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Ocean Palms Elementary's "Be the Change" receives award

By Lisa Farese
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Aug. 4, Ocean Palms Elementary School was recognized as the Florida Department of Education's 2019 – 2020 winner of the Family and Community Involvement Award in the elementary category for Region II. This is the highest award presented by the State Department of Education.



Photo courtesy Lisa Farese

As part of Be the Change, students constructed an eight-foot light-up letter installation at the 2019 Deck the Chairs event, made of egg cartons, leftover construction materials and hurricane sandbags.

The award was created to recognize innovation, school-level family and community involvement, and partnerships—all of which describe the school's Be the Change initiative, which prompted the award. Be the Change is a program that brings environmental awareness to the school alongside partnerships with Beaches Go Green and Ponte Vedra High School. Beaches Go Green especially brings attention to the impact of single-use plastic waste and its effect on the environment.

Ocean Palms cont. on pg. 4

Finding a voice at Peace of Heart Community

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

When Lanier Weed became the first resident of the Peace of Heart Community in January 2019, she found something that completely changed her world: her voice.

Weed, 22, who is non-verbal and profoundly affected by autism, moved into the Ponte Vedra Beach group home for autistic young adults after living in an Orange Park group home for seven years. While the Orange Park facility was clean and safe for Weed and provided an education, her mother wanted something more for her daughter's future as she got older. And that is exactly what she found at Peace of Heart Community.

"It is a utopia at Peace of Heart Community. It is just an absolute dream come true," said Weed's mother, Leslie, who is the founder of the HEAL Foundation (Helping Enrich Autistic Lives). "For years, we were under the misperception that we should treat Lanier as a five-year-old. She could not tell us if she had a headache, a fever or any discomfort. Now at Peace of Heart Community she has learned to communicate through typing."

Leslie credits Amy and Howard Groshell, Peace of Heart Community founders, for being dedicated to creating a true home for autistic young adults. Amy's daughter, Gentry, now 24 and severely autistic, also lives at Peace of Heart Community and was previously at the same group home with Lanier, feeling equally bored with her days.

The Groshells developed the idea for Peace of Heart Community in 2017, and the home off Roscoe Boulevard opened in January 2019 with Leslie and Gentry

moving in first. Initially, the home was to be for young women only, but later young men moved in as well. They now have seven full-time residents ranging in age from 18 – 35 who are from the local community. A placement agency identifies residents with needs, and the Groshells interview candidates to ensure harmony in the house.



Peace of Heart Community farmers market held on Saturdays between October and June

A typical day at Peace of Heart Community begins with a workout, typing modules, life skills lessons, education and plenty of time outside in the garden and around the farm animals. The typing modules help the residents, who are all non-verbal, communicate. Muscle resistance techniques are taught by the staff.

"It is like full body apraxia. Our residents know what they want to say, but they cannot verbalize it," said Amy.

Houseparents, who also have an autistic son in the house, help foster a healthy home life for



Photos courtesy Leslie Weed
Peace of Heart Community enrichment garden.

the residents. In addition, staff is present for both day and night shifts.

At the center of Peace of Heart Community are the enrichment gardens where fresh vegetables are grown and harvested from Oct. 1 through late June. It is an essential piece of the outreach plan because the community can buy a "share" of the farm, and then visit every Saturday from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. during the season to pick up fresh produce with lettuce being their signature item. Residents also learn how to maintain a garden, and they enjoy the produce in their daily meals.

The Saturday Farmers Markets have become an opportunity for residents and community members to learn from each other in a "fun and uplifting" atmosphere, said Howard. Community members who have autistic children, volunteers and customers who value fresh produce make market days a special community event, he said. Most importantly, friends are made and more exposure is given to the Peace of Heart Community mission and fundraising efforts, the latter being something that does not come naturally to the Groshells.



Lanier Weed spending time with the farm animals, one area of the farm that especially helps her to relax and unwind.

"It is hard for us to ask for dona-

Finding a voice cont. on pg. 9

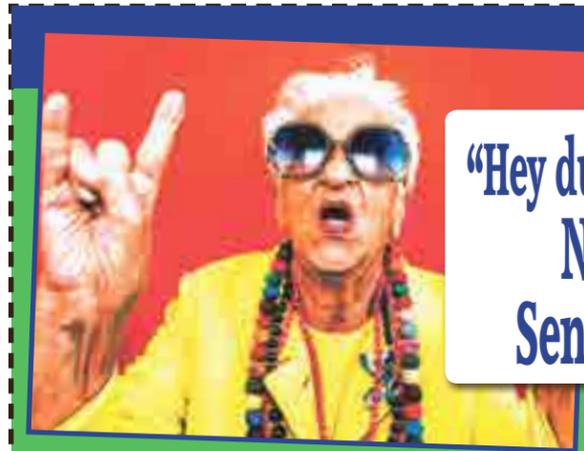
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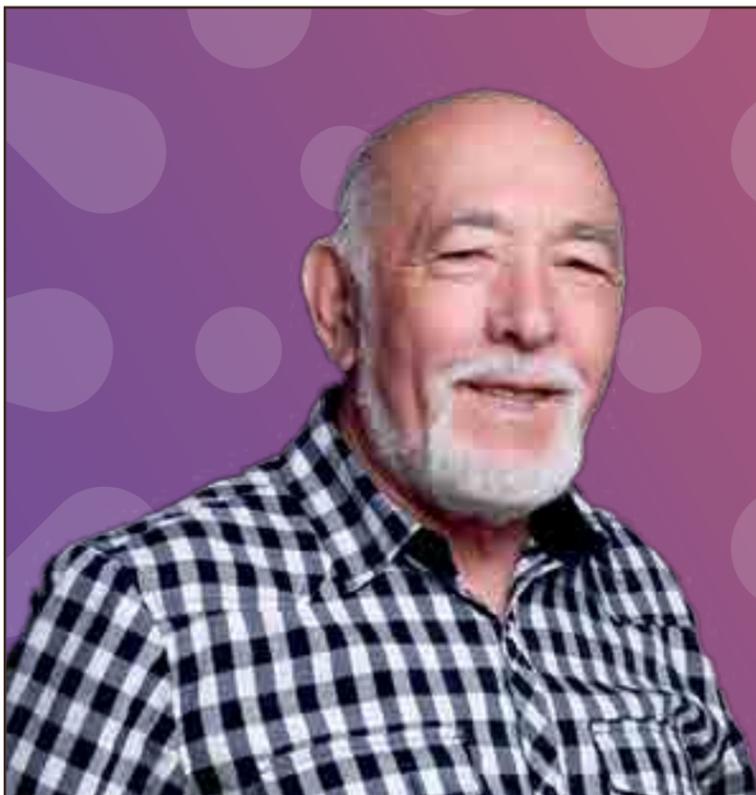


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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Ian!

