

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

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

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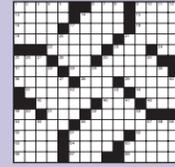
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tag! Children's Museum of St. Augustine breaks ground on four-acre campus

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com



Photos courtesy tag! Children's Museum

tag! Children's Museum groundbreaking with donors, local community and business leaders, family, and friends.

tag! Children's Museum of St. Augustine broke ground on the first phase of construction on Oct. 7. Phase 1 of the interactive experience will be completed during the coming year. Once completed, tag! will be a community resource, local destination, an educational laboratory, and an advocate for children. tag! announced Phase 1 with a generous lead gift from The Newman Family Foundation.

"We are thrilled that tag! Children's Museum will soon begin construction of one of the most unique museums in the country. tag! will tag! cont. on pg. 5

Flip flop art making waves

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Tucked behind a strip mall off Old Palm Valley Road is Ocean Sole — a studio that contains upcycled flip flops found along the beaches and waterways in Kenya. Flip flops turned into turtles, giraffes, manatee, hammerhead fish, zebras, hippos, rhinos, key chains and pretty much anything imagined or requested. The art is available in any measurement, including life-size, otherwise known as a "masterpiece."

While the studio is easy to miss, its impact as a social enterprise is far-reaching. Case in point: Ocean Sole collects 47 tons of flip flop waste per year and recycles 750,000 flip flops. Ocean Sole has 90 employees, mostly Kenyan artisans.

In 2008, Ocean Sole was founded by Julie Church as a way to help local Kenyan women collect, wash, and cut the discarded flip-flops into colorful products to then be sold at local Kenyan markets as another form of family income. In 2016, Ponte Vedra Beach and Kenya resident Erin Smith became the CEO, excited to bring her business background to the social enterprise.

"We want to have a social impact and be impact-driven," said Smith, in between car rides to take 20 Ocean Sole masterpieces to the September Jacksonville Fall Home + Patio Show. "The artisans receive full payment, we create loans, scholarships, invest in a welfare program and the ethos is people focused. We are also big into helping unskilled women."

After a video on Ocean Sole went viral in 2017, Smith said the demand for the product increased, and people wanted to support the cause. And now Smith's mother and sister-in-law both work at the non-profit.

"I love working at Ocean Sole. It is a non-profit that has a huge impact on conservation efforts, employment and



Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps
Ocean Sole items at the PVB-based studio.

cleaning beaches. After working for over 20 years with Congressman Crenshaw and Rutherford, I was excited to join my daughter, daughter-in-law and son in this fun and rewarding endeavor," said Jackie Smith.



Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps

Ocean Sole CEO Erin Smith at the PVB-based studio.

Erin Smith lives half of the year in Ponte Vedra Beach and half of the year in Kenya, the latter location a place that she and her husband treasure.

"It is an amazing place," said Smith. "We live on the Indian Ocean, which is why we are so passionate about the beaches. The beaches are so dirty in Kenya."

Erin said three billion people wear flip flops, and it is known as "the poor man's shoe." And in places like India and China, it is the only shoe that is worn. With no waste management in Kenya, the flip flops eventually end up in the ocean and wash up on the shorelines, she said.

"It is a massive problem that most folks never see," said Smith.

In addition to collecting the flip flops, Smith said Ocean Sole also cleans the beach of all trash, divides it up and protects the turtle hatching areas.

"We aim to recycle a million flip flops a year, recycle over one ton of Styrofoam a month and save over 500 trees a year by using flip flops instead of wood," said Smith. "We contribute over 10 – 15 percent of our revenue to beach clean-ups, vocational and educational programs as well as conservation efforts."

Flip flop art cont. on pg. 2

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Flip flop art cont. from pg. 1

International online orders account for the majority of sales with the smallest revenue coming from the United States, according to Smith. With constant collaborations in the works and the world's first "Flip Flop Gallery" slated for the link building in Nocatee, she hopes to improve sales locally and build more support in Ponte Vedra Beach.

"Sometimes people do not connect with the brand because they do not connect globally," said Smith. "I would love if Ponte Vedra Beach or Jacksonville would connect with marine conservation. I think the beaches here are so clean that it is hard to comprehend the actual mess we find on our beaches — it is the same in some parts of the Caribbean, Central America and other parts of the Indian Ocean."

The launch of the Flip Flop Gallery will be held Nov. 13, and tickets are still available. Proceeds will go to Ocean Sole and the Sapna Foundation (the link CEO Raghu Misra's non-profit).



Photo courtesy Erin Smith
Dirty beaches in Kenya, where the flip flops are collected along with all trash to protect the environment.

"This will be our first exhibition and with the CEO of the link's support, we will be able to use the link as a platform to interact with the community, school children and others about conservation and art. To be able to have all of the art in one place is so exciting for us to show off and tell our story in such a great place," said Smith.

Misra agreed, adding that 15 – 20 flip flop masterpieces are already at the gallery with more to be added in the future. The launch will also include the announcement of a Conservation Club in which one endangered species will be highlighted each month.

"the link is all about entrepreneurship and conservation. Ocean Sole fills both of those buckets. Our family gets excited about these things and creating art is just icing on the cake," said Misra. "This is also a phenomenal way to educate younger people and to promote rethinking, reimagining and conservation."

For more information, visit solemates@oceansoleafrica.com or call (904) 907-3596.



Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps
Artwork at the Ocean Sole Studio.

Hospitality members honored at Golden Pineapple Gala



Photo courtesy Leigh Cort

The second annual Golden Pineapple Gala Awards Dinner was held at Deerwood Country Club on Sept. 29, 2021. The Womens Food Alliance, founded by Leigh Cort, surprised and honored 10 hospitality members at the event:

Hospitality Lifetime Legend: Liz Earnest, The Chef's Garden

Hospitality Pillars: Cindy Stavely, Colonial Quarter and Nicole Chapman, Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association

Specialty Food Originator: Amy Morales, Sweets for the Soul

Lifetime Celebrated Chef: DeeAnn Hobbs, Renaissance Hotel

Restaurant Pioneer: Aine Culhane, Culhane's Irish Pub

Rising Gold Star: Dawn Hutchins, Vege-Cooking

Creative Business Architect: Charlay Smith, The Lentil House

Golden Inspiration: Lauren Titus, Edible Northeast Magazine

Miss Congeniality: Kelly Mabry, Tropical Smoothie

Visit www.WomensFoodAlliance.com for more information.



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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Bubbles!



BREED:

Australian Labradoodle

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:

Visiting the neighbors and taking walks

FAVORITE TREAT:

MilkBone Gnaw Bones

FAVORITE FRIEND:

Ann and Debbie and puppy friend Maxwell

HOW YOUR BFF GOT HIS NAME:

I got his name from a guy who had a "Bubbles" puppy that was very cute several years ago.

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



Senior NewsLine

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Are you interested in promoting your business in St. Johns Business Monthly, a feature section included in both The CreekLine and Ponte Vedra NewsLine? Call Linda 904-607-5062

MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to:
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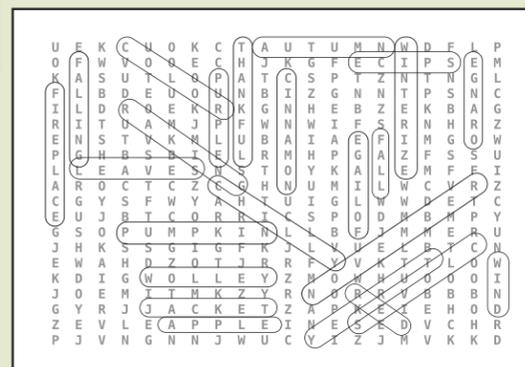
Last month's Mystery Photo was the World Market on JTB. Our winner was Jamille Sergent. Congratulations!



Answers to our Puzzles
PG 18



Answers: A. autumn B. leaves C. pumpkin D. brisk



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

Community Calendar

The Newcomers Alumnae will hold this month's luncheon on Nov. 3 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach. Numa Saisselin, president of The Florida Theatre Performing Arts Center, will be the guest speaker and will discuss The Florida Theatre, a 1,900-seat theatre in downtown Jacksonville that first opened its doors on April 8, 1927. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The cost for this luncheon is \$23. Reservations for lunch must be made by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible in order to reserve a seat.

The Jacksonville Camera Club will meet on Nov. 3 and Nov. 17. On Nov. 3, Bronwyn Horvath, an accomplished photographer, will present "12 Tips for Better Travel Photography." On Nov. 17, the results for images entered in the club's final digital contest for 2021 will be presented. Visit jax.jax-cameraclub.com for more information and meeting location updates.

GTM Research Reserve will host a guided exploration hike on Saturday, Nov. 6 from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. Meet at the GTM Research Reserve Trailhead Pavilion (west of Guana Dam), 505 Guana River Road. Wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes. The event is

free but parking is \$3 per vehicle. Visit gtmnerr.org for more information and to register.

