

### Ponte Vedra NewsLine seeks local stories in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Florida NewsLine Staff  
editor@floridanewsline.com

This October, the Ponte Vedra NewsLine is proud to spotlight the strength and resilience of breast cancer warriors and survivors — and to honor the memory of those we’ve lost.

We invite you to share your story or the story of a loved one. Your journey can inspire, uplift and remind others that they are not alone.

Email us at editor@floridanewsline.com by Sunday, Sept. 22 for a chance to be featured.



### Ponte Vedra NewsLine seeks local stories to honor veterans

Florida NewsLine Staff  
editor@floridanewsline.com

The Ponte Vedra NewsLine is honoring Veterans Day (Nov. 11), and we want to highlight the service, sacrifice and stories of our military veterans right here in our community.

We’re looking for:

Local veteran trailblazers — business owners, community leaders, or anyone making a difference after their service.

Multigenerational military families keeping traditions of service alive.

Stories from veterans who made St. Johns County home after their service.

Veterans involved in local organizations, volunteer work, or mentoring.

Young veterans and their families sharing what service means to them.

Know a veteran we should spotlight? Want to share your own story?

Email us at editor@floridanewsline.com by Monday, Oct. 27 for a

# Y-M-C-Awesome

## Brown Family YMCA renovation now underway

By Maggie FitzRoy  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Brown Family YMCA in Ponte Vedra Beach opened in 1999. Now, in time for its 25th anniversary, a \$4.1 million renovation of the community cornerstone at 170 Landrum Lane has begun.

Renovations, which began July 28, are planned throughout the entire facility. They will include an updated KidZone, a revamped wellness space, revamped locker rooms, a refreshed Welcome Center, automatic doors at the front entrance, new paint and flooring, a new cycling studio and new cycling bikes, a brand-new recovery room, updated bathrooms, resurfaced pool deck, new wellness equipment, upgraded audio-visual/sound systems, and an Airnasium.

“An Airnasium is a gym with no walls,” Executive Director Cara Roach said. The large outdoor multifunctional space will have a ceiling, fans, and turf, and will be located between



Photo courtesy Brown Family YMCA  
Artist rendering of the front of the Brown Family YMCA.

the pool and the rear of the building. Basketball, pickleball, dancing, fitness classes, summer camp activities and more will be able to be held there. “Right now, we have 700 kids who play basketball here and this will provide additional space,” Roach said.

Throughout, “we are updating all the lighting, furniture, and technology — especially for the Wellness Center, where we are adding an eGym,” she said. In the eGym, members will

get a wrist band calibrated to their individual fitness goals and “the wrist band will remember your settings on a machine and automatically adjust to them for you.” The wrist band will be included in members’ YMCA membership. Additional changes will include upgraded weight machines, free weights, and cardio free-motion treadmills that will mimic going up

YMCA cont. on pg. 2

# Hallowes Cove Hurricanes make landfall

## New K-8 school in Rivertown begins inaugural year with full elective offerings

Tracy McCormick-Dishman  
editor@floridanewsline.com

Hallowes Cove Academy opened its doors this month as St. John’s County’s newest school, serving kindergarten through seventh grade students in the Rivertown community. The school will add eighth grade next year to become a full K-8 academy.

The decision to start without eighth grade allows current eighth graders from feeder schools to finish their final year at

their home schools, said Lauren O’Shell, an instructional coach at the school.

“The eighth graders that we’re getting come from Swiss Point, Freedom Crossing, and Cunningham Creek, and it’s so that the eighth graders can finish their year at the school that they had been at,” O’Shell said. “We’re not going to move them before they’re graduating.”

The school draws teachers from those

Hallowes cont. on pg. 5



Photos courtesy Hallowes Cove Academy  
The gymnasium at Hallowes Cove Academy in Rivertown.

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Photo courtesy Brown Family YMCA  
An artist rendering of the planned Airnasium at the Brown Family YMCA.

**YMCA** cont. on pg. 2  
and down hills.  
The new Recovery Room will feature four two-person red light saunas. A CryoLounge Recovery Chair will provide cold and heat treatments for post-workout treatment of sore muscles and minor aches. And a HydroMassage Chair will offer full

body heated massages for wellness and muscle recovery.  
Roach said fundraising for the renovations began in 2021 and by the time construction began at the end of July all but \$73,000 had been raised. She credits the generosity of the community, the strong efforts of the capital campaign committee volunteers, and

major donors.  
Top donors include the Brown Family, Steve and Laurie Austin, the Newman Family, the Chartrand family, the Horschel family, and the Furyk family.  
During renovations, slated to be finished by January 2026, the YMCA will remain open for members, who

will be able to track progress on the website at [www.fcymca.org](http://www.fcymca.org).  
“Classes will be moved as needed but for the most part we will be running classes close to our original schedule,” Roach said. Members will also be able to use other First Coast YMCA locations.



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Photo by Maggie FitzRoy  
Space has been cleared for the new Brown Family YMCA Airnasium.