BREED: Old English Sheepdog
FAVORITE ACTIVITY: Walking on the beach
FAVORITE TREAT: Bowl of ice cubes
FAVORITE FRIEND: His owner, Larry

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME: Like so many male dogs he more than occasionally pees on his front paws. Ian kind of rhymes with "peein".

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Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answers to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and you could win a Gift Certificate!
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VOTER GUIDE 2020

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

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MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you guess where this is?
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Last month's Mystery Photo was Landrum Middle School.
We had no correct guessers.

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Answers: A. puppy B. shelter C. breed D. mutt

Answers to our Puzzles PG 10

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FYI Contact Numbers

St. Johns County Local Government (www.sjcl.us)	bcc4jblocker@sjcl.us, (904) 209-0304
Sheriff's Office: Sheriff David B. Shoar, dshoar@sjso.org, (904) 824-8304	District 5: Henry Dean, bcc5hdean@sjcl.us, (904) 209-0305
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: Brandon Patty, (904) 819-3600	
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners	
District 1: Jimmy Johns, bcc1jjohns@sjcl.us, (904) 209-0301	
District 2: Jeb Smith, bcc2jsmith@sjcl.us, (904) 209-0302	
District 3: Paul Waldron, bcc3pwaldron@sjcl.us, (904) 209-0303	
District 4: Jeremiah Blocker,	
St. Johns County School Board (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)	
District 4: Kelly Barrera, kelly.barrera@stjohns.k12.fl.us, (904) 547-7510	
State of Florida Elected Officials	
Governor Ron DeSantis, (850) 488-7146	
State House District 17: Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov, (904) 823-2300	
State Senate District 7: Senator Travis Hutson, (386) 446-7610	
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U.S. Congress District 4: Representative John Rutherford, (202) 225-2501	
U.S. Senate:	
Senator Marco Rubio, (202) 224-3041	
Senator Rick Scott, (202) 224-5274	



with St. Johns County Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker, District 4

Q: Do you have any updates on ways that St. Johns County is trying to provide relief to residents struggling with finances as a result of the pandemic?

A: At the Sept. 8 meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, we voted to hold property taxes to the rollback rate for St. Johns County property owners, which will help provide relief for homeowners and their families. We are essentially keeping revenues to the county the same and allowing residents to keep some of their money. County staff told me that this is the first time we've rolled back the rate in at least 10 years.

Q: Do you have plans at this point to resume your Ponte Vedra office hours?

A: Unfortunately, we have put these office hours on hold due to COVID and they will probably continue on hold through the end of the year. I look forward to resuming these important meetings with constituents as soon as we can do so safely.

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

A: I'd like to once again draw attention to Pledge St. Johns County. This

program offers businesses the opportunity to commit to CDC guidelines and ensure St. Johns County residents, visitors, and employees are safe and comfortable in their establishments. Pledge St. Johns County features a pledge in which businesses vow to adhere to guidelines regarding cleaning and disinfecting protocols, group size limitations, social distancing recommendations, and encouraging the use of face coverings by staff and customers. The county still has PPE supplies and printable materials available for St. Johns County businesses that take the pledge, which will be helpful not only for helping to prevent COVID, but also with what many believe will be an active flu season. Businesses can visit www.pledgesjc.com to learn more and to take the pledge and consumers can also visit this website to identify businesses that have taken the pledge.

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

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

Ocean Palms cont. from pg. 1

Ponte Vedra High School students provided STEM education as well as presentations on how to educate the community on the need to reduce single-use plastics to the fifth grade students. Then, with that knowledge, the fifth graders led the school-wide Be the Change project, which focused on refusing, reducing,

reusing and recycling. This culminated in the construction of an eight-foot light-up otter installation at the 2019 Deck the Chairs event. The installation was composed of egg cartons, leftover construction materials and hurricane sandbags. Additionally, the school's ambassador students incorporated recycled/repurposed materials in their many annual service projects.

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

Q: Can you give us any insights on the beginning of the new school year?

A: The start of this school year has been challenging, because we are all doing things that are different. The school district is focused on the safety and well being of our students and so we are taking lots of precautions. It's certainly different from the start of any other school year.

But there's an energy that has brought everyone together, working to make the best of the situation. We continue to monitor and make improvements each day. Superintendent Forson has been visiting all the schools and sitting in various classrooms — taking his role as instructional leader of our district seriously.

Q: What has been the biggest challenge?

A: Definitely it's been the teachers having to teach on two platforms: both to students in class and virtually for those students attending distance learning. We have asked teachers not to respond to parents' questions and emails during the school day so they can focus on teaching. The administration in the schools is working on providing extra resources and support for teachers.

In the planning process are possible adjustments to their schedules. We are so grateful for our teachers! They are performing at such a high level despite the challenges.

Q: Have students been mostly complying with the mask requirement?

A: Yes, kids have been great about wearing their masks. It has now become somewhat routine.

Q: What would you say is the most important thing you'd like readers to know?

A: A big reminder would be: whether you are a student, a parent volunteer, or an employee, do not come to school if you are exhibiting any symptoms of the virus. We want to keep our campuses safe and healthy.

Q: What can you tell us about the contract tracing methods being used?

A: The Department of Health is the subject matter expert on this. We are following all their protocols as well as the CDC. The school district is sharing the responsibility of developing the contact tracing lists and the Depart-



Photos courtesy St. Johns County School District K-8 School MM as of Aug. 17, 2020.



High School HHH as of Aug. 17, 2020.

ment of Health does tracing of positive cases beyond the school day. If we have a student who tests positive, it is actually the Department of Health that will contact any other potentially affected students, because we are dealing not only with HIPAA, but also FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) privacy laws.

Q: Do you have a new school construction update?

A: Construction is moving ahead on schedule for High School HHH and K-8 School MM. Some tilt walls are going up on K-8 School MM. We are really starting to see both schools come together.

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

A: I'd like to congratulate the recently announced National Merit Semifinalists. We had 16 from Ponte Vedra High School: Gabriella Berardi, Connor Brady, Sophia Chigounis, Finnur Christianson, Christina D'Aquila, Aiden Fong, Sara Garces, Reese Jett, William Mann, Carolina Mechetti, Ashton Monk, Lily Quick, John Schedel, Matthew Shen, Shuangyi Shi, and Corey Udell; and seven from Nease High School: Laura Harrington, Sreenivas Kuntamukkala, Dylan Lukacs, Colby Millis, Zachary Plevin, Carson Sobolewski, Sreeniketh Vogoti.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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




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with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: Vote By Mail is very popular this election cycle. Do you have any final statistics from the August Primary Election?