The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable will meet on Monday, Nov. 8 at 12 p.m. at St. Augustine-St. Johns County Airport Authority, North East Florida Regional Airport. This will be an in-person meeting inside of the Passenger Terminal. RSVP to info@scjroundtable.org if you would like to attend. Email info@scjroundtable.org to register for the meeting or for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

Crosswater Community Church will host an Overdose Awareness Seminar on Nov. 9 from 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. at the church, located at 211 Davis Park Road in Nocatee. This event will bring awareness to the opioid addiction crisis and features panelists St. Johns County School District Superintendent Tim Forson, Fire Rescue Medical Director Dr. Kerry Bachista, Sheriff Rob Hardwick, Medical Director Dr. Michael Sorna and Florida National Guard Captain Michael Coy. Registration is free.

Nocatee announces the following events, open to the public: Ponte Vedra Auto Show on Nov. 14 from 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at Nocatee Station

Field and Farmers Market Fall Festival on Saturday, Nov. 20 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. Visit www.nocatee.com/events for more information.

The Friends of Ponte Vedra Beach Library will host a free performance of the Gerson Yessin Music Series featuring two of the Florida Troubadours, Jim Carrick and Charlie Simmons on Tuesday, Nov. 9 in the FOL Room at 6 p.m. Both are extraordinary singers and fingerstyle guitarists. The community is invited to hear their musical stories as they play and sing.

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 16 for a 6 p.m. Chat & Chew and 6:30 p.m. meeting at Christ Episcopal Church, Room 106, 400 Solana Road. Dr. Tru Leverette, UNF African-American Studies professor, will speak on "Critical Race Theory" and why so many are concerned about teaching racial history in this country and across the globe. Email janetkary@gmail.com for more information about the club.

The Newcomers of North St. Johns will host a meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 11:15 a.m. at Blackstone Grille, 112 Bartram Oaks Walk in Fruit Cove. Doors will open at 11 a.m. The event will feature a

presentation about what's trending in travel, both stateside and overseas, by travel agent Janice Vanormer. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$33 for members. All reservations must be received by Nov. 5. Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net to register. Members are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item (non-glass container) to donate to the food pantry at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church.

The Friends of Ponte Vedra Beach Library will present Chef Andrea Rosenblatt in the FOL Room of the library on Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 6 p.m. as part of the group's Speaker Series. She will share with home cooks the tricks and tips of professional cook masters along with her topic "Food in Writing." She will discuss food writing vs. cookbook writing while sampling some cookies that are perfect for the holidays.

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club announces its monthly meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 17, celebrating fall fashions at Sawgrass Village. Attendees should meet outside in front of Nona Blue between 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. to visit stores A'propos, Scout & Molly's and Carla's. Then, at 6:30 p.m. dinner will be held at Nona Blue Modern Tavern. Register for this event at www.pontevedrawomansclub.com.

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

Q: Do you have an update on High School III [as of interview date of Oct. 19]?

A: The construction continues on schedule and we will have the topping out ceremony on Oct. 21. Next month, the school board will vote on a name for the school. The names have been narrowed down to five finalists that will be considered: Sampson Creek High School, Bayside High School, Beachside High School, Ocean Valley High School and St. Johns High School. After this, the principal and the community will pick a mascot. The school colors have already been chosen and they are navy blue, gray and bright green. We are looking forward to filling the PTO and hiring school staff, which will likely happen after the first of the year.

Q: Does the St. Johns County School District still have employment opportunities?

A: Yes. We are still hiring due to the growth we have had in the county. We have instructional and non-instructional positions available. This might be a good time to come out of retirement and take a part time job! Visit the school district website (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us) for details and to apply.

Q: What's the latest on redistricting due to the recent Census?

A: There will be community meetings held on Nov. 1 at 6 p.m. at the School Board building, 40 Orange Street and on Nov. 2 at 6 p.m. at Nease High School in the media center. These meetings pertain to redistricting of our county's five districts due to the population increases in the recent census and have nothing to do with school zoning. On Dec. 9, the St. Johns County School Board will hold a joint meeting with the Board of

County Commissioners to finalize the redistricting for the county. Proposed maps are online at www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/redistricting as well as additional information. All of these meetings are open to the public.

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

A: First, the ESE Parent Advisory group will hold its first meeting of the year, online, on Nov. 9 beginning at 6 p.m. There will be a presentation by the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System/Northeast to go over the offerings for parents with disabilities.

Also, I have some students I'd like to highlight:

Ponte Vedra students who placed in the annual Betty Griffin "A Day Without Violence" Art and Poetry Contest are: First place, Ailani Valencia, 10th

grade Ponte Vedra High School, Art; Honorable Mention, Juliette Weber, fourth grade Palm Valley Academy, Art; and Honorable Mention, Hollis Lane, 10th grade Ponte Vedra High School, Art.

Freedom Week Essay Contest winners include Pranathi Chinthalani, 12th grader at Nease High School and Tucker Dimberg, 12th grader at Ponte Vedra High School, who won best overall essay.

The Jeff Holt Coach of the Year Award was also announced. Congratulations to Max Gurowski, Boys' Lacrosse at Nease High School and Mickey Leapley, Boys' Golf at Ponte Vedra High School.

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.



Q&A with St. Johns County Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker, District 4

Q: Can you give some insight into the recent hiring procedure for the new county attorney?

A: We are in the process of hiring this position. We had a wide search and received 50 – 60 applications. Commissioners Dean and Smith narrowed the field to two finalists and then at a recent special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, we voted to hire David Migut. We are currently [as of interview date of Oct. 14] in contract negotiations and will likely have the hire finalized by the time this issue of Ponte Vedra NewsLine is in circulation. David most recently worked for the City of Jacksonville in its general counsel office, but

he is a St. Johns County resident and previously worked for St. Johns County.

The county attorney is one of two positions, along with the county administrator, that the Board of County Commissioners hires. They work for the board and all the rest of the St. Johns County staff works for one of the two of them.

Q: Do you have an update on the FEMA berm?

A: We are in the process of holding a Dune Enhancement Project Town Hall Meeting now. This community meeting gives the public the opportunity to learn more about the

FEMA berm and to ask questions. The project is on schedule and community members should expect Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park to be closed Monday through Friday from Nov. 1, 2021 to late spring 2022. Beach access will be open on the weekends during

this time.

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.

tag! cont. from pg. 1

become a critical part of arts and sciences enrichment and allow children, students, and adults to recapture the pure joy of discovery. It also makes good business sense. tag! will become another destination drawing more people into Northeast Florida and boosting our economy," said Chuck and Diane Newman of the Newman Family Foundation of St. Johns County.

Phase 1 will include a playful collection of indoor and outdoor spaces including the Lastinger Big Backyard, the Florida Blue Healthy Gardens, The Cofrin Family Tree Story Garden, and The PLAYERS Championship STEM programming. Phase 2 includes additional buildings with more indoor exhibits, learning labs, and outdoor learning adventures.

"Our mission calls on us to inspire play, discovery, exploration, and innovation through science and creativity, and to be a partner and resource for those who work with or on behalf of children, youth, and families," said tag! Executive Director Kim MacEwan.

Corporate partners and stakeholders include Dr. Jimmy and Karen Glenos, The Platt Family, Danielle and Gene Fraser, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, and Bozard Ford Lincoln.

Fundraising efforts for the museum are ongoing and the \$7 million capital campaign provides families, businesses, and others the opportunity to invest in the future of Northeast Florida. The organization is currently \$2 million from the goal needed to complete the facility.

tag! Children's Museum will be the first cultural institution built in Northeast Florida in more than 20 years and is anticipated to have an estimated \$2 million annual impact on the community. tag! will enrich the lives of an estimated 300,000 area students, 76 school districts, and engage 85,000 expected visitors annually.

tag! Children's Museum, a 501 c 3 nonprofit, will be located off Arapaho Avenue, just behind Target on US Highway 1 near Windward Marina in St. Augustine. Visit tagmuseum.org for more information.



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Q&A with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: What can you tell us about the sheriff's office's personnel?

A: The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office has a total of just under 900 employees, to include full time, part time, civilian, sworn, and reserves. Approximately 350 of these are deputy sheriffs in law enforcement and 150 are deputy sheriffs in corrections. The remaining are support staff, or what I like to say are those that actually make the sheriff's office work. We have our own human resources department, records division, telecommunications (911 operators), correction control operators and forensics department.

Q: Are there job opportunities for any of these positions?

A: Yes, especially in the support staff areas, we are short staffed.

Q: What full time positions do you have open?

A: We have some sworn officers in the corrections division (who work in the jail) positions open. The starting pay is \$45,000 and that is for entry level with no experience or college degree. These positions require shift work (12 hour shifts).

We also need telecommunication department employees, or 911 operators. Here, the starting pay is \$41,000 and training is on the job under the watchful eye of a field training officer. This position also requires shift work.

Q: What part time positions are available?

A: First, we have school crossing guard positions available. This is a great position

because it is seasonal; you only work when school is in session. It's approximately one hour in the morning (about a half hour before and after the start of school) and an hour in the afternoon. This pays an hourly rate of \$15.87 and all uniforms and training are provided by the sheriff's office.

