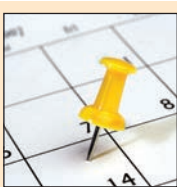
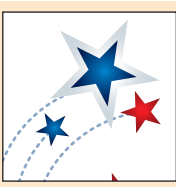
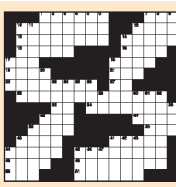
 page 3 BFF Best Furry Friend	 page 4 Community Calendar	 page 8-9 Hometown Herost	 page 10 Puzzles
--	--	---	--



MetroCreative

Affordable tips for a memorable Thanksgiving

By Brent Lister, President and CEO, First Florida Credit Union

The holiday season is right around the corner, and this year many households are wondering how to keep a Thanksgiving feast on the table without breaking their budget. Food prices are expected to rise another 3% in 2025, with groceries alone up 2.4%, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. That means even the classics like turkey, stuffing and pie may come with a bigger price tag.

Still, there's no need to stretch yourself thin to create an extravagant spread. Small, intentional changes can make for a memorable yet affordable celebration.

As First Florida Credit Union suggests for everyday grocery shopping,

Thanksgiving cont. on pg. 7

Bridge, Battle, Baseball

At 101, veteran Bill Spates shares World War II lessons with a new generation

By Tracy McCormick-Dishman
editor@floridanewslines.com

At 101 years old, Bill Spates has vivid memories of his service in World War II—building pontoon bridges under enemy fire and learning leadership lessons from Gen. George Patton.

But these days, the Brooklyn native who now lives in St. Johns is better known by a different name: Uncle Bill.

Spates earned that nickname at Field of Dreams, where he's become a fixture at the youth baseball games, sharing his love of the sport and his remarkable history with a new generation. His daughter, Mary Anne Russell, helps translate his stories, acting as a clear voice for his incredible experiences.

"I could drive," Spates said, recalling how he joined the Army Corps of Engineers in 1943 at age 19. "All you guys drive a road grader? I could drive."

His skill led him on a path from basic training in Texas to England, then across France, Belgium, and finally Germany with the 291st Engineers, Company C. His unit's mission was critical: constructing and maintaining the bridges that would allow Allied forces to advance.

Building Bridges Under Fire
One of Spates's most significant assignments came at Remagen, where his unit was tasked with building a

pontoon bridge across the Rhine River near a captured German bridge.

"We had to build a pontoon bridge right across," Spates recalled. "And when all the captured fell down, we had to run out and just hit at the pontoon bridge so they wouldn't drop."

Russell explained the harrowing scene: Patton's army needed to cross, and when the existing bridge collapsed, Spates's unit had to quickly dismantle their backup pontoon bridge to prevent it from being destroyed by the falling debris, then rapidly reassemble it for the troops to cross into Germany. The entire operation took less than a day.

"Bless the day," Spates said of the swift work. For this action, his unit received a citation for holding their position and completing the critical bridge construction.

Later, during the Battle of the Bulge, Spates was one of six soldiers assigned to guard and maintain a strategic bridge, with orders to mine it if necessary to prevent it from falling into

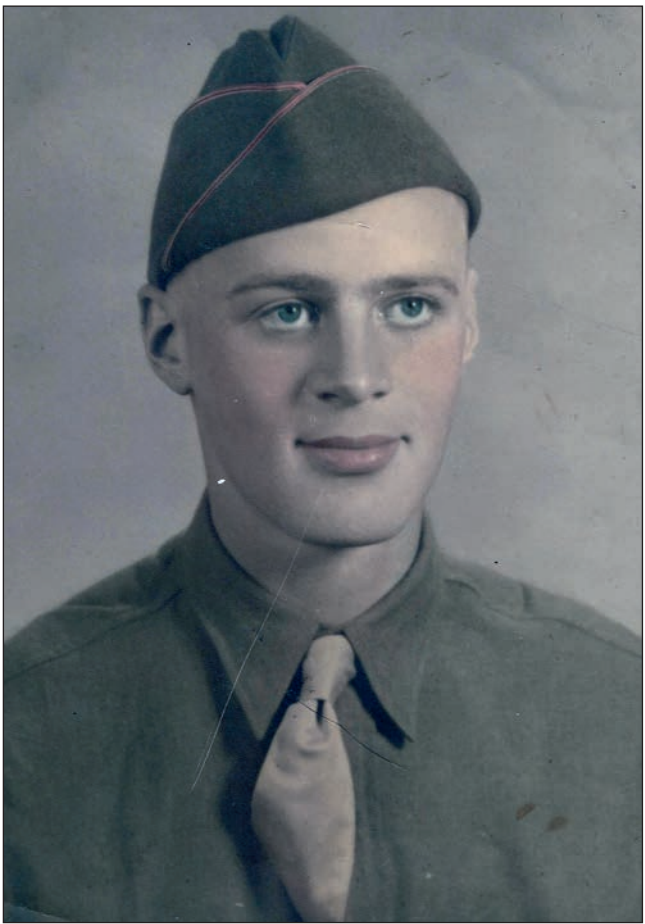


Photo courtesy Bill Spates
Bill Spates poses for a photo during his service with the Army Corps of Engineers in Europe during World War II. Spates joined the service in 1943 at age 19.

German hands. The six were eventually relieved by an entire battalion.

From Brooklyn to the Front Lines
He recalled a memorable leadership lesson from Gen. Patton that stuck with him. "He said you take a piece of spaghetti, okay, you can't push it, but you can take the pen and pull it,"

Bridge cont. on pg. 2



Support our Advertisers!

Mandarin chaplain's 30-year prayer answered through service to veterans

By Tracy McCormick-Dishman
editor@floridanewslines.com

When Larry Vollink prayed for God to place him in one church for 30 years, he never imagined his prayer would be answered in a way that would take him from Michigan to the halls of Congress and eventually to Mandarin, where he now calls home.

A graduate of South High School in Grand Rapids—the same school attended by President Gerald Ford and

singer Al Green—Vollink has been a preacher for 50 years. As a young minister, he found himself moving between churches every few years, a pattern that troubled him deeply.

"I was a young preacher, and I had been at three different churches in 10 years," Vollink recalled. "I prayed, 'Lord, just please let me be in one church. I don't like going to all these



Veterans cont. on pg. 2

Larry Vollink

Veterans cont. from pg. 1
churches every two or three years.”

Shortly after that prayer, Vollink joined the Army in 1980, beginning a journey that would span three decades of ministry to veterans.

During his 20 years of active duty service, Vollink served as an Army chaplain before retiring in 2001. But his calling to serve veterans was far from over. He became chaplain for the American Legion in Michigan, a role he held for another 20 years.

“While I was doing some of these things, I got asked to join the American Legion,” Vollink said. “Being in Michigan, I got to be the chaplain there, and I stayed doing that for like 20 years.”

His dedication didn’t go unnoticed. During President Obama’s administration, Vollink was appointed

National Chaplain for the American Legion.

“Being a national chaplain, you get to do a lot of different things,” he explained. “You get to say the prayer in the Congress and the Senate. You get to lay the wreath. You get to do a lot of different things with being a chaplain. So I had a lot of beautiful privileges.”

In addition to his chaplain duties, Vollink worked for 10 years at the Veterans Administration in Michigan. He also served as Michigan Wing Chaplain for Civil Air Patrol, overseeing eight to ten chaplains across the state.

After giving 30 years to the American Legion, Vollink decided it was time to retire and move to Florida to be closer to his family. He now lives in Mandarin with his wife, Vicki, and attends Christ Church. He continues to wear

his military hat proudly around the community.

It wasn’t until years later that a pastor friend helped Vollink realize the significance of his long-ago prayer.

“I went back to that church and told them about my prayer I prayed about 30 years ago,” Vollink said. “My friend, Pastor Fred, told me, ‘Larry, let me tell you something. God really did answer your prayer because your ministry has always been to veterans.’”

That realization became the title of Vollink’s chapter in a book about Michigan veterans: “And the Lord Answered His Prayer.”

“My church was being a chaplain for 30 years with veterans,” Vollink said. “God answered my prayer. He sure did.”



Photo courtesy Larry Vollink
Larry Vollink in his Civil Air Patrol uniform. He served as Michigan Wing Chaplain overseeing eight to ten chap-

Bridge cont. from pg. 1

Spates shared, referring to Patton’s philosophy that you lead troops by pulling them forward, not pushing them.

