

# Ponte Vedra NewsLine

NOVEMBER 2024 Volume 11 Issue 11

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



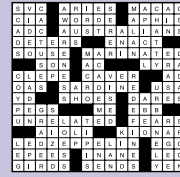
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Photo courtesy Lisa Farese

Ocean Palms Elementary's standout staffers include Jennifer Dean, School-Related Employee of the Year; Brianna Sweeney, Rookie Teacher of the Year; and Stacy Crouch, Teacher of the Year.

## Ocean Palms honors outstanding staff

By Lisa Farese  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The teachers and staff at Ocean Palms Elementary have spoken, naming this year's standouts — Stacy Crouch, Brianna Sweeney, and Jennifer Dean.

Crouch, named Teacher of the Year, is a pre-kindergarten teacher who has been at the school for the past four years. As a pre-kindergarten teacher, she loves how she gets to begin laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning for her students and enjoys engaging them as they grow and learn.

Sweeney, Rookie Teacher of the Year,

**Ocean Palms** cont. on pg. 9

## American Legion Post 233: Making every day Veterans Day

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps  
mail@floridanewsline.com

At American Legion Post 233 in Ponte Vedra Beach, every day is Veterans Day.

“We are a veteran organization, and our main goal is to support veterans through outreach. This gives them an opportunity for a place to come. We believe just having a place to come and a place to talk saves lives. We continue to be thankful for everybody who served, and that is the message we are always trying to send. We want veterans more involved in the Post and in the community,” said Commander Greg Cressman, who has been a member for 13 years and became commander in July.

There are 400 active members of the Legion, also known as Legionnaires.

Cressman, who served for three years in the United States Army, said the goal now is fundraising to rebuild and modernize the American Legion Post to include a canteen, banquet hall and community center. Cressman said the renovation would happen by the end of 2025 and is known as “Operation Pathfinder” because they will find a way to make it happen.

Adjacent to the Post is the Palm Valley Bunker, which received a major facelift earlier in the year, including the addition of air conditioning to what was an open-air pavilion. The Palm Valley Bunker will serve as a temporary home while the new Post is being built.

The American Legion is the nation's largest wartime veterans service organization aimed at advocating patriotism through diverse programs and member benefits. It is a nonprofit organization that supports not only veterans, but also current service members and their families and has been doing so since 1919. It was founded by an Act of Congress after World War I. Post 233 opened in 1971 and is located off North Wilderness Trail. American



Photo courtesy Julie Kay

Brian Kay, SAL Squadron 233 Adjutant and Mea Kay Junior ALA Member raise the flag.



Photo courtesy Julie Kay

Veterans' lunch, American Legion 233.

Legion Post 223 Auxiliary District 5 President Julie Kay said she immediately felt welcomed when she joined this post. As an auxiliary member since 2017, Kay said the auxiliary's goal is to support veterans, active-duty members and all family members. Auxiliary members are not in the military and are the spouses, mothers, daughters and granddaughters of the veterans. The support for active-duty members could happen through baby showers, sending boxes overseas, welcome home parties, helping family members during hurricanes and through partnerships with local schools.

“My ‘why’ is my dad. My dad is a veteran. I did not serve, so this is my way to give back to the veterans who have

**American Legion Post** cont. on pg. 10



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*Holiday Guide*

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Deadline Nov. 18

Linda Gay  
Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com  
(904) 607-5062

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## BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

### Meet Maverick!



**Breed:**  
Australian Shepherd

**Favorite Activity:**  
Playing in the sprinklers

**Favorite Treat:**  
K9 Connoisseur Beef Lung Bites

**Favorite Friend:**  
His big "brother," Aidan

**How did your BFF get his name?**  
Maverick is an independent, little rebel – but his charm gets him out of all the puppy trouble!

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.



**Senior NewsLine**  
appears in this issue!  
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When you advertise, you encourage repeat business, create traffic, and attract new customers!

**Don't miss our December issue featuring our Holiday Guide! Deadline 12/18/24**

Call Linda Gay today to reserve your space!  
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## MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you guess where this is?  
Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.  
Last month's Mystery Photo was the Juan Ponce de Leon statue in the GTM parking lot.

B	E	A	M	T	A	B	E	S	T	A	T	E
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## CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

A. veteran B. service C. honor D. valor

Answers  
Puzzles  
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Coming in our December issue:

# Holiday Guide

Call today and make sure your business is included!  
Deadline Nov. 18

Linda Gay  
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**20% OFF EVERYTHING THAT FITS IN A WBU BAG!**  
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# November

## Community Calendar

### What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

**Council on Aging** offers interest groups at the COA Center at UF Health Nocatee. Meetings are free and self-guided. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required; email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or call (904) 814-9407. 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 and on the grounds of the Palm Valley Community Center at 148 Canal Road, every Tuesday from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. The market offers organically grown produce, microgreens, eggs, grass-finished beef, all natural chicken, Mayport shrimp, prepared meals, preservative-free bread, honey, tea, natural skincare, custom jewelry and soy candles. Visit the Palm Valley Market Facebook page for more information.

**2nd: Wellness** events at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in November 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.

**5th: Vicar's Landing** monthly Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, Nov. 5 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The sale includes a special venue in the Parlor of Holiday Magic; jewelry in the Card Room will display both costume and 14k gold sterling silver items. Framed art for sale will be in the hall. Knick-knacks will have an expanded area for stocking-stuffers, small gifts, and tiny treasures. The public is welcome. Checks or cash only please. The Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives all the proceeds. Call Janet Nicosia at (904)

607-2078 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610 for more information.

**6th: Coastal Friends** will host attorney and local historian Doug Milne, who will talk about the history of Thanksgiving, at a luncheon on Nov. 6, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club. The luncheon is open to members and guests, as well as the community. The cost to attend is \$25. Space is limited; reservations must be made in advance by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible.

**6th: AARP Safe Driver Course**, a two-day program to be held on Nov. 6 and Nov. 13 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., requires pre-registration and has a small fee of \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members that is paid to the instructor directly unless have proof of a United Healthcare Supplement plan. The course will be held at COA Center at UF Health Nocatee, 351 Town Plaza Ave., Suite 205. Both classes are required to receive a certificate toward possible insurance discounts.

**6th: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club** general meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 6 at 6 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club. The program will feature women's health with Rachel Garcia. Registration required; visit [www.pontevedrawomansclub.com](http://www.pontevedrawomansclub.com) for more information.

**7th: 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, Nov. 7. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

**9th: NE Florida Sisters in Crime** will host attorney Jason Weiss who will present "How People Commit Business Fraud" on Nov. 9 at 11:15 a.m. at the Ponte

Vedra Beach Branch Library. Bring your coffee and bring a friend; the group welcomes misters and sisters to learn about writing, promoting, and enjoying crime fiction. Visit [nefloridasistersincrime.org](http://nefloridasistersincrime.org) for more information.

