convenes them when necessary. Similar to selecting a juror for a jury trial, jurors are selected from citizens who have Florida ID. (The Florida Supreme Court changed this requirement from voter registration several years ago in an effort to be representative of the entire community.) For St. Johns County, grand jurors must be residents of St. Johns County and answer some questions from the judge relating to their ability to be fair and impartial and available to serve. We have two six-month terms per year: October to April and April to October. Potential grand jurors would receive a summons in the mail.

Q: How often do the grand jurors serve?

A: They convene as needed during their six month term. The grand jurors in St. Johns County are not called too often; this is good news because it means there are not too many first degree murder charges. In our circuit, Volusia County is the busiest.



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

Q: Can you address the recent School Board vote to allow class sizes in excess of the state requirement?

A: Our "A" rated schools allow us this flexibility and we have passed this resolution annually since 2011. This is nothing different than we have done for the past 11 years. We remain very conservative with our class sizes. I understand that many people are worried about growth, but this annual resolution shouldn't raise any alarm. We've been very cautious over the years about using this option.

Q: Does the district still have openings and what is being done to fill them?

A: Yes, we still have openings. Our principals continue to have the highest expectations for teachers being hired to work in our schools. We continue to be creative in hiring. We sometimes break up positions to make part time instead of full time and we are also reaching out to past employees that we know make excellent candidates for us.

We very much appreciate the hard work of all of our teachers and staff and bus drivers, but the reality is that we are in a labor market shortage. We are trying to navigate that and still focus on our students to provide the best learning opportunities and services each and every day.

Q: What can you tell us about the recent Character Counts! honor

bestowed upon the St. Johns County School District?

A: We started the Character Counts! program in 1998 district wide and we've gone above and beyond in talking about our character and culture and our Victory with Honor Program. We were just recognized as a Character Counts! Exemplary School District for our commitment to teach, enforce, advocate and model the six pillars of character. We are very proud of this.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with our readers?

A: I'm grateful that we didn't receive a direct impact from the recent Hurricane Ian, but I think it's important for people to understand that the school district has a lot of responsibilities in the emergency management process. Principals whose schools are activated as shelters, plus an assigned buddy principal, would be responsible for their school and help provide food and bedding to those sheltering. District staff and school board personnel would help in the manning of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Even though we were not activated locally, we sent people across disciplines and trades from our district to SW Florida to help them reopen their schools.

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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Eddie Creamer

NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF TAX ROLL
Pursuant to Sections 193.122 and 197.323, Florida Statutes,
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Taxes Pending Value Adjustment Board Changes.

EDDIE CREAMER
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Our partnership works to improve the health of all residents by
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Record turnout for beach cleanup



Photo courtesy Beaches Go Green

In October, Beaches Go Green hosted a huge community cleanup in Jacksonville Beach with more than 640 volunteers who cleaned up more than 84 bags of trash and more than 18,000 cigarette butts. Several local schools were represented from St. Johns and Duval counties including local colleges to high schools through middle schools and elementary schools too.

Vicar's Landing Boutique Sale to be held



Photos courtesy Beverly Webb

The Vicar's Landing November Boutique Sale will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 1 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The November sale not only features framed art, designer and costume jewelry, household items and furnishings, but also highlights the upcoming holiday season with Christmas decorations as well. Items, which are donated by Vicar's residents, change every month throughout the year. All items are new or in excellent condition. The public is welcome. Beginning at the entrance of Vicar's Landing/Sawgrass, signs will show the way to the sale areas. The Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives all of the proceeds. Cash or checks only please. Contact Rose Murdock at (904) 891-1777 or Ginny Elliott at (904) 608-6198 for more information.

Guest Column

The assessment process

By St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer

Property taxes in Florida are levied as of January 1 of each tax year, even though tax bills are not mailed until November. The tax roll, and ultimately your tax bill, are under the jurisdiction of three different and distinct governmental units or agencies. First the Property Appraiser's office assesses or appraises all real and tangible personal property in St. Johns County and applies the appropriate exemptions, caps and classified uses to create the tax roll. Next the taxing authorities, primarily St. Johns County and St. Johns County School Board, establish millage rates (the amount of tax per \$1,000 in assessed value) and levy the taxes. And finally, the St. Johns County Tax Collector bills and collects the taxes.

The creation of the tax roll begins January 1 and continues until July 1, when the tax roll is submitted to the Florida Department of Revenue for detailed statistical evaluation and approval. The tax roll cannot continue forward to Truth in Millage, TRIM, and ultimately to tax bills until the Florida Department of Revenue issues its approval. Local taxing authorities have no jurisdiction or input into the tax roll.

Florida is a just market value state, meaning properties are assessed at just market value as of January 1 of each tax year. While there are slightly varying definitions, "just market value" can be defined simply as the amount a willing buyer will pay a willing seller in an open market transaction without any special considerations. Just market value and fair market value are interchangeable terms.

For the 2022 tax year the Property Appraiser's Office processed and reviewed 13,664 sales from 2021 and qualified 12,851 of those. Sales from 2022 will be utilized to establish 2023 Just Market Values.

For the assessment process, we divide St. Johns County into five distinct geographic markets; two appraisers are as-

signed to each market, and inside those markets further division is made into homogeneous or similar neighborhoods for appraisal. Each of those sales are recorded into our Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal System (CAMA). Along with qualified sales data, our office utilizes cost information from third party sources as well as building permits to blend in data on new construction costs. Utilizing this data, we establish square foot rates or values, and using regression analysis we establish values for bedrooms and bathrooms. The CAMA system also uses age of the property, effective age of the property based upon permitted improvements over time and physical condition of the property based upon appraiser inspection. The appraisers then establish final values for the neighborhoods for the tax roll.

In mass appraisal for property taxation purposes, the valuations of property and neighborhoods must meet certain statistical benchmarks to assure that those neighborhoods are not under assessed or over assessed. Benchmarks such as mean values, average values, level of appraisal, sales ratios, coefficient of dispersion and time trended analysis all must meet guidelines set by the Florida Department of Revenue and applied in a uniform manner across Florida's 67 counties.

After the tax roll is submitted and approved by the Florida Department of Revenue, the property appraiser creates and mails TRIM notices and initiates a 25-day period for taxpayers to appeal values or exemptions to the Value Adjustment Board. At the end of the 25-day period, the tax roll is finalized and certified to the Tax Collector for creation and mailing of the property tax bills. At this time the tax roll is closed, and the property appraiser may not make any changes. At the completion of the Value Adjustment Board, changes, if any, are made and the tax roll receives final certification.

