

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

JUNE 2024 Volume 11 Issue 6

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

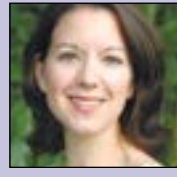
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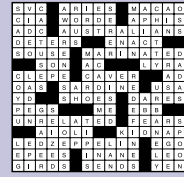
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Photo courtesy Bob Wiltfong

Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra president, Josh Hull; MESH's chair (and club member) Tony Kazlauskas; and the Ponte Vedra Rotary Foundation president, Bob Wiltfong.

Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra helps homeless students at Valley Ridge Academy

On May 7, the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra presented a \$10,000 donation check to Mission to End Student Homelessness (MESH). MESH, in turn, will donate \$6,000 of this donation to Valley Ridge Academy to help with the school's growing expense of financing the needs of homeless students. According to Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra S.O.S. co-chair, Denny Baldwin: "Ponte Vedra Rotary recognized that poverty — and

Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra cont. on pg. 9

Teeing up: Longtime golf club and range remains focused on bringing golf to everyone

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

When Chris Hord looks over the 31 ½ acres of his family's business at the Palm Valley Golf Club and Practice Range, he sees childhood memories everywhere.

There is the tree on the property that was once home to his very own fort. There is the parking lot where he took a spill off his bicycle, earning him a bump on his forehead that he can still feel today. There is the land that he spent countless hours mowing, earning \$2 an hour for special projects.

Go a little deeper and the memories hit closer to the heart like those of his late father Jack Hord teaching him to play golf and the many lessons learned from his parents on the value of hard work and dedication to the community. Jack, along with his wife Sue Hord, built and designed the golf course which opened in 1990. The driving range opened in 1989.

It was and still is a labor of love for the family.

"The mission was to make golf affordable and open to everyone," said Chris Hord. "My dad's dream in building this facility was to have a place where



Photos courtesy Chris Hord

Palm Valley Golf Club and Practice Range looking down the 1st tee hole.

families could enjoy the game of golf together."

The facility, located in Nocatee, includes a nine-hole golf course, grass, and mat practice tees and a 10,000 square foot putting green. A year ago, Hord introduced the Toptracer Range, which uses the same technology as Topgolf facilities. "But at half the price," said Hord,

adding that it offers 20 different virtual courses to play and kids' games. "And it is not just entertainment; it actually has some really good golf metrics."

Hord said his father grew up in Coral Springs loving golf and played for Miami Dade College; however, his parents wanted him to get a "real" career, so he got his master's degree in psychology. He worked as a psychologist for the state of Florida, but he also pursued his PGA Class A Teaching Pro certification.

Prior to opening Palm Valley Golf Club and Practice Range, Hord said his parents purchased a rundown range off Beach Boulevard and brought it back to life. Around the same time, they also found property for sale off Palm Valley Road, formerly an old rodeo, and bought it, creating Palm Valley Golf Club and Practice Range. Jack Hord rented a bulldozer and started shaping



The late Jack Hord on his tractor designing the Palm Valley Golf Club and Practice Range golf course.

Palm Valley Golf Club cont. on pg. 2



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Palm Valley Golf Club cont. from pg. 1

the golf course with no prior experience. Chris Hord said they put in the irrigation themselves and turned an old horse feed building into a pro shop.

“My mom was really the heart and soul of finances,” he said. “My dad was more of the superintendent, and he loved giving lessons the most. He was an incredible instructor.”

Hord said his dad passed away in 2014. At that time, Hord became more involved and ultimately took on a full-time role as the vice president of the facility, wanting to preserve what his parents had built and nurtured. The family never considered selling for this very reason, even as the Nocatee development took shape all around them and offers were made.

Hord’s mother, who often mowed, tended to the flowerbeds, and took on any chore, was diagnosed with in-



Palm Valley Golf Club and Practice Range aerial view, circa 1992.

curable metastatic stage 4 lung cancer in 2017. As a result, she has slowed down, but remains committed to the success of the business and is doing fine health wise, Hord said.

Today Hord is focused on the golf industry and its future and on giving a facelift to the course. Hord is also interested in making the facility more sustainable by possibly incorporating crops and livestock. Maintenance of the golf course keeps Hord and his staff busy every day as they focus on being environmentally friendly and efficient. He said he and his father always considered themselves to be “grass farmers.”

“In season, it is probably 100 to 120 manhours to do the basic maintenance, not including any projects like aerification,” he said.

Kimberly Lawlor, general manager and Director of Golf, said she recognizes the beauty of the place.

“You are out in the middle of nature. There really isn’t another place quite like this,” she said. “It is not a country club environment.”

Lawlor, who played golf at Jacksonville University and turned pro in 1995, likes giving lessons to beginners the most — at any age. The facility has the most First Tee classes of any golf course in North Florida.

“It is very rewarding to watch someone implement what you told them. When they make that connection, you have succeeded,” she said.

Guest Column

The Homeless Coalition of St Johns County – Time to Grow

By Debi Redding, Director

The Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County is a beacon of hope for families facing homelessness. The coalition provides a lifeline of support that includes low-income affordable permanent housing along with the much-needed wrap-around services to create resiliency and self-sufficiency. With a dedicated focus on empowering unhoused families to rebuild their lives, the coalition’s comprehensive programs and services play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty. Parents, with minor children living in the household, that are experiencing homelessness often face unique challenges that can make it difficult to secure stable housing and employment. The Homeless Coalition recognizes the specific needs of these populations and offers tailored assistance to address their individual circumstances and housing barriers. Case managers create a plan consisting of goal setting, life skills training, financial education, and child-care, to personally address each family’s needs.

One of the key initiatives of the Homeless Coalition is its commitment to helping our families secure meaningful employment. Through partnerships with local businesses and staffing agencies, the coalition coordinates job placement services, skills training programs, and resume-building workshops to help individuals find sustainable work. By empowering our families to become financially independent, the coalition aims to create a pathway to stability and success

for these families. The Homeless Coalition recently began reporting timely rent payments to all three credit bureaus to increase credit scores and begin preparing families for home ownership.