A Life After War

Spates was on leave in Luxembourg when he heard that the war in Europe had ended. He was slated to ship out to the Pacific theater next, a deployment he was relieved to avoid when President Harry Truman ordered the dropping of the second atomic bomb on Japan. “If Harry had to order a second bomb, we would have been all the way over to Japan,” Spates said, adding simply: “I hate bugs.”

Discharged in December 1945, he was home for Christmas. Spates married his wife, Ann, in August 1948; they were married for 59 years before her passing in 2007.

After the war, he worked for a company that refurbished printing presses before joining the U.S. Postal Service in 1959. He worked there for 27 years, with his military service counting toward his retirement, giving him 30 years of credited service when he retired in 1986.

The couple raised three children in Poughkeepsie, including son Dick, who served with the Marines in Vietnam.

Uncle Bill and Field of Dreams

Spates and Mary Anne Russell moved to St. Johns last November. One of his longtime passions is youth baseball, which he prefers over the professional league.

When Russell’s realtor suggested they check out Field of Dreams, they instantly loved watching the Little Leaguers.

George Vancore, the lead umpire, quickly struck up a friendship with the veteran and began calling him “Uncle Bill.” Vancore often recognizes Spates over the microphone, thanking him for his service.

“Dad absolutely loves going to the games,” Russell said. “He loves to tease them. He loves to have a hot dog.”

Spates remains active, having played softball until he was 80, only stopping when he found the co-ed games too rough.

These days, Uncle Bill can be found at Field of Dreams, watching the next generation play the game he loves, sharing his remarkable history with anyone who asks, and, at 101, reminding everyone that there’s always a reason to keep moving forward.



Photos courtesy Bill Spates
Bill Spates celebrates his 100th birthday. Spates, now 101, remains active and is known as “Uncle Bill” at the local Field of Dreams youth baseball park.



Allied soldiers rapidly construct a pontoon bridge across a European river. Spates’s 291st Engineers, Company C, performed this critical, high-pressure work at locations like Remagen to keep troops moving forward.

AFFORDABLE WATER
CONDITIONING • SOFTENING • PURIFICATION

Residential Commercial

Family Owned and Operated since 1989

CLEAN WATER FOR YOUR HOME

Affordable Water solutions for your home with the best customer service in the industry.

- Water Softeners & Filtration Systems
- Service on most makes and models
- Delivery of Salt & Potassium for your system

Call today **904-262-0197** for your Complimentary Water Test & Analysis.

License #W-32

3760 Kori Road • www.affordablewaterjax.com

Planet Granite Countertops

Free Estimate for Kitchen, Baths and Outdoor Kitchen countertops

Installing countertops since 2007.

Contact Today:
Sam Martin 904-483-6153
planetgranite@aol.com

450 State Road 13 North
Suite 106 PMB 101
St. Johns, FL 32259
(904) 886-4919
www.FloridaNewsLine.com

Publisher

Mark Pettus
Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

Editor

Tracy Dishman
Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Bookkeeper

Emily Whitehead
Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

Social Media

SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

Advertising Sales

Haley Cook
haley.cook@newslinedigital.com

Ponte Vedra NewsLine community newspaper is a free monthly publication delivered to all addresses in Zip Codes 32081 and 32082. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2025.



BFF

Breed:
Goldendoodle

Favorite Activity:
Golf cart riding, toys and cuddles

Favorite Food:
Nightly bone

Favorite Friends:
Mommy, daddy and human brother, Nic

How did your BFF get their name:
We sat at the kitchen table and decided together.

Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Maxon!

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 Mandarin NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Mandarin NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.

Table of Contents

4

Community Calendar

8 & 9

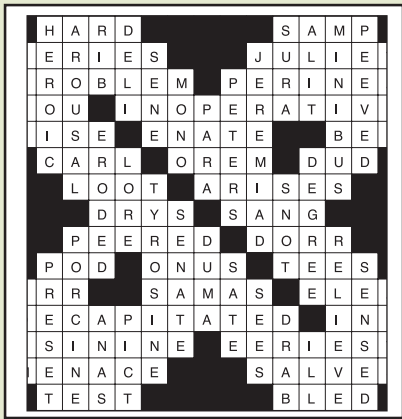
Hometown Heroes

10

Puzzles

12 & 13

Senior NewsLine



Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 8

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Answers: A. slippery B. shower C. bars D. eyesight



A message of gratitude from the editor

As we honor Veterans Day this November, I want to express my deepest appreciation to the veterans who answered our call to share their stories with our community.

Service takes many forms, and the response we received demonstrates the remarkable diversity of experiences within our veteran community. From those who served in peacetime to combat veterans, from enlisted sailors to commanding officers, each story reflects the dedication that defines military service.

The stories you'll read in these pages go beyond the uniform. They reveal what happens after the salute — the challenges of transition, the drive to continue serving in new ways, and the determination to tackle projects that others might deem impossible.

These narratives remind us that Veterans Day isn't just about thanking someone for their service — though that matters deeply. It's about recognizing that the values forged in military service continue to strengthen our community long after the uniform comes off.

To every veteran who shared their story: your willingness to open up about your experiences helps bridge the gap between military and civilian life. You've given our community something invaluable — a deeper understanding of service and sacrifice.

Thank you for your service, then and now.

With gratitude and respect,
Tracy Dishman, editor

Ponte Vedra NewsLine reaches your target market!

Get your business in front of our readers!

Affordable Rates - Multi Issue Discounts - Complimentary Graphic Design

(904) 886-4919

We make advertising easy... Call today!



November

Community Calendar

What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email editor@floridanewsline.com.

Nov. 1
Coastal Friends Luncheon

Coastal Friends monthly luncheon will be held Wednesday, Nov. 1, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. Guest speaker Dr. David L. Sheffler, chairman of the Department of History at UNF, will speak about medieval history and heretics. Cost is \$25. Reservations required by Sept. 26. Contact bartshar@comcast.net. Open to members, guests and the community.

Nov. 7
First Coast Essential Tremor: Meet, Greet & Educate

First Coast Essential Tremor: Meet, Greet & Educate will be held Tuesday, Nov. 7, at 11 a.m. at Baptist HealthPlace at Nocatee, 400 Colonnade Drive, #130, Ponte Vedra. Learn about tremor-reducing devices. All are welcome. RSVP to Jan Kary at jkary@verizon.net or (202) 438-6750.

Nov. 4
Annual Vicar's Landing Boutique Sale

The Annual Vicar's Landing Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, Nov. 4, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. Browse holiday items, jewelry, framed art, knick-knacks, antiques, household items and home furnishings at five shopping venues. The public is welcome. Cash or checks only. Proceeds benefit the Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund. Call Janet Nicosia at (904) 607-2078 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610.

Nov. 1
First Coast Opera Fanfare!

First Coast Opera Fanfare! will be held Friday, Nov. 10, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Celebration Hall at St. Anastasia, 5205 A1A S., St. Augustine. Musical selections performed by University of Florida Opera Department members, plus dinner. Tickets are \$50-\$150.

Visit www.firstcoastopera.com/fanfare or call (904) 417-5555.

Nov. 10-11
Fall Plant Sale

St. Johns County Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale will be held Friday and Saturday, Nov. 10-11, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the St. Johns County Extension Office, 3125 Agricultural Center Drive, St. Augustine. Features landscape plants, houseplants and vegetable seedlings. Garden tours offered. Visit sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohns/.

Nov. 14
Food Truck Friday

Food Truck Friday will be held Friday, Nov. 14, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field, Nocatee. Open to the public.

Nov. 15
Nocatee Farmers Market: Fall Festival

Nocatee Farmers Market: Fall Festival will be held Saturday, Nov. 15, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field, Nocatee.

Nov. 17
All Star Quilters' Guild

The All Star Quilters' Guild will meet Monday, Nov. 17, at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Socializing begins at 9:30 a.m. prior to the 10 a.m. meeting. Program will be "Chat with Sunnie about Other Techniques Quilts," with samples. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org.

Nov. 18
Toddler Storytime

Toddler Storytime will be held Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 9:30 a.m. at Nocatee Room, Nocatee.

Nov. 19
Unwined Wednesday

Unwined Wednesday will be held Wednesday, Nov. 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Splash Waterpark Adult

Pool, Nocatee.

Nov. 20
Beer and Bingo

Beer and Bingo will be held Wednesday, Nov. 20, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Blue Water Bar & Grill, Nocatee. Ages 21 and up.

Nov. 22
Nocatee Farmers Market: Fall Into Christmas

Nocatee Farmers Market: Fall Into Christmas will be held Saturday, Nov. 22, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field, Nocatee.