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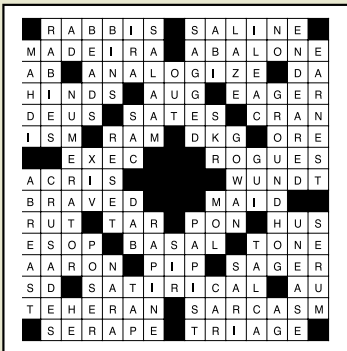
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## MYSTERY PHOTO



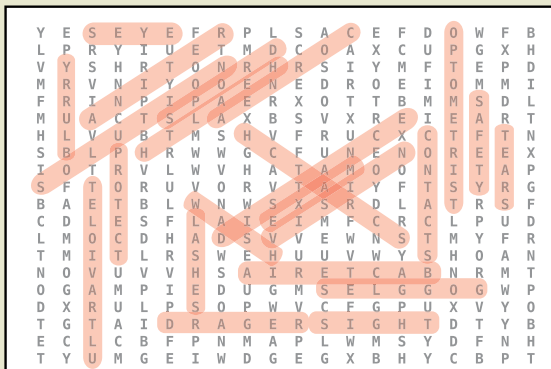
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Answers  
Puzzles  
PG 8



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# September

## Community Calendar

### What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email [editor@floridanewsline.com](mailto:editor@floridanewsline.com).

**Sept. 8**  
**Voter Registration Drive**

Voter Registration Drive will be held Monday, Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. Representatives from the St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections will be on site to register voters, update addresses and answer questions.

**Sept. 9**  
**Fall Kick-Off Luncheon**

Bartram Trail Newcomers and Women's Club will hold its fall kick-off luncheon Monday, Sept. 9, at 11 a.m. at St. John's Golf and Country Club in St. Augustine. The barbecue buffet costs \$32. Membership is open to all women. For information, contact the club.

**Sept. 18-21**  
**"Frozen, Jr."**

The Rising Stars of the Creative Academy at Christ Episcopal Church will present "Frozen, Jr." Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 18-21, at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach. Show times are Thursday and Friday at 7 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 7 p.m., and Sunday at 3 p.m. Saturday's 3 p.m. performance is a sing-along with costumes encouraged. Tickets are \$15 and available at the door.

**Sept. 20**  
**Morning Motor Social**

Morning Motor Social will be held from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 20, at Park Place at Nocatee, 100 Palmetto Park Place, Ponte Vedra. The event is free for spectators and participants. All makes and models welcome.

**Sept. 20**  
**Nocatee Farmers Market**

Nocatee Farmers Market will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 20, at Nocatee Station Field, 400 Nocatee Center Way, Ponte Vedra. The market features fresh produce, crafts and local goods. Visit [www.facebook.com/NocateeLiving](http://www.facebook.com/NocateeLiving).

**Sept. 20**  
**Art with Kasha: Oil Pastels**

Art with Kasha: Oil Pastels will be held Friday, Sept. 20, with two sessions, 10 a.m. to noon and 2 to 4 p.m., at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. Artist Kasha Fahy will teach basic oil pastel techniques. All supplies provided. Call (904) 827-6950 to RSVP.

**Sept. 23**  
**Game Day with Gia**

Game Day with Gia will be held Tuesday, Sept. 23, from 11 a.m. to noon at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Gia D'Anna, marketing specialist for Millennium Physician Group, will provide information about the practice and lead games. Call (904) 209-3659.

**Sept. 2**  
**Reel Reads: Books to Film**

Reel Reads: Books to Film will be held Monday, Sept. 23, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. The program features a movie adapted from a book. Free and open to the public.

**Sept. 25**  
**Free Blood Pressure Check**

Free Blood Pressure Check with Diane DeCarlo will be held Thursday, Sept. 25, from 10 to 11 a.m. at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Call (904) 209-3659.

**Sept. 25**  
**St. Johns County Legal Aid presentation**

St. Johns County Legal Aid presentation "Spouse in Nursing Home? Do You Have to Go Broke?" will be held Thursday, Sept. 25, from 11 a.m. to noon at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Megan Wall, managing attorney for St. Johns County Legal Aid, will present. Call (904) 209-3659.

**Sept. 27**  
**Ponte Vedra Writers Group**

Ponte Vedra Writers Group will meet Saturday, Sept. 27, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. Award-winning author Eric "Doc" Honour will present "Navigating KDP," a workshop on publishing through Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing platform. Free and open to the public.

**Sept. 29**  
**Game Night!**

Game Night will be held Monday, Sept. 29, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. The event will feature board games, cards, puzzles and LEGOs. Families welcome; children must be supervised. Call (904) 827-6950 to RSVP.

**Sept. 30**  
**Medicare 101**

Medicare 101 will be held Tuesday, Sept. 30, from 11 a.m. to noon at COA's THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Independent insurance agent Christopher Hoff will answer Medicare questions. Call (904) 209-3659.

**Sept. 30**  
**Women's Singing Circle**

Women's Singing Circle will be held Monday, Sept. 30, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Ponte Ve-

dra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. Led by former music teacher Ms. Jane, participants will learn rounds, partner songs and chants by ear. No music-reading ability required. Ages 16 and up. RSVP at (904) 827-6950.