Also, we have PSA (Public Service Assistants) positions open. These are also hourly positions and pay \$17.31 per hour with uniform and training provided. The PSAs assist with patrol and our youth resource division and will work more hours than school crossing guards, since after the PSA works the school arrival in the morning, they go on to other duties such as neighborhood patrols and other non-criminal law enforcement. There is a lot of community engagement and they work up to 29 hours per week.

Q: Where can we find more about these open positions and how to apply?

A: Visit www.sjsso.org and then "Join SJSO" to see the current jobs available.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you with any questions or suggestions about this article?

A: They can email me at sheriff@sjsso.org or call me at (904) 824-8304. Also, our website, www.sjsso.org has a wealth of resources, from alarm registration to Crime Stoppers to our Neighbors app.



Q&A with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: Can people find out who I voted for?

A: The fact that you voted in an election is public information. Anyone can ask for a list of people who cast a ballot in an election in Florida; however, you are the only person who knows how you voted. Strict procedures are in place to make sure that no one, not even election workers, can find out how you voted.

Q: How do you prevent Vote-by-Mail ballot fraud?

A: We can only mail a Vote-by-Mail ballot to a voter upon request. We track every ballot issued to voters and whether the ballots have been returned. You can track your ballot by visiting votesjc.gov to see when your ballot has been requested, mailed to you, and counted. When our office receives your ballot, we check to make sure your signature matches our records and that you have not already voted in the election. Once you return your Vote-by-Mail ballot, we update your voter registration record so you cannot vote twice.

Q: How do you prevent dead people from voting?

A: When a voter dies, we receive official notification from other government agencies, such as the Florida Department of Health and the Social Security Administration. Once we receive notice, we remove the voter's name from the voter registration system.

Q: How do you prevent people from voting more than once?

A: We use real-time technology

to update voter records as soon as someone votes, either in person or by mail. If our records show that you have already voted, you may only vote a provisional ballot, which does not count if it is determined you have already voted in the election. Otherwise you are not allowed to vote again.

Q: How do you prevent people who moved out of state from voting in Florida?

A: We share information with other states and other government agencies to keep our voter registration information up to date. When you move and register in a new state, we remove you from the Florida voter registration system.

Q: How do you prevent pets, made-up people or other ineligible persons from voting?

A: You must first register to vote before you can vote. To register, you must provide a state issued ID or Social Security Number. We verify this ID information against official databases during the registration process. This step ensures that only eligible voters are added to the voter registration system. When a voter votes in person, we check their photo and signature ID to make certain that the person is a registered voter.

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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Newcomers Alumnae welcomes K9s for Warriors at luncheon

On Oct. 6, Newcomers Alumnae held its monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club with some special guests from K9s for Warriors: Elizabeth Reeger, development associate, Paul Bednar, puppy raiser, and Winston, service dog-in-training. K9s for Warriors is the nation's largest provider of trained service dogs to military veterans suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injury and/or military sexual trauma. Newcomers Alumnae is a social group of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville and St. Augustine. Contact brookemeister@msn.com for more information.



Photo courtesy Brooke Freeman



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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Market Insight



"The Cracker Messiah"

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

If you want to understand Florida politics, you need to understand Sidney Johnston Catts. Known as the "Cracker Messiah," Catts rose from obscurity to seize the governor's office in a whirlwind 1916 campaign. The spectacular and improbable election led to a four-year term in office that is still one of the most colorful and controversial in Florida's rich history.

Catts was born in Alabama and educated at Auburn. While still in Alabama, he ran for Congress. Catts ran a conventional campaign and lost badly. He would not make that mistake again. Shortly after the loss, Catts had a "Come to Jesus" awakening at a camp meeting. He remembered himself clinging to an 'ole brown stump shaking with religious fervor. He became a Baptist minister in his home state. It did not pay well. One Sunday when his congregation ignored a call for donations, he quit.

Catts relocated to DeFuniak Springs in Florida and took up his ministry there. Disappointed in his \$100 a month salary, he quit again and became an insurance salesman. One benefit of his new job was that it would allow him to travel the state campaigning for the office of governor. He spent the better part of a year traveling back and forth across the state, often to small communities that had never seen a governor before. He bought a Model T and fitted it with a loudspeaker. For many poor rural Flo-

ridians, this would be the first car they'd ever seen.

Catts, who often spoke of himself in the third person, spread his message and raised funds as he travelled. The message was anti-booze and virulently anti-Catholic. In his mind, the two went together. "Rum and Romanism." The Catholics, he told his listeners, secretly controlled Florida. Despite being less than 5 percent of the population, Catholics, he alleged without merit, held two-thirds of the jobs in Tallahassee and were also in control of the press. Catts was there to warn the good hard-working protestants of the great state of this menace. As his campaign stressed, there were only three things the "Florida Cracker" could trust: "God Almighty, Sears and Roebuck, and Sidney J. Catts."

Catts ran for the Democratic nomination. Back in those days, it was the only party that mattered. Whoever won the Democratic nomination would usually win the general election. Initially, Catts won the primary by a few hundred votes. Then on a recount it was determined that his opponent had won by a scant 21 votes.

Catts and his campaign alleged massive voter fraud and entered the general election as a third-party candidate. He ran on the Prohibition ticket. He took to the road again and spread the word of the stolen election. During that campaign, he announced that a group of Catholics from Apalachicola were

planning to assassinate "old Catts." From that moment on, he wore a pair of loaded six guns on his belt to defend himself.

In November 1916, Sidney Catts won the governor's race by 9,000 votes. He remains the only third-party candidate to win that office. He would remain Florida's governor throughout World War I. Shortly after America entered the war, Catts announced that the monks at St. Leo's, near Tampa, were plotting to arm Florida's blacks and overthrow the government in favor of the Kaiser. Furthermore, once the Kaiser ruled, the Pope would be relocating the Holy See from Rome to San Antonio, Florida. Public schools and Baptist churches would be closed. Rather than being met by universal ridicule, this just made Catts even more popular with his base. This was exactly the sort of menace the voters had elected the gun-toting demagogue to protect them from!

Catts was accused of selling offices and pardons. One story held that famous murderer JJ Mendenhall acted as his agent at Raiford, recruiting white prisoners willing to pay the governor to get out of jail. Catts beat those charges. Then a federal grand jury brought charges that Catts was holding two black men as slaves on his plantation. Allegedly, he had pardoned them in exchange for their agreement to lifetime peonage. I guess they thought that was a good deal. His first reaction to the charges was to announce that "My political opponents just won't let me alone." Catts beat those charges as well.

Scott A. Grant is a local columnist, author, speaker, and historian. By day he is a fiduciary asset manager and president of Standfast Asset Management. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.

St. Johns County launches Small Business Exterior Improvement Grant Program

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Small businesses in St. Johns County can now apply for funding assistance through the Small Business Exterior Grant Program. On Sept. 7, 2021, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners appropriated \$500,000 to this program aimed at helping small businesses enhance outdoor spaces for COVID-19 mitigation. This funding is part of Phase I of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) signed into law by President Biden earlier this year. St. Johns County is estimated to receive \$51.3 million in ARPA funding. To date, the Board of County Commissioners has appropriated \$7,843,500.

Eligible small businesses must be located in St. Johns County, be an active and operational business at the time of applying, and have no more than 100 employees as of July 1, 2021. Visit <https://sjcfl.us/sjcarpa/FAQs.htm> to see the full list of eligibility criteria.

Grants will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis and grant applications will be accepted until Friday, July 1, 2022. Each eligible business is limited to one application. St. Johns County is currently seeking community feedback for Phase II ARPA funds. Residents are encouraged to fill out a questionnaire and share their feedback regarding several funding objectives. Visit www.sjcfl.us/SJCARPA to fill out the questionnaire and to learn more about St. Johns County's ARPA program.

ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Are you interested in promoting your business in St. Johns Business Monthly, a feature section included in both The CreekLine and Ponte Vedra NewsLine? **Call Linda 904-607-5062**

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New location for audiology and speech clinic

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center, the area's only nonprofit audiology and speech clinic, is expanding its accessible services to a satellite location at 14595 Philips Hwy. The vision for the new location is to expand Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center's reach into southern Duval County and St. Johns County to meet soaring population demands and a growing need for audiology and speech-language pathology therapies.

Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center has operated its primary clinic in downtown Jacksonville for more than 70 years. The advent of the clinic came to fruition in 1949, when speech therapist Sarah Barrett recognized that her own practice would not be able to meet the growing caseload of children needing speech therapy. Barrett collaborated with local pediatrician Hugh Carithers, and Junior League member Jane Grey Scott to bring the Children's Speech Correction Clinic to life — Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center's first incarnation.

Over the following decades, Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center experienced some changes and additions to move with the times and continue to offer quality, equitable care to its community; however, the clinic also experienced various periods of austerity, bearing the brunt of economic recessions, scarce funds, and the need for upgraded facilities. In recent years, the organization has grown its services. Currently, Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center operates its downtown clinic at 1010 N. Davis St. and its administrative offices in the Jessie Ball DuPont center, where it collaborates with other nonprofits. Local philanthropists and volunteers wanting to make a difference are what have made the clinic's mission and expansion possible.

