



**Patriotic Ponte Vedra** cont. on pg. 2

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# Returning in September! Back to School Guide



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**Linda Gay**  
(904) 607-5062

**Linda@FloridanewsLine.com**

**Patriotic Ponte Vedra** cont. from pg. 1  
together as a community to make meaningful projects happen. Both men credit the Ponte Vedra MSD and Chairman Al Hollon, the community, Ponte Vedra Inn and Club, and the Ponte Vedra Community Association with tremendous support for Patriotic Ponte Vedra. Cellucci added that Ponte Vedra Boulevard resident Kristina Greco was an integral part of extending the project along the boulevard for Phase Two and helped raise money for the cause.

“She has continued to offer help if needed for the project, and we are grateful to her for her enthusiasm and support,” said Cellucci.

Last year, the Beaches Exchange Club honored Cellucci and Ingram with a plaque as a recipient of the “Proudly We Hail” program for their work to organize and implement Patriotic Ponte Vedra.

Ingram said they were honored by the award and grateful for the community support that brought the patriotic project to fruition.

“I just think it makes us all feel proud of the country we live in,”

said Ingram.

[Author’s note: Anyone who would like to donate to Patriotic Ponte Vedra, should make checks payable to Patriotic Ponte Vedra and mail to Patriotic Ponte Vedra, P.O. Box 242, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32004. For questions about expanding the flags to more interior streets in the Ponte Vedra Boulevard area, email Cellucci at jacchnslt@aol.com.]



Photo courtesy Belk Ingram  
Patriotic Ponte Vedra flags on display for July 4th off Ponte Vedra Boulevard.

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(detail) John Frederick Kensett (American, 1816 - 72), *Singing Beach & Eagle Rock, Magnolia, Massachusetts*, 1864, oil on canvas, Courtesy of the Thomas H. and Diane DeMell Jacobsen Ph.D. Foundation.



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Ponte Vedra NewsLine Community Newspaper is a free monthly publication distributed via bulk mail to all addresses in Zip Codes 32081 and 32082. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2023.



# BFF

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**Favorite Activity:**  
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**Favorite Treat:**  
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**Favorite Friend:**  
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**How did your BFF get her name:**  
After losing my previous Aussie, I was very sad and lonely and was told to go get some "Joy"

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@floridanewslines.com to enter your pet.



**Back to School Guide**  
**In this issue!**  
**See page 6**

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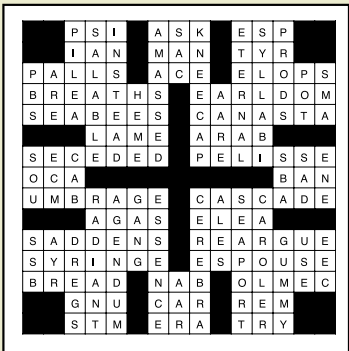
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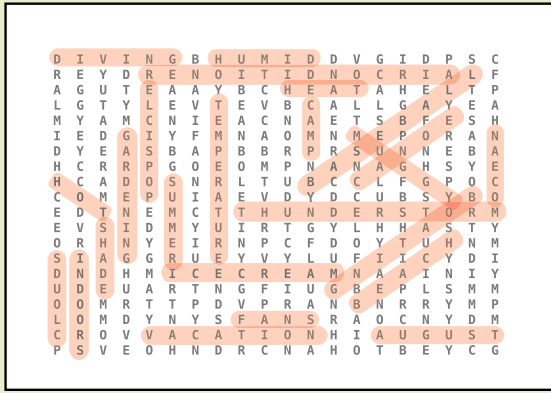
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Answers  
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PG 10

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# August

## Community Calendar

### What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

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

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

**1st: Vicar's Landing** monthly Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, Aug. 1 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The sale includes antiques, household items, home furnishings, framed art, as well as designer and costume jewelry. Two for \$5 jewelry items will be featured at the Aug. 1 sale. The public is welcome. Checks or cash only please. The Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives the proceeds. Call Mary Lane Johnson at (904) 612-9277 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610 for more information.

**1st: Essential Tremor** — Meet, Greet & Educate will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 1 at 11 a.m. at Baptist Health-Place at Nocatee, 400 Colonnade Drive, Suite 130. Speaker Chris Larson, Senior Therapy Representative with Medtronic, will present "Is Essential Tremor Keeping You from What You Love? DBS can help!" RSVP to Jan Kary at jkary@verizon.net or (202) 438-6750.

**3rd: Chair exercise** will be held for five weeks on Thursdays, beginning Aug. 3, from 9:30 a.m. – 10 a.m. at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Call Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

**3rd: Ponte Vedra Woman's** Club New and Prospective Member event will be held on Thursday,

Aug. 3 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. at a member's home in Sawgrass Country Club. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and refreshments while meeting current members and learning about the club. Register online at [www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php](http://www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php).

**3rd: Bingo** will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Thursdays from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. for five weeks beginning Thursday, Aug. 3. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

**3rd: Free Tech Help** with David will be held on Thursday, Aug. 3 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Drop in for tech assistance with your Android, Apple, and Reader devices; no RSVPs required. Visit [sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/](http://sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/) for more information.

**4th: The GTM Research Reserve** will hold a new volunteer orientation on Aug. 4 from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Learn about volunteer rules and responsibility as well next steps to volunteering. Complete the volunteer application online ([www.gtmnerr.org](http://www.gtmnerr.org)) before attending. Contact Abigail Kuhn at [Abigail.Kuhn@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:Abigail.Kuhn@FloridaDEP.gov) to assure that your application was received.

**4th – 12th: PVB Friends** of the Library Book Sale will be held at Seymour's Book Store at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on Friday, Aug. 4 – Saturday, Aug. 12 (except for Sunday, Aug. 6) from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. All proceeds go directly to books, materials and programs at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Call (904) 273-3990 with any questions.

**5th: Wellness and Family Fun** Days at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in August from 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Hosted by Mind Body Social, all events are free and open to the community. Events include wellness classes such as yoga and barre as well as music, lawn games, face painting, a photobooth and raffled prizes, all held on the lawn in front of ABC Liquors. Visit <https://mbs.events/sv/> for more information and to register.

**11th: Food Truck Friday** will be held on Aug. 11 and Aug. 25 from 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. This event is open to the public.

**15th: Adult Coloring Club** at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library will meet Tuesday, Aug. 15 at 11 a.m. to spend an hour coloring together. Contact Joan Meyers at [jmeyers@sjcfl.us](mailto:jmeyers@sjcfl.us) or call the library at (904) 827-6950 for more information.

**15th: Ponte Vedra** Democratic Club will meet on Tuesday, Aug. 15 at 5:30 p.m. for Chat & Chew before the 6 p.m. meeting at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Road. Featured Speaker Dr. Abigail Levrini, psychologist, will present the topic, "How to keep going through disappointment." Email [jkary@verizon.net](mailto:jkary@verizon.net) for more information.