On January 1 of the next tax year, the process starts again.

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Q. November is a time when our attention turns to our veterans. Is the Clerk's office involved in any special veteran services?

A. Specifically for November and in recognition of Veterans Day, we are honoring veterans, active-duty military, reservists and their dependents by providing complimentary passport photos and notary services. They can take advantage of these free services 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday — Friday through Nov. 30 at our courthouse location. Please present your DD 214, military ID, military dependent ID or show your driver license with the veteran designation to demonstrate eligibility. Waiving these fees during November is a small gesture of our appreciation and gratitude to our nation's heroes.

Q. Speaking of DD 214s, you've encouraged fellow veterans to record their discharge documents with the Clerk of Courts — why is that important?

A. Yes, veterans may file their separation records, called DD 214s, for free with the Clerk of Courts for safekeeping and easy future access. By recording your DD 214 with the Clerk's office, an official copy is readily available to you in case the original is lost or destroyed. Your record stays private — military separation documents don't become public record for 62 years after separation, per the National Archives.

We will be recording DD 214s at the annual Veterans Council of St. Johns County event on the morning of Nov. 11 at Anastasia Baptist Church, 1659 A1A South, or come by the courthouse Monday — Friday year-round.

Q. Nov. 13-19 is International Fraud Awareness Week. Are you still promoting free Property Fraud Alerts for St. Johns County property owners?

Definitely — protecting yourself from mortgage or property fraud through your trusted county Clerk of Courts should be an easy decision for a homeowner or business owner. We recently launched a partnership with fellow northeast Florida Clerks to urge property owners in St. Johns, Baker, Clay, Duval and Putnam counties to proactively protect themselves against scammers who would steal their homes, vacant land or business property through fraudulent deeds or other official records. When a subscriber's official records are changed, they are prompted to review the record and to report potentially fraudulent activity to law enforcement. The service is free and safe, and it's easy to sign up at stjohnsclerk.com/recording-activity/.

Q. How can people get in touch with you?

A. Please email me at bpatty@stjohnsclerk.com or call my cell phone at (904) 599-8688.

St. Johns County mourns the passing of District 3 Commissioner Paul Waldron

District 3 Commissioner Paul Waldron passed away on Oct. 18. A lifelong resident of St. Johns County, Waldron was a true champion for residents, always putting their needs first. He served honorably as the representative for the county's southeastern region after being elected in 2016 and re-elected in 2020. As a small business owner, Waldron always brought a business approach to the organizations he served.

"Paul's passing is a tremendous loss for our county. He was the type of person who was always willing to help. He was not only my colleague and fellow commissioner but also my friend. I will miss him," said Chairman Henry Dean, District 5 Commissioner.

As commissioner, Waldron served on

various committees, including the Northeast Florida Regional Council, the Recreation Advisory Board, and the Tourist Development Council.

"Paul was a great man who loved his family, served his community, and lived by faith. His legacy of public service will live on through the lives of everyone he inspired," said Hunter Conrad, St. Johns County Administrator. "This community will deeply miss him."

Commissioner Waldron is survived by his wife of 34 years, Stephanie, and their two daughters, Ashley and Kati.

Governor Ron DeSantis will appoint someone to finish the remainder of Waldron's term, which is set to expire in November 2024.



Photo courtesy St. Johns County Paul Waldron.



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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Business Briefs

St. Johns County businesses can now apply for FEMA funds

St. Johns County residents and businesses may be eligible to receive assistance for uninsured and underinsured damage and losses resulting from Hurricane Ian. Disaster assistance may include financial help with temporary lodging and home repairs, as well as other disaster-related expenses.

Residents should notify their insurance agents of any damages sustained to their property. FEMA cannot duplicate benefits for losses covered by insurance, though eligibility may be determined for expenses not covered under the policy.

Residents and businesses do not have to wait to find out if federal assistance will be available before beginning their clean-up; however, they should keep repair receipts and document damages whenever possible.

Disaster assistance applications can be submitted online at www.disasterassistance.gov, by calling (800) 621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern Time, or by using the FEMA mobile app. If you use a relay service such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service.

The following information is required when applying for assistance:

- A current phone number where you can be contacted
- Your address at the time of the disaster and the address where you are now staying
- Your Social Security number
- A general list of damage and losses
- Banking information if you choose direct deposit

- If insured, the policy number or the agent and/or the company name

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Development Center will provide additional information and resources on the Small Business Administration loan application process. Visit www.sjcchamber.com for updates.

SCORE seeks volunteers

Your skills, talents, and management expertise are valuable resources that anyone operating or planning to open a small business can use. As a SCORE volunteer, you will not only be able to share this knowledge and experience to help others succeed by building new relationships, but also support the community in a meaningful way.

For more than 50 years, SCORE has served as America's premier source of

free business mentoring and education. As a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), SCORE has helped more than 11 million entrepreneurs through mentoring, workshops, and educational resources since 1964.

In Jacksonville, SCORE has been identified as the leading organization offering support to small businesses through mentoring, workshops, and other outreach programs.

Visit www.score.org/volunteer for more information on becoming a volunteer and to fill out an application. Email Kathy Brown at kathy.brown@scorevolunteer.org for more information about volunteering with SCORE. She has been a SCORE volunteer for more than 12 years and is responsible for recruiting and onboarding new volunteers.

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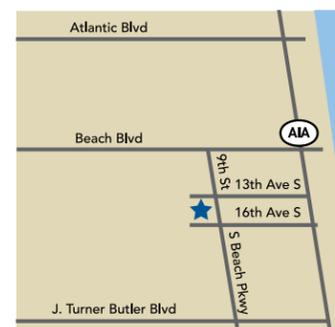
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BAPTIST
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Don't be duped by developers promoting a "one penny tax." It will cost the average family \$4,000 over 10 years and will largely benefit big developers.



That slick ad campaign promoting "A Better St. John's Plan" is funded by land development and construction interests seeking subsidies from our county taxpayers. The Better St. John's PAC is managed by the same people in Tallahassee who run PACs for Senator Hutson and other land developers. That penny is actually a 15% increase in our retail sales tax burden and represents a tripling of the county's take from retail sales!

