

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

JULY 2024 Volume 11 Issue 7

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

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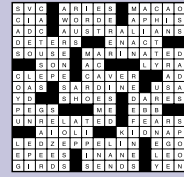
page 3
BFF Best Furry Friend



page 5
Q&A with
Vicky Oakes



page 9
Get To Know ...
Stu Levin



page 10
Puzzles



Photo courtesy St. Johns County

American Flag Rescue Program flag drop-off boxes are conveniently located throughout St. Johns County.

St. Johns County rescues 11,000 American Flags

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

St. Johns County started its American Flag Rescue Program in 2019. As of mid-June, it has rescued more than 11,000 American flags through this program, which allows residents to properly retire flags with honor and respect. American Flag Drop boxes are available to the public at more than 35 locations throughout St. Johns County. In February 2024, the 10,000th flag was collected at the St. Johns County Tax Collector's office. A special video was produced with Tax Collector Dennis Hollingsworth to celebrate the milestone.

The county's recycling coordinator, Christopher Benjamin, founded the American Flag Rescue Program.

Flag rescue program cont. on pg. 9

Meet the Citizens: Special needs community center to open in spring

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

As the saying goes, mom knows best.

Case in point: Lynn Yeager thought she wanted to go into a career in counseling after she had earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education.

"But my mom said, 'You are not going to be good at that.' She was right. I briefly tried it, and I was not good at it," said Yeager, BridgeHaven Academy's executive director.

So, she took her mom's advice and earned her master's degree in educational leadership, and then secured a specialist degree in exceptional education.

"I got into exceptional education because I taught gifted and talented. I started to become interested in exceptional education, and this was well before I had a son with autism," said Yeager. "It was kind of like I was all over the place until I landed here and then everything all of a sudden made sense."

Yeager taught at various schools before opening BridgeHaven Academy in 2016, located in Ponte Vedra Beach. Yeager's son, Jacob Christman Yeager, was born in 2004 with autism and is non verbal. BridgeHaven was born out of necessity to provide a place for Jacob and others who wanted to communicate through typing.



Photo courtesy Lynn Yeager

Candles, soaps, cards and more made by the citizens.



Photo courtesy Lynn Yeager

Emma Haywood and Shane Romanczuk learning cooking skills.

BridgeHaven embraces the "facilitated communication" (FC) model in which supported typing is taught as a method of alternative communication. People whose verbal communication with others is severely impaired can express themselves through FC. BridgeHaven Academy has served 10 full time students, aged 12 and up, while also serving 25 families outside of that group with a Communication Clinic.

Now aging out of the program, the "citizens" as Yeager likes to refer to her participants, are ready for the next phase — their purpose in life. The youngest student in the program is now 18, and the program runs on the Redeemer Church campus.

That's why Yeager has been

working for two years on opening The Community Center at Bethel Point on two-and-a-half acres located at 236 North Roscoe Boulevard — to honor her son and to serve those in need.

"I wanted it to be a place for everybody," she said, adding that Bethel means "The Lord's Place."

It is slated to open in spring 2025 and will be a community center serving all types of special needs adults. BridgeHaven will eventually be absorbed into the new center. Yeager emphasized that it is not an adult daycare, and all participants must function independently or with the assistance of a caregiver.

The community center is being modeled after Brookwood in Georgetown (BiG) through a replication model. It is a God-centered, vocational community that

Meet the Citizens cont. on pg.10



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Molly Ronan is the new Florida Rose of Tralee



Photo courtesy Molly Ronan

Molly Ronan of Ponte Vedra Beach was named the 2024 Florida Rose of Tralee as decided by a judging panel at the Rosen Center Hotel in Orlando. Ronan will represent Florida in the Rose of Tralee in Kerry, Ireland this August. In Ireland she will journey on the Rose tour, where she will have a chance to connect with a class of 31 other Irish and International Roses, each representing Irish communities around the world. The tour will culminate in Tralee where she will be featured on RTÉ (the international Irish television broadcast) and the International Rose will be selected. Visit <https://roseoftralee.ie/> for more information.