**12th: Floral Arranging** with Angela Sieja will be hosted by the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club on Nov. 12 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Palm Valley Barn, 531 N. Wilderness Trail. The cost is \$35, which includes instruction, flowers/vase, and refreshments. Registration required; visit [www.pontevedrawomansclub.com](http://www.pontevedrawomansclub.com) for more information.

**14th: Free Tech Help** with David will be held on Thursday, Nov. 14 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/](http://sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/) for more information.

**16th: The Nocatee Farmers Market – Fall Festival** will be held on Saturday, Nov. 16 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

**21st: St. Johns County Republican Party District 4** monthly meeting will be held on the third Thursday of each month (this month, Nov. 21) at 6:15 p.m. at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd. Visit [stjohns.gop](http://stjohns.gop) for more information.

**21st: Underwood's Trunk Show** Fundraiser, presented by the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club, will be held Nov. 21 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Complimentary libations and hors d'oeuvres; raffle tickets will benefit the club's charities. Visit [www.pontevedrawomansclub.com](http://www.pontevedrawomansclub.com) for more information and to purchase tickets.

**21st: Check your blood pressure** with Diane DeCarlo at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center on Thursday, Nov. 21 from 10:30 a.m. – 11a.m. There is no charge for this event. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

**21st: "Should You Ever Put Someone Else's Name on Your Deed?"** a free lecture by Megan Wall, St. Johns County Legal Aid, will be presented at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Nov. 21 at 11 a.m. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

**23rd: GTM Research Reserve** will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, Nov. 23 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. No registration is required; meet at the Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Visit [gtmnerr.org](http://gtmnerr.org) for more information.

**25th: Ponte Vedra Democratic Club** will meet on Monday, Nov. 25 at 5:30 p.m. for Chat & Chew before the 6 p.m. meeting at Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. The featured speaker will be Marie Garnes, volunteer campaign chair for St. Johns County, who will offer data and analysis results of the 2024 election, up and down the ballot. Email [pvdemclub@gmail.com](mailto:pvdemclub@gmail.com) for more information.

**26th: PVB Adult Coloring Club** at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library will be held on Nov. 26 from 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. This program adults older than 18; bring a snack or drink for yourself or to share with others. Call the library at (904) 827-6950 for more information.



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**with St. Johns County Property Appraiser  
Eddie Creamer**

**Q: Can you share any information on the impact of hurricane damage to a homeowner's property taxes?**

A: If your home was damaged or destroyed by either Hurricane Helene or Hurricane Milton (or any other storm) you will still have to pay property taxes. Property tax bills will be mailed on Nov. 1 and are due by April 1, 2025 with discounts for early payment.

However, if your residence is or was uninhabitable for 30 days or longer, you may qualify for a partial refund of your property taxes.

**Q: What should homeowners with catastrophic property damage do?**

A: If your home has been damaged or destroyed, report it to the Property Appraiser's Office as soon as possible and we will help you determine if you qualify for a partial refund. We can help walk you through the process. Refunds are on a prorated basis, based on the time you are unable to inhabit your home, for up

to 90 days (since there were fewer than 90 days left in the year when hurricanes Helene and Milton hit.)

Also, if you have been displaced from your home and at a different address, please let us know and we will make sure to mail any correspondence to the appropriate address.

**Q: Are there any impacts to property taxes for next year?**

A: If your home's damage has not been repaired by Jan. 1, 2025, even if you are not displaced, be sure to let us know. This will affect your assessment for next year.

**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](mailto:Ed-die@sjcpa.us) or call me at (904) 827-5500.



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

**Q: How can I cast my ballot in the 2024 General Election?**

A: Election Day for the 2024 General Election is Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. and voters must vote at their assigned precinct.

**Q: Where do I go to vote on Election Day?**

A: Some polling places have changed since the last election. Voters are encouraged to verify their polling place on our website using the Find My Polling Place tool before heading to the polls. This can be a real time saver.

If you have moved within Florida, you can update your address up to and on Election Day. For assistance, call the Elections Office at (904) 823-2238. Voters should update their address before heading to the polls to make for an easier voting experience.

**Q: How and where can I return my vote-by-mail ballot?**

A: I recommend returning your vote-by-mail ballot in person to the Elections Office at 4455 Avenue A, Suite 101, in St. Augustine. Vote-by-mail ballots must be returned to the Elections Office by 7 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 5, to be counted. It's too late to mail your ballot, and you cannot return vote-by-mail ballots to an Election Day precinct. If you have changed your mind and have not

yet returned your vote-by-mail ballot, you can surrender your vote-by-mail ballot at your Election Day polling place and vote in person.

**Q: Is the 2024 General Election ballot long?**

A: Yes! The ballot is two-pages front and back, filled with candidates, six constitutional amendments, and two school board referenda. I recommend studying your sample ballot and making your selections at home and bringing your sample ballot to the polling place with you for an easier, less stressful, voting experience. Sample ballots have been mailed to all registered St. Johns County voters, but can also be viewed and downloaded online on our website at [www.votesjc.gov](http://www.votesjc.gov).

**Q: Do I need to bring anything with me to the polling place on Election Day?**

A: Photo and signature ID is required when voting in person. A complete list of acceptable forms of ID is available on our website. If you do not have a current and valid ID, you will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot.

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

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



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**2024 General Election  
November 5, 2024**



**Election Day**


**November 5, 2024  
Polls open 7 AM to 7 PM**

- You must vote at your assigned precinct on Election Day

To find your polling place, visit [www.votesjc.gov](http://www.votesjc.gov) and use the Find My Polling Place tool!

- Photo and signature ID is required when voting in person

**Attention Precinct  
405/407 Voters**



Voters assigned to Precinct 405/407 will still be voting at 1050 A1A North, Ponte Vedra Beach, on Election Day, November 5.

On Election Day, note the alternate driveway and signage directing voters to the back of the property, to the **Council on Aging** building, to avoid the ongoing construction.

**Vote-by-Mail**

- Vote-by-mail ballots must be returned to the Elections Office by **7 PM on Election Day, November 5**, to be counted
- Vote-by-mail ballots **CANNOT** be returned to Election Day polling places

**904-823-2238 · [www.votesjc.gov](http://www.votesjc.gov)**

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

**Q: Can you shed any insight on the school district's involvement with county preparations for hurricanes?**

A: In light of the back-to-back hurricanes, Helene and Milton, I've received several questions about this. The school district is involved with the county's Emergency Operations Center from the onset of a storm. Our facilities and operations department is engaged 24/7 as we have to be prepared to open schools to serve as emergency shelters. Then, after it's safe for people to leave, the school must be cleaned and sanitized before we are able to receive students back. This is why it takes an extra day or so after the storm has passed until the schools are reopened.