A: Here are some statistics from the August Primary:

- 49, 820 Vote by Mail ballots were mailed for the Primary Election.
- 27,158 were voted and returned.
- 1,068 ballots were returned to the Elections Office as undeliverable mail.
- 59 Vote by Mail ballots were not counted because voters did not sign their envelope and 27 Vote by Mail ballots were not counted because the voter's signature did not match their record. When a voter does not sign their ballot or their signature differs, the voter is contacted (phone, email and US Mail) and given the opportunity to cure his or her signature until 5 p.m. on the second day following the election.
- 234 ballots were received late and could not be counted. Most of these ballots were mailed on Election Day or the day after the election.
- 7 vote by mail ballots were turned in at the polls on Election Day and could not be counted.

Q: Looking ahead to the General Election on Nov. 3, what are some of the upcoming important dates?

A: The deadline to register for the General Election is Oct. 5. Early Voting will be held Oct. 19 – Oct. 31. All 10 Early Voting locations are listed in our ad on page 14 of this issue.

Q: Will voters receive sample ballots in the mail?

A: Yes, sample ballots will be mailed by our office on Oct. 1, but they are also available on our website by using the "My Voter Status" link. I recommend that voters do their homework and be prepared when they show up to vote. The ballot is long — two full pages, front and back — as there are a lot of candidates, judges, and six Constitu-

tional Amendments, and everything is in both English and Spanish.

Also, while looking at our website, I recommend taking the time to verify that all of your voter information (such as current address) is up to date. Please call our office before voting to notify us of any changes.

Q: Back to Vote By Mail, can you give some directions for the General Election?

A: There seems to be some confusion on the part of voters about returning their Vote By Mail ballot. The drop boxes are only available at Early Voting locations during Early Voting, Oct. 19 – Oct. 31. They are NOT available after Oct. 31 or on Election Day. Other tips include:

- In order to count, Vote By Mail ballots MUST be received in the Elections Office no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day.
- Do not mail your ballot on Election Day, it will be late and will not count. I recommend mailing them at least a week before.
- Do not turn your voted ballot in at the polls; you can surrender it and vote in person.
- Sign your envelope.
- Update your signature if it has changed over the years.
- If you are contacted by the Elections Office regarding your ballot, please respond immediately; we will provide information on what you need to do to cure your ballot so it will count.
- Visit www.votesjc.com/My-Voter-Page/My-Voter-Status to track your Vote By Mail ballot.

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

A: Readers can email me at voakes@votesjc.com or call me at (904) 823-2238. Our website, www.votesjc.com also has a wealth of information.





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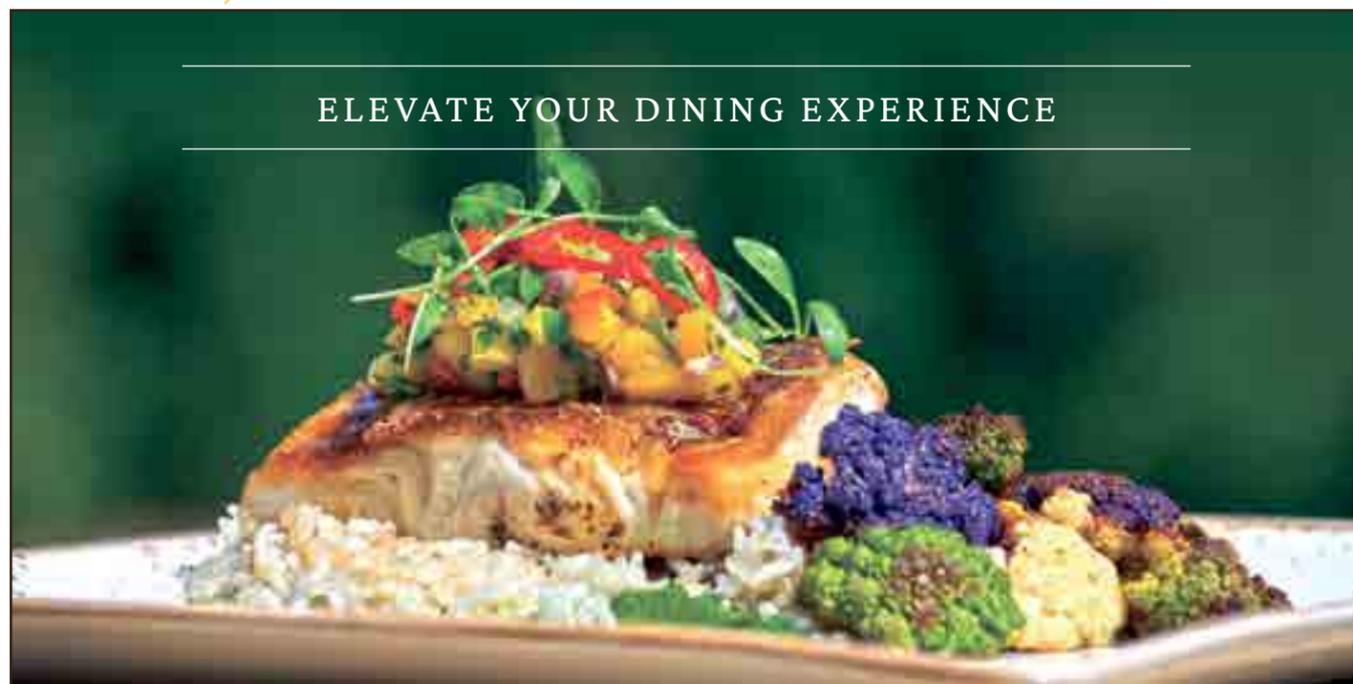


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October

Community Calendar

What's Going On in Ponte Vedra? A modified calendar of events

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Ponte Vedra Chapter, will meet on Oct. 6, from 10:45 a.m. – 1 p.m. Contact pontevedrachapternsdar@aol.com for additional details.

Nocatee announces the following events, open to the public: Food Truck Friday on Oct. 9 and Oct. 30 from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Splash Waterpark and the Nocatee Farmers Market Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct. 17 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Town Center Field.

The Lord of Life Lutheran Church Pumpkin Patch, 276 N. Roscoe Blvd., will be open Oct. 12 – Oct. 31. Hours are 1 p.m. until dusk, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. until dusk on Saturdays and 11 a.m. until dusk on Sundays, while pumpkins last. Masks will be required in the pavilion area and handwashing stations and sanitizer will be available. Proceeds will benefit the church's building fund.

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will hold a ZOOM call meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 14 at 6:30 pm. The meeting will address election 2020 updates, including Robin Dion and Marie Garnes, Blue Wave Coalition activities up to the election; Rhonda DiCamillo, Election Security Task Force updates; and JW Brown, Florida Democratic Party Field Organizer, volunteer opportunities. Email Jan Kary at Janetkary@gmail.com to receive ZOOM meeting access links.

