

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

MAY 2019 Volume 6 Issue 5

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



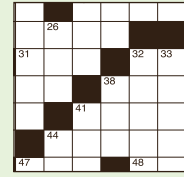
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2019 sea turtle nesting season begins in May

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The beaches of St. Johns County are home to several species of endangered or threatened sea turtles. Residents and visitors have a special opportunity and responsibility to protect these magnificent creatures and their vulnerable nesting sites as they return each season to nest along the beaches.



Photos courtesy St. Johns County
Sea turtles return to the ocean.

Sea turtle nesting season begins May 1, and St. Johns County officials are asking residents, visitors, and businesses to help protect natural habitat by observing all nesting season laws and regulations. Between May 1 and Oct. 31, vehicular traffic on the beach is allowed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. In addition, all beachfront properties are required to reduce their impact by eliminating interior and exterior lights which may disrupt nesting sea turtles.

Beach visitors can also have a positive impact on nesting sea turtles by taking

Sea turtle cont. on pg. 11

Artificial reefs benefit environment and offshore enthusiasts

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Growing up in southwest Florida, Joe Kistel spent his childhood fishing, snorkeling and at the beach. As he became older, he became aware that the reefs offshore where he enjoyed his favorite pastimes were actually artificial reefs.

"I realized an effort was made by individuals to make these reefs," Kistel said.

Kistel developed an interest in all things aquatic and attended the University of North Florida, where he earned a degree in marine biology with a minor in engineering. He continued diving and even spent time doing research on coral in Australia.

Upon his eventual return to northeast Florida, he realized that the artificial reef movement in this area had been stagnant for about a decade. He soon became aware of a ship that was available to be sunk to form an artificial reef and he coordinated with other groups to make this happen. TISIRI was formed as a placeholder group that brought all the entities together to accomplish the task and in 2009, the ship, "Spike" became TISIRI's first artificial reef project.

Kistel said TISIRI, which stands for "Think It, Sink It, Reef It," has a main focus of providing more offshore marine habitats. The preference is to use recycled materials, such as concrete from demolition projects and old ships, with no other use and place them offshore to let the ocean "do the work." Over time, a recreation area for fishing and scuba diving, not to mention marine habitat, will be created.

Shortly after the "Spike" in 2009, TISIRI also partnered with Mandarin High School to sink the remainder of the concrete reef balls created by stu-



A nurse shark rests near an artificial reef off the northeast Florida coast.

dents that had been sitting in the school's front yard for several years. Kistel said this offered valuable educational opportunities for the students, but generally speaking, TISIRI prefers to save items from landfills and utilize recycled materials for the artificial reefs. The group holds federal permits for 21 artificial reefs, but needs to secure funding for the projects.



Photos courtesy Larry Davis
Joe Kistel observes a sinking for an artificial reef.

"The materials for the artificial reefs are simple to get, but the resources to move them out to the site are harder to get and more expensive," Kistel said.

Since 2009, Kistel said there have been approximately seven offshore artificial reef projects that TISIRI has either taken the lead on or coordinated with entities such as the Coastal Conservation Association.

Contrast this with Volusia County, which Kistel said has made 150 artificial reefs offshore in the past seven years. Kistel said TISIRI's latest pitch is to get local counties, such as Duval, more involved with the process — including funding.



Photos courtesy Joe Kistel
TISIRI divers Kem Fair and Kelsey Moss cleaning up a reef.

"I'm proud of what has been accomplished so far," Kistel said. "I am spending a lot of my time now advocating for the City of Jacksonville to take a more vested interest in these projects. Some counties have in-house departments or staff that work on projects like this on an ongoing basis. Artificial reefs are attractive recreational destinations."

Another mission of TISIRI is to focus on education and cleanup. Kistel said that once an artificial reef is created, fishermen can fish within days. Immediately after a sinking, schooling fish that like structure for protection will appear and then bigger fish follow.

"Diversity of marine life comes with time," Kistel said. "Algae forms rapidly and corals and sponges are slow growers over time, but usually within the first year. Within a few years, there is a fairly diverse ecosystem."

To address reef maintenance, TISIRI has its Sea Saver Project. A network of the group's divers can remove decades of snagged monofilament line and abandoned anchor ropes, which can entangle marine life such as sea turtles, in just a few dives. Kistel said he would like to scale this cleanup project up and make it routine every year or two.

"I think it is important to share the story of how these reefs are made and also to share the conservation message," Kistel said. "With TISIRI, we aim to do just that."

Visit www.tisiri.org for more information, and view TISIRI's documentary, "Sunken Conservation" online on YouTube.

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Zouni!



BREED:
Unsure. Found on the side of a road when only a few weeks old.

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Catching toy mice.

FAVORITE TREAT:
Vanilla pudding.