**Oct. 7**  
**Vicar's Landing Boutique Sale**


The Vicar's Landing Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, Oct. 7, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. Shoppers can browse Halloween, fall and holiday items, art (framed art), jewelry (14K gold, sterling silver, costume and designer pieces), knick-knacks (\$1 items) and The Cottage (antiques and household furnishings). All proceeds benefit the Vicar's Landing Employee Scholarship Fund. Cash or checks only. Call Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610.


**Oct. 10**  
**First Coast Opera Fanfare!**


First Coast Opera Fanfare! will be held Friday, Oct. 10, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Celebration Hall at St. Anastasia, 5205 A1A S., St. Augustine. This fundraiser event hosted by General & Artistic Director Curtis Tucker features musical selections from "Carmen," "The Mikado" and more performed by University of Florida Opera Department members, plus a multi-course catered dinner. Tickets are \$50-\$150. Visit [www.firstcoastopera.com/fanfare](http://www.firstcoastopera.com/fanfare) or call (904) 417-5555.


**Oct. 10-11**  
**Fall Plant Sale**

St. Johns County Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale will be held Friday and Saturday, Oct. 10-11, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the St. Johns County Extension Office, 3125 Agricultural Center Drive, St. Augustine. The sale will feature landscape plants, houseplants and vegetable seedlings. Tours of the demonstration gardens will be offered. Visit [sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohns/](http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohns/).












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Hallowes cont. from pg. 1

three feeder schools as well as educators from across the district and out of state. Throughout the summer, new staff participated in team-building events before the building became available in July.

Despite being new, Hallowes Cove offers a full range of middle school electives including art, band, Spanish, yearbook, musical theater, and digital tools classes.

“All of those are electives that we have in middle school, which is pretty rare for a brand new school to have enough teachers and students to kind of make that mix,” O’Shell said.

The school mascot is the Hurricanes, and the academy developed mission and vision statements during summer planning sessions.

Community rallies around new school

Principal Jessley Hathaway, who came from Osceola Elementary, began meeting with community members in May to establish a Parent Teacher Organization. The PTO has already demonstrated remarkable support.

During pre-planning week, PTO members and community volunteers assembled and delivered more than 100 cube organizers to classrooms, ensuring every student has their own cubby space. Volunteers responded within two days of the request being posted.

“They had enough volunteers of just random community members to come and do that,” O’Shell said. “The PTO has already had lunches and breakfast for the staff.”

The community support extends to local

businesses, with the school’s spirit wear company operating within the River-town area.

“Even our spirit wear company is a company within the community, which is cool because it’s just kind of like the community is giving back,” O’Shell said.

Principal Hathaway expressed his enthusiasm for leading the new school and serving the Rivertown community.

“This is an amazing community. They’ve been supportive the whole time. I’m blessed to have this opportunity to lead this school and serve this population,” Hathaway said. “Welcome to Hallowes Cove. Go Hurricanes!”

The school serves families in the River-town development and surrounding area. As the academy grows to include eighth grade next year, it will provide a complete K-8 educational experience for local families who chose the area partly because of the planned school.



Principal Jessley Hathaway stands with his kindergarten son, Benjamin, at Hallowes Cove Academy.



Hallowes Cove Academy welcomes students on the first day of school.



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

**Q: What is up next for the elections office?**

A: We have just passed the one-year mark to the 2026 primary election, scheduled for Aug. 18, 2026, and the elections office is already hard at work preparing. As you know, we conducted list maintenance activities this summer to maintain our voter rolls, and we are now embarking on our next task that requires voter participation. Some voters will begin receiving letters from our office in September.

**Q: Why is the elections office mailing letters to certain voters in September?**

A: Letters will be sent to voters whose signatures have not been updated in a significant number of years.

**Q: Why does my signature need to be up to date?**

A: Over time, handwriting can change due to age, health, or writing habits. Keeping your signature current is imperative for identification and verification, used by the elections office to validate vote-by-mail ballots, candidate and initiative petitions, and other important election documents.

**Q: What will be included in the signature update letter?**

A: Voters who receive a letter will also find enclosed a voter registration application and a postage-paid return

envelope to return the completed form to our office. To update your signature, you must complete the required, black-shaded boxes on the form. Voters can also use this form to update their name, address, party affiliation, or request a replacement voter information card, if needed.

**Q: What if I don’t get a signature update letter?**

A: If you do not receive a letter, there is no need for concern. This means you’ve updated your signature within the past few years, and no action is required.

**Q: How can I get election reminders and updates from the Supervisor of Elections office?**

A: To stay informed, I encourage St. Johns County voters to subscribe to TextMyGov alerts by texting “VOTES-JC” to 91896. To ask a question, text “HI” to 904-439-4555. This service is used responsibly by our office for informative purposes; subscribers will never be spammed.