"We are extremely grateful for our donors and board members for their generosity in funding the buildout of our new location," said Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center CEO and President Michael Howland.



Q&A with St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer

Q: Can you tell us about the recent certification of the tax roll?

A: On Oct. 7, our office certified the 2021 Tax Roll to the St. Johns County Tax Collector. The tax collector is now preparing the tax bill, which will be mailed on or about Nov. 1.

As a reminder, homeowners can receive a discount if they pay their tax bill early: If they pay in November, they receive a 4 percent discount; in December, they receive a 3 percent discount; in January, they receive a 2 percent discount; and in February, they receive a 1 percent discount. The full amount is due in March, with a deadline of April 1, 2022.

Q: Do you have any interesting facts about this year's tax roll?

A: This is the largest tax roll in the history of St. Johns County, which is probably not too surprising. This year, we assessed approximately 157,000 parcels. The just value of the tax roll in 2021 is \$46.9 billion, as compared to \$42.7 billion in 2020, a \$4.2 billion increase. The taxable value that we certified this year is \$33.3 billion as compared to \$30.4 billion in 2020. There was almost \$1 billion in new construction added to the roll. Our expectations for next year, based upon the property sales this year as well as building permits issued, are for the tax roll to be bigger.

Q: What's next for the Property Appraiser's office?

A: We have now moved forward to the assessment period for 2022. We call

it a working tax roll and we will be in this period until June 2022, when we finalize the roll and send it to the Department of Revenue and the taxing authorities.

This is a good time to remind people, especially new homeowners this year, to apply for homestead exemption prior to the deadline of March 2022 if they qualify. To qualify, the property must be your primary residence and your driver's license must show the address. Additionally, you cannot receive property tax benefits in any other state in the United States. In 2021, we took in 14,840 new homestead exemption applications.

Q: What else do you have to share with northern St. Johns County residents?

A: Beginning in January, our office will resume our outreach efforts. We go out to neighborhoods and give presentations and even take homestead and other exemption applications on site. We already have plans to visit Nocatee, RiverTown and Durbin Crossing and would like to visit all neighborhoods. If your homeowners association or community development district would like us to come out, please call our office to schedule.

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.




NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF TAX ROLL

Pursuant to Sections 193.122 and 197.323, Florida Statutes, Notice is Hereby Given that the Tax Roll for St. Johns County was Certified to the St. Johns County Tax Collector on the 7th day of October, 2021, for the Collection of 2021 Taxes Pending Value Adjustment Board Changes.

EDDIE CREAMER
PROPERTY APPRAISER ST. JOHNS COUNTY

For additional information, please visit our website at www.sjcpa.us or contact us at (904) 827-5500

Riverwood Women's Club of Nocatee raises funds for Alpha-Omega Miracle Home



Photo courtesy Linda Ommerborn

The Riverwood Women's Club of Del Webb Ponte Vedra in Nocatee held its sixth "Pick-a-Prize" raffle on Sept. 14 in support of Alpha-Omega Miracle Home in St. Augustine. This year's theme was "Gift Cards and Lottery Tickets Extravaganza!" Raffle baskets were donated by Del Webb Ponte Vedra neighborhoods to this walk-through fundraiser. A total of \$10,800 was donated to Alpha-Omega Miracle Home, which provides supportive programs and housing to single

mothers, their children, and senior women in St. Johns County. Representatives from Riverwood Women's Club present a check for \$10,800 to Alpha-Omega Miracle Home in St. Augustine. Pictured are Women's Club officers Kathy Dittrich, treasurer; June Herron, secretary; Hope Terrell, president; Audra Young, Alpha-Omega Miracle Home event specialist; and Linda Ommerborn and Linda Fralick, co-chairs, Riverwood Women's Club Outreach Committee.



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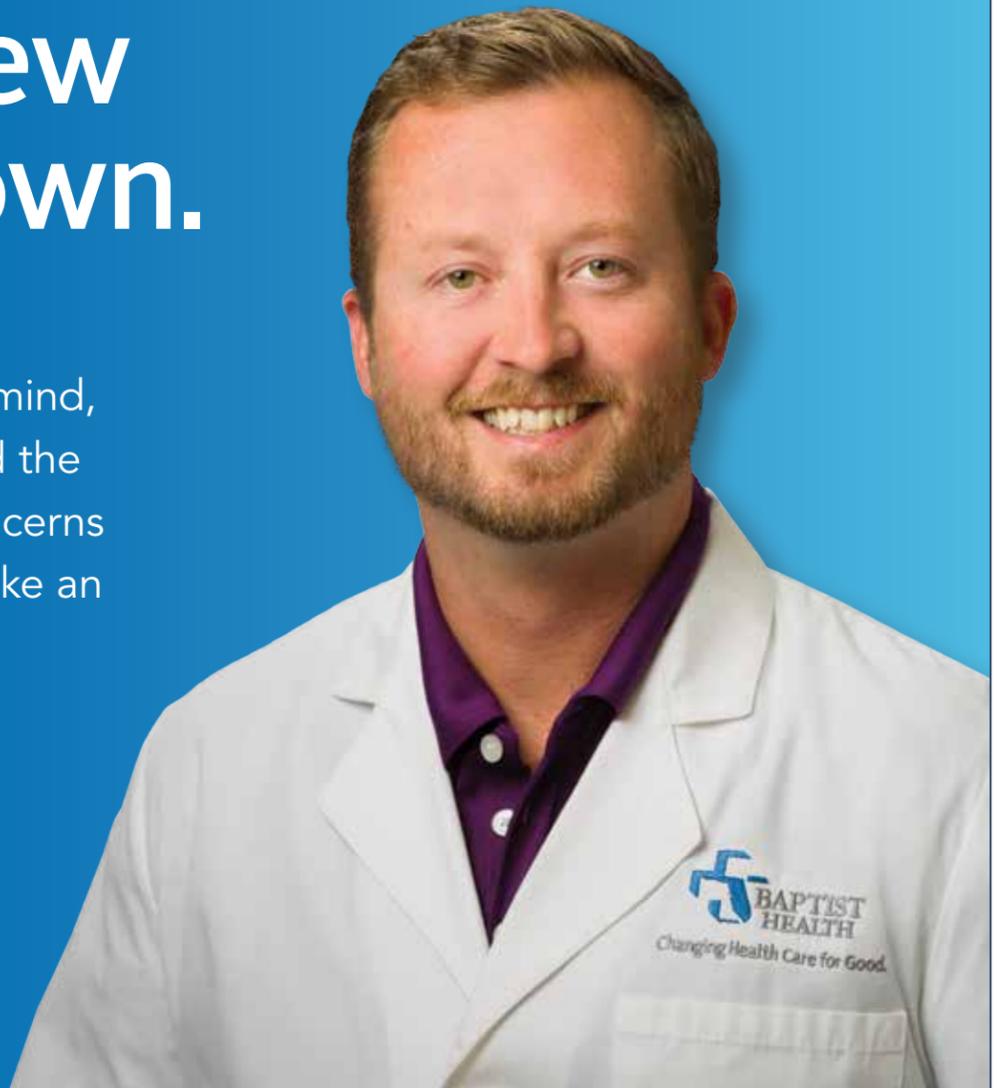


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COA announces November events in Nocatee

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline

The following free events and classes will be held at COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Avenue, Suite 205. Registration is required as space is limited. Call (904) 819-3234 or contact pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com to register.

Residential Age Care (What you need to know): Tuesday, Nov. 2, 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Cooking Demo Healthy Holidays: Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

How to Handle Your Kids on Legal Issues: Wednesday, Nov. 17, 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Bingo: Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The following meetings are self-guided by the group without an instructor present, except for the Caregiver's Support Group which has a trained facilitator. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required by calling (904) 819-3234 or via email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com.

Widows and Widowers: Social group meeting the second and fourth Tuesday

of every month from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Nov. 9 and 23)

Scrapbooking Club: Bring your own supplies or bring some you would like to exchange with others. Meeting the third Tuesday of every month from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. (Nov. 16)

Caregiver Support Group: Holiday schedule for November. Meeting Tuesday, Nov. 9 and 30 from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. There is a trained facilitator present at every meeting to guide the group.

Community Crafting: Bring your craft and work on it with friends. Get new ideas and socialize with other crafters. This group meets every Wednesday from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Genealogy Group: Leaders will be present to guide you the third Wednesday of each month from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. (Nov. 17)

Just 4 Us LBGT+ Social Club: COA invites LBGT+ Community Seniors to meet on the third Wednesday of every month from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. (Nov. 17).

Mah Jongg: For experienced players. No instructor present. Wednesday, Nov. 3, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Tuesday, Nov. 9, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.; Tuesday, Nov. 16 and Tuesday, Nov. 23, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.



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BY LENNAR



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Medicare Open Enrollment is here

By John Risler
mail@floridanewsline.com

It’s check-up time. Before a long road trip, do you check the tire pressure, belts and hoses, coolant? Before leaving the dock, do you assure sufficient life vests, fishing tackle, bait is on board? How about a trip to the beach — towel, cooler, sunblock?

