

# Ponte Vedra NewsLine

AUGUST 2018 Volume 5 Issue 8

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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## Summer tradition benefits First Coast No More Homeless Pets

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewslines.com

For the past four summers, Florida NewsLine and its family of community newspapers, The CreekLine, Mandarin NewsLine and Ponte Vedra NewsLine, have sponsored a pet supply drive to benefit First Coast No More Homeless Pets. Area businesses sign up to



Photos by Martie Thompson

John McFall and Tanner Ives of First Coast No More Homeless Pets with their truck loaded up with donated supplies at the Florida NewsLine offices that were collected from area businesses.

be convenient drop off locations for community members and this year, 20 businesses generously accepted the call. One of the businesses, which also participated last year, is The UPS Store in Murabella at World Golf Village.

"We were happy to participate in the Pet Supply Drive," said store owner Divyan Patel. "Our community loves pets and they are a very giving community. They always come out when we have a donation drive."

This year's pet supply drive netted approximately 400 pounds of dry dog food, 285 pounds of dry cat food, hundreds of cans of cat and dog food, nearly 200 pounds of kitty litter and

**No More Homeless Pets** cont. on pg. 15

Residents of Ponte Vedra, South Ponte Vedra and Vilano Beach, wearing red shirts to identify themselves, nearly filled the County Auditorium at the July 17 St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners meeting. At stake, in addition to an agenda item dealing with dune restoration of South Ponte Vedra Beach and Vilano Beach, was a proposal for the county to fund, in the amount of \$200,000, the hiring of coastal engineers Olsen Associates to begin working immediately on the permitting and development of a dredging site that will hopefully be used to restore sand to Ponte Vedra Beach.

After presentation by county staff and public comment, the commissioners approved, by a vote of 3 - 2, a revised proposal which approved the \$200,000 for sand source investigation and permitting, but utilized the services of a different coastal engineering firm with whom the county already has a contract.

Lori Moffett, one of the founders of Save Ponte Vedra Beach, Inc., was present at the meeting and advocated on behalf of the proposal. During public comment, she said that this proposal would get a beach renourishment program off the ground and that having such a program in place is critical in the eyes of the state and federal governments to be eligible for funding.

"We are thrilled that the county will be hiring a coastal engineer to restore the beach and that they are putting in some initial funding for it," Moffett said after the meeting. "It took a massive effort on the part of hundreds of people in St. Johns County that love Mickler's Beach and all points north and south. The county's largest public beach in terms of public access/parking spots is in desperate need of investment and the people of St. Johns County have strongly voiced their support for it. Thank you,

Commissioners Paul Waldron, Henry Dean and Jay Morris for making it happen!"

Save Ponte Vedra Beach is a non-profit organization that was created with the goal of getting Ponte Vedra Beach restored. According to Moffett, the group used citizen donations to hire coastal engineering firm Olsen Associates to do an initial assessment of the beach.

"Olsen Associates found that we have lost 130 feet of width of our beach since the 1980s," Moffett said. "We continue to lose about three feet per year on average. The beach has lowered by five to 30 feet across Ponte Vedra Beach and it is now down

Duval County line to Guana, is the scope of the project.

"Now we are getting to the project itself, not just the surveying, and this cannot be funded by donations," Moffett said.

She said that funding would need to come from a variety of sources, including possibilities such as funds from the state of Florida, a proposal to increase the St. Johns County bed tax by one cent, and creation of a municipal service taxing unit (MSTU). Federal funding is also a possibility eventually.



Photos courtesy Save Ponte Vedra Beach  
Mickler's Beach after hurricanes Irma and Matthew and numerous Nor'easters.

According to Moffett, Olsen Associates concluded that beach renourishment is the only solution to resolving the erosion problem along Ponte Vedra Beach. Most coastal counties in Florida have a renourishment plan, but St. Johns County does

not. It's important to note that adding sand to the beach is not a permanent fix as the forces which move sand along a coastline still exist. This is why a renourishment program is so important, since it will address the required maintenance. Conversely, seawalls and other shoreline armoring (the only present alternative to many homeowners) will increase the existing erosion, since they lower the beach further and accelerate the erosion of the coastline.

to the coquina that once laid several feet beneath the sand."

Following their assessment, Olsen Associates has a plan to renourish the beach with more sand. A dredging site has been located five miles off the coast as well as another site closer in. The sand needs to be sampled to ensure that it meets the criteria to be used for renourishment. The full nine miles of Ponte Vedra Beach, from the

Moffett, a five year resident of Ponte Vedra Beach, has no background in coastal or environmental engineering, but said she considers herself an advocate of the beach.

"For people who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, the beach is why we live here," she said. "So we have a choice. We can either let the beach go or we can move... but we'd prefer to fix our beach and that's a real possibility now."

## BEACH RENOURISHMENT TAKES STEP FORWARD

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewslines.com



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# take 5

## Ponte Vedra Woman's Club announces social

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club is celebrating new and potential members on Thursday, Aug. 23 from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. The ladies will gather at a member's home to learn more about the club and the local charities they support. All women are welcome. If you are already a member, please bring a friend or friends with you. Email [pr@pontevedra-womansclub.com](mailto:pr@pontevedra-womansclub.com) to RSVP and to learn the address of the social; active members will get the address emailed to them closer to the event.

## Library to host anti-bullying magic show

S.T.A.N.D. Against Bullying Magic Show will be held at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on Thursday, Aug. 2 from 4 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. Magician Mark Alan returns just before school starts with a fun, interactive, and impactful magic show that will show attendees how to embrace their inner hero by standing up for themselves and others. S.T.A.N.D. up for what's right: Stop the Bullying, Tell Someone, Ask for Help, Nobody Deserves Bullying, Don't Be a Bystander. The annual event is sponsored by the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library and

children aged 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult in the event for the duration of this magic show.

## Coastal Restoration Course offered

The GTM Research Reserve has partnered with Duval County IFAS Extension to offer the Florida Master Naturalist Program's Coastal Restoration Course, to be held Monday, Aug. 13 – Wednesday, Aug. 15 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. each day at THE PLAYERS Community Center, 175 Landrum Lane. This program is for adults of all knowledge levels, and affords them the opportunity to learn more about living shorelines. The course is comprised of classroom presentations, hands-on activities, and field trips and is taught by certified instructors Kelly Ussia and Carol Wyninger. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/y74avn35> for more information, registration, and payment. Contact Kelly Ussia with any questions at [kussia@sjcfl.us](mailto:kussia@sjcfl.us) or (904) 209-0335.