Commissioners have admitted that they wish to use this proposed tax windfall to build the parks and roads necessary for land development. In effect, this lines the pockets of land developers, and does not hold them accountable for infrastructure costs.

Our county collected record revenues this past year. Why do we need to raise a sales tax during a boom year? On top of that, the commissioners voted to give us a 12.5% property mileage rate increase over last year's rate. With our current tax base, we can well afford to build libraries and fund fire and rescue infrastructure.

Commissioners and developers argue that tourists will pay 40% of this new tax, but a look at last year's numbers* suggests that it will only be 15%.

GOT QUESTIONS? You won't find answers on the developers' "Penny Plan" website because it has no contact form or email address. They're hiding behind their PAC, and simply expect us to believe their deceptive advertising – no questions asked. Don't play into the developers' hands. We can afford improvements without taxing ourselves. You can ask us questions at 1stCoastConservativesUnited.com

On election day, vote NO on the referendum for a "one cent sales tax."

1ST COAST
CONSERVATIVES UNITED
 FIGHTING DEVELOPER-DRIVEN GOVERNMENT

*Last year, visitors spent almost \$712 million in St. Johns County. A 1% tax on \$712M is \$7.1M. Over ten year's, that's 71.2M. That is 14% of \$500,000. Tourism will grow over the next ten years, but not enough to reach 35 or 40% as the county claims. Even if tourism grows faster than our rapidly growing population, it won't be higher than 20%. If you take 80% of \$500,000, that's how much the rest of us will pay for this sales tax increase over ten year's – \$4,000 per household.

General Election Guide



Elect Gary HOWELL



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 VoteBethTate.Com  [votebethtate](https://www.facebook.com/votebethtate)
votebethtate@gmail.com

Vote for Tate, November 8!

Paid for by Vote for Beth Tate, Airport Authority Group 2 Campaign

It's time for the General Election

By St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

The Nov. 8 General Election is quickly approaching. Early Voting started this week and continues through 6 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 5. For your convenience, you may vote at any of the eight early voting locations around the county. Early voting dates include two Saturdays and one Sunday. All locations are open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. You may cast your ballot in person or use a secure ballot intake station inside each of our early voting locations if you need to drop off your vote-by-mail ballot.

There is no early voting on Sunday, Nov. 6 or Monday, Nov. 7 before Election Day.

The ballot is long with many federal, state, judicial, and local races, plus three constitutional amendments and a local referendum. Your sample ballot will help you prepare for voting. You can also visit our website at www.votesjc.gov, click the "General Election 2022" quick link on the front page, and access an abundance of election research materials. Doing your research in advance and being prepared to vote when you arrive to vote can be a real time saver.

Bring a photo and signature ID with you when you vote; Florida law requires it. There are 13 acceptable forms of photo ID that can be used. A complete list is available on our website. If you do not have a current and valid ID, you will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot.

The deadline for requesting a vote-by-mail ballot has already passed. If you still have your ballot in hand, you MUST return your ballot to the Elections Office no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day in order for it to count. If your ballot is late, it will not count. First class mail takes three to five business days, so you may want to person-

ally deliver your ballot to ensure it is counted. You can drop off your ballot during early voting hours at one of our early voting locations through 6 p.m. on Nov. 5. Vote-by-mail ballots cannot be turned in at the polls on Election Day; however, you can surrender your ballot and vote in person.

Many voters will cast ballots early or vote-by-mail, but for those of you still planning to vote on Election Day or wondering what options you have, here are a few tips:

Know where you vote before you go! Due to the 2020 Census and the 2021 redistricting process, many changes have occurred since the 2020 elections. We have new voting districts, precinct lines, and some new polling places. In addition, voters move all the time, but don't always update their address with the Elections Office before going to vote. Knowing where you vote before you go can save you a lot of time.

Visit our website www.votesjc.gov and use the tools available to you. By using "My Voter Status" under the quick links, you can check your record, verify your address, locate your polling place, view your sample ballot and track your vote-by-mail ballot. If you have moved, give the office a call at (904) 823-2238. We will update your address and send you to your correct Election Day polling place the first time. This can also be a real time saver. Many voters have to be rerouted on Election Day because they go to an incorrect polling location.

Additional information is available in our ad in this newspaper. My staff and I are always ready to serve you and we will make it easy for you to vote. Visit our website or call the office at (904) 823-2238 if you have any questions or need assistance. See you at the polls!



**Vote as you please,
But please vote!**

**See you
at the polls!**

GENERAL ELECTION ★ NOVEMBER 8, 2022

OPEN TO ALL REGISTERED VOTERS IN ST JOHNS COUNTY



Due to the 2020 Census and Redistricting process, voting districts, precinct lines, and some Election Day polling locations have changed. Visit **VOTESJC.GOV** for more information.

We are here to serve you. Please visit our office, call or use our online forms and resources to help you prepare for Election Day.

KNOW WHERE TO VOTE BEFORE YOU GO

To locate your polling place visit **www.votesjc.gov** or call the Elections Office at **904-823-2238**

REMEMBER, YOU HAVE 3 WAYS TO VOTE!



VOTE-BY-MAIL

Visit **www.votesjc.gov** or call (904) 823-2238 by 5 PM on October 29 to request a vote-by-mail ballot.



VOTE EARLY

You can vote in person prior to Election Day by visiting any early voting location from Wednesday, October 26 through Saturday, November 5. Early voting locations will be open from 8 AM to 6 PM daily. Locations are listed below.



ELECTION DAY

To vote on Election Day, you must go to your assigned polling place between the hours of 7 AM and 7 PM on November 8. Signature and photo ID are required to vote in person. For more information, visit **www.votesjc.gov**

MAKE SURE YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

Has your signature changed? If your signature on your voter record and signature on your vote-by-mail ballot certificate envelope do not match, your vote-by-mail ballot may not count. Update your signature using a Florida voter registration application.

Drop your vote-by-mail ballot in a Secure Ballot Intake Station at any early voting location during the hours of voting. Your voted mail ballot **must** be received by the Supervisor of Elections Office **no later than 7 PM on Election Day**. If your vote-by-mail ballot is returned late, it will not count.

ON OUR WEBSITE www.votesjc.gov

- Register to vote
- Check your voter status
- Change your address before you vote
- Verify your polling place
- Track the mailing and receipt of your vote-by-mail ballot
- View and print your sample ballot

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 8, 2022
Polls are open 7 AM to 7 PM

When voting on Election Day, you must vote at the precinct of your legal residence!

EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS

October 26 - November 5, 2022 Includes two Saturdays and a Sunday!
8 AM to 6 PM Daily at all locations

Ponte Vedra Branch Library
101 Library Blvd
Ponte Vedra Beach

Ponte Vedra Concert Hall
1050 A1A North
Ponte Vedra Beach

Julington Creek Annex
725 Flora Branch Blvd
St. Johns

SilverLeaf Amenity Center
218 Silver Forest Dr
St. Augustine

Supervisor of Elections Office
4455 Avenue A, #101
St. Augustine

St. Augustine Beach City Hall
2200 A1A South
St. Augustine

Southeast Branch Library
6670 US 1 South
St. Augustine

Hastings Branch Library
6195 S. Main St
Hastings

4455 Avenue A, Suite 101 St. Augustine, FL 32095
904-823-2238 · www.votesjc.gov

Briefs

Newcomers of North St. Johns announces fashion show luncheon

Newcomers of North Saint Johns will host its November luncheon on Tuesday, Nov. 15 at Ruth's Chris Steak House, 814 A1A North, Suite 103 in Ponte Vedra Beach. The event will feature a member-model fashion show with clothing and accessories provided by Chico's Sawgrass Village. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$36 for members; all reservations must be received by Nov. 4.

Newcomers of North Saint Johns members are also encouraged to support the OLCG Food Pantry with our annual Food Drive. Canned beans and vegetables; dry rice (up to 3-pound bags) and other unopened, non-perishable food items are welcomed. Visit newcomersofnorthstjohns.org for more information.

County Commissioners approve funds for mental health support for fire rescue personnel

During the Oct. 4, 2022, regular Board of County Commissioners meeting, commissioners unanimously approved an allocation of \$500,000 from the Fire District Reserve to provide mental health support for members of St. Johns County Fire Rescue.

District 2 Commissioner, Sarah Arnold, proposed the funding in a heartfelt message to first responders.

"Suicide is the leading cause of death among firefighters and EMTs, and the repeated exposure to trauma provides a direct link to suicide rates among firefighters and EMTs," Arnold said during the meeting. "Our men and women in Fire Rescue are in crisis. I am speaking to you today, imploring you not only as a member of this board but as a member of this community whose life has been deeply impacted by mental health struggles and the devastation of suicide."

The approved funding allocation will go toward the contractual establishment of mental health services available 24/7 to Fire Rescue personnel. Services will include professional mental health support in response to critical incidents or long-term exposure to high-stress events.

This allocation will also provide funding to hire a Fire Rescue Chaplain who will provide services to personnel daily and respond to critical events for on-scene support. Additionally, the chaplain will help grow and train the department's peer support team, who is already working to provide necessary peer-to-peer support for department members in need.

Nonprofit formed to benefit Ukraine

Natalia Plyam has formed a nonprofit organization, Helping Ukraine Inc., to help families from Ukraine who are moving to the Ponte Vedra Beach area. Plyam, who has been acting as a facilitator

between families and the community since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, said that hundreds of Ukrainian families continue to arrive. There is a great need for clothes, toys, food, furniture, and jobs, she said.

Plyam said that she hopes that the creation of the nonprofit will make donating, fundraising, and helping easier for those who are interested.

"It is wonderful to see the community come together for a worthy cause," said Plyam.

J. McLaughlin, a women's clothing store in Ponte Vedra Beach, will be holding a fundraiser for the newly arrived families on Dec. 1. For more information, contact Plyam at (904) 837-5555.

Wreaths Across America expands free teach program curriculum for educators

This year's theme for Wreaths Across America is "Find a Way to Serve." In keeping with this, the organization launched a new TEACH program earlier this year. The program, which was put together by retired educator and Gold Star Mother Cindy Tatum, shares an established curriculum designed to teach the next generation about the value of their freedom. In the past few months, with consistent updates based on American holidays and other important events, this program has become wildly popular with professional educators and homeschoolers. Last month alone, this program received over 2,000 individual downloads.

The program, which consists of stories of courage and character, regularly introduces new educational materials, further focusing on character development and service projects for young people of all ages. This program is free to download from www.wreathscrossamerica.org/teach and is also available to all educators and homeschoolers on Teachers Pay Teachers. The program curriculum encompasses all grades starting at kindergarten through the senior year of high school.

This service-based curriculum is designed to share educational materials from philanthropic and patriotic organizations like The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, the American Rosie Movement™, Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, The Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and IKEducation at the Eisenhower Foundation. Additionally, Wreaths Across America has developed a Veterans' Oral History Project for youth from fourth through 12th grades that encourages young people to interview a veteran, service member, or Gold Star Family member to learn about the sacrifices our military make on behalf of our country and teach the next generation the value of their freedom.

To learn more, or to download Wreaths Across America's TEACH materials, please visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org/teach.

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day is Saturday, Dec. 17, 2022. It is a free event and open to all people. For more information on how to volunteer locally or sponsor a wreath for an American hero, please visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org.

Newcomers honor newest members

Newcomers of the Beaches new members were the honored guests at the Welcome Coffee that was held on Oct. 3 at the Coastal Oaks Clubhouse in Nocatee. Board members and activity leaders mingled with the new members to give a grand welcome. The club has added 54 new members since April 1.



Photo courtesy Bonnie Evans

Each new member introduced themselves followed by board members and activity leaders doing the same.

If you are new to the beaches area or have had a recent life change, visit www.newcomersofthebeaches.com for more information about joining Newcomers of the Beaches.

Local authors to speak at AAUW luncheon

Nancy Quatrano and Susan Slater will be the guest speakers at the Nov. 10 meeting of the St. Augustine branch of the American Association of University Women. The program, open to the public, will take place at the Serenata Beach Club, 3175 S. Ponte Vedra Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach. The two women are mystery writers.

Nancy Quatrano is an award-winning novelist and short story editor. Her stories have always involved dark, hard topics that deliver a satisfying ending. A mystery lover at heart, she also shows a romantic side. Susan Slater lived in the Southwest for 32 years. The enchantment of New Mexico comes alive in her Ben Pecos series. After 39 years in New Mexico and being known as a Southwest mystery writer, she has brought all of her characters to Florida these past 10 years. A selection of their books will be available to buy.

