

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

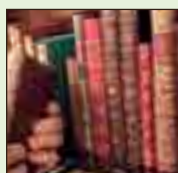
JUNE 2019 Volume 6 Issue 6

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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Nease NJROTC named No. 1 program in Area-12

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

For the seventh time in the past eight years, Nease was named the Most Outstanding Navy JROTC program in Area-12, a region that encompasses 60 schools covering northeastern Florida and the entire state of Georgia.



Photo courtesy Scott LaRochelle

Outgoing Cadet Battalion Commander Peyton Gustafson and incoming Battalion Commander Lindy Gostage receive the Most Outstanding Unit in Area-12 trophy during Nease NJROTC Awards Night.

The award is based on the total achievement of the program, which includes academic performance, community outreach, campus leadership, graduation plans, overall physical fitness and competition results.

“We (seniors) came into JROTC as the number one program back in 2015,” said former Battalion Commander Erin Sass, who will be attending the Coast Guard Academy Scholars Program. “And our goal was to leave on top. Mission accomplished.”

Nease NJROTC cont. on pg. 11

Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall continue improving on what has become a landmark

By Angela Higginbotham
angela@floridanewslines.com

Nearly 200 guests recently attended the celebration of the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall terrace unveiling celebration. Those in attendance enjoyed a champagne toast, ribbon cutting, photo booth, dancing and live entertainment from the Chris Thomas Band.

The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is a smaller performing arts facility located in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach. The hall features national and international performing artists and an array of activities, concerts and community gatherings throughout the year.

The new terrace is a long-awaited renovation completed with donations and fundraisers organized through the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall. The concert hall opened in March 2009 and just celebrated its 10th anniversary. Not long after opening, the Friends group was formed. A 501c3 charitable organization, Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall are made up of a volunteer group of about 300 members. The group is responsible for funding, overseeing and planning many of the renovations to the hall.

“We are as transparent as possible,” said Steve Gard, president of the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall. “We try to get community input into each project and encourage financial support through members, outside donations and corporate sponsorships.”

Other than the recent terrace renovation, the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall have also renovated the



Photo courtesy Kelly Brooks
Steve Gard, president of the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall and Director Marc Ressler cut the ribbon for the outdoor terrace.

green room, purchased a portable band floor so that the concert hall could offer services to weddings and other private functions, and bought a grand piano for the hall. Previously, the hall had to rent a grand piano when one was needed. The group also contributes to many other events throughout the year.

Each membership to join the Friends of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall is good for one year and three levels of membership are available: Basic, Silver and Gold. Currently, the big fundraising project is to raise enough money to complete a \$1.5 million second floor renovation.

“Completing this renovation would add 200 – 250 more seats and would also add space for food and beverage points of sale. This addition would also attract larger acts who need more space than we currently have,” Gard said.

Visit friendspvc.org for more information on donating or becoming a member of the Friends.



Director of Golf Nancy Maunder with Diane Howard.



Photos courtesy Marianne McNeel
Director of Golf Nancy Maunder with Beverly Gavant.

Gavant wins Plantation at PVB ladies' golf crown; Howard takes PLGA Low Net Prize

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Beach Ladies Golf Association recently held its annual Club Championship Low Gross and Low Net tournaments, with 18-hole rounds played on Wednesday, April 24 and Thursday, April 25. Beverly Gavant, who posted a score of 165, was awarded the Low Gross Championship trophy. Carol Williams, with a score of 173, was the Low Gross Runner-Up. Diane Howard took home the Low Net prize, winning the President's Cup with a score of 141 for the two rounds. Magi Jones, carding a 144, was Low Net Runner-Up.

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Tommy!

BREED:
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Playing with his cat brothers,
Linus and Duffy
FAVORITE TREAT:
All fruit popsicles
FAVORITE FRIEND:
His human dad, John

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:
We always give our pets human names because we treat them like little furry children. Thomas Henry (Tommy) was named by his favorite friend, his human dad!



This month's sponsor:
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www.palenciapetclinic.com

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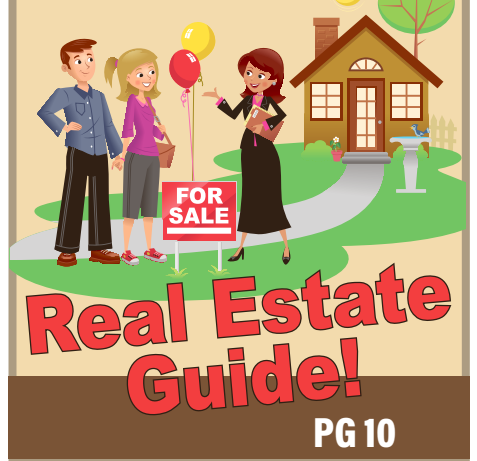


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MYSTERY PHOTO



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 the sign at the entrance to Marsh Landing. Our winner was Amie Larizza. Congratulations!

