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Photo courtesy Lisa Farese  
Students and families attended school for Meet the Teacher at Ocean Palms.

## St. Johns County students return to school

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewslines.com

Students across St. Johns County returned to school on Thursday, Aug. 10. According to District 4 School Board Member Kelly Barrera, the district welcomed back more than 50,000 students this year.

“It was a good and fun start to the school year,” Barrera said. “There was genuine excitement to the start of school. I visited a few schools and was able to see things first hand.”

Barrera also noted that she was pleased to see many students already forging relationships with their school’s Youth Resource Officer.

“Especially for young students new to the school environment, having a relationship with these trusted adults

SJC students cont. on pg. 2

## Commitment to Community: Maguire Family Pickleball Center opens, honors local family

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Marie Maguire loves to play pickleball and has been doing so for three years. When she discovered that the Brown Family YMCA was building five state-of-the-art outdoor pickleball courts, she was quite excited as a longtime member for the finished project. Little did she know that the courts would be dedicated to her family and known as the Maguire Family Pickleball Center, courtesy of the Newman Family Foundation.

Maguire was told the news a few days prior to the July ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Y.

“I was shocked. I started to cry when I found out,” said Maguire, adding that the Y is very special to the family. “The courts are beautiful and truly wonderful to play on — for everyone.”

The Maguire and Newman family connection has deep roots. Chuck Newman Sr. first met the late Rich Maguire in 1970 during a one-year isolated duty with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) in the Arctic Circle.

“Rich was my commanding officer,” said Newman Sr.



Photo courtesy Brown Family YMCA  
Diane Newman, Marie Maguire, Chuck Newman and Charlie Chacos.

Later, Rich and Marie and Chuck and his wife Diane became very close. In fact, Rich was the best man at the Newmans’ wedding, and Marie was the maid of honor.

While the men eventually went their separate ways, the two families remained close. When it was time for Rich to retire from the USCG after 20 years of service, and he was looking for a place to live, the Newmans, who had been living in Ponte Vedra Beach since 1985, eagerly

hoped the Maguires would join them. And they did in 1988.

The families reconnected and soon Rich and Chuck joined forces to fundraise for many community projects including establishing the YMCA in Ponte Vedra Beach at 170 Landrum Lane in 1999. Chuck credits Rich, who was often referred to as “Mr. Y,” with being a strong leader through every project and always putting the community first. Rich was chairman and board member of the then-Winston Family YMCA (now Brown) and Ponte Vedra Rotary Club president, just to name a few of his volunteer positions.

“Everything Rich did, he did well, and he took it very seriously. He was a great leader,” said Chuck, who also served as a board chairman at the Y.




Photo courtesy Brown Family YMCA  
Pickleball is for all ages!

New pickleball courts cont. on pg. 2

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Photo courtesy Lisa Farese  
Students and their families learned about Ocean Palms at the school's annual Kindergarten Tours.

is so important,” she said.

There is one new principal in District 4 this year: Zach Strom is the new principal at Palm Valley Academy. He was previously the assistant principal at Ocean Palms Elementary, helped to open Palm Valley Academy as an assistant principal, and is now the principal.



Photo courtesy Sara Orlando  
Palencia families walk to school on the first day.

**SJC students** cont. from pg. 1

Ocean Palms Elementary School rang in the new school year with the 8:30 a.m. bell on Aug. 10; however, for students, staff and families, this was merely the last event in a series that led up to the first day of school. On July 31 and Aug. 1, kindergarteners and new families were invited to meet administration, learn about the school, and take a tour at the school's annual Kindergarten Tours.

“With approximately 200 families in attendance over two days, it was the perfect occasion to introduce new families to the Ocean Palms community,” said Lisa Farese of the Ocean Palms PTO.

Meet the Teacher was held on the district-wide orientation day of Aug. 9. Students, families and staff met one another, reconnected with friends, learned to navigate the building, discovered how to get involved, and delivered their school supplies to classrooms in preparation for school the next day.

**New pickleball courts** cont. from pg. 1

Rich was 67 years old when he passed away suddenly on Dec. 25, 2013, leaving both families devastated.

Newman Family Foundation member Angelique Newman, Chuck and Diane's daughter-in-law, who has served as a Brown Family YMCA board member, chairman and capital campaign committee member over the years, said the pickleball courts offered the perfect opportunity to both honor the Maguire family and to bring community members together. She presented the idea to fund the pickleball courts to the foundation and received unanimous approval. The exact amount donated by the Newman Family Foundation is being kept private.

Angelique said with Marie loving pickleball and the servant hearts of Marie, Rich and their two adult sons, one a police officer and another an attorney (formerly a public defender), the dedication was a natural choice.

Matthew Maguire said the dedication of the pickleball courts in his father's name is a testament to the love and respect between both families.

“My dad was an amazing person, and my family is honored and grateful for this incredible gift,” he said.

Marie added that the Newman Family Foundation reflects the same message that Rich embraced. “He gave us all the idea of volunteerism and the importance of giving to others,” she said.

The Newmans, who started the



Photo courtesy Brown Family YMCA  
Bob Conklin and Reggie Exum play pickleball during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

foundation in 1999, are now working to pass that sentiment onto the next generation. The foundation includes Chuck and Diane's adult children, spouses and, upon reaching 18 years of age, the grandchildren.

