

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

JANUARY 2022 Volume 9 Issue 1

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

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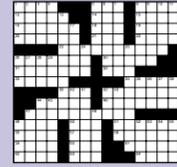
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Riverwood Men's Club golfs for charity



Photo courtesy Mike Mattson

The Riverwood Men's Club raised \$31,000 for Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center.

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Riverwood Men's Club conducted its sixth annual Charity Golf Tournament on Monday, Nov. 1 at Palencia Golf Club. The Riverwood Men's Club, The Palencia Club, and the 2021 Tournament Committee partnered together to make this year's event one of the best ever.

Enjoying perfect weather, a beautiful golf course and a host of fun on-course events and contests, 112 golfers turned out to support this event that benefitted Port in the Storm Homeless Youth Center in St. Augustine. The golfers' participation, along with the generous contributions from many valued sponsors, other additional donors and the Del Webb Ponte Vedra community helped raise \$31,000 for the charity.

Over the past six years, the Riverwood Men's Club charity golf event has raised more than \$155,000 for local charities.

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Silence no more

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

The story in Brady Wright's head existed long before he could give the words life. Long before he could fully communicate them. And long before he could finally break free.

At 17, he has finally found freedom in the form of a book that he was able to write with the help of his mother, his facilitator and his own courage. "Hostage to Silence" was recently self-published and also includes artwork by Wright's friend and artist Gentry Groshell, 25. Wright and Groshell are both nonverbal with autism.

It is a pivotal moment for not only Wright, but also for his entire family.

"I am so proud of Brady. He has really pushed me," said Danielle Wright, Brady's mother. "He told me, 'Mom, I want to tell the world that we are here.' He has a dream of being on a stage. These are ridiculously brilliant kids, but people assume that they are not smart because they cannot communicate in the same way as everyone else."

According to the book's introduction, Brady communicated through a mix of sign language, pictures and an app called Proloquo for the first 13 years of his life. A neuromotor disorder called apraxia makes it difficult for Brady to speak, and it was not until the family, medical team and counselors began to practice facilitated communication with Brady that he found his voice. This method is also referred to as supported typing and is highly dependent on the facilitator providing emotional and physical support that is tailored to each communication partner.

"While monitoring posture and eye contact, the facilitator provides physical contact that helps slow or stabilize movement, providing the support needed for the communicator to overcome neuro-motor problems and express themselves through typing," wrote Danielle and Amy Groshell, Gentry's mother.

Brady's book of poetry tells a story of loneliness, isolation, love, hope, trust, family, friendships and much more.



Photo courtesy Danielle Wright

Brady Wright with Gentry Groshell on a recent afternoon.

"I want people to dream in the life of people like me. To understand that being non-verbal does not mean voiceless," said Brady, through the assistance of facilitator Hope Delemeester who has been typing with Brady for three years. "I was locked inside myself. I felt very alone."

Poetry came naturally to Brady and offered a way out.

"In my head, that is where the poetry lives. I don't share everything. The things that I don't share people would not understand," said Brady, who does not have a favorite poem because he said that "it changes with time."

Delemeester, who is the clinic director at BridgeHaven Academy Communication Clinic, said that the facilitation process is an emotional one that starts with an evaluation of fine motor skills and a ladder of communication. Brady started typing the first day they introduced it to him, said Danielle.

"It was also very emotional for us. He wrote 'I sonar my emotions,' meaning that he feels his emotions and the emotions of others," she said.

Brady said that this book has given him a new role in his family.

"I feel some freedom, and they believe in me very much now," he said.

Gentry's art acts as illustrations of Brady's poems and "a glimpse into Gentry's world," according to Brady. Gentry said (through her facilitator and Peace of Heart Community assistant operations director Joanne Serrano) that she has always had a love of art and the color teal.

"It feels great to have people see my art," she said. "I am inspired by the great variety of colors and the great freeing feeling. My life inspires me."

Brady will turn 18 on Jan. 15, so a Meet and Greet will be held on this day at the Peace of Heart Community in Ponte Vedra Beach with both Brady and Gentry present to autograph books. Art and books will be available for purchase including wearable art pieces and prints. The event will take place at 11 a.m., and a portion of the proceeds will go to Peace of Heart and BridgeHaven Academy.

Brady's advice for others trying to find their voice: "Reach deep inside yourself and push your limits."

For more information, visit hostagetosilence.com. Brady's book can be purchased through Amazon, and visit pohc.org to order Groshell's work.

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Briefs

2022 St. Johns County Beach Driving Passes now on sale

St. Johns County Beach Driving Passes are now on sale. St. Johns County resident passes are \$50, non-resident passes are \$100, and handicap passes are \$40. Passes will be available during normal business hours at the following locations through March 1, 2022:

- Tax Collector's Main Office, 4030 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine
- Tax Collector's DuPont Center, 6658 US1 South, St. Augustine
- Tax Collector's Julington Creek Office, 725 Flora Branch Blvd., St. Johns
- Tax Collector's Ponte Vedra Office, 151 Sawgrass Corners Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach
- St. Johns County Beach Services Office, 901 Pope Road, St. Augustine
- St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier Gift Shop, 350 State Road A1A, St. Augustine

Residents must present a valid I.D. with a St. Johns County address or present proof of property tax payments in St. Johns County to purchase a resident pass. A handicap hang tag or proof of qualification must be presented when requesting a handicap pass. Disabled military members are eligible for a free annual pass by showing their military I.D.

or a letter from Veterans Affairs verifying disabled status. Resident, non-resident, and handicap passes are also available for purchase through CivicRec. Delivery for passes purchased online may take up to two weeks. Vehicles accessing the beach do not need a beach pass until March 1, 2022. After March 1, beach passes will be available for purchase (at the same rate) at tollbooth locations and online.

For more information about annual beach driving passes, call the St. Johns County Beach Services Office at (904) 209-0331.

Virtual Pearl Harbor exhibit showcases St. Johns County heroes

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller has posted a new virtual exhibit showcasing St. Johns County residents who responded to the Pearl Harbor attacks, in observance of its 80th anniversary.

