

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

MAY 2024 Volume 11 Issue 5

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



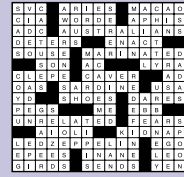
page 3
BFF Best Furry Friend



page 5
Q&A with
Kelly Barrera



page 9
Get To Know ...
Sarah Hanson



page 10
Puzzles



Photos courtesy Lisa Farese

Students at Ocean Palms challenge themselves to soak their teachers!

Ocean Palms Elementary's Spring Family Night was a splash!

By Lisa Farese
mail@floridanewsline.com

Ocean Palms Elementary welcomed students and their families for a night of inflatable, face-painting, candy-walking fun with a touch of splash — teachers and staff at Ocean Palms sat at the mercy of three bean bag tosses, under buckets of water, as students stepped up to the challenge. Let's just say it made a splash!

OPE Spring Family Night cont. on pg. 9

Fellowship with a Purpose: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club supports local charities



Photos courtesy Anne Urban

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club hosted a Masquerade Ball in February as a fundraiser for their mission of raising money for local charities.

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club (PVWC) began in 1970 with 15 local members who united for a charitable cause. They simply wanted to give back.

Today there are 136 members, but the sentiment remains the same.

"We want to help small and local charities to ensure that the donation will make an impact," said PVWC President Anne Urban.

Oftentimes, the charity will outgrow PVWC (a two-year commitment is made to each charity selected), and that is just the way club members like it.

Back in 1970, members selected Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) in St. Augustine as the focus. Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind is now a "legacy charity" and will always be supported. In addition to FSDB, the PVWC also selects four

other organizations every two years to support through an application, screening and voting process.

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club members come from all over the greater Jacksonville area, including both St. Johns and Duval counties. Selected charities also originate from both counties. The selected charities from June 2022 – May 2024 were Betty Griffin Center, BEAM, Hugs Across the County, Port in the Storm and FSDB. Last year's charities received \$10,000 each.

Other charities that PVWC has supported in the past include Mission House, St. Augustine Youth Services, Gabriel House of Care, Rethreaded, Beaches Habitat for Humanity, Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, Haiti Relief Fund, St. Francis House, St. Gerard Campus, Youth Crisis Center, and Expanding Your Horizons.

Urban said the club is both social and philanthropic in nature. Luncheons

with informational speakers are held in addition to "Purely Social" events, which are planned on off nights to give restaurants business during slower times.

"It is the best way to meet people with common interests, and everyone has a servant heart," said Urban, who lived for 30 years in Ponte Vedra Beach and now lives in Fruit Cove. She has been a member since the 1990s and works in the hospitality industry, owning three different companies. She became president of PVWC in 2023 (it is also a two-year term), noting that PVWC is currently at an all-time high for fundraising, membership, and attendance. Urban would like to reach 150 members before the end of the fiscal year.

Urban said members are diverse in age, race, financial background, and career paths. Most of all, everyone is welcome. Most members live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee and the beaches area. As

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club cont. on pg. 2

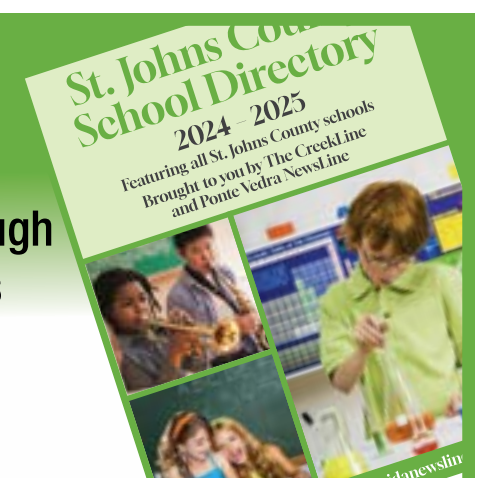


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Ponte Vedra Woman's Club cont. on pg. 1

for the charities, Urban said members are especially passionate about any organizations that assist victims of domestic violence.

“We like to help women and children start a new life without having to worry about the basic necessities,” she said.

“We are very passionate about charities that involve helping children.”

Vice President of Charities Melissa Ford said PVWC looks for charities that provide services in the areas of food, shelter, education, and well-being. Each year, up to three scholarships are also awarded to local high school graduates based on academic achievement, financial need, and volunteer/extracurricular activities, she said.

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will host a “Dine for a Cause” event June 17 – 23 for the first time, an event that the organization hopes to make a twice a year fundraiser according to Parker Alter, the club's vice president of ways and means. Different restaurants will be featured each day with a fixed menu, giving chefs a chance to get creative and to showcase what they choose, Alter said. A percentage of the sales will go back to PVWC to support local charities. The event is open to the public, and reservations should be made through the individual restaurant.

Alter, who is a Realtor, joined PVWC

two years ago and said the PVWC feels like a second home.

“This is a group with a great sense of community and a strong desire to give back to the community,” she said. “We also love to be social.”

Ford, who is retired, agreed.

“Although we have very different viewpoints, we share a passion for giving back to our community and helping others,” said Ford, who moved to Ponte Vedra Beach from New York City three years ago.



A good time was had by all at the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club's Masquerade Ball in February.

[Author's note: For more information about becoming a member (\$50 annually), to be a beneficiary, or to make a donation, visit pontevedrawomansclub.com.]

Vicar's Landing Boutique Sale features something for everyone



Photos courtesy Beverly Webb

One of the most popular venues of the monthly Vicar's Landing Boutique is the jewelry area. The Boutique sale also 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 and the Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives the proceeds. This month's sale will be held on Tuesday, May 7 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way.

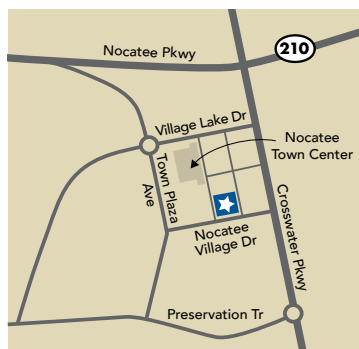


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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Chico!



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Long-haired Chihuahua

Favorite Activity:
Riding in the car

Favorite Treat:
Dental chews

Favorite Friend:
Neighbor Betty, age 92

How did your BFF get his name:
From his previous owner. Chico loves to cuddle, wag his tail, and bark at cars that go too fast!