ElderSource is offering free Medicare counseling for seniors and caregivers during Medicare Open Enrollment (Oct. 16 – Dec. 7). In partnership with

the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program helps seniors understand their Medicare choices and maximize their benefits. Call (888) 242-4464 to schedule an appointment with a SHINE counselor today.

Tale Tellers of St. Augustine will host Scary Halloween Tales for a "A Dark and Stormy Night" on Saturday, Oct. 24. Family concert will begin at 6:30 p.m. and Scary, Gory Tales will begin at 7 p.m. Vilano Beach's Airstream Row (the large grassy parcel located at 190 Vilano Road) in St. Augustine. General admission is \$5 and the event will be first come, first served. Costumes are encouraged and COVID regulations require attendees to wear masks for admission, and practice social distancing during the outside performance. Audience members may wish to bring their own chairs and/or blankets. The Tale Tellers of St. Augustine, a non-profit organization of cultural and educational orientation, was founded in 1993 to promote the art and perpetuate the tradition of storytelling. Visit www.taletellers.org or call (904) 540-0402 or (386) 439-9413 for more information.

First Coast Florida Lifestyles Newcomers Recreation Club will host a Halloween holiday dinner at a Mexican restaurant in St. Johns on Friday, Oct. 30 at 6:30 p.m. Prizes will be offered for costumes. Call the club organizer at (904) 829-0643 (no texts) to RSVP or for information about the club. The club is open to both men and women and is a smoke- and drug-free club.

Newcomers organization seeks members

Newcomers of the Beaches is a social club for women who have recently moved to the area or have undergone a life changing event. All activities adhere to current healthcare guidelines; members participate in a variety of activities where lifelong friendships are formed. There are walks on the First Coast beaches, casual biking through Nocatee trails, and walks around local neighborhoods to rejuvenate the mind and body. The Book Club meets virtually once a month to discuss books selected by the group. Are you a gamer? There are Mah Jongg and Canasta groups active online now. Coming soon we will have trivia and bingo. Registration is now open to new membership. Visit www.newcomersofthebeaches.com to learn more or to sign up.



Photo courtesy Bonnie Evans
Newcomers enjoy a beach walk.



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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

MarketInsight



The Bizarre Story of Joachim Peiper

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

(Warning: This story may shock and anger you.)

By late 1944 it was obvious to everyone that Germany was going to lose the war. Obvious to everyone, that is, but Adolph Hitler. The Fuhrer, who had four months left to live, conceived an audacious plan to turn the tide of war. His troops would take the offensive on the Western Front, driving out of the Ardennes and then turning north to seize Antwerp and split the Allied armies in two. The plan was a replication of the 1940 attack that had knocked France out of the war. This time the result would be different.

SS General Sepp Dietrich was assigned to command the attack, which began on Dec. 16, 1944, in the midst of bad weather. Another SS officer, Colonel Joachim Peiper, spearheaded the operation. He was ordered to keep moving. Time was of the essence. He was given a map of U.S. fuel depots to refuel his tanks. Dietrich would allegedly commit a series of war crimes. He dressed some of his men in American uniforms and, more significantly, his troops massacred prisoners along the way to save time. The most infamous of these massacres occurred at a spot called Malmedy on Dec. 17. It was there that the Germans executed 83 American POWs. They used machine guns and left the dead bodies in the snow.

The decision to murder unarmed prisoners cost the Germans. As word leaked out, the Americans famously dug in at places like Bastogne and Ambleve. At Bastogne, soldiers of the 101st Airborne, under the command of General McAuliffe, held off the German advance for more than a week until they were eventually relieved by units of Patton's Third Army. In the United States, we remember the heroic actions of these soldiers as the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war, Joachim Peiper was one of hundreds of Germans who were tried

for war crimes. His trial took place at Dachau, sight of an infamous Nazi death camp. The trials at Dachau were less famous than the ones held at Nuremberg. Seventy-three members of Kampf Gruppe Peiper were put on trial for 13 separate massacres involving 373 prisoners of war and 111 civilians. Forty-three, including Peiper himself were sentenced to death by hanging. That should have been the end of the story. It wasn't.

Following the trials, the Germans complained their confessions had been obtained under torture. Peiper's sentence was commuted to life and then to 35 years and ultimately, he was released in 1956 having served 12 years for one of the most heinous war crimes of all time. Joachim Peiper, now 41 years old, was offered a job working for Ferdinand "Ferry" Porsche, son of the man who helped Adolph Hitler design the original Volkswagen. Ferry promised to promote Peiper, but when workers at Porsche's factories in Italy began to complain about Peiper's involvement in a different massacre, one that took place in 1943, Ferry let him go.

Peiper sued for wrongful termination, arguing that he had never committed any atrocities. When the case was settled out of court in Peiper's favor, it was seen as a vindication and added to the former SS officer's cult status amongst right-wing Europeans. Peiper was not done. He took a job with Volkswagen training salesmen to sell cars. In 1972, Peiper retired to a small town in France. Several years later word got out that the town was housing a war criminal. Local communists, on Bastille Day in 1976, attacked his villa and set it on fire. Peiper's charred body was found the next day. No one was ever charged with the crime.

Scott A. Grant is a local author, historian, columnist, and speaker. He is president of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.

Business Briefs

Flagler College adds online certificate in nonprofit management

Nonprofit professionals and volunteers who want to create a positive impact on the community can now earn a Certificate in Nonprofit Management through Flagler College's Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) program. Nationwide, the nonprofit sector is facing staffing challenges. Florida has more than 96,000 nonprofit organizations registered with the IRS, and personnel with organizational and philanthropic development knowledge are in demand.

"We've had requests from nonprofit employees and volunteers who are interested in improving their management and leadership skills to create a greater impact," said Ann Ashworth, ACE program coordinator. "Even for those who hold a bachelor's or master's degree, the certificate in nonprofit management can give them an edge in the marketplace."

The self-paced, online curriculum helps prepare students to support and influence the direction of organizations with initiatives such as human and youth services, the arts, sports, conservation and more. Non degree-seeking students and professionals can earn valuable CEUs in the certificate program of 11 courses that include grant writing, fundraising, budgeting,

volunteer development, marketing and social media.

Registration for the Certificate in Nonprofit Management suite of 11 courses results in a 40 percent discount over taking the courses individually. For more information or to register, visit www.flagler.edu/adulted/npm, email professionaldevelopment@flagler.edu or call (904) 826-8643.

Small Business Week Virtual Celebration announced

The Florida Small Business Development Center Network, in conjunction with the U.S. Small Business Administration, will be honoring Florida's Small Business Leaders, Champions and Top Lenders from Pensacola to Orlando at the first-ever Virtual Small Business Week Event as part of National Small Business Week. The event is scheduled for Oct. 9 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. and features keynote speaker Jim Harris discussing "How Technology Is Transforming Small and Medium Sized Businesses." New technologies are dramatically cutting costs, increasing customer satisfaction and offering new value to customers; attendees will learn the tips, tricks, tools and strategies for implementing these technologies.