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Watering restrictions: What you need to know

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns River Water Management District's watering restrictions are designed to ensure the efficient use of water for landscape irrigation. The restrictions allow enough water to maintain healthy landscapes year-round.

The mandatory restrictions specify the time when watering may occur, the amount of water that may be applied, and the days when watering may occur for residential and nonresidential locations. These days depend on whether the address ends in an odd or even number, and on the time of year.

During Daylight Saving Time, homes with odd numbered or no addresses

should water on Wednesdays and Saturdays, while homes with even numbered addresses should water on Thursdays and Sundays

During Eastern Standard Time, homes with odd numbered or no addresses should water on Saturday, while homes with even numbered addresses should water on Sunday.

In all cases, homeowners should water only when needed and not between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Also, water for no more than one hour per zone. Restrictions apply to private wells and pumps, ground or surface water and water from public and private utilities.

Visit <https://waterlessflorida.com/> for more information.

Coming in August!

BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE

Contact Linda Gay
linda@floridanewsline.com
904.607.5062

July

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 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 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: Vicar's Landing monthly Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, July 2 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 all the proceeds. Call Janet Nicosia at (904) 607-2078 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610 for more information.

6th: Wellness events at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in July 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.

9th: Candidate Forum for St. Johns County Commissioner District 1, 3, and 5 candidates will be held on July 9 at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Drive. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and the event will begin at 6 p.m. The forum is hosted by the Palm Valley

Community Association in collaboration with the Ponte Vedra Community Association.

9th: Bingo will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Tuesdays from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. for four weeks beginning Thursday, July 9. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

9th: Adult Coloring Club will meet at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on July 9 from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and July 23 from 1 p.m. - 2:30 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.

9th: COA Travel Club's upcoming trips will be presented on Tuesday, July 9 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane. The COA Travel Club for St. Johns County seniors was created in partnership with Bartimus Travel Group of St. Augustine. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

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

12th: Food Truck Friday will be held on July 12 and July 26 from 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. This event is open to the public.

13th: The GTM Research Reserve will host Family Seining on July 13 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/>

16th: Chef Warren: Thrill of the Grill will be held at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on July 16 from 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. Chef Warren will share tips and hints about grilling and the best ways to prepare a variety of foods. He will end his presentation with a cooking demonstration of grilled marinated swordfish. Registration required; visit sjcpls.org or call (904) 827-6950.

16th: Purely Social Happy Hour hosted by Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will be held on July 16 at 5:30 p.m. at Cruiser's Grill, 319 23rd Ave. South in Jacksonville Beach. This is an informal gathering for women to get to know each other. Free for members; \$10 for non-members. Visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more information.

16th: Fire Safety presentation by St. Johns County Fire and Rescue will be held at COA Center at UF Health Nocatee on July 16 at 10 a.m. Learn what you need to know to protect you and your family; people with hearing, sight, and physical disabilities may be at a higher risk. Contact pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling (904) 814-9407 for more information.

17th: Teen Maker Stations at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library will be held on July 17 and July 24 from 3 p.m. - 4 p.m. Included will be circuits, LEGO Robotics, candle making, card making, button making and fuser beads as well as snacks and drinks. Call the library at (904) 827-6950 for more information.

17th: 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, July 17) from 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. A genealogy expert will guide attendees in discovering their ancestors. Register by email to pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or by calling (904) 814-9407.

18th: St. Johns County Republican Party District 4 monthly meeting will be held on the third Thursday of each month (this month, July 18) at 6:15 p.m.

at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd. Visit stjohns.gov for more information.

20th: Ponte Vedra Writers Group will host award-winning Christian suspense author Joni M. Fisher, who will present "Editing Down to the Bones," a comprehensive workshop on editing your novel, at its meeting on Saturday, July 20 at 11 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. The meeting is free and open to the public. Visit www.floridawriters.org for more information.

20th: The Nocatee Farmers Market: Gatorland will be held on Saturday, July 20 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

22nd: Ponte Vedra Democratic Club will hold its monthly meeting on Monday, July 22, at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library 101 Library Road. Chat and Chew begins at 5:30 p.m. before the meeting begins at 6 p.m. Featured speaker is Al Sandrick, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the National Weather Service, Jacksonville, who will discuss climate change and this year's hurricane forecast. Email PVDemClub@gmail.com for more information.