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

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Summer Camp & Activities Guide in this issue! Pages 14 -15

Table of Contents

- 4 What's Happening in Ponte Vedra
- 5 Q&A with Krista Joseph
- 6 Q&A with Vicky Oakes
- 8 Briefs
- 11 PopHistory

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Answers
Puzzles
PG 10

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May

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.

1st: Coastal Friends will host its monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., on May 1 from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Guest speaker is Chris Oklevitch, owner of The Women's Defense Company, who will be speaking on safety education and self-defense tactics for women. 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.

4th: NE Florida Sisters in Crime will meet on May 4 from 10:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library.

May speaker Vikki Downey will present "A Police Wife's Survival Guide." Contact floridasistersin-crime@gmail.com for more information.

4th: Wellness events at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in May 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.

7th: Vicar's Landing monthly Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, May 7 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 Janet Nicosia at (904) 607-2078 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610 for more information.

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

7th: Purely Social Happy Hour hosted by Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will be held on May 7 at 5:30 p.m. at V Pizza,

154 Canal Blvd. This is an informal gathering for women to get to know each other. Attendees will order off of the menu for their drinks and food. Visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more information.

10th: Food Truck Friday will be held on May 10 and May 31 from 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. This event is open to the public.

11th: The GTM Research Reserve will host Family Seining on May 11 from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. (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/>

15th: Genealogy Group will meet at the OA Center at UF Health Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave. Ste. 205 on the third Wednesday of each month (this month, May 15) from 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. A genealogy expert will guide attendees in discovering their ancestors. This month, the group will discuss Family Tree Maker and compare other computer programs. Register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling (904) 814-9407.

15th: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will host its general meeting with din-

ner on May 15 at 6 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. Topics include charity and scholarship check presentations and year end activities. The cost of the dinner is \$35; visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/event-registrations.php to register to attend.

16th: St. Johns County Republican Party District 4 monthly meeting will be held on the third Thursday of each month (this month, May 16) at 6:15 p.m. at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd. Visit stjohns.gop for more information.

18th: The Nocatee Farmers Market will be held on Saturday, May 18 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

30th: Check your blood pressure with Nurse Fran at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center on Thursday, May 30 from 10 a.m. - 11a.m. There is no charge for this event. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

30th: "How to Avoid Becoming a Victim to Predatory Lending," a free lecture by Megan Wall, St. Johns County Legal Aid, will be presented at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on May 30 at 11 a.m. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.



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

Q: What is special about the beginning of May?

A: The first week of May is Teacher Appreciation Week. I encourage families and community members to honor and recognize the noble work of our amazing teachers. Make sure they know they are loved and make a difference.

Q: What else is happening as we near the end of this school year?

A: There are many end of the year activities that are beginning this month. It's such a fun and celebratory time when we honor our students, teachers, volunteers and business partners. While we are winding down this year, we are already amping up for next year, with plans to open two new schools. Over the summer, there will be lots of training and budget work on our four-day workweek.

Q: Can you share information about the Senior and Adult Volunteer of the Year for St. Johns County?

A: Jim Moyes, Ponte Vedra High School's play-by-play announcer for football, basketball, and baseball, was named the Senior Volunteer of the Year for the district. He is a 12-year volunteer and is described as a premier statistician, a fan favorite and a student mentor.

The Adult Volunteer of the Year is Amy

Parent, who developed CAAP (Children's Access to Art Program) and presents it to two schools in the county. She recruited and trained volunteers, developed shared lessons and secured funding for the program so it can continue. In four years, she has impacted more than 1,000 students.

Q: Is it too early to register new students for next year?

A: It's not too early! It's very important that we know how many students are coming so that we know how much staff to hire. To register, you can contact your zoned school or go online to begin the registration process. If you don't know which school you are zoned for, the district's website (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us) has a school finder that allows you to input your address and learn your zoned school.

Q: Do you have any kudos to share?

A: I had the opportunity to attend the STAR banquet, recognizing the top 3 percent of seniors in our district, on April 17 at World Golf Village. Recognized from Nease were: Mridhini Beegamudre; Jamie Fishbeyn; Daniel Kurian; Shreya Kalarrikkal; Alan Li; Shubhangi Maitra; Keilana McGreevy; Shiven Neelkant; Keya Patel; Rudra Patel; Sia Patel; Pryanna Pradhan; Sanya Shah; Aadithyaa Vishegu; Caroline Whyte; Sawyer Wiltfong; Aditya Yel-

lapragada; and Mason Zobel.

Recognized from Ponte Vedra High were: Mira Bhutani; Daniel Bustos; Richard Circelli; Graysen Gaskins; Spencer Lewis; Jason Li; Kai McLeod; Samay Patel; Taylor Perce; Charlotte Peverley; Megan Ralph; Samuel Ray; Alyssa Ruggles; Carly Thompson; and Bridgette Wells.

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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**with St. Johns County Commissioner
Krista Joseph District 4**

Q: How did your listening event go on March 26 at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library?

A: I had a great time engaging with my constituents at this event. We probably had 40 or 50 people attend and I knew the answers to most of their questions; the ones I didn't, I took a note and got back to them. The new garbage truck that was onsite was a big hit with people of all ages getting in the truck for a photo. I thought the event was very successful and I plan to do another one in September. In the meantime, if anyone has any questions or issues, they can call me on my phone number at the end of this article.

Q: What's the latest [as of interview date of April 18] on the beach renourishment?

A: The beach renourishment is scheduled to finish at the end of April. The county team did a great job in not closing Mickler's too long and we had 100 percent participation from the homeowners. The sand is beautiful and it is from a source eight miles out in the ocean. St. Johns County is one of the last counties to have its beach renourished, which makes the beach wider and more sustainable and better for tourism. Another bonus is that we expect to see an increase in the number of sea turtle hatchlings. The renourishment project from the Duval County line to Guana was made possible with a

\$38 million state grant put together by citizens on the beach as well as Senator Travis Hutson and other legislators.

Q: Do you have information to share about the upcoming overhaul of Davis Park, part of the \$123 million county parks package recently approved by the Board of County Commissioners?

A: The new part of Davis Park will contain new softball fields and more lacrosse/soccer fields as well as biking and walking trails. The park is supposed to be completed in about two years. Like the other parks in the package, it will contain a hub library. Usually the hub libraries are about 3,000 – 5,000 square feet, but our goal for the Davis Park hub is up to a 20,000 square foot free standing facility that contains not only books but also internet and space for community access. Nocatee has grown so much and is really in need of a library. Currently, Nocatee is serviced by our bookmobile, but it breaks down a lot. We plan to have a new bookmobile soon, before the hub library opens. Citizens should know that they can borrow and return books as well as take advantage of other library services at the bookmobile.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc4kjo-seph@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 679-2620.