**15th – 16th: AARP Safe Driver** Course will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane on Tuesday, Aug. 15 from 2 p.m. – 5 p.m. and Wednesday, Aug. 16 from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (you must attend both days in order to receive completion certificate). The fee is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for nonmembers. A completion certificate is required to be eligible for an auto insurance discount (discounts vary by insurer). If you have any questions or wish to register, call Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659.

**16th: Genealogy Group** will meet on Wednesday, Aug. 16 from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. at the COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee, at 351 Town Plaza Avenue, Suite 205. A genealogy expert will guide attendees in discovering and finding ancestors on the third Wednesday of each month. Call (904) 819-3234 or email [pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com](mailto:pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com) to register.

**18th: The Savvy Job** Hunters Ministry Workshop will host a free Zoom workshop, "Resume Writing," presented by Audra Larsen, University of North Florida Career Counselor and Professional Résumé Writer, on Aug. 18 from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Email [pottesen66@gmail.com](mailto:pottesen66@gmail.com) to register.

**19th: The Northeast Florida** Chapter of Sisters in Crime will meet on Aug. 19 at 10 a.m. in the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. (FOL Room). Dr. Fatima Rehman and Judith Erwin will address Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG). Bring your coffee and bring a friend. Visit [www.nefloridasistersincrime.org](http://www.nefloridasistersincrime.org) for more information.

**19th: The Nocatee** Farmers Market: Gatorland will be held on Saturday, Aug. 19 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

**24th: Monthly Birthday** Bash at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Enjoy birthday cake and the music of Nick Marino as August birthdays are celebrated on Thursday, Aug. 24 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Call Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

**25th: Community Hospice** learn about palliative care on Tuesday, Aug. 29 at 11 a.m. at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Light refreshments offered. Call Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

**26th: The Ponte Vedra Writers** Group will meet on Saturday, Aug. 26 at 11 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Author and editor Susie Baxter will present, "Writing Your Memoir," a free writing workshop open to the public. The meeting is free and open to members and non-members alike. Visit [www.floridawriters.org](http://www.floridawriters.org) for more information.

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

**31st: "Probate: Is it a dirty word?"** a free lecture by Megan Wall, St. Johns County Legal Aid, will be presented at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Thursday, Aug. 31 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Call Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

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with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

**Q: Can you share some general Back to School safety tips?**

A: As the first day of school is Aug. 10, I'd like to remind everyone to be alert and prepared as they are getting back to the routine of going to school. Remind your children who walk to wait for a light, look both ways, and cross the street at a crosswalk. Make eye contact with stopped drivers before crossing a street so you know they see you. Obey school crossing guards. Students should wear helmets if biking or skateboarding to school.

If you are driving your children to school, put down your electronic device and remain alert, especially for small children.

As for when to stop for a school bus: if you are on a four-lane road with a raised median, you are not required to stop if going the opposite direction of the bus. If you are going the same direction as the bus, you must stop. You also must stop in both directions if the four-lane road has just paint on the pavement (no raised median), or on all two-lane roads.

**Q: What can you tell us about the schools' Youth Resource Deputies?**

A: As background, the St. Johns County School District has a \$5.1 million contract with SJSO to provide deputy sheriffs, known as Youth Resource Deputies, in schools. This covers 69

percent of the salaries and benefits of the 59 Youth Resource Deputies, since when school is not in session, we reassign these deputies to general activities. The 59 Youth Resource Deputies cover 40 public schools as well as Capt. Peggy Tennyson and her two lieutenants. We also have a permanent juvenile civil citation deputy to handle youths who commit misdemeanor-type crimes. This year we added two threat assessment deputies to respond to an increasing number of threats to schools, such as bomb threats.

This year, I challenge students and parents to get to know their school's Youth Resource Deputy. Feel comfortable with them so that you can address issues in your school and build a relationship.

**Q: What is new this year for the school deputies?**

A: This year, we will begin implementation of the wearing of body cameras for our Youth Resource Deputies. During an educational period, students, school staff and parents will learn more about the body cameras and then the Youth Resource Deputies will begin wearing the cameras later in the school year.

**Q: Can you explain more about Fortify Florida?**

A: Fortify Florida is an app created in the wake of the tragedy at Marjory

Q&A with Sheriff Rob Hardwick cont. on pg. 10



with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

**Q: How many elections are scheduled in St. Johns County in 2024?**

A: There are three: the March 19 Presidential Preference Primary Election, Aug. 20 Primary Election, and Nov. 5 General Election.

**Q: What is the March 19 Presidential Preference Primary Election?**

A: The Presidential Preference Primary Election (PPP) is part of the presidential nominating process for Florida's two major political parties. Voters registered with those parties express their preference for the presidential candidate they would like to see representing their party on the General Election ballot in November.

After the PPP, designated political party delegates from Florida formally nominate the preferred presidential candidate at the respective party's national convention. These national conventions are typically held in July or August. Based on the party rules governing delegate voting procedures, the party decides at the convention which presidential candidate will represent the party on the General Election ballot.

**Q: Where do the names of the presidential candidates come from?**

A: Each political party submits to the Secretary of State a list of its presi-

dential candidates to be placed on the presidential primary ballot by Nov. 30 of the year preceding the election.

**Q: When will we know the candidates' names that will appear on the ballot in March?**

A: No later than Dec. 19, 2023, the Secretary of State shall certify to the Supervisors of Elections the names of each candidate for political party nomination to be printed on the ballot.

**Q: Who can vote in the Presidential Preference Primary?**

A: Florida's Presidential Preference Primary is a closed-primary election. This means that you must be registered with one of Florida's major political parties in order to be eligible to vote in the PPP.

**Q: Can I change my party so I can vote for a specific candidate on the ballot I would like to support?**

A: Yes. The deadline to register to vote or change your party is 29 days prior to each election. February 20, 2024 is the deadline to register to vote or change your party for the March 19, 2024 PPP.

**Q: What do I need to do to prepare for voting in 2024?**

Q&A with Vicky Oakes cont. on pg. 10



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# Back to School Guide

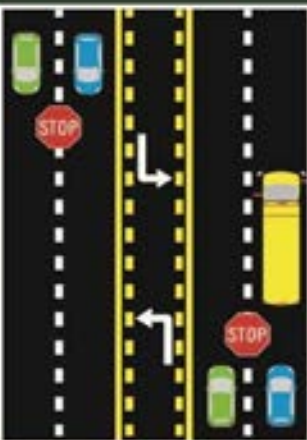


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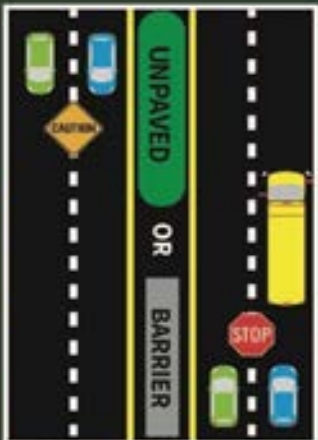
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## How to prepare children for kindergarten

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The first day of kindergarten is a milestone moment for children that their parents will remember forever. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that around five million children attend an organized pre-school or daycare facility in the United States. Children who attend preschool or daycare may make a relatively seamless transition to kindergarten; however, it's still a good idea for parents to take steps to prepare youngsters for kindergarten in advance of the first day of school.

