

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

MARCH 2024 Volume 11 Issue 3

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



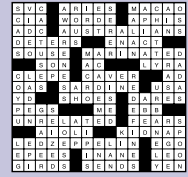
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Water bottle refill station at Nocatee Fields

New water project at Nocatee Fields

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Residents in Nocatee will notice a new addition to their county park facilities in the coming weeks. That's because workers from the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department will install a brand new water fountain and bottle refill station in the restroom area of the Nocatee Fields.

This addition is made possible by a partnership effort between the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra and the St. Johns County Parks Foundation. The club is providing a grant of almost \$2,000 that will go through the newly-formed St. Johns County Parks Foundation,

Nocatee Fields cont. on pg. 6

Saving lives: CPR skills and AED make the difference

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Brown Family YMCA in Ponte Vedra Beach saved John Perkner's life in July 2022.

Perkner, a longtime YMCA board member, had returned from a vacation in the Cayman Islands and then fell ill. Once recovered, he went to the Brown Family YMCA to play basketball with his buddies and after the second game, he passed out. He did not have any chest pains or shortness of breath, just felt light headed for a few seconds before he passed out; however, his friends knew right away that he was probably in cardiac arrest or cardiac arrhythmia. The early morning basketball crew, along with the staff at the Brown Y, acted quickly. One person started CPR immediately while someone else called 911 and went to get the AED on site.

After one shock, Perkner said he came around and was lucid on the ambulance ride to the Mayo Clinic. Perkner, 66, underwent extensive testing for heart attack and blockages in the days that followed. He decided to take aggressive action and have open heart surgery and to have bypass done. He also had an Implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillator (ICD) implanted in his chest. Three months later, Perkner returned to the courts.

Perkner's story illustrates the importance of CPR training and having access to an AED. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), more than 350,000, including 23,000 children, have cardiac arrest each year. Proper training is key during these critical moments when time is of the essence, said the AHA.

Dr. Michael Cunningham, cardiologist at Ascension/St. Vincent's Cardi-



Photos courtesy Cara Roach

Lifeguards Albio Jakupi, Bryce Bernstein and Dan Firtz at the Brown Family YMCA doing a monthly practice session of their life-saving skills.

ology, said early CPR and AEDs have been proven to save lives, and he has seen many lives saved in his career as a cardiologist.

"In regards to the AEDs, every minute one is down with a rhythm that would respond to a shock, a person's likelihood of surviving the cardiac arrest decreases by about 10 percent. The early shock from an AED results in an increased chance of a life being saved," said Cunningham.

Having the AED on site and people willing to use it to administer this aid is critical, Cunningham said.

"Early in my career, we helped bring the first community AEDs to Jacksonville. The first device was placed in the airport, with a bit of resistance, as it seemed worrisome to the local regulatory agencies to allow public access to an AED. Now, fortunately, it's common to see these lifesaving devices," he said.

Cara Roach, Brown Family YMCA associate executive director, said the Y equips its employees with the knowledge to act swiftly and decisively in any emergency, ensuring the well-being and safety of everyone at the

CPR and AED cont. on pg. 9



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BFF

**Best Furry Friend
of the month**

Meet Bruin!

Breed:
Bernedoodle

Favorite Activity:
Playing with his next door neighbor Sadie (Goldendoodle)

Favorite Treat:
Peanut butter with eggs

Favorite Friend:
His human sister Ella

How did your BFF get his name:
We are from Boston and are Bruins fans; he looks just like their Mascot!

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.

**Happy
St. Patrick's Day!**
from your friends at
Ponte Vedra NewsLine

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Last month's Mystery Photo was the World Market on JT Butler Boulevard.

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A. stitch B. yarn C. pattern D. hobby

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wbu.com/jacksonville

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(between Trader Joes & Staples)
904.246.0632
wbu.com/jacksonvillebeach

World Golf Village

180 Capulet Drive #15
(At Mirabelle)
904.209.5754
wbu.com/stauntonville

March

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: 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.

2nd: NE Florida Sisters in Crime will meet on March 2 from 10:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library. Writer and editor Terry Shepherd will present "Researching and Writing Authentic Diverse Characters — When You are Not One." Contact floridasistersincrime@gmail.com for more information.

2nd: Wellness events at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in March 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, 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, March 5 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The sale includes framed art, 14k gold, sterling silver, costume and designer jewelry, antique and household furnishings plus many decorative knick-knack items. 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: Purely Social Happy Hour hosted by Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will be held on March 5 at 5:30 p.m. at Trelor Park Nocatee Restaurant, 158 Markside Avenue, Unit 10. Attendees will order off of the menu for their drinks and food. Visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more information.

5th: Friends of the Ponte Vedra Beach Library Speaker Series presents the Doug Matthews Jazz Trio at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on Tuesday, March 5. Doug Matthews is the chairman of the Piano Department at LaVilla School of the Arts in Jacksonville, where he runs the piano lab and has been an instructor since the school opened in 2000. The Jazz Trio consists of Ricky Ravelo on bass, Rick Kirkland on drums and Doug Matthews on piano. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the event begins at 6:30 p.m. The Speaker Series is free and open to the public.

5th: Adult Coloring Club will meet at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on March 5 from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. No RSVP is required; bring a snack or drink for yourself or to share. Visit sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/ for more information.

6th: Meet with a SHINE Volunteer for Medicare Information at the COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee. A trained volunteer will assist you in a one to one meeting to answer any questions and offer assistance. Appointments available on March 6 beginning at 10:00 a.m. Register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling (904) 814-9407.

6th: Coastal Friends will host its monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., on March 6 from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Dillard's Spring Fashions will be highlighted at this yearly fashion show. The cost of the luncheon is \$25 and reservations must be made in advance by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible as space is limited.

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, March 7. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

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

9th: The GTM Research Reserve will host Family Seining on March 9 from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month for a guided family seining activity. Pull a seine net through Guana Lake, collecting species of fish, crabs, and other habitats. Learn about the animals and their roles. All necessary gear, including waders and boots will be provided. Registration required online at <https://gtmnerr.org/event/family-seining-18/>.

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

20th: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will host its general meeting with dinner on March 20 at 5:30 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. The program is "Fashion Forward with Cindy Nordman." The cost of the dinner is \$35; visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php to register to attend.

20th: Teens Design Your Own Jewelry at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. on March 20. How about earrings, a necklace or a bracelet? Create your original design! If you like it, make a home business out of this venture. This program is for students in grades six through 12 only. RSVP is not required to attend. Visit sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/ for more information.

21st: St. Johns County Republican Party District 4 monthly meeting will be held on the third Thursday of each month (this month, March 21) at 6:15 p.m. at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd. Visit stjohns.gop for more information.

21st: Free Tech Help with David will be held on Thursday, March 21 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/ for more information.