FAVORITE FRIEND:
Ernie, my other cat of a different breed

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:
Zouni. A short version of Zouzouni, a Greek word meaning a small little bug. Zouni is a tiny cat.

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www.palenciapetclinic.com

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MYSTERY PHOTO



Win two free day passes to Adventure Landing's Shipwreck Island (value \$65) by correctly guessing our Mystery Photo this month. We will hold a random drawing of all correct answers. Email your guess to mail@floridanewline.com. Good luck!

Last month's Mystery Photo was St. Johns County Fire Station #1. Our winner was Kathy Esfahani. Congratulations!

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around town

May 1
Toastmasters Club #5199 Ponte Vedra Beach
 7:30 a.m. (repeating event on Wednesdays)
 Players Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane
 carmenjsardinas@gmail.com

May 2
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7
 7:30 p.m.
 St. Augustine Yacht Club near the St. Augustine Lighthouse
 (904) 460-0243

May 5
BRASS Gala
 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, 200 Ponte Vedra Blvd.
 Tickets: www.brassonline.com

May 6
Current Events Discussion Group
 10 a.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
 New location: Amenities Annex, 625 Market St., Palencia
 adsilby@yahoo.com

May 6
Caregiver support meeting
 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
 Ponte Vedra Memory Care Center, 1048 A1A N.
 (904) 297-0061

May 7
Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Ponte Vedra Chapter meeting
 10:45 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 pontevedrachaptersdar@aol.com

May 8
Newcomers of the Beaches luncheon
 11 a.m.
 Sawgrass Beach Club, 975 Summer Place
 RSVP: www.newcomersofthebeaches.com

May 8
Ponte Vedra Democratic Club Meeting
 6:30 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Library, Friends of the Library meeting room
 Newcomers welcome; Facebook.com/PonteVedraDemocrats

May 9
Shorebird Walk at Matanzas Inlet with St. Johns County Audubon Society
 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
 Matanzas Inlet West Parking Lot, 8655 A1A S., St Augustine
 www.stjohnsaudubon.com

May 9
American Association of University Women (AAUW) featuring Dr. Mackenzie Moon Ryan
 6:15 p.m.
 Coquina Crossing Clubhouse, 4536 Coquina Crossing Drive, Elkton
 RSVP by May 6: (505) 980-7865 or pkinchen02@gmail.com

May 12
Mother's Day Extravaganza to benefit Nease Media Center
 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
 Top Golf, 10531 Brightman Blvd., Jacksonville
 Carolyn.Milian@stjohns.k12.fl.us

May 13
Beaches Toastmasters Club
 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (Repeating event on Mondays)
 Baptist Hospital Beaches, Wilson Epstein Building
 cgsm13@yahoo.com

May 13
Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District Meeting
 6 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, FOL Room
 www.pvmsd.org

May 15
Jacksonville Camera Club
 6:45 p.m.
 Shepherd of the Woods Church, 6595 Columbia Park Ct.
 www.jax.jaxcameraclub.com (repeating event, first and third Wednesdays)

May 15
Aging Parent Support Group
 6 p.m.
 First Atlantic Bank building, 100 Corridor Road S., Ste. 280
 Limited space; RSVP to Karen Feliciano, (904) 907-7880

May 16
Adventures in the Arts featuring Ellen Diamond
 2 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

May 17
Turtle Talk with Environmental Specialist Jade O'Neill
 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

May 18
Ancient City Chapter of Florida Writers Association meeting featuring Rik Feeney, "Publishing: What's New in 2019?"
 10 a.m.
 Main Library, 1960 N. Ponce de Leon Blvd., St. Augustine
 Open to the public; fwastaug@gmail.com

May 20
Summer Beaches' Art Book Club
 3 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 Maurice Shuman, (904) 982-1340 to sign up

May 21
First Coast Card Club – adult card players
 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

May 21
St. Johns CARES meeting
 7 p.m.
 Bartram Academy, 164 Everest Lane, Ste. 1
 www.stjohnscares.org

May 21
Free Tools to Quit Smoking Class
 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.
 Wildflower Healthcare Clinic, 268 Herbert St., St. Augustine
 Call Florida AHEC to register (904) 482-0189

May 23
Adult Coloring Club
 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

May 29
PVB Division Member Appreciation Awards
 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Sawgrass Beach Club, 9797 Summer Place
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take 5

Library hosts Star Wars event

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library will celebrate all things Star Wars at “May the Fourth Be With You,” a drop-in event in the Children’s Department on May 4 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Attendees can have their photo taken with favorite Star Wars heroes; create a Star Wars bookmark and color Star Wars scenes; choose a Star Wars book to check out from the library’s special display; and get a Star Wars sticker. Costumes and dress-up are encouraged, but not required. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the Library Ponte Vedra Beach.