Brown Family YMCA Executive Director Charlie Chacos said he is incredibly grateful to both families for their continued support and dedication over the years.

“Both of these families have gone all in with us over the years. Not only for the Y but for the entire community,” he said. “We are so lucky to have their support.”

*[Author's note: For more information about how to join the Y Pickleball Club (which also includes three indoor courts) or to contribute to the capital campaign, email Charlie Chacos at CCHacos@fcymca.org.]*

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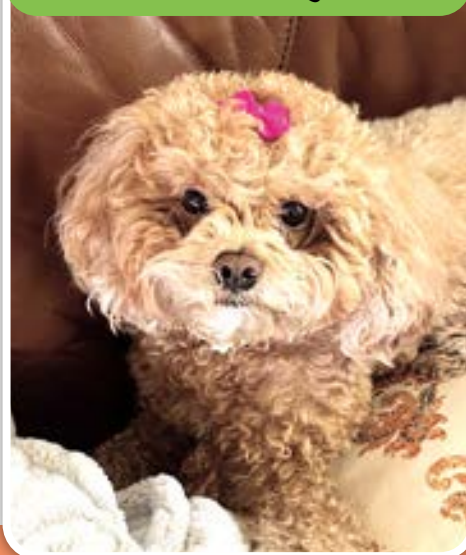
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# BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

## Meet Ruby!



**Breed:**

**Cavapoo**

**Favorite Activity:**

**Tug-o-war and chase**

**Favorite Food:**

**Bacon**

**Favorite Friend:**

**RI, our neighbor's dog who Ruby loves to run and greet.**

**How did your BFF get their name:**

**We named her Ruby because she is a Ruby red color.**

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.



**What would you like to read about in Ponte Vedra NewsLine?**

**Let us know!**

**editor@floridanewsline.com**

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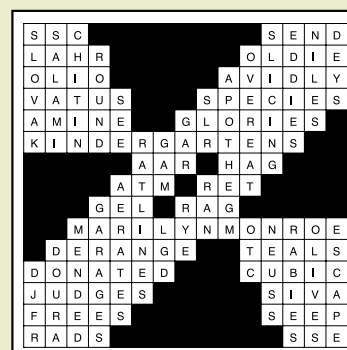
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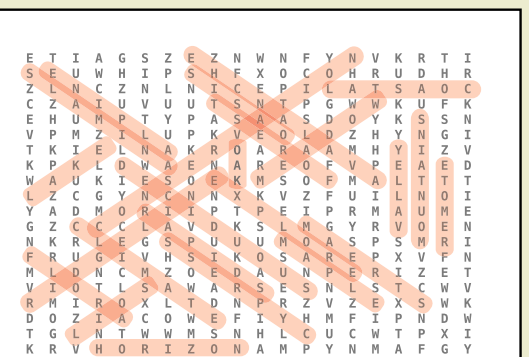
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Last month's Mystery Photo was Baptist HealthPlace in Nocatee.



**Answers  
Puzzles  
PG 10**



A. trees B. outdoors C. hiking D. nature



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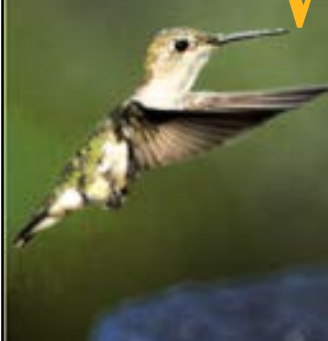
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# September

## 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](mailto: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:** **The GTM Research Reserve** will hold a new volunteer orientation on Sept. 1 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.

**2nd:** **The Northeast Florida Chapter of Sisters in Crime** will meet on Sept. 2 at 10 a.m. in the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. (FOL Room). Lana McAra, an award-winning, international best-selling author and ghostwriter of 43 titles through traditional publishing with a million books sold will address "Create Compelling Fiction from Your Own Real-Life Experiences." Bring your coffee and bring a friend. Visit [www.nefloridasistersincrime.org](http://www.nefloridasistersincrime.org) or email [floridasistersincrime@gmail.com](mailto:floridasistersincrime@gmail.com) for more information.

**2nd:** **Wellness and Family Fun Days** at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in September 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.

**5th:** **Vicar's Landing monthly Boutique Sale** will be held Tuesday, Sept. 5 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. Holiday gift items, including Christmas bears, Santas, and Byers Choice figurines will be featured at the 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.

**5th:** **GriefShare support** group starts Sept. 5 at 4 p.m. at Ponte Vedra Church, 76 S. Roscoe Blvd. This is a 13-week Christian-based support group for those who have recently lost a loved one. Class time consists of a 40 minute video and discussion of questions in the workbook. For more information about the class contact [mfarns934@gmail.com](mailto:mfarns934@gmail.com) or call (217) 722-3176. Visit [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org) for classes in other locations.

**5th:** **Chair exercise** will be held for four weeks on Tuesdays, beginning Sept. 5, 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.

**6th:** **Coastal Friends** will host its monthly luncheon on Sept. 6 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Guest speaker Jennifer Barker, CEO of First Coast No More Homeless Pets (FC-NMHP), will discuss estate planning for your pets and provide information on what will hap-

pen to your pets if something happens to you. The cost of the luncheon is \$25 and reservations must be made in advance by contacting [bartshar@comcast.net](mailto:bartshar@comcast.net) as soon as possible. Visit <https://coastalfriends.wildapricot.org> for more information.