## Nocatee Farmers Market to welcome Robbie Litt Band

The Nocatee Farmers Market: Sounds of Summer will be held on Aug. 18 at the Swim Club Green and will feature

a special free concert for the community. From 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., families who attend can look forward to performances by local band, The Robbie Litt Band. Along with this fun theme, the market will include more than 70 local vendors offering items such as organic produce, herbs, spices, delicious unique foods, crafts, and jewelry. Also, there will be crafts, face painting, and a bounce house for the kids, plus the Bar will be open for beer and wine purchases. Visit [www.nocatee.com](http://www.nocatee.com) for more information.

## Summer education conference for volunteers scheduled

RSVP of St. Johns County and the St. Johns County School District will host a summer education conference

for volunteers Thursday, Aug. 2, from 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Experts in the areas of mentoring, tutoring, and school readiness will be sharing strategies with volunteers who are currently serving and those who are interested in volunteering. The conference will take place at The Webster School, 420 North Orange Street, St. Augustine, FL, 32084. For more information and to register, contact Cheryl Freeman at [Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us) or (904) 547-3952.



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Come visit us today at the Pet Center!  
 130 N. Stratton Rd.  
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## BRAG ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL OR STUDENTS!

We would love to publish your great news in Ponte Vedra NewsLine!



Send it in! Photos also welcome!  
[editor@floridanewsline.com](mailto:editor@floridanewsline.com)

## MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is? Submit your answer to [mail@FloridaNewsLine.com](mailto:mail@FloridaNewsLine.com).

Last month's Mystery Photo was of the Guana North parking lot. Our winner was Hank Detlaff.

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P	A	C		P	O	T	S											
A	R	A	B		S	A	B	R	E									
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## Answer to your Puzzles

Answers: A. base B. score C. umpire D. fly

Aug						
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	29	30	31	

# around town

save the date!

**Sept. 5: Music by the Sea**

6 p.m.  
St. Johns County Pier Park, 350 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine Beach  
<http://www.sabca.org/8-2/>

**Sept. 9: 2018 Ponte Vedra Auto Show**

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Nocatee  
[www.pvautoshow.com](http://www.pvautoshow.com)

**October 6: 14th annual Creekside Festival**

10 a.m.  
Princess Place Preserve, Flagler County  
<http://business.flaglerchamber.org/events/details/14th-annual-creekside-festival-15525>

**October 13: 21st annual St. Augustine Greek Festival and Arts & Crafts Fair**

11 a.m.  
Francis Field, Downtown St. Augustine  
[www.staugreekfest.com](http://www.staugreekfest.com)

**November 4: 35th annual Caring Chefs hosted by Children's Home Society of Florida**

7:30 p.m.  
The Avenues Mall  
[www.chsfl.org/events/35th-annual-caring-chefs/](http://www.chsfl.org/events/35th-annual-caring-chefs/)

**August 2**

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

**August 3**

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

**August 6**

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

**August 6**

**Beaches Toastmasters Club**  
7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (Repeating event on Mondays)  
Baptist Hospital Beaches, Wilson Epstein Building  
[cgsml3@yahoo.com](mailto:cgsml3@yahoo.com)

**August 7**

**Parents with Hope (support for parents who have lost a child)**  
6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Ponte Vedra Valley, 4750 Palm Valley Road  
[www.pontevedravally.com/grief-support](http://www.pontevedravally.com/grief-support)

**August 7**

**First Coast Card Club - adult card players**  
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library  
(904) 827-6950

**Aug. 7 - Sept. 4**

**Hebrew Reading Crash Course**  
7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays  
Chabad at the Beaches, 521 State Road A1A  
(904) 770-0502 or [www.chabadbeaches.com](http://www.chabadbeaches.com)

**August 9**

**Palencia Bridge Club plays Party Bridge**  
11 a.m. – 3 p.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)  
Donovan's Irish Pub, 7440 US Highway 1  
Diane Tamplin, (904) 808-7326

**August 9**

**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](http://www.stjohnsaudubon.com)

**August 10**

**Food Truck Friday**  
6 p.m. – 9 p.m.  
Nocatee's Splash Waterpark

**August 13**

**Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District Meeting**  
6 p.m. – 9 p.m.  
Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library FOL Room  
[www.pvmsd.org](http://www.pvmsd.org)

**August 14**

**Friends of the GTM Reserve Board Meeting**  
5 p.m. – 6 p.m.  
GTM Research Reserve Environmental Education Center  
(904) 823-4500.

**August 14**

**Lilies of the Valley widow support group**  
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
Ponte Vedra Valley, 4750 Palm Valley Road  
[www.pontevedravally.com/grief-support](http://www.pontevedravally.com/grief-support)

**August 15**

**Ponte Vedra Democratic Club meeting**  
6:30 p.m.  
Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library  
[Facebook.com/PonteVedraDemocrats](https://www.facebook.com/PonteVedraDemocrats)

**August 15**

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

**August 18**

**Nocatee Farmers Market: Sounds of Summer**  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Town Center Field, Nocatee

**August 21**

**St. Johns Federated Republican Women Hob Nob**  
Opportunity to meet state and local Republican candidates  
6:30 p.m.  
Renaissance Hotel, WGV  
[sjfedrepublicanwomen@gmail.com](mailto:sjfedrepublicanwomen@gmail.com)

**August 21**

**St. Johns CARES meeting**  
7 p.m.  
Bartram Academy, 164 Everest Lane, Ste. 1  
[www.stjohnscares.org](http://www.stjohnscares.org)

**Aug. 21 - Sept. 25**

**Free Quit Smoking Now Class**  
Tuesdays, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Flagler Hospital Wellness Center  
Call Florida AHEC to register (904) 482-0189

**August 22**

**Tabletop gaming for high schoolers**  
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.  
Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library  
(904) 827-6950

**August 22**

**PVB Division Chamber After Hours**  
5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.  
The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach – Beach Club  
[Sjcchamber.com](http://Sjcchamber.com)

**August 23**

**Adult Coloring Club**  
1 p.m. – 4 p.m.  
Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library  
(904) 827-6950