Nov. 23
St. Augustine Film Society: "The Broken Circle Breakdown"

St. Augustine Film Society presents "The Broken Circle Breakdown" Saturday, Nov. 23, at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2487 A1A S., St. Augustine. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Film begins at 6 p.m. This powerful Belgian drama blends romance, tragedy and American bluegrass culture, focusing on the love and heartbreak of two musicians whose lives are upended by the illness of their child. The film is noted for its emotional intensity and unconventional narrative structure, mirroring the cyclical nature of bluegrass music. Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film.

Dec. 7 and 14
Angels of Light

Join the North Florida Women's Chorale for Angels of Light, a concert celebrating the many symbols of the season through beautiful choral music. Directed by Kerry Fradley, with Kathleen Vande Berg as collaborative accompanist. Two performances: Sunday, Dec. 7, at 4 p.m. at Community Presbyterian Church, 150 Sherry Drive, Atlantic Beach; and Sunday, Dec. 14, at 4 p.m. at Trinity Parish Church, 215 St. George St., St. Augustine. Free and open to the public. Visit www.womenschorale.org.

Ongoing Activities
Council on Aging programs

Council on Aging offers interest groups at the COA Center at UF Health Nocatee and THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach. Programs at THE PLAYERS Center include lunch programs, duplicate bridge, tap dance, painting classes, chair exercise, tai chi, canasta, bingo, board games and more. Most activities are weekly beginning Nov. 4. Note: THE PLAYERS Center is closed Nov. 11 for Veterans Day and Nov. 27-28 for Thanksgiving. Call (904) 209-3659 or visit www.coasjc.org/ponte-vedra-center. For Nocatee programs, advance registration required; email pbrunell@Stjohnscoa.com or call (904) 814-9407.

Palm Valley Market

Palm Valley Market will be held at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd., every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The market offers organic produce, pasture-raised meats, local honey, baked goods and local crafts. Email info@PalmValleyMarket.com.

Ponte Vedra Beach Ruck Club

The Ponte Vedra Beach Ruck Club (aka Beach Patrol Ruck Club) offers a free beach ruck every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. Meet on the top floor of the parking garage at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach. Rucking is carrying weight in a backpack while walking. Everyone is invited and you can walk without any weight. The rucks are 3 to 3.5 miles long. Come get some exercise, meet new people and enjoy the beach.

Ponte Vedra Friday Farmers Market

Ponte Vedra Friday Farmers Market is held every Friday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Peace of Heart Community Farm. The market features organic produce, grass-fed beef, local honey, breads and local crafts.



By Scott A. Grant
mail@floridanewsline.com

PopHistory

Gene Johnson, the oyster man

He lived in an old pre-Civil War shack overlooking the Matanzas River in Summer Haven, south of St. Augustine. Summer Haven was also home to famous local author of "The Yearling" and other works, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. His name was Gene Johnson, and he served oyster dinners with hush puppies to just about everyone who lived here and to visitors "in the know."

He was a black man living in a segregated world and his restaurant was little more than a rusted tin roof extending out from his shack over a dirt floor. But his oysters were good and so was the price; all you could eat for 50 cents. And Johnson had a warm and engag-

ing personality. So, they came and kept coming for almost four decades, from 1936 to 1975.

Johnson had some important backers that helped him survive. In Johnson's case it was the Mellon family from Pittsburgh, who vacationed here. The Mellons are a famous banking family. They had a cottage called Mellon Haven on Mellon Island in Summer Haven. They loved Gene Johnson and his oysters.

Johnson liked to regale guests with stories of his exploits running moonshine in his little johnboat. He knew where all of the sandbars were located and was adroit at navigating around them.

And he would tell his listeners with a laugh that sooner or later he would look back and see the pursuing revenue-runners aground on a sand bar while he continued on his merry way.

Apparently, he did not always get away. He was arrested more than once by infamous Sheriff L.O. Davis. According to Davis's daughter, the sheriff would release Johnson on the weekends to serve oysters and hospitality for the weekend.

Other famous guests included the cast of the movie "Distant Drums," about the Seminole Wars, filmed here locally. They showed up in 1950. The star of that movie, Gary Cooper, saw Johnson

poking his oysters with a stick as they steamed under wet burlap and took up the stick himself and started poking. Johnson had none of it and purportedly told the movie star to "stop messing with my oysters."

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was also a frequent guest and admirer. She wrote about Gene in a book called "Cross Creek Cookery." In 1986, Summer Haven renamed the road where his restaurant was located, Gene Johnson Road.

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

Ocean Palms honors top educators

Ocean Palms Elementary School named this year’s Teacher of the Year, Faie Pellegrino, and School Related Employee of the Year, Vicki Morales.

“They bring such dedication, joy and a true team spirit to everything they do,” said Tiffany Cantwell, principal.

Pellegrino, the school’s guidance counselor, has been at Ocean Palms since 2017. She works tirelessly with teachers, families and staff to help students develop socially, academically and emotionally. She has assisted with many programs throughout her time at the school, including working with

the fifth-grade student ambassadors, overseeing the school’s Otters in Need Program and serving as the School Advisory Council chair.

Morales, registrar and data operator, has been the welcoming face of Ocean Palms since 1997. She is often the first person new families meet, welcoming them with open arms and setting them on a path of success. Due to her team-work mentality, she often pitches in to help wherever needed.

These two shining stars make Ocean Palms the place where “every day, every-one, everything matters.”



Photo courtesy of Ocean Palms Elementary PTO
Ocean Palms Elementary School recognized Faie Pellegrino, left, Teacher of the Year, and Vicki Morales, School Related Employee of the Year.

Landrum honors top teachers and staff

By Lisa Farese

Landrum Middle School recognized its top teachers and staff with annual awards celebrating excellence in education.

Morgan Williams was named Teacher of the Year, Madeline McGinnis earned Rookie Teacher of the Year honors, and Christine Baccari was selected as School Related Employee of the Year.

Williams, the school’s drama teacher,

brings out the creativity in students who bring stories to life through performance. McGinnis, one of the school’s exceptional student education instructors, is known for the lengths she will go to make her students shine.

Baccari, who works in the school’s media center, is known for helping out everywhere throughout the day with a smile and a laugh.

Together, these teachers and staff give Landrum something to roar about.



Photo courtesy of Landrum Middle School PTO
Morgan Williams, second from right, Landrum Middle School's drama teacher, was chosen as Teacher of the Year.



Photo courtesy of Landrum Middle School PTO
Christine Baccari, center, Landrum Middle School's media center staff member, was chosen as School Related Employee of the Year.

Personalized financial advice to help achieve your goals

Not FDIC or NCUA Insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC. © 2022 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.

Chris Thompson

CFP® / CMFA / CRPC®
PRIVATE WEALTH ADVISOR
Managing Director

904.380.2290

Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC
818 A1A North, Suite 301
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
chris.thompson@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson
St Johns County resident since 1993

ST. JOHNS COUNTY
PROPERTY APPRAISER

Eddie Creamer, CFA

NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF TAX ROLL

Pursuant to Sections 193.122 and 197.323, Florida Statutes, Notice is Hereby Given that the Tax Roll for St. Johns County was Certified to the St. Johns County Tax Collector on the 10th day of October, 2025, for the Collection of 2025 Taxes Pending Value Adjustment Board Changes.

EDDIE CREAMER

ST. JOHNS COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

For additional information, please visit our website at www.sjcpa.gov or contact us at 904-827-5500.

SPECIAL FALL SALES

Sawgrass Village

A UNIQUE BLEND OF UPSCALE SHOPPING, DINING, AND WELLNESS.

UNLOCK YOUR FALL STYLE
VISIT THIS PONTE VEDRA BEACH GEM

WWW.SAWGRASSVILLAGEPVB.COM



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

Q. What services does your office offer in recognition of Veterans Day?

A. To honor the brave men and women who have served our nation, we are offering complimentary services to veterans, active-duty military, reservists and their dependents throughout the month of November. These include free passport photos, notary services and recording services for DD-214s. To demonstrate eligibility, individuals must provide a military discharge record (DD-214), military ID, military dependent ID or present a driver license with the veteran designation. In addition, veteran couples and their dependents may enjoy free wedding ceremonies and photos when presenting a valid marriage license.

Q. What is the importance of recording DD-214s?

A. Recording your DD-214 ensures an official copy is available if the original is ever lost or destroyed. These records remain protected and confidential for 62 years after separation. At the time of recording, veterans are also eligible to receive a Salute to Service ID card, which provides special discounts at local dining establishments, attractions and other services throughout St. Johns County.