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around town

<i>June</i>						
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June 3
Current Events Discussion Group
 10 a.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
 New location: Amenities Annex, 625 Market St., Palencia
 adsilby@yahoo.com

June 3
Caregiver support meeting
 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
 Ponte Vedra Memory Care Center, 1048 A1A N.
 (904) 297-0061

June 4
Palm Valley Farmers Market
 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (repeating event on Tuesdays)
 Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd.
 www.facebook.com/PalmValleyFarmersMarket/

June 5
Toastmasters Club #5199 Ponte Vedra Beach
 7:30 a.m. (repeating event on Wednesdays)
 Players Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane
 carmenjsardinas@gmail.com

June 5
Open House
 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.
 Starling at Nocatee, 999 Crosswater Pkwy.
 Light refreshments; tours every 15 minutes. No RSVP needed.

June 6
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7
 7:30 p.m.
 St. Augustine Yacht Club near the St. Augustine Lighthouse
 (904) 460-0243

June 7
GTM Research Reserve new volunteer orientation
 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
 Environmental Education Center, 505 Guana River Road
 (904) 823-4500

June 8
Family seining
 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
 Guana Dam, 505 Guana River Road
 (904) 823-4500

June 10
Beaches Toastmasters Club
 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. (Repeating event on Mondays)
 Baptist Hospital Beaches, Wilson Epstein Building
 cgsm13@yahoo.com

June 10
Ponte Vedra Beach Municipal Service District Meeting
 6 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, FOL Room
 www.pvmsd.org

June 12
Newcomers of the Beaches luncheon
 11 a.m.
 Sawgrass Beach Club, 975 Summer Place
 RSVP: www.newcomersofthebeaches.com

June 12
Crazy Sea Cows with Janice Price, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

June 12
PVB Chamber at Noon
 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 TPC Sawgrass, 110 Championship Way
 RSVP: Sjcchamber.com

June 13
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

June 15
Nocatee Farmers Market: Island Experience
 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 Town Center Field, Nocatee

June 15
Ancient City Chapter of Florida Writers Association meeting
 10 a.m.
 Main Library, 1960 N. Ponce de Leon Blvd., St. Augustine
 Open to the public; fwastaug@gmail.com

June 18
First Coast Card Club - adult card players
 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

June 18
St. Johns CARES meeting
 6:30 p.m.
 Celebration Lutheran Church, 810 Roberts Road
 www.stjohnscares.org

June 19
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)

June 19
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

June 19
Afternoon Insight: Pollinators
 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.
 GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road
 RSVP: (904) 823-4500

June 20
Adult Coloring Club
 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

June 25
Ponte Vedra Beach Tuesday Book Club: "Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine" by Gail Honeyman
 3 p.m.
 Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library
 (904) 827-6950

June 28
Food Truck Friday
 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
 Nocatee's Splash Waterpark

June 30
First Coast Newcomers Club Games Day (Taboo, Rummikub, Yahtzee and more)
 1 p.m.
 Coffee cafe in Ponte Vedra Beach
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RSVP of St. Johns County is looking for community members to assist once a week in the summer reading or algebra programs in the St. Johns County School District. Hours are flexible, and even if you are traveling this summer you can help out while you are in town. Orientation for reading volunteers is Thursday, June 6 from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Fullerwood Auditorium, 10 Hildreth Drive in St. Augustine. Orientation for algebra volunteers is Monday, June 24 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. at St. Augustine High School, 3205 Varella Ave. in St. Augustine. Contact RSVP at (904) 547-3952 or Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us to make a training reservation or for more information.

Local cat rescue seeks volunteers

Love Me True Rescue, located at 5150 Palm Valley Road, #403, provides a



home for kittens and cats before they before they find their forever home. Adoptions are held every Saturday between 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. The group is looking for adult volunteers (aged 18 and older). Contact Peggy Hatfield at peggyhatfield63@comcast.net if you are interested or visit www.LoveMeTrueRescue.com for more information.

Kayak trips near Nocatee offered

Nocatee sunset kayak trips facilitated by St. Johns County Naturalists will be offered daily from Thursday, June 27 to Sunday, June 30 from 6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Nocatee Landing on Tolomato Road. Participants will paddle the marshes of the Tolomato River and learn about the unique things that live there and why estuaries are so important. At the end of the tour participants will get to experience a beautiful sunset on the water. Fees for St. Johns County residents providing own boat (12-foot minimum length) are \$20 per person or \$40 if using a county boat. Fees for non St. Johns County residents providing own boat (12-foot minimum length) are \$30 per person or \$50 per person if using a county boat. To register, contact Kelly Ussia at kussia@sjcfl.us or (904) 209-0335.