Gala to feature Jacksonville Symphony

The BRASS Gala and concert by the Jacksonville Symphony with conductor Natan Aspinall and guest conductors Randolph Johnson and Joyce Perlowitz, will be held on May 5 from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, 200 Ponte Vedra Blvd. BRASS, or Beaches Residents Actively Supporting the Symphony, hosts this event, which includes a cocktail hour with open bar followed by dinner, live auction and live music, annually. Proceeds benefit the Jacksonville Symphony. Tickets are available at www.Brassonline.org or email nadinesabatier@bellsouth.net or call (904) 545.0491 for more information.

Adventures in Arts features contemporary impressionist Ellen Diamond

Adventures in the Arts will feature Ellen Diamond on Thursday, May 16 at 2 p.m. She will present videos and comments about Pablo Picasso featuring Rosamund Bernier from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Diamond grew up in a home that was totally enmeshed in the world of art.

Her father, Ben Clements, was renowned portrait painter. She found joy visiting museums in New York City where the 19th and 20th century masters inspired her. Over the years, she developed her own technique where shape, color and light becomes the central theme of her work. As a leading contemporary impressionist, Diamond’s love for nature has taken her year after year to Europe. There she experiences the light and atmosphere which is the inspiration to create her paintings tracing the footsteps of Van Gogh, Matisse, Bonnard and Monet. Adventures in the Arts is an art related series of programs sponsored by Cummer Beaches and Friends of the Library, Ponte Vedra Beach. The program is free and open to all; call Marianne Stein at (904) 280-2976 for more information.

Treasures of the Beach explained at lecture

THE PLAYERS Community Center,

175 Landrum Lane, has partnered with GTM Research Reserve for a Living Sustainably lecture series. On Friday, May 3, from 10 a.m. – 11 a.m., the lecture will focus on Treasures of the Beach. Florida’s East Coast beaches are constantly changing and bringing new items up for beachgoers to see. Shells, sea beans, grasses, shark’s teeth, and marine debris — learn how to identify these items and where they come from. This is a free program, but registration is required. Contact Kelly Ussia at kussia@sjcfl.us or (904) 209-0335 for more information.



Photo courtesy Martie Thompson

North Florida Women’s Chorale to perform in St. Augustine

The North Florida Women’s Chorale is performing its annual free spring concert on Saturday, May 4 at 12 p.m. at the Ancient City Baptist Church, 27 Sevilla St. This free performance is part of the Chamber Music Series of Romanza Festivale of the Arts. Titled,

“Much Ado About Women,” the North Florida Women’s Chorale will sing moving songs of hope and encouragement for women’s roles in society. The chorus is celebrating its 13th year with director Kerry Fradley, accompanied by Kathleen Vande Berg as collaborative pianist. In addition to singing, the chorus also selects a community service project for each concert theme; attendees are invited to donate items for care packages for women that are undergoing cancer treatments. Visit www.womenschorale.org for more information.

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Inquiring Minds want to know!

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Are you puzzled about something going on in Ponte Vedra or wondering about whatever happened on a topic from a previous issue? Email your question to us at editor@floridanewsline.com by the fifth of the month and we will do our best to track down the information for you.



with Florida State Representative Cyndi Stevenson, District 17

Q: What is the upcoming schedule (after the date of this interview, April 12)?

A: We should be in "conference" soon on the budget. Session ends on May 1.

Q: Can you give us an update on the voter privacy bill you are sponsoring?

A: This bill is ready for the floor. The bill is an attempt to protect the personal information of 16 and 17 year olds who pre register to vote. Voter information including name, address, gender, political party and birthdate are all public record. The bill also now includes the provision that phone numbers and email addresses of all voters would no longer be public record in addition to all the information of the minors. This was added by amendment and I think it's a welcome addition.

Q: What can you tell us about the status of HB 25, which you are sponsoring?

A: This bill allows for ambulatory surgical centers to provide more affordable options to a hospital for qualifying surgical procedures, as well as allow a 48-hour stay. Now, many stays are less than 24 hours. It also adds certain birthing services to the suite of permitted services. This bill is also ready for the floor.

Q: What can you tell us about your Peer Specialist Bill?

A: This bill will allow more people

(such as those who have overcome mental illness or substance abuse themselves) to serve as peer specialists, which have been found to be very helpful in support of others to help in their recovery.

Q: Do you have an update on the cyber harassment bill?

A: This issue was brought to us by law enforcement and the terms of the bill I sponsored have now been included in a larger bill. HB 1043 makes the 2015 cyberstalking bill that we passed more effective; both bills target what is generally known as "revenge porn." When someone sends by electronic means a sexually explicit image of someone for the sole purpose of embarrassing or harassing the person depicted without their permission, the sender would be subject to prosecution under this law. Previously, law enforcement was unable to enforce against images sent directly by email. The 2015 bill required the image to be posted on the internet, which left out many intentional acts of revenge porn due to the proliferation of high quality photographic and recording devices and the ability to easily share digital images.