"St. Johns County residents responded to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor like millions of other Americans — by lining up to enlist and joining the fight," said St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty. "We are thrilled to share some of their stories of service through their discharge papers with this virtual exhibit."

The "Greatest Generation" exhibit features a few of the thousands of discharge documents recorded with the Clerk's office. Since late 1919, a year after the end of World War I, the St. Johns County Clerk of Courts has recorded military discharge papers.

Clerk Historian Dr. Susan Parker assembled county records, including World War II discharge documents and newspapers, for the online exhibit showcasing the men and women of St. Johns County who served during that period, including:

- A farmer from Hastings, who enlisted soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor and served the entire war.
- A 39-year-old baker and cook who was discharged after four months so he could return to the civilian workforce in an essential industry.
- A woman who served as a message center chief in the Philippines and New Guinea and returned home to work as a telegraph editor for the St. Augustine Record.
- A teacher of the hearing-impaired at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, who served on the anti-submarine patrol protecting the shores of the Americas.

The "Greatest Generation" exhibit can be found online at stjohnsclerk.com/pearl-harbor-veterans.

Cornerstone Classical Academy Choir sings

Cornerstone Classical Academy's choir helped Newcomers Alumnae celebrate an early Christmas with all the trappings when the social group held their monthly Holiday Luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021 at Marsh Landing Country Club in Ponte Vedra Beach. Before lunch, the

second-grade 18-member choir from the Academy sang traditional Christmas Carols. Cornerstone Classical Academy opened in August 2020 and is a tuition-free classical school for grades K-7 presently and increasing to K-12 in five years. The school has already attained an "A" rating and they already envision growing to become a wellspring of future leaders for the Jacksonville area, the nation, and the world.

Newcomers Alumnae members feasted on a special luncheon of hearty lasagna, Caesar salad, a scrumptious holiday dessert, and topped off the occasion with a prosecco toast to ring in the holidays. Many prizes and gift certificates were given out.

The next monthly luncheon will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022 at 11 a.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway. The cost for this luncheon is \$23 and reservations must be made by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible to reserve a seat. The January luncheon will feature something different. Instead of a speaker or entertainment, the program will consist of a round-table discussion entitled "A Strategic Planning Session to Look at Various Options for Our Club in the Future." For more information about Newcomers Alumnae, a club formed in 1998, visit www.newcomersalumnae.fl.wildapricot.org or contact brookemeister@msn.com.

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Goldilocks!



BREED:
Goldendoodle (micro size)

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Beach walks

FAVORITE TREAT:
Anything mom chops in the kitchen and any people food we share

FAVORITE FRIEND:
Neighbor doodle Tucker

HOW YOUR BFF GOT HIS NAME:
It came to mind naturally when we got her at 7 weeks

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



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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

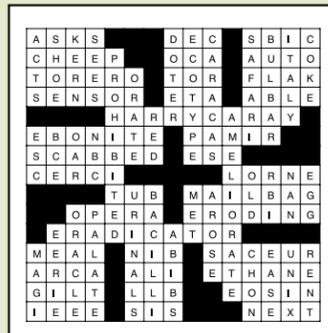
Are you interested in promoting your business in St. Johns Business Monthly, a feature section included in both The CreekLine and Ponte Vedra NewsLine? **Call Linda 904-607-5062**

MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to:
mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.

Last month's Mystery Photo was the bridge at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Our winner was Dean Smith. Congratulations!

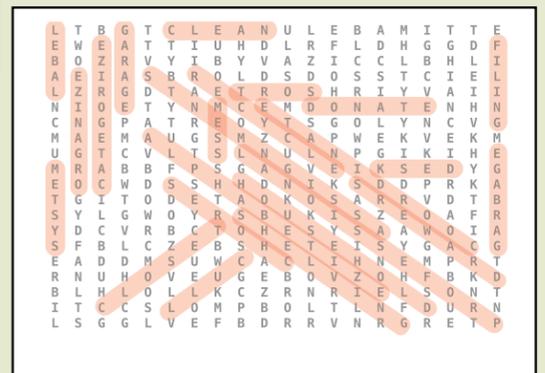


Answers to our Puzzles
PG 10

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Answers: A. orderly B. neat C. sort D. organize



CHAMPIONSHIP SPECTATORS GUIDE will be inserted in the March 2022 issue of Ponte Vedra NewsLine!



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

Community Calendar

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Ponte Vedra Chapter, will meet on Jan. 4, from 10:45 a.m. – 1 p.m. Contact pontevedrachapternsdar@aol.com for additional details

The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable will meet on Monday, Jan. 10 at 12 p.m. via Zoom. Cory Darling, site administrator, Ascension St. Vincents, St. Johns County Campus will be the speaker and will discuss the new hospital. Email info@sjcroundtable.org to register for the meeting or for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library will host the Dr. Gerson Yessin Music Series, presenting the Bel Suono Duo of flutist Rhonda Cassandra and harpist Kayo Ishimaru on Tuesday, Jan. 11. Doors open at 6 p.m. for the 6:30 p.m. concert. The concert is free.

Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 18 at 6 p.m. for Chat & Chew before the 6:30 p.m. meeting at Christ Episcopal Church, Room 106, 400 San Juan Road. Ponte Vedra resident and former US Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND) will address "What's the Matter with Congress? Reflections of a former member."

The Newcomers of North St. Johns will host a meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 18 beginning at 11:15 a.m. at Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club in Green Cove Springs. The event will feature entertainment by musician De Luna, who plays the harp and flute. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$33 for members. All reservations must be received by Jan. 7. Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net to register. The Newcomers of North St. Johns offers a wide variety of activities, including smaller lunch groups, wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, holiday parties, day trips and cultural events.

The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library will feature Jim Draper, multi-talented artist in drawing, painting, photography, video and writing on Tuesday, Jan. 18. The program starts at 6:30 p.m. and the doors open at 6 p.m. Draper has taught drawing and painting at Florida State College and Flagler College, but is now retired and working full-time in his studio.

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club presents Julie Schilbrack discussing "Gardening Like a Master" on Jan. 19 from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Nona Blue Modern Tavern. Register for this event at www.pontevedrawomansclub.com.