25th: Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will hold its monthly meeting on Monday, March 25, at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library 101 Library Road. Chat and Chew begins at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting begins at 6 p.m. Featured speaker is Hunter McIntosh, CEO of a boat company that operates in Alaskan waters who will speak on stewardship of the land and eco-tourism. Email PVDemClub@gmail.com for more information.

26th: Listening Hour hosted by Commissioner Krista Joseph will be held at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26. All constituents are invited to stop by and ask their questions of Commissioner Joseph.

28th: Check your blood pressure with Nurse Fran at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center on Thursday, March 28 from 10 a.m. – 11a.m. There is no charge for this event. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

28th: "Do you Need a Living Will and How Can you Avoid the Need for Guardianship" a free lecture by Megan Wall, St. Johns County Legal Aid, will be presented at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on March 28 at 11 a.m. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.



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

Q: Can you explain how the State Attorney's Office interacts with the Florida Legislature?

A: We are presently in the middle of the annual legislative session, which this year runs from early January through early March. Our office interacts in a couple of ways with the legislature when it comes to passing laws. I think it's good to give lawmakers our perspectives.

There are various committees that I regularly deal with and testify before: the House Committee on Criminal Justice and the House Committee on Criminal Justice Appropriations are probably the most frequent.

Sometimes we are called to testify our opinion on proposed laws; this year I have testified on laws regarding immigration and child pornography. Depending on how we feel about how a proposed law will affect public safety, we might give our opinion in favor of or in opposition to the bill. Sometimes we are invited by the committee to testify and other times our coalition of the 19 State Attorneys, known as the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association, will monitor bills coming through commit-

tees and go to Tallahassee to speak one way or the other if we feel it's needed.

Q: Do you interact in other ways?

A: Another way we interact with the legislature is by helping to draft language for a bill we feel is necessary and then submitting it to a legislator for their staff to put in the form of a bill. A bill must pass three committees before being eligible to go to the House floor for a vote.

This year, we worked with District 17 Representative Jessica Baker, who introduced the Officer Jason Raynor Act. We had found that some statutes pertaining to resisting arrest were inconsistent. This bill clarifies the statutes to make it crystal clear that a defendant cannot resist, with violence or the threat of violence, the arrest or detention by a law enforcement officer who is working within the scope of his or her official duties. This bill has passed all three House committees and the companion bill in the Senate is expected to pass the remaining two necessary committees. Then, we are hopeful both chambers will vote to pass the bill and it will go to the governor to sign into law.



with St. Johns County Property Appraiser
Eddie Creamer

Q: Can you share your office's tax roll calendar?

A: The first important part is between Jan. 1 and March 1, where we accept homestead exemption applications, which have a deadline of March 1. Between Jan. 1 and June 1, we are in our valuation process, valuing properties as of Jan. 1 and recording all sales. On June 1, we close the tax roll and send it to the Florida Department of Revenue as well as to each county taxing authority, CDD and CRA.

Q: What happens during the summer?

A: For the month of June, we are locked out of the tax roll while the Department of Revenue is performing their evaluation, making sure we are consistent. Then on July 1, we submit the tax roll back to the Department of Revenue, with any changes they indicated, to begin the process for TRIM. By Aug. 5, all taxing authorities have to submit their proposed millages back to us.

Q: When do you mail the TRIM notices?

A: This year, we will mail them on Aug. 16, which triggers the 25-day period that homeowners who dis-

agree with us can file a petition with the Value Adjustment Board. Also, during this 25-day period, which ends this year on Sept. 10, 2024, we can approve homestead exemptions if the person was otherwise qualified as of Jan. 1. We are prohibited from doing this after the Sept. 10 date.

Q: What happens next?

A: On Oct. 1 we send the tax roll back to the taxing authorities and the Tax Collector and at that point we are locked out of the tax roll and cannot make any changes. On Nov. 1, the Tax Collector mails the property tax bills and once again we can correct any errors made, such as if a homeowner corrects their home's square footage or if the Value Adjustment Board had any changes.

And finally, on Jan. 1 of the next year, we start the process all over again.

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

A: Our office is located at 4030 Lewis Speedway Ste. 203, (904) 827-5500. It is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Also, readers can email me at Eddie@sjcpa.us or call me at (904) 827-5500.

Ponte Vedra NewsLine is available online!
www.floridanewsline.com

Peripheral Neuropathy Breakthrough!

*"My feet feel like they're on fire."
"Each step feels like I'm walking through mud."
"I live in constant fear that I'll fall."
"I can't sleep, my hands and feet tingle all night."*

What do all of these people have in common? They suffer from **peripheral neuropathy**. It's estimated that more than 20 million people in the United States have peripheral neuropathy. Unfortunately this figure may be significantly higher as the disease is often misdiagnosed because of its wide array of symptoms.

Dr. Jann Turpin of Riverplace Acupuncture Integrative Health in Jacksonville shares this belief. "I've been treating neuropathy, in all its various forms, for over one decade and so often my patients come to me because of the symptoms, not because of the diagnosis. They saw one of my newspaper ads, or read the testimonial of another patient, or spoke to another patient and said to themselves, 'hey, I feel the same thing'."

Lisa B. testified to this. "Pain doesn't wake me at night anymore and I can walk as much as I want to all day without pain. I'm going to start exercising on the treadmill, for the first time in years. These are things I couldn't do before seeing Dr. Jann and getting acupuncture!"

Those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy often face a very grim reality; Western medicine declares that there is no solution while most alternative therapies carry large price tags and offer little to no resolve. Which is why Dr. Turpin and the staff at Riverplace Acupuncture pride themselves on being 'the last resort with the best results'.

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves and this damage is commonly caused by lack of blood flow in the hands and feet. This shortage results in a lack of nutrients; the nerves then begin to degenerate and die which causes pain ranging from discomfort to debilitating. Because neuropathy is a degenerative condition, once the nerves begin to deteriorate they will continue to do so until they are completely expired, leaving those suffering with severe balance issues. "In this case, the absence of pain is not necessarily a good thing," shares Dr. Turpin. "This usually means that your nerves are hanging by a thread."

So how exactly is Dr. Turpin able to reverse the effects of this degenerative disease? "Acupuncture has been used to increase blood flow for thousands of years which helps to get the necessary nutrients to the affected nerves. But the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance BioTherapy™. This is tech that was originally developed by NASA to expedite recovering and healing."

"I just can't say enough about Dr. Jann," Lisa shared through tears of joy. "My husband and I moved here 3 years ago and he's gone to the beach almost every day. I always stayed home because of the pain and discomfort. Yesterday I walked on the beach with him! And next week we're starting ballroom dancing lessons. I am truly living life these days."

By seamlessly blending the ancient science of acupuncture with modern medical solutions, Dr. Turpin has achieved a 90% success rate in reversing the effects of neuropathy. She starts each patient with an initial consultation during

which a sensory exam is performed. "This not only aids in making a proper diagnosis but it helps to define just how much nerve damage has occurred," tells the doctor. "This is important because if a patient has suffered more than 95%, there is little that I can do to help them. I'm familiar with the medical miracle but I know my limits as a practitioner and the limits of my medicine."