**7th:** **Bingo** will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Thursdays from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. for four weeks beginning Thursday, Sept. 7. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

**8th:** **Food Truck** Friday will be held on Sept. 8 and Sept. 29 from 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. This event is open to the public.

**14th:** **Free Tech Help** with David will be held on Thursday, Sept. 14 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.

**16th:** **The Nocatee Farmers Market** will be held on Saturday, Sept. 16 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

**19th:** **Ponte Vedra Woman's Club** General Meeting with dinner will be held on Sept. 15, from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club. The meeting will include a kick off for the club's new year with introductions of existing and new members. There will be a charity spotlight, committee sign ups and socializing. Registration and required dinner payment may be found on the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club website under Events at [www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php](http://www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php).

**19th:** **Adult Coloring Club** at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library will meet Tuesday, Sept. 19 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.

**21st:** **Fabulous Fifties Monthly Birthday Bash** at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Enjoy birthday cake and dress like the 1950s on Thursday, Sept. 21 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Call Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

**23rd:** **The Ponte Vedra Writers Group** will meet on Saturday, Sept. 23 at 11 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Ponte Vedra author Kate Stollenwerck, who won a Florida Book Award Gold Medal with her debut novel, "Hello, Goodbye," will discuss writing the young adult novel. The meeting is free and open to members and non-members alike. Visit [www.floridawriters.org](http://www.floridawriters.org) for more information.

**23rd:** **GTM Research Reserve** will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, Sept. 23 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.

**26th:** **Ponte Vedra Democratic Club** will meet on Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 6 p.m. for a summer social at Pusser's Bar and Grille, 816 State Road A1A. Snacks and appetizers will be provided and there will be a cash bar. Music will be by the Baystreet Band. Email [jkary@verizon.net](mailto:jkary@verizon.net) for more information.

**28th:** **"The Expense of Nursing Homes — You Don't Have to Go Broke,"** 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, Sept. 28 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 School Board Member  
Kelly Barrera, District 4

**Q: Do you have an update about the district’s strategic plan?**

A: A planning committee comprised of teachers, administrators, students and community partners met this summer to develop our strategic plan. This year’s plan, which contains yearly goals as well as three-year and five-year goals, was more focused than usual because it is coming right after our accreditation process. We were able to use data, surveys, interviews, and focus groups from accreditation. The school board will vote on the plan at our September meeting.

**Q: What does the strategic plan contain?**

A: In addition to their commendation of our school district, the accreditation board identified five areas for improvement, so we knew what to focus on in this year’s strategic plan. All aligned with our mission, vision and beliefs. The five areas are:

- 1. Stakeholder communications and engagement
- 2. Teacher and staff recruitment and retention
- 3. Student voice for self-directed long term learners
- 4. Student academic growth
- 5. Technology

Each of these areas has objectives, critical initiatives, and key measures.

Everything the board approves needs to tie back to our strategic plan. Our

business and community partnerships are woven into each area as well as safety and growth of the district. The plan also contains contingency plans for the unknown.

**Q: What are the goals for the district this year?**

A: Our overarching goals for this year are: All students read at grade level by third grade; all middle and high school students will experience a career and/or academic acceleration opportunity; and all students demonstrate good behavior resulting in a decrease in suspensions and major disciplinary actions.

**Q: What can you tell us about the status of classroom libraries this year?**

A: All books in our school libraries and classroom libraries have to be listed on our school district’s media system, Destiny. The books that are listed have been reviewed by a certified media specialist within the county as per Florida statutes. Books that have not yet been reviewed by a certified media specialist are being removed until such time that they can be reviewed. Our media specialists worked hard over the summer to get as many books approved and in the system as possible. They continue to work now that school has started. This is a huge process, but in the end it gives parents transparency.

**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.

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**John**, Resident at Westminster St. Augustine

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with St. Johns County Commissioner  
Krista Joseph District 4

**Q: At the July 18 Board of County Commissioners meeting, you introduced 14 points that you would like added to the county’s Land Development Code tree protections. How did this come about?**

A: One of the main things I hear from residents in the county, both during the election and now, is this topic. People are concerned about clear cutting of property. It’s the main reason I ran for office; I have seen properties clear cut and then just sit there without development, sometimes for as much as two years. In that period, the property could have been collecting rain and providing cooling and shade. Studies have shown that having trees positively impacts mental health. Even developers have told me that trees sell homes.

I think we should keep trees as long as possible and do land clearing in stages to preserve habitat as long as possible. We all moved to St. Johns County because of the way it feels and looks and we need to preserve that.

**Q: What can you tell us about your proposal?**

A: First, it’s important to note that

the county’s Land Development Code as it pertains to trees (we don’t actually have a “tree ordinance”) hasn’t been updated in 25 years. The financial penalty for cutting down a specimen tree is not consequential today. You can’t replace what’s taken out with the amount of the fine. I came up with 14 points, but I could have had 30 points. I tried to keep it as simple as possible and find some things that developers and environmentalists could agree on.