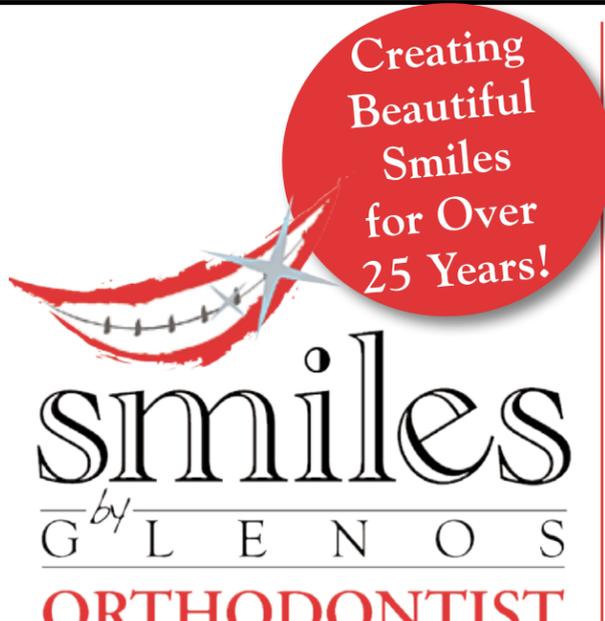
**August 28**

**Primary Election**  
[www.sjcvotes.us](http://www.sjcvotes.us)

**August 31**

**First Coast Newcomers Club board games and lunch**  
1 p.m.  
Coffee Cafe, St. Augustine  
Limited to 10; RSVP (904) 829-0643

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**with Eddie Creamer, St. Johns County Property Appraiser**

**Q: Has your office completed property valuations for the year?**

A: We just did the first submission of the tax roll for the 2018 – 2019 year, which basically means that all valuations are completed for the year. Total taxable value for all properties in the county was up 8.9 percent. In more detail, residential taxable values were up 9.6 percent and commercial taxable values were up 7.7 percent. Tangible personal property, basically business assets, showed a 7 percent increase. This is generally a good sign that business is picking up.

**Q: How many parcels did your office value?**

A: We valued 133,484 residential parcels and 8,444 commercial parcels and we processed 3,221 tangible personal property returns. The increases above are inclusive of exemptions and caps. We administered 84,088 exemptions in our office, of which 66,712 were homestead exemptions. So, approximately half of the residential properties in the county are homesteaded. Of note, we added 4,000 newly constructed homes to the tax roll.

**Q: Can you explain the new hurricane tax abatement bill?**

A: This is a new law passed in the last state legislative session. If your property is homesteaded and you were displaced for 30 days or more as a result of Hurricanes Hermine, Matthew or Irma, you can qualify for a pro rata rebate for your taxes for the year. The application for this appears on our website, www.sjcpa.us and after a homeowner fills it out, we handle it from there.

**Q: What's coming up this month?**

A: August 17 is the date that TRIM notices will be mailed out. Property owners will have 25 days after this to resolve any disagreement regarding their property taxes or solve any errors on our part — or file a petition with the Value Adjustment Board. I encourage homeowners to visit our website and check at their property's valuation now. I like to say, "Beat the rush from TRIM."

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

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



**with Jay Morris, St. Johns County Commissioner (District 4)**

**Q: Can you give us a clarification of the plans announced by the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach to build a new center?**

A: Just to clarify, the proposal by the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach to build a center on the property along A1A for sale by Alta Mar Holdings, LLC, would require that the Cultural Center actually own the property first. They would then still have to provide plans and go through the PZA process before the matter would come to the Board of County Commissioners.

**Q: What is the latest on beach renourishment for Ponte Vedra Beach as of today, July 12?**

A: This is a major agenda item for the July 17 meeting of the Board of County Commissioners. A few alternatives will be presented to the board. I believe any plans will have to include an implementation of a 5 cent bed tax (up from 4 cents). This would be in approximately \$2.5 million and a majority of this will have to go to beach renourishment in order for this to work. It would have to be part of the package.

**Q: How would the bed tax be increased?**

A: It would require a supermajority vote of the commissioners, so at least 4 – 1 in favor. This would probably have to be a future agenda item.

**Q: How important is beach renourishment to Ponte Vedra Beach?**

A: It of utmost importance. It's the biggest thing right now for all Ponte Vedra residents. A beach renourishment program is important anywhere in Florida, but especially in St. Johns County, where we have 42 miles of pristine beach. There are more than six million visitors who come to St. Johns County annually; that's why the bed tax, which these visitors would pay, would be an appropriate partial funding source for the renourishment.

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

A: Readers can email me at bccd4@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 209-0304.

**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, bcc2smith@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0302  
District 3:  
Paul Waldron, bccd3pwaldron@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0303  
District 4:  
Jay Morris, bccd4@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0304

District 5:  
Henry Dean, bccd5hdean@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**

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 Bill Nelson, (202) 224-5274  
Senator Marco Rubio, (202) 224-3041



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# Your Vote Counts

By St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

## Elections ahead

It's almost here! August 28 is our Primary Election; open to all registered voters in St. Johns County.

Many important races appear on your primary ballot such as U.S. Senate, Governor, Attorney General, Commissioner of Agriculture, County Commission District 4 (Republican ballots only), School Board District 4 (if you live in precincts 401 – 409) and a Circuit Court Judge.

Unsure of your districts or who will be on your ballot? Visit [www.votesjc.com](http://www.votesjc.com) and use "My Voter Status" to check your voter record. Once you put in your information and bring up your record, you can choose the list of office holders. All your districts and representatives will be listed. You are also able to view your sample ballot as they are currently available. All voters will receive a sample ballot prior to the elec-

tion, which will be based on your party and precinct.

Florida is a closed primary state, so in the Primary Election on Aug. 28, the law requires you to vote only the party in which you are registered. You may also vote in any of the non-partisan contests available.

July 30 is the last day to register to vote or make party changes for the Primary Election. Don't forget, online voter registration is available, so if you need to make any last minute changes to your voter record, just give it a try.

For more information, visit [www.votesjc.com](http://www.votesjc.com) or call the Elections Office at (904) 823-2238. Visit our website regularly ([www.votesjc.com](http://www.votesjc.com)) to see "What's New."

Your vote is your voice! Register and vote in every election!

## The Sheriff Reports

By St. Johns County Sheriff David B. Shoar

### Back to School Safety

I would like to remind all of our citizens as well as visitors that schools will be back in session this month, which means that our children will be going to and from school daily. District-wide, students return to the classroom on Aug. 10.

I would ask all of you to take extra time and be extremely careful in school zones as well as at bus stops. In heavy traffic areas, motorists should plan on longer commutes and follow the speed limit in School Zones. Deputies will be at school zones throughout the county to monitor those zones and to address any violations accordingly. Drivers need to be advised that speeding fines are doubled if they occur in a school zone.