The elections office shares information weekly on social media — using accounts on Facebook, X, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Interested St. Johns County citizens can follow along on any of these platforms, or subscribe to our monthly newsletter through our website, for informative, educational posts and articles as well as registration and voting reminders.

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

Q. Your office just released the fifth edition of “Tracking Your Tax Dollars: A Guide to St. Johns County’s Finances.” What is the purpose of this guide?

A. “Tracking Your Tax Dollars” is our Popular Annual Financial Report, or PAFR. The guide gives residents a clear picture of how their tax dollars were collected, spent and invested over the past year. It’s a refined version of our Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and is designed to help you understand where county funds go and how they support our

community.

Q. What kind of information does the PAFR include?

A. The PAFR includes financial highlights from fiscal year 2024, including county revenues and expenditures, the budget process and a breakdown of how the county uses the money to provide necessary services to residents. A snapshot of the county’s investments, reserves and financial health is also included.

Q. Does the PAFR offer any other

information that might be of interest to residents?

A. In addition to financial highlights, the PAFR includes economic indicators and community trends, including updates on demographics, housing, population and community growth. The report also highlights the county’s strategic investment in community services.

Q. Where can residents access the PAFR?

A. The PAFR is available to view online at [stjohnsclerk.com/pafr](http://stjohnsclerk.com/pafr). Printed copies can be requested at the St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller’s Office at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine.

For a more comprehensive look into the county’s financial reports, the full Annual Comprehensive Financial Report can also be accessed online at [stjohnsclerk.com/acfr](http://stjohnsclerk.com/acfr).

Q. What is the best way for people



to contact your office with questions?

A. For questions about the Popular Annual Financial Report, or any of the services we offer, residents can contact our Customer Care Call Center Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at (904) 819-3600, and by email at [clerk@stjohnsclerk.com](mailto:clerk@stjohnsclerk.com). I can also be reached directly on my cell at (904) 599-8688 or by email at [BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com](mailto:BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com).

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DAR members tour historic St. Augustine museum

By Viky Divertie

The Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution recently had a private tour of the Lightner Museum, followed by lunch in the museum cafe. The excursion was a social outing where members had the opportunity to explore some local history.

The Lightner Museum was formerly the Hotel Alcazar in St. Augustine, built by Standard Oil executive Henry Flagler in 1888. It flourished as a hotel during the Gilded Age of the 1870s-1890s. After the 1929 stock market crash, northerners stopped taking the train to St. Augustine to vacation and the hotel was left unoccupied until Chicago publisher, collector and professional hobbyist Otto Lightner bought it in 1948 and founded the museum. The museum has collections of Gilded Age furniture, eclectic collections and rotating exhibits. Members were particularly fascinated by the historical bicycle collection.

DAR is a nonpolitical genealogical women’s service organization whose purpose is to promote historic preservation, education and patriotism. In the past few years, the Ponte Vedra chapter organized a Valentine’s Day celebration for military dependents, assisted with reading in local schools, provided benches for the Jacksonville National Cemetery, hosted a celebration to honor both Revolutionary War veterans and Vietnam veterans, volunteered at Canines for Warriors, and helped staff a traveling Revolutionary War exhibit.

This field trip was one of their social activities, which include monthly happy hour meetings, monthly lunch meetings with speakers and a book club. The chapter will resume monthly meetings on Sept. 9 but will meet the first Tuesday for the rest of the year. For more information, visit [DAR.org](http://DAR.org) or contact [regent@darpontevedra.org](mailto:regent@darpontevedra.org).



Photo courtesy Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution  
Members of the Ponte Vedra Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution pose during their recent visit to the Lightner Museum in St. Augustine.



# Life

travel • pantry raiders • gardening  
fishing • entertainment • puzzles

## Get to Know ...

By Maggie FitzRoy  
mail@floridanewsline.com

### Hannah Kim Smith

A Canadian citizen from South Korea, Hannah Kim Smith moved to Canada at age six, and to the Beaches area in 2013 with her parents. In 2015 they became members of the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, where she has made many friends.

Now living in Palm Valley with her husband, Mike, Hannah is an avid mahjong player at PVIC and an active member of the club's book club, where she first met Mike.

She is also an enthusiastic member of the Pickleball Club at the Brown Family YMCA in Ponte Vedra Beach, where she also plays mahjong. Hannah says she enjoys mahjong, a group game played with tiles, and pickleball, a paddle sport much like tennis, because they are both highly social and she loves people and bringing people together.

**Q: What first brought you to the Beaches?**

#### Get to Know ...

Interested in being featured? Email Tracy Dishman at  
editor@FloridaNewsLine.com



A: My sister, Dr. Betty Kim, was a neurosurgeon at Mayo Clinic. It was her first job, and she invited me and my parents to live with her in Jacksonville Beach.

**Q: When did you join the PVIC book club?**

A: In 2015. It was small then, six older ladies and me. I was young and

the only visible minority.

**Q: How did you happen to meet your husband at the club?**

A: He'd been a member of PVIC since the 1980s but had never had the time to come to the book club until 2015. The first time he came is when he met me. I am grateful to PVIC for giving us the opportunity to meet. I think of it as a matchmaking place.