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

A: Readers can email me at Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov or call my local office at (904) 823-2300.

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FYI Contact Numbers

St. Johns County Local Government (www.sjcfl.us)

bcc4jblocker@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0304
District 5: Henry Dean,
bcc5hdean@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0305

Sheriff's Office: Sheriff David B. Shoar,
dshoar@sjso.org, (904) 824-8304
Ponte Vedra Field Office: (904) 209-2215

Property Appraiser: Eddie Creamer,
sjcpa@sjcpa.us; (904) 827-5500

Supervisor of Elections: Vicky Oakes,
voakes@votesjc.com, (904) 823-2238

Tax Collector: Dennis Hollingworth,
taxcollector@sjctax.us, (904) 209-2250

Clerk of Court: Hunter S. Conrad, (904) 819-3600

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

District 1: Jimmy Johns,
bcc1jjohns@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0301
District 2: Jeb Smith,
bcc2jsmith@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0302
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bcc3pwaldron@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0303
District 4: Jeremiah Blocker,

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(www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)
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kelly.barrera@stjohns.k12.fl.us, (904) 547-7510

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

Q: Is it too soon to register students new to the area for the next school year?

A: No. If any new students are in the area or are moving to the area, please register as soon as possible. Last minute registration causes stress for school administrators for all that goes with hiring new teachers and also for teachers who arrive late to their classrooms. The first day of school will be Aug. 12, 2019.

Q: How should students be registered?

A: We've started an online registration process on our website, www.stjohns.k12.fl.us. We encourage the online registration, but you can also go to your zoned school.

Q: What can you tell us about the Career Academies' recent business partners recognition program?

A: Our Career Academies are really booming: the number of students who take part, the number of certifications and the number of internships keeps growing. Did you know that 43 percent

of all of our St. Johns County high school students participate in a Career Academy/technical education? Last year, 1,627 students earned industry certifications, ranging from AutoCAD to biotechnicians to Microsoft Office. Additionally, 156 students had summer internships at 47 different businesses last year.

The Career Academies' Business Partners of the Year recognition program was held April 2 at First Coast Technical College, and it included a dinner and awards ceremony. I'd like to recognize Ed Wullner, executive director of the Northeast Florida Regional Airport, who was named the Outstanding Individual Business Partner of the Year; Carlisle Interconnect Technologies, which was named the Outstanding Business Partner of the Year; Matt Clancy, a parent and also of Ultratech, who was named Outstanding Advisory Board Member; and Haskell, which was named Rookie Business Partner of the

Year. A special award was also given to Mayo Clinic for its Innovative Intern Program.

Q: What else do you have to share with District 4?

A: On April 11, the Youth Character Counts! awards including the Pursuing Victory with Honor awards was held. This is not just for St. Johns County School District; other area schools attend as well. Honored students talk about which character of the six pillars means the most to them and then chooses a teacher or coach who they feel was influential and embodies the character they chose. Bartram Trail High School alumnus and NFL player Nathan Peterman was the guest speaker.

I'd like to commend honorees Parker Apple, Grayson Eastman, Andrew Gajewski, Anna Hampton, Cecilia Molis, Teagen Pettit, Nicole Scarbrough Elizabeth Thompson, Ruchi Patel, Erin Sass, Demoi Smith, and Maanasi Vadlamani from Nease High School and also Kyle Bacus, Diana Feier, Jack Garber, Aary-

anna Gilmore, Collin Magill, Chase Magnano, Lydia Merete, Madison Paxton, Emily Beson, Mark Calvin, Seth Corley, and Nathan Yant from Ponte Vedra High School. Peyton Carter from Nease and Paige Johnson from Ponte Vedra High School were honored with the Pursuing Victory with Honor award for their school.

Finally, I'd like to recognize and thank all of our awesome volunteers in northeast St. Johns County who give of their time. Special recognition goes to co-first runner up Heather Jett of Nease High School in the Youth category; first runner up Leslie Bohsali of PVPV/Rawlings Elementary School and co-second runner up Kelly Simmers of Ocean Palms Elementary School in the Adult category; and co-second runner up Lana Kirkpatrick of Palencia Elementary School in the Senior category.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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



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

Q: Can you dispel some of the myths surrounding Vote by Mail?

A: One of the biggest myths surrounding Vote by Mail ballots is that they are only counted when an election is close. The fact is, they are the first to be counted. Vote by Mail ballots are opened and processed by the canvassing board starting a week prior to Election Day, as they come in to our office. We use the high speed counter, which is different from the machines used at the precincts. We keep the results secure until 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Q: How does one make a request for a Vote by Mail ballot?

A: You can request one by visiting our website or calling our office. The request can be for up to two elections, or four years — or any number of elections in between. If the voter doesn't specify a time frame, we will send the Vote by Mail ballots for the four years. When the Vote by Mail time frame is expiring, we send out a postcard no-

tification. Voters may either allow it to expire, or call us or go online to expand the request.