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

Q: Why is jury duty considered a civic duty?

A: The Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to a trial by jury. To have a jury though requires jurors, who are selected from their respective counties for the most part. In other words, St. Johns County citizens for St. Johns County cases. The justice system cannot fully operate without jurors so, like paying taxes, citizens can be compelled to act to complete their civic duty to the country and county.

Q: What is the role of the clerk's office in jury management?

A: Our office manages the summoning and organizing of prospective jurors reporting for jury duty. Each month, we issue more than 500 jury summonses to residents using information provided by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Upon receiving the notice, those being summoned are welcome to check in online and submit any excusal or deferral requests. The process essentially starts with a larger pool before whittling down to a panel consisting of potentially six to 12 selected jurors.

After a circuit or county judge qualifies 50 – 100 prospective jurors, they are sent to the courtroom for voir dire, which is questioning by the judge and lawyers. Throughout this, our office works hard to ensure the process is efficient, effective, and not unduly burdensome.

Q: What message would you like to convey to residents summoned?

A: I would like to encourage residents to view it as an opportunity to serve their community and fellow citizens. When serving on a jury, you are effectively the judicial branch of government, deciding the facts of a case brought forth by the state or a fellow citizen. It's a big deal and a vitally important component of the American way of life.

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

A: Residents can call my office at (904) 819-3601 or my cell at (904) 599-8688. My email address is BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com. Most questions can be answered by visiting our website, www.stjohnsclerk.com, which is most commonly used to pay traffic citations or search court records.



with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: Have all processes been completed for the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary Election?

A: Yes, our final process was the Post-Election Audit completed on Friday, April 4. The Post-Election Audit was completed with 99.996 percent accuracy.

Q: Was this Post-Election Audit any different than the audits conducted in the past?

A: Yes. This Post-Election Audit was the first audit conducted in St. Johns County using our new Clear Ballot Clear Audit System. We are very pleased with the system and grateful to have an additional avenue to provide confidence in verified trusted election results in St. Johns County.

Q: What is the Clear Ballot Clear Audit System?

A: The Clear Ballot Clear Audit System was approved by the Florida Division of Elections in June 2023 for conducting post-election audits. The system provides an independent audit of voting results separate from the tabulation machines, which gives voters added confidence in the transparency of St. Johns County elections.

Q: How does the new audit system work?

A: All voted ballots are scanned into the ClearAudit system. During the canvass-

ing of vote-by-mail ballots, voted ballots are tabulated and then scanned in the audit system. During early voting, voted ballots are scanned in the audit system the following day. Voted ballots cast on Election Day are scanned into the audit system the day after the election.

All scanning events are noted on the St. Johns County Canvassing Board schedule and are open to the public — any person is welcome to attend.

Q: Do you share information about the Post-Election Audit?

A: The St. Johns County Canvassing Board schedule, forms, notices, and more can be found on our website, www.votesjc.gov.

Q: Why was the audit 99.996% accurate?

A: There was a poll worker error due to a ballot jam on Election Day in which one ballot was run through the DS200 scanner twice. The error will be addressed in our next session of Poll Worker Training for the 2024 Primary Election in August. This was the only discrepancy encountered during the election.

Q: What's next for St. Johns County voters?

A: The next election will be the 2024

Q&A with Vicky Oakes cont. on pg. 9

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**with St. Johns County Sheriff
Rob Hardwick**

Q: Since May is Mental Health Awareness Month, can you share some background on what SJSO is doing to support its employees?

A: Mental health is personal to me and our agency and it's something we address every day. There are 57.8 million adults aged 18 and older in the US who experience mental illness each year. Additionally, on average 22 veterans die by suicide daily. I ask myself, how do we provide better service to St. Johns County? And that is to make sure that our employees are mentally, physically, and spiritually fit and make sure that all services are available to all of our employees.

Q: What are some of the offerings of SJSO's mental health initiative?

A: We have a number of things. First, I added a licensed clinical psychologist to our staff. She has 20 years of experience and is a Navy veteran and she is available to all of our employees, not just our deputies. Also, we partner with K9s for Warriors. We brought in two dogs, Simba and Sandy, who completed the program and are certified as station dogs. They work outside the agency, too, as well as providing therapy and wellness for our employees. We also have a robust peer to peer team and we are sharing what we do with agencies across the state.

Q: How do you address wellness?

A: For physical wellness, we offer memberships in gyms and have some gyms located on our properties. We offer things like boxing and yoga. Faith-based wellness is important and we have chaplains on staff. For financial wellness, we have financial advisors on staff. We have multiple community partners, including UF Health, Care Connect+ and EPIC. We recently partnered with Lakeview Health for bed space if needed.

Q: Can you tell us about the Cordico app?

A: This is a brand new, confidential app for all of our employees and their families as well as our retirees. It was set up specifically for SJSO and includes options like finding a therapist, self assessment, career wellness, family wellness, financial wellness, faith-based wellness, leadership, nutrition, peer to peer support, sleep deprivation and trauma. The app allows the user to get confidential information or immediate help if needed in each of these areas. We are trying to be open minded and innovative in our approach to mental health and wellness. We check out other agencies and what they are doing to see if we can duplicate and even make it better for our men and women.

Q: Do you have anything else to share in this area?

A: Mental health is as important to me as physical health and is a top priority at SJSO.

If a citizen is suffering from a mental health crisis, they can call 988 to receive help. Additional resources are available through the local chapter of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), (904) 827-7404 or www.namivfsj.org.

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

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Care Rooted in Empathy and Experience
Do you ever wonder what it is that makes some doctors so incredibly compassionate while others have a bedside manner better suited for the DMV?

In the case of Dr. Jann Turpin, DOM, AP of Riverplace Acupuncture Integrative Health it is a case of true empathy. "I suffered from chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy while battling Stage III breast cancer."

Peripheral neuropathy, which affects over 20 million people in the U.S., is weakness, numbness and pain from nerve damage, usually in the hands and feet. "My feet were burning at night and my fingers were numb and tingling all day. If my feet got cold, the pain was so intense I had to sit down."