25th: Free Tech Help with David will be held on Thursday, July 25 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.

30th: Nutrition classes from Feeding Northeast Florida will be offered at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center on Tuesday, July 30 from 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Topics covered include My Plate, Basic Cooking Skills, Food Safety, Shopping on a Budget, Meal Planning and Physical Activity. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

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with St. Johns County Commissioner Krista Joseph District 4

Q: Can you let us know some of the things that have caught your attention while serving on the Library Advisory Committee?

A: One thing I have learned is that our St. Johns County Public Libraries have all kinds of things besides books, audiobooks, and videos for patrons to check out with their library cards. There is a Library of Things, which includes non-traditional items such as telescopes, color blind glasses, ukuleles, chess sets, CD players, and Library Adventure Packs with binoculars, maps and a compass.

One sweet story of a patron involves a widow who had a cassette recording of her late husband's voice, but no cassette player to listen to it on. The library was able to lend her one. Individual branches have different items, so be sure to check with your local library to see what they have available. I'm so glad we're serving our community in this way.

Q: What's the latest you have to report on the beach renourishment project?

A: The beach in Ponte Vedra Beach is almost finished with renourishment. It's incredible — the beach is almost two times as wide and with this extra width, the dunes are more protected since the water is out farther. Also, the color of the sand used is causing the color of the water to just be beautiful.

Q: While talking about the beach, do you have any safety tips to share?

A: Our lifeguards are out in full force and it's always a good idea to swim near a lifeguard. But be careful to never swim near someone who is fishing. Swimmers could get hooked or, it's important to remember that a struggling fish on the end of a line can attract predator fish to the immediate area.

Q: Do you have any update on the nearly concluded budget process for

this year?

A: I'm not thrilled with how it's going right now. I would like to see a tax rollback in accordance with property tax TRIM notices this year. This "rollback rate," would essentially allow the county to collect the same amount of money as last year and would result in homeowners paying less in taxes than with the new budget proposal. I think we need to find alternate funding sources, like we did with the bonds for the new parks and the public safety improvements. We also need to consider our wants and needs and adjust accordingly. I'm going to try to convince my fellow commissioners at our upcoming meetings to do the rollback to try to provide some relief to taxpayers.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc4k-joseph@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 679-2620.



with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: When is the 2024 Primary Election?

A: The 2024 Primary Election is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2024. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Voters must vote at their assigned precinct on Election Day.

Early voting will be available from Saturday, Aug. 10, through Saturday, Aug. 17, from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily at all locations. A list of early voting locations will be available 30-days prior to the election at www.votesjc.gov. During early voting, voters can vote at any location.

Q: Is there a deadline for registering to vote or changing my party for the 2024 Primary Election?

A: Yes. The deadline for the 2024 Primary Election is Monday, July 22. To register to vote or change party affiliation online, visit www.votesjc.gov.

Q: Have candidates that are running for office filed their papers?

A: Yes. Candidate qualifying ended June 14 and the 2024 Primary Election ballot has been set.

Q: How can I find out who will be on my ballot?

A: A sample ballot will be mailed to every registered voter unless they requested a vote-by-mail ballot or a sample ballot by email. Sample ballots are mailed three weeks prior to the election, as well as being available on our website by using the "My Voter Status" tool.

A list of Primary Election candidates is also available on our website along with

a full list of candidates who qualified with the Elections Office.

Q: When will vote-by-mail ballots be mailed?

A: Vote-by-mail ballots will first be mailed July 6 to overseas and military voters. The ballots for all other voters who requested a vote-by-mail ballot will be mailed mid-July. The deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed is Thursday, Aug. 8, by 5 p.m.

Visit www.votesjc.gov to request a vote-by-mail ballot. Voters can also use the "My Voter Status" tool to confirm that they have a vote-by-mail request on file, or to track the status of their ballot.