Deputies will also be in unmarked vehicles seeking any motorists who pass stopped school buses while loading or unloading students. Remember all traffic in both directions must come to a complete stop for school buses that are stopped, displaying the "stop" signal. Motorists traveling in the opposite direction are exempt from stopping if the roadway is separated by a median of at least five feet wide. These infractions will be strictly enforced.

Motorists are also reminded to take extra precaution at school bus stops where eager youngsters, many riding the bus for the first time, may dart into the street as the bus arrives.

Here are some safety rules to pass along to children that ride a school bus. Arrive

at your bus stop at least five minutes early and stand at least 10 feet away from the roadway. Be sure to wait until the bus stops, the door opens and the bus driver says it's all right to enter before stepping onto the bus. Be careful that clothing with drawstrings and book bags with straps or dangling objects do not get caught in the handrail or door when exiting the bus. Walk in front of the bus, never behind the bus. Remember if you can't see the bus driver, he or she cannot see you. After getting off the school bus, stop at the edge of the bus and look both ways before crossing. If you drop something beside the bus, make sure to you tell the driver before attempting to pick it up.

Students who walk to school should do so on a sidewalk if it is available. If there is no sidewalk, students should walk against the flow of traffic and be sure to cross at marked crosswalks.

Those who ride a bicycle should remember to ride with the flow of traffic and follow all traffic signs and signals. Remember students are required to wear a bicycle helmet.

Visit [www.sjsso.org](http://www.sjsso.org) for much more information on this and other safety topics. Feel free to email me at [dshoar@sjsso.org](mailto:dshoar@sjsso.org) with any questions you may have as well as any topics you would like to see addressed here. You can also download our App by searching for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office in your "App" store.

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# ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

## MarketInsight



### Going over Niagara Falls in a barrel

By Scott Grant  
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

Since 1850, more than 5,000 people have died going over Niagara Falls. Some of those were accidents, some were suicides, and some were stunts gone awry. And, of course, some were murders. The most famous person to die going over the Falls was baseball legend Ed Delahanty. "Big Ed" was one of baseball's first superstars. He and his brothers played for the Philadelphia Phillies at the turn of the last century. In 1903, Delahanty was travelling by train from Detroit to New York. He got thrown off the train by a conductor for being drunk and disorderly and threatening other passengers with a knife. He tried to walk across the International Railway Bridge and either fell, jumped, or was pushed off. They found his mangled body several days later next to the "Maid of the Mist." Some people still think he was murdered.

The first person to survive a trip over the falls was Annie Edson Taylor. The 63-year-old school teacher went over the falls in a barrel she built out of oak and iron and lined with a mattress. The plunge down the rushing curtain of water was her retirement plan. She knew she could not teach forever and had not saved any money. She figured that if she survived she would earn plenty telling her tale and if she did not, she would not need any money. Others would follow her, often with less success.

A young man named Kirk Jones was the first to survive the trip unassisted. In 2003, he swam over the falls. It is unclear whether the effort was a stunt or a suicide attempt. He and his friends

were drunk, and they could not work the video recorder. Either way, he survived. Jones was fined \$2300 and banned from entering Canada for life. Fourteen years later, Jones was back. He tried to go over the falls in a large rubber ball. This time he died.

Going over Niagara Falls in a barrel is a bad retirement plan. For one thing, it is dangerous. Even more dangerous than investing in the stock market. And for what it's worth, it did not work for Annie. It turned out that there weren't a lot of people anxious to pay to hear her story. To make matters worse, her manager stole her barrel and took it on tour himself. The barrel was more interesting than its passenger. She spent most of her speaking money on private investigators trying to hunt the rogue down.

Learn from Annie Edson Taylor. Your retirement is too important to leave unplanned until the age of 63. Your retirement is likely to last much longer than you think and cost more also. If you have not done so already, you need to start saving today. And you need to earn a high rate of return. To get where you are going, you need to invest in the stock market. It is the only vehicle that is likely to get you there. Invest early and often — or start working on your barrel.

*Scott A. Grant is President of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at [scottg@standfastic.com](mailto:scottg@standfastic.com).*

## Hurricane preparedness tips for businesses

By Marge Cirillo  
[mail@floridanewsline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewsline.com)

The Florida Small Business Development Council (FSBDC) exists to provide assistance with marketing and business plans for small businesses. Here are some hurricane preparedness tips for businesses:

**Develop a Comprehensive Plan.** An effective hurricane survival plan should be written down and reviewed annually. This plan should address policies and procedures for employee safety regarding hurricanes, business continuity and contingency plans in the face of damage to the business's facilities and policies for dealing with employees, customers and vendors.

Some of the key elements of an effective plan are:

- Conditions that will activate the plan
- Chain of command
- Emergency functions and who will perform them
- Specific evacuation procedures, including routes and exits
- Procedures for accounting for personnel, customers and visitors
- Equipment for personnel

Determine procedures and individual crisis management responsibilities.

Identify which personnel are required to be on-site in the days surrounding a hurricane, as well as who is essential to business function, whether required on-site or not. Be sure to communicate areas of accountability and responsibility for key personnel and how to perform their emergency-response duties effectively.

**Coordinate with others.** Understand the hurricane response plans of other businesses in your area as well as police, fire department, hospitals, and utility companies. It is also helpful to communicate with suppliers, shippers, and others with whom you regularly do business.

**Prepare employees.** Communicate your hurricane plan with all your staff; obtain all emergency contact numbers for employees and ensure understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations for every employee.

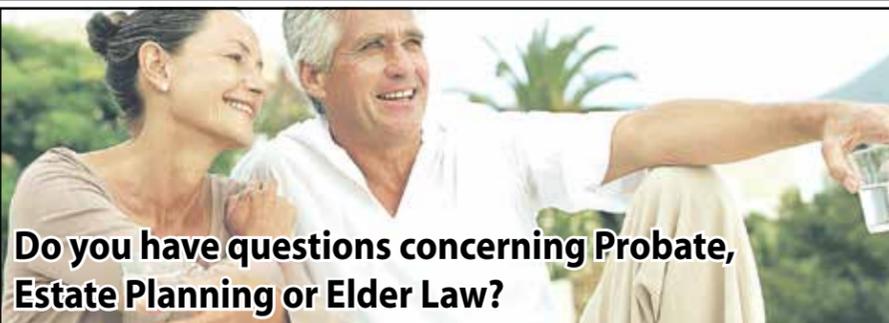
**Review emergency plans annually.** Assess changes in your business or to the community that may affect your hurricane response plan and make the necessary changes each year.