Register at www.sbdc.unf.edu/pay-for-workshop/?workshops_id=470 for this no cost virtual event.

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Helpful tips to overcoming the virtual school angst

By Sade Goodridge
mail@floridanewslines.com

The threat of COVID-19 has caused many families to adjust to new ways of life. Going out and wearing a mask, constantly sanitizing, and cleaning are just some of the adaptations many families have to make. Parents who have made the decision to have their children attend school online face additional challenges — they have to take on the task of being a mom and dad, while also juggling being an educator to their children.

Here are a few tips and tricks parents can apply to assist their kids in acing their online school year.

Reduce distractions. A report done in 2016 by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln found that students spent “an average of 20.9 percent of class times using a digital device for non-class purposes” or one-fifth of the day. The majority of the students in the study said they did so to fight boredom. While learning online, this might become even more of an issue. Experts suggest that parents keep the phones not being used for school and limit how much time their children can spend on it during the school day.

Find time to take a break. Numerous studies have shown that spending a long

amount of time staring at a screen in one sitting can cause a number of issues, including eyestrain, blurred vision, and possibly long-term problems such as nearsightedness. Following the 20-20-20 rule can reduce these effects. Look away from the screen every 20 minutes and look at something around 20 feet away for about 20 seconds.

Create a schedule. Applying a consistent schedule allows both parents and students to be able to better organize their day and break out of the summer schedule. Try to build as much structure and consistency as possible, like setting times for meals, homework, and other activities. For younger children, try breaking down segments of their class to do one at a time rather than completing one lesson in one sitting. Older students normally can stay focused for longer

stretches of time, so try applying breaks between different subjects.

Be flexible. One of the most important tips families across the district can apply is to be able to adapt to situations that will arise. Realizing now that technology will crash or students might not always be engaged will better prepare you for when such circumstances appear. When these occurrences happen, take a deep breath and accept that it is going to be okay. Calmly attacking a problem will produce better results than coming at it harried and frazzled.

Hopefully these tips are useful to parents and students; I should know, I’m a student and use these as well.

Sade Goodridge is a sophomore attending Ponte Vedra High School via school-based distance learning.



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The benefactor event was held on Sept. 10 at the home of David and Shannon Maura.



Guests enjoyed the pool area.



Benefactor event hostess Shannon Maura and her father Bill.

Photos courtesy Rebecca Thomson



Rob and Kendall Hardwick.

Home Tour held to benefit Cultural Center

The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach hosted its annual benefactor event on Sept. 10 at the home of David and Shannon Maura. Attendees were local dignitaries, sponsors for the 10th annual Ponte Vedra Home Tour as well as benefactors of the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach.

The 2020 Home Tour was held on Sept. 12 and featured three Mark Macco Architects homes in prestigious neighborhoods in the Beaches area.

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Get to Know . . .

Stephanie Marciani

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Stephanie Marciani
Stephanie Marciani

Stephanie Marciani traces her love of baking back to middle school when she would help her Aunt Mary bake Christmas cookies in Connecticut. At that time, the Food Network did not exist and food industry jobs were not as popular, so Marciani never considered that as a career path — at least not right away. Instead, Marciani earned her television/radio/film degree from Syracuse University in 2001 and worked publicity first in Los Angeles for one year and then in New York City another four years in the music industry. While she enjoyed that job, Marciani knew in 2006 that it was time to pursue her passion and enroll at the Institute of Culinary Education night program in New York City. She worked during the day at the Whole Foods in Union Square. After earning her Pastry Degree, Marciani worked at the Union Square Café. Next, she moved to North Carolina and became the head baker at the Edible Art Bakery & Cake Shop in Charlotte. She discovered her true niche here — custom desserts. Five years ago, Marciani, her husband and their two boys moved to Ponte Vedra Beach and “Pastry Steph,” her home baking business, was born with plans for expansion on the horizon.

Q: What do you like about baking?

A: I like trying new and different things all the time. I love when people bring me new ideas for a custom cake. I am very good at seeing what people show me and then replicating it. The real

reward is being creative and working with people and ultimately making any event — small or large — very special. The cake is a good centerpiece for the person and creates a time to focus on that person.

Q: What was it like to be the head baker at the Edible Art Cake Shop?

A: I was responsible for baking all of the cakes and cookies. From there, the talented staff of cake artists would take over and create their beautiful designs. I was able to learn a lot just by watching their techniques. I was also able to help with customer service and really enjoyed brainstorming with clients to come up with the cake of their dreams. Edible Art is well known in the Charlotte/Myers Park area, and we were frequently commissioned with making cakes for NASCAR drivers, Michael Jordan, and Carolina Panther players.

Q: Did you have any interesting experiences with celebrities working as a music industry publicist?

A: Working in entertainment PR, I focused mostly on tour press. When an artist was touring, I was responsible for reaching out to national and local television and print press in the touring markets to get event exposure. I did this first for a small boutique PR firm (Brookes & Company, with Public Enemy as their most notable client), an indie record label (Razor & Tie, widely known as the creators and distributors of Kidz Bop!) and then finished up my PR career at a national firm called Rogers & Cowan, where I worked on tour press for Bryan Adams and also assisted

my boss with her clients (Christie Brinkley, Elton John, and The Rolling Stones).

Q: Describe working at the Union Square Cafe and the Whole Foods in Union Square?

A: Union Square Cafe (the original location) was in an older building and had a small pastry kitchen area where three of us would squeeze together to get our work done for the day. We would produce the desserts and bread for the week and plate them for the lunch and dinner service. It was exciting during the dessert rush to get them prepped and plated and trying to beat the clock, all while making it look pretty and not messy. The kitchen at Whole Foods was completely different. It was large and brand new, with walk-in ovens and plenty of room for the bakery production staff to work on their daily tasks. As production manager, I was responsible for making sure the production team had made enough baked goods. At the time, it was the largest grossing Whole Foods Bakery. Through all of my jobs, I have learned that I most enjoy continuously learning new techniques and challenging myself.

Q: Name an interesting cake you have made.

A: I was asked to create a two-tier pirate cake with a pirate ship on top and a toy sword through the middle of the cake. It was my first time putting a sword through a cake, but it worked.

Finding a voice cont. from pg. 1

tions. We are not a charity, but we need the help of the community to meet the needs of the autistic community. Everyone has been so generous,” said Howard.

Peace of Heart Community also includes 50 chickens, a pot-bellied pig named Lily, one goat (Marshmallow) and a mini horse named Sammy. All of the animals are rescue animals minus the chickens, and the Groshells are looking for people who may want to sponsor an animal. It costs \$300 to \$400 a month to care for all the farm animals, said Howard.