In response to the ever-growing family homeless population, the Homeless Coalition has launched the 2024 Expansion Campaign to expand needed low-income affordable housing units and supportive services. The campaign aims to raise \$5.6 million to add 16 new cottages and an onsite Children’s Education Center to further strengthen the foundation for families to flourish. These new facilities will not only provide much-needed housing for unhoused families, but will also develop a supportive community in which our children can thrive and build a future. To make this vision a reality, the Homeless Coalition is calling on the community to support the 2024 Expansion Campaign.

We need your help to raise the funds needed to access this campaign’s full impact and potential reach. With the community’s help, the coalition can continue to work towards ending family homelessness in St Johns County. Please help us reach our \$5.6 million goal by donating now. You may donate online at <https://homelesscoalitionstjohns.com/donate/>

If you would like a tour of our five-acre campus and learn more about the services the Homeless Coalition provides, contact us at (904) 819-0059.



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Ponte Vedra NewsLine community newspaper is a free monthly publication delivered to all addresses in Zip Codes 32081 and 32082. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2024.



BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Breed:
King Charles Cavalier Spaniel

Favorite Activity:
Doing tricks and catching the football

Favorite Treat:
Ice Cream

Favorite Friend:
a Golden down the street

How did your BFF get her name:
From her British cavalier background



Meet Darcy!

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

FLAG DAY
JUNE 14

Commemorating the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14, 1777 by resolution of the Second Continental Congress.

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Answers Puzzles PG 10

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June

Community Calendar What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

Council on Aging offers interest groups at the COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee. Meetings are free and self-guided except for the Caregiver's Support Group. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required; email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or call (904) 819-3234. Tuesday clubs include: Widows and Widowers social group, second and fourth Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Wednesday groups include: Mah Jongg Meet-up, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Palm Valley Market is held inside the Palm Valley Community Center at 148 Canal Road, every Tuesday from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more. Visit the Palm Valley Market Facebook page for more information.

1st: Wellness events at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in June from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Hosted by Mind Body Social, all events are free and open to the community. Events include wellness classes such as yoga and barre, all held on the lawn in front of ABC Liquors. Visit <https://mbs.events/sv/> for more information and to register.

2nd: "Coming Home To Music" will be presented by Singers by the Sea at Palms Presbyterian Church, 3410 3rd Street South in Jacksonville Beach on June 2 at 2:30 p.m. The group of 40 singers performs throughout the year at senior centers, retirement communities and churches in Jacksonville and the Beaches area. The concert is free and all are welcome. There is a reception immediately following the program. Visit www.singersbythesea.org for more information.

4th: Essential Tremor support group will meet Tuesday, June 4 at 11 a.m. at Baptist HealthPlace at Nocatee, 400 Colonnade Drive, Suite 130. The program will feature (by Zoom from Lithuania) Mantas Venslauskas, co-founder and CEO of Vilimed Company, the inventor of ET therapy device "Vilim Ball." RSVP to Jan Kary at jkary@verizon.net or (202) 438-6750.

4th: Vicar's Landing monthly Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, June 4 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The sale includes framed art, 14k gold, sterling silver, costume and designer jewelry, antique and household furnishings plus many decorative knick-knack items. The public is welcome. Checks or cash only please. The Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives the proceeds. Call Janet Nicosia at (904) 607-2078 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610 for more information.

5th: Coastal Friends will host its monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., on June 5 from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The new slate of officers will be announced at the installation ceremony. The cost of the luncheon is \$25 and reservations must be made in advance by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible as space is limited.

6th: Bingo will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Thursdays from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. for four weeks beginning Thursday, June 6. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

7th: Book Lovers Book Club will discuss "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on June 7 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. The group is open to all. Visit sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/ for more information.

8th: NE Florida Sisters in Crime will meet on June 8 at 11:15 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library. June speaker and Army veteran Tonya Oxendine will present "Words of a Woman Warrior." Contact floridasistersincrime@gmail.com for more information.

8th: The GTM Research Reserve will host Family Seining on June 8 from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. (the second Saturday of each month) for a guided family seining activity. Pull a seine net through Guana Lake, collecting species

of fish, crabs, and other habitats. Learn about the animals and their roles. All necessary gear, including waders and boots will be provided. Registration required online at <https://gtmnr.org/>

11th: Purely Social Happy Hour hosted by Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will be held on June 11 at 5:30 p.m. at Palm Valley Outdoors Bar and Grill, 377 South Roscoe Blvd. This is an informal gathering for women to get to know each other. Attendees will order off of the menu for their drinks and food. Visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more information.

11th: Adult Coloring Club will meet at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on June 11 from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. No RSVP is required; bring a snack or drink for yourself or to share. Visit sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/ for more information.

12th: Informed Eating for Optimal Health and Longevity, a free presentation by Jennifer Wickliffe, MPH, CPH on how healthy eating can assist in brain health will be held at COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee on June 12 from 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Contact pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling (904) 814-9407 for more information.

13th: Flag Day will be celebrated when the National Guard visits THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center on Thursday, June 13 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Light refreshments will be served and attendees are invited to wear red, white, and blue. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

14th: Food Truck Friday will be held on June 14 and June 28 from 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. This event is open to the public.

15th: The Nocatee Farmers Market will be held on Saturday, June 15 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

19th: Genealogy Group will meet at the OA Center at UF Health Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave. Ste. 205 on the third Wednesday of each month (this month, June 19) from 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. A genealogy expert will guide attendees in discovering their ancestors. This month, the group will discuss researching military records including Fold3. Register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling (904) 814-9407.

19th: "Beaches Area Dine For A Cause," a summer fundraiser organized by The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club kicks off on June 19 from 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. at Two Dudes Seafood. Restaurants will donate 20 percent of the evening's proceeds to the club, which awards more than \$50,000 each year to local charities. If your restaurant would like to participate, contact Parker Alter at (804) 814-8259. Visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for an updated list of participating restaurants.