We also have principals and staff onsite at the schools when they are open as shelters. They help serve food and generally make sure the people are taken care of. We often get travelers from other parts of Florida who are evacuating, in addition to local people. It's a major operation for our leadership and staff.

Interestingly, some of our staff went to Dixie County to help them get their schools reopened after Hurricane Helene. This is a normal procedure and they would do the same for us.

**Q: Do you have any last minute information to share about the two school referenda on ballots on Nov. 5?**

A: The school district has been holding a series of meetings for citizens to learn about the referenda on the ballot. Keep in mind that this is a lengthy ballot and our referenda are the last two items. Passage of these referenda will be critical for the future of our community.

Some of the concerns I've heard are that the district can simply do more belt-tightening instead. We've done a lot of budget cuts over the years and there comes a point where quality is sacrificed. As we continue to sustain and increase the safety at our schools and services to our students, additional funding is critical. In order to recruit and retain excellent teachers and staff, we must be able to compete with surrounding counties' compensation.

If you have any additional questions about the referenda, you can visit [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/vote/](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/vote/).

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

A: I'd like to recognize and congratulate this year's National Merit Semifinalists from Nease and Ponte Vedra high schools:

From Nease: Tu Ly Bui, Ethan Diachun, Sophia Drake, Kaitlyn Glidewell, Hershel Kamat, Pranay Kolukuluri, Braden Leonard, David Lovett, Sheza Mehruf,

Q&A with Kelly Barrera cont. on pg. 7



**with St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller John Rundgren, Clerk Designee**

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

A. To honor the brave men and women who have served our nation, we will offer complimentary services to veterans, active-duty military, reservists, and their dependents through Nov. 29. This includes free passport photos, notary services, and recording services for DD-214s.

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

A. Recording your DD-214 ensures an official copy is available if the original is lost or destroyed. These records remain protected for 62 years after separation. In addition to offering this service year-round, we will offer recording services at the Veterans Day event on Nov. 11 at Anastasia Baptist Church, 1659 A1A South in St. Augustine Beach.

**Q. November is also known as National Adoption Awareness Month. Please share details about the annual event your office hosts.**

A. Our office will celebrate National

Adoption Day with a special ceremony on Friday, Nov. 22, at 10 a.m. at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center. This public event celebrates the final hearing in adoption cases. We are thrilled to host this event and collaborate with our government partners to share this special moment with children and local families.

**Q. What is the role of the Clerk's Office in the adoption process?**

A. Our Family Law Clerks play a crucial role in adoption proceedings. Our clerks process the petitions filed by the adoptive parents and their attorney, process the final judgment of adoption signed by the Family Court Judges, and provide certified copies of the orders to the parties.

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

A. If residents have questions about services offered to veterans, the National Adoption Day Celebration, or any other services we offer, call us at (904) 819-3600 or email [clerk@stjohnsclerk.com](mailto:clerk@stjohnsclerk.com).

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[www.floridanewslines.com](http://www.floridanewslines.com)



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**George "T" Hill**  
**For Florida State Senate District 7**

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George "T" Hill will fight to put Tallahassee on our side and not let insurance companies take advantage of homeowners.

**Briefs**

**Sisters in Crime to learn about business fraud**

Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime will meet on Nov. 9 at 11:15 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Speaker Jason Weiss will present “How People Commit Business Fraud.”

Weiss had practiced law for more than two decades when he found himself searching for greater personal fulfillment, asking himself how he could reach beyond the conventional teachings of law school. He discovered that his true passion lay in teaching, offering guidance, and acting as a mentor. Using social media, he shared his transformative story and became a magnet for attorneys who sought greater satisfaction from their own careers.

Combining his legal and business intellect, Weiss will educate attendees on the countless ways a criminal mind can conceive to deceive the public. In today’s world of cybercrime, scams and schemes, everyone is frighteningly vulnerable. Perpetrators are no longer as obvious as the old-time snake oil salesman.

This meeting will be a hybrid meeting (personal attendance and zoom.) Members should pre-register to zoom to attend this meeting at

<https://nefloridasistersincrime.org>. Contact [floridasistersincrime@gmail.com](mailto:floridasistersincrime@gmail.com) for more information.

**Annual Giving Tree initiative to benefit charities**

The 18th annual Giving Tree Initiative will occur from Nov. 1 to Dec. 5. The wishes of clients from 40 non-profit organizations in St. Johns County serving Elderly, Veterans, Homeless, Abused, Children and Animals are printed onto holiday wish tags, which are then displayed in participating businesses, schools and organizations throughout the county. The donations placed in the collection boxes are then sorted and provided to the non-profit organizations for the holidays. Monetary donations are used to purchase wish items that were not donated.

Over the years the generosity of the community during the Giving Tree drive has been so appreciated by the

receiving organizations and has made a significant impact on their clients. Now as much as at any time, so many people are in need.

Donation boxes with posters will be displayed at the host sites. A list of participating host sites is available at [www.stjohnscares.org](http://www.stjohnscares.org). Monetary donations can also be made on the website. Contact [president@stjohnscares.org](mailto:president@stjohnscares.org) for questions.

**“Christmas on the River” to benefit COA Care Connection**

St. Johns County Council on Aging (COA) invites members of the public to ring in the St. Augustine holiday season at “Christmas on the River,” a gilded age holiday celebration on Sunday, Nov. 24, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at River House. The annual fundraising event supports COA’s Care Connection program, which provides St. Johns County seniors with the services they need in order to continue to enjoy independence and quality of life at home.

Attendees are invited to enjoy heavy hors d’oeuvres, wine tasting, live music,

and a charity auction in the spectacular waterfront setting of River House, located at 179 Marine Street in downtown St. Augustine. Tickets to the event are \$100 per person and may be purchased online at [www.coajc.org/cotr](http://www.coajc.org/cotr) or by calling (904) 209-3700. On-site parking is plentiful and free.

COA’s Care Connection program is financed entirely through donations and powered by caring, local COA volunteers. The program supports seniors in remaining in their homes where they are most comfortable, rather than being forced by circumstances to enter assisted living. Services provided include minor home repairs, lawn maintenance, safety device installation, wheelchair ramp construction, as well as assistance obtaining low or no-cost prescriptions, pet food, wheelchairs, and other assistive devices. Care Connection provides these crucial services for which no other funding sources exist.

For more information on COA’s Care Connection program and to get involved, visit [www.coajc.org/care-connection](http://www.coajc.org/care-connection) or call (904) 209-3700.



**with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick**

**Q: Can you shed any insight on the recent active hurricane season?**

A: It’s a myth that hurricanes are just during the summer, but hurricane season runs through Nov. 30 — and in fact the most active part of the season is historically near the end. I’d like to thank the community for their response to our orders.

As soon as a storm is on our radar, we activate the Incident Management Team, which consists of agency employees with additional duties who are activated internally. We work hand in hand with St. Johns Fire and Rescue as the Emergency Operations Center activates. We work in partnership before the storm, during the storm, and post storm.