*Marge Cirillo is the Florida Small Business Development Council consultant for St. Johns County. She can be reached at [m.cirillo@unf.edu](mailto:m.cirillo@unf.edu) or (904) 209-1295.*

## ST. JOHNS Business Monthly



Call or email Linda Gay  
[Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com](mailto:Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com)  
(904) 607-5062



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## Meet your local candidates

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewslines.com

In advance of the Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, Aug. 28, Ponte Vedra NewsLine invited each of the candidates that will appear on northern St. Johns County voters' ballots for County Commission, District 4 and School Board District 4 to submit a statement for this election section.

Ponte Vedra NewsLine offered this opportunity to all candidates for these Primary Election races as a community service; no purchase of advertising was required. The content of the statements was left up to each candidate; the only stipulation was that the statement could not exceed 200 words. No editing of the statements took place. Each statement is printed in its entirety, as submitted by the candidate.

### County Commission District 4 (elected at large)

#### Erika Alba (Rep.)

I have been a conservative Republican since I registered to vote in 1984. A resident of Palm Valley for over 13 years, my husband and I have two children: a daughter (PVHS '11 graduate) and a son who's a fifth grader at Ocean Palms. An attorney for over 25 years, I began my career as a Deputy DA prosecuting child sexual predator cases. Currently, I am a corporate attorney with a national law firm. I value public service, having served on the board of the Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Florida, Florida TaxWatch, and the Ponte Vedra Athletic Association.

I am running for Commissioner because the status quo is not working. St. Johns is rapidly growing and our infrastructure is not keeping up. We cannot jeopardize our wonderful quality of life due to mismanaged traffic, crowded schools and lack of greenspace. When elected, I will call for a "top-down" forensic audit: the county's true fiscal health must be transparent and our tax dollars must be spent wisely! Also, we must create more high-wage jobs through strategic economic development and prioritize our infrastructure with particular attention to traffic congestion and our maintenance-starved parks/recreational facilities. I humbly ask for your vote.

#### Jeremiah Blocker (Rep.)

Hi, my name is Jeremiah Blocker and I am running to be your St. Johns County Commissioner for District 4. I live in Nocatee with my wife, Lauren, and our two beautiful children. We worship at St. John Paul II Catholic Church. I want to continue to make St. Johns County the best place in Florida to live, work, and raise a family. I am running because I am uniquely qualified to serve. I am a U.S. Army combat veteran who served our country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. In addition, I currently serve as a JAG officer in the U.S. Air Force and am a former prosecutor in our community.

As a small business owner and a conservative Republican, I believe that fiscally conservative principles are the best way to serve. This includes limiting the size and scope of government, reducing taxes, creating a business friendly environment to retain and attract new businesses and promote job growth, and providing the best public safety to protect our citizens. I look forward to meeting you in the community and hope to earn your vote. I encourage you to contact me anytime at Jeremiah@JeremiahBlocker.com.

#### Nicholas Michael Dudynskay (Rep.)

First-time political candidate. Engineer, entrepreneur, marketer and consultant. Vision: "Make St. Johns County the best place to live and work in America." Mission: "Plan, Progress, and Promote: The future belongs to those who plan for it." Action: "Attract clean, high-technology firms to diversify the economic base and grow tax revenue." St. Johns County is an ideal location. Concurrently eliminate wasteful spending. More tax revenue = More county services (wants and needs). Unbalanced (irresponsible) growth the is leading the county towards fiscal insolvency. Tax base is over-represented by residential property taxes (90 percent). Residents typically consume more public services than tax dollars paid. Larger businesses are grossly underrepresented (10 percent). Functional St. Johns County tax base should be roughly 65 percent residential and 35 percent business. Each new home constructed increases the financial risk, if not counterbalanced by economic growth. Today, St. Johns County's top ten companies employ less than 5 percent of the population. The top three: 1) Public Schools, 2) Flagler Hospital, 3) County itself.

Meet your local candidates cont. on pg. 10

## ERIKA ALBA - Conservative Leadership For Our Future



**Lifelong Republican**



**Conservative Leadership For Our Future**

*As your Commissioner, my priorities will be to:*

- ✓ Call for the County to conduct a "Top-Down" forensic audit so that both Commissioners and citizens will know the true health of the County's fiscal situation. Our tax dollars must be spent wisely.
- ✓ Demand that a St. Johns County Beach Nourishment Program be established as well as a thorough review of our waterways, creeks, and culverts.
- ✓ Increase the availability of well-paying jobs through economic development. The current residential to commercial split is 87-13% which is unsustainable. A healthy and balanced economy requires a split of 65-35% which must be our goal.
- ✓ Ensure that our community, and especially our schools, remain safe. As a former prosecutor and mom, I will work closely with the school board and law enforcement to make sure that each has the tools necessary to keep us safe.
- ✓ Focus on the transportation and infrastructure needs in all parts of the County with particular attention to traffic and congestion as well as the lack of maintenance of our parks and recreational facilities.
- ✓ Preserve the 2nd Amendment rights of law abiding citizens.
- ✓ Promote transparency in government to help build our citizens' trust in their leaders.

# PRIMARY ELECTION ★ August 28, 2018

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- View and print your sample ballot
- Read candidate profiles and campaign reports

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- Democrats receive a Democratic ballot
- Republicans receive a Republican ballot
- Voters registered with no party affiliation or a minor party receive a nonpartisan ballot
- School Board Dist 4 (Precincts 401-409) is nonpartisan and appears on all primary ballots in District 4

## Vote: It's Your Choice!

Call 823-2238 for your vote by mail ballot today! You can also use the online request form on our website [www.votesjc.com](http://www.votesjc.com).

Make sure your vote counts!

Has your signature changed? If your signature on your voter record and signature on the 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.

Your voted mail ballot is due in the Elections Office no later than 7 PM on election day. If it is late, it will not count. The local delivery of mail takes an average of 3-5 days or drop your mail ballot in the red box at your local public library or Tax Collectors Office. Drop boxes will be available beginning August 1st.

## ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF ID WHEN VOTING IN PERSON

Voter information cards are not a valid form of identification when voting. Be sure to bring a current and valid photo ID when voting in person. If the photo ID does not contain your signature, an additional ID that includes your signature shall be required. Example: Photo on Student ID and signature on a library card are acceptable. If you do not bring any ID, you will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot.