20th: St. Johns County Republican Party District 4 monthly meeting will be held on the third Thursday of each month (this month, June 20) at 6:15 p.m. at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd. Visit stjohns.gop for more information.

27th: Free Tech Help with David will be held on Thursday, June 27 from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Drop in for tech assistance with your Android, Apple, and Reader devices; no RSVPs required. Visit sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/ for more information.

27th: Check your blood pressure with Nurse Fran at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center on Thursday, June 27 from 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. There is no charge for this event. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.



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

Q: Do you have any administrative news to share in District 4?

A: We are saying goodbye at the end of this school year to Lisa Kunze, longtime principal at Nease. While it is never easy to lose our principals who have so successfully led our schools, we are excited to announce that Gina Fonseca will be coming to Nease. Both have been fixtures in the St. Johns County School District for a number of years. Lisa Kunze started as an AP at Nease, then went on to help open Ponte Vedra High School as AP, then was promoted to principal at Switzerland Point Middle School before returning home to Nease as principal. We wish her all the best. Gina Fonseca began as an AP at Ponte Vedra High School, then went to the district office in charge of secondary curriculum and instruction, then became principal at Freedom Crossing Academy. We are very fortunate to get her back to District 4 and we know that she will be an excellent leader at Nease.

Q: Will school facilities be open to the public again this summer?

A: Yes. All eight of our high schools, including Ponte Vedra High School, will be open Wednesday evenings in June and in July (through July 24) from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. to promote community health and wellness. Access will be allowed to the track, tennis courts, and outdoor basketball courts only.

Q: Do you have the results of the state's Progress Monitoring Tests yet?

A: While we are still waiting for the

final results of the state's Progress Monitoring Tests, initial results seem very positive. We are pleased to be one of only two school districts in the state to be "A" rated since 2010.

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

A: Certificates of Excellence in Financial Reporting were received by the district's accounting department for the school district's annual Comprehensive Financial Report. We have received these awards each of the seven years since we began participating in the program in fiscal year 2015 – 16. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) and the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) issued the certificates of excellence.

Also, the school district earned "Best Public Dashboard" in the EnergyCAP 2023 Eco Champion Awards. On this dashboard on our website, interested parties can look at energy cost summaries by school and water cost summaries by school. By monitoring this, district staff is able to detect water leaks, for example. Since the inception of our energy conservation program in 2008, we've had a cost avoidance through March 2024 of \$75.5 million. (That is equivalent to 1,425 average teacher salaries of \$53,000.)

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.



with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: The Aug. 20 Primary Election is fast approaching. What is up next for the Elections Office?

A: The focus in June is Candidate Qualifying. Candidate qualifying will take place from noon, June 10, to noon, June 14. Under Florida Statute, qualifying papers began being accepted May 28, 2024.

Q: Have any offices qualified already?

A: Yes. The first qualifying period in 2024 was open from April 22 to April 26 for candidates for Judicial, State Attorney, Public Defender, U.S. Senator, and U.S. Representative offices to file with the Florida Division of Elections. These candidates do not file with the Supervisor of Elections. Information for these candidates can be found on the Florida Division of Elections website.

Q: What offices qualify with the St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Office during the June qualifying period?

A: The Elections Office will be qualifying candidates for all county offices, special districts, municipalities and community development districts.

The local offices scheduled for election include Sheriff, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, Clerk of Courts, Supervisor of Elections, three County Commissioners, two School Board Members, and many more.

The Florida Division of Elections in Tallahassee will be qualifying candidates for State Senator, State Representative, and Multi-Special Districts.

Q: Can voters see which candidates are qualifying?

A: Yes. As local candidates file, their information is added into our system and posted on our website. This information can be found by visiting www.votesjc.gov and selecting Candidate Information, then Candidate List and Reports.

Q: Where can voters see a complete list of the local offices up for election in 2024?

A: The list of local offices up for election in 2024 can be found on our website at www.votesjc.gov under Election Dates. Closer to the election, this page will also feature a link to a Primary Election information page that will have important dates, early voting locations, and information about voting in the Aug. 20 Primary Election.

Q: Are there any upcoming deadlines for the Aug. 20 Primary Election?

A: Yes, the last day to register to vote or change your party affiliation for the Aug. 20 Primary Election is July 22, 2024. To register to vote or update your information, visit www.votesjc.gov and hit the Register to Vote button on the home page.

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

A: Readers can email me at voakes@votesjc.gov or call me at (904) 823-2238. The Elections Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Our website, www.votesjc.gov also has a wealth of information.

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

Q. We heard you're being deployed by the Navy. Can you expand on why and how? Was it voluntary? When will you return?

A. Yes, in early December I was notified by the Navy that I was being involuntarily mobilized in support of overseas contingency operations. While I was eligible for worldwide assignment, the call was a surprise especially as I thought they were calling about an overdue travel voucher! Nonetheless, having my name called to serve overseas in uniform is an absolute honor and privilege. My orders began in late May and are scheduled to run through the end of the year.

Q. Have you notified the office? How was the response?

A. In early May, I called an all hands meeting and informed the team of my impending deployment and plans for moving forward. I wanted them to hear the official news from me first versus from others. It was definitely a shock to the office, though we have all quickly rallied around and are working through the challenge. I am really humbled at the support staff has extended and am very proud to work alongside such a dedicated group of public servants.

Q. How will this impact your office as clerk and comptroller?

A. Per Florida Statutes, I have requested

a leave of absence from the governor and have appointed a designee to fulfill my responsibilities. My senior leadership team is second to none, and they will continue managing their portfolios and divisions while our deputy clerks continue to excel and provide world-class customer service across our court and county functions. By and large for residents and stakeholders, our high-quality support will continue without fail.

Q. Any message you would like to provide to our readers?

A. Serving as your clerk and comptroller is the honor of a lifetime and, while I will be serving you in a different capacity, I want you to know that our office will continue operating at the highest levels. We will continue protecting taxpayer dollars, enhancing services across the board, and seeking opportunities to make your interactions with us easier than before. I cannot wait to rejoin the office upon my return and continue serving you in this important role. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me or our office with any questions or concerns. Thank you!