**Q: What is important to know about a mandatory evacuation?**

A: This term is necessary to require the evacuation of critical structures like hospitals, senior care facilities and in-patient treatment facilities. Their evacuation is mandated once we invoke this term.

We are not out threatening everyday people to leave their homes, but we do let them know that there could come a time when a first responder cannot get to them if they need help. We just want people to go to higher ground, which could still be in St. Johns County.

**Q: What can you tell us about bridge closures?**

A: Bridges are closed independently if winds of 40 mph or more are sustained at the bridge for a minute or more. Higher spanning bridges are more prone to these sustained gusts. Sometimes, bridges like the Bridge of Lions or the Shands Bridge are closed due to flooding downtown (Bridge of Lions) or washouts on one

side or the other (Shands). It’s important to note that the SJSO can close a bridge, but only the Florida Department of Transportation can reopen the bridge after its inspection.

**Q: What happens when you implement a curfew?**

A: Curfews must legally be signed by the Board of County Commissioners, so I always get one signed in advance and then hold on to it until if and when needed. These are important for community safety as a curfew gives us the ability to enforce “no movement” during the curfew time.

**Q: What advice do you have for the remainder of this hurricane season and next year?**

A: Learn your evacuation zone. Discuss your storm plan with your family. Make copies of all of your critical documents to take to a safe place. Make sure you have your hurricane supplies for seven days. There is a great checklist of items to include on [www.floridadisaster.org/](http://www.floridadisaster.org/). Make sure to also make a plan for your pets.

Also, be sure to sign up for alerts. You can text StJohnsEOC to 888777 to receive alerts via text or download the SJC Connect app. Finally, follow SJSO and Emergency Management on social media.

**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@sjsso.org](mailto:sheriff@sjsso.org) or call me at (904) 824-8304. Also, our website, [www.sjsso.org](http://www.sjsso.org) has a wealth of resources, from alarm registration to Crime Stoppers to our Neighbors app.

**Q&A with Kelly Barrera** cont. from pg. 6

MacKenzie Moy, Jolie Nguyen, Jessica Pandey, Vasanth Parthasarathy, and Likith Tipimeni.

From Ponte Vedra: Vivian Foisy, Maia Geronimo, Chase Kennedy, Skylar Liu, Aidan Procopio, Arianna Rah-

mathulla, Emlynn Rossiya, Banks Vadeboncoeur, and Ella York.

**Q: How can our readers contact you?**

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

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# School district holds community meetings to explain proposed referenda

By Martie Thompson  
 editor@floridanewsline.com

In addition to federal, state and local races on the Nov. 3 General Election ballot, St. Johns County voters will have a decision to make that will impact the future of schools in the county. Two local referenda, located at the end of a lengthy ballot, ask voters to decide whether to continue a half cent sales tax to be used for building new schools and also whether to approve an extra mill to be used for operating expenses, specifically and mostly for employee salary supplements.

“Two items of importance to the school district are on the ballot for voters to consider,” said St. Johns County School Superintendent Tim Forson at a community meeting held at Bartram Trail High School on Sept. 30. “And they both have to do with growth. Growth in our school system is inevitable; it’s part of who we are the past 15 years and will likely be for the next 15 years as well.”

During his part of the presentation, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Brennan Asplen explained that the St. Johns County population has doubled since 2005 and so, too, has the student population. The half-cent sales tax, approved by voters for a 10-year term in 2015, is up for renewal. Asplen pointed out that the two referenda address two different funding sources (capital outlay for school construction and operational budget) since, per Florida Statute, money can’t be taken from one to pay for the other. The half-cent sales tax provides approximately \$37 million annually, which pays for things like new school construction, maintenance (\$25 million annually), school safety, and new technology.

“It’s important to note that construction costs have increased 63 percent over the past few years,” Asplen said. “Pine Island Academy, built just four years ago, cost \$38 million. Trout Creek Academy, built using the same blueprint, cost \$62 million.”



Photos by Martie Thompson

Asplen said that a Citizen’s Advisory Committee will continue to monitor and advise on expenditures. Visit [www.halfcentsuccess.com](http://www.halfcentsuccess.com) for a full list of projects funded by the half-cent sales tax.

The other referendum is new to St. Johns County, but not to many other counties in the state, including Duval, Clay and Nassau: an additional mill added to property taxes for teacher and staff pay. One mill equals \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed value, less homestead. St. Johns County School District Chief of Staff Michael Degutis handled this part of the presentation, and said 85 percent of funds would be used to recruit and retain high quality teachers and staff. He said that over the past several years, the Florida legislature has reduced local school millage by nearly two mills.

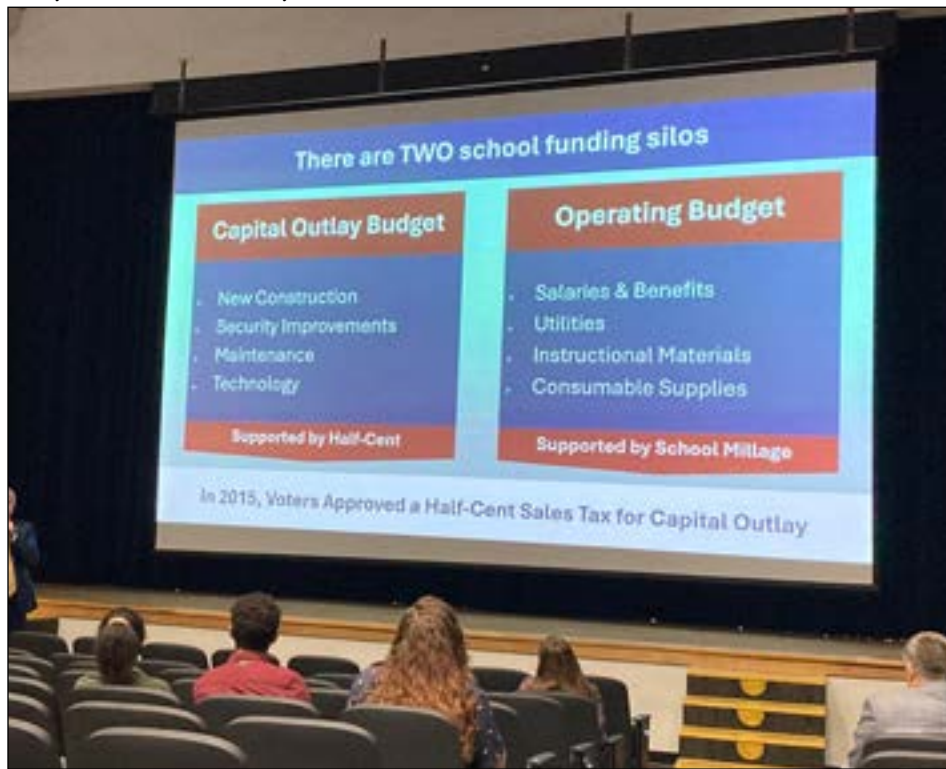
“We are facing operational challenges,” Degutis said. “The school district is by far the largest employer in St. Johns County, but we have historic vacancy levels for teachers and staff as we offer

less compensation than neighboring districts since they already have the additional mill and the money that brings in.”