Peripheral neuropathy is normally a degenerative condition, but since Dr. Turpin's neuropathy was caused by chemotherapy, it was expected to improve. However, doctors said that improvement could take months or years and the medications prescribed weren't working. She knew she couldn't live like that.

It wasn't until her primary care doctor sent her to an acupuncturist that she found real relief.

"This is why I often refer to my practice as 'The Last Resort With the Best Results.' You've been everywhere else and been given the same disheartening prognosis, prescribed the same medications and told this is just something you're going to have to learn to live with."

Soon after her first experience with the healing arts, she made the life changing decision to abandon her 13 year computer programming career and pursue her education in acupuncture.

Acupuncture quite literally saved my life and I wanted to share that with the world," she proclaims.

Your Golden Years Should Be Golden

While in school, she watched as her grandmother began to suffer from peripheral neuropathy. "Your golden years should be golden, not plagued with insufferable pain while doctors and specialists tell you there is nothing they can do." Understanding that Eastern Medicine excels where Western medicine fails, Dr. Turpin set forth to develop treatment protocols for all variations of Peripheral Neuropathy (including diabetic and chemotherapy-induced) and now has a 90% success rate in treating this once difficult to manage condition.

"I was tired of seeing the older generation suffer unnecessarily," shares Dr. Turpin. "Diagnosing them as 'just getting older' and giving them a treatment plan of 'you're just going to have to get used to it' has never sat well with me so I wanted to offer them a real option for treatment and care."

The Magic of Compassionate Care

And what do those in her care have to say?

"Dr. Turpin looked me in my eyes and wanted to know about me, not just my condition. I feel like a person, not just a patient," shares Jesse. "In fact, I don't think she ever used the word patient." Others proclaim "she saved my life", "her neuropathy treatments gave me my life back," and "it's a miracle she treated my fibromyalgia. I don't know how else to explain it."

Dr. Jann Turpin has a long, personal history in complicated, difficult to understand conditions and understands how tragic it can all be if left untreated. "I have sat where my patients sit. I've experienced their pain and suffering in a very real way. I know the frustration of feeling hopeless on an intimate level.



"[Dr. Turpin] is just such a wonderful, unique person. You mention what's bothering you and before you know it, it's gone!"
Betty Jacksonville

That's why I practice the brand of medicine I do and why I've made it my life's mission to treat the 'untreatable'. It brings me joy when I get to say 'I can help you'.

Furthermore, Dr. Turpin isn't opposed to more modern medical solutions. "It's in blending the time-tested science of acupuncture with recent innovations in medicine that get me the best results." One of those advancements is ATP Resonance BioTherapy. Originally developed by NASA it aids nerves in regeneration by providing them with the nutrients they need to repair and renew, "very similar to what water does for a plant!"

Dr. Turpin and her staff specialize in treating chronic pain, complicated neurological conditions and autoimmune diseases that leave other professionals scratching their heads. Ready to schedule? Call (904) 720-8887 for a comprehensive consultation today. For more information about Dr. Jann Turpin and what she treats, visit www.RiverplaceAcupuncture.com.

Call (904) 720-8887 to Schedule a Complimentary Consultation

Ponte Vedra Concert Hall unveils new design

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The future of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall will begin to take shape on May 1, as renovations for a transformed music venue kick off. The finalized plans show a renewed space and completion is anticipated in early 2025.

Designed by the architecture and interior design firm Fisher Koppenhafer, expansion plans for Ponte Vedra Concert Hall include a second-floor balcony with seating and an outdoor terrace, as well as stadium-style seating on the first floor to offer more flexible seated and standing configurations for the more than 100 shows per year. Additional venue enhancements include wider seating, new projection and audio systems, modernized restrooms, a multi-use room for special events and meetings, an onsite merchandise shop, elevated concessions amenities, and more.

Originally built in 1980, the Concert Hall's building was home to New Beginnings Baptist Church until St. Johns County purchased the building and adjacent properties in 2006. Retrofitting a former Baptist Church into a live music venue involved meticulous planning and phased construction. On Feb. 13, 2011, Ponte Vedra Concert Hall marked its inaugural performance with Canadian folk-rock band Great Big Sea. Throughout its 13-year history, the venue has undergone several enhancements, including the installation of new lighting, and upgraded sound systems,



Rendering courtesy Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

improved artist facilities, and the addition of an outdoor terrace. Majority of these improvements were made possible through the support of The Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, a non-profit organization composed of local residents dedicated to fostering community engagement and financial investment through advocacy and action.

In 2022, Friends of the Ponte Vedra

Concert Hall launched the “Elevate” campaign, reviving the dream of a second-floor balcony. In partnership with SJC Cultural Events, Inc. (formerly known as St. Johns County Cultural Events Division), the campaign for the balcony gained momentum and culminated on June 23, 2022, with the unanimous approval of \$5.4 million in funding by the St. Johns County Board

of County Commissioners. While owned by the county, the Concert Hall's renovation will not impact St. Johns County residents' ad valorem tax dollars.

With the design plans now finalized, renovations are set to begin on May 1. Visit <https://www.pvconcerthall.com/venue-info/news-media> to track the construction progress.

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Briefs

ElderSource seeks St. Johns County representation for Advisory Council

ElderSource, a nonprofit organization that works to empower elders, adults with disabilities and their caregivers in order to age with dignity and independence, is seeking volunteer members to its Advisory Council, specifically seniors who reside in St. Johns County.

Duties for an Advisory Council member are to report on the needs of elderly and emerging issues in their respective counties; review and comment on the agency's Area Plan; study legislative issues and advocate on behalf of the elderly; assist in promoting the mission, programs and activities of the agency; and to educate the public about the needs and the contributions of the elderly.

“Our Advisory Council members are an important asset to our organization,” said Linda Levin, CEO of ElderSource. “They are an active voice we need to hear in order for us to stay in touch on senior issues affecting the communities in which they live.”

Meetings are held the third Thursday of every other month from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and conducted virtually using the Zoom platform.

For more information about how to become an ElderSource Advisory Council member, please call 904.391.6600 or email Sherry.

Holmes@MyElderSource.org.

Newcomers of North St. Johns announces May luncheon

Newcomers of North Saint Johns will host its May luncheon on Tuesday, May 21 beginning at 11 a.m. at St. Johns Golf & Country Club, 205 St. Johns Golf Drive. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. The luncheon event will include the installation of the club's board of directors for 2024 – 2025.