Q. Where can veterans access these



Brandon Patty

complimentary services?

A. Veterans and their families can access these services Monday through Friday during business hours at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine. With the exception of wedding photos, free services are also available by appointment only at the Julington Creek Annex, 725 Flora Branch Boulevard, St. Johns, and the Ponte Vedra Beach Annex, 151 Sawgrass Corners Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Q. Will services be available on Veterans Day?

A. Yes. While our office is closed on Veterans Day, our clerks are thrilled to offer complimentary DD-214 recording services on November 11 at the annual Veterans Council of St. Johns County's Veterans Day Celebration at Anastasia Baptist Church, 1650 A1A South, St. Augustine, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Q. What is the best way for residents to contact your office?

A. If residents have questions about any of the services we provide, our Customer Care Call Center is available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 904-819-3600, and by email at clerk@stjohnsclerk.com. I can also be reached directly on my cell at 904-599-8688 or by email at BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com.

Support Local Journalism

Our team at Florida NewsLine covers the issues, sports, and events that shape our lives. We focus on facts, not opinions, because we believe unbiased, fact-based reporting empowers you to cast an informed vote and be a better neighbor. All NewsLine content is free, but the work we do is only possible with your support.

Help us continue delivering quality journalism, and enjoy some exclusive benefits along the way.

Become a Member!



FLORIDA
NewsLine
THE NEWSPAPERS EVERYBODY GETS

Get Special Membership Perks.



Expanding access to high-quality heart care



Courtney Andres, DO

Jay 'Trip' Heckert, DO

Baptist Heart Specialists is excited to welcome two new cardiologists to its location at Baptist Medical Center South.

Courtney Andres, DO, a non-invasive cardiologist, brings expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease, as well as atrial fibrillation (Afib). She looks forward to providing compassionate care to her patients.

Jay 'Trip' Heckert, DO, specializes in general cardiology. Dr. Heckert's areas of expertise include preventive medicine and risk factor management. He is committed to helping patients maintain active, healthy lives.

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Andres and Dr. Heckert to our team. Both doctors are accepting new patients ages 18 and up at Baptist South.

Full-service, high-quality heart care is available at Baptist Health. Call **904.720.0799** or visit **BaptistJax.com/Heart** for more information or to book an appointment.



BAPTIST HEART SPECIALISTS
Baptist Medical Group

14534 Old St. Augustine Road
Suite 3420, Medical Office Building 3
Jacksonville, FL 32258

Physicians providing care at Baptist hospitals are not employees or agents of the hospitals. Baptist Heart Specialists are employed by Baptist Cardiology, Inc.
© Baptist Health 2025

Gardening

The Good Earth: For the love of pruning

By Connie Doyle, Master Gardener UF/IFAS

Welcome to November - and to our much-loved Thanksgiving season!

Last month we talked about cool-weather annuals to plant and some essential fall maintenance chores. This month, let's focus on one task that often mystifies even experienced gardeners: pruning.



Connie Doyle

For many of us, pruning remains a bit of a puzzle - when to do it, how much to remove, and what tools to use. And rightly so! Pruning can be tricky and requires both knowledge and experience. Still, it's an essential part of landscape and garden care that should be done regularly - not postponed until shrubs or trees are overgrown.

The good news? Much of the need for heavy pruning can be avoided by choosing and planting correctly from the start - that means knowing the

mature height/width of your plant before it goes in the ground.

Pruning isn't just about making plants look tidy - it serves several key functions. For the health of your plants, removing dead, dying or diseased branches prevents decay from spreading to other parts of the plant and to other plants nearby.

From an aesthetic standpoint, proper pruning maintains a pleasing, balanced form. Growth control is another important benefit, as pruning keeps plants within size limits or encourages fuller, denser growth. When it comes to flowering and fruit production, strategic pruning improves bloom or fruit yield by directing the plant's energy where you want it. Finally, safety considerations require clearing branches that block views, sidewalks, or other structures.



Photo courtesy Connie Doyle.

For more information, visit the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) website: edis.ifas.ufl.edu - a great resource for detailed pruning guides and seasonal advice. IFAS is a federal-state-county partnership dedicated to developing knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources, and making that knowledge accessible to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. With Extension offices in all 67 Florida counties, IFAS provides research-based, science-backed information specifically tailored to Florida's unique climate and growing conditions. EDIS, the Electronic Data Information Source, offers thousands of peer-reviewed publications on topics ranging from landscape maintenance to pest management, all written by university researchers and Extension specialists.

If you're not a do-it-yourselfer, consider hiring a qualified professional. A little expert help can go a long way toward keeping your landscape healthy and beautiful year-round.

Remember: God made rainy days so gardeners could get the housework done — Anonymous

Connie Doyle writes The Good Earth, a gardening column inspired by a lifelong passion for plants, nature, and the peaceful rhythm of the garden. With more time in retirement, she has been inspired to take that passion to the next level — learning, growing, and sharing with others in our community by way of earning her Master Gardener Certification. Connie can be reached by email to mail@floridanewsline.com.

Thanksgiving cont. from pg. 7

the first step in preparing a Thanksgiving dinner is to simply make a plan — and stick to it. Write out a list and establish a clear spending budget. Your list should include not only staples but also extras like drinks, desserts and any last-minute purchases.

Opt for family favorites. An overwhelming spread only gets picked at, leaving you with leftovers you may not even want. When making your list, stick to recipes with pantry staples and choose dishes that share ingredients. Frozen and canned produce can also help lower your final cost.

Planning to cook from scratch may save you some money. Homemade

rolls and mashed potatoes cost less than pre-made versions. You can even prep and freeze dishes like pie crusts or cranberry sauce ahead of time. As a bonus, cooking together can turn meal prep into a fun family activity.

Some items go on “pre-holiday” sale if you shop far enough in advance. Stuffing mix, canned pumpkin and cranberries often get discounted. Once you're at the store with your list, First Florida Credit Union recommends opting for generic brands whenever possible. Store-brand frozen turkeys are often less expensive and just as tasty.

These small savings will add up — and you'll see the final price go down.

Polling expert to speak at Coastal Friends Luncheon

By Brooke Freeman

Eva Sonnenberg-Matthews, political science instructor and research coordinator at UNF, will discuss the art and science of polling at the Coastal Friends luncheon on Wednesday, Nov. 5.

The presentation will cover the role of public opinion research in elections and the policy process, including why it's important, what goes into conducting a poll, some long-standing and new challenges, and what to look out for as a consumer of polling data.

The luncheon will be held at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. In keeping with the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, the menu will include spinach and goat cheese salad, turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie with Cool Whip.

The cost to attend is \$25 and the lunch is open to Coastal Friends members and guests, as well as the community. Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net. The deadline for checks to be received is Friday, Oct. 31.

Established in 1998, Coastal Friends (formerly Newcomers Alumnae) is a social club for women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach, St. Augustine and Jacksonville and the surrounding area. Activities include adventures and outings, book club, bunco, canasta, happy hour, lunch in, lunch out, mah jongg, samba and wine socials.

Luncheons are held on the first Wednesday of every month except for July and August. New members are welcome throughout the year. For more information about Coastal Friends, contact brookemeister@msn.com.

Visit us online!
www.floridanewsline.com



20% OFF
EVERYTHING THAT FITS
IN A WBU BAG!

Black Friday & Small Business Saturday
Offer valid in store 11/28/25 through 11/29/25 only
Exclusions Apply

20% OFF
ONE REGULARLY PRICED ITEM

Valid in-store the participating stores listed. Coupon not valid for Seed/Bird Food, Camera Feeders, Optics, Gift Cards, DSC Memberships, or Sale Items. Cannot be combined with other coupons/discounts. Offer expires 11/30/25
ONE COUPON PER CUSTOMER

St Johns 450 SR13 at Racetrack Rd (next to Publix) 904.230.3242 wbu.com/jacksonville	Jax Beach 4138 Third Street South (between Trader Joes & Staples) 904.246.6832 wbu.com/jacksonvillebeach	World Golf Village 180 Capulet Drive #5 (At Murabella) 904.209.5754 wbu.com/staugustine
---	--	---



FOR PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S

HELPING THOSE WITH PARKINSONS LIVE A FULLER LIFE!

Education • Connection
Advocacy • Awareness

(904) 804-5535
www.jaxhopeinc.org



438544-1



Bricks of remembrance, promise of presence

The following column is from "The Patriot Reader," the newsletter of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County.

Around our county, there have been several civic and veterans organizations that have honored and remembered our veterans in some special way. The most prominent way has been the laying of bricks in memorial gardens or Walls of Remembrance.