Amy said her goal is to help society embrace “presumed competence” when it comes to the very wide spectrum of autism and to provide a place that meets residents’ goals for as long as they need it.

“It is a belief system that everyone has a purpose and meaning in life,” said Amy.



Peace of Heart Community residents Lanier Weed and Gentry Groshell.

“Just because someone is non-verbal does not mean that they do not want the same things in life. Do not have pity on them. Recognize that they are human beings with dreams and goals just like everyone else.”

To that point, Gentry’s dream is “to be an artist and to sell her art.” She also wishes to attend Florida State University. Lanier’s dream is “to be a caring mentor to the silent so parents can get real hope in their hearts” — two dreams recently typed to two very proud mothers.

Email Amy at amy@pohc.org or visit pohc.org to learn more about purchasing a share of the Peace of Heart Community gardens, sponsoring an animal, or volunteering.

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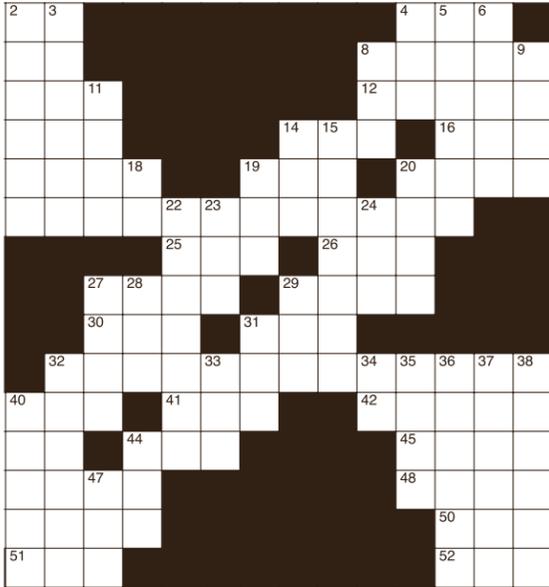
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. They look out for kids
- 4. Play
- 7. Water (French)
- 8. Prayer leader
- 10. Small constellation
- 12. ___ Carta: influential royal charter
- 13. Pressure unit
- 14. Extrasensory perception
- 16. A symbol of "Aloha"
- 17. Portion of the small intestine
- 19. Psychedelic amphetamine
- 20. Very long period of time
- 21. British overseas territory
- 25. Cereal grain
- 26. Car mechanics group
- 27. Wish harm upon
- 29. At a specific prior time
- 30. Peyton's younger brother

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Boston hoopster
- 2. A type of bribe
- 3. SE England county
- 4. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
- 5. "Hotel California" rockers
- 6. Italian province
- 8. Mischievous child
- 9. Popular street name
- 11. Boxing promoter Bob
- 14. Snakelike fish
- 15. Break into pieces
- 18. The Bay State
- 19. Time zone
- 20. Port city in Yemen
- 22. In name only
- 23. 007's creator
- 24. No (Scottish)
- 27. Baseball's Gordon and rock's Snider are two

CLUES ACROSS

- 28. Pie ___ mode
- 29. Don't know when yet
- 31. Supervises interstate commerce
- 32. Make a ringing metallic sound
- 33. Helps little firms
- 34. Pound
- 35. Lilly and Manning are two
- 36. Put on the back burner
- 37. Baltimore ballplayer
- 38. Cuddle
- 39. Poker stake
- 40. Drinks to celebrate a birth (Spanish)
- 44. Pouch
- 47. Not around



Solve the code to discover words related to dogs.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 20 = E)

A. 9 12 9 9 24
Clue: Young dog

B. 14 2 20 4 8 20 22
Clue: Pet adoption location

C. 3 22 20 20 25
Clue: Type of dog

D. 10 12 8 8
Clue: Mixed heritage dog

PRECIOUS PUP WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- AKITA
- BREED
- COLLIE
- DALMATIAN
- DESIGNER
- DOBERMAN
- GOLDEN
- HOUND
- HUSKY
- LABRADOR
- LEASH
- MALTESE
- MIXED
- POODLE
- PUG
- RETRIEVER
- SETTER
- SHARPEI
- SHEPHERD
- SHETLAND
- TERRIER
- VETERINARIAN
- WAG
- YORKIE

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

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October 2020				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

Total 179 Days

- Teacher Optional Planning
- 9 Teacher Planning (non-student day)
- 2 Teacher Inservice (non-student day)
- Classes Resume
- Student/Teacher Holiday
- End of Quarter

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VOTER GUIDE 2020

Meet your local candidates

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

In advance of the General Election to be held on Tuesday, Nov. 3, Ponte Vedra NewsLine invited each of the candidates that will appear on northern St. Johns County voters' ballots for US Congress District 4, Florida State Senate District 7, Florida House of Representatives District 17, State Attorney 7th Judicial Circuit and County Commission Districts 1 & 5 to submit a statement for this election section.

Ponte Vedra NewsLine offered this opportunity to all candidates for these General 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.

US Congress District 4

Donna Deegan (Dem.)

I'm proud of my deep roots in Jacksonville. I grew up on the Southside, attended Bishop Kenny High School and graduated from FSU. As a journalist for 30 years, I listened to all sides to get to the heart of the matter and shine a light on the truth.

When diagnosed with cancer for the first of three times, I learned firsthand the toll a medical crisis takes on a family. I heard from women who had to choose between food and medicine. That's why I started The DONNA Foundation and marathon, raising millions to help struggling families. There's real work to be done. Families are in real pain. Yet the people I talk to feel ignored by elected leaders.

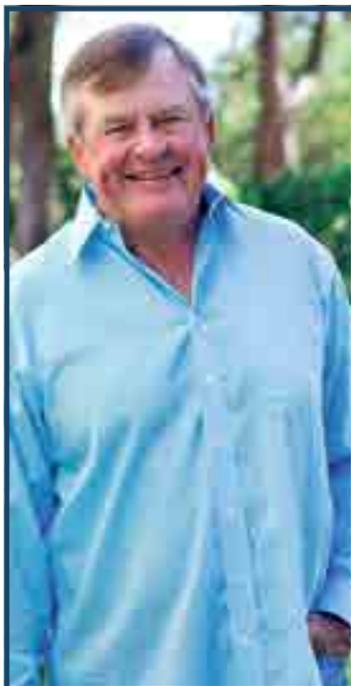
While partisan politics holds our country hostage, I stand ready to work together to solve our most pressing challenges. I'm

committed to lowering the price of insurance and prescription drugs while investing in jobs with real wage growth, strong public education, safety, and climate change solutions to grow the economy of our future.

This community has been good to my family and me. It would be an honor to work for you. I would appreciate your vote on Nov. 3.

John Rutherford (Rep.)