Prior to the program, there will be a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. at a cost of \$30, which includes an entrée, salad, bread, tea or coffee, dessert, tip and tax. The reservation deadline for the luncheon is Wednesday, Nov. 2. For reservations, contact Gayle Diamant-Holland at (904) 417-0332 or gayle123@bellsouth.net. Information about the organization is available at staugustine-fl.aauw.net, aauw.org, and on Facebook, AAUW St. Augustine.

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Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Martha Womack

Author Martha Womack, who goes by the pen name of Martha Louise, loved playing school and writing as a child. All things paper made her very happy. “I remember washing dishes and fantasizing about writing stories. I wrote a young teen romance in high school and poetry in college,” said Womack. “Writing has always been a part of my life.” The Arkansas native also enjoyed studying behavior, learning quite a bit from being one of 10 children in her family. All these interests led Womack to earn a bachelor’s, master’s, and a specialist certification in psychology. Womack spent 20 years as a school psychologist, mostly at schools in Julington Creek and Ponte Vedra Beach. Womack loved her career (especially testing), but she never stopped writing both personally and professionally. Her very first manuscript, “Adeline in a Gymnastics Jam”, was written after her youngest daughter, enrolled in the sport, went looking for a book about gymnastics and could not find one. So, Womack wrote one. “The main character in the story exemplifies kindness, compassion and empathy, virtues increasingly needed in our world, and this book is not just about gymnastics,” said Womack, who has three adult daughters. “It’s about learning life lessons, working hard and persevering. And it is about exclusion.” Womack now takes her message to classrooms,

a message that supersedes the sport. The pre-teen book was not published until 2021 because a personal tragedy caused Womack to first publish a book that she wrote after “Adeline in a Gymnastics Jam.” Her memoir “Married to Merlot” was published in 2019 to tell the story of how her husband, a Vietnam vet, tormented by his time in the war as a medic, became an alcoholic and ultimately took his own life in 2007. Womack found that writing about the experience was cathartic for both her and her daughters. Interestingly, some of the poetry that Womack wrote in her 20s perfectly matched the book — poems she only rediscovered after the book was written. The poems appropriately introduce each chapter of the book.

Q: Share why you felt that it was important to write “Married to Merlot.”

A: There comes a time when we really need to face certain tragedies. It was difficult because people didn’t talk about suicide. People did not know what to say to us. We do not need to act like it never happened. I wrote the book to help others not feel alone. You



Photo courtesy Martha Womack
Martha Womack

may never get over it, but you can get through it, and you can live a better life.

Q: After your family’s tragic loss, what did you learn about yourself?

A: I learned that I had been dwelling on the past, worrying about the future, and resisting life. I am now able to accept the arrival of events and incidents that are potentially stressful rather than resist their very existence, and I can “make the most of it” (my mother’s motto) in any given situation. I occasionally fall back into old habits, and, when I do, I remind myself to be wholly present in the current space of time. I found my resilience, and, for the first time, I fully embraced life.

Q: You mentioned that all the proceeds from that memoir will be donated to a Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Van Buren, Arkansas. Why this post?

A: This post, Robert Jack VFW Post 1322, hopes to expand its facilities and attract younger servicemen and servicewomen. The post has a recovery focus with the hope of decreasing the suicide rate in that population. They offer community to service men and women who have served in foreign wars and the global war on terror.

Q: What did you like about being a school psychologist?

A: I loved having an impact on students and parents. And they had an impact on me as well. One of my strengths when talking to parents was that I felt a great sense of empathy, and I was able to connect with the struggle that they might be going through. The children with emotional handicaps really pulled at my heartstrings, and I had a special place in my heart for those who were distraught.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I like to walk four miles three to four times a week as well as do weight training. I do a lot of reading for a Facebook group called “We love memoirs.” I like to read the stories about adversity the best.

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

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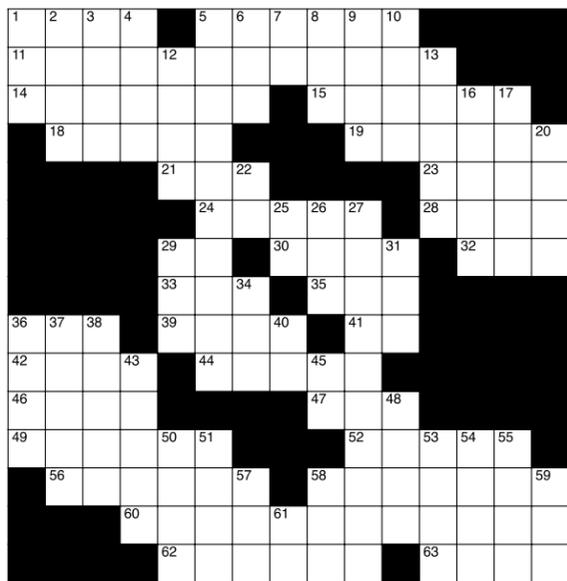
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Greek mountain
- 5. One dependent on something
- 11. Gratitude
- 14. Glazed ceramic ware
- 15. Paddling
- 18. Step
- 19. More greasy
- 21. Upper-class young woman
- 23. Light beige
- 24. Belief in a supreme being
- 28. Indigenous people of Scandinavia
- 29. A beloved princess
- 30. Transfer property
- 32. Field force unit
- 33. Automated teller
- 35. When you hope to get there
- 36. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 39. Politicians Fischer and Conroy are two
- 41. Blood type
- 42. Stringed instrument
- 44. Curses
- 46. Barbary sheep
- 47. Belonging to a thing
- 49. Supporters
- 52. Leaf-footed bug
- 56. A shower of water
- 58. Attribute to
- 60. Intermittent
- 62. Soda waters
- 63. Scottish island

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Klutz
- 2. Relaxing places
- 3. Expel saliva
- 4. The extended location of something
- 5. Certified
- 6. Cease to exist
- 7. Powerful legal pro
- 8. The OJ trial judge
- 9. Popular greeting
- 10. "90210" actress Spelling
- 12. ___ Blyton, children's author
- 13. "This Is Us" star Fitch
- 16. Battery cell with a nickel alode
- 17. Full of bacteria
- 20. Remains of an old building
- 22. Exist
- 25. It gets you into places
- 26. Witness
- 27. The spreading of a disease to another part of the body
- 29. Father
- 31. Touch gently
- 34. Licensed for Wall Street
- 36. Herring-like fish
- 37. Lute used in N. Indian music
- 38. Mirabel shouldn't talk about him
- 40. Atomic #62
- 43. Religious
- 45. Silvery-white metal (abbr.)
- 48. Influential civil rights organization
- 50. Acknowledgment (abbr.)
- 51. Turn away
- 53. Kidney disease (abbr.)
- 54. Smooth-feeling fabric
- 55. Competently
- 57. Sea eagle
- 58. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 59. It helps you see
- 61. Emerging technology