- Attend orientation or related events. Elementary schools typically are housed in much larger buildings than pre-schools or daycares, and that size can be intimidating for children. Attending kindergarten orientation or related events as a family can help children see their classrooms, meet their teacher and potentially their classmates.

- Meet other kids in the neighborhood. Some children attend preschools or daycares close to home, while others may go to facilities near a parent's office. Regardless of where kids go to daycare or preschool, they're likely to meet new youngsters in kindergarten. Introducing them to other kids in the neighborhood who will be going to kindergarten as well can calm children's nerves. Seeing a



Photo courtesy MetroCreative  
The first day of kindergarten is a big moment for young children. Parents can take steps to calm first-day jitters and ensure children have a memorable day.

familiar face on the bus and/or in class can put youngsters at ease.

- Avoid lengthy goodbyes. Parents may get a little teary-eyed on their children's first day of kindergarten, but drawing out goodbyes as kids get on the bus or walk into school will ultimately make it harder on children. Limit your goodbye to a hug and kiss and some words of encouragement. Keep the emphasis on the positive and the fun that's to be had so kids arrive at school in a good frame of mind.

- Remind youngsters you'll be there to pick them up at the end of the day. Let children know that, just like daycare and preschool, mom or dad will be there to pick them up at school or the bus stop at the end of the day. This sense of the familiar can calm kids' nerves and reassure them that a smiling face will be there at the end of the school day.



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# ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

## You can fund your children’s college education and retirement simultaneously - Here’s how

By Chris Thompson, CFP®, CRPC®

Many parents face the challenge of saving for their children’s college education while also building a nest egg for retirement. Funding both priorities simultaneously can feel like a juggling act — and the stress can intensify as high school graduation and retirement dates draw nearer, particularly if you’re coming up short on your savings goals.

As your time horizon narrows, which should come first — funding your kid’s tuition or your own retirement? The answer depends on your situation, but here are some factors to keep in mind:

In most cases, saving for retirement should take priority over saving for your child’s higher education. To understand why, consider the following:

- You may not get to choose your retirement date. Becoming injured or disabled, needing to care for an aging parent or being laid off from your job are just a few scenarios that could unexpectedly accelerate your retirement date, leaving you with less time to save than you were counting on.
- You don’t want to run out of money

in retirement. As a college student, your child may have access to scholarships, grants, loans or other financial aid to help pay the bills. The same isn’t true for your retirement. If your nest egg comes up short, you may need to work longer, reduce your living expenses (or perhaps both) to make ends meet.

While it’s imperative to focus on your own financial security in retirement, funding higher education is still an important goal for many parents. The key is striking the right balance between saving for both goals. Consider the following tips as a starting point:

1. Paying for college doesn’t have to be all-or-nothing. Many parents choose to pay a percentage of the total bill, cover certain expenses (e.g., tuition, technology fees or room and board), pay for a set number of years, or contribute as much as they are able to save by the first day of school instead of funding the full cost. Revising your college savings goal in one of these ways could allow you to direct more money to retirement.
2. If your child has sights on graduate school, decide whether you will contribute to those bills, too. This decision

is particularly important if your child needs a graduate degree before entering their field of choice. If you intend to provide financial support, calculate how much the total cost will be so you have a clear savings target in mind.

3. Discuss your intentions with your child. No matter how much you plan to contribute (or not), talk to your child about your financial commitment so they know what to expect. Discuss what your contribution will look like at their preferred colleges. For example, if you agree to pay a set amount, perhaps this money will fully cover community college or a substantial amount at a state school, but it may leave a larger portion of the bill outstanding at a private college.

No matter your financial situation,

know that it is possible to make meaningful progress toward both goals, particularly if you are intentional about how to allocate your savings. Consult a financial advisor and tax professional if you want help setting specific savings goals and understanding the various investing options available to you.

Chris Thompson, CFP®, CRPC® is a Managing Director and Associate Manager with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. in Jacksonville. To contact him, visit [www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson](http://www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson) or email [chris.thompson@ampf.com](mailto:chris.thompson@ampf.com).

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EDS-18791-A



### with St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller Brandon J. Patty

#### Q. Why is jury duty important?

A. The sixth and seventh amendments of the U.S. Constitution ensure all American citizens have the right to a jury trial, where their legal disputes will be decided by fellow Americans. This right cannot be exercised without fellow citizens willing to step forward and serve on a jury. One of our judges says it best: “Be the type of juror you would want if you yourself ended up needing a jury.” It is a critical responsibility we must uphold if called upon to serve.

#### Q. What role does the clerk’s office play in jury management?

A. Our office plays a key role by summoning and checking-in prospective jurors. We send out 300 – 500 notices

monthly with the names and addresses randomly pulled from information provided by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

#### Q. What is the process for a resident summoned for jury duty?

A. Upon receiving the notice, those being summoned are welcome to check-in online and submit any excusal or deferral requests. After all of these are processed, we usually end up with 50 – 100 qualified jurors, some of whom are selected for voir dire, where they head up to the courtroom for questioning by the parties’ lawyers. The process essentially starts with a larger pool before whittling down to a panel consisting of potentially six to 12 selected jurors.

#### Q. How does your office assist residents with the jury duty process?

A. Our Jury Coordinator prepares, and issues summons for jury duty, provides juror reporting information, and assists jurors with excusal, exemptions, registration, and compensation.

Our team works hard to ensure your jury experience is as comfortable and efficient as possible. We strive, along with the judges, to shepherd prospective jurors through the process as quickly as we can. From check-in through qualification, you will be in great hands with our exceptional team.

#### Q. What is the best way for residents to contact you?

A. Residents can call my office at (904) 819-3601 or my cell at (904) 599-8688. My email address is [BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com](mailto:BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com). A lot of questions can be answered by visit-

ing our website, [www.stjohnsclerk.com](http://www.stjohnsclerk.com), which is most commonly used to pay traffic citations or search court records.

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

**Q:** What can you share about some of the school district sponsored summer camps that have recently taken place?  
**A:** I had the opportunity to visit and

observe a couple of these camps that several of our students were able to participate in. Some of the students from the northern part of the county attended sessions at Webster Elementary in St. Augustine and students from all over the county in fifth through 12th grade attended camp at the link in Nocatee over a five week period. School district personnel provided curriculum and instruction in camps focusing on culinary entrepreneurship, robotics/drones, a girls' engineering program and camps for English language learners. Camp teachers told me that they were impressed with the collaboration of students from a variety of backgrounds and schools who were able to form bonds and relationships. One of the unexpected takeaways was that the teachers, too, felt inspired by the camps. They told me they felt they could take some of the creativity of the summer curriculum and use it in their classrooms in the fall.