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

A. Residents can call my office at (904) 819-3601. A lot of questions can be answered by visiting our website, www.stjohnsclerk.com.



with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: Can you give a refresher on the recently passed laws concerning age requirements for golf cart operators?

A: Beginning last Oct. 1 and in effect today, a person operating a golf cart on a public road or street under the age of 18 must possess a valid driver's license or learner's permit. (In order to get a learner's permit, you must be at least 15 years old.) The idea is that the operator must have some "rules of the road" training. If the operator is 18 or older, they must possess a valid government issued identification or driver's license.

Q: Can a person with a learner's permit operate a golf cart without an adult?

A: Yes.

Q: What is your message to parents who allow underaged children to operate a golf cart if they are in an adjacent seat, or perhaps with the child on their lap?

A: This is against the law. The law says the person operating the golf cart must be at least 15 years old with a learner's permit or driver's license regardless of if there is a parent in the golf cart. We recommend that children be properly restrained for safety and so that the driver is not distracted.

Q: What is the fine for a golf cart operator who is determined to be

underage?

A: It would be a non-moving uniform traffic citation, and the fine is \$166.

Q: Where may golf carts be driven?

A: Let's talk about golf carts first, then low speed vehicles or LSVs. Golf carts do not have headlamps or a license plate and may not exceed 20 mph. They may be driven on certain roadways designated for golf carts with speed limits of 30 mph or less. This includes certain neighborhoods in No-cattee and Ponte Vedra Beach. They may be driven on a designated multi-use path, but not a bike path or sidewalk.

Low speed vehicles have headlamps, stop lights, windshields, seat belts and are registered; they have a license plate. Their speed can go up to 25 mph and they can only operate on public roads and streets with posted speeds of 35 mph or less. The operator must have a valid driver's license in their possession, as with a car.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you with any questions or suggestions about this article?

A: They can email me at sheriff@sjso.org or call me at (904) 824-8304. Also, our website, www.sjso.org has a wealth of resources, from alarm registration to Crime Stoppers to our Neighbors app.

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St. Johns County Sheriff

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- ✓ **Dedicated Sheriff**
- ✓ **Husband & Father**

COMMUNITY LEADER

"I'm humbled to ask for your vote on August 20th so that I can continue to serve our community with integrity and honor."

- Sheriff Rob Hardwick
ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Paid for by Rob Hardwick, Republican, for St. Johns County Sheriff



with St. Johns County Commissioner Krista Joseph District 4

Q: Can you share any insights on the county's budget meetings which are being held now [mid-May]?

A: I have learned so much from these meetings. Last year, they were held in a giant room with each department head coming in to present their budget. This year, the meetings are live streamed on GTV, and county administrator Joy Andrews and each department head go over each line item of their proposed budget. I found that because of this more intimate setting, the staff was so open. It seemed more humanized and more interesting. Joy asks the department heads questions after their presentations and I think she's done a great job — her questions are very relevant and focused on the cost to the taxpayer. All the TVs in the auditorium are set to this livestream for people to watch, or they could watch at home. I have found them so informative.

Q: What has particularly impressed you?

A: There are some departments that have particularly impressed me be-

cause they are run exceptionally: Public Works, with department head Greg Caldwell, Utilities, with Neil Shinkre, and Parks and Recreation with Ryan Kane. I am impressed with how well they are all taking care of our county.

Q: Do you have an example?

A: For instance, I learned that if you have downloaded the St. Johns County Connect app (www.sjcf.us/sjc-connect/), and let's say you see a pothole in a street near you. If you take a photo of the pothole and upload it to the app, the county will fill it within two days. I also had a constituent mention that the striping was faded at the intersection of A1A and Palm Valley Road. I reported it and within a week it had been restriped.

Q: Do you have an update on the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall renovations?

A: They are just starting the construction. The front has been pulled down to do the remodeling. They texted me that they are saving some trees in the front of the building, which I so appreciate. Ponte Vedra Beach is looking forward to having a high quality space for local as

well as national acts when the Concert Hall is completed in early 2025.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 4?

A: It's the time of the year to be vigilant about water safety, particularly at the beach. Be aware of rip tides — what they are, where they are and how to deal with them. Parents, watch your children closely! And of course it's best to swim near a lifeguard. They are on duty from Memorial Day through the summer. Our St. Johns County lifeguards are certified as US Life Saving Professional Life Guards and the unit is recognized as an Advanced Life Saving Agency. They help swimmers and boaters in distress, as well as handle medical and traumatic injuries. The agency's Junior Lifeguard program has around 80 students, aged nine to 16, each year.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc4kjoseph@sjcf.us or call me at (904) 679-2620.

Beaches Museum announces Beach Legends nominees

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

The Beaches Museum recently announced the individuals selected to be

recognized at its Beach Legends Gala, to be held on Friday, Sept. 13 at the TPC Sawgrass Clubhouse. According to event chair Heather McConville, this year marks the museum's 11th gala honoring Beach Legends.

The 2024 honorees are:

The Adeeb Family: For generations, the name Adeeb has been synonymous with great food and hospitality. Growing from a single Green Turtle restaurant started by Joe Adeeb in 1947, and later opening the iconic Joe Adeeb's Sea Turtle restaurant in Atlantic Beach, the family today operates 20 Bono's Pit Bar-B-Q restaurant franchises, 17 Willie Jewell's Old School Bar-B-Q restaurants, four locations of Beach Diners, and a Strings Brewery (with another on the way), plus new concept restaurants in NC, Colorado, and Georgia.

Mitch Kaufmann: By turns a historian, documentarian, and leader of the Beaches surfing scene, Mitch Kaufmann has turned his passion into a mission. With his camera, he's documented our surfing heroes, and with his passion, he's promoted, taught, and shared the sport of surfing. Mitch Kaufmann has contributed to the local and national surf and skate culture as a surf contest director, filmmaker, and promoter of life in the water — from his Radical Side TV series to running the Eastern Surfing Association.