The Savvy Job Hunters Ministry Zoom Workshop, "Do What You Are: Connecting Personality Types to Careers" will be held on Jan. 21 from 10 a.m. — 12 p.m. Email nwhite@christepiscopalchurch.org to register.

GTM Research Reserve will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, Jan. 22 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. No registration is required; meet at the Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Visit gtmnerr.org for more information.

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club presents Viva Las Vegas Casino Night and Silent Auction on Jan. 22 from 6 p.m. – 10 p.m. at Fairfield Ponte Vedra Clubhouse. Limited tickets are available for \$100. Register for this event at www.pontevedrawomansclub.com.

The St. Johns County School District Volunteer Blitz will be held on Thursday, Jan. 27 from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the Character Counts Conference Center, First Coast Technical College, 2980 Collins Ave. in St. Augustine. Come and learn about tutoring and mentoring in the St. Johns County School District.

Sarah Arnold selected by Gov. DeSantis to fill District 2 seat

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Dec. 13, Governor Ron DeSantis announced the appointment of Sarah Arnold to the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners. Arnold will fill the vacancy left in the District 2 seat when Jeb Smith resigned to become the president of the Florida Farm Bureau. She will serve the remainder of the unexpired term, until the 2022 election for the seat, at which time she could run for election to a full term if she chose.

Arnold, of St. Augustine, is the Director of Resource Development for the United Way of St. Johns County. She serves on the boards of the Dream Big! Foundation and the Child Guidance Center of Jacksonville. Arnold is a member of the Rotary Club of St. Johns and volunteers with Armstrong Meal Distribution and Read for the Record.

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

Q: What is the latest on the county redistricting for school board and county commission as required with the latest census?

A: The redistricting is complete. I think the process went smoothly and we gave the opportunity for public input. We on the school board had time to think and decide how we wanted to proceed. District 4 needed to shrink geographically due to the population increase over the past 10 years. The original redistricting proposal did not include Neck Road or south of Mickler's in District 4, but the final plan does include south of Mickler's and Guana in our district. Overall, I'm pleased with how it turned out.

Q: Has the annual High School Showcase been scheduled?

A: Yes, this event that gives students and their families the opportunity to learn about the high school Programs of Choice and meet representatives from each high school will be held on Jan. 13, 2022 from 3:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. at the World Golf Village Convention Center.

Q: Can you give an update on the annual Mayo SPARK event?

A: This was held virtually on Dec. 7 and Ponte Vedra High School was well represented. This is like a science fair with mentoring as students begin in the summer and are paired with doctors from Mayo for projects including cancer research. I continue to be amazed at the presentations and the work that the students put in. Participating from Ponte Vedra were Emma Chirila, Emily Dorairaj, Andrew Liu, Kathryn Shapiro and Jackson Wolfe.

Q: What can you tell us about the recent recognition of the School Related Employees of the Year?

A: The School Related Employee of the Year celebration was held on Dec. 9 in World Golf Village. There was such excitement and appreciation among the attendees to be in person again. I'd like to congratulate District 4 school level School Related Employees of the Year: Landrum Middle School, Courtenay Page; Nease High School, Nicole Cooks; Ocean Palms, Kathleen MacGilvray; Palencia Elementary, Nelson Chute; Palm Valley Academy, Alice Fasula; Pine Island Academy, Kathleen Tompkins; Ponte Vedra High School, Daniel Clark; PVPV/Rawlings, Bradson Ephraim; and Valley Ridge Academy, Joy Calvo.

Q: Do you have any kudos to share?

A: I'd like to congratulate brand new 2021-22 Sunshine State Scholar Alternate Tabitha Gottipati from Nease High School.

I'd also like to give kudos to the Nease NJROTC for continuing to excel in their competitions.

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

A: This is an interesting story: PVPV/Rawlings was awarded a Character Counts! grant in 2018, which is to be used to fund things that will help develop character in the school. The school decided to sponsor a service dog at K9s for Warriors. Due to COVID, both the sponsorship and the training of the dog were delayed, but on Dec. 16 the dog, named "Rawly" after the school, and his assigned Army veteran graduated from the program.

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

Q: Can you comment on the persistent issue of students and threats of school violence?

A: The main message I want to get out is this: parents, kids ... if you see something, say something. Contact the authorities. Never just assume that spoken threats or threats on social media are a joke. These threats are crimes with serious consequences and we always take them very seriously.

Q: Can you elaborate on the crime aspect?

A: There are two primary Florida Statutes that deal with making threats of violence. Both are considered second degree felonies, which are punishable by 15 years in the Florida state prison system.

First, Fla. Statute 836.10 deals with written threats to kill, or do bodily harm or conduct a mass shooting. "Written" includes a letter or an electronic post on social media.

Secondly, Fla. Statute 790.163 deals with making a false report concerning planting a bomb or the use of a weapon

in a violent manner. This can be spoken to someone or via a phone call.

Just the act of making a threat, either written or verbally, is a crime. Even if you think or someone says it's just a joke, it's a crime. Saying you didn't mean it or you were joking is not a defense.

Q: Why is this taken so seriously?

A: There are so many consequences to verbal or written threats of violence, even if they are not actually carried out. We always have to take threats seriously, so in the event a written or verbal threat against a school is received, the school will shut down. Law enforcement commits massive resources to working to protect students. Kids may be locked in classrooms and traumatized, not knowing if the threat is real or not. Going forward in their lives after experiencing something so harrowing, mental and emotional trauma often occur.

So, this is no joking matter. We treat each threat as if it's real — and we need everyone to report what they see and hear.



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

Q: Is the redistricting process complete?

A: Locally, yes. The Board of County Commissioners and the School Board adopted their new voting districts on Dec. 9, 2021. Maps of the new districts are available on our website at votesjc.gov. Click on the “Redistricting 2021” icon to view all related documents and maps. The largest changes in district lines occurred in District 1 and District 4, which have both been greatly reduced in size. Districts 2, 3 and 5 increased in size to equalize the population across the districts.