When it comes to treating peripheral neuropathy, regardless of its origin, early detection greatly improves your chances of a full recovery.

If you or someone you love is suffering with chronic pain that presents as burning, tingling or 'pins and needles' or you've recently been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy, it's important to know that there are options. There is hope!

Call (904) 720 - 8887 to schedule an initial consultation or visit www.RiverplaceAcupuncture.com to read more incredible success stories.





Members of the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra present a check to the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Foundation.

Nocatee Fields cont. from pg. 1

which will, in turn, give it to the Parks and Rec Department for the equipment purchase.

A couple of years ago, leaders from the Rotary Club approached the Parks and Rec Department to determine if there was anything the club could do to help efforts in Nocatee parks and beyond. The result of that conversation was a commitment from the club to supply funding for at least one water bottle refill station at the Nocatee Fields.

“Our club members are among those who use and enjoy the facilities at Nocatee Fields daily,” says Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra President Josh Hull. “We thank the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department and St. Johns County Parks Foundation for the opportunity to provide relief to those who run, sweat, and play in our beautiful parks. It helps fulfill our Rotary mission of ‘Service Above Self’ and addresses the ongoing issue of providing clean drinking water to our world’s population.”

To celebrate the effort, members from all involved gathered at the restroom area of Nocatee Fields on Jan. 23 for a ceremonial big check photo opportunity.

Michael F. Payne, Sr., executive director of the St. Johns County Parks Foundation, said, “We are delighted that the Rotary of Ponte Vedra saw a need and fulfilled that need expeditiously,” Payne said. “We are excited about this partnership and this collaboration and hope that county residents will enjoy this generous gift for years to come.”

Photo courtesy Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra.

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with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: The Presidential Preference Primary Election is just ahead on March 19. Who is eligible to vote in this election?

A: The March 19 election is only open to registered Republican voters to vote for their presidential nominee.

Q: I am registered with no party affiliation. Can I vote in this election?

A: No. Florida is a closed primary state, which means only voters who are registered members of a political party may vote for their respective party’s candidate in a primary election. The deadline to change your party affiliation for this election was Feb. 20, 2024.

Q: I am a registered Democrat, why don’t I get to vote?

A: Since Joseph R. Biden, Jr. is the only name submitted by the Democratic Party of Florida for their Presidential Preference, there will not be a Democratic ballot in this election.

Q: If a presidential candidate has suspended their campaign, why are they still on the ballot?

A: The deadline for presidential candidates to withdraw from Florida’s Presidential Preference Primary Election ballot was Dec. 12, 2023. If a presidential candidate suspends their campaign after that date, their name remains on the ballot. All votes will be counted, and results certified to the State as required by law.

Q: Almost all candidates have dropped out of the race, why are we still having an election?

A: Florida law requires an election be held to determine which candidate will receive Florida’s delegate votes at the party’s National Convention in the summer.

Q: Are the delegate votes awarded proportionally for each candidate?

A: No. Florida is a “winner take all” state, so the candidate who wins will be awarded Florida’s delegate vote at the convention.

Q: How do I get a vote-by-mail ballot?

A: Voters who want to vote-by-mail must have a request on file with the Supervisor of Elections Office. All requests from 2022 expired after the 2022 General Election. Simply call the Elections Office at (904) 823-2238 or visit our website www.votesjc.gov to request a vote-by-mail ballot. The deadline to request a vote-by-mail to be mailed for this election is March 7, 2024, by 5 p.m.

Voted ballots can be returned by mail, in person to the Elections Office, or to a Secure Ballot Intake Station available at all early voting locations from March 9 through March 16 during the hours of voting. Vote-by-mail ballots must be received by the Supervisor of Elections Office by 7 p.m. on Election Day to be counted.

Q: When is early voting for the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary Election?

A: Early voting is from March 9 through March 16, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily at all locations, which includes two Saturdays and one Sunday. Eligible St. Johns County voters can vote early at any of the six locations. For early voting locations, see our ad in this paper or visit www.votesjc.gov.

Q: When is Election Day for the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary Election?

A: Election Day is Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Polls are open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters must vote at their assigned precinct on Election Day. I would like to remind voters that several polling places have changed since the last election. Affected voters were mailed new voter information cards. Please check your polling place before heading to the polls — this can be a real time saver! Visit www.votesjc.gov and use the “Find My Polling Place” tool or call the Elections Office at (904) 823-2238 to confirm your polling place.

Ponte Vedra Democrats welcome Mayor Deegan



Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan spoke at the Ponte Vedra Democratic Club at its Jan. 22 meeting. She reviewed the accomplishments of her administration in the first six months and emphasized her priorities in the coming year — education (including an initiative to promote literacy so that children would be reading at grade level by third grade), health care (including publicizing access to the federal government/Florida state marketplace), and Duval County infrastructure, which has been sorely neglected for decades. Approximately 120 attendees peppered the mayor with questions and gave her a standing ovation in response.



2024 Presidential Preference Primary Election · March 19, 2024

Open only to registered Republican voters to vote for their presidential nominee.

Republican Party Presidential Candidate List

- Ryan L. Binkley
- Chris Christie
- Ron DeSantis
- Nikki R. Haley
- Asa Hutchinson
- Vivek Ramaswamy
- Donald J. Trump

Candidates listed in order by last name.

NOTE: The deadline for presidential candidates to withdraw from Florida’s Presidential Preference Primary Election ballot was December 12, 2023.

If a presidential candidate suspends their campaign after that date, their name remains on the ballot. All votes will be counted and results certified to the State as required by law.

Several polling places have changed since the last election. Affected voters were mailed new voter information cards. Check your polling place before heading to the polls!

Vote-by-Mail

To request a ballot, visit www.votesjc.gov or call 904-823-2238.

The deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot **to be mailed** for this election is March 7, 2024, by 5 PM. Vote-by-mail ballots must be received by the Supervisor of Elections Office by 7 PM on Election Day to be counted.

Vote-by-mail ballots can be returned:

- By mail
- Secure Ballot Intake Stations, available at all early voting locations during the hours of voting
- In-person at the Elections Office

Early Voting

March 9 - March 16, 2024
Includes two Saturdays and one Sunday
Open 9 AM to 6 PM daily

Ponte Vedra Branch Library
101 Library Blvd, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

Julington Creek Annex
725 Flora Branch Blvd, St. Johns, FL 32259

Supervisor of Elections Office
4455 Avenue A, Suite 101, St. Augustine, FL 32095

St. Augustine Beach City Hall
2200 A1A South, St. Augustine, FL 32080

Southeast Branch Library
6670 US 1 South, St. Augustine, FL 32086

Hastings Branch Library
6195 S. Main St, Hastings, FL 32145

Election Day

March 19, 2024
Polls open 7 AM to 7 PM

- You must vote at your assigned precinct on Election Day
- ID is required when voting in person

Visit www.votesjc.gov to find your polling place and review your sample ballot.