- Florida Driver License
- Florida ID Card issued by DMV
- United States Passport
- Debit or Credit Card
- Military ID
- Student ID
- Retirement Center ID
- Neighborhood Association ID
- Public Assistance ID
- Veteran Health ID
- Concealed Weapon ID
- Firearm License ID
- Government Employee ID

## EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS

★ **DATES & TIMES~August 18th – 25th (including Sunday)**  
**Hours: 9 AM – 6 PM Daily At All Locations**

<b>Supervisor of Elections Office</b> 4455 Avenue A, Suite 101 St. Augustine, FL 32095	<b>St. Augustine Beach City Hall</b> 2200 A1A South St. Augustine, FL 32080	<b>Southeast Branch Library</b> 6670 US 1 South St. Augustine, FL 32086
<b>Ponte Vedra Branch Library</b> 101 Library Blvd. Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082	<b>Julington Creek Annex</b> St. Johns Co. Service Ctr. 725 Flora Branch Blvd. St. Johns, FL 32259	<b>W.E. Harris Community Center</b> 400 E. Harris St. Hastings, FL 32145

## ELECTION DAY

- ★ **Tuesday, August 28, 2018**
- ★ **Polls are open 7 AM – 7 PM**
- ★ **When voting on Election Day you MUST vote at the precinct of your legal residence.**

## KNOW WHERE TO VOTE BEFORE YOU GO

To locate your polling place visit [www.votesjc.com](http://www.votesjc.com) or call the Elections Office at 823-2238.



**Meet your local candidates** cont. from pg. 8

Married, spouse Christine holds degrees in Criminal Justice and Psychology. She is a Daughter of the American Revolution. Son, Max attends Palmer Catholic Academy and baseball fanatic. Believe in faith, not fate.

**John C. (Jack) Gorman (NPA)**

When I arrived by boat to St. Augustine in 1972, the City and environs were almost a magical place. Very unique in atmosphere and architecture. Now the

area is expanding more rapidly than anywhere else in the entire country. Careful planning is critical now — there are some areas that are already falling into the cement jungle, urban sprawl that pervades much of south Florida. Let's not let this happen!

My political experience includes eight years on the Board of Directors at the St. Augustine St Johns County Airport, now renamed the North Florida Regional Airport, (name change en-

gineered to attract more commercial air traffic). During my tenure on the Airport Board, we took the airport off the St. Johns County tax rolls completely. Also the airport won a national award for environmental design (I must brag a bit about spearheading this idea, then the Airport Board ran with it). Commercial airline traffic also began during those eight years. We were proud of our accomplishments. I hope by being elected as St. Johns County Commissioner, District 4, to work to try to maintain the area's special atmosphere. We must try to work on a non-partisan basis for a positive future.

**Daniel Heiser (WRI)**

Did not submit a statement.

**Dick Williams (Rep.)**

School safety is an issue that is important to all of us. I am honored to have received the endorsement of our Sheriff David Shoar and look forward to working with him and our law enforcement professionals to continue to identify solutions to ensure we are all safe including our children.

Like most families relocating with school age children, my wife, Linda, and I chose to live in St Johns County for its "A" rated public schools, low crime rate and the quality of life. As a conservative,

I am committed to bringing my decades of private sector business experience to the county to ensure we can maintain the excellent quality of life that we all enjoy while protecting our hard-earned tax dollars and ensuring that we manage future growth.

I will ask that we implement zero-based budgeting to ensure that we are spending tax dollars wisely to provide the necessary services. I will also ask for an independent audit so we can know exactly where our government is spending your hard-earned taxpayer dollars. Being retired will allow me the time to dedicate my full attention to serving St. Johns County.

**School Board District 4 (if you live in District 4)**

**Kelly Barrera**

Kelly Barrera brings more than 25 years of experience in education and business management to the St. Johns County School Board. As the board's vice chair, she plays a strategic role in guiding the top-rated school district in Florida, overseeing nearly 40,000 students and a \$315 million budget. During her tenure, Barrera has addressed concerns about school overcrowding, overseeing the opening of two new K-8 schools, one new elementary school and two

Meet your local candidates cont. on pg. 11

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August 28th

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Vote Tuesday, August 28th  
Republican Primary

ENDORSED BY ST. JOHNS COUNTY  
Sheriff David B. Shoar



**Meet your local candidates** cont. from pg. 10

soon-to-open K-8 schools, along with the expansion of Crookshank, Mill Creek and Nease. If re-elected, she pledges to lead the fight for a new high school to ease overcrowding. Barrera advocated for a testing task force to reduce testing, increased Exceptional Student Education and guidance programs, and played a leading role in plans to strengthen school security.

Barrera's experience and dedication have earned her the support of numerous parents and educators. "There is no question in my mind that the re-election of Kelly Barrera is essential to the continued success of the St. Johns County School District," says former Superintendent Joseph Joyner, president of Flagler College. "I have worked with many board members in my 40 years in public education and (she) is one of the finest."

**Denver Cook**

As a USAF veteran, general contractor, former law enforcement and father of two students, my vision for St. Johns County starts with creating rich curriculum that begins beyond the minimum FSA standards. This will do more than improve District FSA scores and graduation rates, it will inspire each student to achieve their full potential, high-achieving and special needs, alike. We need a fresh approach for career-technical education, in partnership with businesses and universities, to develop diverse electives and vocational courses matched to future job opportunities. To address the challenges of growth, I will promote fiscally responsible solutions to create reliable funding and free the District of debt. Securing our schools does not end with an armed guard, it begins with SJSO Youth Resource Officers in every school, and this must be the goal for our board.

Together, we can significantly raise the quality of education and solve our fiscal challenges. Beyond having open School Board meetings, I will proactively solicit the opinions of parents, teachers and community in making board decisions, and make the board more responsive to community needs. I would be honored to earn your vote and to be your voice on the board.

**Abigail Levrini**

Dr. Abigail Levrini is a licensed psychologist, Ponte Vedra business owner, bestselling author and mom to two St. Johns County public school students. She earned her doctorate in Counseling and School Psychology from the Florida State University College of Education in 2008. Dr. Levrini has published numerous scientific articles in the field of school psychology and presents on school interventions in professional settings throughout the country. She can be found throughout the media on WebMD, The Washington Post, NAMI, APA, PsychCentral, and many other popular means of press. In 2014, she opened a Florida branch of her highly acclaimed educational and psychological practice, Psych Ed Connections.