**Q: What type of books do you like to read?**

A: I like New York Times bestsellers but thanks to book club I have read many books I never would have read, which is great. I send out a book club newsletter once a month to draw members together in other ways, inviting them to meet up at other PVIC events.

**Q: Has the book club grown since you joined?**

A: Yes, we now have 61 members. Many in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. I love that.

**Q: How and when did you start playing mahjong?**

A: My sister introduced me to it. I had never played games. I hated games. Thanks to my friend Lucille

Swinarton, I learned to play well, both the American and Chinese versions. And thanks to Ashley Feil, director of the PVIC Member Experience, we play mahjong every week now at the club. It's social because it's traditionally played in groups of four. It's good for you because it strengthens memory, strategic thinking, and hand-eye coordination. It also teaches you how to manage risk and adapt to changing circumstances.

**Q: What do you like about pickleball?**

A: Like mahjong, it has the same mental and social benefits. It's usually played in doubles, so it fosters social interaction and camaraderie among players. It's also a great way for seniors to connect with others and build friendships.

**Q: How and when did you start playing pickleball?**

A: I had never been involved in sports. My husband played tennis at PVIC, so I got involved with pickleball when it began at the Y. Claire Dickson, the pickleball coordinator there, is a great organizer. I'm a beginner/intermediate player and she has introduced me to many people at my skill level. I never identified myself as a sports person, but the sport gives me confidence. When I win, I feel great. Learning new skills, I feel like I've achieved something.

## Gardening

### The Good Earth: September brings ideal planting weather

By Connie Doyle  
Florida Master Gardener UF/IFAS

As Ponte Vedra Beach transitions from summer to fall, September brings average daytime highs of 85 degrees and lows of 77 degrees with late afternoon showers continuing. Hurricane season remains active.

September is ideal for adding new plants to the garden, transplanting existing ones that need better placement, dividing others that have grown too large such as society garlic and agapanthus, and general cleanup from the hot summer. Fall color annuals can be added if available.

The triple-digit temperatures are largely over, and winter is still months

away. January is typically the coldest month. This gives plants time to become established without summer heat stress or winter cold shock.

When selecting plants for your landscape, one of the most important considerations is the plant's hardiness zone. The Department of Agriculture has designated four zones in Florida: 8, 9, 10 and 11. Ponte Vedra is in Zone 9b, with average lowest temperatures of 25 to 30 degrees.

The USDA hardiness zones are based on average lowest temperatures, helping you choose plants that can survive winter. Use the zones as a guide for

selecting plants best suited for the area.

However, many other factors affect a plant's ability to survive and thrive, including long hot summers, high humidity, soil composition and drainage. Use the USDA plant zone as a guide, but also consult the IFAS/UF Florida-Friendly Plant Guide app for other considerations. Visit gardening-solutions.ifas.ufl.edu for science-based information.

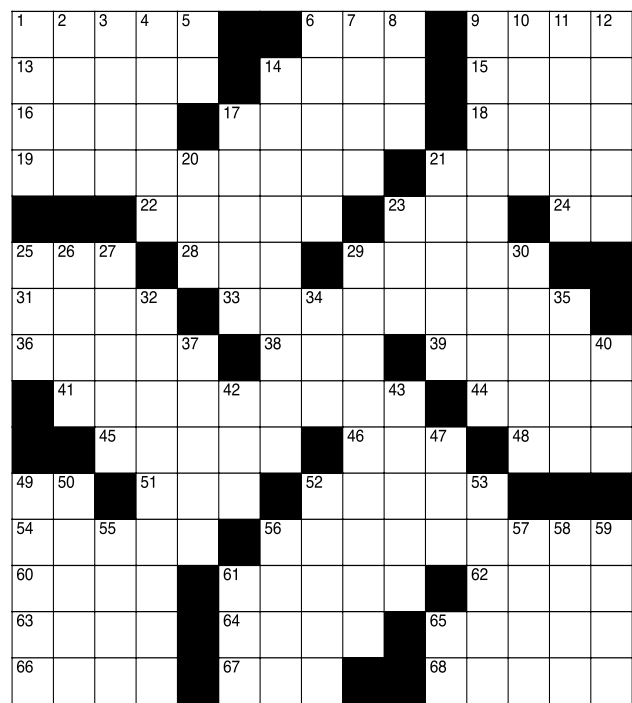
Spanish moss does not kill trees. Spanish moss is not a parasite but an epiphytic plant that grows on another plant without using the host plant

for nutrients. Epiphytes, sometimes known as "air plants," get all their nutrients from air and rainwater. Spanish moss is neither Spanish nor a moss; it is a bromeliad. It does not exist in Spain but is native to Central and South America and the southeastern United States.

The caladium is a tuber that can be planted from March to September. They are fast-growing and prefer shade and partial shade, with some new cultivars able to take more sun. As cooler weather approaches, the leaves will die back and re-emerge in spring.

Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Fairly large
- 6. Barrels per day (abbr.)
- 9. Cover the entirety of
- 13. Leafy appetizer
- 14. Showy ornament
- 15. Norse personification of old age
- 16. Athletes
- 17. Closes tightly
- 18. Attack via hurling items
- 19. Where the reserves stand
- 21. Sword
- 22. Begat
- 23. Damage another's reputation
- 24. Northeast
- 25. Turf
- 28. For each
- 29. Hours (Spanish)
- 31. Western state
- 33. One who offers help
- 36. Flanks
- 38. A woolen cap of Scottish origin

- 39. Free from drink or drugs
- 41. Tunnels
- 44. Mature
- 45. More dried-up
- 46. News organization
- 48. Steal something
- 49. Forms one's public persona (abbr.)
- 51. Female fish eggs
- 52. Small petrel of southern seas
- 54. Edible starches
- 56. Historical
- 60. In a place to sleep
- 61. Horse grooms
- 62. Off-Broadway theater award
- 63. Chinese dynasty
- 64. Resembling a wing
- 65. Small projection on a bird's wing
- 66. Of the Isle of Man
- 67. Derived unit of force (abbr.)
- 68. Plate for Eucharist

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Vipers
- 2. Ancient city in Syria
- 3. Slog
- 4. Emits coherent radiation
- 5. "Pollock" actor Harris
- 6. Bleated
- 7. Monetary units of Afghanistan
- 8. Tooth doctor
- 9. One who takes apart
- 10. Commoner
- 11. Beat poet Ginsberg
- 12. Cave deposit material
- 14. Home energy backup
- 17. Begets
- 20. Face part
- 21. Frocks
- 23. Hill or rocky peak
- 25. Giving the impression of dishonesty
- 26. About ear

- 27. Male parents
- 29. Popular grilled food
- 30. Vaccine developer
- 32. Not conforming
- 34. Polite address for women
- 35. 1970 U.S. environmental law
- 37. Astronomical period of 18 years
- 40. One who fights the government
- 42. Center for Excellence in Education
- 43. Watches discreetly
- 47. An electrically charged atom
- 49. Hymn
- 50. Arabic given name
- 52. Popular pie nut
- 53. City in Zambia
- 55. Species of cherry
- 56. John \_\_, British writer
- 57. Be next to
- 58. Make angry
- 59. Give birth to a lamb or kid

ON THE TRAIL

WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

ALTITUDE SICKNESS  
BACKPACKING  
BASE CAMP  
BLAZE  
CAIRN  
DAYPACK  
ELEVATION  
FILTER  
GAITERS  
HEADLAMP  
HIKE  
LEAVE NO TRACE  
LOOP  
POLES  
REGISTER  
REST  
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## **My property's just (market) value has stayed the same or decreased. Why did my property taxes increase?**

By Eddie Creamer

St. Johns County Property Appraiser

In some neighborhoods here in St. Johns County, we're currently seeing a stabilization and even a decrease in home values. With this being the case, many may think their property taxes will stay the same or decrease, but instead taxes for those properties will still likely increase. This is due to Florida's Recapture Rule that is part of the Save Our Homes legislation.

Save Our Homes protects Florida property owners from seeing a rapid increase

in property values from one year to the next due to a changing market. It allows for a gradual change instead.

To better understand this, an explanation of the key terms just market value, assessed value and taxable value is helpful. Just market value is a property's probable sale price in a competitive market as of Jan. 1 of this year. Assessed value is the just market value limited by the Save Our Homes statutory caps. The homestead property cap is 3% or the percent change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is less. The non-homestead property cap is 10%.

Taxable value is the assessed value minus exemptions, which is used to calculate property taxes.

Even when the just market value stays the same or decreases, the assessed value will still increase by the statutory caps until the assessed value and just market value equal. For those property owners who have owned a homestead property for many years, the difference between the just market value and assessed value could be significant. Therefore, those property owners may never see their just market value and assessed value equal, but they are still seeing a tax savings

overall based on what they would be paying without the Save Our Homes cap.

Portability is an additional Save Our Homes benefit that allows the accrued difference between just market value and assessed value to be transferred (up to \$500,000) from one homestead property to another within three tax years. This provides homestead property owners with a substantial tax savings when making their next home purchase.

I'm available to answer questions or provide additional information at [Eddie@sjcpa.gov](mailto:Eddie@sjcpa.gov) or 904-827-5500.

# Panthers perfect: Nease tennis claims historic state championship

This spring, the Nease High School girls tennis team had high expectations for its 2025 season, and the Panthers delivered. Both the boys and girls teams opened the season at the Spruce Creek Invitational in February, finishing second to Lake Nona High School, a powerhouse in Florida High School Athletic Association Class 4A.

The Nease girls team, led by senior Kylie Kochis, juniors Blair Murray and Zofi Huszcza, sophomores Nadia Filer and Rachel Alvarez, and freshman Olivia Jepsen, finished the regular season 16-2. The Panthers swept the District tournament, winning every singles and doubles line over Ponte Vedra High School, then defeated Ridgeview and Ponte Vedra again to claim their second straight Regional title.