During lunch, accomplished pianist Matt Hall will entertain members. For the past 30 years, he has provided outstanding musical entertainment in various cities around the country.

Newcomers of North Saint Johns offers a wide variety of activities, including smaller lunch groups, Bunco, Canasta, wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, a walking group, holiday parties, day trips and cultural events. Learn more about Newcomers of North Saint Johns by visiting <https://newcomersof-northstjohns.org>.

The cost for the luncheon and program is \$35 for members and \$40 for guests. All reservations and payments must be received by May 14, 2024.,

Visit <https://newcomersofnorthstjohns.org> for more information about the luncheon and membership.

Life

travel · pantry raiders · gardening
fishing · entertainment · puzzles

Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsl.com

Sarah Hanson

Sarah Hanson grew up in a small town in Virginia, spending most of her time singing in church and school choirs, doing gymnastics, and cheerleading. Mostly, she just wanted to perform. Graduating from Radford University, Sarah majored in theater with a minor in dance. She worked for a professional dinner theater during college while also performing in school, and was hired by Theatre IV in Richmond after college. After one year of touring children's shows, she looked for a job in between seasons, and was offered the assistant gymnastics director position at The Little Gym. She found that she loved the job and decided not to return to touring. In 2008, Hanson met her husband, Eric, and the two got married in 2011. The couple moved to Mooresville, North Carolina, in 2012 for Eric's job and in 2014 welcomed a son, Bennett. At that time, Sarah decided to become a stay-at-home mother. In 2018, Eric took a job with the PGA, and by the end of the year, the family was living in Nocatee. After the move and the pandemic, Sarah found herself leaning heavily into personal development, listening to a lot of manifestation podcasts. "I found it all very fascinating. I have always understood that the power of thought is very valuable. What you are thinking has an impact on what you attract," said Sarah. Next, she discovered her



Sarah Hanson
Photo courtesy Sarah Hanson

Human Design of being a "Reflector," something that is quite rare and often known as a truth teller. "That whole door opening totally transformed my world," she said. From there, Sarah, 40, became more open, resulting in what she calls a "shift." Her breathwork business soon came into existence and has become known as "Shifts with Sarah."

Q: How would you define Human Design?

A: Human Design is a part science, part spiritual system, that gives you the road map to who your soul came here to be. Human Design combines astrology, the I Ching, Kabbalah Tree of Life, and the chakra system, all coming together to form a holistic self-knowledge system giving you a comprehensive and personalized map of your unique energy and life blueprint, guiding you towards self-awareness, personal growth, and empowerment.

Q: How did this lead you to being a Transformation Coach, Breathwork and Rapid Resolution Therapy facilitator and Human Design Reader?

A: I was looking into a fitness busi-

ness partnership and was literally on the verge of signing the contract when I emailed the founder a few questions. He never responded to two emails that I sent. It caused me to stop and reevaluate, and I soon realized that it was not what I wanted to do. So, I asked the universe, and I got a download to start a breathwork business. I had no idea what that was, but I was open. I pulled up Instagram, and there was a free community breathwork online class being offered. I took that and loved it. Next, I learned that a facilitator program training was beginning the next week. It all felt very aligned. By the end of 2021, I was a certified breathwork facilitator. Shortly after that, I had my first client. From there, I continued to add certifications.

Q: How is knowing your Human Design helpful?

A: One of the reasons that I love sharing Human Design is that it does give people a permission slip to follow their intuition. They can feel it in their bodies. When I read their chart, I can tell them that they are more aligned to do it this way. And often people will say "that is the way I actually wanted to do it".

Q: How do you find ways to recharge?

A: I do all the work that I do with my clients. I do breathwork regularly with another facilitator. In this line of work, if I am not feeling 100 percent, I can't hold space for someone else. I am walking the walk just as my clients are.

Q: What do you like to do with your free time?

A: I play tennis, listen to podcasts and books on Audible and go outdoors and watch football with my family.

OPE Spring Family Night cont. from pg. 1

Families, alongside fellow otters, enjoyed music, food from Chick-fil-A, the school experience auction chock full of camps, activities and other fun in the community, and even shopped at the Scholastic book fair.



OPE students and their families enjoy dinner at the school's Spring Family Night event.

Q&A with Vicky Oakes cont. from pg. 6

Primary Election on Aug. 20, 2024. Many federal, state, and local offices will be on the ballot, and some races may even be decided in this Primary Election.

More information will be provided as we approach the election, so stay connected by following the Elections Office on Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and Instagram, by visiting our website at www.votesjc.gov, and by subscribing to our monthly newsletter.

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

A: Readers can email me at voakes@votesjc.gov or call me at (904) 823-2238.

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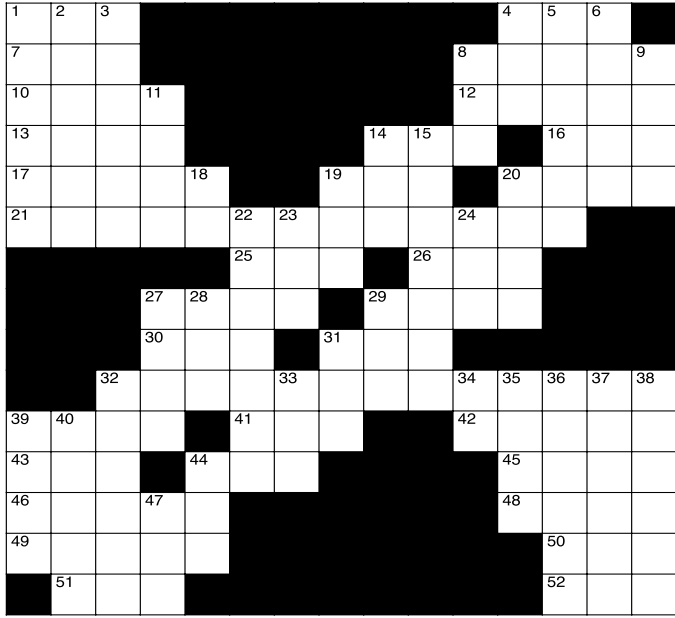
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St. Johns County School Directory 2024 - 2025
Featuring all St. Johns County schools
Brought to you by The Creek Line and Ponte Vedra NewsLine



Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Fashion accessory
4. Engine additive
7. Small, faint constellation
8. Gives a job
10. Self-righteous person
12. Caucasian language
13. Surinam toad
14. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
16. Former French coin
17. Levels the score
19. What stage performers do
20. Egyptian Sun god
21. Localities
25. Spherical body
26. Licensed for Wall Street
27. Perfect