Dr. Levrini hopes to bring her vast experience in the field of educational psychology to the St. Johns County School Board, emphasizing the importance of our children's social and emotional health in addition to their academic prowess. She plans to take St. Johns from a top tier Florida county to a top performing county within the United States. As an educator, psychologist, business leader, philanthropist, and mom, Dr. Levrini possesses the knowledge and skills to continue to improve schools in our rapidly growing community, work closely with parents, and keep our students safe.

## Jacksonville Area Golf Association announces 2018 Scholarship Trust recipients

The Jacksonville Area Golf Association (JAGA) officially recognized the 10 recipients of its college scholarships for 2018 at a banquet held at Queen's Harbour Yacht & Country Club on June 14. Each recipient was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for each semester of the 2018-2019 school year. Scholarships are renewable each semester based on meeting certain criteria, including a minimum grade-point average.

**The nine Scholarship Trust recipients for 2018 are:**

Kierstyn Casper of Julington Creek Golf Club. She attended Pedro Menendez High School and will attend the University of North Florida.

Charles Collings of TPC Sawgrass. He attended Providence School and will attend Flagler College.

Catharine Gray of Ponte Vedra Inn & Club. She attended The Bolles School and will attend Florida Atlantic University.

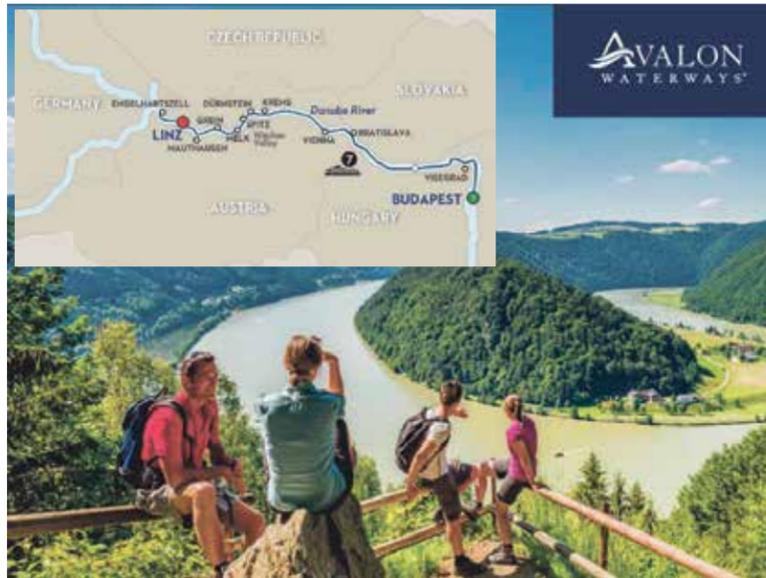
Dalton Hamm of Jacksonville Beach Golf Club. He attended Fletcher High School and will attend Shorter University.

Randall (Trey) Hester of Jacksonville Golf and Country Club. He attended Fleming Island High School and will attend the University of North Florida.

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# Life

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## Get to Know . . .

### Susan Schjelderup

By Ken Gillespie  
mail@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Susan Schjelderup  
Susan Schjelderup

Prior to relocating to Del Webb, Susan Schjelderup enjoyed a career with General Dynamics Information Technology, supporting the United States Senate. Her primary work tools were spreadsheets, process flowcharts, auditing to technical standards, and measurements for process re-engineering, perfect for her analytical brain. She continues to use these tools to address a variety of issues in her retirement life.

Husband Ed shares this analytical bent, having spent his career with the Central Intelligence Agency. Lest you think both are ivory tower theoreticians, you will find they are a fun loving couple who share interest in truly neat things such as disco dancing (initially what attracted Susan to Ed), organizing teams for trivia competitions, and snorkeling extensively through Caribbean waters.

**Q: How did you decide to come to Nocatee?**

A: Fourteen hour days, which included two and a half hours commuting from Northern Virginia into D.C. for too many years took its toll. It was time for a life change. We each had a list of "musts" for relocating. Ed wanted a climate where he could wear short sleeve shirts year round. We both wanted a place with conveniences and activities. So I developed a spreadsheet with all our criteria and started researching. On climate for example, I looked at more than 100 years of hurricane data along the southeast coast. Northeast Florida seemed to be a bit of geography where storms mostly skipped.

Further analysis of all our criteria found us zeroing in on the Jacksonville area. Following a few visits to the area, we found Nocatee.

**Q: Trivia...that's interesting!**

A: We've formed solid friendships on our trivia team, playing weekly (and more often) over the past five years. Looking to boost our competitive standings, I wondered which trivia topics came up most often. So I created a spreadsheet listing more than 60 categories and researched those most frequently asked. The top five: movies, music, science, sports, and current events. Each team member now has deeper focus in these categories, which we use for greater collective success. Now that's process improvement!

**Q: Say more about your effort to create a community Emergency Response Team.**

A: On settling in at Del Webb, it occurred to me that there was little infrastructure in place to respond to residents' medical and injury-related emergencies. St. Johns County's Fire/EMT Nocatee facility wasn't yet built so seniors were facing potentially long delays in receiving emergency care. I was instrumental in a massive effort to recruit and train residents in first aid, CPR, and the use of automated electronic defibrillators (AEDs). Resident volunteers were then on call on a rotating basis 24/7 to instantly respond to calls for help within the community while awaiting 911 paramedics; however, when the new Fire/EMT station was built nearby, volunteer enthusiasm

weakened greatly so we changed our mission from responding to training. The group ultimately disbanded. Looking back, I feel really good about having seeded more than 200 first aid-trained residents across our development. And I've learned a lot about managing volunteers that will shape any future effort I may undertake.

**Q: What about the future?**

A: While I'm still on call with General Dynamics Information Technology for proposal writing, I've discovered a cornucopia of interesting things to keep me engaged. I've taught English as a second language for World Relief, a humanitarian organization. I co-founded a discussion forum within Del Webb called the Roundtable. I'm a member of several groups: Book Club, Avian Adventure (birders), and Travel Club. Ed and I continue to refine our dancing with more lessons. And we travel, visiting some 25 Caribbean islands to date.

## Get to Know . . .

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at [editor@FloridaNewsLine.com](mailto:editor@FloridaNewsLine.com)

**Jacksonville Area Golf** cont. from pg. 11

April Kirk of Eagle Harbor Golf Club. She attended St. Johns Country Day School and will attend the University of South Florida.