**Q: What are your 14 points?**

A: Here are my 14 goals and recommendations of tree preservation: 1. Continue to prevent removal of trees on a lot less than an acre; 2. Provide greater tree protection on all lots that are an acre or greater and/or are coastal habitat lots; 3. Better protect our irreplaceable trees so that they’re not removed by those who could afford to pay the fines; 4. Greater conservation of trees for Planned Unit Developments; 5. More strongly discourage non-permitted tree removal; 6. Keep tree payment fund payments current with inflation;





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

**Q: Can you share information about TRIM notices?**

A: TRIM notices have been mailed and are also available for review on our website. TRIM stands for “Truth in Millage” and is a notice of property taxes. It is basically the final notice of the year to work with the Property Appraiser on any disagreements on values or exemptions. If we can’t come to an agreement, we encourage taxpayers to file a petition with the Value Adjustment Board.

**Q: What is the timing of the taxes on the TRIM notice?**

A: The property value and exemptions that a property owner sees on the TRIM notice are as of Jan. 1, 2023 and are looking back. They are based on the use, ownership and condition of the property as of Jan. 1, 2023. If you did not own your property on Jan. 1, 2023, this year’s taxes and exemptions are not yours, but are rather those of the previous owner. As of Jan. 1, 2024, all of your caps and exemptions if any will go into effect.

**Q: How do you assess property values and taxes?**

A: All 67 Property Appraisers in the State of Florida assess property and create their tax roll under very strict state statutes. The oversight is by the Florida Department of Revenue, not the local county government, so each year prior to July 1 we submit the tax roll to the Florida Department of Revenue, where it is evaluated under those standards. The Florida Department of Revenue must approve the tax roll prior to us sending out TRIM notices. Since I’ve been in office, St. Johns County has never not had our tax roll approved on the first round by the Florida Department of Revenue.

**Q: What should taxpayers do if there is something on their TRIM that they do not understand?**

A: If anyone has questions on TRIM, values, or exemptions, they should contact our office. If you are qualified for an

**Q&A with Eddie Creamer** cont. on pg. 10



**with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections  
Vicky Oakes**

**Q: Are our elections secure?**

A: Yes! As the Supervisor of Elections, I have 100 percent confidence in our voting system and processes, and you can too, because Florida uses the safest system that exists: a paper ballot. St. Johns County voters have been voting on paper ballots since 1994, and all of Florida since 2008. Additionally, only voting systems certified by the Department of State can be used to count ballots in Florida.

**Q: What kind of voting system is used in St. Johns County?**

A: We utilize ES&S DS200 digital scan tabulators for counting ballots during early voting and on Election Day. To count vote-by-mail ballots, the Elections Office uses DS850 high speed tabulators. We have been using this system since 2010.

**Q: Are our voting machines connected to the internet?**

A: No. A stand-alone server is used to program the election and tabulate the results. After polls close on election night, unofficial results are transmitted using a secured private network that has no internet access.

**Q: How do I know that my ballot was counted accurately?**

A: Our machines go through rigorous testing before each election, where thousands of ballots are run through the machines to make sure they are working correctly and counting each vote accurately. A public Logic and Accuracy test is conducted prior to each election, and the machines must be certified they are counting accurately prior to being used in an election. This test is open to the public, so you can attend to be sure our machines will count your vote correctly.

**Q: Does Florida conduct audits after an election?**

A: Yes. Audits have been conducted in every election in Florida since 2007, except in the case of a recount. Year after year and election after election, our manual audits, which consist of hand counting a percentage of ballots to compare to the machine count, have confirmed the accuracy of our machines.

**Q: Is there a new audit process coming in 2024 for our election?**

A: Yes. St. Johns County has recently purchased Clear Ballot Clear Audit, an automated independent audit system. The system provides a 100 percent audit of election results separate from our tabulation system. Beginning in 2024, a 100 percent audit of our election results will be conducted on every election.

**Q: Are elections conducted on a local level?**

A: Yes! Our poll workers do not work for a political party or candidate, they serve you, the voters of St. Johns County. Our staff and poll workers serve with integrity and transparency to ensure your vote is counted fairly and impartially. Remember, our poll workers are members of our community. They are our friends, family, and neighbors. We are public servants who serve to protect your right to vote.

**Q: How can I find out more about the security of our elections?**

A: Come take a tour of our office! We offer a behind the scenes look of our operation and present the facts about how elections are conducted in St. Johns County. Visit [www.votesjc.gov/](http://www.votesjc.gov/) office-tours to schedule a tour.

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

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

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Briefs

St. Johns County Emergency Management Offers Public Safety Alert Service

St. Johns County Emergency Management is using Nixle Alerts to provide another way for the public to stay updated with relevant information from the St. Johns County Emergency Operations Center. Any individual can text StJohnsEOC to 888777 to opt-in to receive notifications through SMS text messages. Nixle does not charge for this service, but carrier message and data rates may apply.

St. Johns County Emergency Management will use this service to alert residents of public safety advisories, natural and human-caused disasters, and other significant events that may impact the community.

“As we move into the peak of hurricane season, we want to ensure we can reach as many residents as possible with pertinent public safety information,” St. Johns County Emergency Management Deputy Director Kelly Wilson said. “Signing up for this service is an excellent way for the public to receive that information.”