Degutis said that the remaining 15 percent of funds raised through the additional mill would go to other specific operating expenses: school safety, student welfare (school nurses, which are not funded by the state) and enhanced programming for students (to include music, arts and technology.)

School Board District 1 member Beverly Slough also attended the community meeting and she encouraged attendees to vote for both of the referenda.

“This is a critical decision. We cannot afford to lose the half penny sales tax because that is what we use to build new schools,” Slough said. “On the other side, our students are deserving of excellent staff and they are deserving of supplements to their salaries. The additional mill will go a long way to retain all of the quality employees who contribute to the success of our schools.”



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# Life

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## Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps  
mail@floridanewsline.com

### Deanna Decker

Ever since she was a little girl, author Deanna Decker has loved to write and to act. She started with writing plays for friends in elementary school — plays that they would all eventually perform together for the neighborhood. At Florida State University as a communications and English major, she would continue with a script writing class and completed an internship at an NBC affiliate station as well as worked as a Disney character in Orlando while on school breaks. She also managed merchandise at a Planet Hollywood store. After graduation, Decker's father, a lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force, encouraged Decker to earn her Microsoft certification because he knew that she also had an interest in computers. She took his advice, and that decision eventually led to a job with Cerner, a supplier of health information technology platforms, services and hardware. She moved to Kansas City, Missouri, for the job where she met her husband, a database administrator also at Cerner. A few years later, he accepted a job at Shriners Hospitals for Children in Tampa, and the couple moved to the Tampa area. Decker continued to work remotely for Cerner. When the couple's first child, Aiden, now 18, was born, Decker decided that she would become a stay-at-home mother. Soon, they had now 16-year-old daughter Alaina. That season of life in Tampa



Photo courtesy Deanna Decker  
Deanna Decker

brought Decker, who is also certified as a Functional Medicine Coach, back to writing; she wrote "The Final Guardian," a young adult novel, in one year. After finishing the book, Decker sent it to one publisher, received a rejection letter and promptly shelved the manuscript. Meanwhile, the family made a move to Atlanta and then finally to Ponte Vedra Beach to be near family. Ten years later, Ava discovered the book on her mom's shelves. She read it, loved it, and wanted to know why it had not been published, very eager for the next installment. "In that moment, as a 47-year-old stay-at-home mom, I decided nothing would stop me from publishing my book. Since then, my children have been my biggest supporters, embodying the very lessons I've taught them. Whether we succeed or fail, the important thing is to try, because it is never too late to learn and grow," she said. Decker, who went on to self-publish "The Final Guardian" and whose pen name is D.M. Decker, is currently working on the second installment in the three-part series.

**Q: With a military father, you moved**

**every two to four years during your childhood. Which locations did you like the most?**

A: Germany just because of the amount of history, the things to see and the ease of getting around. I also liked living just outside of Washington, D.C., in Maryland in the North Potomac area because I spent three of my high school years there and loved it.

**Q: What prompted you to write a Young Adult novel?**

A: Some of my fondest memories are from my first three years of high school, so that is probably why my book comes out of that time period. Then, my family moved me my senior year. I had a lot of teenage angst as a result. I was able to use this in The Guardian Series which is a blend of high school drama and the fantasy of the past.

**Q: Where do you do most of your writing?**

A: I mainly write from home, in the car waiting for one of my kids at an after-school activity, or at one of the many local libraries.

**Q: What are your hobbies, and what do you like to do as a family?**

A: I like to play tennis at The Yards. We love to go hiking, very much outdoors people. We all love to go to amusement parks and have a goal to go to every one in the United States. We are big family people, especially with all of my family living in Jacksonville.

**Q: What is your personal philosophy towards life?**

A: I firmly believe the universe has our back, and sometimes we may not totally understand something, but there is a direction to it.

Ocean Palms cont. from pg. 1

is a varying exceptionalities teacher. New to Ocean Palms this year, her knack for creating a nurturing environment that creates a love for learning and willingness to make mistakes to learn and grow is an important part of her teaching philosophy. She believes it's about the small wins each day.

Finally, Dean, School-Related Employee of the Year, is the school's LEA clerk. From assistance in classrooms, to office help, to anything the school needs, Dean has been instrumental in the day-to-day happenings at Ocean Palms over the past six years. She enjoys working with the amazing staff and getting to interact with the students. That said, she believes the only way to do great work is to love what you do.

## Field of Dreams spring registration in process

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Registration is now open for the Spring 2025 season of Field of Dreams. The season begins on Jan. 18, 2025.

The Field of Dreams baseball league enables children with special needs (intellectual or physical disabilities) to have the opportunity to play baseball in an organized league, to wear a uniform, to have their names announced, to participate in the singing of the National Anthem before each game and to be a player on an athletic team. Players have a buddy to assist them as they play on a turf and fenced field with an announcer and an umpire.

The mission of Field of Dreams, 501c3 nonprofit organization, is to provide a sustainable voluntary organization that provides a safe, ADA compliant facility where special needs children of all ages can play baseball for free and be an active part of a thriving athletic association.

Visit [www.fodbbaseball.com](http://www.fodbbaseball.com) to register your child or to learn about sponsorship opportunities.

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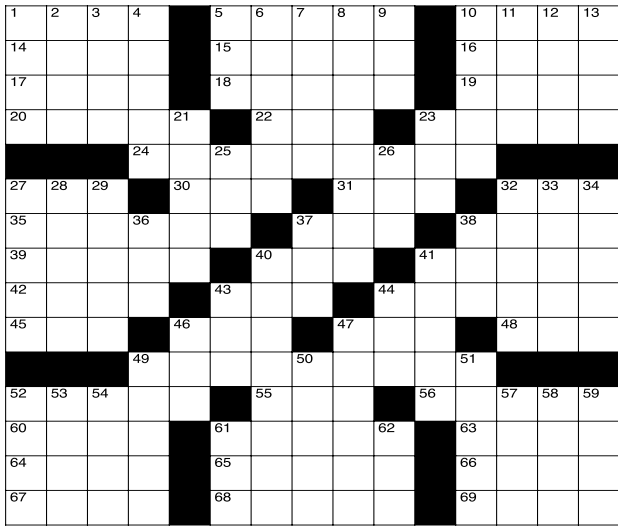
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# Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Long piece of squared timber
5. Emaciation
10. "Bewitched" boss Larry
14. Combining form meaning "different"
15. Current unit equal to 10 amperes
16. Older
17. Large, stocky lizard
18. Ringworm
19. Actor Pitt
20. Indian hand clash cymbals
22. Data at rest
23. Jeweled headdress
24. Indicators of when stories were written
27. Check
30. Cigarette (slang)
31. Arctic explorers (abbr.)
32. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
35. Delivered a speech
37. A place to bathe
38. Postmen deliver it
39. Surface in geometry
40. More (Spanish)
41. \_\_\_ and Venzetti
42. Exclamation at the end of a prayer
43. Hawaiian dish
44. Aggressively proud men
45. Fellow
46. Mark Wahlberg comedy
47. Mock
48. When you expect to get somewhere
49. Songs
52. Pair of small hand drums
55. Play
56. Sword
60. Evergreens and shrubs genus
61. Filmed
63. Italian Seaport
64. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
65. Pores in a leaf
66. U. of Miami mascot is one
67. Snake-like fishes
68. Pretended to be
69. Body part