Sam Ohno of Sawgrass Country Club. He attended Episcopal High School and will attend Dartmouth.

Charles Raulerson of Orange Park Country Club. He attended Fleming Island High School and will attend Florida State University.

Amelia Root of Deerwood Country Club. She attended Atlantic Coast High School and will attend the United States Naval Academy.

Since the JAGA Scholarship Trust was formed in 1974, JAGA has awarded approximately \$1.75 million to more than 350 deserving young students. The Trust is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit organization. Applicants for scholarships must be sons, daughters or grandchildren of a member of a JAGA member club or an employee of a member club who resides in JAGA's North Florida region. JAGA scholarship recipients have gone on to successful careers as golf course superintendents, golf club managers, PGA TOUR players, PGA golf professionals and other careers both inside and outside the golf industry. Funds to support the Scholarship Trust are generated by JAGA member clubs and individual contributors to the scholarship fund.

Entities and individuals who are interested in making contributions to the Scholarship Trust may do so by contacting Ken Hicks at [kenrhicks@bellsouth.net](mailto:kenrhicks@bellsouth.net). JAGA welcomes all contributions and wants all donors to know that Trustees of the fund are volunteers, as are all 100-plus JAGA directors, and all monies go directly to the Trust. Visit [jaxareagolf.org](http://jaxareagolf.org) for more information.

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AUGUST 2018				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

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





**No More Homeless Pets** cont. from pg. 1

countless towels, blankets, toys and treats for First Coast No More Homeless Pets.

Founded in 2001 by Rick DuCharme, First Coast No More Homeless Pets began as SpayJax in response to a request by the City of Jacksonville. By 2009, they had opened one of the largest spay/neuter clinics in the country and now average 2,500 spay/neuter surgeries per month, supporting shelters in Duval, St. Johns, Clay, Nassau and 14 other Florida and south Georgia counties. Their goal is to end the killing of shelter cats and dogs in the community and across the nation.



Donated supplies filled up an office at Florida NewsLine.

First Coast No More Homeless Pets also has a Feral Freedom program, which sterilizes feral cats and then releases them back to their territory. The Mega Pet Adoption Events are organized by First Coast No More Homeless Pets three times annually in an effort to keep Florida counties “no-kill.” According to Tanner Ives, Social Media and Communications Manager of First Coast No More Homeless Pets, the most recent event in June featured 19 different shelters and approximately 600 pets found their forever home. Finally, First Coast No More Homeless Pets also maintains the Jacksonville Pet Food Bank, which is where many of the donations from this pet supply drive will go.

“Every six weeks the Pet Food Bank is open to give previously qualified, low income people food for their pets for a month,” said Ives. “The Jacksonville Pet Food Bank has distributed more than 1.4 million pounds of food since it was started in 2012.”



Tanner Ives of First Coast No More Homeless Pets, Florida NewsLine bookkeeper Emily Whitehead, Florida NewsLine creative director Julie Gerona and John McFall of First Coast No More Homeless Pets after loading the donated pet supplies into the truck.

The Jacksonville Pet Food Bank is located at the Cassat Avenue hospital and Ives said besides food, they also distribute kitty litter, pet supplies, treats, and toys on an as-needed basis. An application for qualification may be found on the First Coast No More Homeless Pets website.

The towels and blankets collected in the pet supply drive will be used at the two animal hospitals for animals post surgery. According to Ives, there is a place called “the beach,” where the towels and blankets are used to keep the animals warm as they come out of anesthesia.

Although the Florida NewsLine Pet Supply Drive is concluded for this year, readers many still donate food, supplies and money to First Coast No More Homeless Pets at any time. Visit [www.fcnmhp.org](http://www.fcnmhp.org) for more information on how to donate or volunteer.



Hannah and Mabel at Forever Vets on Race Track Road with some of the supplies they collected from the community.



**This 'n That**

By Mims Cushing  
mail@floridanewslines.com

**Good to the bone**

I hope many of you reading this have spent hours, if not days and weeks, helping family and friends when they needed help. Perhaps they were incapacitated or otherwise unable to do chores of daily living. I hope you felt good about it. As a child of 10, I helped my mother when she returned from the hospital following surgery. I brought her a “meal” and it made me feel helpful. Special. Important. Happy. I brought her the newspaper, the mail, and books, and discovered that helping people who are sick not only made them feel good, it also helped me.

It’s one thing to help out a family member; it’s another to be a good citizen and help out more or less a stranger on an ongoing basis.

A local person who has Parkinson’s and prefers not to be mentioned by name told me he is so grateful that neighbors on one side of him on his little street regularly, without fail, bring him the newspaper in the morning. Sometimes they meet each other in the driveway and chat a bit. He relies on them. A newspaper is important to him, giving him contact with the rest of the world. On the other side of his house, a volunteer graciously and with good cheer brings him a wonderful meal that a church prepares. This delivery is assured. It gives him encouragement that people are dedicated to doing kind acts.

Week after week, a friend of mine goes shopping with someone who cannot drive and has no way of getting groceries or other necessary items. So, without fail, she drives this lady to do errands around town and also helps the woman choose food.

The other day someone told me a friend of mine used to drive from Ponte Vedra

Beach to Neptune Beach to make breakfast for a grandchild before he left for school. The child’s mother had to go to work and would be late if she stayed to fix a morning meal. That same person, once a week, makes a point of visiting people who are ill, living in assisted living facilities, or living alone. She spends her Sunday afternoons keeping them company.

Of course there are many opportunities to do volunteer work — libraries, schools, senior centers, pet centers, Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross, food banks, and many more places. But assisting people regularly one-on-one is a different matter and involves an undying, ongoing commitment.

People should realize giving of themselves is a great gift. I am talking about far more than just random acts of kindness, such as picking up litter one morning on the beach or holding a door open for someone struggling with it.

Random acts of kindness are wonderful. A man who lived across the street from me always bounded down his driveway and carried my groceries or heavy boxes from my car into my house. After hurricanes last year, neighbors raked up massive amounts of debris in nearby yards before folks even returned from an evacuation. And they cleaned up playgrounds as well.

I’m sure there are hundreds of stories like this. There ought to be a way people who care about others can be acknowledged. A Chinese saying goes, “If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone. The secret to happiness is helping others.” And if someone you know is helping you or someone else, be sure to thank them.

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