First Coast No More Homeless Pets CEO to speak at Coastal Friends luncheon

After the summer’s hiatus, Coastal Friends will hold its monthly luncheon on Wednesday, Sept. 6 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Jennifer Barker,

CEO of First Coast No More Homeless Pets, who will discuss estate planning for your pets and provide information on what will happen to your pets if something happens to you.

Marsh Landing Country Club will serve Caesar salad, chicken cordon bleu with mashed potatoes, seasonal vegetables with Dijon mustard sauce and Chef’s choice for dessert. Open to members as well as the community, the cost to attend this luncheon is \$25. Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible.

Coastal Friends is a social club that has been in existence for 25 years. It consists of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, St. Augustine and the surrounding area. Formed in 1998, some of the activities offered by Coastal Friends are adventures and outings, book club, bunco, canasta, happy hour, lunch in, periodic lunches at local restaurants, Mah Jongg, and wine socials. Luncheons are held the first Wednesday of every month. New members are welcome throughout the year. Contact brookemeister@msn.com for more information on how to join.

Public hearing for Ponte Vedra Resort rescheduled

The St. Johns County Planning and Zoning Agency (PZA) public hearing for

PUD 2023-02 Ponte Vedra Resort has been rescheduled to Sept. 21, 2023, at the request of the applicant, Ponte Vedra Corporation. The meeting will begin at 11 a.m. in the St. Johns County Auditorium, located at 500 San Sebastian View. The item was scheduled to appear before the PZA on Aug. 17.

This item is still scheduled to appear before the Ponte Vedra/Palm Valley Architectural Review Committee on Sept. 6 at 5 p.m. in the Sawgrass Marriott Champions Room, located at 1000 TPC Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach. The item will also appear before the Ponte Vedra Zoning and Adjustment Board on Sept. 11 at 11 a.m. in the St. Johns County Auditorium.

For more information on this item, email faxplandept@sjcfl.us.

Tickets are now on sale for Disney’s Aladdin, Jr.

“Disney’s Aladdin, Jr.,” presented by the creative academy at Christ Church, 400 San Juan Drive, will be performed on Thursday, Oct. 5 and Friday, Oct. 6 at 7 p.m. as well as Saturday, Oct. 7 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. The show is about a boy named Aladdin and his three friends, Babka, Omar, and Kassim, who are down on their luck until Aladdin discovers a magic lamp and the Genie who has the power to grant three wishes. Wanting to earn the respect of a princess named Jasmine, Aladdin embarks on an adventure that will test his will and his moral character. Tickets are \$20 – \$30. Visit Ccpvb.org/alladinjr or email Barbiekroberts@gmail.com for more information.

St. Johns County seeks community input on World Golf Village

The public now has an opportunity to provide their input on the properties being vacated by the World Golf Foundation, which include the World Golf Hall of Fame, IMAX Theater, PGA Tour

Productions facility, as well as various parking lots and other property amenities. Interested parties should visit www.sjcfl.us/wgv to learn more and to provide input on potential future uses of the properties.

There will also be community engagement meetings in September, which will take place at the St. Johns County Administration Building Auditorium, 500 San Sebastian View in St. Augustine. The meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 27 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. and Thursday, Sept. 28, from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

The properties that are open for public input include:

- World Golf Hall of Fame: a 64,113 square-foot multi-purpose facility. WGF notified its intent to discontinue Hall of Fame operations on or about Sept. 1, 2023. Currently, the World Golf Foundation is proposing a temporary lease extension to Dec. 31, 2023.
- World Golf Hall of Fame IMAX Theater: a 17,865 square-foot movie theater. The World Golf Foundation notified its intent to discontinue IMAX operations on or about Sept. 1, 2023. The equipment (movie screen and audio/visual components) would remain in the building.
- PGA Tour Productions: a 32,329 square-foot Class-A office building. The World Golf Foundation is relocating at the end of 2024.
- S. Legacy Trail: 36.07 acres of various parking lots, rights-of-way areas, landscaping, and lakes.

Staff will analyze public feedback to establish themes and bring back options with associated costs to the Board of County Commissioners for a comprehensive planning approach for the properties.

Briefs cont. on pg. 9

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# Ponte Vedra wrestlers shine at nationals

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Three Ponte Vedra wrestlers, Mary Manis, Erin Rizzuto, and Donavanne Hofmann, traveled to Fargo to represent the State of Florida at the Marine Corps Junior and 16U Wrestling National Championships.

The tournament, also referred to as “Fargo,” is the largest wrestling tournament in the world. The event is held annually at the FargoDome in Fargo, North Dakota. All 50 states and Puerto Rico host a team of the best wrestlers from their respective state/territory, for a total pool of 51 teams. More than 1,500 girls competed at the two-day event in an arena filled with 32 wrestling mats. Ponte Vedra locals Manis, Rizzuto, and Hofmann all qualified for the event by becoming Florida National Team members.

Hofmann bounced through the 128-wrestler bracket and needed just one minute and 45 seconds to pin her opponent in the round of 64, securing five points en route against Virginia. Hofmann went backside on her next match, facing Arizona and then Washington to finish up her Nationals run. Hofmann is a rising sophomore.