Briefs

Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum purchases property afor expansion

The Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum is expanding its footprint in the nation’s Oldest City with the purchase of the historic Sanchez House at 105 St. George Street in St. Augustine. Karpeles Manuscript Library Inc. CEO Mark Karpeles and CFO Cheryl Alleman, who are the son and daughter of the museum founder, the late David Karpeles, paid \$4.5 million for the property in January.

The interior renovations for the new full-size Karpeles Manuscript Library museum are underway with an opening planned in summer 2024. Built in 1809, the Sanchez House spans more than 3,800 square feet and is located near the Columbia Restaurant.

The Karpeles Manuscript Library currently operates a Mini Museum at 106 St. George Street, which is across the street from the new location. It is the smallest walk-in museum in the United States. The Mini Museum encompasses about 100 square feet in St. George’s Row, a collection of indoor shops and restaurants. It displays reproductions of documents from the Karpeles collection including a collection of original drawings from early Disney films.

Founded in 1983 by David and Marsha Karpeles, the Karpeles Manuscript Library archives contain one of the largest private collections of historic documents and manuscripts in the

United States, with more than 10,000 pieces totaling about a million pages, in the categories of literature, science, religion, political history, exploration, music and art. To make the collection more accessible to the general public, all Karpeles museums are free to visit, and the collection rotates between its museums three times per year.



Photo courtesy Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum

There are nine Karpeles Manuscript Library Museums in the United States including the two St. Augustine locations and a location in Lake Mary, which is the museum’s headquarters. Visit www.karpeles.com for more information.

Student art celebrated during month of March

The St. Augustine Art Association (STAAA) is presenting the 19th annual St. Johns All-County High School Art Show, featuring artwork of

more than 150 students from grades nine through 12, at the Bradley Mayer Main Gallery, in downtown St. Augustine, March 1 – 31. The artwork can be seen in-gallery or online.

The exhibit is a favorite of STAAA, bringing a truly fresh and unique perspective to art today, and it started as far back as the 1940s. In STAAA’s early years, artists Tod Lindenmuth and Elizabeth Warren set out to host the association’s first student art show. More than 60 years later, in 2004, Diane Bradley joined STAAA as a life member and board member after retiring from a 30-year career as a middle school and high school art

teacher. She soon began hosting art classes after school, and was inspired to create an opportunity for students to exhibit their work. Bradley set off to establish a partnership with St. Johns County schools, and with the help of high school art teacher David Olson and St. Augustine High School assistant principal Allyson Breger, STAAA hosted its first St. Johns All-County High School Art Show in 2005 — with only two schools. Now, the exhibit features work from eight schools and more than 150 students, in part thanks to Tommy Bledsoe, former St. Johns County School District curriculum coordinator.

Visit the exhibition in-gallery Tuesdays through Sundays, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. as well as online at staaa.org.

Pickleball players have new play options

Pickleball in North Florida now has a new outlet for the enthusiastic players of the fastest growing sport in the country. First Coast Pickle has formed, offering an outlet for pickleball players seeking new friends, new challenges, and a great time. Organized and headed by Matt Bacon, co-founder and commissioner, the new league commenced play on Feb. 19.

“Everybody has a lot of fun playing pickleball,” Bacon said. “This league will offer more opportunities to play, socialize and meet new players from all around North Florida.”

Invented in 1965 by three Washington State fathers whose children were bored, pickleball has caught the public’s attention. Named for the dog of one of the fathers, players are known as Picklers and use a paddle larger than one used in ping pong but smaller than a tennis racquet.

The league will play four flights: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. Each flight will have playoffs, winners, and recognition for players. Visit firstcoastpickle.com for more information.

St. Augustine Celtic Music and Heritage Festival announces entertainment in March

The St. Augustine Celtic Music & Heritage Festival is being held in America’s Oldest Celtic City with

Briefs cont. on pg. 10



A BETTER MAMMOGRAM WHEN READ BY BREAST EXPERTS

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“Patients receive a better mammogram when they are read by breast experts, and unfortunately that’s not always the case, Breast Imaging Radiologists are experts at breast cancer screening and diagnosis. They have additional Breast Fellowship training beyond Radiology Board Certification.” She adds, “I want physicians to take back control and optimize patient care by allowing fellowship-trained breast imaging radiologists to have the time to examine and talk with patients.” She would like to provide the highest level of breast care, ultimately increasing screening and diagnosis access and workflow through experience, collaboration, and state-of-the-art technology. “This will improve and expedite cancer diagnosis, help us answer questions, educate patients, and quite literally hold their hand through the process,” Pearson said. “I want them to leave Boutique Breast Imaging feeling they were really cared for and not just lined up through a revolving door and valued only for their insurance contract. I want to care for women like I would my own family.”



Kathryn Pearson, M.D.
Radiologist, Founder & Director
Founder Mammosphere

Dr. Kathryn Pearson, M.D. a Stanford and University of California at San Francisco-trained breast imaging radiologist (ACR Board-certified with Breast Imaging Fellowship), has been practicing in Jacksonville, Florida, since 1999, developing a widely known reputation as a breast imaging expert, speaking locally and nationally.

Having been personally impacted by breast cancer through a deep-rooted family history and need for surgery herself, Dr. Pearson continues to advocate for better patient care. She founded and served as CEO/Chief Medical Officer of the non-profit healthcare IT company Mammosphere in 2012, which stores and exchanges breast imaging studies in the cloud.

Dr. Pearson is a dedicated patient advocate and provider, optimizing breast imaging screening and cancer diagnosis to detect usually-curable breast cancers.



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Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Dr. Amy Hearne

Dr. Amy Hearne first realized that she wanted to become a doctor in high school after liking her biology class and taking a career matching test that indicated cardiology as a good fit for her. Soon she was enrolled in AP Biology, entered a shadowing program in doctor's offices, and later became an EMT while in pre-med. During medical school, Hearne was required to participate in a variety of clinical rotations. She chose to do OB/GYN first because she thought there was no way she wanted to go into the field, but it was women's health, and it seemed to offer a certain degree of comfort and academic success. "I was surprised by how much I really enjoyed it," said Hearne. "I liked it because it was a little bit of medicine, a little bit of surgery; it was women's healthcare, and, as a woman, I realized that I was more passionate about women's healthcare. I also liked the fact that you could see people of all ages. It turned out to be the right career for me," said Hearne, 50. Later, she narrowed her focus to gynecology exclusively. Today she works at the Jacksonville Center for Reproductive Medicine, where she concentrates on fertility, endometriosis, pelvic pain, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, and hormones. "As my career has



Photo submitted by Amy Hearne
Amy Hearne

evolved, I think I am where I am meant to be," said Hearne, whose husband, Dr. Mike Yorio, is the team doctor for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Along with her interest in medicine, Hearne has been equally interested in fitness. In her 20s, Hearne became an Athletics and Fitness Association Certified instructor and began to teach group fitness classes whenever she had the time. Currently, she teaches classes at The Lodge & Club at Ponte Vedra Beach and the Brown Family YMCA. Also, in March 2021, Hearne and Yorio opened a BODY20 Studio franchise in Ponte Vedra Beach. BODY20 utilizes a FDA-cleared electro-muscle stimulation suit, offering 20-minute strength, cardio, and relaxation sessions with a personal trainer. For Hearne and Yorio, it is personal. "This is where we live, and we wanted to help out our own community," said Hearne.