**Q:** Can you give any information about the most recent school district rankings?

A: I'd like to address a rumor that has been brought to my attention — the rumor is that St. Johns County has fallen from first place to second place in the state. This information is coming from a website called School Digger, which is not a primary source and actually has a number of inaccuracies listed about our school district (such as the incorrect number of high schools that we have). The Department of Education will determine in the fall each school district's ranking; these rankings have not been determined yet. We do know that out of 21 different categories, St. Johns County scored first in 15 and tied for first in another. None of this would be possible without the hard work of our teachers, students,

administration and support of our parents. Our faculty will be diving into all this material to determine how to help each individual student in their academic growth.

Keep in mind that this is the first year of new standards and the FAST (Florida Assessment of Student Thinking) testing. Certainly there will be areas to improve as we become more proficient with these new assessments.

**Q:** Do you have any kudos to share?


A: I'd like to spotlight Landrum Middle School this month. Students there participated in a vocabulary.com Spring Training contest and Landrum was in the Top Five of rookie (first year participating) schools in vocabulary assessments. Also, last spring, 37 Landrum students participated in a World Language Festival competition at Mandarin Middle School. Students performed in drama, composed music, and created art, all in different languages. Landrum students earned 16 Superior ratings, nine Excellent ratings and numerous honorable mentions. Congratulations to all these students.

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

A: The first day of school will be Aug. 10. The excitement this year isn't about opening new schools, but about welcoming our students back for a new school year. Teachers and employee training across every department has been non-stop this summer, all in anticipation of starting the school year off right. We think it's going to be a great year!

**Q:** How can our readers contact you?


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



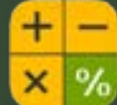
## ST JOHNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF ROBERT A. HARDWICK


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CALCULATOR% IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL SECRET APPS USED TO HIDE PHOTOS, VIDEOS, FILES, AND BROWSER HISTORY.




HOLLA IS A SELF PROCLAIMED "ADDICTING" VIDEO CHAT APP THAT ALLOWS USERS TO MEET PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD IN JUST SECONDS. REVIEWERS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH RACIAL SLURS, EXPLICIT CONTENT, AND MORE.




DISCORD IS AN APP THAT ALLOWS USERS TO TALK TO FRIENDS AND STRANGERS IN REAL-TIME VIA VOICE, TEXT, OR VIDEO CHAT WHILE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES. REVIEWERS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH RACIAL SLURS, EXPLICIT CONTENT, AND MORE.




ASK.FM IS KNOWN FOR CYBER BULLYING. THE APP ENCOURAGES USERS TO ALLOW ANONYMOUS PEOPLE TO ASK THEM QUESTIONS.




ROBLOX IS AN ONLINE GAMING PLATFORM WITH A CHAT FUNCTION. UNDERAGE USERS HAVE HAD ISSUES WITH SOLICITATION FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS.




WHATSAPP IS A POPULAR MESSAGING APP THAT ALLOWS USERS TO SEND TEXTS, PHOTOS, VOICEMAIL, MAKE CALLS, AND VIDEO CHATS WORLDWIDE. WHATSAPP USES AN INTERNET CONNECTION ON SMARTPHONES AND COMPUTERS.




KIK ALLOWS ANYONE TO CONTACT AND DIRECT MESSAGE YOUR CHILD. KIDS CAN BYPASS TRADITIONAL TEXT MESSAGING FEATURES. KIK GIVES USERS UNLIMITED ACCESS TO ANYONE, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.




WHISPER IS AN ANONYMOUS SOCIAL NETWORK THAT PROMOTES SHARING SECRETS WITH STRANGERS. IT ALSO REVEALS A USER'S LOCATION SO PEOPLE CAN MEET UP.




BUMBLE IS SIMILAR TO THE POPULAR DATING APP "TINDER" HOWEVER, IT REQUIRES WOMEN TO MAKE THE FIRST CONTACT. KIDS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO USE BUMBLE TO CREATE FAKE ACCOUNTS AND FALSIFY THEIR AGE.




BADOO IS A DATING AND SOCIAL NETWORKING APP WHERE USERS CAN CHAT, SHARE PHOTOS, AND VIDEOS AND CONNECT BASED ON LOCATION. WHILE THE APP IS INTENDED FOR ADULTS ONLY, TEENS ARE KNOWN TO CREATE PROFILES.




GRINDR IS A DATING APP GEARED TOWARDS LGBTQ+ PEOPLE. THE APP GIVES USERS OPTIONS TO CHAT, SHARE PHOTOS, AND MEET UP BASED ON A SMART PHONE'S GPS LOCATION.




SKOUT IS A LOCATION-BASED DATING APP AND WEBSITE. WHILE USERS UNDER 17 YEARS OLD ARE UNABLE TO SHARE PRIVATE PHOTOS, KIDS CAN EASILY CREATE AN ACCOUNT USING A DIFFERENT AGE.




SNAPCHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR APPS IN RECENT YEARS. WHILE THE APP PROMISES USERS CAN TAKE A PHOTO/VIDEO AND IT WILL DISAPPEAR, NEW FEATURES INCLUDING "STORIES" ALLOWS USERS TO VIEW CONTENT FOR UP TO 24 HOURS. SNAPCHAT ALSO ALLOWS USERS TO SEE YOUR LOCATION.




HOT OR NOT ENCOURAGES USERS TO RATE YOUR PROFILE, CHECK OUT PEOPLE IN THEIR AREA, AND CHAT WITH STRANGERS. THE GOAL OF THIS APP IS TO HOOK UP.



OMEGLE IS AN ONLINE CHAT SITE WHERE REGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED. USERS ARE ABLE TO CHAT ANONYMOUSLY VIA VIDEO, PRIVATE CHATS, OR GROUP CHATS. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY HAS BEEN AN ISSUE ON THIS SITE.






MEETME IS A DATING SOCIAL MEDIA APP THAT ALLOWS USERS TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE BASED ON GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY. AS THE APP'S NAME SUGGESTS, USERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO MEET EACH OTHER IN PERSON.




TIKTOK IS A MOBILE DEVICE APP POPULAR WITH KIDS USED FOR CREATING AND SHARING SHORT VIDEOS. WITH VERY LIMITED PRIVACY CONTROLS, USERS ARE VERY VULNERABLE TO CYBER BULLYING AND EXPLICIT CONTENT.

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## Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps  
mail@floridanewsline.com

### Jessica Boylan

It took just one semester studying Spanish in Seville, Spain, during college for Jessica Boylan to discover her love of languages. It was something that she suspected was tucked away in her brain, courtesy of her Colombian mother. The trip confirmed her suspicions. This would also be the first of several key turning points in her life. The next would happen on a trip back from Colombia when Boylan decided to go home early and got delayed in the Fort Lauderdale airport, causing her to meet her now husband, Gerardo Montanez. He is from Colombia and was also visiting family. After talking in the airport (there is some disagreement about who was more interested), the two discovered that they were not booked on the same flight back to Jacksonville; however, they were able to change the flight and fly home together, talking the whole way back. When they arrived in Jacksonville, they found that their rides (her parents and his sister) had parked very close to each other. So, they got to meet each other's families right away. Four years later, the couple got married and now have two daughters, Lanna, 9, and Lily, 8, living off County Road 210 West. Montanez, who was a doctor in Colombia, is a healthcare provider in Georgia. Boylan, who has taught English in China, Mexico, and at



Photo courtesy Jessica Boylan

the University of North Florida (her alma mater), has been a teacher at The Bolles School for 15 years. She earned her undergraduate degree in graphic design and Spanish and her graduate degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. In her free time, she enjoys baking French meringue cookies, so much so that she started Jessica B. Special Sweets, selling at the Palm Valley Market during the summer months and taking online orders year-round.