Rising junior Rizzuto drew Puerto Rico in the championship round of 64 and earned a takedown and bonus point before going to the backside of the bracket. Rizzuto defeated Kansas by pinfall, Illinois by points, New York by superiority, and Iowa by points, where she earned a five-point takedown in the last 10 seconds of the match to secure the win. Her outstanding performance landed her in the round of eight on

Day 1. Rizzuto finished the tournament by posting a record of 4 – 2. Rizzuto also served as the Official Flag Bearer of the State of Florida during the Parade of Champions.

Rising junior Manis earned her first National Title in the 16U 106 lb division. She entered the 64-wrestler bracket as the No. 2 seed. Manis went undefeated on Day 1 of the competition, with wins against girls from Missouri, Wisconsin, and California. Manis won the matches by a combination of victory by fall, victory by points, and victory by superiority (also known as technical fall, where so many points were scored, the match was ended, as it would be impossible for her opponent to recover). On Day 2, Manis posted a win over Michigan to secure her spot in the finals, where she faced Connecticut and scored a takedown early in the first period to secure her win. She held on through the second period to establish herself as a National Champion. After the match, Manis was met on the wrestling mat by a Marine Corps service member, who presented her with her National Championship plaque, also referred to as a “stop sign” due to its octagonal shape.

Ponte Vedra High School’s girls’ wrestling assistant coach, Alexa Christoforatos, is a Florida National Team coach and coached the Team Florida girls to their historic finish. PVHS head coach, Nadine Fiege, was the first ever female National Champion for the State of Florida and wrestled as a member of the Florida National Team in 2013, where she won her first National Title at Fargo.



Mary Manis presented her Championship plaque by a Marine Corps Service Member after winning her finals match.

## Ava Heinz awarded Craig Speziale Memorial Scholarship

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida has announced Ava Heinz as the 2023 recipient of the Craig Speziale Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship recognizes a Ponte Vedra High School graduating senior who demonstrates academic excellence, school leadership, community service and the “Spirit of Spez.” Heinz graduated summa com laude. She was a member of the track and field team, serving as captain and mentor of the Lady Sharks’ discus and shot put. She was appointed to the Superintendent School Accreditation Committee and volunteered more than 700 hours at various organizations including Colonial and Good News churches as a child and youth worship leader and tutor. She was president of the Math Honor

Society, and member of the Science, English and History honor societies. Heinz will no doubt continue to make her mark at the U.S. Naval Academy in the fall. Pictured are Ava Heinz and her parents, Jenn and Mitch Heinz.



Photo courtesy Ana Speziale

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# Life

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## Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps  
mail@floridanewsline.com

### Maggie FitzRoy

When Maggie FitzRoy was a teacher, she always had a strong feeling that she was meant to be in a different field. One day, she got a book on photography, started studying it and signed up for a correspondence photography class. She instantly loved it. That decision would change the course of FitzRoy's career and life. FitzRoy, who has a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in deaf education, was drawn to the power of telling a story through an image. In 1998, she walked into a local newspaper's office and asked if they needed a photographer. As it turned out, the receptionist said yes and asked if FitzRoy was, in fact, a photographer. "In my mind's eye, I saw superimposed on her, big wooden monastery doors, the kind you see in the Middle Ages, swing open," she said. "It was awesome, and I just knew that it was going to work out." FitzRoy was hired to complete five assignments a week. About one-and-a-half years later, FitzRoy decided that she wanted to write stories as well, something that was not initially well-received. FitzRoy took the reaction in stride and did what came naturally to her throughout her life: go to the library, check out books and learn. FitzRoy not only got a shot at writing her first story, but she went on to be a reporter and photographer for the Shorelines section of the Florida Times-



Photo courtesy Craig O'Neal  
Maggie FitzRoy

Union for 11 years. She was also the editor for First Coast Magazine. After that, she decided to write a novel, so she went to the library to learn about the craft and soon discovered that her imagination carried her perfectly into this next season of life. FitzRoy, who is married with three adult children and two grandchildren, is also the director of programming at First Coast Romance Writers.

#### Q: Where did you grow up?

A: I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, but grew up in Audubon, New Jersey. We had a summer home from when I was eight to 18 in Medford Lakes, so that was very formative. We lived in a log cabin on a lake with a canoe and a sailboat. It was just perfect.

#### Q: Describe the novels you have written.

A: I love to write historical romances that sweep the reader into the past. "Mercy's Way" was my first novel set in

1845 about the Oregon Trail. "Beacon Beach" came next and is set in 1886 Cape May, NJ. "His Haven" is a historical romantic suspense set in 1923 Miami Beach. My most recent novel, "Never on Monday," is set in 1955 Philadelphia and features romance and mystery. It is about a female private investigator who is a complete rookie. She meets her competition, a really good-looking guy who is a PI with a lot of experience. I am taking that relationship through seven books.

#### Q: How has singing in the choir at Christ Church impacted your life?

A: I am very spiritual, and I have always had a strong spirituality. I don't feel like I am alone. I have always had a strong core, and I feel lucky that way. When I joined the choir, I heard it said that when you sing, you pray twice. I think singing has really enhanced my spirituality.

#### Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I like to play pickleball for socialization and exercise, taking it up during the pandemic even though I had never played a ball sport before in my life. I also enjoy swimming laps and walking on the beach.