CAREGIVER WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- ACUTE
- AGENCY
- ASSISTIVE
- CARE
- CHRONIC
- COMORBIDITY
- COMPANION
- COMPETENCE
- CUSTODIAL
- DIRECTIVES
- DISABILITY
- DISCHARGE
- FACILITY
- FAMILY
- GUARDIANSHIP
- HOME HEALTH AIDE
- HOSPICE
- INDEPENDENT
- INFORMAL
- MEMORY
- MOBILITY
- PROXY
- SUPERVISION



Solve the code to discover words related to caregivers.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 7 = T)

- A. 26 1 10 15 13 22 19 26 15**
Clue: *Oversee*
- B. 26 1 10 10 25 13 7**
Clue: *Assist*
- C. 3 5 13 19 20 8**
Clue: *Sensitive*
- D. 5 7 7 15 20 7 19 25 20**
Clue: *Focus*



By Scott A. Grant
mail@floridanewsline.com

PopHistory

Massacre at Matanzas

St. Augustine is rightfully proud of its tradition as America's Oldest City. Of course, it isn't the first city to have existed in the United States or even the first European city, but it is the oldest European city to have remained in continuous existence. The French actually founded a city near Jacksonville on the banks of the St. Johns River that pre-dates St. Augustine.

That city, known as Fort Caroline, was founded in June 1564, a year earlier than St. Augustine, by a group of French protestants led by Jean Ribault. Initially, Ribault sent his lieutenant, Rene De Laudonniere to establish the new colony with promises he would follow with more settlers and supplies. Ribault was delayed. De Laudonniere and his followers became disheartened. In late July, the English pirate, John Hawkins, visited Fort Caroline to take on fresh water. The distressed settlers traded their cannon for one of Hawkins's ships. That was unfortunate. The can-

non might have come in handy as things turned out.

In September 1565, as De Laudonniere was preparing to leave, Jean Ribault arrived with the much-needed reinforcements. At the same time, Pedro Menendez arrived from Spain with an expedition of his own. The two fleets engaged in a brief skirmish off of what we now call the St. Johns River. Both sides retreated. The French fled to sea and the Spanish sailed south to the next estuary where they established a permanent settlement.

The situation was rife with peril. The two sides hated each other. It wasn't just that they were French and Spanish, which might have been enough to bring them to conflict on its own. More importantly the Spanish were Catholic, and the French were Protestants. That made them mortal enemies.

Both sides set out to destroy the other. The French sailed south.

Shortly thereafter, the Spanish marched north. On Sept. 11, a hurricane hit. The hurricane arrived during the feast of Saint Matthew. (Ironically, 451 years later another Hurricane Matthew would hit the First Coast.) The storm wrecked the French fleet and battered Pedro Menendez's troops. It also hid their movements. The Spanish troops surprised the outnumbered French at Fort Caroline on Sept. 20 and put 140 men to death.

Meanwhile, Ribault and the survivors of his wrecked fleet washed ashore near Daytona Beach. The French began to march north hoping to make it back to their base at Fort Caroline. Their progress was blocked by the Matanzas Inlet, south of St. Augustine. On the far side of the inlet, Pedro Menendez waited with his troops. After some negotiation, the French agreed to surrender.

Menendez rowed the French across the inlet in groups of 10 with their

hands tied behind their backs. As each group arrived, they were asked if they were Catholics. Those who were not were marched out of sight behind a sand dune, where the Spanish slit their throats. About 350 Frenchmen were killed in this manner over several days in October, giving the inlet its name. In Spanish, "Matanzas" means massacre.

The slaughter was controversial even in its day. It is still unclear whether the French were tricked or went willingly into eternity. At the time, a Spanish professor who wrote a contemporary history of the event suggested the French protestants got off easy. They should have been burnt at the stake as heretics.

Scott A. Grant is a local historian and author. By day, he acts as president of Standfast Asset Management, a fiduciary asset manager based in Ponte Vedra. He welcomes your comments at scottg@standfastic.com.

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Students participate in Great Pumpkin Drop

Bolles Grade 1 students from both the Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus and Lower School Whitehurst Campus gathered for The Great Pumpkin Drop on Oct. 10. Ahead of the event, students worked in teams to design and build protective capsules around pumpkins, with the goal of keeping them intact after a three-story drop. The first graders could only choose two of the following materials to engineer their cardboard capsules: packing peanuts, air pillows, foam wrap and bubble wrap. Grade 1 teacher Brittany Herland worked with students to toss each team's capsule from a balcony on the Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus while the group gathered to



watch from a safe distance. While only two of the 20 teams successfully kept their pumpkins from breaking, all learned how to work together and cheer on their classmates during this hands-on seasonal activity.



PVHS Happenings

Ponte Vedra High School hosts blood drive

By Sade Goodridge
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Sept. 22, 2022, Ponte Vedra High School participated in its first blood drive since 2019, sponsored by OneBlood and assisted by account representative Jim Thompson. OneBlood is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) community asset responsible for providing safe, available, and affordable blood to more than 200 hospital partners and their patients throughout most of Florida, parts of Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and North Carolina.



Photo courtesy Sade Goodridge
Ponte Vedra High School students donating blood on the bus.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, PVHS often hosted numerous blood drives throughout the school year to provide students with the opportunity to donate their blood. The pandemic hit and to protect the health and safety of the donors, nurses, and those who would receive the donation, blood drives at the school ceased until now. Since OneBlood and other blood banks across the country were at critically low levels during and after the pandemic, the need for blood was vital — so OneBlood reached out to the schools that were planning to host a drive and asked for student volunteers to help be ambassadors for the school. The volunteers attended a training in which they learned the ins and outs of hosting a blood drive, including how to handle situations in which people express fear for the donation ahead. PVHS senior volunteer Amelia Coker said, "I thought it was a good cause to volunteer for, especially after hearing that blood supply levels were at a critically low level."