Statewide redistricting continues. The state legislature scheduled to meet between Jan. 11 and March 11, 2022 in Tallahassee to review potential maps and adopt new districts. New Congressional, Florida Senate, and Florida House district lines will be adopted during the session. A link to

the State’s 2022 redistricting page is also available on our website. Many maps have already been proposed and are available for public viewing. This is a great place for you to keep up with the committee meetings and action being taken on adoption of the new districts by the state legislature.

Q: What is the Supervisors of Elections’ role in the redistricting process?

A: Since our voting precinct lines are based on County Commission and School Board district lines, precinct lines must now be redrawn based on the new districts. Many precinct numbers will be changing, and polling places are also under review. Due to population growth in our county, we anticipate adding precincts and polling places in preparation for

busy elections in 2022 and 2024. Once the state adopts their districts and my office receives their information, we can finalize our precinct lines and new polling places.

Q: How does that affect me as a voter?

A: District lines affect representation of your elected officials, the races that appear on your ballot and who you vote for in an election. Your representatives, precinct number and polling place may change.

Q: When and how will I be notified of these changes?

A: At the completion of the redistricting project in Tallahassee, all voters in St. Johns County will be mailed a new voter information card. The card will reflect your new district, precinct and polling place. Our goal is to mail these in May.

Q: Will these new changes affect the 2022 elections?

A: Yes. Candidates who wish to run for office must file their paperwork with the Elections Office, or the Division of Elections in Tallahassee to obtain a position on the ballot. The deadline to file to run for office is noon on June 17, 2022.

Q: How can I keep up with the changes and other pertinent election information?

A: In order to help keep you updated on current elections news, my office is launching a new email newsletter in March. Visit votesjc.gov and submit your email address to subscribe.

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

Q: Can you give some background on tangible personal property?

A: Tangible personal property taxes are confusing to a lot of business owners who either don’t know they exist or don’t understand them. If you own a business in St. Johns County, you are required to file a tangible personal property tax return. This is an ad valorem tax and applied to the value of your business assets like equipment, furniture and computers. It doesn’t matter how large or small your business is, whether it is a lawn care business or hair salon or major manufacturer. It also doesn’t matter if you own or rent the real estate that houses your business.

Q: What are some business assets that are exempt from tangible personal property tax?

A: If the assets of a business are tagged motor vehicles, they are not subject to the tax. Inventory held for sale is also not subject to the tax. So, if your business sells widgets to the public, the widgets are not subject to tangible personal property tax, but the shelves that hold them are subject.

On the other hand, if you are in the business of renting furnished residential property, the furniture inside the property is subject to the tax.

Q: What is the deadline to file the tangible personal property tax return?

A: We send out a postcard reminding business owners about the deadline, which is April 1. If you notify our office in advance, we can give an extension until May 1. If you didn’t notify us prior to April 1, we cannot give the extension.

You can file your tangible personal property tax on paper or online on our website.

Q: What happens if a business doesn’t file a tangible personal property tax return?

A: We are required by the state of Florida to estimate the value of your assets and you will be taxed on that value with no opportunity for appeal.

Q: How much is the tax?

A: If the value of your business’ assets are \$25,000 or less, you are exempt from tangible personal property taxes, but you must still file one time. When you file the first time, you will be exempted and not have to file again, unless your business assets grow to more than \$25,000. It’s very important to file because if you don’t file, or file late, there are penalties.

If your business assets are valued at more than \$25,000, the tangible personal property tax is applied the same millage as real property.

Q: What are the penalties for filing late?

A: There is a 5 percent penalty per month until you file, up to a total of 25 percent.

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.



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Q&A with St. Johns County Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon Patty

Q: What are some of the priority projects for the Clerk of Court's office for 2022?

A: A key project for us in 2022 is implementing "taxpayer standards" across the office. Many times, government agencies, especially ones like us that have been in service for decades or even centuries, have procedures and processes in place that are completed a certain way "because that's how it is always done." This is what I consider "office standards" and are generally — though not always — outdated and inefficient with time and resources.

We are actively working to elevate the standards toward what taxpayers would demand. For example, strict financial accounting, modernizing processes and innovative, world-class consumer service. Our goal is to ensure the more than 1,000 functions we accomplish are done as if a resident is reviewing our work. And, as a resident of our great county and the elected clerk, I am your representative in office and ensure all of us do our best with the public in mind, every day.

Q: You recently updated your online veterans' display. What can you tell us about the new exhibit?

A: Our new virtual exhibit showcases St. Johns County residents who responded to the 1941 Pearl Harbor attacks, in observance of its 80th anniversary on Dec. 7. Like millions of other Americans, our residents lined up to enlist and join the fight. Clerk Historian Dr. Susan Parker assembled county records, including World War II discharge documents and newspapers, for the online exhibit, called "The Greatest Generation," showcasing the men and women of St. Johns County who served during that period. Among them is a farmer from Hastings who enlisted soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor and served the entire war, and a teacher of the hearing-impaired at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine who served on the anti-submarine patrol protecting the shores of the Americas. Each discharge document is a mini-story — that's really fascinating to many of us. The virtual

exhibit can be found online at stjohnsclerk.com/pearl-harbor-veterans.

Q: Does the Clerk's office record many of these discharge documents?

A: Not as many as we would like, as St. Johns County has over 20,000 veterans. Recording separation documents, or DD 214s, with us is secure, free and quick, plus it ensures a copy is readily available in case the original is lost or destroyed. In addition, DD-214s are protected for privacy for 62 years past separation from the military, per the National Archives.

Q: Where can readers get more information about your office?

A: Our website, stjohnsclerk.com, offers a lot of information — from online payment of traffic tickets or court fees to court record searches and much more. To stay up to date on happenings, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. To talk to a clerk, call our main number at (904) 819-3600 and our top-notch customer service staff would be glad to help you or connect you with the right expert.

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In loving memory of
John Lee Haines

In loving memory of...