**Q: Explain your position at The Bolles School.**

A: I teach academic English to our international students, and I teach Spanish as well. I am also the International Student Academic Advisor for grades nine through 11. I love teaching and advising, and every class is special because I meet students from different countries every year.

**Q: Why is the number 19 significant to you?**

A: I met my husband on the 19th, my father-in-law's birthday is on the 19th, we had our first kiss on the 19th, we were married on the 19th and our

daughter Lanna was born on the 19th.

**Q: You were a professional improviser for 13 years. What attracted you to improv?**

A: I saw an ad in a newspaper for an improv workshop, so I gave it a try. I ended up loving it and did shows throughout Jacksonville. Improv is such a great outlet. I was rather shy and reserved throughout high school and college. I found improv in my 20s. It was a life changer. This helped me professionally, and I also use this type of humor in the classroom. I call it "mental yoga." It is great to be silly and to not be judged. It is nice to see that take place while the students are learning.

**Q: How do you approach life?**

A: Accepting what comes your way and always finding a way to move forward with support. This is something that I always tell my students. Don't take on life on your own, just reach out.

**Q: How did you get interested in baking?**

A: During the holidays, I wanted to make something special for my daughters' teachers. I started out with chocolate dipped apples and pretzels, but fell in love with meringues this year. I love seeing everyone's reactions when they try one. They may have a preconceived notion of what they might taste like, but it is the "yum" reaction that is the best.

[Author's note: Visit [www.jessicaBspecialsweets.com](http://www.jessicaBspecialsweets.com) or [facebook.com/Jessicabspecialsweets](https://www.facebook.com/Jessicabspecialsweets) to find out more about Jessica B. Special Sweets.]

Girls on the Run cont. from pg. 1

supporting girls. The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service released a report about the vital connection between physical activity and mental health. In the report, Dr. Murthy highlighted Girls on the Run as an example of a program for girls to learn life skills through engaging activities and lessons. The program was recognized as a powerful resource in supporting girls when they need it most.

Since 2004, Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida has inspired more than 27,000 girls. This season, the program will serve girls in Alachua, Bradford, Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Union, and Volusia counties. Girls on the Run has research-based lessons that use dynamic discussions and fun running games to teach critical life skills. The season will culminate with a celebratory 5K event that brings together family, friends, and community members to celebrate the girls' growth throughout the season.

The program fee for the fall season ranges from \$50 – \$130 and is based on household income. Scholarship funding is available to those who qualify. The program fee includes all lesson materials, registration for the celebratory 5K event, a finisher medal, a GOTR t-shirt, and GOTR water bottle.

Visit [www.gotrnefl.org](http://www.gotrnefl.org) for more information about the program and registration.

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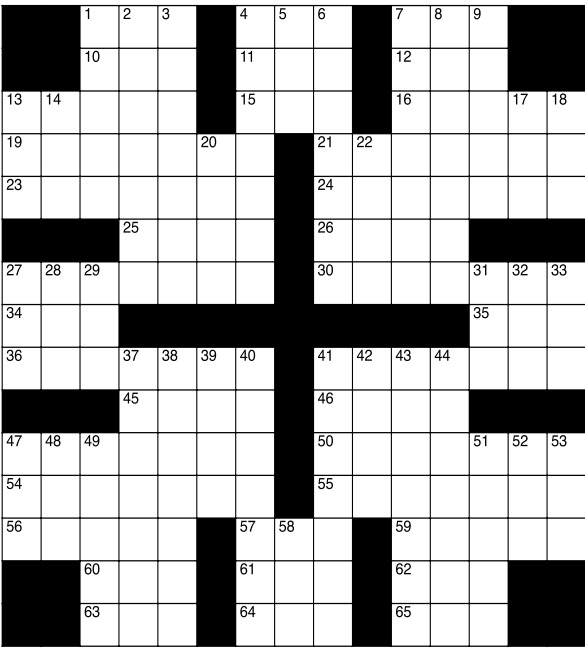
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Indicates tire pressure
- 4. Request
- 7. Clairvoyance
- 10. 007's creator
- 11. Adult male
- 12. Scandinavian god of battle
- 13. Cloths spread on a coffin
- 15. Breeze through
- 16. Ladyfish genus
- 19. It's good to take them
- 21. Noble-governed territory
- 23. Members of U.S. Navy
- 24. Card game resembling rummy
- 25. Affected by injury
- 26. Member of a Semitic people
- 27. Left
- 30. Woman's cloak
- 34. S. American plant
- 35. Prohibit
- 36. Offense
- 41. Dish soap brand
- 45. Ottoman military commanders
- 46. Ancient Greek City
- 47. Makes unhappy
- 50. Discuss again
- 54. Medical instrument
- 55. Promote
- 56. A beloved carb
- 57. Tag the base runner to get him out
- 59. Prehistoric people
- 60. Large African antelope
- 61. Vehicle
- 62. Georgia rockers
- 63. Scientific instrument (abbr.)
- 64. A major division of geological time
- 65. Attempt

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Plant of the nettle family
- 2. Fit to be sold
- 3. Rather
- 4. Collected
- 5. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- 6. Patella
- 7. Ageless
- 8. Lists of course requirements
- 9. Pokes at
- 13. TV network
- 14. They \_\_
- 17. Cooking hardware
- 18. U.S. Army title
- 20. Iron-containing compound
- 22. Swiss river (alt. spelling)
- 27. Former French coin
- 28. Electronic countermeasures
- 29. Taxi
- 31. Helps little firms
- 32. Woeful
- 33. Midway between northeast and east
- 37. Glowing
- 38. Tasks which should be done
- 39. An informal body of friends
- 40. Intrinsic nature
- 41. Neural structures
- 42. Brews
- 43. Where ships unload cargo
- 44. Singer
- 47. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 48. Southwest Scotland town
- 49. Most worthless parts
- 51. Viscous
- 52. Put to work
- 53. Old world, new
- 58. Swiss river

### DOG DAYS WORD SEARCH

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

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

### WORDS

AIR CONDITIONER  
AUGUST  
BASEBALL  
BEACH  
BOATING  
CAMP  
CANOE  
CLOUDS  
DIVING  
FANS  
GARDENING  
HEAT  
HOT  
HUMID  
ICE CREAM  
INDOORS  
MUGGY  
OCEAN  
POPSICLE  
SHADE  
SUMMER  
TEMPERATURE  
THUNDERSTORM  
VACATION

### CRYPTO FUN

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Solve the code to discover words related to the dog days of summer. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 11 = M)

**A. 12 8 11 15 10**  
Clue: Water vapor in the air

**B. 3 13 22 6 11 9**  
Clue: Warm and moist

**C. 3 8 11 11 22 5**  
Clue: Hot season

**D. 3 4 9**  
Clue: Atmosphere seen from earth

**Q&A with Sheriff Rob Hardwick** cont. from pg. 5

Stoneman Douglas High School. It allows users to easily report suspicious activity instantly to law enforcement and school officials. Users may remain anonymous and we encourage all residents, not just parents, to download and use the app if they see something

suspicious to report. If you see something, say something!