Lori Moffett: As the founder of the non-profit, Save Ponte Vedra Beach, Lori Moffett has lobbied state and local officials, addressed community groups, and written countless letters, all in an

effort to save Ponte Vedra Beach from the devastating effects of tropical hurricanes. Under her leadership, the Save Ponte Vedra Beach organization helped secure the necessary funding for dune rebuilding and beach renourishment to preserve the future of the Ponte Vedra Beach coastline.

"We are thrilled with the support of the community for this event and these honorees and expect our 11th year to be the best year yet," said McConville.

Visit www.beachesmuseum.org for more information. Contact Chris Hoffman at director@beachesmuseum.org or by calling (904) 241-5657 x 113 for more information on sponsorship and auction donations.



Photo courtesy Vic DiGenti
Beach Legends nominees Scott Adeeb, Joe Adeeb, Mitch Kaufmann, Barry Adeeb, and Lori Moffett.


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Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Sian Cook



Photo courtesy Warren Cook
Sian Cook

There were signs when author Sian Cook was growing up that she would likely pursue a career in writing. She always loved to read, play with words, and observe people. “I was always a quiet shy introvert, and I liked to listen,” said Cook, 50. While Cook loved writing and had an interest in advertising, she said her parents, part of the Silent Generation, believed that it was important for her to get a more reliable and traditional job. Cook, who was born and raised in Benoni, South Africa, decided to enter Wits Medical School in Johannesburg, becoming a general practitioner. “I also liked science, physics, and helping people, so I thought okay I will do medicine,” she said. However, as a self-described empath, Cook found it very difficult to detach emotionally from the job and her patients. Also, AIDS was becoming prevalent, and Cook had three HIV positive needlesticks and had to undergo monthlong antiretroviral therapies. “It was very intense and very stressful. I knew I wanted to get married and have kids, so I didn’t know if this was the lifestyle that I wanted my kids to be around,” she said. Some areas of Johannesburg could also be quite dangerous, especially when Cook worked with the paramedics. “We had been shot at. It was crazy,” she said. So, she decided to go into advertising, working for medical advertising agencies as a medical

copywriter. After two years, she took a job with Novartis Pharmaceuticals as a medical advisor, working on various marketing campaigns. In 2001, Cook married her husband, Warren Cook, an engineer, and had two daughters, Carys in 2004 and Mia in 2006. Next, Sian started a freelance copyright business, and then the family moved to the United States in 2010. Once moved to Julington Creek, Sian embraced being a stay-at-home mother. It was then that she also was able to return to her love of writing, realizing her longtime dream of writing a book. The family later settled in Ponte Vedra Beach because of their love of water, fishing, and boating.

Q: How did you start your book writing journey?

A: I first wrote “Soul Safari” (not yet published). It is a women’s fiction novel, a very easy read about two friends that end up in Africa for different reasons. I used my experiences of going on safari and of being a doctor with one character being a doctor. They always say write what you know, so I thought,

let me just practice on that. And then I decided that I needed to write something that I would read. I always loved reading psychological thrillers, and I love trying to understand why people do what they do.

Q: What is the premise of your psychological thriller, “The Road to Hell?”

A: It is about two sisters thrown into a very difficult situation and how each of them would cope. It evolved from their relationship and their choices. The story involves a cult, drugs, and is set in the 1980s so that the characters would not have cell phones.

Q: How would you describe your writing method?

A: I read a book years ago called “Goal, Motivation, Conflict.” So, each character has a goal, what motivates them to get to their goal, and what stops them from getting to the goal. I had a big board in my study, and I would post all the main characters up there and just add notes on it all the time. From there, I would start writing. So, I am very much a free writer and a character writer.

Q: Who is your favorite author?

A: I really enjoy reading Colleen Hoover, Jeffrey Archer, and Dennis Lehane. I also like to read historical fiction such as Philippa Gregory who focuses on British history like the Tudor period.

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

A: I like to play pickleball, and we are in the process of building a court at our home. I love to read, watch crime shows and sports and take walks in the preserve.

Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra cont. from pg.1

even homelessness — among many of our students in Nocatee has been on the increase since the pandemic. Partnering with Valley Ridge Academy (where student poverty is especially acute) and St. Augustine-based 501(c)3, Mission to End Student Homelessness (MESH), last fall we embarked on an effort to assist local students in need which we call ‘Save Our Students’ or SOS for short. Thanks to the generosity of many, we’re closing in on our goal of raising \$20,000 of which \$12,000 will be granted to VRA for its exclusive use to help address the effects of student poverty, and the remaining \$8,000 will assist MESH in its legacy mission of supporting homeless students throughout St. Johns County. Anyone wishing to donate to SOS may still do so by sending a check to the Ponte Vedra Rotary Foundation, 101 Marketside Avenue, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081, contributing online at www.pontevedrarotary.org or utilizing Venmo @PonteVedra-Rotary.”

Visit www.pontevedrarotary.org and <https://meshstaugustine.org> for more information.

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2024 – 2025

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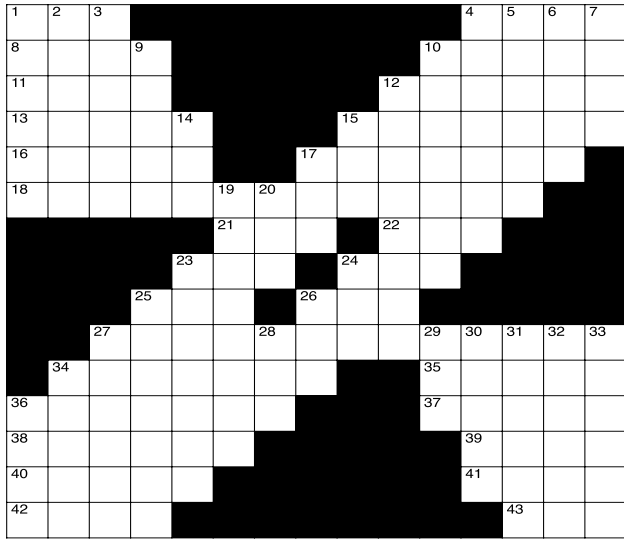
Pursuant to Sections 193.122 and 197.323, Florida Statutes, Notice is Hereby Given that the Tax Roll for St. Johns County was Re-Certified to the St. Johns County Tax Collector on the 23rd day of May, 2024, for the Collection of 2023 Taxes, to reflect all changes made by the Value