Vote-by-mail ballots must be returned to the Elections Office by 7 p.m. on Election Day to be counted. Secure Ballot Intake Stations will be available at all early voting locations during the hours of voting.

Q: Where can I find more information about the 2024 Primary Election?

A: The St. Johns County Citizen's Guide to the 2024 Primary and General Elections is being mailed to all residences in St. Johns County to share important information about the upcoming elections. Residents can expect to receive the guide mid-July.

You can also call the Elections Office with any questions you may have at (904) 823-2238, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. My staff and I are here to serve you, and we will make it easy for you to vote.

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St. Johns County Sheriff

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Vicky Oakes
St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections

2024 Primary Election
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For registration and election information, call or visit:
904.823.2238 www.votesjc.gov



with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: What can you tell us about the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office aviation unit?

A: We refer to them as our "eyes in the sky." Currently we have two aircraft: a 2013 Bell 407 that we bought used from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and a 1969 Vietnam-era Bell OH-58 that we acquired repurposed in the 1990s under Sheriff Perry from the federal government under the 1033 program. It's important to have two aircraft in case one is undergoing maintenance. About two years ago, we ordered a new

Bell 407 to replace the 1969 aircraft, since parts are becoming scarce for repairs to that aircraft. We anticipate getting the new aircraft in late 2024.

We currently lease space at the St. Augustine Regional Airport and share a hangar with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), which also has two helicopters.

Q: What personnel does the unit have?

A: The aviation unit is under the Opera-

tions Division. We have four pilots and the lead pilot has the rank of sergeant. These pilots are all very experienced and the goal is to get the aircraft in the air more, which we have been successful in doing. In 2023, we flew 475 flight hours; so far in 2024 we have 590 flight hours. The unit also has two full time mechanics and a part time mechanic.

Q: What are some highlights of the "eyes in the sky?"

A: They are able to assist us in real time, which adds an extra layer of safety for the community as well as our deputies. For example, they can advise the deputy sheriffs who are in cars as to oncoming traffic.

Flights by our aviation unit are both reactive and proactive — and they can physically respond to calls for service, such as swimmers in distress, stolen vehicles, missing children or elderly, suspected criminals in pursuit, in progress calls and the proactive traffic enforcement for traffic stops.

Q: Do you partner with other agencies?

A: We have many partnerships with local agencies such as St. Johns Fire and Rescue, St. Augustine City Fire Department, and surrounding municipalities. We provide mutual aid for Clay, Flagler and Putnam counties as well as St. Johns County municipalities, Florida Highway Patrol, and FWC. We have a great partnership with the city of Jacksonville as well. Since the closest US Coast Guard Search and Rescue is in Savannah, Georgia, we bolster their search and rescue attempts. We can get on the scene quicker in our area and drop a raft if necessary, but we can't hoist up to our aircraft. We patrol 221 square miles of water in St. Johns County in addition to our 42 miles of beaches. We know lives are being saved because of our aviation unit.

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.

Summer volunteer orientation announced

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

RSVP of St. Johns County and the St. Johns County School District will host a volunteer orientation on Tuesday, July 23 for individuals interested in learning more about tutoring and mentoring students in our county.

"We will be sharing strategies with

volunteers who are currently serving and those who are interested in volunteering," said Cheryl Freeman, director of RSVP of St. Johns County.

The conference will take place 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. For more information and to register, contact Cheryl Freeman at Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us or (904) 547-3952.

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Landrum Middle School has a new principal

By Jack Kasting, Florida A&M University journalism student
mail@floridanewline.com

At the end of this past school year, St. Johns County Superintendent Tim Forson met with Troy Kasting and informed him he was selected to serve as the new principal of Landrum Middle School.

Kasting has worked many years in the school district. As a teacher, he taught social studies, including Advanced Placement Psychology as well as Advanced Placement U.S. History. Kasting has years of administrative experience as well. He was St. Johns County School District school services coordinator, as well as assistant principal at Creekside High School and Pedro Menendez High School.

Prior to entering public education, Kasting served in the United States Air Force as an instructor, and later in the Tennessee Air National Guard. He says that taking on the role of instructor in the military paved the way for him to enter public education.