JOHN LEE HAINES
John Lee Haines, formerly of Rockport, Ind., passed on December 21, 2020 at his home in Orlando, Fla., surrounded by his loving family after losing his battle with cancer. He was preceded in death by his mother Marjorie K. Haines, who passed in 1982 and his father John W. Haines who passed in 1948. He was a loving husband and father. His survivors include his wife of 36 years, Ann Carter Haines, his brother, David Haines (Dinah), of Louisville, Ind.; six children: of Naples, Fla.; Mark Pettus (Colleen) of Alavana, Fla.; (Kim) of Orlando, Fla.; Matthew Pettus (Angela) of Coral Springs, Fla.; Jeremy Pettus (Ashli), of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; and 18 great grandchildren. He graduated from Rockport High School in 1958 and was later a partner in M&B Customs (stands for Main local car repair and customization facility. A memorial is planned at a later date in his hometown of Rockport and following his wishes will take place on the banks of the Ohio River, which he loved.

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The importance of hearing health

By Chandra Manning
mail@floridanewline.com

Those with hearing loss often cite this quote attributed to Helen Keller: “Blindness separates us from things, deafness separates us from people.” Our hearing is one of our most vital senses. It keeps us connected to our loved ones, our coworkers, our doctors and nurses. It may be surprising to know that hearing also is linked to fall risks, dementia, depression, and more.

Our hearing is an important part of maintaining one of our most basic human needs — connection to others; however, the significance of taking care of your hearing goes well beyond your

ability to hear your spouse at the dinner table or your grandchild say their first word. It’s about keeping your brain healthy. It’s no secret that our bodies are systemic. Each part works with another, or several other parts. Hearing is no different. Your ears work closely with your brain, receiving signals that tell you the waitress is asking you a question, a bird is chirping outside of your window, or glass broke in the kitchen. What happens when your brain isn’t receiving those signals? Eventually, it affects your cognitive processing.

Just like our muscles need to move to stay healthy and strong, your brain

needs to receive sounds to stay active. If you don’t move your arm for an entire year, imagine what would happen to it. Now imagine what happens to the brain if it’s not active in an area for an entire year. Unfortunately, the average person waits about seven years to treat their hearing loss, and that’s after they notice they’re struggling. It’s unhealthy to let your brain go without stimulation for that long. It can lead to other, sometimes more serious, health concerns.

When do you know it’s time to address your hearing? Several signs help you know it’s time. Do you struggle to hear on the phone or when watching TV? Do

you ask people to repeat themselves often, or does it seem like people mumble a lot? Has someone close to you said something about your hearing?

The good news is that help is easy to come by. Nearly all insurances will cover a hearing evaluation, so you can start by simply learning your hearing status today. Have your primary care fax a referral, or order for a hearing test, to your local audiologist. Keep your hearing — and keep your brain processing, healthy and active!

Chandra Manning is Chief Operating Officer, Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center.

Simple strategies to combat stress

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Just about everyone experiences stressful situations. Sometimes a measure of stress can provide motivation to do one’s best or strive for an especially lofty goal; however, when stress becomes a chronic condition, it can adversely affect individuals’ quality of life and even their overall health.

Harvard Medical School says stress can manifest itself in myriad ways. Stress can cause tension headaches, indigestion, aches and pains, or even heart palpitations, and it may affect the mind by making it hard to concentrate or make decisions. Many people experience stress through emotional or psychological symptoms, such as irritability or feeling down. Learning how to effectively

manage stress is essential for individuals’ overall well-being.

Exercise regularly: Exercise serves many functions, including acting as a potent stress relief strategy. The Cleveland Clinic says aerobic exercise releases endorphins, which are natural substances that help a person feel better and maintain a positive attitude. Movement activities like yoga or Tai Chi also can relax the mind and body and promote physical health.

Take media breaks: Overwhelming oneself with a barrage of negative news stories or constant information can increase stress levels. Individuals can strive to remain informed and still build breaks into their schedules. Shut off

Stress cont. on pg. 13

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Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Bonnie Yales

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Bonnie Yales found her love of art at a young age by watching her mother knit and crochet. “My mother was very creative and very talented,” said Yales, a Ponte Vedra Beach resident and artist. It wasn’t long before Yales began expressing herself through tapestry, needlepoint and embroidery. “I really liked the effect of being drawn into a work of art because of the different textures.” Now more than 500 synagogues, churches, institutions and private homes in many different countries feature Yales’ needlepoint tapestries and textiles. When Yales went to Israel with her late husband (who was a rabbi) on one of his sabbaticals, she found yet another medium that she loved: mixed media. Within this realm, Yales discovered what has become a common theme in her paintings — three doves. She uses the doves to symbolize Christianity, Judaism and Islam all working together for a peaceful world. Yales often dreams about what she will create. “My watercolor and mixed media paintings depict rural scenes and floral and peaceful settings, a consequence of my extensive travels,” said Yales, who was born in Cincinnati and lived in Boston for 40 years. “I am best known for visions of a peaceful and harmonious world which is reflected in my work.” It is her desire to continue sharing this



Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps
Bonnie Yales

message with the world, and she hopes to return to Israel one day, a place that holds a special place in her heart.

Q: What is your favorite artistic subject?

A: One of my favorite subjects is my religious homeland. The way all the buildings in Jerusalem turn pink because of the way the light reflects off the stone, believe it or not, it feels like the most peaceful place on Earth.

Q: Share what you did during your time in Israel.

A: I went to the Art Academy to study with the professors there. I was taught for a year by tapestry artist George Goldstein. He was an artist and architect who built synagogues and homes. He was my mentor without question.

Q: I understand that you taught art on cruise lines and currently teach at UNF. Describe these experiences.

A: I taught painting and needlepoint on some major cruise lines such as

Royal Caribbean, Norwegian and Princess for 12 years as a member of their enrichment program. At UNF, I teach classes in the Olli program for continuing education (55 and over). I teach classes in needle arts and experimental painting. I like the people. I make my classes fun, and they always come out with finished products. I love being with people and turning them on to art. I plan to teach at the Atlantic Beach Arts Market as well where some of my work is featured. I was invited to join the juried Atlantic Beach Arts Market.

Q: Art played a part in meeting your husband Ray Gibson. Can you explain that meeting?