Tuesday Book Club announces monthly book discussion

On June 25, the Ponte Vedra Beach Tuesday Book Club will meet at 3 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library to discuss “Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine” by Gail Honeyman. The story is described as smart, warm and uplifting, the story of an out-of-the-ordinary heroine whose deadpan weirdness and unconscious wit make for an irresistible journey as she realizes the only way to survive is to open her heart. When Eleanor and new, bumbling friend Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kind of friends who rescue each other from the lives of isolation they have each been living. New members are always welcome.



Photos courtesy MetroCreative

Newcomers to meet

The Newcomers of the Beaches will hold its monthly luncheon as usual on the second Wednesday of the month. This month the luncheon will be held on June 12 at the Sawgrass Beach Club, 975 Summer Place in Ponte Vedra Beach. This social club consists of a fun and diverse group of women who have recently moved to the beaches area, or have gone through a major life event. If you are looking for new friends and interesting activities, visit www.newcomersofthebeaches.com for more information and to make a reservation.

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

Q: At the date of this interview (May 17) school is winding down. What is happening with District 4 schools?

A: It is a busy time with graduations and senior awards, but it is also the time we thank our volunteers. RSVP of St. Johns County just honored its outstanding volunteers including Ponte Vedra resident Rick Lombardo. He volunteers at Otis Mason Elementary in St. Augustine throughout the year and also works at their summer reading program.

As for the schools, Ocean Palms Elementary is undertaking a huge remodel on its media center to become a STEAM center. The school's PTO has provided a lot of the funding to buy items like modular and adaptable tables, special couches and a dedicated area for the youngest students which will have fun rugs and manipulatives and be very interactive. This new STEAM lab/media center will be open in time for next school year.

Landrum is also doing some remodeling — science classrooms are being renovated to include some new science labs. Also at Landrum, I'd like to highlight that the school welcomed one of its largest classes of seventh graders into the National Junior Honor Society: 105 students.

Q: Are there any students you'd like to highlight?

A: Nease had a student, junior Lizzi Stevens, recognized by U.S. Rep. John Rutherford. She won Best in Show at the Ponte Vedra Public Education Foundation's (PVPEF) recent art show and her artwork will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol.

Thirty students from Palm Valley Academy formed 12 teams and recently attended the Computer Science Competition at the University of North Florida. They showcased their recent code.org work.

Finally, several District 4 students were recognized with Crimestoppers Awards at the last school board meeting: Yanelisse Rivie from PVPV/Rawlings, Taylor Foote from Palm Valley Academy and Daniel May and AnnMarie Williams from Nease. These awards are the result of a partnership between the State Attorney's Office, the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and the St. Johns County School District to raise awareness and ensure the safety of all students in secure learning environments.

Q: What are the teachers doing when school is out?

A: Many of our teachers are starting professional development in the month of June. So many of them do this on their own time and often at their own expense. They are already preparing for the next school year.

I'd also like to highlight Tricia Ingle, a second grade teacher at Valley Ridge Academy, who was recently recognized with the Investing in Kids (INK!) Make Your Mark award.

I think it's so fun to celebrate our kids' and teachers' gifts and talents.

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.

FYI Contact Numbers

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

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, bcc1johns@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0301
District 2: Jeb Smith, bcc2jsmith@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0302
District 3: Paul Waldron, bcc3pwaldron@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0303
District 4: Jeremiah Blocker,

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

St. Johns County School Board

(www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)
District 4: Kelly Barrera, kelly.barrera@stjohns.k12.fl.us, (904) 547-7510

State of Florida Elected Officials

Governor Ron DeSantis, (850) 488-7146

State House District 17: Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov, (904) 823-2300

State Senate District 7: Senator Travis Hutson, (386) 446-7610

Federal Elected Officials

U.S. Congress District 4: Representative John Rutherford, (202) 225-2501

U.S. Senate:
Senator Marco Rubio, (202) 224-3041
Senator Rick Scott, (202) 224-5274



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with Jeremiah Blocker, St. Johns County Commissioner (District 4)

Q: Can you give us an update on your new office hours in Ponte Vedra Beach?

A: The first day of office hours will be tomorrow, May 17. I am booked for 30-minute appointments all day at the library. We crafted these office hours to provide a convenient opportunity for citizens to meet with me. Citizens will receive the same services as if they went to St. Augustine. We plan to continue and improve the office hours with a goal of one day per month and eventually two days per month.

Q: Do you have a date for the June office hours?

A: The June date is still to be determined. Citizens can call my office or follow on social media for the announcement of the date and then call in to make an appointment.