CLUES DOWN

29. It's on many people's heads
 30. Boxing's GOAT
 31. Photo
 32. Popular HBO show
 39. Popular music awards show
 41. Pouch
 42. Lake in Botswana
 43. Unruly group
 44. One-fourth
 45. Very eager
 46. Edward ___, author and writer
 48. Flying insect
 49. Dragged forcibly
 50. Thus far
 51. Not just "play"
 52. Commercials
1. Occur
 2. Show up
 3. Capital of Taiwan
 4. Brother or sister
 5. Secret get-togethers
 6. Type of tea
 8. Where the action is
 9. Cast out
 11. Crime group
 14. Type of vessel (abbr.)
 15. Accept and handle
 18. Sacrifice hit
 19. One who buys and sells securities simultaneously
 20. Month
 22. Most thin
 23. Naturally occurring material
 24. Luke's mentor ___-Wan
 27. Postmodernist Austrian "Ho
 28. Aquatic salamander
 29. Baseball stat
 31. Beginning military rank
 32. Talk rapidly and unintelligibl
 33. Paddle
 34. Caregiver (abbr.)
 35. Old Irish alphabet
 36. Japanese city
 37. In a way, acted
 38. Things to see
 39. Nursemaid
 40. Type of tooth
 44. To be demonstrated
 47. Defunct European group

ALL IN BLOOM WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- ANEMONE
- ASTER
- AZALEA
- BEGONIA
- BLOOM
- CARNATION
- CHRYSANTHEMUM
- DAFFODIL
- DAHLIA
- DAISY
- DANDELION
- HYDRANGEA
- IRIS
- LAVENDER
- LILY
- MARIGOLD
- ORCHID
- PEONY
- POPPY
- ROSE
- SNAPDRAGON
- SUNFLOWER
- TULIP
- ZINNIA

⊙ ** ☒ ⊕ ⊗ ~ Ⓜ Ⓝ Ⓟ Ⓠ Ⓡ Ⓢ Ⓣ Ⓤ Ⓥ Ⓦ Ⓧ Ⓨ Ⓩ ⓐ ⓑ ⓓ ⓔ ⓕ ⓖ ⓗ ⓘ ⓙ ⓚ ⓛ ⓜ ⓝ ⓞ ⓟ ⓠ ⓡ ⓢ ⓣ ⓤ ⓥ ⓦ ⓧ ⓨ ⓩ ⓪ ⓫ ⓬ ⓭ ⓮ ⓯ ⓰ ⓱ ⓲ ⓳ ⓴ ⓵ ⓶ ⓷ ⓸ ⓹ ⓺ ⓻ ⓼ ⓽ ⓾ ⓿

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to flowers.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 14 = N)

- A. **23 18 26 15 6**
Clue: Flower part
- B. **9 6 11 11 20 5 14 12**
Clue: Producing flowers
- C. **25 15 2 20 26 8**
Clue: Pleasant heat
- D. **17 22 14 17 8 5 14 18**
Clue: Light from sun

Briefs cont. from pg. 8

"A Police Wife's Survival Guide" to be presented to crime writers

Wives of law enforcement and first responders live in continual stress. Just ask Vikki Downey, the May speaker at the Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime meeting on May 4 at 10:15 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. They must be supportive, understanding and stoic. They must protect their children from fears they have themselves. They must navigate their place in the world and educate friends and family about safety matters.

For 25 years, Vikki Downey navigated the challenging role of being a police wife, despite having no law enforcement background in her family. Her husband John started his journey as a police officer at the age of 29. While John Downey pursued his career,

Vikki Downey taught school while raising their children. She has dedicated her life to empowering fellow police spouses, often through personal support, but also helping them supplement family income.

This will be a hybrid meeting. Register for this meeting at <https://nefloridasistersincrime.org>. Contact

floridasistersincrime@gmail.com for more information. Bring your coffee and bring a friend; the group welcomes misters and sisters.

March marks second consecutive month of below-average rainfall for the District

In March, rainfall across the St. Johns River Water Management District was slightly below the monthly average, with frontal systems being the main

source of precipitation. Northern counties received the majority of the rain, while southern counties experienced drier conditions. Despite variations, overall rainfall across the District remains above the annual average.

A comprehensive report outlining March's hydrologic conditions was presented at the District's Governing Board meeting on April 9, featuring the following highlights:

Districtwide, March's rainfall averaged 2.70 inches, just 0.77 below the monthly average.

County-wide monthly rainfall totals ranged from a high of 4.80 inches in Nassau County, to a low of 0.86 inches in Brevard County.

Over the past 12 months, the District has received above-average rainfall,

with a cumulative total of 57.61 inches, surpassing the long-term average by 6.60 inches.

County-wide totals varied between 53.37 inches in Alachua County to more than 63 inches in Volusia County.

Upper Floridan aquifer conditions were varied, but generally fell within the high or normal range by the end of March.

Districtwide groundwater levels, expressed as a single index, fall within the 81th percentile, which is in the high range for this time of year.

Visit www.sjrwmd.com for further insights into rainfall totals and other hydrologic data. Visit WaterLessFlorida.com for tips to help landscapes thrive while saving water and money.

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By Scott A. Grant
 mail@floridanewsline.com

PopHistory

Prom?

In the spring of 1975, students at the Holton-Arms School had a novel idea. Why not, a member of the committee suggested, have their prom at Susan's house? Holton-Arms is a prestigious all girls academy in Bethesda, Maryland. At the time, the school's most famous alumnae included a member of the Astor family and Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis. A few years later, Julia Louis-Dreyfus would join the list.

Susan's house was certainly an exciting possibility, but there were some problems. For one thing, Susan's parents, Betty and Jerry, would be out of the country. Arrangements were made for Aunt Janet to chaperone along with teachers from Holton-Arms and so it was agreed that the girls could use the house where Betty and Jerry were living so long as stipulations were met. The biggest one being that the prom would not cost the taxpayers any money. Betty, Jerry, and Susan Ford were all living in the White House. Jerry had become the only non-elected President of the United States upon the resignation of Richard Nixon in 1974.