#### Q: What is your life philosophy?

A: What I say to myself every day is everything is working itself out for good. I am open and receptive to my highest good. And I am going to meet my good. My good will also help other people meet their good. So, I am going to meet my good.

[Author's note: For more information about FitzRoy's novels, visit [www.maggiefitzroy.com](http://www.maggiefitzroy.com).]

Briefs cont. from pg. 7

#### St. Augustine Book Festival hosted by Ximenez-Fatio House Museum

The Ximenez Fatio House Museum will host the St. Augustine Book Festival on the first three Saturdays of September 2023 — from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sept. 2, Sept. 9 and Sept. 16. The event will feature literary events that include historic house tours, author meet and greets, author presentations, book signings, local attractions and vendors at the Ximenez-Fatio House Museum, 20 Aviles St., historic St. Augustine, Florida. Admission is free to the festival, with donations accepted to continue historic preservation of the 225-year-old coquina house. Advance RSVP for tour is encouraged. Visit [ximenezfatiohouse.org](http://ximenezfatiohouse.org) for more information.

#### American Association of University Women announces meetings

The American Association of University Women, St. Augustine branch, will hold a Welcome Back Kickoff for all current, new and prospective members, on Wednesday, Sept. 13 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. at Captains Quarters Clubhouse, 1 Dondanville Road in St. Augustine. The featured speaker will be Debi Redding with the Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County. Attendees will also learn more about branch activities and AAUW's mission. Donations of canned pop-top goods are welcomed.

The group's October meeting will be a card party scholarship fundraiser on Saturday, Oct. 14 from 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Westminster St. Augustine, 235 Towerview Drive. Tickets are \$30 per person and include a buffet luncheon and lots of camaraderie.

Email Lisa Herrmann, [Lisa.Herrmann@pactivevergreen.com](mailto:Lisa.Herrmann@pactivevergreen.com), or Cathie Altman, [cathie.altman@gmail.com](mailto:cathie.altman@gmail.com), for more information about attending these events.

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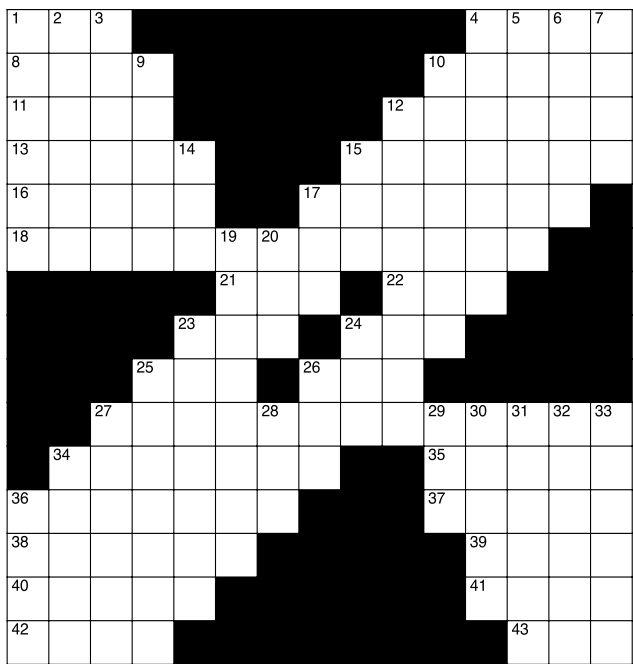
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# Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



## CLUES ACROSS

1. Outsourcing (abbr.)
4. Post
8. German city on edge of Black Forest
10. “\_\_, but goodie”
11. Spiced stew
12. Passionately
13. Monetary units
15. Group of living organisms
16. Organic compound derived from ammonia
17. High honors
18. 5-year-olds’ classes
21. Swiss river
22. Old woman
23. Cash machine
24. A way to soak
25. Hair product
26. Deride
27. “The Blonde Bombshell”
34. Cause to become insane
35. Bluish greens
36. Supported with money
37. Type of equation
38. Court officials
39. Indian god
40. Rids
41. Leak slowly through
42. Units of ionizing radiation
43. Midway between south and southeast

## CLUES DOWN

1. Native of Slovakia
2. Deli meat
3. Fibrous substance in fungi
4. Cutting
5. Vedder and Van Halen
6. Horror comic novelist
7. Rulers of Tunis
9. Shaped like a circle
10. Make a pig of oneself
12. Aphorism
14. Witness
15. Single Lens Reflex
17. Freshwater North American fish
19. Natural ropes
20. Leg (slang)
23. Pokes holes in
24. Moved quickly on foot
25. Fix-it shops
26. Type of bread
27. Repaired
28. Synthetic diamond (abbr.)
29. Type of drug (abbr.)
30. German city along the Rhine
31. Animal disease
32. Martini necessities
33. Get away from
34. Village in Mali
36. Djibouti franc

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[illegible]

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CLIMATE  
COASTAL  
CONSERVATION  
CYPRESS  
DECIDUOUS  
EXPLORE  
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FOREST  
HORIZON  
LAKE  
MAPLE  
MEADOW  
MOUNTAINS  
OAK  
OASIS  
RAPIDS  
REMOTE  
RIDGELINE  
SOIL  
STREAM  
VALLEY



Solve the code to discover words related to the wilderness.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 13 = **R**)

- A.** 9 13 5 5 7  
*Clue: Provide shade and habitats*
- B.** 24 26 9 3 24 24 13 7  
*Clue: Not inside*
- C.** 2 1 17 1 23 14  
*Clue: Walking through wilderness*
- D.** 23 6 9 26 13 5  
*Clue: Wildlife and plants*

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## Q&A with Eddie Creamer

exemption and even if you did not apply for it, the Property Appraiser has discretion up until 25 days after TRIM (this year, that would be Sept. 12) to apply for the exemption. So please contact our office immediately. Especially during TRIM season, we answer our phones and return all messages and emails prior to the end of each business day.