Now is the time to check your Medicare health coverage. The Medicare Open Enrollment Period for Medicare beneficiaries, also known as OEP, began on Oct. 15 and continues through Dec. 7. The sooner you start your review of coverage the better. This allows time for comparison, evaluation, counseling, and changing.

Begin by getting out your insurance cards. This includes your Medicare card, Supplemental Insurance card, Medicare Advantage Plan insurance card, and perhaps your Medicaid card. Next get out your drug plan card, if you have one, and a list of your current medications. Finally dig out your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) or Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) that have arrived in the past several months.

With this information in hand you can better understand what went well during the year, where you had difficulties, and if you wish you had made a different plan selection decision last fall.

You will also want to confirm that your current favorite primary provider and specialist will be accepting the same plans in 2021. Is your pharmacy still the preferred one for your plan? Are your drugs all covered by your plan? This may

require changing plans or providers.

Further, you should determine if your financial situation has changed. Are your current plans still within your budget? Do you need to reduce your costs? Do you qualify for, and need to apply for, premium assistance with Medicare Part B or Part D?

These are just some of the questions that comprise a thorough Medicare coverage check-up. Now is the time to start!

Confused? Overwhelmed? Unsure? There is help available as close as your computer or telephone. Medicare.gov is a user-friendly website with a convenient Plan Finder Tool that can guide you through the options available.

You can also call the ElderSource Program, SHINE (“Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders”) Program. This program offers free, independent and unbiased counseling with the goal of helping people find the best information possible to make important healthcare decisions.

SHINE volunteers are not insurance brokers, but rather specifically trained guides to help enrollees understand the possible changes they can make to their Medicare plans. This year, older adults may need additional guidance on coverage options because of the impacts of the COVID-19.

An ElderSource SHINE volunteer may be reached by calling (888) 242-4464.

John Risler is an ElderSource SHINE volunteer.

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How to confront the potential onset of memory loss

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

No two individuals are the same, but many men and women encounter similar changes as they approach their golden years. As adults get closer to retirement, their eyeglass prescriptions may need to get a little stronger and their workouts may need to be a little less intense as their bodies adjust to the physical challenges of aging.

Many changes associated with aging don't affect seniors' ability to live independently; however, one common concern for older adults is the potential decline of their cognitive health, which can compromise their ability to get through their daily lives without some form of assistance.

According to the National Institute on Aging, many older adults worry about memory loss as they age. The Alzheimer's Association notes that voicing concerns about memory loss can make those worries seem more real. That fear may compel some aging men and women to write off memory loss as a minor side effect of getting older. And in many instances, memory loss is not severe and not indicative of the onset of dementia or Alzheimer's disease. However, the Alzheimer's Association notes how important it is for aging men

and women to seek support if they are concerned about their memory or any changes in the way they're thinking or behaving. Doctors can be invaluable resources for aging men and women, offering tips on how to confront memory loss and recommending strategies that can improve cognitive function.

The Alzheimer's Association recommends aging adults take a three-pronged approach to memory loss the moment they notice any changes in their memory or behaviors.

1. Assess the situation.

Start making a list of any changes you notice each day. Changes could be related to memory, thought patterns or behaviors. Note anything that feels abnormal or is causing you concern.

A good assessment also will involve careful consideration of any and all potential factors that may be behind your concerns. Is something other than aging going on? Family stress or a recently diagnosed medical condition can lead to the same issues many people associate with dementia or Alzheimer's.

The Alzheimer's Association lists 10 warning signs for Alzheimer's at www.alz.org/10signs. Familiarize yourself with these signs to see how they line up with how you're feeling.

Take note of anyone who has shared concerns about your memory loss, thought patterns or behaviors. It's not always easy to hear loved ones express such concerns, but they should not be ignored.

2. Have a conversation.

The Alzheimer's Association notes that many people find it helpful to discuss their concerns with a loved one rather than going it alone. Don't delay such conversations, but try to figure out how you will approach them in advance.

After discussing your concerns with a trusted loved one, ask this person to accompany you when you discuss these concerns with your doctor. Having a loved one accompany you when visiting the doctor can calm your nerves, and this person can serve as a backup who can ask the doctor any questions or share any concerns you may forget to ask or bring up.

If a loved one says your concerns sound like normal aging but you still want to seek more support, don't hesitate to contact another friend or family member.

3. Reach out for help.

The Alzheimer's Association is a reliable source of information that can be accessed online at www.alz.org and over the phone at 800.272.3900. Individuals also can find local resources by visiting www.alz.org/CRF.

COA announces November events in Ponte Vedra Beach

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The following special events and activities will be held at The PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane. Registration is required, as space is limited. To register to attend, email COA's Nancy Walzer at nwalzer@coasjc.org, or call the center at (904) 280-3233.

Monday, Nov. 1 and Monday, Nov. 8: Scrapbooking, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 15: Plant Some Fresh Herbs for Your Winter Salads, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 16: "Breaking News: What Does it Take to Create a Newspaper," 11 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 29: St. Nick's Holiday Craft Workshop, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 30: Music with Jenny and Sara, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

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The basics of long-term care insurance

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Many older adults get some peace of mind by taking steps to finance long-term care should they become incapable of living independently.

LT Care Consumer, a health care advisory company, says 70 percent of people over age 65 will require some type of care at some point in their lives. According to the 2017 Cost of Care study by Genworth Financial, the average annual cost for a private room at a nursing home is \$97,455. Such costs illustrate why long-term care insurance can be a wise investment.

Long-term care, or LTC, encompasses services and support that assist individuals with the activities of daily living, which include bathing, eating, dressing, toileting, and more. In addition, LTC may support needs such as caring for pets, household chores, medicine management, and meal preparation.

LTC may be provided by specialized assisted living facilities or by in-home care workers.

The resource Long Term Care Primer advises that individuals typically must fund their own long-term care. Many facilities are not subsidized by government assistance programs under Medicare in the United States. Medicaid may step in for certain individuals who are of limited means, but that assistance may be exclusive to those living in skilled nursing facilities. That means the bulk of paying for long-term care rests on the individual.

Long-term care insurance can pay for care to treat chronic health conditions and meet personal needs over an extended period of time. This is known as custodial care. Individuals who have habits or health issues that could result in the need for LTC in the future should look into LTC insurance. LTC insurance also can be a sound invest-

ment for individuals who cannot afford extended nursing care out-of-pocket.

The Ohio Department of Insurance notes that policies may vary, but they typically include a deductible or elimination period, which is a time when the policy holder is liable for payment before the insurance begins. Policies typically include a daily benefit as well. This is the maximum amount the insurance company will pay toward each day in the nursing facility; the policy holder may be responsible for the difference. Policies also include a benefit period, or the length of time the policy will pay the daily benefit, which can be a few years or a lifetime.

Individuals also have other options in regard to securing long-term care. Care.com says comprehensive LTC policies, combination policies and riders to current life insurance policies may help augment long-term care needs. Because LTC insurance — and

paying for health care in general — can be quite confusing, people are urged to speak to professionals about their options and whether LTC insurance is necessary. A 2014 study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College estimated that only 20 to 30 percent of people would benefit from a policy. Researchers concluded that, while many people do need long-term care, they may not need it for an extended period of time and may be able to cover their care with their own savings. Furthermore, the cost for policies may be \$2,000 a year, which is a concern for some people.

Individuals who purchase LTC insurance should know that medical underwriting for policies can be extensive. Coverage may be denied for current or past health conditions. Most people find that the best age at which to buy LTC insurance is in one's mid-50s. Healthy individuals may be eligible for discounts on LTC premiums.



Exceptional Care, From Generation to Generation

The Adult Day Program (ADP) at River Garden offers a purposeful, safe environment for seniors who require extra support. It also provides a worry-free time during the week, allowing caregivers to work or manage other appointments.

Additional Services

- Outpatient therapies, as ordered
- Primary care from on-site physicians
- Barber, salon and personal care



Schedule a Visit Today
(904) 288.7858
RiverGarden.org

Safe ways for seniors to volunteer

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Charitable organizations rely on the efforts of volunteers to meet their missions every day. People of all ages can volunteer, and a great number of volunteers are seniors.

A 2016 survey from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that nearly one-quarter of American volunteers are age 65 and over. That was never more apparent than during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many nonprofit organizations were suddenly forced to confront a volunteer shortage due to the adoption of social distancing guidelines that were designed to keep vulnerable populations, such as seniors, as safe as possible. One study from Fidelity Charitable found that two out of three volunteers decreased or stopped contributing time during the pandemic.

The rollout of various COVID-19 vaccines has allowed vaccinated individuals to return to a certain degree of pre-pandemic normalcy; however, the threat posed by strains of the virus like the Delta variant has made some seniors apprehensive about returning to volunteering. Though each individual should consider various factors before returning to volunteering during the pandemic, the following are some options seniors can consider as they aim to safely pitch in once again.