The students at Holton-Arms raised \$1,380, primarily through bake sales and so, for the first and only time in

our colorful history, a prom was held at the White House. A few weeks before the big event, Susan Ford broke up with her long-term boyfriend, Gardner Britt. The couple parted ways over a disagreement concerning the Equal Rights Amendment. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was designed to provide equal rights for women at a time when they were barely able to open a bank account or get a mortgage without a husband. Susan and her parents, President and Mrs. Ford, were big proponents of the ERA. Apparently, Susan's boyfriend disagreed.

I guess it would be even worse to break up right before the prom. That is what happened to Jenna Bush, daughter of President George W. Bush. She and her twin sister, Barbara, went to a public high school in Austin, Texas. Jenna's boyfriend purportedly dumped her a few days before the prom to take a prettier girl. Sister Barbara was named Prom Queen. Now Jenna is a TV star, so it all worked out. "He knows who he is," she told her TV audience.

Less than a month before prom, Susan Ford found a new date at the Apple Blossom Festival in Shenandoah. She

was crowned Apple Blossom Queen. Her father put the crown on her head. Bob Hope acted as Master of Ceremonies. Susan invited her escort, a senior from Washington and Lee named William Pifer, to take her to the prom. He, of course, agreed!

Picking a band or bands for the prom proved problematic. White House staff insisted that any band be free of any drug charges. Initially, Ford and her classmates tried to get the Beach Boys. That did not work out, so they settled for "The Outerspace Band" from Trinity College in Hartford and a top-40 band from Virginia. Members of the Outerspace Band showed up in a beat-up Chevy Suburban "full of hippies" and announced, "We're from Outerspace and we're meant to be here." As they rolled down the driveway towards the White House, one of the members mooned the Secret Service.

Some parents send their children to prom in a fancy limousine. Susan and her friends arrived on the presidential yacht, "Sequoia." They enjoyed a meal of beef stroganoff over rice with white wine before arriving at the White House half an hour late. FDR and Churchill had once discussed

war strategy on the "Sequoia." Jimmy Carter would sell it a few years later as part of his austerity program.

Upon arrival, prom guests were greeted by a throng of press, snapping pictures and asking questions. A White House spokesperson assured the press, "This party isn't costing the taxpayers a cent." The attendees enjoyed Swedish meatballs and quiche and a non-alcoholic punch. Apparently, there was also an open bar. One student, now an anesthesiologist in New Jersey, remembers ordering a gin and tonic. The prom ended around 1 a.m. Some guests spent the night in the White House. Some went to the Lincoln Memorial to watch the sun rise.

In doing research for this story, one fact really hit me, and I had no place to put it, so I will put it here as an ending. Susan Ford remembers that she was excited to move into the White House because it was the first time in her life that she had a private bathroom.

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

Chinese class creates lasting impact

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewslines.com

When Chinese teacher Yan Li first started teaching Chinese 12 years ago, she had a clear mission in mind.

“My goal has always been for the program to not just be about the grades. I wanted my students to know the culture, the people, and to expose them to cities, geography, and history,” she said. “I always felt that it was very important to have a deeper understanding of the culture, food, and the language. We all learn together and grow together.”

Mission complete.

Even as the Chinese program at Ponte

Vedra High School ends this year, Li feels successful in her mission and has many memories to help her remain positive.

“I am so proud of my students. I really see how much they can get out of the language and the culture. They have exposed themselves to all of it,” she said. “Many of my students have reached out to me after graduation to share many heartwarming stories.”

For example, one student used to work for the American Embassy in China, and another once opened a business in China. Li said she frequently hears from former students about the impact the class had on them. Ponte Vedra High

School was the only high school in St. Johns County to offer the program.

The Chinese program began in 2008, and Li took it over in 2012. Prior to that, Li began the Chinese program at William M. Raines High School in Jacksonville and taught Chinese at Landrum Middle School. Li is also highly involved with and volunteered in the Chinese community in Jacksonville. She has been the principal of Jacksonville Chinese Sunday School since 2008.

One of the main highlights of the program at Ponte Vedra has been students attending the Florida Statewide Chinese Competition (FSCC) over the years. At the competitions, students from across the state competed in individual listening, reading, and speaking competitions. In 2023, Ponte Vedra won first place in the cultural jeopardy game and the creative project competition. Five students attended the competition this year in Orlando.

Junior Joy Qiu said that the competition is a true highlight for her.

“The time we spent writing and practicing our speeches, the jokes we made while preparing for Jeopardy, and the memories we made during this are certainly unforgettable,” she said. “As

all the Chinese schools across Florida come together and compete annually, many new friends are made and many old faces are seen each year, making each year incredibly memorable.”

Sophomore Ben Williams said Chinese class has been so impactful in his life.

“As a student who has dedicated three years to studying Chinese and has actively participated in the Chinese competition club for two years, Chinese class has played an integral part in my life,” he said. “Beyond just learning the language, Chinese has become intertwined with my identity allowing me to connect with my Chinese-speaking grandparents on a deeper level.”

Li said she is very sad to see the program end at the high school and that she will miss her students the most and the bonds that were formed.

“To me, they are like my kids,” she said. “I am so sad to see the program end. I cannot do anything about it. It was a budget cut made by the St. Johns County School District and the administration. I am sad for the students and for myself. My goal has always been to have everyone enjoy the class and to make it fun. I will remember it fondly.”



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Ponte Vedra High Chinese Club students participated in the Florida Statewide Chinese Competition in March. All students who attended received high marks in their individual categories.



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Women's Civic Alliance awards grant

Photo courtesy Jodi Furr

Betty Griffin Center's Rape Crisis Unit is the recipient of the Ponte Vedra Women's Civic Alliance's annual grant. Betty Griffin Center's Kelly Franklin accepted the funds from Ponte Vedra Women's Civic Alliance board members Jodi Furr, Joan Davey, and Annemieke Holder at the alliance's general meeting on Feb. 8. The Ponte Vedra Women's Civic Alliance awards an annual \$10,000 grant to a beaches area 501(c)3. Applications are accepted May 1 – June 30. Visit PVWCA.org for more information.



What do you want to read in Ponte Vedra NewsLine?

Let us know!

editor@floridanewsline.com



Newcomers explore St. Augustine



Photo courtesy Bonnie Evans

On a windy but gorgeous day, Newcomers of the Beaches came with an appetite to experience the best food and wine St. Augustine has to offer in a unique three-hour guided foodie tour led by Alex with Tasting Tours. Corks and Forks is a food and wine pairing tour that introduced attendees to the tasty side of America's Oldest City. They visited four establishments and sampled local cuisine and delicious wine while strolling through the Historic District. Visit www.newcomersofthebeaches.com to find out all the fun activities of the club. Those who have experienced a lifestyle change such as recently moving to the Beaches area, newly single, widowed, divorced or recently retired, are eligible to join the club.