Q: What can you tell us about the Town Hall held in mid-May in Nocatee?

A: This was very successful and well attended. We covered the state of the county with guest speakers including the sheriff and the county administrator. It served a dual purpose: to get residents in a room to be able to directly address each county office and ask their questions as well as allow the various offices to learn what residents' concerns are. There were panel presentations and then time for questions from the audience.

Q: Do you plan to host any more of these?

A: Yes, we plan to have one in Ponte Vedra later in the summer and then one in Palencia in the fall. Our goal is to rotate these around and have them a few times a year.

We also will have a separate Town Hall in the summer in Ponte Vedra Beach on beach renourishment. Unlike the other Town Halls, which are very general, this will be specifically to discuss the beaches and inform the public as to where we are with renourishment. Guests will include county staff as well as engineers and the date is to be announced.

My goal with all of these events, such as the office hours and the Town Halls, is to be more accessible to the public so I can learn what their concerns are. Even if there are disagreements, it is important for everyone to be on the same page as far as information is concerned.

Q: Can you give us some insight into your recent appointment as executive director of the Association of Service Dog Providers for Military Veterans and how you plan to fit this into your already busy schedule?

A: The Association of Service Dog Providers for Military Veterans is a group out of Washington, DC that wanted a military veteran to help them with their legislative priorities. I'll be taking a leave of absence from my law firm (not handling any litigation) to take on this new position. It's an opportunity for me to help this organization continue to improve and move to the next level and I'm excited about it. It will actually give me more time to be a county commissioner.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc4jblocker@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 679-2620.



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QA with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: Can you give us some background on the bilingual ballot language requirements?

A: Last year, we were involved in a lawsuit with 32 other counties in Florida regarding voters from Puerto Rico who evacuated to Florida as a result of Hurricane Maria. They are U.S. Citizens, educated in American schools, but English is not their primary language. The 32 counties were required to provide Spanish sample ballots for the Nov. 6, 2018 General Election in all forms we make them available, such as on our website, mailed, or advertised and at all voting locations.

We also were required to provide additional measures such as hiring additional bilingual poll workers, and be able to provide bilingual assistance as needed. We already had 15 bilingual poll workers, but were able to hire additional and had a total of 38 bilingual workers who worked during early voting and at the polls on election day. Two of our 11 full time staff members are bilingual and available to provide Spanish language assistance anytime.

Now, the judge has moved forward and ordered ballots and all voting materials to be in English and in Spanish for the March 17, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary Election.

Also, in a policy decision, Gov. DeSantis has directed that all Florida counties must provide ballots and voting materials in English and in Spanish for all future elections. Presently, there are 14 counties with at least 5 percent of their voting age population identified as Spanish speaking that do this; now all counties will be required to comply, regardless of the percentage of their population that is Spanish speaking.

Q: So what exactly will you have to do to comply?

A: Pretty much all materials in the Elections Office will have to be in English

and in Spanish, to include ballots, absentee envelopes, provisional ballot envelopes and secrecy sleeves, voter information cards, voter registration applications, voting instructions, voter information guides and pamphlets, Notification of Election, polling place changes and signage and all information available on the Supervisor of Elections' website. We will need to provide a toll-free Spanish-language hotline with at least one bilingual employee for the purpose of translating or otherwise assisting voters.

Basically, all notifications, announcements and informational materials about all stages of the electoral process, including materials concerning the opportunity to register, voter registration deadlines, times, places and subject matters of the elections, the absentee and early voting processes, offices up for election, candidates who have qualified and local issues or referenda and announcements applicable to elections in the county will need to be available in English and in Spanish.

Q: What will this all cost?

A: We received the court order on May 13 and I have ordered staff to determine the cost to replace everything in the office, including our precinct signs and supplies for the polls. My budget is due to the Board of County Commissioners on May 31. I present my office's budget in person to the board on June 18. There will definitely be a cost to the taxpayers to comply and we are working to determine what it is. We are under a federal judicial order and a Secretary of State directive in addition to the Florida policy Administrative Rule from the governor. There are no additional funds coming from the state to comply with this order.

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.

Answers to puzzles on page 12

Answers to our Puzzles

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

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

CRYPTO FUN

Refer to the code to reveal the answer!

Answers: A. dairy B. food C. milk D. cow

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

ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

MarketInsight



Where there's a will, there's a fight!

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

One of the most lurid and obscene documents you will ever read is the transcript of the trial in the New York lawsuit over the estate of J. Seward Johnson. Johnson was one of the sons of one of the founders of Johnson & Johnson, the company that makes Band-Aids and baby powder. At the age of 76, he divorced his second wife and married the upstairs maid. Basia Piasecka was 34 when she became the new Mrs. Johnson. Twelve years later, in 1983, her husband died and left his entire fortune of between \$400 million – \$500 million to the Polish immigrant who had arrived in New York with \$200, setting off what one writer called “the largest, costliest, ugliest, most spectacular and most conspicuous” probate battle in American history. At the time, Seward Johnson’s estate was the largest ever to be probated in the State of New York.