If you look on our website under "Quick Links," there is an option of "My Voter Status." Here, you can check your voter record as well as see if you will be receiving a ballot by mail. You can also check to see when the ballot has been mailed, and once you have returned it to us, you can see when we received it.

Q: What is important to note when filling out a Vote by Mail ballot?

A: In order to be counted, the voter must sign the outside of the envelope where it clearly states "Voter Must Sign." This is the signature that will be compared to the signature we have on file and serves as the official ID for the ballot. If the signature here doesn't match or is left blank, we will contact the voter either by telephone, email, or US Mail, with the steps they must take

to "cure" the ballot. Under current law, the voter has until the Monday prior to Election Day to cure.

Q: Are there typically a lot of Vote by Mail ballots that end up being not valid?

A: In November 2018, our office received more than 30,000 Vote by Mail ballots. Fewer than 100 ended up being rejected because the voter did not sign or the signature didn't match AND the voter didn't respond to our efforts to cure. That is really a very small percentage.

Q: What's the most important thing to note about voting by mail?

A: If you choose to Vote by Mail, you need to return the ballot in time to be counted. It must be received by our office no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day. Last election, we received approximately 200 ballots the day after Election Day. They had been postmarked either the day before Election Day or on Election Day itself, but were received by our



Photo courtesy Vicky Oakes

A voter must sign the outside of the envelope where it clearly states "Voter Must Sign" in order for their ballot to be counted.

office too late to be counted.

Q: What about overseas military voters?

A: They receive their ballots 45 days prior to Election Day and are the only group who may receive their ballot via email to print out and either fax or air mail back to us. Overseas military has an additional 10 days after Election Day for their ballot to be received and counted.

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

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








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Answers to puzzles on page 12

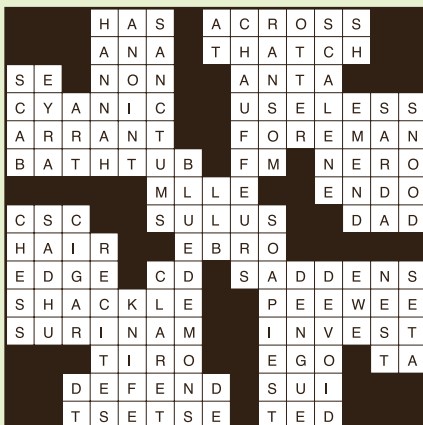
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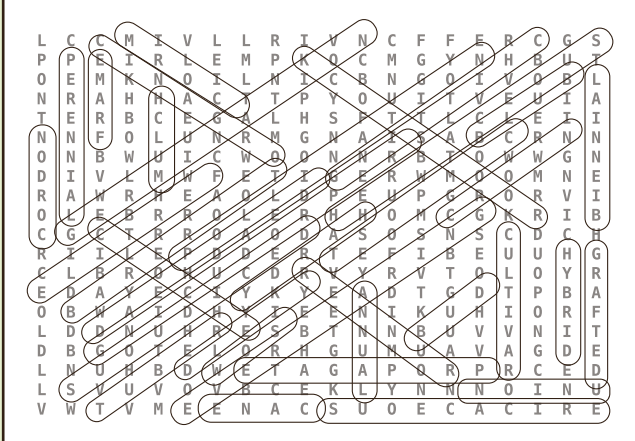
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Puzzles



Answers: A. trowel B. soil C. cultivate D. growing







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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Chamber recognizes local business owners during National Small Business Week, May 5 -11

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is participating in National Small Business Week, May 5 — May 11. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will highlight the impact of outstanding entrepreneurs, small business owners, and community members nationwide. According to Chamber sources, in St. Johns County small businesses include more than 6,000 locally owned and operated companies.

According to Isabelle Renault, Chamber president and CEO, “This is a great opportunity to recognize our area’s small businesses that contribute significantly to our local communities, develop creative products and talent, and make advances with innovative technologies. We encourage everyone to shop local and support small businesses that comprise a significant portion of our economy.”

The Chamber’s numerous programs and services along with specialized councils and events help small business owners to start, build and grow their organizations and staff, and receive assistance for recovery from disasters.

Tom Dolan, owner of Meehan’s Irish Pub & Seafood House at 20 Avenida Menendez in historic downtown St. Augustine, has nine years in business at the location and 49 employees. He is grateful for local talent in the service industry and from college students who depend on making an income at his 172-seat dining and bar establishment. Loyal support comes from area customers and visitors.

“The majority of our staff live nearby as do our customers who frequent Meehan’s. Visitors are approximately 40 percent of our business except during major events and festivals when we welcome more destination tourists,” he said.