**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@sjso.org](mailto:sheriff@sjso.org) or call me at (904) 824-8304.

**Q&A with Vicky Oakes** cont. from pg. 5

A: Register to vote and make sure your registration is up-to-date, including your address. There are tools available on our website where you can register to vote and verify your information on file with the Elections Office. Visit our website [www.votesjc.gov](http://www.votesjc.gov) and select My Voter Status to verify your voter infor-

mation or update if needed.

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

A: Readers can email me at [voakes@votesjc.gov](mailto:voakes@votesjc.gov) or call the Elections Office at (904) 823-2238. Be sure to visit our website [www.votesjc.gov](http://www.votesjc.gov) for registration and election information.

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By Scott A. Grant  
[mail@floridanewsline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewsline.com)

PopHistory

The parole of Leslie Van Houten

The most horrifying memory of my childhood occurred in the summer of 1969, when members of the Manson family brutally murdered seemingly random people for no reason. Those heinous crimes repulsed and captivated the nation. They still do. At the time, an effort was made to shield a sensitive society from the details. Mothers told their children that the Manson family would be executed or at least locked away. It turns out neither of those things were entirely true.

At the time and to this day, the media frenzy has tended to concentrate on the killing of actress Sharon Tate and her unborn baby, forgetting that four other people were murdered that night as well — as if the coffee heiress, the celebrity hairdresser, family friend, and a young man who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time were mere extras in a gory horror film. The cult's copycat killing the following night at the home of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca played out in the media like a bad sequel.

If the murders were news, the nine-month long trial would be even more of a media frenzy. Charles Manson,

Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel, and Leslie Van Houten were tried together in Los Angeles in a circus-like atmosphere. Outside, other members of the Manson family protested and kept watch. "Squeaky" Fromme and others attempted to murder a family member who had turned state's evidence. Unable to prove the attempted murder charge, prosecutors settled for an obstruction charge. Fromme and the others were sentenced to 90 days. In 1975, Fromme was convicted of attempting to assassinate President Gerald Ford. She was sentenced to life and paroled in 2008.

Manson and the three women were sentenced to death. Shortly after the sentence, the California Supreme Court declared the death penalty to be unconstitutional and all four sentences were commuted to life with the possibility of parole. Charles Manson got married in prison and died in prison. Susan Atkins, who had once danced topless during Church of Satan rituals, was baptized by immersion, married, divorced, and ultimately died in prison as well. Patricia Krenwinkel remains in prison. Leslie Van Houten was recently paroled after 53 years in jail and 24 parole hearings.

Van Houten was not part of the Tate murders. She was taken the second night to the home of the LaBiancas. She allegedly stabbed Rosemary LaBianca 16 times, although Rosemary was probably already dead. At the time of her initial sentencing, she was 21, the youngest woman ever sentenced to death in California. The commuted life sentence was overturned in 1977, because her attorney had died during the initial trial. Her second trial ended in a hung jury, and she was released on bail pending a third trial. During her brief hiatus from prison, Van Houten attended the 1978 Academy Awards. It was the 50th Anniversary of the Oscars; Bob Hope acted as master of ceremonies. At her third trial, the prosecution added a robbery charge and was able to convict her under the felony murder rule, this time for life with the possibility of parole.

The press has reported that Van Houten was the first Manson family member to be paroled. That is not entirely true. Besides the aforementioned Squeaky Fromme, another Manson family member by the name of "Clem" Grogan was released years ago. He was with Van Houten and Manson on the night

of the LaBianca killings. He did not go into the house. Later, he would be convicted along with Tex Watson and Charles Manson in the less sensationalized torture and murder of a ranch hand named Donald Shea. He also was initially sentenced to death in 1971. The judge reduced his sentence to life saying he was "too hopped up on drugs to decide anything on his own." Grogan was paroled in 1985 after fathering two children while in prison.

It was always a strongly held belief of mine that Charles Manson and his followers would never be paroled. There are some crimes for which there would seem to be no redemption. It is hard to imagine Perry Smith or Ted Bundy being paroled. And yet, we release Van Houten into a world still fascinated by the crimes she and the cult committed more than 50 years ago. Dozens and dozens of books and movies have been produced about the Manson family. At this point, Charles Manson is probably better known than Bob Hope.

Scott A. Grant is a local author and historian. He welcomes your comments at [scottg@standfastic.com](mailto:scottg@standfastic.com).



**Briefs**

**US Coast Guard Auxiliary celebrates membership milestone**

On June 25, US Coast Guard District 7 Auxiliary Commodore John W. Holmes announced in an email to all flotilla's officers reflecting upon the auxiliary's membership goals, "We did it. At this very moment D7 Membership (per official records), our accredited membership is now 4010 members!"

The commodore went on, "The work to achieve this return to pre-Covid levels is one remarkable accomplishment and one that many believed would not happen. My sincere and humble thanks to all of the D7 team."

The US Coast Guard 7th District is responsible for maritime activities throughout a 1.7 million square mile area including Puerto Rico, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and 34 foreign nations and territories with active duty, Reserve and Auxiliary members.

**"Aladdin, Junior" auditions announced**

The Creative Academy at Christ Church, 400 San Juan Drive, is holding auditions for "Aladdin, Junior" on Saturday, Aug. 5 at 9 a.m. in the Formation Arts building choir room

All interested parties aged eight through 18 are welcome to audition. Those auditioning should wear comfortable clothing for movement and bring 16 bars of music to perform. The cost is \$250 with checks made out to Christ Church.

"Aladdin, Junior" will be directed by Cathy Dooley with choreography by Jocelyn Geronimo. Rehearsals are Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. Performances are Oct. 5, 6 and 7.

Email [Barbiekroberts@gmail.com](mailto:Barbiekroberts@gmail.com) with any questions.

**25 year milestone for Coastal Friends**

In March 2023, Coastal Friends celebrated its 25th anniversary as a women's social club in the Ponte Vedra/Jacksonville area. Formerly known as Newcomers Alumnae, Coastal Friends was formed a quarter of a century ago as a result of women wanting to continue their friendships and activities after being required to graduate from another local newcomers' club.