As the top seed in the FHSAA Class 3A state tournament, Nease defeated East Lake 4-0 in the quarterfinals, Niceville 4-0 in the semifinals, and Jensen Beach 4-1 in the finals to capture the team championship. Kochis followed with a victory in the state individual tournament, becoming the first player in Northeast Florida history to win both team and individual titles in the same year. She was later named an All-American.

Coach Michael Kypriss, who was inducted into the FHSAA Hall of Fame



earlier this year, earned his 18th state championship. "This was a collective team effort," Kypriss said. "Probably the most satisfying state championship for me as a coach. We all came together at the right time, and to win Nease's first state championship in 30 years was very gratifying."

Kochis said the team's chemistry was key to its success. "We really just trusted each other in times when we knew we had to come together to win the championship," she said.

*Submitted by the Golden Panther  
Booster Club, Nease High School*



## Spiritual retreat focuses on addiction recovery in St. Augustine

The Grace and Recovery Foundation is hosting a spiritual retreat focused on addiction recovery at the historic Our Lady of La Leche at Mission Nombre De Dios, 101 San Marco Avenue, St. Augustine, on Sept. 20, coinciding with National Recovery Month.

The day-long retreat runs from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with breakfast served at 8:30 a.m. The program combines traditional recovery principles with faith-based elements, featuring witness testimonials, scriptural reflection and meditation, small group discussions and a review of the 12 steps of recovery. All ages are welcome.

While Catholic Mass and confession are available, participation remains optional, making the program accessible regardless of specific faith traditions.

For more information, contact the  
Grace and Recovery Foundation at  
732-425-7949.

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By Scott A. Grant  
mail@floridanewsline.com

# PopHistory

## Florida icons

In 1937, a Russian immigrant had a novel idea. He wanted to build a new kind of aquarium just south of St. Augustine. His name was Count Ilya Tolstoy, and he had a couple of things going for him.

First, he was a count. Americans have always been enamored of nobility. Second, he was the grandson of Leo Tolstoy, author of “War and Peace,” one of the most famous novels of all time. We are equally enamored of famous writers. Tolstoy attracted the attention and support of a man named Pratt and another named Whitney. Both were descended from a long line of wealthy industrialists. Together they planned to open the “world’s first oceanarium.” It would be more than just an aquarium. The facility would also serve as a film studio.

Marine Studios opened for business in June 1938 and was an immediate success. About 30,000 people showed up the very first day, snarling traffic on State Road A1A for miles in both directions. Prior to the imposition of beachfront blackouts, Marine Studios was one of the most brightly lit properties on the Florida coast. So bright were the lights that a German U-boat commander used them as a landmark as he hunted for prey off the coast.

For the next several decades, barring a three-year shutdown during World War II, Marine Studios was the most popular tourist attraction in the state. Visitors came from all over the world. They came to see the dolphin show. So many people came to see the dolphin show that in 1948 The Times-Union called the man who starred in the show, Mitch Lightsey,

“the most photographed man in America.” He may well have been.

They also came to see celebrities. A number of famous writers hung out at Marine Studios. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, the area’s most famous author, who wrote “The Yearling,” was there regularly. Her husband, Norton Baskin, operated the Moby Dick Bar & Grill on the property. Other authors like John Dos Passos and especially Ernest Hemingway liked to drink at the Moby Dick. The bar was shaped like the bow of a ship and was fitted with a hydraulic system that made it rock as if it were at sea. They say that when the crowd got too rowdy, Norton would speed up the hydraulics to make his inebriated guests seasick.

In 1961, Marine Studios changed its name to Marineland. By then,

it had already lived up admirably to its original name and purpose. A number of movies and TV shows were shot there, most notably “The Creature from the Black Lagoon” and its sequels. “Return of the Creature” was shot largely at Marine Studios and in Palatka. Clint Eastwood made his first credited movie appearance in that film, in a scene shot just outside St. Augustine. Many episodes of the TV series “Sea Hunt,” starring Lloyd Bridges, were also filmed at Marine Studios. When it was built, Marine Studios was a modern wonder of the world, as iconic in its time and place as the Sphinx or the Washington Mowment.

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

## Beaches Museum to honor community leaders at annual gala

NewsLine staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Beaches Museum will host its 12th annual Beach Legends Gala on Friday, Sept. 12, at the TPC Sawgrass Clubhouse, celebrating a new class of extraordinary community leaders. As the museum marks 47 years of preserving local history, the Beach Legends Gala recognizes those whose service and leadership have enriched the lives of residents from Mayport to Palm Valley.

“Throughout our history, the Beaches Museum has proudly preserved and honored our heritage,” said Executive Director Chris Hoffman. “This year’s Legends — Lori Anderson, William ‘Bill’ Gulliford and Gabe Goodman — embody the values and spirit that make our community unique. We are honored to celebrate their lasting legacies.”

Beach Legends honorees:

**Lori Anderson** After a successful career with United Airlines in San Francisco, Lori Anderson answered a calling that brought her to Ponte Vedra Beach and to a life of service. Six months later, she became executive director of Mission House, where her leadership transformed the organization’s reach and impact. She later became the first professional executive director of the Beaches Council on Aging, continuing her mission to uplift others by improving the lives of local seniors.