On Thursday, Sept. 18, Pedro Menendez High School performed such a dedication before their varsity football game that evening. The ceremony was conducted around the American flagpole at the entrance to the football field. This area contains many bricks honoring our local veterans from St. Johns County. The dedication service was attended by Joseph McDermott, director of the Veterans Service Office, and myself as guests of the school, and we participated in the dedication service. The Veterans Council purchased five bricks in honor of all former chairmen of the Veterans Council.

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County made a commitment years ago that no veteran from our county will ever be buried without a family member present. On numerous occasions, the Veterans Council has had to be that family member. This was the situation last Wednesday when Joseph McDermott, director of the Veterans Service Office, and I transported the remains of an indigent veteran to Jacksonville National Cemetery for burial. Navy veteran Jacquis Hehelijah Rossiter had no known family that could be located. Direc-



Bill Dudley

tor McDermott and I, along with a member of the Jacksonville Ladies, a volunteer group that ensures no veteran is buried alone at Jacksonville National Cemetery, performed the services for veteran shipmate Rossiter.

Thank you for your service.

Bill Dudley is chairman of the Veterans Council of St. Johns County. He served 10 years of active duty in the U.S. Air Force, deploying during the Berlin Crisis and Cuban Missile Crisis, before transferring to the USAF Reserves and retiring at the rank of lieutenant colonel. Since 2005, he has served the veteran community as National Director of the U.S. Navy League and in leadership roles with the National Cemetery, Veterans Treatment Court Advisory Board and other local veterans organizations.

A military mom's story of pride and sacrifice

By Tracy McCormick-Dishman
editor@floridanewslines.com

Twelve years ago, my oldest son signed some documents and was whisked away into a life I knew nothing about, but one that he craved. His calling in life is to serve and protect our nation.

I knew how to build a career following a college pathway. I knew nothing about the military as a career. All I knew was this was important to him, and he had to go. He belonged to the United States Army now. I didn't have mom's authority to know what he was doing, where he was going, or who he was going with. I was a military mom.

There are two memories of my son's early military days that changed what it means to me to be an American.

The first memory is my son's graduation from boot camp. It was my first experience being on a military base and getting a peek into where he had been living for 10 weeks. The anticipation of waiting to see him was exhilarating and painful.

I remember hearing them march in as a newly formed team of soldiers. The cadence was one of the coolest songs I had ever heard. The pride of accomplishment showed in their form as they marched in unison. The stern looks of leadership on their faces were more than impressive.

In my opinion, the definition of a great leader is written in the eyes of an American soldier standing at attention; fully engaged in the mo-

ment, with every fiber of their being, and ready for whatever is next.

The feeling of pride in my son at that moment when I looked at his face for the first time in many weeks came bubbling out of me in sobs of joy. He was an American soldier. He was a man, standing at attention, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient. I could tell by the look on his face that he was exactly where he was meant to be.

The second memory was attending a welcome-home ceremony for his tour of duty overseas. My soldier had been active duty for several years at this point and had traveled to many places. We kept in touch over the phone, sometimes late in the evening for him after a grueling day, but an entire day in the future for me because of the time zone difference.

I moved mountains to make arrangements to get myself and my family to the base for his arrival. We gathered in a huge gymnasium and sat in the bleachers with other military families. The program started with a recap of what our soldiers had experienced and accomplished while away.

I knew my son was behind the big doors across the gym from me. We could see shadows under the doors of feet moving around. My heart was racing, and my eyes were starting to fill with happy tears.

Then, over the loudspeaker, "Proud to be an American," by Lee Greenwood, started playing. Special-effect

Mom's story cont. on pg. 9

November 11: A nation says thank you

By NewsLine staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

On November 11, Americans observe Veterans Day, a federal holiday dedicated to honoring all military veterans for their service and patriotism. Unlike Memorial Day, which specifically honors those who died in military service, Veterans Day celebrates all who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, living or dead.

The holiday has deep historical roots. Originally known as Armistice Day, it commemorated the end of World War

I, which concluded at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. Congress officially renamed it Veterans Day in 1954 to honor American veterans of all wars.

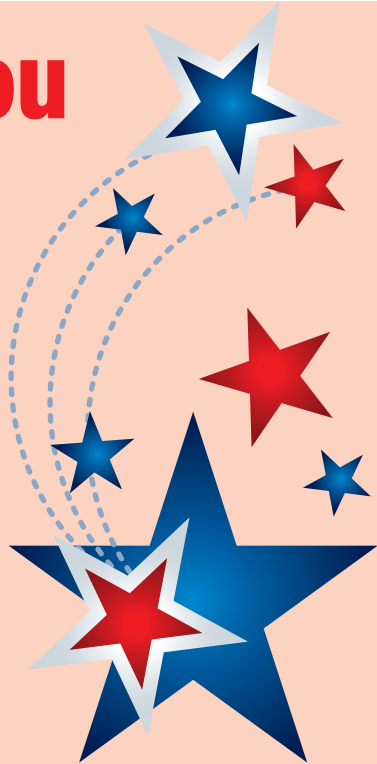
Veterans Day is always observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week it falls on. This date was chosen to preserve the historical significance of the original armistice.

The purpose of Veterans Day is to show gratitude for the willingness of veterans to serve and sacrifice for our country. It's a time for communities to come to-

gether and thank those who have worn the uniform in defense of our nation.

One interesting note: The official spelling is "Veterans Day" without an apostrophe. This is intentional, as the day honors all veterans collectively rather than being a day that "belongs" to veterans.

As November 11 approaches, take a moment to thank a veteran for their service. Their dedication and sacrifice have helped preserve the freedoms we enjoy today.





Local veteran brings navy boat back to life

By Lawrence P. Dukes

I am a retired U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. and former nuclear reactor operator. I'm also the owner of Dubuque, a 36-foot surplus U.S. Navy Landing Craft Personnel Light that once served aboard the Dubuque (LPD-8), which was decommissioned in 2006.



I found Dubuque on eBay in 2018 — high and dry, covered in red dust in a surplus yard in Del Rio, Texas along the Rio Grande. At first glance, I knew this was my boat. When it arrived at Green Cove Springs Marina, Fla., a crowd formed. Shouts of "it's a gunboat!" rang out. Dubuque was in bad shape — most of the engine missing, no windows, no cleats, no railing. It had been stripped, and I think they were making bets I would never get it in the water.

But the stainless-steel lettering on its stern gleaming in the sunlight stated defiantly "USS DUBUQUE" — identifying itself as one of the Dubuque's small boats. That was enough for me. I had been an engineer half of my Navy career. I was undaunted. I moved Dubuque to long-term storage and formulated a restoration plan.

After almost two years in storage, I moved Dubuque into the work area and began the restoration. COVID-19 hit, making parts difficult to find. My biggest hurdle was the en-



gine — too many parts missing. Then I miraculously found a fully functional 8V-71 Detroit Diesel on a GSA Government Auction website. I won the auction and drove to Yorktown, Va. to retrieve the 4,000-pound engine myself. The 26-hour trip back at 45 mph drew curious onlookers at every stop. It was slow going, but I made it back to Green Cove Springs.

After more work and a few hiccups, a year and a half after placing Dubuque on the hard stand, she was ready to be tested.

When I energized the batteries, Dubuque woke from a 20-year sleep — lights on, fan whirling. "It's alive!" I shouted. Next came the engine test. Two huge barrels of water on deck fed the raw water-cooling system. I pressed the start button. The engine tried to turn over: "wah," "wah," "wah." Charles, my boat neighbor, threw me a can of starting fluid. "Hit it with this! In the air intakes!" Two shots, and the engine rolled over with a roar, settling into the steady beat of a two-stroke Detroit Diesel. Beautiful.

The cooling water and exhaust flowed from the twin stern exhausts. I went down to view the propeller — the shaft was spinning, the propeller turn-

ing smooth as butter. I sprayed silicon lubricant into the shaft strut bearing, and everything spun smoothly in silence. It was magical. I thought I heard Dubuque say, "Reporting for duty, ready to answer all bells, sir!"

Dubuque would be back in the water very soon now. I looked around and noticed that a few of the Marina Staff had been watching the activity, and they were now enthusiastically giving me and Dubuque a thumbs up. It was a great day. Mission accomplished.

I could not have accomplished this task without the support of the Green Cove Springs Marina Staff and my boat neighbors who are now my good friends.