### CLUES DOWN

1. Piece of felted material
2. Ancient Greek City
3. Aquatic plant
4. Potentially harmful fungus (Brit. sp.)
5. Body art (slang)
6. One who follows the rules
7. Ordinary
8. Honorably retired from assigned duties and retaining one's title
9. Relaxing space
10. Japanese socks
11. Indian city
12. Rip
13. Icelandic book
21. Satisfies
23. Where golfers begin
25. Small amount
26. Snag
27. Determine the sum of
28. A distinctive smell
29. Exposed to view
32. Stain or blemish
33. Small loop in embroidery
34. River herring genus
36. Large beer
37. Deep, red-brown sea bream
38. Partner to cheese
40. At a deliberate pace
41. Gurus
43. Of each
44. Angry
46. Popular beverage
47. Flower cluster
49. Blocks
50. Those who benefitted from efforts of relatives (slang)
51. Polio vaccine developer
52. A (usually) large and scholarly book
53. Popular soap ingredient
54. NBAer Bradley
57. Popular movie about a pig
58. Musician Clapton
59. Not a sure thing
61. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
62. Father

## MILITARY SERVICE WORD SEARCH

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

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

### WORDS

- ACTIVE ARMY CHIEF
- COMMANDER
- COUNTRY
- DEPLOYMENT
- DISCHARGE
- DRILL
- DUTY
- GUARD
- INACTIVE
- LIBERTY
- LIEUTENANT
- MARINES
- MILITARY
- NAVY
- OFFENSE
- OFFICER
- OPERATION
- QUARTERS
- RESERVE
- SERVICE
- TOUR
- VETERAN

## CRYPTO FUN



Solve the code to discover words related to veterans. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 26 = E)

- A. 12 26 17 26 22 9 14**  
Clue: One who served in the military
- B. 25 26 22 12 7 11 26**  
Clue: Participation in the military
- C. 25 5 14 5 22**  
Clue: Show of respect
- D. 12 9 3 5 22**  
Clue: Strength of mind or spirit

### American Legion Post cont. from pg. 1

made that ultimate sacrifice or the ones who still serve today for our freedoms and the things that we get due to their service," said Kay, who lives in St. Augustine and was a fourth grade teacher for 20 years in North Carolina.

Her goal is to gain new auxiliary members and reach a membership of 170. Kay noted that while they have just started the membership drive, they are currently at 60 percent of the goal.

Post 233 offers 17 programs through the auxiliary such as community service, veteran affairs and rehabilitation

and the "Be the One" mental health initiative to destigmatize asking for mental health support just to name a few. The American Legion includes four pillars of service: National Security (supporting the first responders), Mentoring Youth (going into schools and educating children), Veterans Care (veterans affairs and rehabilitation), and Americanism Patriotism (learning proper flag etiquette and respect of the flag and what that flag means and stands for).

As for the best way for the public to honor veterans this Veterans Day and

every day, Kay said it is very simple.

"If you see a veteran out in public — and you can often tell because they usually have a hat on indicating their service — just thank them for their service, especially those Vietnam veterans; just welcome them home. Also, donate to your local American Legion whether it is for hurricane relief or back to school supplies, knowing that's going back into the communities to support the veterans and the military families in the community," she said.

Also, Kay noted an important distinction between Memorial Day and

Veterans Day.

"Memorial Day is to honor the memory of the veterans who have served and gone before us. Veterans Day is to honor those that are still actively serving and those veterans who are still alive and with us here."

[Author's note: For more information about American Legion Post 233, call (616) 690-8410 or email [district5president@alaf1.org](mailto:district5president@alaf1.org). Kay noted there are many opportunities for members of the public to attend events at the Post such as bingo on Sundays and brunch on the first Sunday of every month.]

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**PopHistory**

By Scott A. Grant  
[mail@floridanewslines.com](mailto:mail@floridanewslines.com)

**Winning Florida**

Since the end of the Civil War, five men have run for president at the top of a major ticket more than twice. Interestingly, all five of those men have, so far, carried the State of Florida every time they ran. The five men are Grover Cleveland, William Jennings Bryan, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Richard M. Nixon, and Donald J. Trump. These are their stories.

When Grover Cleveland won the presidency in the election of 1884, he became the first Democrat elected to that office since 1856. There would not be another until 1912. Cleveland is sometimes remembered for marrying his much younger ward, the beautiful Francis Fulsom. He called her "Frankie." Cleveland was a conservative who opposed tariffs, subsidies, and "free silver." When he lost the election of 1888 to Benjamin Harrison, grandson of the ninth US President, William Henry Harrison, "Frankie" announced, "We'll be back" and in 1892 they were. Cleveland went two

and one in national elections, but won Florida every time.

Williams Jennings Bryan is probably best remembered for the "Cross of Gold" speech or for assisting in the prosecution of the Scopes Monkey Trial, which sought to criminally enforce a ban on the teaching of evolution in the State of Tennessee. Bryan was a "free silver" Democrat who lost three presidential elections in 1896, 1900, and 1908. He was opposed to the US dropping silver in favor of the gold standard. At the 1896 Democratic Convention in Chicago, the progressive populist declared, "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" Bryan lost three times nationally, but carried Florida all three times.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt remains one of the most popular presidents in our history. He won four elections from 1932 – 1944, all in landslides. FDR carried Florida and the rest of the south and then most of the rest of the country as well.

The "solid south" was still reliably Democrat. It would not turn red until the 1960s, but no one was going to beat FDR anywhere.

Richard M. Nixon ran for president in 1960, 1968, and 1972. In 1960, he lost one of the closest national elections ever to John F. Kennedy. Most of the south went for JFK. Florida did not. Florida historically had a strong anti-Catholic bias and it is said that was the deciding factor. Nixon was back in 1968 and he won nationally and in Florida, thanks in part to the third-party candidacy of Alabama governor and segregationist, George Wallace. Wallace carried five southern states and took enough votes from Hubert Humphrey elsewhere to make Nixon the winner. In 1972, Nixon defeated George McGovern in a landslide. He finished two and one nationally and 3 and 0 in Florida.