Based on donations from the past, a goal was set for a donation of 40 units of blood — potentially saving 120 lives, as one pint of blood

can save up to three lives. Ponte Vedra High School students crushed this goal with 64 procedures and 70 units of blood (six people donated double red cells which provided two units). This means that 198 patients could benefit from the lifesaving efforts of blood donors at Ponte Vedra High School.

Much of the blood drive's success can be attributed to the students' desire to do their part in saving lives as evidenced by senior Zander Javier, who said, "I felt the compulsion to help others."

According to oneblood.org, more than 4.5 million patients need blood transfusions each year in the United States and Canada. If you are interested in saving just three of these lives, visit OneBlood at oneblood.org to search for a donation site near you. If you know of a child who is older than 16, has a signed parent permission form, and attends Ponte Vedra High School, the school will be hosting its next blood drive on Thursday, Nov. 17, 2022.

Sade Goodridge is a student at Ponte Vedra High School.



5 ways to show seniors they're appreciated

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Senior citizens account for a significant percentage of the overall population. Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau released in 2020 indicate the nation's 65-and-older population had grown by more than one-third over the preceding decade. By 2050, the number of senior citizens is expected to be close to 90 million.

People are living longer than ever, and as individuals age, the demand for senior services continues to grow — as does the need to be patient and respect the elderly. There are many ways to show seniors just how much they're appreciated.

1. Help with chores. Lend a hand with chores around the house that may have grown difficult for seniors. This can include mowing the lawn, weeding garden

beds, shoveling snow, raking leaves, or even taking the garbage pails in and out on collection days.

2. Visit more often. Frequent visits are one of the simplest ways to show seniors you care. Whether seniors live in a private home or managed care facility, visitors brighten their days, especially if they no longer get out and about as frequently as they once did. Spending time together and sharing stories can bring smiles to the faces of older adults.

3. Plan activities with seniors in mind. When organizing parties and special events, consider the needs of seniors on the guest list. Add music from their era to playlists or DJ requests. Seat seniors with mobility issues near exits and restrooms. Make sure to arrange for photos with the guest of honor to keep family history alive.

4. Thank seniors. Find any reason to thank a senior. Perhaps someone served in the military or volunteered their time with children. Celebrate accomplishments big and small with a simple "thank you."

5. Prepare a meal. Invite a special senior over for a home-cooked meal with the family. Make it a regular occurrence on the calendar. If he or she cannot get out easily, bring a hot meal over to his or her place, instead.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Simple gestures of gratitude and appreciation can brighten a senior's day and let that person know he or she has not been forgotten.



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How to create structure after retirement

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Professionals typically look forward to retirement and the freedom that comes with it. The notion that commuting and deadlines will one day be a distant memory is enough to make anyone excited for retirement. But when the day to leave the daily grind behind arrives, many retirees admit to feeling a little anxiety about how they're going to find structure.

Retirement is a big transition, and Robert Delamontagne, PhD, author of the 2011 book "The Retiring Mind: How to Make the Psychological Transition to Retirement," notes that some retirees experience anxiety, depression and even a sense of loss upon calling it a career. Some of those feelings can undoubtedly be traced to the perceived lack of purpose some individuals feel after retiring. Without a job to do each day, people can begin to feel useless. Overcoming such feelings can be difficult, but finding ways to build daily structure can make the transition to retirement go smoothly.

• Find something to truly engage in. Professionals who truly enjoy their work tend to be fully engaged, so it's no surprise if such individuals have a hard time adjusting to retirement. Some may suggest volunteering can help fill the void created by retirement, but researchers with the Sloan Center on Aging and Work at Boston College have found that only those individuals who are truly engaged in their post-retirement volunteering enjoy the psychological benefits of such pursuits. So before retirees dive right into volun-

teering as a means to creating structure, they should first exercise due diligence and find an opportunity they'll find genuinely engaging.

• Embrace the idea of "bridge employment." "Bridge employment" is the name given to the trend that has seen retired individuals take on part-time or temporary employment after they have retired from full-time working. COVID-19 has no doubt skewed post-retirement working statistics since the World Health Organization first declared a pandemic in March 2020, but a 2019 survey from the LIMRA Secure Retirement Institute found that 27 percent of pre-retirees with at least \$100,000 in assets planned to work part-time in retirement. Even part-time work can provide enough daily structure to help retirees feel as though each day is not just a free-for-all.

• Make a concerted effort to be more social. Volunteering and working are not the only ways to create structure in retirement. A concerted effort to be more social can help retirees fill their days with interactions with like-minded individuals who may be experiencing the same feelings. Join a book club, a local nature group that goes on daily or semi-daily morning hikes or another local community organization. These are great ways to build structure and meet new people. Retirees can create social media accounts to find local community groups that cater to their interests. Even if it seems hard to believe, plenty of retirees are seeking to create structure in retirement life, and social media can make it easier to find such individuals in your community.



Celebrating seniors cont. from pg. 1

Landing. I learn so much from them too. My senior students have so many hidden secrets about life, love, joy, and happiness. They are full of wisdom and goodness.”

Brown Family YMCA Healthy Living Director Tina Allen has been teaching Active Older Adults (AOA) classes for 10 years and currently teaches AOA Fit and Aqua Fitness. Allen said that the AOA classes focus on strengthening muscles and increasing range of movement to help with daily life activities. The classes also provide an option for every fitness level, including being seated in a chair. Allen said she enjoys seeing how active and fit participants are well into their 90s.

“They are so thankful for the classes and the social aspect of coming and participating with their friends. Also, hearing their stories and being a part of their lives is so rewarding. As an instructor, you know that you are really making a difference in their lives,” said Allen, who is also the Group Exercise and Healthy Aging Coordinator.

Executive/Artistic Director Dawn Wolf at Ponte Vedra Ballet and Dance Company offers a free senior ballet class (ages 65 and older) to the community once a week. She has been teaching the class for 17 years. The art of ballet, she said, helps with balance, alignment, and strength as participants move through seated, barre and center work. Most importantly, modifications are made for the senior body, and the point is to simply have fun and enjoy the health benefits of ballet, especially regarding posture.

“I want everyone to feel good and beautiful with movement. Everyone is capable of making beautiful movements,” said Wolf, adding that she is dedicated to keeping the class free and accessible to everyone.