- Look for contactless opportunities. Interactions with the people they help and work alongside is what drives many volunteers to lend a helping hand. That's especially so

for seniors whose children have grown up and moved out. In person interactions may be too risky during the pandemic, but seniors can still volunteer via contactless opportunities. For example, in lieu of delivering meals by hand, seniors who work with organizations such as Meals on Wheels can deliver prepackaged meals outside recipients' residences.

- Pitch in with fundraising. A report from Giving USA released in 2021 revealed that Americans gave more to charity in 2020 than in 2019. That increase came in spite of an economic downturn that saw millions of people lose their jobs or take pay cuts as companies scrambled to deal with lost revenue related to the pandemic. Though giving might have increased in 2020, many nonprofit organizations, including local community theaters, likely suffered due to cancellations and audience restrictions. As a result, many local nonprofit organizations are in need of financial support. Seniors who want to pitch in but stay safe can volunteer to help local organizations raise funds. Seniors can participate in fundraising efforts from the comforts of their own homes.
- Offer professional expertise. Many seniors retired after spending decades mastering their crafts, and that experience can be an invaluable resource to local nonprofit organizations. Seniors can offer professional advice and mentor youths remotely via apps like Zoom without putting their physical health at risk.



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- Dorothy

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Briefs

St. Johns County adds new location for free disposal of yard waste

Residents in St. Johns County may be experiencing a delay in yard waste collection due to the national workforce shortage. Republic Services and Advanced Disposal have encountered difficulties completing yard waste routes on scheduled service days. In an effort to provide additional options to the community, residents may bring yard waste to the following locations free of charge:

- Tillman Ridge Transfer Station, 3005 Allen Nease Road, Elkton. Drop off hours are from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday through Friday and 7 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturday.
- Republic Services Facility, 445A Republic Drive, St. Augustine. Drop off hours are from 7 a.m. – 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Drop off service is for St. Johns County residential customers only. No commercial trucks or vehicles will be allowed. In addition, all garbage and recycling routes will remain on schedule.

St. Johns County Solid Waste Division is working with Republic Services and Advanced Disposal to ensure yard debris collections are being conducted as quickly as possible. Call the Solid Waste Division at (904) 827-6980 or visit www.recyclestjohns.com for updates.

Governor Ron DeSantis announces judicial appointments

In anticipation of Constitution Day 2021 on Sept. 17, Gov. Ron DeSantis announced the appointments of 20 rule of law judges to the following five circuits and 10 county courts: Fourth, Ninth, Eleventh, Fifteenth and Eighteenth Judicial Circuits, as well as Citrus, Hillsborough, Lee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Orange, Palm Beach, Pasco, Polk, and St. Johns counties. Nine of the judicial appointments will fill new vacancies that were created by the Florida Legislature. With these appointments, Gov. DeSantis has made 150 total judicial appointments.

In St. Johns County, the new judicial vacancy on the St. Johns County Court created by the Florida Legislature was filled by Lauren Blocker. Blocker has served as Corporate Counsel to Fidelity Information Services since 2018. Previously, she served as a Judicial Law Clerk to U.S. Magistrate Judge Carol Mirando, U.S. Magistrate Judge Patricia D. Barksdale, and U.S. District Judge Marcia Morales Howard. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and her law degree from Florida Coastal.

Giving Tree to benefit 41 local non-profit organizations

The St. Johns CARES 15th annual Giving Tree initiative will occur from mid-November to early December. The wishes of clients from 41 non-profit organizations in St. Johns County serv-

ing elderly, veterans, homeless, abused, children and animals are printed onto holiday wish tags. The wish tags and posters are displayed in participating businesses, schools and organizations throughout the county from mid-November until Dec. 7. The donations placed in the collection boxes are then sorted and provided to the non-profit organizations for the holidays. Monetary donations are used to purchase wish items that were not donated.

Over the years the generosity of the community during the Giving Tree drive has been so appreciated by the receiving organizations and made a significant impact on their clients. Now as much as at any time, so many people are in need.

Donation boxes with posters will be displayed at the host sites. A list of participating host sites is available on our website at www.stjohnscares.org. Monetary donations can also be made on the website. Contact president@stjohnscares.org with any questions.

Protect yourself from vaccination text scam

Attorney General Ashley Moody recently issued a Consumer Alert warning Floridians of a new COVID-19 vaccination text scam. There have been reports of fraudulent text messages being sent to Floridians asking for driver license details in order to remake licenses that show vaccination status. The text messages provide a link that sends targets to a spoofed Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles website with input boxes requesting Social Security and driver license information — including a place to upload a photocopy of a driver license.

Moody said, “COVID-19 cases have decreased drastically across the state, but that hasn't stopped scammers from finding new angles to exploit the pandemic. Please be on the lookout for phony messages and remember that the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will never reach out via text and ask for personal information. Florida is not updating driver licenses to include proof of vaccination — any solicitation making this claim is a scam that should be reported immediately.”

Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Executive Director Terry L. Rhodes said, “The best defense against scams like this is to know how FLHSMV interacts with our customers. We do not text Floridians regarding the status of their driver license or request personal or medical information via text message. If you receive a text asking for this information, it is a scam. With only the information on your driver license, scammers can create many fraudulent financial accounts. All under your name, all without your knowledge. Do not respond to these texts and do not click on the links contained in the text message.”

Moody is asking Floridians to follow the tips below to avoid these types of imposter scams:

- Know that the FLHSMV is not requiring driver license updates listing proof of vaccination;

- Do not automatically trust a number listed on a caller ID or in an unsolicited text message;
- Do not post photos of vaccination cards or driver licenses online, as they can be used to commit identity fraud; and
- Avoid clicking on links in a suspicious email or in a text message received from an unknown sender.

Report suspicious solicitations or COVID-19 vaccine-related advertisements to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.

Veterans receive preferred parking at St. Johns County Courthouse

Veterans now have preferred parking when doing business at the St. Johns County courthouse.

“It's just one small way we can thank our veterans for their service to our country,” said St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty. “While this designation is an active demonstration of our appreciation, reserved parking also is a functional benefit for our veterans.”

Circuit Judge Howard O. McGillin Jr., Chairman Bill Dudley of the St. Johns County Veterans Council and Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator Cynthia Thompson joined Clerk Patty to formally designate two parking spaces near the south entrance to the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, located at 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine.

“A priority parking space is a small but meaningful gesture to extend to our veterans,” said Judge McGillin, who presides over Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County. “Many of the veterans in our program and other veterans who need to access the courthouse suffer from physical disabilities that do not qualify for handicapped parking. These spaces extend a courtesy to them in particular that simply says ‘thank you for your service.’”

With the north entrance closed indefinitely since spring 2020 due to the pandemic, the south entrance provides the only public access to the complex. Disabled veterans with the appropriate permit from the Department of Motor Vehicles or a Disabled Veterans license plate or placard should continue to use designated parking spaces for disabled persons.

Application deadline for Emergency Rental Assistance Program is Nov. 30

St. Johns County is urging all eligible residents to apply for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program no later than Nov. 30, 2021, which will ensure all county funds are sent to recipients by the federally mandated deadline of Dec. 31, 2021.

The St. Johns County Emergency Rental Assistance Program is a public relief program providing rental and utility assistance to County residents at risk of eviction because of COVID-19. Households in St. Johns County that have individuals qualified for unemployment benefits, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due

Life

travel · pantry raiders · gardening
fishing · entertainment · puzzles

Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Karen Wood

Karen Wood has been active all her life, participating in five marathons, many half marathons, other races and powerlifting; however, she hesitated to try yoga because she was embarrassed to do it at a studio. One day she tried the P90X DVD at home and was introduced to yoga via instructor Tony Horton, who had included a yoga demo in the series. She was hooked, but she realized that others probably had a similar hesitation when it came to yoga. "So many people are intimidated to go to a studio. I didn't know the lingo. I didn't know what I didn't know. I didn't want to look stupid," she said. "That's why beach yoga is so important to me. I want everyone to experience yoga without all the hang-ups. Every physical body is able to do yoga." Wood, the youngest of seven children, has been practicing yoga for 16 years and teaching for six years with training from the Yoga Den and Baron Baptiste Power Yoga. In April, Wood launched beach yoga "Beyond Breath" because a mom's stroller group asked her to offer it. So, she did and made it donation-based for anyone to attend. Anywhere from five to 35 people attend on Mickler's Beach four times a week (new location starting Nov. 1 due to the beach restoration project). Wood and her "loving partner" Robert Sprague have one goal: "Help as many people as we can breathe deep and learn how to create their own calm, peace and ease right within their own bodies."



Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps
Karen Wood

Q: What inspires you to help others?

A: I have been through a lot of losses in my life. I lost my Dad at 15, and my boyfriend at 25. I have lost five immediate family members in the last seven years, and I was always the caregiver. It all culminated in me being able to truly relate, share and give back. I have always been passionate about giving to and helping others. I can help others by sharing my story, my gifts and by listening.

Q: Explain your "ALL are welcome" policy.