The case finally went to trial four years later, in 1987. The four-month court battle cost more than \$24 million in legal fees. Seventy-five witnesses produced 15,000 pages of testimony, much of which reflected poorly on the Johnson family, exposing tawdry details of incest, infidelity, cuckoldry, drug abuse, and attempted murder. The trial pitted the Johnson children, each of whom had received a trust that should have been worth \$110 million, and an oceanographic institute versus the widow Johnson. The children accused her of treating her deceased husband like a dog, even keeping him on a leash at times, and bullying him into changing his will just two weeks before his demise. Basia Piasecka Johnson’s lawyers portrayed her as a loving helpmate who cared for and nursed Johnson during his decline.

In the end, the case was settled. Basia agreed to pay the children’s legal fees

and give them almost \$50 million. The oceanographic institute, Harbor Branch, got \$20 million and Basia Johnson, the former maid, kept the rest, about \$340 million, making her the 149th wealthiest person in the world. She turned the mansion into a golf course and moved back to Europe to collect art.

The biggest loser in the case was Basia Johnson’s attorney, Nina Zagat. Zagat was a friend of Basia’s and wrote the will that made her executor and trustee of the trust. Nina was to be paid \$9 million as executor and then \$900,000 a year as a trustee for as long as Basia lived. The Johnson children accused her of helping Basia to bully her husband into signing the will. The court cut her executor fees to \$1.8 million and removed her as a trustee. Most of the jurors sided with the children and one indicated that Zagat’s testimony “did most of the damage to Mrs. Johnson’s case.” Zagat and her husband went on to start the Zagat Restaurant guide. They eventually sold it to Google for \$151 million.

It is amazing how frequently estate fights destroy families. They are rarely about money, even the obscene amount of money accumulated by J. Seward Johnson. The fights are about hurt feelings and the type of family squabbles that often ruin Thanksgiving dinners. Outwardly happy families descend into chaos and fight over the most and least consequential of things, shouting about principle while lawyers get rich. There is no solution. It is a tale as old as Cain and Abel.

Scott A. Grant is President of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.

Tools are great for Father’s Day - And for Investors

By Karsten Jacobson
mail@floridanewsline.com

If you’re a dad, you may well be pleased to unwrap some tools as Father’s Day gifts. Of course, it might be a stereotype that all men are handy at repairs; women certainly can be every bit as good when it comes to building and fixing things. In fact, the construction process is valuable for anyone to learn — and the same skills that go into creating and mending physical objects also can be applied to financial projects — such as working toward a comfortable retirement. Here are a few of those skills:

- **Diagnosing the challenge:** A good craftsman knows that the first step toward accomplishing any outcome is to assess the challenge. So, for example, if you want to build some bookshelves right into the wall, you’ll need to locate the wall studs, determine if you have adequate space for the shelving you want and allow room for future expansion. Similarly, if you want to retire at a certain age, you need to consider the key variables: your current and future income (How much can you count on from your retirement plans?), where you’ll live (Will you downsize or relocate? Will you rent or own a house or condominium?) And what you’ll do as a retiree (Will you travel extensively or stick close to home? Will you do some type of work for pay or pursue your hobbies and volunteer?).
- **Assembling the right tools and materials:** To put together your bookshelf, you will need the right tools — saw, hammer, drill, sander and so on — and the right building materials — plywood, nails, screws, glue, brackets, moldings and so on. And to work toward a comfortable retirement, you’ll also need the right tools — in the form of

a long-term financial strategy, based on your specific retirement goals, risk tolerance and time horizon — along with the appropriate materials — the mix of investments you use to carry out that strategy. These investments include those you’ve placed in your IRA, your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan, and those held outside your formal retirement accounts. Ideally, you want a diversified mix of investments capable of providing growth potential over time, within the context of your individual risk tolerance.

- **Review your work:** Once you’ve finished your bookshelf, you occasionally may need to make some minor adjustments or repairs in response to slippage, cracks or other issues that can develop over time. As an investor, you also may need to tweak your financial strategy periodically and adjust your investment mix — not necessarily because something is broken, but to accommodate changes in your life, such as a new job, new family situation and new goals. Furthermore, over time, your risk tolerance may change, and this needs to be reflected in your array of investments. Consequently, conducting an annual portfolio review with your financial professional should be a priority.