Steve Hudson, MSIM, is a digital marketing expert and co-founder and president of local small business Law Firm Marketing, LLC and Digital Mark Company, LLC in northwest St. Johns County. He is a longtime Chamber member and Ambassador, and chairman of the North

Business Council and graduated from the Chamber’s Leadership St. Johns program in 2018.

As a retired U.S. Navy military war veteran, former school teacher in St. Augustine, and successful entrepreneur, Hudson leveraged his experience as a specialist in data-driven marketing and SEO focus to increase his clients’ bottom line.

“Launching my small businesses and staying active in the Chamber while participating in Council and professional networking activities has propelled my organizations to grow quickly and responsibly,” he said. “The Chamber has helped me forecast important growth and business trends in the region. Chamber experts and speakers know our area and provide tips for staying ahead in our burgeoning county, and beyond.”

Joe Finnegan is the owner and innkeeper of St. Francis Inn, located at 279 St. George Street in the oldest settlement section of historic downtown St. Augustine. In June 1985, when Joe and Nancy Finnegan became the owners of the Inn, they quickly set out to learn the importance of guest and customer service along with budgeting, marketing, management, administration, and other business functions.

Finnegan depends on the Chamber to learn about the economic impact of growth and development, infrastructure, politics, tourism and hospitality in St. Johns County along with current laws and regulations about taxation.

“I place importance on attending the Chamber’s Tourism and Hospitality Council and Historic St. Augustine Area Council meetings and speaker events to learn about county wide initiatives and innovations to stay active and current,” he said.

The Chamber’s Ponte Vedra Beach Division serves many small businesses and one is co-owned by two women. Trasca & Co Eatery was opened by Sara Frasca in 2015. It is noted for its “Panino”



Photo courtesy Colleen Sperry

Florida NewsLine team attends JAX Chamber Trade Show

On April 2, publisher Mark Pettus and marketing representatives Jeremy Moriarty, Heather Seay and Linda Gay represented Florida NewsLine at the JAX Chamber’s annual Trade Show, held at UNF University Center. They joined other Chamber members and attendees eager to network and learn about member businesses all over the Jacksonville area.

sandwich which was invented by Frasca’s grandmother. Earlier this year, Trasca & Co merged with Karina Coryell, of KC’s Kitchen fame. The merger of two community minded small businesses has been met with enthusiasm.

The SBA was created in 1953 and is a Cabinet-level agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy in the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. Visit www.sba.gov for more information.

The St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce is a not-for-profit business membership organization. The Chamber is one of the largest business networking organizations in northeast Florida. Visit www.sjcchamber.com or call (904) 829-5681 for more information.

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SUMMER CAMP Guide

Always practice summer sun safety

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

When the weather is warm, many people take time to relax at the beach or poolside. While such relaxation can provide a welcome break from busy schedules, it's important that men, women and children prioritize protecting their skin when spending time in the sun.

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, basal cell carcinoma, or BCC, is the most common form of skin cancer. The American Cancer Society notes that each year there are more new cases of skin cancer in the United States than the combined incidences of cancers of the breast, prostate, lung and colon. Despite that prevalence, many people still

engage in risky behaviors in the name of outdoor enjoyment. Being safe in the sun won't take anything away from enjoyable outdoor activities, but exercising such caution will help summer revelers reduce their risk for skin cancer and other conditions.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Be sure to practice summer sun safety.

- Know the risks of UV exposure. Sunlight is needed to engage vitamin D production in the body, but too much sun exposure

can do more harm than good. Ultraviolet, or UV, rays from the sun and other sources, such as tanning beds, are the primary cause of skin cancer. Exposure also can lead to sunburns, premature aging/wrinkling and eye damage.

• Use only broad-spectrum SPF sunscreen. Look for a sunblock product that boasts an SPF of at least 30. The FDA requires any sunscreen with an SPF below 15 to carry a warning that it only protects against sunburn, not skin cancer or skin aging. Find a sunscreen that works against UVA and UVB rays as well. UVA rays are mostly responsible for contributing to skin cancer and premature aging. Reapply frequently, especially when swimming or engaging in activities that cause sweating.

• Know the difference between water-resistant and waterproof sunscreens. Manufacturers are no longer allowed to claim that their sunscreens are waterproof or sweatproof. A sunscreen may be able to repel water for a short time, but it should be reapplied when leaving the water or when spending long stretches in the water.

• Cover up whenever possible. It may seem counterintuitive in hot weather, but covering up can be beneficial to the skin and actually keep a person cooler. Wear wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeve tops and light-colored pants. Some materials are made with reflective properties, while others actually boast their own SPF.



Last day of school
May 24, 2019

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MAY 2019

M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

- Teacher Optional Planning
- Teacher Planning (non-student day)
- Teacher Inservice (non-student day)
- Classes Resume
- Student/Teacher Holiday
- End of Quarter
- Underline = testing dates

Life

travel · pantry raiders · gardening
fishing · entertainment · puzzles

Get to Know . . .