A: We create an environment where we encourage people to listen to their bodies. There is never any pressure of

any kind. If folks don't like a pose or prefer not to do it — perfect. Never any judgement, and I highly encourage practitioners to do whatever their body is calling for at that moment. Each day and each practice is different. That's why it is so important to listen.

Q: How do you design your classes?

A: No two classes are ever the same. I don't plan my classes. I wait and see who shows up, hear the needs of others and read the energy. It is all about balance and trying to achieve it, our emotions, life, mind and feet. That is why it is called "the practice." We are constantly working at it, noticing our

breath and how we breathe through it. We are habitual beings. How we handle stress on the mat is how we will handle stress off the mat. We have to have those tools in place to go to when we need them. The whole purpose is to prepare for mediation, to come out of our heads and into our bodies.

Q: Tell us about your yoga and meditation work at the Brooks Adaptive Sports Program.

A: I work with paraplegia, quadriplegia, stroke survivors, amputees and those with traumatic brain injuries. These are the most beautiful humans that you will ever meet. They are so grateful for the movement. I am very fond of this program, and it is my passion.

Q: You run women's workshops, mediations, private lessons and fundraisers as well?

A: I run "Real Authentic Women" (RAW). It started as a book club one year ago, but it became more about life and experiences. I also teach private yoga lessons on the beach and in the home and offer coaching, meditation and retreats. In October, we raised \$2,038 for the Jay Fund by holding a "Beach Yoga and Sound Bath" charity event with 90 people in attendance. All donations went to the Jay Fund to help families with children battling cancer. We plan to hold more fundraisers like this one in the future because it is so important to give back. I am working on launching a Women in Wellness event in early 2022 in Jacksonville Beach with my dear friend Mary Beth Perrone.

[Author's note: For yoga updates and information, Wood can be found on Instagram @beyondbreathwellness.]

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

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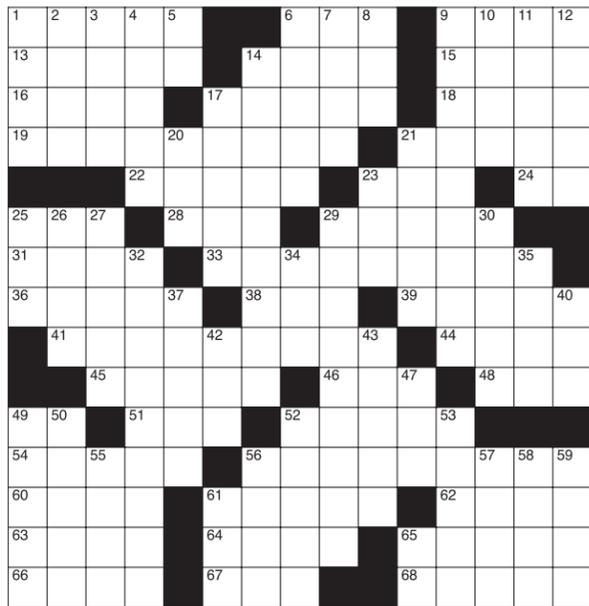
Linda Gay
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Rebecca Thomson
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. German philosopher
6. A type of stock trading (abbr.)
9. Cincinnati ballplayers
13. Deerlike water buffaloes
14. Island
15. Jewish calendar month
16. Round Dutch cheese
17. Unstressed syllable of a metrical foot
18. A restaurant needs one
19. Decent behaviors
21. Groans
22. Works hard
23. Upset
24. A sound made in speech
25. One point east of due south
28. Boxing's GOAT
29. Whittles
31. Tailless amphibian
33. Surrounded
36. Doesn't stay still
38. Copycat
39. Four-door car

CLUES DOWN

41. Morally correct behavior
44. Something that is owed
45. Pasta needs it
46. Ant-Man's last name
48. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
49. Small period of time (abbr.)
51. Woman (French)
52. On or around
54. Fencing swords
56. Fonts
60. A command in the name of the court
61. Sprays with an irritant
62. Georgetown athlete
63. Dry or withered
64. Sign of injury
65. Tracts of land (abbr.)
66. 365 days
67. Physique
68. Icelandic poems

CLUES DOWN

1. Bodily substance
2. Internal
3. Provoke or annoy
4. Type of lounge chair
5. Losses
6. Makes less severe
7. Identifies a thing close at hand
8. Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
9. Rebuilt
10. Ancient Greek City
11. American investigative journalist
12. Partially melted snow
14. Take shape
17. Mexican beverage
20. Patti Hearst's captors
21. Jacobs and Summers are two
23. Disfigure
25. Scientists' tool (abbr.)
26. Ill-mannered person
27. Overhang
29. Famed rat catcher
30. Passover feast and ceremony
32. Equal to 10 meters

34. Central processing unit
35. Chinese native religion
37. Unfermented juices
40. "To the ___ degree"
42. Frozen water
43. Medieval circuit courts
47. 1,000 cubic feet (abbr.)
49. Gossipy
50. Shopping is one type
52. Palmlike plant
53. Partner to "oohed"
55. Welsh name meaning "snow"
56. Popular Mexican dish
57. It helps power devices
58. Reddish-brown wildcat
59. Impertinence
61. Legal financial term (abbr.)
65. Atomic #52

AUTUMN WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- APPLE
- AUTUMN
- CHILLY
- CINNAMON
- CLOVES
- COLOR
- FALL
- FALLING
- FIREPLACE
- FOLIAGE
- JACKET
- LEAVES
- NOVEMBER
- ORANGE
- PUMPKIN
- PURPLE
- RAKING
- RED
- SPICE
- THANKFUL
- TURKEY
- WIND
- WINTERIZE
- YELLOW

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to autumn.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 26 = U)

A. 12 26 2 26 20 22
Clue: One of the seasons

B. 25 19 12 14 19 5
Clue: Parts of trees

C. 15 26 20 15 3 21 22
Clue: Orange gourd

D. 16 8 21 5 3
Clue: Cold but refreshing

Briefs cont. from pg. 1
to the COVID-19 pandemic, are highly encouraged to apply.

For more information or to apply for this program, visit <https://stjohns-crr.unqork.io> or call (904) 344-3188.

Earn accredited high school diploma for free through library

The St. Johns County Library System is offering qualified community members

the opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma and career certificate for free through Career Online High School, a program brought to public libraries by funding from the State of Florida through a partnership with Smart Horizons Career Online High School. This program is specifically designed to reengage adults into the education system and prepare them for entry into postsecondary career education or the workforce. Currently, more

than 9,800 adults in St. Johns County lack a high school degree or equivalent.

So far, St. Johns County has seen 17 students earn their diplomas and career certificates through its Career Online High School program.

"Career Online High School is perfect for the person with a busy adult life. Coursework is available any time, and there's great academic support. Truly,

there's no age limit when it comes to learning and accomplishing your goals," said Michelle Kiley, who has been administering the program.

The St. Johns County Library System will award scholarships for Career Online High School to qualified learners looking to earn a high school diploma and advance their careers. Students are able to graduate in as few as six months by transferring in previously earned high school credits but are given up to 18 months to complete the program.

Residents 19 years of age or older who are interested in learning more about Career Online High School may do so by visiting www.sjcpls.org/cohs, or contacting Michelle Kiley at mkiley@sjcfl.us or (904) 827-6970.

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Homeless Coalition creates secure environment for homeless families

By Martie Thompson
 editor@floridanewsline.com

The Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County is a true coalition, according to executive director Debi Redding, and it works with a lot of different agencies to provide its services — but its main focus is on homeless families and bringing them to self-sufficiency. Back in June 1998, several groups that were concerned about homelessness in the county as well as mental health issues came together and co-founder Jean Harden (along with husband Jim) came up with the idea to help homeless families.

“It was a big eye opener that homeless families existed in St. Johns County,” Redding said. “The group formed a 501 c 3 organization and a board of directors in November 1998.”

Those very first board members all signed the mortgage note and bought the Homeless Coalition’s first house on West King Street to be used for transitional housing. In 2001, the coalition purchased a block of seven homes in West Augustine that had been condemned. Again, the board members all personally signed the mortgage notes. Redding said through donations and hard work from the community, they were able to renovate these homes and ultimately buy more homes and vacant land in the immediate area as it became available. Today, the Homeless Coalition has 23 houses for use by families with minor children.

Redding said the coalition receives its referrals from St. Johns Care Connect (Flagler Health+), which determines the most vulnerable families after an assessment process.

“Families that come to us are either living in a place not suitable for human habitation, including the woods, or living at St. Francis House or Betty Griffin Center,”



Photos courtesy Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County
 Some of the Homeless Coalition’s transitional homes.



Volunteers help with landscaping at the Homeless Coalition’s campus.



Volunteers from Longleaf Church, and other groups like them, are invaluable to the Homeless Coalition.

Redding said. “When they get to us they don’t have anything, which is why all of our homes are fully furnished, down to the dishes, linens, and personal hygiene products, all from community donations.”

As a housing first provider, the Homeless Coalition will refer individuals that come to them to appropriate agencies to address the barriers which led to their homelessness — like mental health issues or substance abuse.