Donald J. Trump is now running for the third time. He has won one and lost one, while carrying Florida

both times. It is unclear how he will fare the third time around. Many hope he will win, many hope he will not. As of this writing, he is ahead in Florida and may win the state a third time regardless of how the national election turns out.

Interestingly, two of the men on this list, FDR and Nixon, both ran for vice president as well. FDR ran for vice president in 1920 on a ticket with James Cox. The pair lost to Warren G. Harding (on the short list of worst presidents ever), but carried Florida. Nixon ran as Eisenhower's vice president in 1952 and 1956. The pair won both elections nationally and carried Florida both times. Collectively, the five men on this list won the state of Florida in 18 of the last 35 elections. A Trump win of the state in November would bring that number to 19 out of 36.

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



# Taking a step toward better health: Foot care for diabetic seniors

By Dr. Candice Kennedy  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Millions of adults in the United States older than 65 live with diabetes, a condition that requires careful management of medications and blood sugar levels as well as lifestyle changes; however, one crucial aspect often overlooked is foot care. For older adults with diabetes, neglecting foot health can lead to serious complications, as minor issues like cuts or blisters can quickly escalate into more severe conditions.

Let's first identify the diabetic complications that primarily cause issues for your feet. The first is peripheral neuropathy, which is essentially nerve damage. Almost half of diabetes patients lose feeling in their feet that often prevents them from noticing injuries. And, when you don't

treat an injury, it often worsens.

Secondly, many diabetic seniors suffer from peripheral artery disease (PAD), which reduces blood flow to the feet. This delays healing and increases the risk of infection. Many patients with PAD also develop open sores called foot ulcers.

All of these complications can lead to serious, sometimes life-threatening, issues. Untreated wounds can turn into chronic infections. The bacteria from these infections can spread to bones leading to other issues that may require hospitalization. These infections can even lead to amputation. Studies show diabetes causes 60 percent of non-traumatic lower-limb amputations, and serious foot injury complications have been linked to a higher mortality rate among older adults with diabetes.

Luckily, all of these complications are preventable. It is possible to lead a long and healthy life with diabetes if you receive the right care. Diabetic seniors must also wear supportive, well-fitting shoes. There are diabetic-type shoes that are designed to minimize pressure points, which can help reduce the risk of ulcers. Caring for your feet also means keeping them moisturized to prevent dry, cracked skin from turning into an infection; however, remember to avoid leaving moisture between the toes, which can cause fungal growth.

It is also important for diabetic seniors to regularly see their podiatrist. Podiatrists can trim nails, check for complications and provide specialized care. You can take it one step further and schedule an annual comprehensive foot exam that

assesses circulation, nerve function and skin integrity.

Foot health is an essential part of overall health for seniors with diabetes, and it's not something that should be overlooked. Maintaining healthy feet helps ensure mobility, independence and an active lifestyle, crucial traits for both physical and mental well-being. Taking foot health seriously today can prevent major issues tomorrow.

*Dr. Candice Kennedy is the founder and owner of Total Foot Care & Wellness Clinic, which operates five locations throughout Jacksonville. The clinic's staff treat conditions such as injuries, bunions, corns and calluses, diabetic foot problems and plantar fasciitis. Visit [TheTFCClinic.com](http://TheTFCClinic.com) to learn more.*

## Explore resources for caregivers

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

While many caregivers are professionals hired for their services, a good number of caregivers are informal — meaning they are family members or friends assisting loved ones. Even though they are trying to help others, caregivers often must con-

front a form of stress known as caregiver burnout. The Cleveland Clinic states this stress is marked physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that occurs in caregivers. This burnout may lead to fatigue, anxiety and depression.

While there may not be a way to com-

pletely eliminate all caregiving stress, there are some ways to prevent burnout. Utilizing various resources can be a start.

- **Trusted friend:** Find someone you trust with whom you can discuss your feelings, including any frustration you may feel. This can be a neighbor or a coworker with whom you feel comfortable sharing personal details.
- **Support groups:** Support groups can provide safe spaces to vent with others who are in the same boat. Houses of worship may host support groups, or you can find out about meetings through hospitals or from personal doctors. The National Family Caregiver Support Program was established in 2000 and provides grants to states and territories to fund a range of support that assists

family and informal caregivers to care for their loved ones at home for as long as possible. Other groups include Caregiver Action Network and Family Caregiver Alliance.

- **Respite care services:** Respite care services provide temporary breaks for caregivers by enabling the sick, elderly or injured to stay in care facilities for anywhere from a couple of hours to a few days. Some respite care services will provide short-term, in-home care as well.
- **Professional therapist:** Many therapists are trained to counsel individuals who have particular issues. Some may specialize in grief or even caregiver needs. Utilize their services if speaking with a confidante is not enough.



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## Tips for daily living with arthritis

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Arthritis isn't a single disease, but a term that refers to more than 100 conditions characterized by joint pain or joint disease, says the Arthritis Foundation. Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, and affects women at a proportionally higher rate than men.

Arthritis looks and feels different to the various people who experience it, and symptoms can vary from day to day depending on variables such as the weather and individuals' level of physical activity. When arthritis flares up, it can make performance of daily activities challenging. Therefore, people experiencing arthritis can take steps to make living with the condition somewhat easier.

**Work with an occupational therapist:** An occupational therapist can assess work and home situations and make recommendations on potential modifications to these spaces that might be right for your situation. The bathroom and kitchen typically are two spaces where people spend a lot of time and can be areas of focus. Having items at counter height; purchasing smaller

sizes of products that are easier to hold; avoiding bending down by using a grabber tool; and having a chair or stool nearby so that you can sit while doing an activity can help.

**Use smart devices:** The bevy of smart devices now available can work to your advantage. With the push of a button on a phone app or through voice control, you can turn on lights, switch the thermostat or perform any other tasks programmed around the house. This can help when mobility is compromised.

**Focus on kitchen tasks:** Meal preparation can be a chore when arthritis makes it painful. Rather than eating out all of the time, some tips can help. Utilize frozen fruit or vegetables that already are chopped and prepared to cut down on these tasks. Invest in lightweight cookware and dishes to simplify moving items around. Electric jar openers, kitchen scissors and even vegetable steamers that require less water are additional kitchen tools that can make life with arthritis a little easier.

**Move your bedroom:** If climbing stairs repeatedly is problematic, move clothing or even your bedroom downstairs



Photo courtesy MetroCreative  
Arthritis affects millions of individuals around the world. By making some changes, people living with the condition can find life a little bit easier.

to reduce trips up and down. Additional relocation techniques can include putting a mini fridge in your bedroom or relocating the washer and dryer upstairs to make laundry easier.