**William “Bill” Gulliford** A tireless advocate for the Beaches, Bill Gulliford has dedicated decades to civic service and community leadership. His public service includes roles as mayor of Atlantic Beach and Jacksonville City councilman, and he has held key leadership positions in numerous nonprofit and civic organizations. Bill’s practical leadership and commitment to common-sense

solutions have left a lasting mark on Northeast Florida.

**Gabe Goodman** For more than 30 years, Gabe Goodman has been a guiding light for the Beaches community, both from the pulpit and through quiet, compassionate service. As the pastor of Community Presbyterian Church, Gabe grew the congregation, the number of services and added two wings to the sanctuary. He was a founding member of the Beaches Ministerial Association and helped launch BEAM, Mission House

and Pablo Hamlet, building a legacy rooted in faith, family and community support.

The Beach Legends Gala begins at 6:30 p.m. and features a seated dinner, silent and live auctions, and heartfelt tributes to the honorees. As the museum’s largest annual fundraiser, the event supports vital educational programs and operational needs.

For tickets and more information, visit [beachmuseum.org](http://beachmuseum.org).



Beach Legends honorees Gabe Goodman, left, Lori Anderson, center, and William “Bill” Gulliford, right, will be recognized at the Beaches Museum’s 12th annual gala Sept. 12.

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Travel

Blue Ridge Bliss: A journey through Southwest Virginia

By Debi Lander  
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The call of the Blue Ridge Parkway, often called “America’s Favorite Drive,” is hard to ignore. I recently followed that call into the heart of Southwest Virginia. The road is limited-access, billboard-free and designed for leisurely travel rather than high-speed driving.

I found scenic overlooks with layered ridgelines of misty blue and uncovered a string of small towns: Rocky Mount, Stuart and Floyd. Each one a gem in its own right, welcomed me with music, stories and now, memories that linger.

My trip began near Rocky Mount, a friendly spot with deep agricultural roots and the proud title of “Moonshine Capital of the World.” That evening, I sipped a moonshine cocktail and tapped my foot to the beat of old-time mountain music at Twin Creeks Distillery. Think banjo picking, fast fiddling, guitar and upright bass—the soundtrack of Appalachia.

Just outside town, I found the Blue Ridge Institute and Farm Museum in Ferrum. As Virginia’s official state center for folklore, it maintains a farmstead and exhibits on Appalachian traditions. I meandered through preserved 19th-century buildings, photographing rustic barns, weathered tools and heritage breeds of livestock.

Farther south along the Parkway, I

pulled over at the Rocky Knob Recreation Area, where I found opportunities for hiking, biking and camping. But I couldn’t resist stopping at the Saddle Overlook. It offered the opposite of Florida’s landscape—mighty mountain ridges rolling across the horizon. I loved it.

A bit farther on, I reached one of the Parkway’s most photographed landmarks: Mabry Mill. The weathered wooden gristmill, reflected in the still water, created a timeless scene. On weekends, local musicians gather there, adding an Appalachian soundtrack through the trees. Visitors can also watch demonstrations of traditional crafts like blacksmithing, sawmilling and sorghum-making.

I then made my way to Stuart for a stop at Fairy Stone State Park. Legend says the park’s cross-shaped stones were formed from the tears of mourning fairies. While I didn’t find any fairy stones, I discovered plenty of magic in the park’s peaceful woodland.

But the real soul of this trip revealed itself in Floyd. Just a few miles off the Parkway, Floyd is a place where art, music and mountain spirit mingle on every corner. My visit coincided with the Thursday Night Jam, nearly as lively as the legendary Friday Night Jamboree at the Floyd Country Store. Locals and



Photos courtesy Debi Lander

Visitors to Mabry Mill can watch demonstrations of traditional crafts like blacksmithing, sawmilling, and sorghum-making

visitors pack the space, clapping and dancing. Joy abounds. I adored watching the fiddlers, twirling dancers and grinning elders tapping their toes.

By day, the Floyd Artisan Trail led me to tucked-away galleries and studios brimming with pottery, paintings and fine woodworking. The Hotel Floyd made an ideal overnight rest stop.

My final Parkway stop, near the North Carolina border, brought me to the Blue Ridge Music Center. Managed by the National Park Service, the museum tells the story of mountain music’s deep roots. Out back, a shaded amphitheater hosts musicians who keep those tunes alive—melodies that rise from the hills.

October brings the most visitors to the Parkway, thanks to its explosion of fall color. Last year, I detoured there (while visiting Natural Bridge) just to catch the autumn display. All I can say is wow! Make your reservations soon.

My journey along the Blue Ridge Parkway reminded me that travel isn’t always about ticking off landmarks; it’s about pausing, observing and connecting. In Southwest Virginia, I found a place where the past is preserved with pride, the music never fades and the beauty begs to be relished. For anyone seeking an authentic slice of Appalachian culture, this route delivers.



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