A: We met at an art gallery where my work was being featured. I happened to go alone for this opening, and I was just sitting there when he asked to sit next to me. We ended up going to dinner and then brunch the next day. We have been married for 14 years. He has his own handyman business and used to be the lead framer for Michaels.

Q: What are some of your most cherished career highlights?

A: My work is exhibited at the State Capitol buildings of Boston and Columbus. I thought I was going to faint when I received this honor. It was so overwhelming and impactful. My work is also exhibited at the Hebrew Union College chapel, the YMCA and the King David hotel in Jerusalem. I also won the first-place award at the “National League of American Pen Women” conference in Daytona Beach for my tapestry art entitled “War and Peace.”

[Author’s Note: Yales’ work is currently being represented at A’propos Boutique in Ponte Vedra Beach and at the Atlantic Beach Arts Market.]

Riverwood cont. from pg.1

“We are looking forward to hosting the 2022 event, scheduled for Nov. 7,” said Mike Mattson, Riverwood Men’s Club president. “Mark your calendars now!”

Visit www.stfrancisshelter.org/port-in-the-storm for more information about Port in the Storm and visit riverwood-mensclub.org for more information about the Riverwood Men’s Club.

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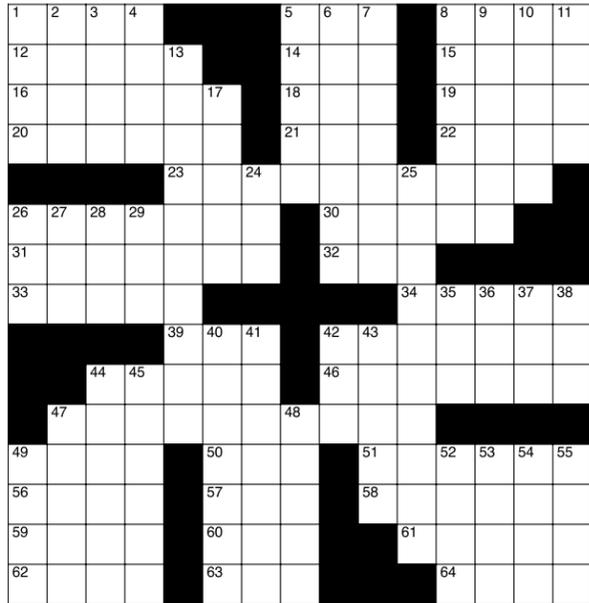
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Requests
5. Calendar month
8. Invests in little enterprises
12. Bird sound
14. S. American plant cultivated for tubers
15. Car
16. Bullfighter
18. Hill (Celtic)
19. Strong criticism
20. Detector
21. When you hope to get there
22. Having the skill to do something
23. Legendary MLB broadcaster
26. Vulcanite
30. C. Asian mountain range
31. In a way, healed
32. Midway between east and southeast
33. Small appendages of insects
34. ___ Greene, "Bonanza" actor

CLUES DOWN

39. A place to bathe
42. Postal worker accessory
44. Classical music
46. A way of wrecking
47. Terminator
49. You eat three a day
50. Pointed end of a pen
51. NATO official (abbr.)
56. Genus of clams
57. Boxing's "G.O.A.T."
58. A colorless, odorless gas used as fuel
59. Covered thinly with gold paint
60. Bachelor of Laws
61. Red fluorescent dye
62. Engineering group
63. Female sibling
64. Adjacent

CLUES DOWN

1. What a thespian does
2. Footwear
3. Adjust spacing between
4. Witnesses
5. Who shows excessive fondness
6. Distinct form of a plant
7. National capital
8. Hunting expedition
9. Related to medulla oblongata
10. European country
11. Cola
13. Excluded from use or mention
17. Speak
24. Bloodshot
25. Make better
26. Keyboard key
27. Type of degree
28. Paddle
29. Peacock network

35. Not young
36. Baseball stat
37. One's grandmother
38. Breakfast food
40. Bathroom features
41. Disease-causing bacterium
42. NY ballplayer
43. Got up
44. Prophet
45. Part of the mouth
47. Unnatural
48. Acronym for brain science study
49. Three are famous
52. Languages spoken in Patagonia
53. Freedom from difficulty
54. Widely used OS
55. Many people pay it

GET ORGANIZED WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- ALPHABETIZE
- ASSIGNMENTS
- CATEGORIZE
- CHORES
- CLEAN
- CLOSET
- COORDINATE
- CULL
- DESK
- DONATE
- DRAWERS
- FILING
- GARAGE
- GARBAGE
- HOUSEHOLD
- LABEL
- MESS
- ORGANIZE
- PROFESSIONAL
- RECYCLE
- SHELVING
- SORT
- SYSTEM

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to getting organized.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 26 = R)

- A. 12 26 7 19 26 4 25
Clue: Methodically arranged
- B. 23 19 16 11
Clue: Tidy
- C. 24 12 26 11
Clue: Categorize
- D. 12 26 15 16 23 1 6 19
Clue: Order

PVHS Happenings: New opportunity for Asian youth writer

By Sade Goodridge
mail@floridanewline.com

On Nov. 19, 2021, Leila Wickliffe, a junior at Ponte Vedra High School received exciting news — she had been accepted into a national program called “Dear Asian Youth” where she could write articles about people like her.

“Dear Asian Youth” is an online website started in May 2020 by a high school junior, Stephanie Hu, where she could have a space to publish her poetry. After receiving such positive responses, she opened the platform to other Asian writers so that they could have a space to share their stories as well. Since then, “Dear Asian Youth” has expanded from simply being a site to publish poetry to a posting of current events pertaining to minorities and opinion editorials on the Asian experience to name a few.

Wickliffe found “Dear Asian Youth” through a friend who subsequently encouraged her to apply for any openings within that platform. She applied for the current events category and was delighted to learn not too long later that it had been accepted. In the current event’s position, Wickliffe has been given the task of sending in both a breaking news story and an investigative article every six weeks or so. While the breaking news story focuses on current events of any issue, the investigative reporting concentrates on the Asian community. Examples of this are articles on Asian beauty standards and Asian discrimination.