**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](mailto:Eddie@sjcpa.us) or call me at (904) 827-5500.

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Westminster St. Augustine, located in World Golf Village, is looking for a part time dishwasher. Typical hours are 4pm to 9pm. Starting pay is \$15 per hour. Text 904-474-1075 to receive an online application.

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

PopHistory

The Monkees come to Jacksonville with an unexpected guest

Seeking to cash in on the Rock & Roll boom of the 1960s, a pair of TV producers decided to create a TV show based on the escapades of a fictional band called "The Monkees." Some say that the idea sprang forth on the night of Feb. 9, 1964, the day the Beatles first appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show. There were other acts that night including a young Broadway singer named Davy Jones who had just finished a commanding performance as the Artful Dodger in the Broadway hit "Oliver Twist." The same night that the American heartland was introduced to the Beatles, they were also introduced to Davy Jones.

Jones was signed as a Monkee in 1965 followed by Michael Nesmith. Nesmith had written and recorded a song called "Different Drum." That song was not a hit for Nesmith, but it was a big hit for the Stone Poneys, fronted by a young Linda Ronstadt. At the time, Nesmith's mother was struggling to meet demand for her growing business, the Liquid Paper Company. Bette Nesmith invented "White-Out" while working as a secretary for a bank in Dallas. Eventually, she would sell the company to Gillette for \$47.5 million two weeks before her death in 1979. Mickey Do-

lenz was a former child actor and son of TV character actor George Dolenz. Peter Tork, the last to join the band, was a folk singer who hoped to one day be president.

The show was a surprise hit, but even more surprisingly, the manufactured music was an even bigger hit. In 1967, the Monkees went on tour. Halfway through, Nesmith and Dolenz wanted a new opening act. The pair had gone to Greenwich Village to see an African American who purportedly played his guitar with his teeth. When they saw him again at the Monterey Pop Festival in June of '67, they were sold.

And so, on July 8, 1967, Jimi Hendrix joined The Monkees on stage for the first time at the Jacksonville Memorial Coliseum. The combination was ill-fated from the start. No one who wanted to see The Monkees wanted to see Jimi Hendrix and vice versa. Hendrix had once called the Monkees' music "dishwater." The teen and pre-teen girls who flocked to see the Monkees had even less enthusiasm for Jimi, and they made it clear, nearly booing Hendrix from the stage, shouting things like "We want The Monkees" and "We want Daavvy!" When Hendrix tried to get

them to sing along to his song "Foxy Lady," the crowd just shouted back "Foxy Davy!"

The day before the concert, the "Jacksonville Journal" ran a short press release about the Monkees in their weekend supplement, "Action." In a twist that can only be described as "so Jacksonville," the supplement ran a long cover story on a local band, "The Daybreakers." The band was fronted by 16-year-old Wanda Roberson, the "little girl with a mighty big sound," who was about to cut two records fresh off big performances at the Jacksonville Beach Auditorium and the Orange Park High School Gymnasium.

"The Jimi Hendrix Experience" was not mentioned. Hendrix was greeted the same way at each subsequent tour stop. It was frustrating. After nine days, he quit the tour. But he did get a small amount of revenge for his humiliating Jacksonville debut. Sixteen months later, he returned in his own right and sold-out the Jacksonville Coliseum.'

*Scott A. Grant is a local pop historian. By day, he is CEO of Standfast Asset Management. He welcomes your comments at [scottg@standfastic.com](mailto:scottg@standfastic.com).*

Q&A with Krista Joseph cont. from pg. 5

7. Prevent land clearing too far in advance of development; 8. Preserve buffers, thereby protecting an existing neighborhoods' privacy and other quality of life aspects; 9. Ensure that development and construction do not lead to die-off of trees in abutting preserve areas; 10. Continue to allow the county's surveyor to create a tree inventory; 11. Preserve more trees in commercial settings; 12. Ensure that 100 percent of disbursement of funds from the county's Tree Bank goes toward the purchase and installation of trees; 13. Monitor and ensure adherence to code is accomplished with higher fines; and 14. Notification of clearing within 300 feet of the property to the people on the property line.

**Q: What is the next step?**

A: Our team (staff) at the county is now going over these 14 points and will make a presentation showing, among other things, financial ramifications to the Board of County Commissioners at our Oct. 17 meeting. I encourage people to attend this meeting and use their three minutes of public comment so that we commissioners will know their opinions.

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

A: Readers can email me at [bcc4k-joseph@sjcfl.us](mailto:bcc4k-joseph@sjcfl.us) or call me at (904) 679-2620.





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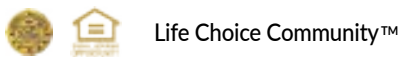


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