Tools are a big deal on Father’s Day. But the construction-related tasks they represent, physically and symbolically, go beyond any one holiday and can be used by anyone interested in working toward a solid financial future.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by local Edward Jones Financial Advisor, Karsten Jacobson. Email Karsten.Jacobson@edwardjones.com for more information.



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Real Estate Guide

Northeast Florida average home sales price largest since June 2018

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

April was a busy month for real estate activity in Northeast Florida, with 2,889 homes being sold. This figure is a 6.5 percent uptick from a year ago, and the largest number of monthly sales since August 2018. There were also

3,171 pending sales (those on which a contract has been written but did not close). The pending sales activity was a 5.8 percent increase from a year ago.

The median sales price of \$225,000 was

up 2.3 percent from a year ago, but was down from \$229,900 in March. The average sales price was significantly higher at \$276,712, the largest average sales price since \$280,880 in June 2018.

Homes sold quickly in April, with 67 days on market being the average.

A reduced inventory continues to be a major factor in the market, with only 3.6 month's supply on hand.

"Sellers are finding that their properties are selling very quickly and pricing is robust," said 2019 NEFAR President Jeanne Denton-Scheck. "In April, 14.3 percent of homes sold by NEFAR member Realtors were for more than the original list price."

Visit www.nefar.com to view the April 2016 housing market reports for Northeast Florida, made available from the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors. As all St. Johns County and Nassau Realtors are not participants of the NEFMLS, reports provided do not represent the full extent of Realtor sales in those counties.

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with Eddie Creamer, St. Johns County Property Appraiser

Q: Can you give us some background into the homestead exemption audit?

A: Right now, we have 71,000 homesteaded properties in St. Johns County and some are very old. They have never been audited. If something happens that could affect homestead exemption (such as death, divorce, or remarriage) within the state of Florida, we have a good system to discover it. But it's not so far out of state properties. Recall that a requirement of homestead exemption in Florida is that a person can have no other homesteaded properties anywhere.

Q: How will the audit be conducted?

A: We will contract with a third party firm, Exemption Project, which will check against national databases to make sure our homestead here is still valid. The firm will work under my supervision and it's key to understand that any final decisions are mine. My office will investigate and determine if the St. Johns County property has improperly claimed homestead exemption.

Q: How will the third party firm be compensated?

A: There is no upfront cost. Exemption Project is only paid if they find an improperly homesteaded property. If I agree, then we lien the property. When back taxes, penalties and interest are paid, the Exemption Project is paid 18 percent of that. I've presented this to all the taxing authorities in the county and received their approval, since a portion of any taxes collected will be paid to the firm.

Q: What are the penalties for improper homestead exemption?

A: The penalties are severe and include repayment of all back taxes, a 50 percent penalty and 15 percent interest annually. I urge readers to contact me if they are unsure of their individual situation and would like to discuss it.

Q: When will the audit begin and how long will it take?

A: We will begin in late summer and it will be an ongoing process. The initial audit should take approximately 90 – 120 days. Checks will continue to be run as national databases are updated.

Q: What are the benefits to hiring this firm and performing the audit?

A: I selected Exemption Project because they are very qualified and can identify rentals and short term rentals. They can also help us identify unclaimed exemptions, which is exciting for us. They can reverse their search to identify people who are not getting homestead exemption but should be. For the county, the audit is beneficial because not only will we collect back taxes, but it will put value back on the tax rolls in the form of any incorrect exemptions as well as any portability.

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

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

Life

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Get to Know . . .

Maribeth Wood

By Angela Higginbotham
angela@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Maribeth Wood
Maribeth Wood

Maribeth Wood was born in Richmond, Va., and moved to Florida in 2001. She earned her degree from the University of North Florida in Elementary Education. After a brief move to England, Wood decided to gain additional education in Library Information Science. She earned her masters in 2013 and began her journey as a librarian in Ocala. She later moved back to the Jacksonville area and served at the Bartram Trail Branch Library before continuing her career with the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library as the library's reference librarian one year ago.

Wood is passionate about outreach and community involvement. Many new programs and classes for both adults and children are a credit to Wood's hard work in Ponte Vedra. Over the past year, Wood has introduced "Make and Take" crafting events and "Books and Bites" events combining reading, culture and food. She's also coordinated special speaker events at the library. Wood was responsible for writing the winning grant that allowed the St. Johns County Library System to bring author Lisa Wingate to St. Augustine for a popular author visit and culminating event for the St. Johns Reads program. She was recently recognized at the Library System's Staff Development Day for "Making a great impact" in the Library System over the past year.

In May, she graduated from the St.

Get to Know . . .

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

Johns County Leadership Academy, an eight-week course for 10 St. Johns County employees selected by their department head and presented by County Administrator Michael Wanchick.