Much help and assistance is given, but expectations are high. After giving the new residents a month or so to settle in to their transitional homes, the work begins to get them back on their feet.

“They must get a job, they must work to get out of the situation they are in,” Redding said. “We help with resume building and referrals to staffing and employment agencies. We also work with them on budgeting and parenting. We try to make it as painless as possible, but we have to see results.”

The estimate is about 18 months for the clients to spend in the transitional housing. By that time, Redding said they should be on their way to self sufficiency. She said the Homeless Coalition has an 80 – 85 percent success rate. When the client is able to leave, they may take all of the items from their transitional home, including furniture and household goods, so they can set up their new permanent home. Since they had the utility bill in their name from the onset, they have built up credit. Once a family moves out, the Homeless Coalition

works with community donors to clean and re-outfit the house and then a new referral moves in.

The Homeless Coalition has just four employees and relies heavily on volunteers, particularly groups from area businesses and churches, to do things like sort food pantry items and clothing donations, as well as help with home repairs, landscaping and general upkeep of the five-acre campus. A group of volunteers from Longleaf Church signed up to volunteer on a recent Saturday. Pastor Jeff St. Clair, who has volunteered a few times at the Homeless Coalition, said some of the things he has helped with include organizing a storage shed, painting a porch, folding clothes and some basic landscaping.

“I was introduced to the Homeless Coalition in December 2020,” St. Clair said. “The Homeless Coalition is a powerful outreach to the St. Johns community and is a great way for a family to get involved in serving their community and to help empower those who have recently gone through tough times find a way to greater stability.”

The Homeless Coalition is always looking for donations of items to furnish and outfit its transitional homes, as well as clothing, personal hygiene items and games and toys to put in the children’s rooms. Redding asked that those wishing to donate or volunteer call or email first to ensure that the items are needed at that time as storage space is limited.

“We have a very generous community,” Redding said. “And we are thankful for everything they do.”

Visit <http://homelesscoalitionstjohns.com>, call (904) 819-0059 or email homelesscoalition@comcast.net for more information.



Pastor Jeff St. Clair of Longleaf Church volunteered on a recent Saturday.

The Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County has recently started an “Adopt a House” program, where groups or individuals may donate funds for specific home repairs. Redding said that 12 of their houses are more than 100 years old and many repairs are needed! Call (904) 819-0059 for more information about this program.



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Festive apps to satisfy guests



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

In addition to a platter of fruit slices, figs, aged cheeses and crostini, treat guests to "Mini Cheese Ball Bites," which offer various textures and flavors in bite-sized morsels.

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Thanksgiving is a food lover's paradise. Even though the turkey and side dishes are the crowning achievements on Thanksgiving, hungry guests will need something to tide them over until the pièce de résistance is ready. In such situations, bite-sized appetizers that are tasty yet not too filling can fit the bill.

Charcuterie boards and tasting menus continue to be all the rage. In addition to a platter of fruit slices, figs, aged cheeses and crostini, treat guests to "Mini Cheese Ball Bites," which offer various textures and flavors in bite-sized morsels. Enjoy this recipe, courtesy of "Spectacular Spreads: 50 Amazing Food Spreads for Any Occasion" (Rock Point) by Meagan Brown.

Mini Cheese Ball Bites

Makes 12

8 oz. light cream cheese, softened

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

3 tbsp. drained, chopped pimentos

1 tsp. garlic powder

1 tsp. paprika

Pinch kosher salt

Pinch freshly ground black pepper

½ cup crushed pecans

¼ cup chopped chives

12 pretzel sticks

In a large bowl, stir together the cream cheese, cheddar, pimentos, garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper until well combined. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Place the crushed pecans and chives in a small bowl. Set aside.

Roll the cheese mixture into 12 one-inch balls. Evenly coat each ball with the pecan-chive mixture. Press a pretzel stick into the top of each cheese ball just before serving. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Nutrition Check

Lifestyle approaches to managing diabetes

By Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RDN, LDN, CLC and Crystal Liebenberg BS
mail@floridanewslines.com

November is Diabetes Awareness Month, so this article lists strategies to prevent and manage your diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, about 11.8 percent of the adult population in Florida, approximately two million Floridians, have been diagnosed with diabetes. About 546,000 people don't even know that they have diabetes, which puts them at greater health risk. Diabetes can have major negative long-term impacts including heart disease and kidney disease, if not appropriately managed.

Managing diabetes can be challenging; sometimes, you may feel overwhelmed. Having diabetes means that you need to check your blood sugar levels often, make healthy choices, be physically active, remember to take your medicine, and make other good decisions about your health several times a day. I also recommend working with a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist or joining a Diabetes Prevention Program; you can ask your family physician for referrals to both.

Here are Five Care Strategies to help manage diabetes

1. Small changes

- Drink plenty of water; try swapping a sugary beverage (tea, soda) for water
- Eat healthy snacks in between meals like a piece of fruit, handful of nuts, or a cheese stick to prevent hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)

2. Eat healthily

- Consult with a Registered Dietitian Nu-

tritionist and use MyPlate as a guide for your meals. Variety and type of carbohydrates matter, so learning portion sizes and carbohydrate quality are key to success.

3. Keep moving

- Work you way up to walking for at least 30 minutes a day to help manage your blood sugar
- Exercise maximizes your own body's insulin. Consult with your primary care provider before participating in any exercise activities.

4. Monitor blood sugar. Blood glucose changes throughout the day; what you eat, how your hormones react, and your activity level affect it.

- Most healthcare providers suggest you test four times a day: before breakfast and two hours after each meal.
- Use a logbook to record the results of each blood glucose reading.
- If needed, take your medication.

5. Take time to breathe. Take time to relax and unwind at the end of a busy day or anytime you feel overwhelmed.

- Deeply and slowly inhale and exhale.
- Repeat the process about four times.

Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RDN, LDN, CLC, FAND is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida.



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Travel

A close-up look at the Hoover Dam

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewline.com

While flying to Las Vegas, I looked out the window and got a surprise — an aerial view of the Hoover Dam. The impressive sight of this American engineering feat filled me with wonder.

After picking up a rental car, I drove a little over 30 minutes to my hotel. The Hoover Dam Hotel & Casino, as you might expect, is not only ideally located for dam visits, but offers scenic views of Lake Mead. Inside, numerous restaurants and small casinos fulfill your needs.

I understood the Hoover Dam Visitor Center was closed (due to Covid), as were tours inside the tunnels, but that didn't stop me. Exploring the U.S. National Monument doesn't require more than a half-day (even including a tunnel tour) and much less if you are in a hurry.

I walked down the promenade toward the dam, reading the signage and photographing as I went along. Hoover Dam was built between 1930–1936 in a wasteland, a forbidding dry, rocky



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Memorial Bridge and below the dam.

desert. The goal was to help control flooding of the Colorado River and to divert water where needed. Most importantly, the dam would provide massive amounts of hydroelectric power.

Ninety-six workers lost their lives in accidents, but no one was buried alive while pouring the 6.6

million yards of needed concrete. Imagine working in sweltering heat to bore into carbon monoxide-choked tunnels or dangling from heights of 800 feet to clear canyon walls.

Over the years, some 21,000 workers contributed to the overall construction.

The sight of the complex staggered my mind. Everything about the place feels supersized. I glanced up at tilted transmission towers supported by massive braces and down at the immense, rounded curtain of concrete. The dam measures 726 feet tall and 1,244 feet long, almost a quarter of a mile. According to some online research, "At its base, the Dam is a whopping 660 feet thick, about two football fields stretched end-to-end. At its top, Hoover Dam is nearly as wide as a four-lane highway."

All visitors notice the 30-foot high Art Deco statues, known as the "Winged Figures of the Republic." The pair resemble seated humans with sharp, angular features and wings that soar straight toward the sky. Sculptor Oskar

Hansen created them with more than four tons of statuary bronze. The two are now weathered with a green patina, except where visitors follow the tradition of rubbing their feet for good luck.

A celestial chart embedded in the terrazzo floor surrounds the monument's ceremonial area. The base marks the day the Hoover Dam was dedicated by President Franklin Roosevelt, September 30, 1935.

The river backed up by the dam creates Lake Mead, one of the largest artificial lakes in the world. As the water reaches the blockade, it falls 500 feet through pipes to a hydroelectric power plant at the base. The water turns 17 hydraulic turbines, which then rotate a series of electric generators. The engineering miracle produces a power capacity of 2,080 megawatts. Nearly half of the generated electric power goes to Los Angeles and Southern California; the rest goes to Nevada and Arizona.

A federal highway traverses the dam's crest, although I didn't approach from that direction. Over the years, as traffic increased, backups occurred, and Sept. 11, 2001, added severe security restrictions. Therefore, a new concrete arch bridge with a 1,060-foot span — the longest in North America for that type of bridge — opened in 2005. I climbed the stairs to ascend Memorial Bridge for a panoramic view, stopping to read plaques while I caught my breath.

Our national parks present spectacular scenery, but some of our man-made wonders also deserve a look.

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



Aerial view of the Hoover Dam.



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