When asked what he will be focusing on this upcoming school year, Kasting said, "It will be mainly continuing the fine work that the previous principal Mr. Guy Harris began three years ago."

Kasting has been friends with Harris for many years and said Landrum has been in good hands for the last three years. Kasting's goal is to ensure the teachers



Photo courtesy Troy Kasting
Former Landrum Middle School principal Guy Harris with new Landrum Middle School principal Troy Kasting.

can be as effective as possible and that the students have any option they wish to pursue as they transition to high school.

"Landrum is among the highest performing middle schools in the State of Florida," he said. "The high level of instruction and care that the teachers demonstrate towards the students is exemplary. Landrum is definitely not a school that needs to be turned upside down."

[Author's Note: In full disclosure, Troy Kasting happens to be my dad and his new appointment is poignant for me because I spent my middle school years at Landrum. Many of the teachers that taught me are still teaching there to this day. One of the things as a Landrum Lion I still remember to this day was how supportive and caring the Landrum teachers were.]



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Do you ever wonder what it is that makes some doctors so incredibly compassionate while others have a bedside manner better suited for the DMV?

In the case of Dr. Jann Turpin, DOM, AP of Riverplace Acupuncture Integrative Health it is a case of true empathy. "I suffered from chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy while battling Stage III breast cancer."

Peripheral neuropathy, which affects over 20 million people in the U.S., is weakness, numbness and pain from nerve damage, usually in the hands and feet. "My feet were burning at night and my fingers were numb and tingling all day. If my feet got cold, the pain was so intense I had to sit down."

Peripheral neuropathy is normally a degenerative condition, but since Dr. Turpin's neuropathy was caused by chemotherapy, it was expected to improve. However, doctors said that improvement could take months or years and the medications prescribed weren't working. She knew she couldn't live like that.

It wasn't until her primary care doctor sent her to an acupuncturist that she found real relief.

"This is why I often refer to my practice as 'The Last Resort With the Best Results.' You've been everywhere else and been given the same disheartening prognosis, prescribed the same medications and told this is just something you're going to have to learn to live with."

Soon after her first experience with the healing arts, she made the life changing decision to abandon her 13 year computer programming career and pursue her education in acupuncture.

Acupuncture quite literally saved my life and I wanted to share that with the world," she proclaims.

Your Golden Years Should Be Golden

While in school, she watched as her grandmother began to suffer from peripheral neuropathy. "Your golden years should be golden, not plagued with insufferable pain while doctors and specialists tell you there is nothing they can do." Understanding that Eastern Medicine excels where Western medicine fails, Dr. Turpin set forth to develop treatment protocols for all variations of Peripheral Neuropathy (including diabetic and chemotherapy-induced) and now has a 90% success rate in treating this once difficult to manage condition.

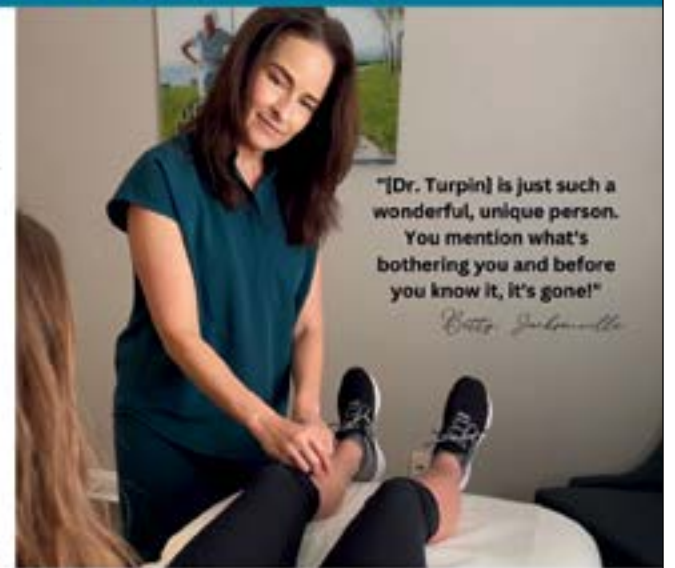
"I was tired of seeing the older generation suffer unnecessarily," shares Dr. Turpin. "Diagnosing them as 'just getting older' and giving them a treatment plan of 'you're just going to have to get used to it' has never sat well with me so I wanted to offer them a real option for treatment and care."