Lawrence P. Dukes is a retired U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr., former reactor operator aboard the Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69), and U.S. Coast Guard licensed Master. He is a graduate of Terry Parker High School and the University of North Florida. He owns SEA STATE Realty Corp. and SEA STATE Maritime School in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.



Mom's story cont. from pg. 8

smoke came from under and around the two sets of big doors I had been staring at. The doors swung open, and we all jumped to our feet as our soldiers marched in and filled the room.

The soldiers looked similar in their fatigues. We were squinting and scanning

each one to find our soldier as the group marched in and lined up in formation to face us. I recognized one of the forms that moved just a hair differently, one that I knew like the back of my hand. That's him! There he is!

The rush of emotions is something that is difficult to put into words. I soon got my hug and looked into the eyes of my

very exhausted son. My healthy, strong son.

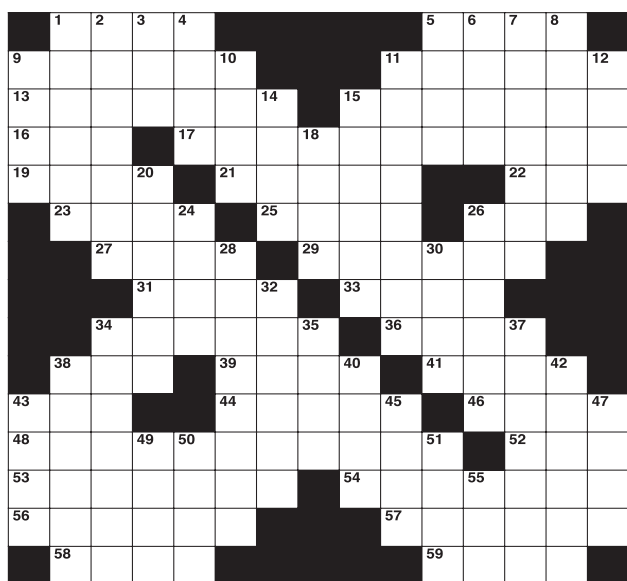
My son is a career military man in his 12th year of service. He now leads his own platoon and trains the next generation of soldiers. The pride he has in his country is evident on his face and in his voice whenever we talk about work.

I pray that pride in this beautiful nation is heard in your voice and shows on your face. I pray you take time to remember those who signed papers, were whisked away from their families to serve and protect, and gave the ultimate sacrifice.

God bless you and your family, and God bless America!

Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Difficult
5. Coarsely ground corn
9. There's one for the "world"
11. Loved Romeo
13. Sticky situation
15. Pelvic areas
16. An informal debt instrument
17. Cannot be repaired surgically
19. A device attached to a workbench
21. Related on the mother's side
22. Sound unit
23. __ Sagan, astronomer
25. Utah city
26. A disappointing effort
27. Steal goods during a riot
29. Wakes up
31. Hair salon service
33. Serenaded
34. Looked intensely
36. U.S. Air Force expert Robert F.
38. A type of cast
39. One's duty
41. Where golfers begin
43. Make a mistake
44. Semitic sun god
46. Ancient Greek City
48. Having had the head cut off
52. A place to stay
53. Unwise
54. Most unnatural
56. Dennis is a notable one
57. Ointments
58. Students' exam
59. Leaked blood

CLUES DOWN

1. Brave
2. Act of awakening
3. Jest at
4. Sandwich store
5. Chapter of the Koran
6. Dismounted
7. Small vehicle
8. Irked
9. One who earns by disreputable dealings
10. Monetary unit of Samoa
11. Long, mournful lamentation
12. Weight unit
14. Alone, single
15. Decreases
18. Indicates beside
20. Worn by exposure to the weather
24. A body of traditions
26. College students' ultimate goal
28. Amino acid
30. Nasal mucus
32. US government entity
34. Swinish
35. Legislative body in Russia
37. Grant an exemption to
38. Put in advance
40. Satisfy
42. Felt
43. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
45. Witnesses
47. Picnic invaders
49. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
50. Ancient person of Scotland
51. Cheerless
55. Unwell

TURKEY DAY WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

APPLE PIE
BISCUITS
BRINE
CASSEROLE
CIDER
CORNBREAD
CORNUCOPTA
DINNER
ENTERTAIN
FAMILY
FRIENDS
FULL
GRACIOUS
GRATITUDE
GRAVY
GREEN BEANS
HOLIDAY
MEAL
OVEN
SOUP
STUFFING
THANKSGIVING
TURKEY
YAMS



Solve the code to discover words related to senior safety.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 17 = E)

- A.** 19 24 13 7 7 17 23 5
Clue: Slick
- B.** 19 1 15 11 17 23
Clue: Place to wash
- C.** 26 20 23 19
Clue: Handles
- D.** 17 5 17 19 13 12 1 25
Clue: Ability to see



HALLOWEEN

I Spy



How many do YOU spy?



Spooky Scramble

SUTMEOC

LEESOTNK

IEPAVRM

OBZIEM

DIRSEP

MYMUM

AUTOS/MISC

Donate Your Car to Veterans Today! Help and Support our Veterans. Fast - FREE pick up. 100% tax deductible. Call 800-245-0398

MISCELLANEOUS

Old guitars wanted! Gibson, Fender, Martin, Etc. 1930's to 1980's. Top dollar paid. Call 866-433-8277

Reach millions of homes nationwide with one easy, affordable buy in the ADS Network! For more information www.communitypublishers.com/category/all-products

SunSetter. America's #1 awning! Instant shade at the touch of a button. Transform your deck or patio into an outdoor oasis. Up to 10-year limited warranty. Call now and save \$350! 855-914-1148

We buy houses for cash as is! No repairs or fuss. Any condition. Easy 3-step process: Call, get cash offer, get paid. Get your fair cash offer today. Liz Buys Houses: 844-877-5833

Portable oxygen concentrator may be covered by Medicare! Reclaim independence & mobility w/the compact design & long-lasting battery. Inogen One free info kit! 877-305-1535
Consumer Cellular - same reliable, nationwide coverage

as large carriers. No long-term contract or hidden fees, free activation. All plans unlimited talk & text starting at just \$20/mo. 877-751-0866

Become a published author. We want to read your book! Dorrance Publishing trusted since 1920. Consultation, production, promotion & distribution. Free author's guide 877-729-4998 or dorranceinfo.com/ads

No more cleaning gutters. Guaranteed! LeafFilter backed by no-clog guarantee & lifetime warranty. Call 1-833-610-1936 to schedule FREE inspection/estimate. Get 15% off your entire order. Military & Seniors get additional 10% off. Limited time. Restrictions apply, see rep for details.

Replace your roof w/the best looking & longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! 3 styles/multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited time offer up to 50% off install + additional 10% off install military, health & 1st responders. 833-370-1234

Inflation at 40-year highs. Interest rates are up. Credit cards, medical bills, car loans. Have \$10k+ in debt? Call National Debt Relief to find out how to pay off your debt for much less than you

Job Finder November:

STATE FARM INSURANCE IN MANDARIN is looking for Sales/Customer Service. Full time Salary + Incentives. Florida Insurance license preferred send resume to jim@jimregister.com www.jimregister.com
Starling is the owner and operator of several luxury senior living communities throughout the state of Florida. We are always looking for talented and motivated folks to join our team. Visit www.StarlingLiving.com/careers to view our current openings!

owe! Free quote: 844-955-4930

Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. AmeriGlide 833-399-3595

Home break-ins take less than 60 seconds. Don't wait! Protect your family, home, assets now for as little as 70¢/day! 833-890-1262

Jacuzzi Bath Remodel can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as 1-day. Limited time, waving all installation costs! Additional terms apply. Subject to change & vary by dealer. Ends 12/28/25. 844-501-3208

Pest control: Protect your home from pests safely. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders & more. Locally owned & affordable. For service or inspection today! 833-860-0657 Have zip code ready!

MobileHelp America's premier mobile medical alert system. Home or away. For safety & peace of mind. No long term contracts, free brochure! 888-489-3936

Aging roof? New homeowner? Storm damage? You need a local expert provider that proudly stands behind their work. Fast, free estimate. Financing available. 833-640-4753 Have zip code ready when calling!

Water damage cleanup & restoration: A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do repairs to protect your family & home value! 833-887-0117. Have zip code ready!