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Summer Camp Activities Guide[®]



Strategies to encourage kids to read more

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Children have much to gain from reading and being read to. According to the Children's Bureau of Southern California, a nonprofit organization devoted to strengthening vulnerable children, their families and the communities where they live, reading aloud to children supports their cognitive development; improves their language skills; prepares them for academic success; increases their discipline and ability to concentrate; and improves their imagination and creativity. Many of those same benefits apply to kids who read on their own, which may be more appealing as kids advance through elementary school and aspire to become more independent.

Since children have so much to gain from cuddling up with a good book, parents can try these strategies to encourage kids to read more.

- Allow kids to read the same book. Parents of young readers or children learning to read undoubtedly know how much children like to read the same book over and over again. Though that might not engage moms and dads, experts note that allowing kids to read the same books again and again is an effective way to foster a love of reading in children. Researchers have linked reading the same books again and again to greater vocabulary acquisition and improved reading comprehension, among other benefits. Kids are more likely to enjoy reading if they recognize more

words and can better understand the stories, so parents can encourage kids to read the same books again and again.

- Take a book along when running errands or traveling. The Children's Book Review notes that books can be just as handy in cars as tablets and other devices kids use to watch movies while on the go. Though some children may get car sick when reading while a car is in motion, those who don't have plenty of time to read while in the backseat. On long road trips, promise a movie after kids have read for an hour. When running errands with the kids in tow, encourage them to read by keeping a couple of books or magazines in the backseat at all times.

- Practice positive reinforcement with emerging readers. Another way to encourage young readers to pick up a book more often is to praise their efforts even if they struggle with words. Patience can go a long way toward instilling a love of reading in children. If kids are struggling with a word or words, read the sentence aloud with them. Reading also has a tendency to pique readers' curiosity, so parents can encourage kids to ask questions about the books they read and help them find answers to those questions if necessary.

- Enroll kids in library reading programs. Summer reading programs sponsored by local libraries have been found to be conducive to promoting reading in young children. In its report titled "The Role of Public Libraries in Children's Literacy Development," the

Pennsylvania Library Association indicated that preschool and summer reading programs encourage children to spend significant amounts of time with books and also encourage parents to play a greater role in their children's literacy development. Participation in such programs is typically free of charge, so there's no reason why families cannot take advantage of these highly effective programs.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Reading benefits children in myriad ways. Parents can look to various strategies to foster a love of reading in their children.

Enhance staycations with themed fun days

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Staycations are an option for budget-conscious vacationers or people who simply do not want to travel too far from home due to mobility issues or other restrictions. Enhancing staycations with entertaining themes can improve the fun factor. While any themed day can be inspired by an active imagination, these ideas can get the creativity flowing.

- Superhero day: Embrace your favorite superhero by dressing up in his or her colors, donning a superhero T-shirt or watching an action-packed superhero movie.

- Pajama day: This is a fun theme for rainy days when Mother Nature keeps you indoors. Stay in your pajamas all day and enjoy a cozy, lazy day.

- Alma mater day: Parents and children can pull out their trusted college T-shirts, sweatshirts or other school at-

tire. Bake up some tasty treats in school colors and then find some old photos or look for highlights of your alma mater's sports teams online.

- Throwback day: Take a step back in time by playing games or engaging in activities from your youth. Teach youngsters about the toys you enjoyed or watch movies from the era in which you grew up.

- Crazy hair day: Embrace bed head, plug in the curling iron, double down on hair gel or pomade, or put those wacky coiffures into full effect.

- Cultural day: Tap into your personal heritage by researching your family tree and then preparing a meal that coordinates with your heritage.

- Arts and crafts day: Get crafty by tackling a creative project that the family will enjoy. Or engage in individual projects before comparing the final results collectively.

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Summer Camp Activities Guide[®]



Summer camp options abound

By Newline Staff
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Summer camp season will be here before parents know it. While children anxiously await the last day of school, adults know that it can be challenging to keep kids occupied and mentally stimulated when they aren't in the classroom. Although it may be alright to enjoy a few days lounging around and playing video games, too much sedentary behavior is not good for anyone, even children. Families turn to summer camp to provide children with activities to occupy their time when school is not in session.

Camps catering to a variety of interests are open to youngsters, so there's likely one out there to excite every child. Each year, more than 25 million children and adults take part in the camp experience, says the American Camp Association. Summer camp gives kids a chance to spread their wings and enjoy new adventures. When seeking camps, families can consider interests, proximity, cost, and other variables. Here are some of the different types of camps families can consider.

Day camp: Day camps are a popular

choice. Day camps tend to be general recreation camps that offer an array of activities. Campers are dropped off (or bussed) in the morning, and arrive home early evening. These camps are readily accessible and run by various organizations. Some camps enable you to pay by the week, rather than committing to an entire season.

Sleep-away camp: Like the name implies, sleep-away camp hosts campers overnight, typically for several weeks. This may be children's first extended time away from home, and there's bound to be a few nerves that spring up. Round-the-clock activities and chances to bond with their peers can help kids overcome fears of being away from home.

Academic camp: Academic camps focus their attention on various subjects, putting like-minded children together. Academic summer programs ensure children's brains stay active, helping students avoid that dreaded "summer slide." Some of these camps mimic a school day so they are familiar to kids. Academic focus may vary from general academia to specific subjects like STEM



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Summer camp options abound. It's only a matter of identifying a path for children and then seeking a camp that offers the desired program.

to astronomy to the arts.

Scout camp: Boys and girls participating in scouting programs often have the option to attend summer camp. During camp, kids will have an opportunity to earn badges and advance their rank. Many scout districts have relationships with a specific scout campsite where troops from all over live and advance together for a week or so during the summer.

Fitness and sports camps: Fitness-minded campers or those who play particular sports can investigate camps that focus on fitness and sports performance. These may be more rigorous than other types of camps since they involve lots of physical activity. Wilderness preparation camp is another type of camp that may fit into this category. It will highlight survival training and help mold active hikers and campers.



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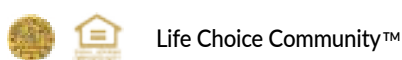
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