Q: Where did you grow up and attend college?

A: I grew up in Rochester, New York. I attended Penn State University for premed, Syracuse University for medical school, and The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine for my Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency.

Q: What brought you to Ponte Vedra Beach?

A: I met my husband, who is from Long Island, in medical school, and we got married in 2003. We lived in Annapolis and Long Island for our jobs. Then my husband, who does internal medicine/sports medicine, got recruited for a position in Jacksonville in 2014, and we found Ponte Vedra Beach. We absolutely love it here.

Q: What do you like about fitness?

A: I like helping people reach their goals. As a physician, I know how important movement and exercise are to longevity and to overall health. I like to make it fun for people and just really enjoy seeing people be active.

Q: What got you interested in BODY20?

A: I took a look at it, and there was good data on muscle atrophy in ICU patients. I decided to bring it into Ponte Vedra. I felt like this is a fitness-minded community. People are interested in exercise, but may not have the time, and this is cutting-edge fitness technology with no impact on the joints.

Q: You have two teenage daughters, Drea and Lila. What do you like to do as a family?

A: We love going to the beach, watching sports, traveling, and volunteering at Love Me True Cat Rescue.

CPR and AED cont. from pg. 1

YMCA. All employees undergo Basic Life Support, First Aid and Oxygen training.

"Additionally, our lifeguards are required to participate in four hours of monthly in-service training. Investing in CPR training for our staff at the YMCA is more than a commitment to safety; it's a dedicated pledge to be the lifeline in times of crisis," she said.

Perkner said he will always be grateful to the staff and members of the Brown Family YMCA. One year later in 2023, he was able to return the favor.

"One year, one day and one minute to the time of my event, another member had an almost identical event to mine while playing basketball," said Perkner. "He fell after the second game, and we all thought he had twisted his ankle. He was lying face down, and he was not moving, and I thought that was strange. I rolled him over, and he was turning blue."

Again, a member started CPR right away, Perkner called 911 and grabbed the AED.

"I knew that is what saved my life," said Perkner, who followed the prompts of the device along with a Y lifeguard. After one shock, Perkner said the member's color returned, and he started to breathe. More CPR was conducted, and the member was talking as the ambulance arrived. That member is also doing well today.

"Having both members who are willing to act and having trained staff around and having an AED that is fully functioning and state-of-the-art, that makes a huge difference. It is a positive message when you have two people who had a significant event in the same place, and both survived and are back to normal activity."

To find CPR training classes, go to heart.org/nation.

Get to Know ...

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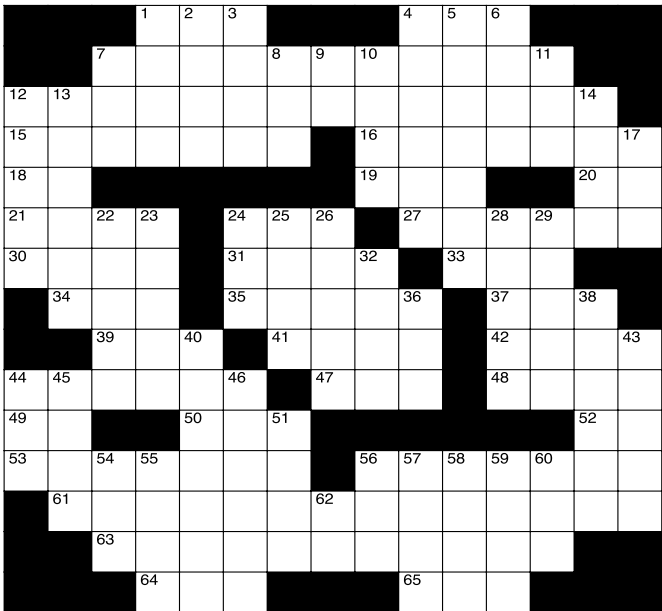


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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Helps little firms
- 4. Political action committee
- 7. Allowed
- 12. Olivia Colman played one
- 15. Open
- 16. He had a notable lamp
- 18. Promotional material
- 19. Domesticated animal
- 20. Larry and Curly's buddy
- 21. The best ever
- 24. TV network
- 27. Checked for
- 30. Dry or withered
- 31. Expression of annoyance
- 33. Dash
- 34. Fifth note of a major scale
- 35. A secret clique

- 37. Partner to cheese
- 39. ___ school: where to learn healing
- 41. City in ancient Syria
- 42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 44. Established practice
- 47. Thanksgiving side dish
- 48. District in Peru
- 49. It's becoming more prevalent
- 50. State in India
- 52. Measure of illumination
- 53. Raised platform
- 56. Japanese warrior
- 61. R.L. Stevenson novel
- 63. Transitory
- 64. Advanced degree
- 65. Fiddler crabs

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Prevent from seeing
- 2. Czech city
- 3. ___ and Andy, TV show
- 4. A young pig
- 5. Removed surgically
- 6. Covered with
- 7. Chest muscle (slang)
- 8. Nigerian City
- 9. Midway between south and east
- 10. A way to shut
- 11. Stop playing
- 12. Marshy places
- 13. Takes apart
- 14. Ten cents
- 17. A gesture of assent
- 22. Scent
- 23. Teletypewriter
- 24. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 25. Hillside
- 26. Taxi driver
- 28. Semitic Sun god
- 29. Town in India
- 32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
- 36. Fugitives are on the ___
- 38. Type of dance
- 40. Two letters, one sound
- 43. Having a strong, pleasant taste
- 44. Golf score
- 45. Mayhem
- 46. Drenched
- 51. River in northeastern Asia
- 54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)
- 55. Part-time employee
- 56. A very large body of water
- 57. Aboriginal people of Japan
- 58. Millisecond
- 59. Forearm bone
- 60. Subway dweller
- 62. Royal Mail

ST. PATRICK'S DAY WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- CELEBRATION
- CELTIC
- CLOVER
- EMERALD
- ERIN
- FORTUNE
- GAELIC
- GOLD
- HARP
- IRELAND
- IRISH
- ISLAND
- JIG
- LEGEND
- LEPRECHAUN
- LUCK
- MAGIC
- MARCH
- MISCHIEF
- PARADES
- PATRICK
- SAINT
- SHAMROCK
- TRADITION



Solve the code to discover words related to crochet.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 1 = T)

A. 19 1 12 1 24 17

Clue: Loop of thread around hook

B. 25 3 6 9

Clue: Spun thread

C. 18 3 1 1 4 6 9

Clue: Model or form

D. 17 16 7 7 25

Clue: Enjoyable pursuit

Briefs cont. from pg. 8

multi-award-winning cultural events on Saturday, March 9 from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m., and Sunday, March 10 from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. Top international and U.S. Celtic bands, Highland Games, workshops, lectures, Celtic food and artisan crafts, and a St. Patrick Day parade will be featured, plus a whiskey tasting event

on Friday, March 8 from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. The Celtic Music & Heritage Festival and activities will be held at Francis Field, 29 W. Castillo Drive in historic downtown St. Augustine.