Photo courtesy Jennifer Wickliffe
Leila Wickliffe

Wickliffe described the application process as not being too difficult. She detailed how she had to fill out an application and undergo an interview before being accepted. She advised that if others have an interest in applying, they should keep an eye out on their Instagram page @dearasianyouth, as applications for positions don’t open often.

Wickliffe considers writing for “Dear Asian Youth” incredibly important to write for Asian topics on an Asian-focused site because it gives her and other writers a voice that she may not have had otherwise. She describes it as being able to “report on topics that are important to me that I usually don’t see on mainstream media.” She also sees it as rewarding and finds that the ability to learn about issues from around the world by her peers is an experience she won’t soon forget.

Have you seen this bench?

Chances are you have if you’ve visited Bird Island Park in the last 10 months. Family members of Judy Duvall, long time resident of Ponte Vedra Beach and lover of Bird Island Park erected this bench in honor of their beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, who passed away from dementia in August 2020. Judy loved everything about being outside, especially in Florida, which the bench boldly reads. Her husband Buddy, who works part-time at Ace Hardware, delivers flowers three times a week to local residents, churches and funeral homes — and honors his beloved partner of 62 years by visiting and leaving flowers out on his daily walkabout. Next time you’re visiting Bird Island Park, take a moment and visit “Judy’s



Photos courtesy Chris Bradley

Bench.” Say hello and enjoy being outdoors in Florida — where Judy said she always felt better. Pictured are Judy and Buddy Duvall as well as Judy’s Bench.

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New SJSO center designed to efficiently accommodate employees who serve community

By Martie Thompson
 editor@floridanewsline.com

Have you ever wondered about the sizable building clearly visible on the west side of Interstate 95, just south of State Road 16? Known as the Emergency Communications and Training Center, it is the fruition of a years-long vision by leaders in the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office to have a facility to accommodate multiple departments under one roof.

The building houses the Operations Division, which encompasses training, communications, special operations, and the marine and air units. Slightly over half of the building is dedicated to training functions and includes classrooms with state of the art technology, a defensive tactics room for physical training, and a simulator room, where specialty cameras project realistic situations on a screen for trainees to learn to assess and react quickly in life or death situations.

Behind the building is a driving track where deputies can practice PIT (pursuit intervention technique) maneuvers, a tactic by which a pursuing car can force a fleeing car to turn sideways abruptly, causing the driver to lose control and stop. Multiple gun ranges onsite provide for the most modern firearms training in a very controlled environment.



Photo courtesy Rhonda Ramos

The Emergency Communications and Training Center, located on Law Enforcement Way off Interstate 95.

Also on the property is a large retention pond, which in addition to providing drainage, also contains part of an old plane, a school bus, and a vehicle — all submerged to allow for practice drills for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office dive team.

Director of Operations Russ Martin said having the agency's training available locally and in one place allows the sheriff's office to save money on travel to out-of-county facilities.

"We can set the culture with new hires on the very first day on the job," Martin said. "We provide training designed by

us, for us, and given by us — plus we get to host it in our own county. We can leverage these cost savings to provide better customer service to our St. Johns County residents."

Since the building also serves as the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office's emergency management center, it needs to be self-sufficient. An expansive locker room as well as a full kitchen and dining room allow for 24-hour stays by essential personnel in the event of a natural disaster.

The remainder of the building is occupied by the Communications Center, which includes the 911 call center for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and St. Johns County Fire and Rescue, as well as dispatching for the St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach police departments. Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST), or 911 operators, work on shifts around the clock handling hundreds of 911 calls daily. Each station is set up with six large screens that allow the PST to access the phone system, multiple CAD (computer aided dispatch) screens, as well as maps that allow them to track the closest deputy to a call or determine the location of a call.

"All calls for service come through us," said Communications Manager Nadyne Sneyd. "We have to answer a 911 call in 10 seconds or less. It's busy all the time. I like to call it controlled chaos."

Public Safety Telecommunicators transfer calls for fire or EMS to the St. Johns Fire and Rescue dispatchers, which share the room with them. Large screens on the wall of the Comm Center show Florida Department of Transportation cameras at the county's busiest intersections, as well as a screen used to monitor the tracking devices of domestic violence offenders.

Next to the Comm Center is the Real Time Intelligence Center. Here, subject matter experts utilize the latest in technology for real time crime solving. They track crime as it is in progress in St. Johns County and relay their research to deputies in the field.

"Our intelligence analysts are civilians assigned as liaisons to investigative units as well as sworn detectives," said George Harrigan, Lieutenant of Intelligence/Property Crimes.

Martin said that due to the increase in the county's population as well as the desire to proactively hire for the future, more Public Safety Telecommunicators are needed and SJSO is actively hiring. He pointed out that PSTs are the first line of connectivity between service requested by a resident and the service that actually arrives at their door.

"Let us pay you a good salary including benefits, even while in training, and provide you a skill you can use in any organization," Martin said he tells potential employees.

Requirements for the position include a high school diploma or GED equivalent, a valid Florida driver's license, good moral character and the ability to work rotating 12-hour shifts. Visit www.sjso.org/careers for more information.



Photo courtesy Martie Thompson
 The Comm Center operates 24/7.

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PopHistory

The Limit of Man's Endurance

By Scott A. Grant

When humanity emerged from the calamity of the Second World War, we saw definite limits to man's endurance. One of those limits was the four-minute mile. It was an unconquerable barrier, like Mount Everest. Man could not run that fast or climb that high.

Between the wars, a young American named Glenn Cunningham from Kansas had come close. He even claimed to have broken the four-minute barrier once in practice. But as Allen Iverson taught us: practice doesn't count.

Cunningham's story is interesting. At a young age he had suffered massive burns over the lower parts of his body. Doctors said he would never walk again. His father refused to accept the diagnosis and nightly massaged his son's damaged legs with liniment. Throughout the ordeal, his father quoted from the Bible, from the book of Isaiah.

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength,

- they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
- they shall run and not be weary,
- they shall walk and not faint.