It has truly been an honor to serve the people of the 4th Congressional District in Congress these past four years. Every day I have gone to work trying to bring people together to seek bipartisan solutions to major issues we confront as a nation. From safely and responsibly reopening our economy after the devastation brought on by the COVID-19 crisis by providing support to workers,



The Common Sense Conservative St Johns Can Trust

- ★ Prioritizing public safety spending
- ★ Balancing budgets - if we have to balance our budget, the government should have to
- ★ Responsible spending that puts people first, not special interests
- ★ Restoring and protecting our beaches

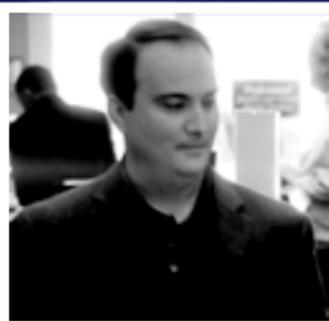
HENRY DEAN
FOR COUNTY COMMISSION - DISTRICT 5

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Paid by Henry Dean, Republican, for St. Johns County Commission District 5.

Meet your local candidates cont. on pg. 13

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for ST. JOHNS
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DISTRICT 1

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PAID BY JOE MCANARNEY, DEMOCRAT, FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY COMMISSION, DISTRICT 1

Meet your local candidates cont. from pg. 12

families and business owners, to protecting our coast from oil drilling, to building consensus on lowering prescription drug costs, protecting pre-existing condition coverage and making healthcare more affordable, I have championed common sense solutions that bring people together and ignore the political games that are all too common in Washington, D.C.

Should the voters give me the honor of continuing to represent them in Congress, I pledge to continue working to bring people together to solve problems, because there is nothing we cannot overcome or accomplish if we focus on those things that unite us in common purpose. Our best days are truly in front of us, and I humbly ask for your vote on Nov. 3 to continue working for you.

State Senate District 7

Heather Hunter (Dem.)

I am running to restore power to the people in Tallahassee. For too long corporations have been overrepresented at the state level through lobbyists and campaign donations this system needs to change. I am not taking any money from corporations unlike my opponent, Travis Hutson, so that I am only bought and paid for by the people. My platform includes ensuring the over 1.8 million Floridians wanting for their unemployment benefits are paid in full. We need to fix our designed to fail unemployment system that has left so many families stressed and anxious about their ability to pay their rent or put food on the table. I also want to expand Medicaid to 800,000 uninsured Floridians, an effort that saves us \$160 million

and saves thousands of lives. We must go further and create a Medicare for all type system to cover the more than two million Floridians who would still be without healthcare even if Medicaid is expanded. During a global pandemic making sure all Floridians have healthcare is a top priority. I will also protect our environment including the St. Johns River and our coast to ensure we have a safe and sustainable future.

Travis Hutson (Rep.)

I'm Travis Hutson, a conservative Republican seeking re-election to Florida Senate District 7, which includes Flagler and St. Johns counties and part of Volusia County. I live in St. Augustine with my wife, Tanya, and our three children.

As a lifelong resident of Florida's First Coast, I understand the unique challenges we face as a community. While serving in the Florida Legislature, I've championed crucial legislation for District 7 and the state, focusing on the economy, education and public safety. One of my priorities was to craft enhancements to Florida's Career and Professional Education Act, responding to Florida's critical workforce needs.

As your Senator, I closed loopholes in the release of sexual violent predators making Northeast Florida's most vulnerable citizens safer. Additionally, I fought for improved water quality in Florida, successfully championing water policy reform and hurricane recovery.

I look forward to continuing to serve you and our community by keeping St. Johns safe for our children, promoting smart

economic growth and ensuring government regulations are kept in check. I look forward to earning your vote on Nov. 3.

State Representative, District 17

Dave Rogers (Dem.)

I'm Dave Rogers, retired Navy commander, 22 years active duty, 1979 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. I've been retired from working life since 2013. I'm running for State Representative in District 17.

I entered this race because Republicans have had 20 years in power in Florida. They've had an uninterrupted opportunity to shape Florida into their vision of the ideal Republican state.

Everywhere I look, I see mediocrity. While St Johns County is doing well, the rest of the state is not. We have the 12th highest poverty rate in the nation, the fourth highest uninsured rate for health coverage. We're below average in per capita GDP, income, public health spending, infant mortality, the list goes on. Adding to this record of unmitigated mediocrity, the legislature has utterly ignored the challenge of climate change.

To our grandchildren who will inherit a climate catastrophe, the status quo is unsustainable. To our brothers and sisters who know the burden of poverty, the sting of bigotry, or the anger of injustice, the status quo is unacceptable. To the thousands of grieving families of COVID-19 victims, the status quo is unforgivable.

We can do better. We must do better. I will.

Cyndi Stevenson (Rep.)

My name is Cyndi Stevenson. I'm a lifelong Floridian. I have been married to my husband Henry for 37 years. We live in Julington Creek in NW St. Johns County. Our two sons were raised here and graduated from St. Johns County's top ranked public schools. I am a CPA with more than 20 years experience in keeping business and government accountable.

As your Representative in Tallahassee, I don't play political games. I work hard to represent you.

I have consistently voted to increase funding for our teachers and schools and have supported our local law enforcement and public safety teams. I have championed legislation to continue the fight to

improve access to mental health services and quality, affordable healthcare. I have helped keep taxes low, investing in our workforce and jumpstarting our economy. I have worked to protect our beaches and waterways, and to add to our conservation areas and parks in St. Johns County. I champion policies that enable people to rise out of poverty so they have a chance at the American Dream.

My name is Cyndi Stevenson and I am asking for your vote in the Nov. 3rd Election so I can continue to serve you.

State Attorney, 7th Judicial Circuit

Don Dempsey (Dem.)

My name is Don Dempsey and I am running for the office of the State Attorney for the 7th Judicial Circuit. I am running with No Party Affiliation. This is due to my strong belief that the Office of State Attorney should be non-partisan, having no political allegiance to any party. The statue of Lady Justice in front of our U.S. Supreme Court is blindfolded symbolizing that justice should be blind. I agree.

I am in my 30th year practicing law in this circuit as both prosecutor and defense attorney. During that time, I have witnessed numerous injustices in our criminal justice system that need redressed. The sum total of these injustices has yielded the sad fact that Florida jails more people per capita than any country in the world. This is wrong.

We need common-sense justice in our circuit. We need to reprioritize victim crimes over victimless, non-violent offenses. We should spend more resources on white collar crimes such as exploitation of the elderly, embezzlement, and other economic crimes over victimless non-violent crimes such as personal use cannabis charges.

R.J. Larizza (Rep.)

I am a native Floridian. I have worked as a probation officer, prosecutor, private attorney, and currently as your elected State Attorney. I have tried more than 70 jury trials including two death penalty cases.