The event's touring bands are from Scotland, Ireland, Canada, and the U.S. with traditional and Celtic rock music. An extensive music line-up includes festival favorites Albann-

ach, Dublin City Ramblers, Jamison, La Unica, Seven Nations, Steel City Rovers, and Syr, with Emmet Cahill returning after a five-year absence. Appearing for the first time at the Festival will be Grammy-nominated Gaélica, and the Mudmen, renowned as the Canadian Celtic Rock Warriors. Chad Light is the main stage host and emcee. Additional entertainment, lectures, and workshops will be on the second stage

hosted by Sharon Foy Baird.

Tickets and VIP passes include a variety of entertainment options for both days. Vendors will offer Celtic cuisine along with a variety of food and beverage, as well as handmade and imported Celtic crafts. Visit www.celticstaugustine.com for more information about tickets, the Festival, and St. Patrick Parade.

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By Scott A. Grant
mail@floridanewsline.com

PopHistory

Rube Waddell, Lost in Jacksonville

George E. Waddell, better known as "Rube," was one of the great characters of early 20th Century baseball. He liked to chase fire trucks and if one drove by the stadium while he was pitching, he might just take off after it and leave everyone wondering what happened. Apparently, he chased the fire engines because he wanted to help and on a number of occasions, he did. They also say that he would become distracted by shiny objects and puppies. Opposing fans were known to bring both to games.

Rube Waddell was also one of the best pitchers of his, or any, era. In 1904, he set a major league strikeout record of 349, 110 more than the second-place finisher. That record lasted until it was broken by Sandy Koufax 61 years later. He led the Philadelphia Athletics to American League pennants in 1902 and again in 1905. He never played in a World Series. In 1902 the American League was only two years old, and no World Series was played. In 1905, the A's were set to play the National League champion NY Giants when Waddell was injured tussling with a teammate.

Back in those days, men wore straw boaters that they removed after Labor

Day. It was a tradition. On Labor Day, you took off your boater and punched your fist through the top and tossed it away. If a man caught another man wearing a straw boater hat after Labor Day, he could grab it and destroy it himself. Well, Rube tried to take his teammate's hat. His teammate attempted to hide the hat under his coat. A fight ensued. Rube was injured. There were rumors that he had been paid to miss the series by gamblers.

A couple of interesting stories about Rube Waddell that I had read became more interesting when I learned they happened right here in Jacksonville. All of the events happened in the spring of 1903. The Philadelphia Athletics held their spring training in Jacksonville that year. It was the first time a major league club came to Jacksonville since 1888. It would be a dozen or more years before a team would come again.

Waddell got to Florida early. He came to play baseball for Rollins College. Back in those days, Rollins and Stetson had a fierce baseball rivalry. The story goes that Stetson brought in some high-quality players from the University of Illinois to bolster their chances in the big game. William C. Temple, who was

on the board of trustees at Rollins and a part owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates, hired Waddell to enroll at Rollins. The Rollins catcher could not handle Waddell's fastball and was terrified of his curveball. So, Temple added A's catcher Osse Schreckengost to the roster. Stetson lore says Stetson won a three-game series 2 to 1. Rollins lore says the Stetson players took one look at Waddell warming up and fled back to DeLand.

Rube and Schreck were already in Florida when the A's arrived for spring training. Jacksonville offered numerous temptations and Waddell went missing on several occasions. That was not unusual; Waddell often left the team to fish and would show up days later often living in a fire station or the back room of a saloon. Rube loved to drink. He once traded a baseball from a game he won over Cy Young to a bar for free drinks. The ploy worked so well that Rube ended up trading a dozen "game balls" to other bars in the area. On another occasion in Chicago, Rube snuck off to the zoo and punched a lion. The lion bit him.

The first time Rube went missing in Jacksonville they found him wrestling an alligator over near the old Ostrich

Farm. There are reports of a run in with an emu possibly from the same event. The second time Rube went missing he showed up days later leading a parade down Main Street. There are photos of a big car parade held in Jacksonville in 1903, but that seemed to have happened later in the year.

The third Jacksonville story is the most bizarre of all. Supposedly, Rube and his catcher were sitting on a pier jutting out into the Atlantic, most likely at Atlantic Beach. Waddell, who was despondent after being dumped by a local woman, a brunette, announced his intention to kill himself by jumping into the ocean. Schreck, maybe not taking him seriously, said "do it." Rube jumped, narrowly missing some sharpened pilings, and then walked out of the ocean, amused some locals by knocking down some boards with a soggy baseball, and then went back out to the end of the pier and jumped off again.

Rube and Schreck ended up dying three months apart in 1914 at the ages of 37 and 39.

Scott A. Grant is a local author and historian. He welcomes your comments at scottg@standfastic.com



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

Q: Can you tell us about any new events for students that have been taking place?

A: Our district’s curriculum department has been trying some new events such as the first annual Local History Night, which was held on Feb. 5 at Gamble Rogers Middle School. Families learned about the history of pirates, farming, civil rights in St. Augustine and the history of Hastings while sampling Minorcan clam chowder and datil sauce and enjoying a slice of pizza. Engaging speakers provided information on topics such as the lighthouse, Spanish colonialism, Gamble Rogers, and 18th century medicine.

The Honor Chorus selected students from 12 elementary schools across the district who worked with a clinician and then gave an evening performance. The first annual St. Johns County Dance Festival will be held at Beachside High School on Feb. 29.

We continue to evaluate what we’re doing and find ways to expand and improve our offerings so that we can provide opportunities for our students.

Q: Will the Sources of Strength program be coming to District 4?

A: This peer-to-peer program is currently in our high schools. Mill Creek Academy and Switzerland Point Middle School have been piloting the program this year for middle schools, and Landrum has been selected to start the program

next year. The program works to equip students to help each other navigate the difficulties they may come across. It’s been highly successful and we think it will be a positive addition to our middle schools. We have the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) program, where eighth graders help orient sixth graders to middle school, and this will be another resource for students.

Q: Do you have any kudos to share?

A: The District’s Spelling Bee winner is from Landrum Middle School, Sree Vidya Siliveri. We honored her at a recent school board meeting and she will go on to the regional competition.