Coastal Friends is a social group of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, St. Augustine and the surrounding area. Some of the many activities offered are adventures and outings, book club, canasta, happy hour, periodic lunches at local restaurants, Mah Jongg and wine socials. Additionally, monthly luncheons with an accompanying guest speaker are held at Marsh Landing Country Club on the first Wednesday of every month except for July and August.

New members are welcome throughout the year. Contact [brookemeister@msn.com](mailto:brookemeister@msn.com) for more information on how to

join.

**QuiltFest returns to Jacksonville**

One of the largest quilt shows in the Southeast returns to Jacksonville's Prime Osborn Convention Center Sept. 14 – 16, 2023 for its annual event. The Jacksonville Quiltfest is an all-volunteer organization and show, whose purpose is to showcase quilts, and to encourage and inspire quilters, both new and experienced. Quiltfest is a 501c3 nonprofit with significant charitable giving.

Show hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free parking is provided and entrance tickets are \$15 daily. Advance tickets are now on sale and may be purchased at Cinnamon's Quilt Shoppe, Bee's Quilt Shop and the Tilted Quilters or via Ticketmaster. Visit [www.quiltfestjax.com](http://www.quiltfestjax.com) for more information.

**Screening of "My Ascension" to spotlight suicide prevention efforts for youth**

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare will host a documentary screening of "My Ascension" on Saturday, Aug. 5 at 5:30 p.m. in the Toco Creek High School Auditorium, 11200 St. Johns Pkwy.

Recent research released by the CDC shows a staggering increase in mental health struggles for teens, especially girls. Additionally, the rate of teen suicides is rising; suicide is the second leading cause of death of people aged 15 – 24 in the US. To help reduce stigma around mental health and suicide, EPIC Behavioral Healthcare and other local organizations are advocating for the importance of talking about suicide awareness and prevention by screening the film "My Ascension."

"My Ascension" chronicles the story of 16-year-old high school varsity cheerleader Emma Benoit, who was paralyzed by a suicide attempt, which propelled her on a mission to use her painful experience to help others find hope and stay alive. The documentary highlights Emma's inspiring journey. The film also shares the stories of two remarkable young people who tragically did not survive their attempts, and viewers learn first-hand from their families, friends, school officials, and suicide prevention experts about the devastating effects of suicide and what can be done to prevent it.

The screening will be followed by an engaging discussion on youth suicide prevention and mental wellness with Emma Benoit and local mental health and suicide prevention experts. Additionally, there will be resource tables sharing important information on mental health and suicide prevention.

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare has partnered with the St Johns County School District, United Way of St. Johns County, Big Brothers Big Sister of St. Johns County, LSF Health Services, Betty Griffin Center, and St. Augustine Youth Services to bring "My Ascension" to St. Johns County.

For more information, call (904) 829-3295.

**The role of DNA in contemporary crime solving**

Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime will host two speakers who will address Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) at a meeting on Aug. 19 at 10 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library. Dr. Fatima Rehman is a faculty member at the University of North Florida, Biology Department. She received a Ph.D. in Genetics and Molecular Biology at Emory University in 2006. Her analytical work is enhancing scientific knowledge in areas like acceptance of organ transplants and cancer research. Judith Erwin obtained a law degree from the University of Florida at the age of 55 and released her first novel, "Shadow of Silence," on her 75 th birthday. Now she is retired from her legal practice, and is a former freelance writer/photographer who specialized in theater and dance. She is an award-winning author of eight novels, with book nine in the works who is now studying FGG to incorporate it into a future book.

Hundreds of cold cases are hot again thanks to advancements in DNA forensic technology. Forensic Genetic Genealogy, which first emerged in 2018, is now a well-recognized scientific tool. Submitting your DNA to a lab is more than just learning your family history. Connections to your Uncle Harry can and is being used in criminal investigations. Writers of contemporary crime solving novels need to stay current with these advancements to be authentic. Readers can benefit from learning how it works since it has become the major tool in collection of direct evidence. Can investigators use a coffee cup from your garbage to test your or your guests' DNA? Privacy issues are becoming legal challenges.

The Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime group welcomes misters and sisters to learn more about writing, promoting, and enjoying crime fiction. Visit [nefloridasistersincrime.org](http://nefloridasistersincrime.org) for more information.

**Rising prices make it pricy to live in Northeast Florida**

In June, it became more expensive to live in Northeast Florida. The Home Affordability Index for single-family homes in the six-county region fell 4.3 percent to 66, which is the lowest it has ever registered in the region. The Housing Affordability Index measures housing affordability for the region; it measures whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income, and median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability. An index value of 100 means that the average family has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage.

In June, Northeast Florida's median sales price on single-family homes settled in at \$394,900, a rise of 1.8 percent from the previous month. New listings — 3,212 homes — jumped 16.6 percent and active inventory rose to 4,891 homes, a 15.1 percent increase. Also in June, homes remained on the market a little longer — 33 days, which is a 3.1 percent increase from May.



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# Nocatee Rotary installs new president

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra (Nocatee) held its annual Passing of the Gavel Celebration and Installation Dinner on July 18 at Maggiano's. The event is organized by the club's Past Presidents Council. Outgoing 2022 – 2023 president, Bob Wilfong, recapped a very successful year. After presenting gifts to all of the outgoing board members, and proclaiming that they were all "Rotarians of the Year," he also said, "It has been a real privilege to be your president this year."

He passed the gavel to 2023 – 2024 President Josh Hull, who will become the club's sixth president. Hull, a charter member of the Ponte Vedra club, is the vice president of Vystar Credit Union's Nocatee branch.

On hand to celebrate and participate in the installation ceremony was John Tabor, Rotary District 6970 Governor. Rotary Club of Palm Valley Past President and Rotary mentor to Hull, Dave Howie acted as the installation officiant.

Upon receiving his President's pin and gavel, Hull revealed goals for the upcoming Rotary year.

Hull said, "I want to add more fundraising events to support charitable projects and attract new members, while concentrating on retention of current members. I encourage our club to plan for more social events, and to actively involve our Rotary Youth Exchange student in the life of our club. The student will arrive from Brazil in August and will spend the school year with host families in Nocatee. I want us to have more fun in Rotary!"

The Rotary year begins on July 1 and Rotary Clubs worldwide pass the gavel to new leadership. The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra, chartered in April 2018, is one of 64 Rotary Clubs in North Florida that comprise Rotary District 6970. The club meets every other Tuesday morning at 7:15 a.m. at Treylor Park Restaurant in Nocatee Town Center.

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in communities, and in themselves. Email [pontevedrarotary@gmail.com](mailto:pontevedrarotary@gmail.com) for more information.



Photo courtesy Kelly Sastre  
Josh Hull and District Governor John Tabor.

# Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club celebrates milestone anniversary

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

In June 1983, a small group of local businessmen got together and formally chartered the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach. Today, 40 years later, the Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary has grown into a respected nonprofit that has donated more than \$1.5 million to local charities and community improvement projects. That legacy was celebrated Sunday, when 100 Rotarians and guests gathered to mark the club's 40th anniversary. Held at Palm Valley Outdoors along the banks of the Intracoastal Waterway, the celebration brought together Rotarians old and new who reminisced about the club's early days and celebrated its philanthropic achievements.