Harry Smith

By Ken Gillespie
mail@floridanewslines.com



Photo courtesy Ken Gillespie
Harry Smith

Upon entering Harry Smith's Ponte Vedra Beach house, he points to a large screen television. Sprouting behind it is an array of antennae: long vintage rabbit ears topped by a bunch of aluminum shards pointing north. Thanks to this assembly, he and wife Sondra enjoy free over-the-air access to more than 30 channels. No Netflix, no HBO, no cable bill. Further, they have no internet service, thus no email capability. They don't own a computer or a smartphone; he relies on a dated flip-top phone.

Smith proudly rebels against what he sees as a relentless march of "always-on" electronic connectivity, pushed by tech giants who continually sell ever costly upgrades. Tired of having to keep up with the latest tech, he's willing to accept trade-offs such as people complaining that he can be hard to reach. Bottom line benefits for him include spending less money, minimizing wasteful intrusions into his day, and generally being more in control of his time.

Considering Smith's early years, formal education, and career, one would not expect a turning away from today's electronic eye candy. A boyhood hobby was to assemble radios from kits. In third grade, as a recognized numbers whiz, teachers asked him to handle class milk money and postal savings. At university, on scholarship, he majored in math and physics, earning bachelor's and master's degrees.

Get to Know . . .

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

While employed by the Bell Telephone system he was a budgeting and statistics guru using the latest computers.

Q: You retired from the Bell System at age 52, more than 23 years ago.

A: I spent 30 years in the telephone industry. Most everyone my age can recall Bell's break up into eight separate companies. I left their corporate headquarters in NYC and cycled through a series of jobs at different entities over the years. Reorganizations continued and I was ultimately offered an early retirement buyout. I bought my first Florida house in the 1980s after only a one day search. Sondra and I now divide our time between here and our old Pittsburgh neighborhood where we still have emotional ties.

Q: You and Sondra have a unique personal history together.

A: We both grew up in the Pittsburgh area and attended Westminster College where it was love at first sight. We dated through graduation at which time I wanted to spread my wings and see the world. She preferred to stay put. With much sorrow and angst we parted. We each went on with our lives and eventually married others. My first relationship lasted 25 years and produced three children. As life happens, I divorced. A few years later when I attended one of the school's reunions, who did I come across but Sondra. She had also ended her marriage. Voila! We re-fell in love and have been together for the past 23 years. I'd say it was destiny.

Q: You both experienced a horrendous car accident a few years back.

A: Life sometimes throws curves. A head-on crash in Pittsburgh caused both of us to slam into the windshield. Sondra cracked her neck, her sternum, and a number of ribs. My neck also cracked. Repairing our bodies has taken years. The reality is that lingering effects still persist. Intellectually I'm not what I used to be, a real frustration for a math and numbers guy. While we try to do nightly "Jeopardy," the answers don't come as quickly. Playing the game of Bridge together has proven to be good therapy.

Q: What lies ahead?

A: We take one day at a time. Keeping in shape on the treadmill is a daily must. Serving as vice president of our small community's homeowners association keeps me involved. Spending time with my three children and their families is important. And travel has always held our interest. Westminster College is sponsoring a European tour next year and we're looking forward to linking up with friends. A highlight will be attending the Ommeragau passion play.

Sea turtle cont. from pg. 1

the following actions while enjoying the beach:

- Refrain from using fireworks and open fires.
- Remove ruts and fill in holes left by vehicles and sandcastle building.
- Remove all chairs, umbrellas, or canopies from the beach before dark. These items are subject to removal by county staff.
- Flashlights are strongly discouraged as they can harm sea turtles.
- Avoid entering sand dunes and conservation zones (15 feet seaward of the dune line).
- Refrain from using balloons, as they can fall into the ocean and harm marine life.
- Never approach sea turtles emerging from, or returning to, the sea. Nesting sea turtles are vulnerable, timid, and can be easily frightened away.



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Ponte Vedra Woman's Club members learn from county naturalist

By Contributing Writer Sharon Jones
mail@floridanewslines.com

Birds, turtles, furry friends and more make up Fantasy Farms located deep in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach, which was the site of the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club April meeting. AyoLane Halusky, a St. Johns County naturalist, spoke to the group. As a naturalist he teaches and learns about the flora and fauna of north-east Florida. His topic for the evening was Building Kinship with the Earth.

Halusky's secret agenda is to create or bring awareness to emotionally charged positive experiences in the natural world to encourage a stronger heartfelt connection between the person and the local

area for years to come. Halusky has more than 25 years of professional experience creating and conducting many different kinds of programs. He is also a St. Johns County native who knows the local waters and wilderness areas.

After the program the ladies toured the farm viewing all the "residents" who inhabit this beautiful environment.