The Magic of Compassionate Care

And what do those in her care have to say?

"Dr. Turpin looked me in my eyes and wanted to know about me, not just my condition. I feel like a person, not just a patient," shares Jesse. "In fact, I don't think she ever used the word patient." Others proclaim "she saved my life", "her neuropathy treatments gave me my life back," and "it's a miracle she treated my fibromyalgia. I don't know how else to explain it."

Dr. Jann Turpin has a long, personal history in complicated, difficult to understand conditions and understands how tragic it can all be if left untreated. "I have sat where my patients sit. I've experienced their pain and suffering in a very real way. I know the frustration of feeling hopeless on an intimate level.



"[Dr. Turpin] is just such a wonderful, unique person. You mention what's bothering you and before you know it, it's gone!"
Betty Jacksonville

That's why I practice the brand of medicine I do and why I've made it my life's mission to treat the 'untreatable'. It brings me joy when I get to say 'I can help you'.

Furthermore, Dr. Turpin isn't opposed to more modern medical solutions. "It's in blending the time-tested science of acupuncture with recent innovations in medicine that get me the best results." One of those advancements is ATP Resonance BioTherapy. Originally developed by NASA it aids nerves in regeneration by providing them with the nutrients they need to repair and renew, "very similar to what water does for a plant!"

Dr. Turpin and her staff specialize in treating chronic pain, complicated neurological conditions and autoimmune diseases that leave other professionals scratching their heads. Ready to schedule? Call (904) 720-8887 for a comprehensive consultation today. For more information about Dr. Jann Turpin and what she treats, visit www.RiverplaceAcupuncture.com.

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Briefs

Ponte Vedra Beach Candidate Forum announced

The Palm Valley Community Association, in collaboration with the Ponte Vedra Community Association, will host a Candidate Forum for the St. Johns County Commissioner candidates for Districts 1, 3 and 5 on July 9. The event will be held at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Drive in Ponte Vedra Beach. The doors will open at 5:30 p.m., and the event will begin at 6 p.m.

All qualified candidates for this office who have been certified by the Florida Division of Elections to appear on the August 2024 Primary Election ballot are expected to participate. For those who may not know, all County Commission seats are elected countywide.

The Ponte Vedra Beach Candidate Forum is a nonpartisan event that ensures all participants can share their thoughts in a fair and civil discussion. An experienced moderator will lead the process, providing a respectful and informative exchange of ideas on issues of interest to St. Johns County voters.

“Those who represent St. Johns County on the County Commission carry an enormous responsibility. Together, these five community leaders make the critical decisions that affect the services provided to our citizens and help our county navigate the significant challenges of a rapidly growing population. We need intel-

ligent and thoughtful people in these roles, and for that to happen, we must make informed decisions,” said Greg Leonard, president of the Palm Valley Community Association.

Coastal Friends elects new board of directors

At Coastal Friends’ monthly luncheon on Wednesday, June 5 at Marsh Landing Country Club, the existing executive board and committee chairs were thanked for their service as they transitioned out of their positions. A new board of directors was inducted for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.

As usual, there will not be any monthly luncheons during July and August, but will start up again in September. Additionally, some activities are curtailed during the summer, but others will continue to take place such as canasta, Mah Jongg and book club. New members are welcome throughout the

year. Contact brookemeister@msn.com for more information.

Hospital unveils expanded state-of-the-art rehabilitation center

Baptist Beaches/Wolfson Children’s Rehabilitation Center has announced the opening of its new, larger facility on the Baptist Beaches campus, an expansion to meet the community’s growing need for convenient access to rehabilitation services.