1. What do you enjoy most about the Ponte Vedra area regarding your work at the library there?

I love how receptive everyone has been. The response has been overwhelming to the cooking classes and all the programs. It really validates that there is a need and an interest.

2. What are some more of the programs or events you've started at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library?

We have so much going on and have so many summer programs for adults and children. Cooking classes, a wildlife series for all ages and the St. Johns Riverkeeper will be out. The Florida Department of Protection will be doing a class for us. We have a shark program coming. Plant classes, for people interested in planting the right plants in the right place. Cooking classes, watercolor classes and book clubs. There's so many choices coming and there really

is something for everyone. I encourage residents to check out the website for a list of what's going on and when .

3. What are your goals career wise?

My dream is to be a branch manager one day. I love what I do and just want to do it better and more — and a manager is the goal.

4. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I love to crochet and do crafts. I read a lot, of course. Harry Potter is my favorite, but I love all fantasy and historical fiction. I do love audio books, so that I can do other things while listening. I love to travel with my boyfriend, Ray. We love National Parks.

5. What is something most people don't know about you?

I'm actually an introvert. I kind of turn myself on for work and then when I go home, I flip the switch back off.

Nease NJROTC cont. from pg. 1

Among Nease's noteworthy achievements this past year: first place championships at McFarland Drill Meet, Mandarin Drill Meet, Terry Parker Drill Meet, Area-12 Drill Championship, Middleburg Pentathlon and Lee Ultimate Challenge; qualifying for both Drill and Orienteering national championships; graduating six seniors with Service Academy ap-

pointments or ROTC Scholarships; and the completion of more than 7,000 hours of community service.

"We're a cadet run unit — and these cadets like to stay active," said Command Master Chief Petty Officer Duane Spears, one of the three naval science instructors.

Nease was the number one program in Area-12 from 2012-2016 and again in

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2018. Nease is currently the No. 5 ranked program in the nation out of more than 600 schools.

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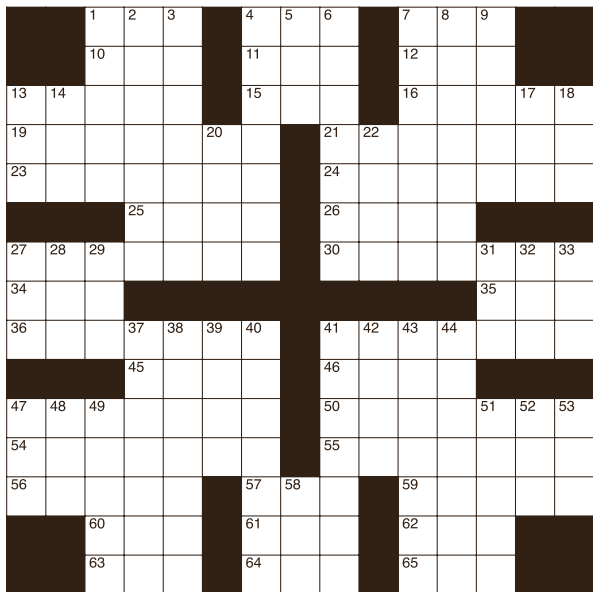
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Puzzles

Answers to puzzles on page 8
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Mathematical term (abbr.)
- 4. Seaport (abbr.)
- 7. "Unforgettable" singer
- 10. The GOAT
- 11. Used to harvest agave cactus
- 12. Luke's mentor ___Wan
- 13. Muses
- 15. IBM operating system
- 16. Hungarian village
- 19. Popular conversation topic
- 21. N. Atlantic island
- 23. Fail to discern correctly
- 24. The President has one
- 25. Irish Gaelic language
- 26. Gasteyer and Ivanovic are two
- 27. Garnished
- 30. National capital
- 34. Basics
- 35. Initial public offering

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Belongs to the daughter of Chaos
- 2. Wardrobe
- 3. Derek and Jeff are two
- 4. Disfigured
- 5. Hawaiian dish
- 6. What a hack drives
- 7. Horse gear
- 8. Do away with
- 9. Narrow straits between Sinai and Arabian peninsulas
- 13. Corrie
- 14. Hawaiian flower necklace
- 17. Midway between northeast and east
- 18. Insecticide
- 20. Comfort
- 22. Town in Galilee
- 27. Informal greeting
- 28. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 29. Used to check the heart
- 31. Western India island
- 32. Credit card term
- 33. Female deer
- 37. British football team
- 38. Persian jurisdiction
- 39. Freshwater mussel genus
- 40. Opposite of happiness
- 41. Ban on trade
- 42. Bitterly regrets
- 43. Assented
- 44. Well-proportioned
- 47. Part of (abbr.)
- 48. Indigenous people of Thailand
- 49. A man of your stature (abbr.)
- 51. Advantageous
- 52. Female sibling
- 53. Electronic countermeasures
- 58. Swiss river