**Get a rollator:** A rollator is a wheeled walker that doubles as a seat. It provides support when walking, but also can be a comfortable place to stop and take a seated break.

**Get the right pain relief:** Pain relief can make it easier to cope. Strategies include anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy and massages, stretching and exercising, and even prescription therapies that target the immune system in people with autoimmune arthritis. Work with health professionals to get the right combination of what is needed to alleviate pain and stiffness.



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# What to know about exercise and dementia risk

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Three seconds go by in a flash, but that's enough time for another person to join the masses already diagnosed with dementia. According to Alzheimer's Disease International, every three seconds someone in the world develops dementia, a condition that more than 55 million people were living with in

2020.

The World Health Organization notes that various diseases and injuries that affect the brain can contribute to dementia. As menacing a threat as dementia presents, individuals are not helpless against it. In fact, exercise, which can help lower risk for heart disease, stroke and various other conditions, can be a valuable ally against

dementia as well.

## What is the link between exercise and dementia?

Dementia remains something of a mystery, but the Alzheimer's Society notes that evidence is now strong enough to support the assertion that lack of physical exercise increases a person's risk of developing dementia. The Alzheimer's Society also notes that researchers have discovered improvements in thinking and memory and reduced rates of dementia among middle-aged and older adults who exercised compared to those that did not.

## Is cardio the most effective exercise at lowering dementia risk?

Speaking with CNBC, Silky Singh Pahlajani, a clinical professor of behavioral neurology and neuropsychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine, noted that cardiovascular exercise, often referred to as cardio, can provide the biggest benefit for brain health of any form of exercise. Cardiovascular exercise can increase heart rate, which helps deliver oxygen cells to the brain. The National Institutes of Health notes that oxygen shortages prevent the brain from working as well as it should, and a 2023 study published in the journal Redox Biology found that oxygen abnormality plays a crucial role in the occurrence and progression of Alzheimer's disease.

## How should aging adults approach exercise if they have been largely sedentary?



Photo courtesy MetroCreative  
Exercise, which can help lower risk for heart disease, stroke and various other conditions, can be a valuable ally against dementia as well.

Middle-aged and older adults who have not been physically active throughout their adult life but want to begin incorporating exercise into their daily routines are urged to speak with their physicians prior to beginning a fitness regimen. Preexisting conditions may make it difficult, if not impossible, to engage in certain forms of exercise. A personal physician can consider a patient's unique medical history and then recommend certain exercises that won't put him or her in jeopardy of suffering an injury or illness. A gradual approach to exercising is typically best for individuals who have lived a sedentary lifestyle. Starting off slowly with a short walk or light physical activity like gardening can help the body acclimate to physical activity at a safe pace. As adults bodies' become more accustomed to exercise, men and women can then gradually increase the intensity of their workouts, switching from walking to jogging on a treadmill when possible.

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## Second annual Alice B. Landrum Cross Country Invitational held

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

The second annual Alice B. Landrum Cross Country Invitational brought together middle school teams from Liberty Pines Academy, Palm Valley Academy, Lake Asbury Junior High, St. John's Academy, Duval Charter School at Coastal and host Landrum Middle School. Despite a rainy start, the weather cleared for the 3K races. The event showcased impressive performances, with notable individual achievements

from Vespo Latino (first place, girls' race) and Liam Heffernan (first place, boys' race), both from Landrum.

In the girls' race, strong finishes included Hayden Warren (second place, Liberty Pines), Lucy Lommel (third place, Landrum), Audra Davis (fourth place, Landrum), and Micaela Simpson (fifth place, Palm Valley). In the team standings, Landrum secured first place, followed by Palm Valley, Lake Asbury, Liberty Pines, St. John's Academy and



Photos courtesy Jennifer Werba

Vespo Latino and Liam Heffernan from Landrum, the first place winners.

Duval Charter School at Coastal.

For the boys, standout finishes were from Louis Lyons (second place, Liberty Pines), Collin Bovee (third place, Landrum), Rafe Lommel (fourth place, Landrum), and Ben Kimber (fifth place, Landrum). The boys' team rankings had Landrum in first, followed by Palm Valley, Lake Asbury, Liberty Pines, St. Johns Academy, and Duval Charter School at Coastal.



Runners from Palm Valley Academy.

## Ocean Palms flips into fall

By Lisa Farese  
mail@floridanewslines.com

On Sept. 19, Ocean Palms Elementary opened its doors to students and their families for what started as a traditional open house event; however, there was an exciting twist. An acrobatic show from Orlando's WeFlip Entertainment, Acrobatic Science, awaited the students and their families — speed equals motion, equals flips! From human levers, to high-climbing feats, this adrenaline-filled show awed the audience. Families also visited classrooms, shopped the book fair, and enjoyed the concession stand and Tikiz.

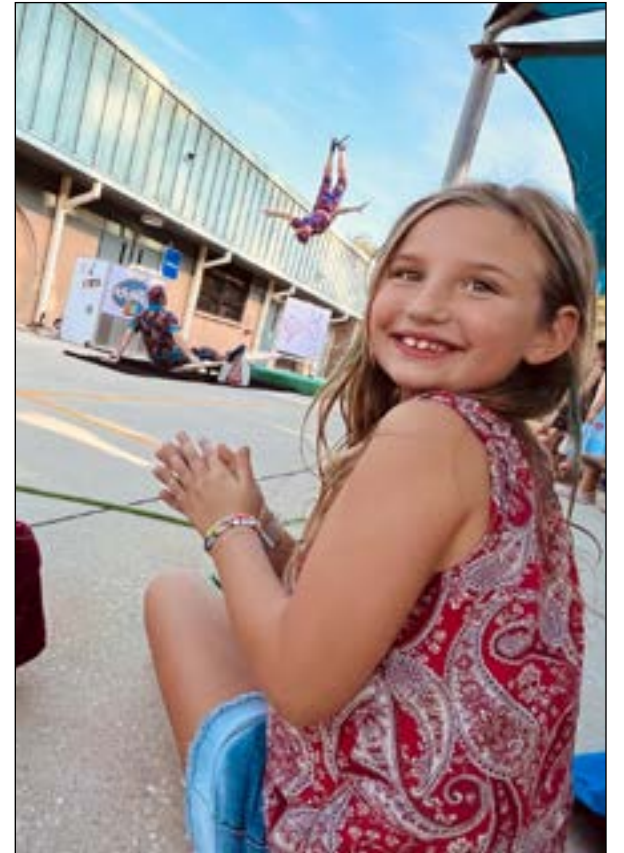


Photo courtesy Lisa Farese

Students and families enjoy the acrobatic show at Ocean Palms' Open House.



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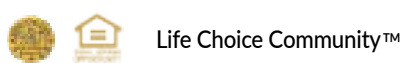
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