Professional lawn service: Fertilization, weed control, seeding, aeration & mosquito control. Free quote. Ask about first application special! 833-860-0811

DIRECTV Stream - Carries the most local MLB games! Choice Pkg \$89.99/mo for 12 mos



Trust the Nation's #1 Roofing Contractor
Award-Winning Roofing and Customer Service
Erie Roofing Since 1976

LIMITED TIME OFFER
50% OFF
Installation

FREE ESTIMATE
SCHEDULE TODAY!
Call 1.833.370.1234

CALL TODAY! 1.833.370.1234

New orders only. Does not include material costs. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Minimum purchase required. Other restrictions may apply. This is an advertisement placed on behalf of Erie Construction Mid-West, Inc. ("Erie"). Offer terms and conditions may apply and the offer may not be available in your area. If you call the number provided, you consent to being contacted by telephone, SMS text message, email, pre-recorded messages by Erie or its affiliates and service providers using automated technologies notwithstanding if you are on a DO NOT CALL list or register. Please review our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use on homeservicescompliance.com. All rights reserved. License numbers available at eriehome.com/erielicenses/



Transform Your Bathroom and Change Your Life.

FREE TOILET + \$1,500 OFF*

For your FREE information kit and our Senior Discounts, Call Today Toll-Free

1-855-417-1306



*Free toilet with purchase and installation of a walk-in tub or walk-in shower only. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Market restrictions may apply. Offer available in select markets only. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445 13VH11096000

Stream on 20 devices. HBO Max included for 3 mos w/Choice Package or higher. No contract or hidden fees! Restrictions apply. IVS 866-859-0405

Dental insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance

Company. 400+ procedures.

Real dental insurance - not a discount plan. Free info kit! 855-526-1060 [#6258](http://www.dental50plus.com/ads)



Family-focused care, close to home in Bartram Commons.

Walk-in and same-day appointments now available in Nocatee while Bartram Commons is under construction

We know life is busy. And when you need a doctor, you need someone close to home who you can trust. Our Baptist Primary Care doctors are now accepting new patients at Baptist HealthPlace at Nocatee, Suite 230. Walk-ins and same-day appointments are available while we prepare to open our permanent Bartram Commons office just off Race Track Road in spring 2026.

Meet the care team:



Joel Ahlgrim, DO
Family Medicine Physician
Treats ages 5+



Jagat Patel, MD
Family Medicine Physician
Treats ages 5+



BAPTIST
Primary Care
Baptist Medical Group

Temporary Location:
400 Colonnade Drive, Suite 230
Ponte Vedra, FL 32081



To make an appointment, call our office at **904.376.3970** or scan the QR code to visit our web page.



Senior NewsLine

"Caregivers need care too:" How a local day program supports family caregivers

By River Garden Senior Services
mail@floridanewsline.com

More than 2 million Floridians currently provide caregiving for family members, a number that is expected to grow significantly during the next five years. Rich Demico and his wife understand the related challenges all too well.

Demico has been a caregiver for his 82-year-old mother Barbara for a year and a half. He moved Barbara into the couple's Bartram Park home when they realized her Alzheimer's had worsened.

"We immediately realized she was in worse shape than we thought," Demico said. "She was living alone, and a friend of hers was kind of hiding how badly she was doing, how much help she needed."

Those first few weeks were an adjustment for everyone. Demico, who is retired, and his wife who still works, spent four to six weeks helping Barbara acclimate to her new surroundings - cooking for her, cleaning for her, establishing a new sleeping pattern and

getting caught up on all her medical needs.

"It's a constant thing where we have to be there at all times with her," he said. "My wife and I play tag team on the weekends and in the evenings just to make sure one of us is awake and available for her."

But when Barbara fell in the garage and broke her nose, they realized caregiving was a greater responsibility than they expected. Rich's wife soon found River Garden Senior Services and discovered the Adult Day Program.

"She needs someone to be with her constantly, and we can't do that," Rich said. "River Garden was quite the life-saver for us."

The Adult Day Program is a safe and engaging space for seniors who live at home but need daytime support and social connection. Each senior receives a personalized, flexible schedule tailored to their needs. They may participate in a range of daily activities from chair exercises and ceramics to baking and bingo.

Caregivers typically begin by scheduling two days per week but often increase that as their loved one becomes more comfortable, said Melanie Ruggiero, director of home and community based services at River Garden. The program operates Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"When we have caregivers come in and interview with us, they are exhausted," Ruggiero said. "Over time, we notice that they look rested."

Barbara now attends the program the full five days per week. For Rich, it's been life-changing. The time allows him to run errands, prepare meals and handle household responsibilities he can't manage when Barbara is home. But the biggest change, he says, has been in his mother.

"She's made a lot of friends; she's very sociable," Rich said. "I think it's a distraction for her when she's engaged with her friends and staff, and that takes her mind off things."

Ruggiero says River Garden prides itself on being a safe place that caregivers trust. She says their goal is to make every person who walks through their doors feel understood and valued.

"No matter what their diagnosis is, we meet them where they are," Ruggiero said.

The Adult Day program is accepting new clients. Caregivers also now have access to a new drop-in program, where they can drop off their loved one for a four-hour window on short notice if something comes up.

Ruggiero says without respite, caregivers eventually burn out, which is why



Photo courtesy Rich Demico.
Barbara Demico.

support systems like River Garden's are so critical.

"It's been a huge help because we have the peace of mind knowing she's being taken care of, and that it's something she enjoys," Rich said.

To learn more about River Garden's Adult Day Program, caregivers can visit RiverGarden.org.



Your carefree oasis of luxury awaits!

Feel right at home at one of our Starling communities. Live in unparalleled environments that feature resort-style amenities and comfortable residences. Select from luxurious independent living, assisted living or memory care lifestyles.

Whether you're sampling the delectable dining options, enjoying the full-service salon or pursuing a new hobby, Starling is all about embracing life with friends, family, and community.

Learn more at www.StarlingLiving.com.





STARLING
AT PONTE VEDRA
ASSISTED LIVING
and MEMORY CARE
904-686-3700
ALF#12887



STARLING
AT NOCATEE
ASSISTED LIVING
and MEMORY CARE
904-834-4199
ALF#13109



STARLING
AT NOCATEE
INDEPENDENT
LIVING
904-834-4511



STARLING
AT SAN JOSE
ASSISTED LIVING
and MEMORY CARE
904-337-6350
ALF#12887

WELLNESS • ENGAGEMENT • CULINARY • SERVICE

Call today to learn about current specials!



From left, Rich Demico, Jackie Agnew, Barbara Demico, Rob Demico, Joyce Cox and Jenn Mulryan. Photo courtesy Rich Demico.



Senior NewsLine

Thoughtful gifts offer comfort, fun for older adults

By NewsLine staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Gifts from friends and loved ones can make people feel cherished and valued. When these people are the older adults in one's life, such as parents or grandparents, gifts take on additional meaning because they can warm the hearts of very special people.

Finding unique gifts for seniors can be challenging because these individuals have been receiving gifts for many years, and many may already have everything they need. Inspiration is everything when shopping for the ideal gifts for the older adults in one's life, and the following are some categories that can serve as a springboard for what to get seniors this holiday season.

Comfort and mobility

Although people like to say, 'age is just a number, getting older may come with a few aches and pains and even some limitations. Gifts like seat cushions that correct posture or easy on/off sock helpers can be helpful. Cloud foam slippers or even a grab bar that attaches into the hood of the car door can be great gifts.

Fitness and fun

Gifts that cater to interests, well-being and more can be ideal. Active seniors may appreciate a fitness tracker or exercise equipment (yoga mat, light dumbbells, resistance bands) to facilitate fitness goals. Storage solutions for hob-



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

bies and craft items also can be fitting. See-through containers to store paints or beads or an organizer for fishing tackle can make seniors' hobbies even more enjoyable. A roll-up puzzle mat is great for puzzle enthusiasts to protect their work until completion.

Family gifts

Seniors also may appreciate gifts that touch the heart. A custom recipe cutting board that features a treasured family recipe may become a cherished item. A

customized photo calendar that features family members' birthdays and other key events also is thoughtful. A photo jewelry locket makes a nice gift for a special senior woman.

Travel gifts

Seniors typically have more time to devote to travel than younger adults, and gifts that cater to their wanderlust are a perfect fit. Digital GPS-based devices that connect to keys or luggage can help prevent lost items while traveling. Bright

luggage that won't get mixed up at the baggage carousel or ergonomic neck pillows that facilitate napping on a flight also can be appreciated. Those who know destinations the seniors in their lives may want to visit can purchase plane or cruise tickets as a generous gift for someone special.

Various categories can provide ample inspiration when shopping for gifts for seniors this holiday season.



OPENING DOORS TO MORE.

More time with friends. More ways to stay active.
More moments to enjoy the lifestyle you've earned.