The next event of the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club is the May 21 general meeting and luncheon, which will be the last one for this year. Visit pontevedrawomanclub.com to register.

COA announces annual Centenarian Luncheons

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Council on Aging will be honoring community centenarians and nonagenarians at the annual Centenarian Luncheons, scheduled for May 2 at 12 p.m. at River House, 179 Marine St., in St Augustine and May 22 at 11:30 a.m. at The PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Table sponsorships are available for \$250 and include table recognition and one seat (Ponte Vedra) or two seats (St. Augustine) at the luncheon.

If you or someone you would like to honor is age 95 or better, contact COA to participate in this special celebration of the community's treasured older adults. Contact Carolyn Karger at (904) 209-3687 or ckarger@stjohnscoa.com for more information, to sponsor a table, or to RSVP.



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JJ Vigoureux of JJ's Bistro with Tom Coughlin.



Photos courtesy Debbie Moore
The evening raised \$25,300 for the Jay Fund.

Ponte Vedra bistro celebrates 25 years

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

JJ's Bistro, owned by JJ Vigoureux, recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and Vigoureux attributes its success to loyal customers who have become good friends over the years.

On April 6, Vigoureux hosted the silver anniversary celebration at the restaurant and selected the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund to be the recipient of a fundraising event. The evening raised \$25,300 for the Jay Fund, which will be used to continue its work of assisting families who have a child with pediatric cancer by providing financial, emotional, and practical support.

"This past year has been the best year in terms of sales that we have ever had," Vigoureux said. "The 25th anniversary celebration was a very special and emotional night for not only me, but also my family, my staff, and this amazing community that has supported us since day one."

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Travel

Highlights of the Lowcountry

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

Charleston and Savannah rank among the top tourist destinations in the United States and fortunately, they are within driving distance from Jacksonville. Visit these Southern gems if you've never been, but unfortunately, they are pricey. It is possible to find some less costly but equally fabulous cities and Lowcountry attractions nearby.

First up, Beaufort, S.C., pronounced as the locals say, "Like beautiful – Beaufort." Beaufort lies just 40 miles from Savannah and 70 miles from Charleston. The city, founded in 1711, was overtaken by Union troops during the Civil War. The soldiers found the place so lovely, they spared it from destruction. Many of the mansions acted as hospitals. Take a scenic walking or carriage tour past some of the antebellum homes including sites from the iconic Hollywood movies: "The Big Chill," "The Great Santini" and "Forrest Gump." Literary fans will enjoy the Pat Conroy tour. The Arsenal looks like a castle with gothic church windows, and the downtown restaurant scene oozes southern hospitality and excellent seafood.

Georgetown, close to Pawleys Island, became one of the most interesting small towns I've visited. Main or Front Street offers five museums, including a Gullah Museum and the elegant Kaminsky House, circa 1769, on the banks of the Sampit River.

Rice plantations flourished in the area and by 1840, the region produced nearly one-half of the total rice crop of the United States, and the port export-

ed more rice than any port in the world. The local variety called "Carolina Gold" was in demand worldwide. This labor-intensive crop provided great riches for the planters. Rice plantation workers in the South Carolina Lowcountry afforded their masters the highest per capita income in the American colonies, and they continued to earn huge profits up to the Civil War. Eventually, saltwater infiltrated and halted production. Today, Georgetown delights shoppers and its boardwalk/wharf area brings scenic dining opportunities.

Head on to Huntington Beach State Park where Atalaya Castle — not really a castle, but more a folly — is the star. The wealthy and eccentric couple, Archer and Anna Huntington, built the one-story brick structure on more than

9,000 acres. A most unusual construction, the floor, walls and ceiling are all brick. Cool in the summer, but in February when I visited, the place was damp and chilly. Take a guided tour to learn about the Huntingtons and their monkeys and dogs.

Anna Huntington was a famous sculptor, and many of her works are displayed across the highway at Brookgreen Gardens. Brookgreen's immense property contains more than 2,000 works by 425 artists, and in the words of Wayne Craven, author of the book, "Sculpture in America," it is "unequaled in its size, focus on figurative works, visibility of the sculpture to the visitor, and integration within a garden setting." Anna's Don Quixote is a must-see, modeled from a dying horse she purchased for the project and then nursed back to health.

A visit to Pawleys Island brings you to the southern end of the Hammock Coast and one of the oldest resort areas



Carriage ride in Beaufort



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Beautiful Beaufort

on the Atlantic Coast. Pawleys Island offers unique waterfront lodging and no mundane trappings or distractions. No businesses dot the island other than its two historic inns that stand alongside a collection of beach homes. Staying on Pawleys Island is indeed a getaway.

Make the drive to the Lowcountry and take time to relax. Enjoy some seafood, a Lowcountry boil and perhaps a praline and tea from the Charleston Tea Plantation, the only one in the United States.

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

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Carolyn Millian
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