I am married (more than 29 years), have two children and six grandchildren. I play the harmonica, enjoy boating, family time, and am privileged to serve as your State Attorney.

Your safety is my priority. We seek lengthy prison sentences for violent criminal predators, while providing treatment for nonviolent offenders. I maintain a Domestic Violence Unit, Career Criminal Unit and Homicide Unit to identify and prosecute the most violent and dangerous criminal offenders. I established Veterans Court, DUI Court, Drug Court and various diversion programs to assist those with addiction/mental health issues. I am working on a mental health pilot program for mentally ill offenders. I established a program for folks who have lost their driver's licenses for financial reasons. We help them obtain their license to work and provide for their families.

This smart on crime approach works — we have accomplished a 54 percent reduction in the crime rate in the 7th Judicial Circuit since I took Office.




General Election ★ November 3, 2020

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- ★ By Mail – No postage needed
- ★ Secure Drop boxes are available Oct 19 - 31 at all early voting locations during the hours of voting (Listed below)
- ★ Availability of the Drop boxes end Oct. 31 when early voting ends
- ★ 24 hr. Drop box in front of the Elections Office

Your ballot **MUST** be returned to the election office **NO LATER THAN 7 PM** Election day in order for it to count. If it is late, it will not count.

Vote by mail ballots cannot be turned in at the polls on election day.

EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS

★ **DATES & TIMES ~ October 19th – 31st** ★ **8 AM – 6 PM daily at all locations**
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New Site

St. Johns Convention Center At World Golf Village 500 S. Legacy Trl. St. Augustine, FL 32092	Ponte Vedra Branch Library 101 Library Blvd. Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082	St. Augustine Beach City Hall 2200 A1A South St. Augustine, FL 32080	Hastings Branch Library 6795 S. Main St. Hastings, FL 32145
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New Site

Ponte Vedra Concert Hall 1050 A1A North Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
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New Site

Solomon Calhoun Comm. Center 1300 Duval St. St. Augustine, FL 32084
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ELECTION DAY

- ★ **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**
- ★ **Polls are open 7 AM – 7 PM**
- ★ **When voting on Election Day you MUST vote at the precinct of your legal residence.**
- ★ **Vote by mail ballots cannot be turned in at the polls on election day.**

KNOW WHERE TO VOTE BEFORE YOU GO

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

Meet your local candidates cont. from pg. 13

County Commission, District 1

Joe McAnarney (Dem.)

I am running to Preserve, Protect, and Defend all that is good about St. Johns County. We all moved here for our quality of life, A+ rated schools, historical spirit, and natural beauty. But our County is threatened with runaway development and overcrowded roads, a proliferation of strip shopping centers with low wages, and schools that cannot keep up with growth. We must control this overdevelopment! So, here is my plan:

Families First — decisions that maintain A+ rated schools, provide parks and recreation for our youth sports and families, and preserve the values of our communities;

Smart Growth — decisions that balance development with conservation and pre-

vent overcrowded roads in our communities; and

Sustainable Jobs — decisions that aggressively attract companies to relocate here with good high-wage jobs for our communities.

My opponent says he wants “government out of the way.” But we need community leadership and a County Commissioner who will not get out of the way for big developers. I will stand with you and fight for you to Preserve, Protect, and Defend all that is good about St. Johns County. This is a community campaign, so I ask for your vote as the most qualified candidate for St. Johns County Commissioner.

Christian Whitehurst (Rep.)

I’m Christian Whitehurst, candidate for St. Johns County Commission, District 1. I moved to St. Johns County 22 years

ago, graduated from Nease High School and live in Julington Creek with my wife Courtney and our two daughters.

My background is in business and I’m very passionate about the future of St. Johns because we need a strong, decisive leader on our County Commission.

St. Johns must have a strong, thriving economy, where we create opportunities for businesses to succeed and an atmosphere to attract new businesses. We must prioritize the safety and security of children and ensure law enforcement has the support they need to keep us safe. I will always stand with our veterans. Their service and sacrifice must be honored and I will ensure veterans are provided the services and attention they deserve. I will fight to protect our environment and ensure our beautiful beaches are preserved for our kids and grandkids.

I believe smart managed growth is the best path forward for St. Johns. That means projects must provide a net-benefit to our community and our environment.

I look forward to earning your vote on Nov. 3.

County Commission, District 5

Henry Dean (Rep.)

I have 30 years of Florida public service: Staff Attorney for Florida’s Growth Management Agency, General Counsel for Florida Department of Natural Resources, Executive Director of SJRWMD and Executive Director of SFWMD. I was directly involved with the acquisition and management of roughly 1.25 million acres of conservation lands in Florida, including 70,000 acres in St. Johns County. While at SJRWMD I led the efforts to restore the headwaters of the St. Johns River, the Indian River Lagoon and Lake Apopka. My last year at SFWMD prior to retirement I managed an annual budget of roughly \$1 billion and 2,000 employees.

I would like to continue to provide the best service possible to our residents, including public safety, infrastructure, libraries, parks, boat ramps and cultural activities.

My vision for St. Johns County is to plan for smart growth in a way that maintains our exceptional quality of life. This includes planning for and providing sufficient infrastructure for new developments, ensuring new development is compatible with the surrounding area and setting aside parks and open spaces by re-starting the LAMP program. We also need to implement a management plan for our 42 miles of beaches and coastal estuaries.

Merrill Paul Roland (NPA)
Did not submit a statement.

COMMONSENSE

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- ✓ Raised Two Sons In St. Johns County
- ✓ Over 20 Years of Experience Keeping Businesses And Government Accountable

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Cyndi Stevenson

For State Representative
District 17

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Paid by Cyndi Stevenson, Republican, for State Representative District 17

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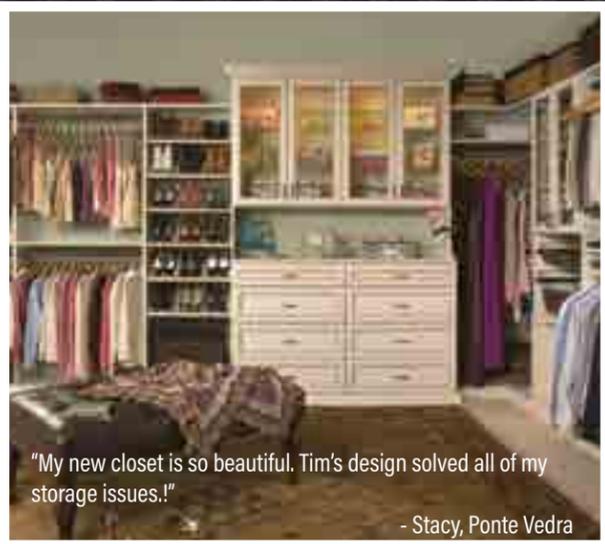


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