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

Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Baby's dining accessory
- 4. Something free
- 8. Ancient Egyptian deity
- 10. Set-like mathematical categories
- 11. Top-quality
- 12. Expansive
- 13. Seizure
- 15. People with congenital absence of pigment
- 16. Gains
- 17. Mocked online
- 18. Clint's son
- 21. Body part
- 22. Humor
- 23. Code number

- 24. Your physique
- 25. Family of regulator genes
- 26. LA football player (abbr.)
- 27. "The Blonde Bombshell"
- 34. Charity
- 35. Bluish greens
- 36. Examined closely
- 37. A type of equation
- 38. Stretched uncomfortably
- 39. Indian religious god
- 40. Clocks
- 41. Slowly leak through
- 42. Witnesses
- 43. Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Nestlings
- 2. Induces vomiting
- 3. A place to eat
- 4. Partner in the air
- 5. Offered one's take
- 6. Nobel-winning French biologist
- 7. Farm animals
- 9. Prevent from growing
- 10. Sensationalist periodical
- 12. Soft-bodied beetle
- 14. Very fast airplane
- 15. Imaginative creation
- 17. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- 19. Evoked a response
- 20. French river
- 23. Shiny yellow minerals
- 24. Make illegal
- 25. U.S. military branch
- 26. River in France and Belgium
- 27. A woman of refinement
- 28. Male child
- 29. Type of medication
- 30. German city
- 31. Animal disease
- 32. Mediterranean dietary staple
- 33. Sneak out
- 34. Radioactivity unit
- 36. Performs on stage

TV DADS WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- AL BUNDY
- CARL WINSLOW
- CYRUS ROSE
- DAN CONNER
- DANNY TANNER
- ERIC TAYLOR
- FRANK COSTANZA
- FRED ANDREWS
- GOMEZ ADDAMS
- HOMER SIMPSON
- JACK PEARSON
- JAMES EVANS SR
- JASON SEAVER
- LOUIS HUANG
- MICHAEL KYLE
- MIKE BRADY
- MITCH LEERY
- NED STARK
- PHIL DUNPHY
- PHILIP BANKS
- RON SWANSON
- TONY MICELLI
- TONY SOPRANO
- WALTER WHITE

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to Father's Day. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 15 = E)

- A. 23 19 9 11 15 10
Clue: Male parent
- B. 25 15 4 9 24 10
Clue: Provides guidance
- C. 14 19 10 15 4 9
Clue: Guardian
- D. 2 15 13 15 16 10 19 9 1!
Clue: Throw a party

Briefs

DAR members clean gravestones

Members of the Ponte Vedra Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) cleaned gravestones in Section F of the



Photo courtesy Viky Divertie
Suzie Ralston, Marsha Byers and Viky Divertie at the grave cleaning.

H. Warren Smith Cemetery on the corner of Beach Boulevard and Penman Road. The gravestones of more than 40 veterans had grass, weeds and mold removed. Gravestone cleaning is a regular volunteer activity of DAR chapters, fulfilling the goals of both historical preservation and support of the military.

Daughters of the American Revolution is a non-political, genealogical women's service organization whose members can trace their lineage to a patriot of the Revolutionary War. Visit DAR.org or contact regent.darpontevedra@gmail.com for more information.

Civic group accepting grant applications

The Ponte Vedra Women's Civic

Alliance is accepting applications through June 30, 2024 for its \$10,000 grant.

The grant will be awarded to a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in St. Johns County or to an organization that serves the Beaches area including Ponte Vedra Beach, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach.

The Ponte Vedra Women's Civic Alliance is a non-profit organization, established in 2011 to foster friendship by working together for the good of the community. The group awards grants yearly.

Visit pwca.org to request an application and to review the grant guidelines.

Summer reading volunteer opportunities abound

If you are willing to spend a little time this summer helping others, there is an opportunity waiting for you! RSVP of St. Johns County is looking for community members to assist once a week in the summer reading program in the St. Johns County School District. Hours are flexible. If you are traveling this summer, you can help while you are in town.

"There are students who can greatly benefit from the help of those willing to give just a small amount of their time," said Cheryl Freeman, RSVP director. "Assistance from community volunteers can make all the difference in helping these students succeed."

Briefs cont. on pg. 14

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By Scott A. Grant
mail@floridanewsline.com

PopHistory

The Rear View Mirror

Over the years, many automotive innovations have come out of the sport of racing. Some of those, like seat belts and roll cages, were designed to make a dangerous activity more safe. This is the story of one such innovation.

In 1911, at the inaugural running of the Indianapolis 500, now billed as the "Greatest Spectacle in Racing," Ray Harroun "invented" the rear view mirror. It is widely believed that his was the first ever installed on an automobile. Harroun added the rear view mirror not to make his car safer, but to make it faster. At that time, all race cars had two passengers — a driver and a mechanic. The onboard mechanic had several jobs, one of which was to look out for cars overtaking from behind.

Harroun showed up for that first Indianapolis race in a single seat Marmon Wasp. That car, which was innovative in many ways, featured a rear view mirror mounted onto the front dash. Harroun argued that his new mirror made the riding mechanic unnecessary. Track officials agreed and Harroun and the yellow number 32

Marmon Wasp gained a significant advantage in weight.

Harroun had gotten the idea for the mirror in 1904 in Chicago. Harroun was serving as the chauffeur for the president of Montgomery Ward, William Thorne. At that time, Montgomery Ward was a mail order retailer. Later they would add brick and mortar stores and, for a time, would be one of the largest department store chains in the country.

In 1944, FDR ordered the US troops to seize Montgomery Ward's corporate offices to end a four-month strike that was considered debilitating to the war effort. After the war, the company fell on hard times due to mismanagement. Louis Wolfson, of Jacksonville, launched a proxy fight in 1955 to unseat the president. For a time, the company recovered, but ultimately sold its few remaining stores in 1985.