Then, suddenly, in 1953, Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary conquered Everest. I mention Norgay first because for almost half a century, he was all but ignored. By many accounts, the indomitable local Sherpa pulled Hillary and the expedition up the slopes towards that final ascent the two men would make together. At one point, Hillary fell. Tenzing saved his life.

Just as suddenly, in 1954, the four-minute mile came under serious assault. Three friends from Oxford University had a plan. They would work together to push the fastest of the three to the record.

May 6, 1954, was a cold and rainy day in Oxford, England. Roger Bannister, a young medical student, made his morning rounds, nervously awaiting the afternoon and his date with destiny. It seemed a bad day to make the attempt, what with the weather, but they all knew they might not get another chance.

Chris Brasher would pace the first two laps of the race, Chris Chataway the third, leaving Bannister alone against the clock for the final lap. Brasher, who went on to win a gold medal in the

1956 Olympics and found the London Marathon, went out in a good time. Bannister, who was running easily kept calling out "faster," but Brasher did his job and held the pace to 58 seconds for the first lap and 1:58 at the half.

The crowd was electric as Chataway pushed into the lead. The four-minute mile was within reach! The pace slowed in lap 3 to three minutes and one second. Suddenly, four minutes seemed in jeopardy. Chataway, who was supposed to drop out, ran on, sprinting really, pushing himself to exhaustion. Bannister exploded past Chataway on the back stretch, lengthening his stride and surging towards immortality. His head back, Bannister leapt at the finish and then collapsed. No one in the stadium knew for sure if the lad had succeeded, until the time was announced.

Norris McWhirter called the race. When he announced the time, the crowd

exploded at the number "3" and the realization that one of the great obstacles had been broken. No one heard the rest of the time over the screaming exaltation of the crowd.

Later that summer, the owner of a brewery in Ireland called Guinness decided that the world needed a book of records. One of his employees, Chris Chataway suggested twin college chums Norris and Ross McWhirter to compile what would become the Guinness Book of World Records.

Not surprisingly, the first record the pair compiled was Bannister's world record mile time of 3 minutes, 59.4 seconds. To this day more people have climbed Everest than have run the mile in under four minutes.

Scott Grant is a local historian and author. By day he is Chief Investment Officer at Standfast Asset Mgmt. in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Stress cont. from pg. 8

news programs, turn over the newspaper or tune out of social media from time to time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that individuals who are stressed out by world events reduce the number of times they read the news or check the headlines each day.

Meditate or perform breathing exercises: Breathing and meditation can help alleviate stress, according to the American Heart Association. A quick meditation

can provide some perspective. If a situation is stressful, go for a walk or take a few slow, deep breaths until the body relaxes. Harvard Medical School also says meditation can induce a relaxation response, which is an antidote to stress.

Change negatives to positives: Negative self-talk may increase stress, but positive self-talk can help a person calm down. Individuals should practice positive self-talk every day. Instead of saying, "I hate when this happens," say, "I know how to deal with this, I've done it before."





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Travel

Getaway to Jekyll Island

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

Jekyll Island, one of Georgia's Golden Isles, rests about 90 minutes north of Jacksonville. The island is owned and operated as a Georgia state park and becomes a relaxing getaway any time of the year.

Before 1954, the only way to reach Jekyll was by boat — but the history of the seven-mile long isle goes back much farther and proves quite interesting. An Indian mound testifies the first inhabitants: the Guale and Mocama tribes. Then in 1747, British General Oglethorpe sent Major William Horton to build an outpost to help protect Fort Frederica. With the help of indentured servants, he made a home. The remains of Horton's House stand off-road, open for visitors. There's a Spanish moss-draped trail to hike and signage across the road to fill you in on the early history.

Next came the DuBignon family, and in 1879 their descendants established a private hunting club that aimed to attract wealthy patrons. The barons of industry and finance (think Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Astor, Pulitzer, Biddle, Whitney,



A "cottage" on Millionaire's Row.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Driftwood Beach.

Morgan) were enticed and brought their families. In fact, by 1886, the Jekyll Island Club became, according to Munsey's Magazine, "the richest, most exclusive, inaccessible club in the world."

Some families built winter "cottages" (mansions), and many still stand. But these wealthy figures didn't just come to Jekyll for hunting and relaxation; they came to meet secretly. Together they formed what became the Federal Reserve System.

The club continued to prosper with the addition of the Great Dunes Golf Course, which opened in 1926; however, when WWII descended, the threat of German submarine activity along the coast caused the US government to evacuate the island.

The 7,500-acre isle sat unused until Georgia purchased it in 1948 for \$675,000. For comparison, in 2020 dollars, that amount would be \$7.8 million, a bargain purchase likened to the sale of Manhattan. The state opened the park in 1954 after constructing the causeway bridge to allow more public access.

The abandoned Jekyll Island Club was eventually renovated and reopened as a hotel in 1987. An overnight getaway at the resort still remains a splurge, but promises grand memories.

A stroll around the luxury property and National Historic District is a must; it's free. Walk down Millionaire's Row, past the restored cottages from the Gilded Age. Again, signage helps you understand the buildings of the former era. You can also tour this district via a tram;

check for times and pricing. History buffs may also enjoy a look through the Mosaic Jekyll Island Museum.

You'll find 20 miles of safe biking paths, especially nice since they sit off the main road. Naturally, there is a mini-golf course and hiking trails. A full-size water-park may surprise you, considering the zoning restrictions, but kids love it.

Indulge in eight miles of uncrowded beaches, my favorite being Driftwood Beach. For decades, the location suffered from erosion, so what was once a stately maritime forest is now a petrified tree toppled expanse. The beach lies covered by what looks like giant pieces of driftwood — a photographer's delight; however, watch for tidal changes.

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center, a hospital for the injured species, makes an excellent educational experience for the whole family. You can look through a glass wall and watch the veterinary staff working on an animal if lucky.

If a stay at the Jekyll Island Club Resort doesn't fit your budget, consider the Beachview Club Hotel, Holiday Inn, or a lovely Westin directly on the beach. Even less costly is the RV and tent camp park. Whichever, you'll escape traffic, crowded beaches and indulge in open green space.

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



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