For 35 years, **Fleet Landing** in **Atlantic Beach** has opened the door to what matters most for seniors in Northeast Florida. Now, with the addition of **Fleet Landing at Nocatee**, we are opening even more doors. Discover an elevated lifestyle, meaningful connections, and the peace of mind only a Life Plan Community can provide.

Visit FleetLanding.com or call 904.944.7636 to learn more.

FLEET LANDING

PVN25-88145



Travel

Fredericksburg weaves American history into travel destination

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

Few places in America weave so many layers of history into such a small area as Fredericksburg, Virginia. Nestled along the Rappahannock River between Washington, D.C., and Richmond, the town feels like a living timeline—one where the colonial era, Revolutionary War, Civil War and Civil Rights movement all left lasting marks. Walking its brick streets, visitors sense the weight of the nation's past amid a lively mix of shops, galleries and cafes.

The Washington Family Legacy

Fredericksburg proudly calls itself the boyhood home of George Washington. The story begins at Ferry Farm , where



Debi Lander

George lived from ages 6 to 16. After his father Augustine's death, his mother, Mary Ball Washington, guided the family through lean years, shaping her son's resilience and sense of duty. The reconstructed farmhouse and museum displays reveal what daily colonial life looked like for the future president.

Downtown, the Mary Washington House preserves the home George bought for his mother in 1772. She lived there for the rest of her life, tending her gardens and welcoming visitors, including her famous son. Nearby stands the Rising Sun Tavern, built in 1760 by George's younger brother



Photo courtesy Debi Lander
Kenmore, Home of G. Washington's Sister.

Charles. Costumed interpreters recreate the atmosphere of an 18th-century tavern, where politics and gossip mingled over tankards of ale.

The family story continues at Kenmore , the Georgian mansion of George's sister Betty Washington Lewis and her husband Fielding Lewis. Fielding sacrificed his fortune to fund supplies for the Revolutionary army, a powerful reminder of the personal cost of independence. The home dazzles with ornate plaster ceilings and exhibits honoring the enslaved community who maintained it.

Don't miss the Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop , owned by Washington's friend and fellow patriot Dr. Mercer. The 18th-century pharmacy displays the remedies of its day including herbs, tinctures and even leeches. The guides offer a fascinating glimpse into colonial medicine.

The Civil War Crossroads

If Washington's Fredericksburg represents America's beginning, its battlefields capture the nation's near collapse. the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park encompasses four major battlefields—Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House—forming one of the country's most extensive Civil War landscapes.

At Marye's Heights, visitors walk the ground where Union troops suffered staggering losses in December 1862. Chancellorsville, just west of town, saw Gen. Robert E. Lee's audacious victory but also the death of his trusted

lieutenant, "Stonewall" Jackson. The 1864 battles of Wilderness and Spotsylvania marked the relentless Union drive toward Richmond under Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Trails, exhibits and ranger programs bring these harrowing moments to life.

The Civil Rights Trail

Fredericksburg's story doesn't end with muskets and monuments. the city also plays a key role on Virginia's U.S. Civil Rights Trail. the Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) served as a center of faith and activism for African Americans from the Civil War era through the modern Civil Rights movement.

Modern Fredericksburg

Though steeped in history, Fredericksburg thrives as a vibrant modern community. Its downtown brims with galleries, boutiques and eateries, while farmers' markets, carriage rides and festivals enliven the streets.

A Place that Holds It All

Fredericksburg is where the American story converges—where a young George Washington grew under his mother's watchful eye, where patriots risked everything for independence, where a divided nation fought for survival and where freedom continued to advance.

For travelers, it's a chance to stand where so many chapters of the American experience overlap.

If You Go: Fredericksburg lies about an hour south of Washington, D.C., via I-95 or Amtrak. Allow at least two days to explore the Washington family homes, nearby battlefields and Civil Rights landmarks.

Debi Lander is an award-winning travel writer and photographer who blends her passion for history, culture, food, and personal discovery into captivating stories. Through her website Bylandersea.com and her long-running travel column for Florida Newsline, she explores destinations from small U.S. towns to iconic global landmarks. She hopes her storytelling and practical insights inspire readers to experience the world with curiosity, appreciation, and a sense of adventure. Debi can be reached by email to mail@floridanewslines.com.



Photo courtesy Debi Lander
Bright colors within Kenmore.



Photo courtesy Debi Lander
Interior of Mary Washington House



PROGRAMS FOR ALL LEVELS AND AGES!

It is so much more than a soccer program. It is a soccer family!

WWW.SPORTINGJAXACADEMY.COM

Fishing

November fishing shifts to bass, stripers

Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewsline.com

Hello again. I hope everyone is doing well as we begin our annual cool down and the start of the holidays. November brings a big shift for fishing in our area of the river. Saltwater species can still be around, but the balance will slowly shift to the freshwater species until they eventually make up most of our fishing opportunities through the winter, so I'll touch on a little of both this month.

What causes the shift? The water temperatures are dropping, which does make fish move, but the bigger influence on the fish, especially the saltwater species, is the salinity. Shorter days, cooler temperatures, less evapotranspiration, etc., means more freshwater enters and stays in the river during the winter. This combination of lower temperatures and fresher water means it's not comfortable for many fish to hang around. They will head to our coastal marshes near the river's mouth if they can handle the cold. If they can't, they head out and south.

Shrimp will continue to exit. They're bigger but less numerous than previous months, but don't let that keep you from looking. I've had some amazing days shrimping around Thanksgiving.

Flounder and redfish will be some of the last saltwater species to leave, and small numbers of them will even stay through the winter. A live shrimp or shiner is great for both. Try shallower water and use floats to cover more area.

Drum can still be found around bridge pilings and shell bars, but they will also be leaving throughout the month. Shrimp, clams and crab will work for them. If you fish with a Carolina or fish finder rig, try bouncing the sinker off the bottom every now and then. The thud and puff of sediment can attract drum to your bait.

On the freshwater side of things, I'd say we have three main species to target now through the winter: Bass, specks and

stripers. Catfish are an honorable mention since our channel and white catfish are the most consistent bite throughout the winter, but for some reason they aren't targeted that much.

Bass and stripers would be my top picks this month. Try shallow structure and near creek mouths for bass and bridges for the stripers. Live shrimp have you covered for both. Next month we can talk all about freshwater, so keep an eye out for that. Tight lines.

Jimmy Tomazinis is a Jacksonville area



Jimmy Tomazinis

native who has fished the St. Johns River his entire life. His passion for fish led him to study coastal biology at the University of North Florida. He has since participated in multiple fishery studies in Northeast Florida, continues to implement fish habitat and water quality improvement projects, fishes as much as he can, and has a monthly podcast called North Florida Fishing and Outdoors where the fishing conversation continues. Jimmy can be reached by email to mail@floridanewsline.com.

Visit us online!
www.floridanewsline.com

Community Marketplace: Call (904) 886-4919 for advertising rates

PRESSURE WASHING SERVICE

PROOF IS IN THE WORK

SERVICES

- EXTERIOR CLEANING
- EXTERIOR PAINTING & RESTORATION
- HOT WASH & SOFT WASH
- ROOF CLEANING
- POOL ENCLOSURES
- DOCKS & WALKWAY

CALL US TODAY: 904-622-3000

www.powwashjax.com

The Tankless Bros

Doing Your Tankless Job!

TANKLESS WATER HEATER FLUSHES

Local - Insured - Upfront Pricing

Only 1 Service Offered = No Upcharges or Sales Pitches

904-792-3487 / www.tanklessbros.com

We offer Fictitious Name Advertisement
Call for more info! (904) 886-4919

THE TAILORED CLOSET™



PREMIER GARAGE™



20 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

With over 13,000 Installations since 2005



•CUSTOM CLOSETS •GARAGE CABINETS •FLOOR COATINGS



Request a FREE Consultation (904) 645-0885
FINANCING AVAILABLE

VICAR'S
LANDING
Live Exceptionally!



Vicar's Landing at Sawgrass



Vicar's Landing at Oak Bridge

Luxury Retirement That's Paradise. Perfected.



Traditional retirement living? No way.

Every day is an adventure at Vicar's Landing in beautiful Ponte Vedra Beach. This is today's senior living, with fitness classes, artistic pursuits, thought-provoking lectures, and on-site, comprehensive healthcare. Indulge in gourmet dining, relax in our serene surroundings, and find lasting friendships.

Discover a retirement experience that exceeds expectations and challenges all the norms—Discover Vicar's Landing.



Life Choice Community™

904.285.6000 | [VicarsLanding.com](https://www.vicarslanding.com)