The winner of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. essay contest is from District 4: Sarah Garcia from Ponte Vedra High School. Her essay was entitled, “America, Be True to What You Said on Paper.”

District 4 was well represented at the recent STEM Fair, and several projects were chosen for state competition. First place winners from District 4 were:

From Landrum Middle School, Bhavesh Senthil Kumar, Sri Mysari, Kate Hurford, Ingrid Montans, Dhruva Gadiparthi.

From Ponte Vedra High School: Nat Bagnall, Mira Bhutani, Ben Burk, Joshua Kim, Emaad Rahmathulla, Diana Chirila.

There were numerous second and third place winners from Landrum, Nease, Pine Island Academy, Ponte Vedra High School, and Valley Ridge Academy as well.

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

A: We are saddened by the passing of Bill Mignon, former principal at Nease and School Board member. This is a huge loss to the community as well as to our schools. He was not only a community advocate, but always a teacher and student advocate who loved our schools. He will be greatly missed.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

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Newcomers visit St. Augustine



Photo courtesy Bonnie Evans

On Feb. 3, Newcomers of the Beaches members enjoyed a behind the scenes walking tour of St. Augustine with Ladies Adventures. They were given an entertaining historical narrative of St. Augustine, while a colonial-attired guide pointed out locations of historic events and the citizens who helped create and maintain the oldest city in the nation. Afterwards the members enjoyed lunch at the Columbia Restaurant, which has a Spanish inspired decor with colorful mosaics with tableside signature preparations. If you are new to the Beaches area or in the last two years have been divorced, widowed, or retired, then Newcomers of the Beaches is for you. This is an active social club with 245 members that has a wide variety of activities. Visit www.newcomersofthebeaches.com to apply.

Ocean Palms and JT Townsend Foundation collaborate

By Lisa Farese
mail@floridanewslines.com

From outdoor items such as trikes, bikes and scooters, to indoor sensory tools such as light tables, magnetic letter tiles, blocks, and puzzles, students at Ocean Palms with varying exceptionalities have new ways to learn and play thanks to a grant of more than \$9,000 from the JT Townsend Foundation.



Photos courtesy Lisa Farese

Students enjoy playing and learning with the new sensory and outdoor items provided by the JT Townsend Foundation.

The JT Townsend Foundation is dedicated to “providing hope to the community of people living with disabilities by offering financial assistance for adaptive equipment and services that will improve their quality of life,” which is exactly what the foundation’s recent grant to Ocean Palms achieved by providing these unique educational items to the classrooms and outdoor play areas of approximately 75 students

at the school.

This isn’t the first time Ocean Palms and the JT Townsend Foundation have worked together on a project: when a new playground was installed at the school in 2020, the foundation donated \$5,000 in support of a wheelchair accessible otter float portion of the structure.



Carmen Townsend and Curtis Dvorak on the school's Otter Raft, donated previously by the JT Townsend Foundation.

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with St. Johns County Commissioner Krista Joseph District 4

Q: Do you have the details for your March listening event yet?

A: Yes, I will be at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on Monday, March 26 from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. to listen to my constituents and answer any questions. If I can't answer something, I will make a note of it and find out for the questioner. Also at this listening event will be one of the brand new FCC Environmental Services waste pickup trucks, plus handouts for the kids.

Q: What can you tell us about the new waste management company recently selected to serve St. Johns County?

A: We recently changed from Republic Services to FCC Environmental Services. I had actually voted against it, but after meeting with the management of FCC, I found they're very competent and I was impressed. They will begin operating in our area later this year with brand new trucks that have a special compartment for cardboard boxes. They explained that 36 percent of the garbage they pick up is cardboard boxes, so now if you put cardboard boxes out on garbage day, they will be loaded into a special part of the truck, away from the rest of the garbage. FCC is also trying to rehire some of the Republic Services employees, after they pass background and drug tests.

Q: At a recent Board of County Commissioners meeting, you made a point to recognize the St. Johns County Utilities Department's re-appropriation of operating budget funds. Can you explain why?

A: Neil Shinkre is the new director of the utility department and he is doing a really good job. He's thinking ahead with his budgeting and retaining employees by offering higher education opportunities, which increases their skills and salaries. And he's not asking for more budget to do this, but is more efficiently using funds he has. I'd actually like to see a TRIM rollback this year [where the amount of taxes paid by homeowners remains the same as the previous year] and the first step is to do things like this in our county's individual departments.

Q: Can you address the medians along A1A?

A: The medians have been a topic for years and years in Ponte Vedra Beach. They contain these tall palm trees, which are majestic but are not native. Unfortunately, the grasses in between have always been messy. Recently we cleaned this up and are planting grass temporarily in the medians, so that things are clean and green for THE PLAYERS. We can't do any major work until after the golf tournament, but we do plan to include possibly some peanut plants or other native vegetation as a groundcover.

I'd like to see some flowers for sure, but we do have to select plants that don't require a lot of water since there is no irrigation system in the medians.

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

A: Over Super Bowl weekend, I had the opportunity to serve as a judge for a Chili Cook-Off at American Legion Post 233 in Palm Valley, off Wilderness Trail. I met the new commander and was very impressed with their plans to rebuild and expand their main gathering area.

What would you like to read about in Ponte Vedra NewsLine? Let us know!

editor@floridanewsline.com



DAR American History Essay Contest winners announced

By Viky Divertie
mail@floridanewsline.com

Once again, the Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presented a bronze medal, a certificate and \$50 to each winner of the American History Essay Contest for grades five through eight at the chapter meeting on Feb. 6.

Brandy Hibbard, the longtime chapter organizer of the event said, "This contest inspires creativity and motivates our youth."

The students were invited to read their essays and afterwards were invited to share lunch along with their parents, teachers, principals and chapter members. This year's outstanding essay writers were Gavin Garrow, fifth grade, PVPV/Rawlings Elementary; Landon

Hunter, sixth grade, Landrum Middle School; Christopher Frankie, seventh grade, Landrum Middle School; and Briahana Macht, eighth grade, Landrum Middle School.

The 2024 contestants were instructed to imagine that they were a reporter writing an article on the first performance of John Phillip Souza's patriotic march "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

Chapter winning essays are forwarded to the Florida State Society DAR American History Contest for the state competition. The Ponte Vedra Chapter has had several regional and even state winners in past years.

Visit DAR.com or contact regent.darpon-tevedra@gmail.com for more information..



Photo courtesy Viky Divertie

Essay winners and their teachers: Michelle Bettler, Alexander Ford, Briahana Macht, Gavin Garrow, Landon Hunter, Christopher Frankie, Natalie Gavarette, Greg Arcini.

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with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: What can you share about your new K-9 program for the jail?