In any event, while he was chauffeur-ing Thorne around the busy streets of Chicago, Harroun noticed a horse drawn taxicab. The driver was sitting there in a top hat, and he had a long pole with a mirror attached in order to see what was behind him. Seven

years later, Harroun put a similar device onto an automobile. Driving alone, Harroun averaged a speed of 74.6 miles per hour and finished the 500-mile race in seven hours and 37 minutes. He won the race and a first-place prize of \$10,000, a little over a quarter of a million dollars in today's money.

The race was fraught with peril. One mechanic was thrown from his car and killed instantly. Spectators rushed to the event and had to be driven off by National Guardsmen to make room for the doctors. Several other mechanics were injured and so were some spectators. Every time there was a crash, the crowd rushed across the track to get a better view.

Harroun had some other advantages. Known as the "Little Professor," he ran a smart race and only had to change four tires, which saved considerable time in the pits. The car itself

was called a "Wasp" because it had an aerodynamic tail that resembled a wasp's stinger. Later engineers would argue that the rear view mirror mounted on the cowling had the unintended outcome of acting like a spoiler producing downforce. If so, that was the only advantage the mirror provided.

In 1911, the Indy 500 track was constructed entirely of bricks which made for a bumpy ride, making the mirror all but useless. "To tell the truth, on the brick surface, I couldn't see a damn thing in it," Harroun would later confess. "And no one knew it but me."

Scott A. Grant is a local historian and author. By day he is president of Standfast Asset Management. He grew up in Indianapolis and went to a number of races. He welcomes your comments at scottg@standfastic.com

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Meet two veteran teachers upon their retirement

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Jodi Johnson and Sherri Anthony are both retiring this year after more than 30 years working for the St. Johns School District. Both are currently at Landrum Middle School. Their colleague, Beth McBride, thought it would be great to recognize them and fun to learn a little bit more about them.

Meet Sherri Anthony

Q: What college did you graduate from?

A: Flagler College in St. Augustine.

Q: How long have you been in education and what was your first job?

A: Forty-two years in St. Johns County and my first job was teaching physical education at Nease High School in 1982.

Q: When and where did you start coaching basketball?

A: Nease High School in 1982. I taught PE and then coached three sports — JV volleyball, varsity girls basketball, and JV softball — all at Nease. I also coached at Flagler College: basketball for two seasons, 1986 – 1988 and softball for nine seasons, 1982 – 1991.

Q: You have been awarded many basketball coach awards, what was the most recent?

A: The NHSCA – National High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame Award

Q: What schools did you teach at throughout your career?

A: I taught PE at Nease from 1982 – 1986; PE at Ponte Vedra-Palm Valley Elementary School, 1986 – 1990; PE at Landrum Middle School from 1990 – 1995; and was Dean of Students at Landrum Middle School from 1995 – 2024.

Q: You helped open Landrum Middle school in 1990; what is one memory that you have of that first year.

A: The size of the school was such that you really got to know the students and their families, everything was brand new, traditions were formed, new mascot and colors were decided, clubs were started, and sports were a central theme throughout the year. Mr. Allten, the principal's theme was for everyone to buy into his mantra of doing everything with Dignity, Integrity, and Class. Punch cards were created for positive behavior rewards and the whole faculty had a club either during or after school. Dress code of tucking in shirts and fingertip length shorts and dresses were a must.

Meet Jodi Johnson

Q: How many years have you been a teacher and what was your first job?

A: 36 years. I started at the Safety Harbor (Florida) Exceptional Center – a K-8 grade school for Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) students. In St. Johns County, I've taught at Rawlings Elementary, Valley Ridge Academy, and Landrum Middle School.

Q: Why did you become a teacher?

A: I took a psychology class as a freshman in college, I had not declared a major at that time. Teaching was not on my radar. We had an assignment where we were to go into an elementary school and work with kindergarten students. I was paired with a five-year-old girl; I still remember her name, Dena. She was deaf and during our short time together she taught me,

a 19-year-old college student, how to sign. I was so fascinated by this little girl, I began taking sign language classes which led to getting my Master's degree in ESE.

Q: Tell one funny story.

A: The first year at Valley Ridge Academy the grades two through seven were taking a standardized test. I admit, I was technologically challenged, and I clicked on "LAN-SCHOOL" during the test, and I still do not know what I did, but the entire school testing site shut down and my face came up on everyone's screen! Everyone got to witness my reaction seeing myself on the screen as well as me frantically pushing all kinds of keys to shut it down. Needless to say, I had two APs, the dean and the IT person immediately at my classroom door huffing and puffing (I was on the second floor) wondering what the heck I did. They weren't too happy, but everyone else got quite the laugh. Me, well, I was mortified!

Q: What is a piece of advice you would give teachers on being able to stay a teacher for a long time.

A: If you feel yourself getting burned out, change schools, grade level or subject area. It challenges you and can never go wrong meeting new teachers. I feel teachers are some of the most caring, giving people I have ever met.

Q: Why did you stay in education so long?

When you love what you are doing, time goes by very fast. I have loved working with students, getting to know them, their families, their struggles and what makes them unique. My students know I care about them and in turn they trust me. I am so blessed that I chose a career that I was meant to do. It has been incredibly gratifying.

Q: When a student is struggling with the material that is being taught, what do you say to them?

A: I always point out what they can do and go from there. We all have our strengths, and we all have our weaknesses.



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Photo courtesy Beth McBride
Congratulations to Jodi Johnson (left) and Sherri Anthony (right) on their retirement.

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Friends of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall present first-ever music scholarship

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

On Friday, April 26 the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall and Friends of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall hosted a “Load Out” in celebration of the Concert Hall’s upcoming renovation with St. Johns County leadership and government officials in attendance. During the “Load Out” the Friends of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall punctuated this special event with the announcement that they are establishing the first-ever music scholarship at the North Florida School of Special Education.