Past President and event emcee Bruce Barber displayed items from a club time capsule, noting that when the club was founded, its membership was open only to men, who were expected to wear suits and ties to every meeting. Today,

the Ponte Vedra Beach Rotary Club includes 114 members — 34 of them women — and the dress code is a bit more relaxed.

Barber also recognized some of the founding club members who attended the celebration — among them, founding club president Steve Melching and past presidents Bill Hill and Jim Hoener.

Current club president, Doc Renuart, thanked Rotarians for remaining committed to the club's motto of "Service Above Self" and for their efforts to support both Rotary International's humanitarian and polio eradication efforts as well as the club's efforts to raise money for countless local charities.

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach holds weekly breakfast meetings at Marsh Landing Country Club. Contact [pvbrotaryclub@gmail.com](mailto:pvbrotaryclub@gmail.com) for more information.



Photo courtesy Jennifer Logue  
Past President Bruce Barber displays items from the club's time capsule.

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# MixedRITA celebrates a ‘groundstroke’ breaking year

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

On June 3 and 4, the seventh annual MixedRITA tennis tournament took place at Sawgrass Country Club. In addition to hosting 144 matches over two days, the event raised \$84,700 for breast and prostate cancer research and additional care in Jacksonville. Over the past seven years, more than \$340,000 has been raised by this tennis tournament.

This year’s fundraising will focus on supporting Baptist MD Anderson through the purchase of the UroNav, which is the next generation of prostate care us-

ing image-guided biopsy technology. And it’s not just patients on the First Coast who won — tournament winners included Jill Saig and PJ Politan, Violet and Rob Deen, Sherri Ouchi and Darren Odendaal, Charlotte and Stephen Bates, Tina Bobango and Zach Waters, Sarah Huffman and Mike Alden, Jen and John Werba, and Tina and Rick Townsend.

Visit [the-rita-foundation.org/mixed-rita/](http://the-rita-foundation.org/mixed-rita/) for more information on the MixedRITA tennis tournament or to make a donation.



Photos courtesy Sherill Herzfeld

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## Nutrition Check

### Back to School

By Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RD and Rayonna Hills BS  
mail@floridanewslines.com

As we are closing out summer, the time comes when schools resume, which means kids and young adults are no longer at home 24/7. (As a parent myself, I think all those parents out there can relate!) Back to school brings opportunities to support healthful food choices for all ages. So what can you do? Let’s focus on three main concepts in nutrition and how you can support positive food choice.

#### Balance:

1. Aim to get at least one fruit, vegetable, whole grain and lean protein at meals and/or snacks. See MyPlate for examples ([www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)).
2. Get your children, teens and young adults involved. Give them choice with meal planning, at the grocery, during meal prep and when eating out. Food choice does not have to be a battle, but rather embrace preference, culture and food enjoyment.

#### Variety

1. Change up your routine eating plans periodically. Once per week (or every other), explore all your food options by looking at adding either a new fruit, vegetable, whole grain or lean protein in the menu.

2. Within each food group (e.g. proteins), there are many options available to us. Try different cuts or cooking methods of popular animal proteins like pork, or explore the possibilities of plant-based proteins such as legumes and beans.

#### Moderation

1. Food can bring happiness to our bodies, our moods and our mouth. All foods can be part of your dietary pattern, just some less frequently or in smaller amounts than others.
2. Start a positive mindset with food for you and your family. Let’s eliminate food stigmatization by not classifying healthy vs. unhealthy or good vs. bad. Let’s be a friend to all foods!

As parents and caregivers, it is a premier opportunity to instill and inspire positive eating patterns and embracing that all foods bring nutrients to our bodies. Focusing on balance, variety and moderation are key.

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



Travel

Legendary Music in Muscle Shoals

By Debi Lander

Small towns often bring big surprises, which was the case with Muscle Shoals in northwest Alabama. Muscle Shoals was and continues to be a city where high-profile musicians come to record music in the local sound studios. It earned the title "Hit Recording Capital of the World."

Baby Boomers especially recall musical memories when touring FAME Studios. It all started in the 1960s by a group of local musicians and producers. The establishment quickly gained a reputation for its high-quality recordings and unique sound, which blended elements of soul, R&B, and rock. One of the most famous producers to work at FAME was Rick Hall, who helped launch the careers of artists like Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding. Another notable producer was Jerry Wexler, who brought Aretha Franklin to Muscle Shoals to record her classic album "I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You."

In addition to FAME Studios, you can connect with nostalgia at Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, founded by a group of former FAME musicians in the 1970s. They typically worked as the backup rhythm band for the artists and were known as the Swampers. Their studio recorded albums by the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Willie Nelson, and many more.

"The magic must be in the water," said the former Swampers when asked why the hits happened there. Native American legends called the Tennessee River the Singing River and claimed it sang songs to protect them. Myth or not, the town's small size and tight-knit community allowed musicians and producers to work closely together, giving us some of the most iconic songs in music history, from "Respect" by Aretha Franklin to "Sweet Home Alabama" by Lynyrd Skynyrd.

You'll also find the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in the Shoals. This fantastic museum highlights Alabama's musical icons with portraits and memorabilia from 82 inductees. Some are giants like country music's Hank Williams and jazz/R&B crooner Nat "King" Cole and the ever-popular Lionel Richey.

WC Handy, known as the "Father of the Blues," was a prominent musician and composer born in Florence, Alabama, just a few miles from Muscle Shoals. In the early 1900s, Handy moved to Memphis, where he became a key figure in the development of the blues genre. His birthplace, a small log cabin, is now a music-centric museum, still owned and operated by his family.

If music is not your passion, the Shoals area offers diverse reasons to



Photos courtesy Debi Lander  
Muscle Shoals studio artists.

visit. A rock star of a different type is the Wichahpi Commemorative Wall, better known as Tom's Wall. Tom Hendrix spent 33 years hauling rocks and constructing a memorial wall for his great-great-grandmother. She was forced to leave her home and walk the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma. A member of the Yuchi Indian tribe, she eventually walked 700 miles to return to the Singing River. Each stone represents one step of her journey. Meandering along the wall becomes a moving experience like nothing I've seen before.

More notable attractions include the Coon Dog Cemetery with graves and decorative tombstones for coon dogs, the 1939-designed Frank Lloyd Wright

"Rosenbaum" House with original furnishings open to the public, and the Florence Indian Mound and Museum. Another must-see in nearby Tuscumbia is Ivy Green, the house where Helen Keller connected the spilling water at the pump with the letters in the word w-a-t-e-r traced in her hand. Anglers like to come to the "Smallmouth Bass Capital of the World" for excellent freshwater fishing. I'm sure something in Muscle Shoals will hit the right chord for you.

For more information: <http://colbert-countytourism.org> or [alabama.travel](http://alabama.travel)

Visit [www.bylandersea.com](http://www.bylandersea.com) to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.



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