A: This is a brand new program and it's not typical to have K-9s in the jails. But we've had a handful of drug overdoses since I've been sheriff and since our goal is to make people better than when they came in, we wanted to institute this program. Unfortunately, we do have some who sneak in contraband. Currently we have the 3-D scanning machines like in the airport, but narcotics can be hidden in bodies, so sometimes illegal narcotics get in the jail. We have to be proactive and innovative to protect the safety of not only our inmates, but also the 220 employees who work in the jail.

Q: How did you start the program?

A: First we went through an extensive search to find the best kind of dog, and determined it would be a German Shorthaired Pointer or GSP. These are very active, hunting-type dogs with a keen sense of smell, a lot of stamina, and a high work ethic. We found two sister dogs, Raven and Korra, in Canada and brought them here at the end of last year. Concurrently, we were defining the responsibilities of the handlers and selected two deputies, Dep. Lebon and Dep. Hieras, to undergo extensive training. When Raven and Korra arrived here, after a transitional period where they became acquainted with their handlers and the handlers' families, we shipped the dogs and the handlers off

to Marion County for specialty training. Marion County is also instituting a program like this and we are training together.

Q: What is the next step?

A: The training is progressing very well and the dogs are scheduled to receive their Certification for Scent by the end of February and have all training completed by the beginning of March. At that time, we will swear them in as deputy sheriffs and they will be issued a badge and identification number.

Q: And then they will begin their duties?

A: Yes. They will work with an unorthodox and unknown schedule so as to keep the element of surprise. The K-9 teams will work on opposite days so that every day is covered at our two primary facilities: the work release center, which houses 20 to 30, and our main facility, which houses approximately 400. The dogs are trained to sniff many different illegal substances, including fentanyl, cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin. The dogs are also available to back up our K-9s on the street when needed.

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 or call me at (904) 824-8304. Also, our website, www.sjso.org has a wealth of resources.



Photo courtesy Rob Hardwick
Sheriff Rob Hardwick and Kendall Hardwick with Korra and her handler.

**The
Pantry
Raiders**

Enjoy a taste of tradition easily

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Tamales are a traditional Meso-american dish made of a masa dough and fillings, and then steamed in a corn husk or banana leaves. While tamales certainly are delicious, the time-consuming nature of making them may compel some to avoid preparing them at home. This recipe for "Chicken Tamale Pie" offers the flavors of tamales in a single-pan dish. Try it, courtesy of "30-Minute Meal Prep" (Sourcebooks) by Robin Miller.

Chicken Tamale Pie
Serves 4

- 1 (8.5 -ounce) box corn muffin mix (such as Jiffy)
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp. taco seasoning
- 1/2 cup corn, canned, fresh or frozen (thawed if frozen)
- 2 cups shredded, cooked chicken
- 1 cup red enchilada sauce, divided
- 1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese, or a blend of cheddar and Jack, or Mexican cheese blend
- Fresh cilantro leaves (whole or chopped) for serving

- 1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
- Coat a 9-inch pie plate or oven-safe skillet (such as

- cast iron) with cooking spray.
- 2. In a large bowl, whisk together the corn muffin mix, milk, butter, egg, and taco seasoning. Fold in the corn. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan, and smooth the surface. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean or with moist bits clinging to it.
- 3. Meanwhile, in a large skillet or saucepan, combine the chicken and 3/4 cup of the enchilada sauce. Set the pan over medium heat and warm the mixture through.
- 4. Using the end of a wooden spoon or spatula, poke holes all over the cornbread in the pan. Pour the remaining enchilada sauce into the holes. Top the cornbread with the chicken mixture. Top with the cheese.
- 5. Bake for 5 minutes, until the cheese melts.
- 6. Top with fresh cilantro, and serve.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Chicken Tamale Pie.



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Travel

Dreams Come True in Lucerne, Switzerland

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

As a child, I fondly remember the book “Heidi,” about a young orphan girl sent to live with her grandfather in the Swiss Alps. She develops a deep love of the mountains and nature. Looking back, I believe I was drawn more to the illustrations than the storyline, as I clearly recall wishing to see the Alps, chalets, and grazing cows. My chance finally came when I signed up for a river cruise from Basel, Switzerland, to Cologne, Germany.

My travel buddy Judy and I flew to Zurich and boarded a train directly from the airport to Lucerne. Swiss Rail makes it easy. I’m glad I listened to a friend’s recommendation to spend two days in Lucerne because the beauty and ambiance of the city can’t be overstated. The stunning Old Town rests on Lake Lucerne’s banks, surrounded by stunning mountains featuring Mt. Pilatus, rising approximately 7,000 feet.

After a five-minute walk from the train station, Judy and I dropped our bags at the hotel. We set off to explore the enchanting city by crossing the famous Chapel Bridge. This covered wooden bridge rests on stilts with a picturesque tower first built in 1333. Lush flowering window boxes line the railings, and religious paintings grace the architectural archways.

A stroll through the pedestrian-only historic center included fascinating houses painted with historical scenes

or artistic details of former artisan guilds. You’ll see fountains, flowers, unusual rooflines, and inviting shops.

We then headed across town to the Lion Memorial, another famous landmark carved into a rock face. Next to the monument lies the Glacier Garden Museum, a place that truly surprised us. The interactive displays start with geology, the Ice Age, and the formation of the Alps. Stairs within the rock gardens lead to fantastic views above the lake and city. The unexpected fun came when we entered the Mirror Maze and lost our way among our mirrored reflections and the path. This hall of 51 mirrors was built in 1896 for the Swiss National Exhibition in Geneva and moved to Lucerne in 1899. We left exhausted from laughing at ourselves. I absolutely recommend a visit.

In the evening, we dined on (you guessed it) cheese fondue. When in Switzerland, you must try it as well as decadent Swiss chocolates.

The following day, we signed up for a day tour beginning with a lake cruise that transported visitors to the entrance to the most vertical cog railroad in the world. The thrilling and speedy ride up Mt. Pilatus presents an ever-changing landscape. We left the fog-enshrouded lake behind and ascended to clear, sunny skies at the summit. Here, I basked in the soaring panorama of the Alps: Eiger, Mönch,



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Going up on the cog railroad.

and Jungfrau, a dream come true. We also met hearty hikers who climbed the peak, something I do not dream about.

A gondola ride zipped us partway down the mountain, stopping where visitors can enjoy toboggan runs or challenging rope courses. We lingered at the dramatic background and rode a second gondola down to the outskirts of Lucerne. The day ended with a sunset cruise on the lake, albeit without a memorable sunset, but the narration answered many questions about the area.

Before leaving on a train to Basel, we wanted to visit the impressive Jesuit Church but found it closed. But, we discovered a fascinating cuckoo clock store (very pricey) and numerous chocolatiers. We missed Lucerne’s many museums but delighted in every minute of our stay. The city becomes a photographer’s jackpot and the perfect way to start a trip through Switzerland and Germany.

For information: www.luzern.com

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



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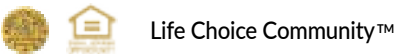


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