The Friends of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall donated the amount of \$4,000 to the school in honor of Tib Miller, founder of Flying Saucer Presents. Miller was one of North Florida’s

most beloved and respected concert promoters and friend to the music industry. Honoring a very special connection to the school, Miller’s son, Gram, has attended the school since age six, and continues to thrive there today as a 20-year-old, multi-talented drummer and guitarist.

The music scholarship created by Friends of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall goes to a cause very near and dear to the group’s mission of cultivating and inspiring the arts in the community. Music is often lauded as an incredibly beneficial therapeutic approach to address the social, physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of people with intellectual and developmental differences. This donation will help to further the safe haven provided by



Photo courtesy Friends of Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

music classes at the school, promoting the positive expression of feelings, sensory development and release, the

benefits of movement, a closer connection with peers and teachers, and the learning of musical instruments.

Ocean Palms celebrates rockin’ staff

By Lisa Farese
mail@floridanewslines.com

Ocean Palms Elementary School celebrated its staff the week of May 6 – 10 in a week of record-turning, note-worthy fun with a music- through -the-decades celebration.

On Monday, staff were invited to “sock

hop” in for a breakfast of coffee, donuts, chicken biscuits and fruit. Tuesday brought peace, love and cupcakes with gift cards. By Wednesday, staff were “doing the hustle” to a taco lunch. Thursday was chill with a gourmet popsicle food truck fit for popstars. And, finally, Friday was met with a “great mix” of live music by Pete Masitti and lunch by Trasca.



Photos courtesy Lisa Farese

A 70s-themed lunch made the staff’s day at Ocean Palms.



OPE staff were living like pop stars with gourmet popsicles on Thursday.



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For more information, contact Vinny Terlizzi at 904.742.8777 or vaterlizzi@gmail.com

Briefs cont. from pg. 10

Orientation will be provided, and background screening will be performed free of charge. Contact RSVP at (904) 547-3952 or Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us for more information.

Group to induct new slate of officers at June luncheon

Coastal Friends will hold an installation ceremony to induct a new slate of officers for fiscal year starting July 1, 2024 at its monthly luncheon on June 5 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy., from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

The luncheon is open to the community, members, and guests of Coastal Friends. The menu will consist of house salad with chef's dressing, chicken

Florentine, baked red skin potato wedges, steamed vegetable medley, and fruit-topped cheesecake. The cost to attend is \$25 per person. Seating will be limited, so reservations must be made in advance by contacting bartshar@comcast.net. Luncheons are held on the first Wednesday of every month, except for July and August.

Established in 1998, Coastal Friends is a social group of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach, St. Augustine, and the surrounding area. Some of the activities offered are: adventures and outings, book club, Bunco, Canasta, happy hour, lunch in, lunch out, Mah Jongg, samba, and wine socials. New members are welcome throughout the year.

Additionally, Coastal Friends collects food and pet items, toys, gently-used items and donates them to various local organizations and animal shelters. June's highlighted Organization of the Month is Gabriel House. Gabriel House's mission is to promote a "community of healing" environment by providing affordable, temporary lodging for adult organ transplant and cancer patients as well as their caregivers who come to Jacksonville for medical treatment.

Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime welcomes Army veteran

The Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime will meet on June 8 at 11:15 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Featured speaker will be Army veteran Tonya Oxendine who will present "Words of a Woman Warrior."

"Military members have a 'can-do' mentality," Oxendine said. "Together, we faced challenges head-on, relying on hard work and determination to achieve our objectives."

And this she did during her 30-year Army career, but she also endured traumatic challenges, including harassment, rejection, stereotypes and prejudice in a "man's world." She coped with her situation the same way so many other women, and men, have done — by bottling up her emotions. Oxendine finally sought help for her post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD) and the severe depression and anxiety she was experiencing. The Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Talk program gave her the connection she needed. Now, she travels the world to help others heal and find peace by sharing her powerful story.

This will be an in-person discussion meeting and no zoom linkage will be offered. Contact floridasistersincrime@gmail.com for more information. Bring your coffee and bring a friend. The group welcomes misters and sisters to learn more about writing, promoting, and enjoying crime fiction.

Ponte Vedra Beach author's memoir named Book of the Month


The Florida Writers Association has named "Ron's World: All the Times I Died" as its current Book of the Month selection. Written by former Miller Electric CEO and chairman Ron Autrey, the book chronicles Autrey's life as seen against the backdrop of one of the most transformative periods in world history: the 1950s to the present day. While recounting the era's remarkable advancements in technology, medicine and exploration — along with its wars, famines and natural disasters — Autrey punctuates his historical chronicle with personal recollections, including accounts of several near-death experiences.

"I was both humbled and gratified to learn of this honor," Autrey said. "For a guy like me, the 'town electrician,' to have my first book recognized by other authors is very encouraging."

"Ron's World" recounts Autrey's boyhood experiences growing up in Jacksonville in the 1950s and 1960s, his time in the Army, and his climb in the electrical contracting business to become a prominent local businessman and philanthropist. As its title implies, "Ron's World" is an examination of the times in which its author lived.

Autrey noted that all profits from sales of the book go to K9s for Warriors (<https://k9sforwarriors.org>). Proceeds from the sale of his forthcoming book, "Synope," will benefit the Tunnel to Towers Foundation (<https://t2t.org>).

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Sisters-in-Arms receives donation



Photo courtesy Steph McFee

Del Webb resident Gloria North recently made a \$10,000 donation to Sisters-in-Arms, the result of North selling her African art collection. North saw a story in Ponte Vedra NewsLine about Sisters-in-Arms, a non-profit empowering girls to thrive in work and life after aging out of foster care. North felt inspired to help after reading the story and was especially interested in helping to meet the educational and professional needs of the girls to help them succeed in life. Pictured are Sisters-in-Arms co-founder Steph McFee; The Yards director of sales and events Anna Washington; Sisters-in-Arms co-founder Mary Saenz; and donor Gloria North. Sisters-in-Arms is asking the community to Save the Date for its upcoming fundraiser on Oct. 25, 2024: "Arm-in-Arm Showdown," a pickleball and golf tournament, which will take place at The Yards from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Visit www.sisters-in-arms.org for more information.

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