[Author’s note: For the free ballet class, register online at puballet.com or call Ponte Vedra Ballet and Dance Company at (904) 859-2223 for more information. The classes, which run year-round, are held on Wednesdays from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Wolf said seniors may come consistently or just pop in at any time.]



Photo courtesy Jana Alexander
Jana Alexander leading a chair Zumba class at Starling at Nocatee.

How to determine if it’s time to downsize

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Individuals work hard to save enough money to purchase their homes — and the hard work doesn’t end there. Once homeowners settle into a new home, they may set their sights on renovations that suit their individual needs. And even when buyers find a home that needs no such work, maintenance requires homeowners’ utmost attention.

All that hard work is perhaps one reason why seniors may be a little reluctant to downsize as they advance through their golden years. In addition to the sweat equity homeowners put into their homes, all the memories they’ve made within their walls can make it harder to put a home on the market.

Downsizing is a difficult decision that’s unique to each homeowner. Seniors who aren’t quite certain if downsizing is right for them can consider three key factors to make a decision that’s in their best interests.

- **Cost:** Perhaps no variable affects senior homeowners’ decisions to downsize their homes as much as cost. No one wants to outlive their money, and downsizing to a smaller home can help seniors reduce their monthly expenses by a significant margin. Even homeowners who have long since paid off their mortgages can save substantial amounts

of money by downsizing to a smaller home or even an apartment or condominium. Lower property taxes, reduced insurance premiums and the need to pay for fewer repairs are just some of the ways downsizing can save seniors money.

- **Space:** Many people love the extra space that single-family homes provide. But seniors can take a walk through their homes and see how many rooms they still use on a consistent basis. If much of the home is unused, seniors can probably downsize without adversely affecting their daily lives.

- **Market:** The real estate market is another factor to consider when deciding if the time is right to downsize. A seller’s market can help seniors get the biggest return on their real estate investment, potentially helping them make up for meager retirement savings. For example, home prices skyrocketed across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, making that a great time for sellers to put their homes on the market. Seniors selling to downsize may capitalize on such spikes since they won’t be looking to turn around and buy larger, equally expensive homes once they sell their current place. If the market is down and seniors can withstand the work and cost a little longer, it may be best to wait until things bounce back in sellers’ favor.



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New option for affordable independent senior living now available

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

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How to stay mentally sharp after retirement

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

If asked to describe how they envision retirement, many professionals might reference travel, time spent with grandchildren and various recreational pursuits. Few, if any, would mention cognitive decline; however, cognitive decline poses a significant threat to aging men and women, especially during retirement.

Researchers have long since recognized that certain cognitive abilities begin to decline with advanced age, even among elderly individuals who are healthy. Despite that decline, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that dementias like Alzheimer's disease are not an inevitable part of aging. In fact, the CDC estimates that as many as 40 percent of dementia cases may be prevented or delayed. In addition, the CDC reports that it's not uncommon for routine memory, skills and knowledge to stabilize or even improve as the brain ages.

That's good news for retirees who want to spend their post-work life pursuing their passions and hobbies. Individuals also can embrace some strategies to stay mentally sharp in retirement.

- Consider delaying retirement. Even if early retirement is a dream, it might be better to work a little longer than you had planned. A 2021 study published in the journal "SSM - Population Health" found that postponed retirement is beneficial to cognitive

function for all genders, races/ethnicities, educational levels, and professional status. The study reported that individuals who waited until age 67 to retire experienced less cognitive decline than those who retired prior to turning 67.

- Make exercise part of your retirement routine. A lack of structure may seem enticing to individuals who have spent decades working; however, many retirees find that little structure loses its appeal quickly after calling it quits. When creating a new routine in retirement, include regular exercise. According to the Mayo Clinic, studies indicate that people who are physically active are less likely to experience a decline in their mental function. So daily exercise not only gives retirees something to do, but also benefits their brains.

- Enroll in an adult education course. A 2014 study published in the journal JAMA Neurology examined the association between lifetime intellectual enrichment and cognitive decline in the older population. The study's authors found that higher levels of late-life cognitive activity were associated with higher levels of cognition. The study's authors concluded that lifetime intellectual enrichment might delay the onset of cognitive impairment. Retirees can look into adult learning programs at local colleges and universities to see if anything piques their interest.

Coleman cont. from pg. 1

Jacksonville Walk to End Alzheimer's, raising nearly \$10,000 last year with his team for the cause. He has the same team goal this year for the Nov. 5 Walk to end Alzheimer's that will take place at the University of North Florida.

In addition, the Acosta Bridge will be lit purple again this month through Coleman's work with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. Coleman also worked with Daily's Place to light its roof purple on Nov. 4.

Coleman's top donor is Starling at Nocatee, and Starling Chief Operating Officer Megan Kennedy said they are fully behind all of Coleman's efforts. Starling staff members plan to walk on

Coleman's team.

"We have a special place in our heart for the entire Coleman family," said Kennedy. "I am incredibly proud of our team for joining forces with Gabe's team and working towards the greater good — a cure. Starling believes in his cause, in his mission, and we believe in Gabe."

Coleman is also working with his past teachers at Bolles Ponte Vedra lower school to join him at the walk, and he recently presented a video to the school explaining his mission to students.

Coleman has a blog outside of the Alzheimer's site to help keep up with everyone: www.gabealzwalk.com. Visit alz.org for more information on the Jacksonville Walk to End Alzheimer's.

"Considering these difficult and challenging times, we find great benefit from living here. This was a terrific decision and we're glad we did it!"



John, Resident at Westminster St. Augustine

Jacksonville Historical Society CEO spoke at Coastal Friends luncheon



Photo courtesy Brooke Freeman

On Oct. 5, to a crowd of over 60 Coastal Friends' members, Dr. Alan Bliss, CEO of the Jacksonville Historical Society, spoke about the society at Coastal Friends' monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club. He discussed Jacksonville's bicentennial, as well as the society's project to renovate and activate the 102-year-old factory building, formerly the Florida Casket Company. Plans include making the first floor into a museum and exhibition space devoted principally to Jacksonville's music history; the second floor will be archival processing and preservation of the society's huge collections, and the third floor will be an event venue and meeting space. The next monthly luncheon will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 2, at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Contact brookemeister@msn.com or visit coastalfriends.wildapricot.org for more information.

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