Solve the code to discover words related to dairy.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 15 = O)

A. 6 10 13 19 8
Clue: Type of food or beverage

B. 2 1 17 16
Clue: Sustenance

C. 24 13 25 14
Clue: Healthy beverage

D. 4 15 26
Clue: Dairy animal

WORK SAFETY WORD SEARCH

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WORDS

- ACCESS
- APPROVED
- AUDIT
- AUTHORIZED
- CAUTION
- COMPENSATION
- COMPETENT
- COMPLIANCE
- CORRECTIVE
- DANGEROUS
- DUE DILIGENCE
- EMPLOYEE
- ERGONOMICS
- EXPERT
- HAZARD
- HAZMAT
- HYGIENE
- INSPECTION
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Teacher Appreciation Week celebrated at Ocean Palms

Ocean Palms's Elementary kicked off Teacher Appreciation week with lights, cameras, and action! This Hollywood-themed event was the talk of the town as paparazzi followed teachers on the red carpet going into school on May 6. Students held posters, microphones and cardboard cameras to get into character. The week was filled with fun as teachers won all kinds of gift baskets including facials, movie tickets and even car detailing (right in the school parking lot) in addition to catered VIP events throughout the week.



Photo courtesy Pamela Riley



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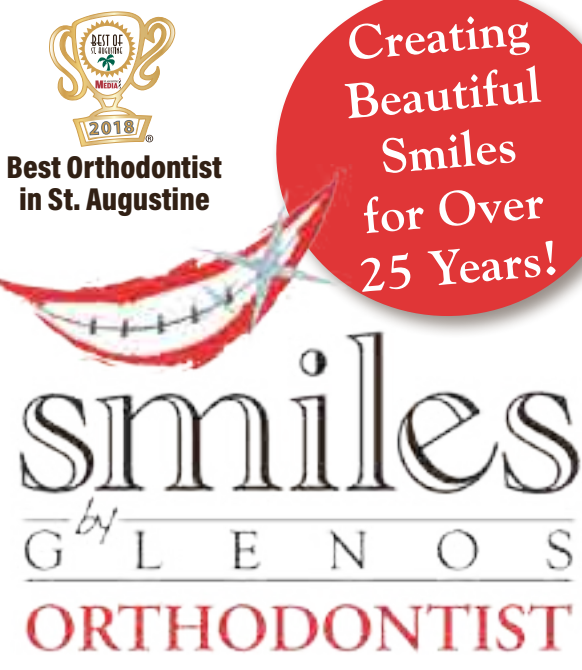


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Local swimmers compete at Florida's All Star Meet

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Three local athletes from Planet Swim Aquatics recently competed at Florida Swimming's All Star Meet in Fort Pierce. Annie Wohlgemuth, Lucas Mijares, and Mary Agnes Smith qualified for the meet by placing in the top sixth at their events in the Florida Age Group Championship Meet held in Orlando in February. These young athletes were challenged by the high level of competition and they brought home top 10 finishes in 14 events.

Additionally, Planet Swim Aquatics Coach Ailton Temotio Jr. was selected by his peers and invited to serve as coach of the 13 – 14 year old girls at the meet.

"I wanted our swimmers to have fun at this meet," Temotio said. "This is a once-a-year opportunity to swim with the best-of-the-best in Florida and I was so pleased with their swims. These athletes train hard and we saw those results in the pool."

Highlights of the weekend include:

Wohlgemuth's first place finish in the 200 Medley Relay; second place finish in the



Photo courtesy Planet Swim Aquatics
Coach Ailton Temotio Jr. with Planet Swim athletes Annie Wohlgemuth, Lucas Mijares, and Mary Agnes Smith.

Mixed 200 Medley Relay; fifth place finish in the 200 Backstroke; sixth place finish in the 100 Backstroke and seventh place finish in the 100 Butterfly.

Smith's second place finish in the 100 Butterfly; fourth place finish in the 50 Butterfly; sixth place finish in the 500 Freestyle; and eighth place finish in the 100 Freestyle and 100 IM.

Mijares placed 10th in the 100 Breaststroke and 10th in the Mixed 200 Medley Relay.

Visit www.planetswimaquatics.com for more information about Planet Swim Aquatics in Ponte Vedra Beach.



Photo courtesy Nocatee

Nocatee Farmers Market celebrates all things spring

There was no shortage of family fun activities at the Nocatee Farmers Market: Spring Fling on Saturday, April 20, including live music from The Firewater Tent Revival, a petting zoo, crafts, bounce houses, and shopping from more than 70 local vendors. Plus, the Easter Bunny made a special appearance for photos.

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