The new 6,000-square-foot facility represents a leap forward in rehabilitative care. Equipped with the latest technology, including a ZeroG® Gait and Balance System and an adult pelvic health program, the center is designed to transform the approach to physical, occupational, speech and massage therapies. The ZeroG system protects pediatric patients from falls by using a harness which connects to

Briefs cont. on pg.9



Coastal Friends: Donna Berger; Bonnie Chandler, Recording Secretary; Anita Walker, Corresponding Secretary; Gloria Myers, Treasurer; Brooke Freeman, Co-President; Nancy Scott, Co-President; Shirin Brenick, Vice President.

Overcapacity roads. Overcrowded schools that are no longer ranked #1 in the state. Vote out the commissioners who are overdeveloping our county.

Fl. Dept. of Ed.

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Challenging Whitehurst. Ann-Marie owned a thriving law firm.* Mom to 7, she is the proud wife of a retired police officer. Ann-Marie is exposing wasteful county spending.
*Admitted to practice law in WA only

ElectAnn-Marie.com



Challenging Henry Dean. Ann has two sons in our schools and is a former businesswoman of 25 years. A current HOA board president, Ann helped win the fight against a wood burning polluter in our county.

VoteAnnTaylor.com

Life

travel · pantry raiders · gardening
fishing · entertainment · puzzles

Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewslines.com

Stu Levin

The retirement years look a little different in Stu Levin's world. That's because he powerlifts and arm wrestles competitively, something he began in his early 70s. Now 79 and a world champion, he continues to compete in both sports all around the world and works out three hours each day, five days a week, to do so. Levin moved to Florida in 2004 and retired from a 36-year career in the legal field around 2010. His interest in fitness began when his son introduced him to the Brown Family YMCA in Ponte Vedra Beach. Levin, who is from Atlantic City, NJ, started to focus on weightlifting, specifically the bench press and the strict curl, which ended up complementing his future arm wrestling career. In 2015, Stu and Alice attended a Renaissance Fair in Tampa where he entered a local novice arm wrestling contest just for fun. He took home first place with both his right and left hand. Around the same time, Stu's life changed drastically when he was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. After a 10-hour surgery in March 2016, and then radiation and chemotherapy, Stu began a very slow recovery. Today he is cancer free and credits Alice for his health. "The fact of the matter is she saved my life," he said, adding that she was an excellent caregiver. After losing 65 pounds and much of his strength, Stu started to



Photo courtesy
Tiffany Merlo Phelps

slowly train again in 2017. He ultimately made a return to both sports and has traveled to compete in Poland, France and Malaysia with Alice. He competes in the ultra-grand master category (70 plus) and has won 18 gold national titles, and three gold, six silver and two bronze in the World Championships (all International Federation of Armwrestling or IFA). In 2021, he broke the strict curling world record in a powerlifting competition in the 165-pound weight class and the 75 – 79-year-old age group. In powerlifting, he also earned two gold and two silver awards in the World Championships (100 Percent Raw Powerlifting Federation). Stu now has his sights set on Greece in September for the IFA 2024 World Championships where he will be defending his right arm and seeking a gold for his left.

Q: How did joining Team Jacksonville in Middleburg with Coach Chuck Westberry help you improve in arm wrestling?

A: If you want to learn, they will teach

you. I went out there to learn, and it worked. After the practice, I wrote down what they told me, and, little by little, you start to put it together. When I was a novice, I did not know how to arm wrestle, I just won on strength. They taught me the sport.

Q: What are the differences in the way you compete in arm wrestling and weightlifting?

A: Weightlifting is singular. You are on a bench. It is just you and the weight. Your competition is that bar. In arm wrestling, when you are at a table, you have another individual across from you. You look them in the eye, and they try to stare you down or intimidate you. I find it really interesting, the personalities. Off the table, they are the most wonderful people in the world, friendly, family men. But when they get to the table, their personalities change.

Q: How did having esophageal cancer change your outlook on life?

A: I am a little more accommodating now. Things that used to bother me, don't bother me anymore. It gives you a different perspective when you face your own mortality.

Q: What do you like to do when you are not working out and competing?

A: I love to cook, and I love to spend time with my grandchildren. I have two adult children and four grandchildren.

Q: What is your approach to life?

A: The focus of my life is and has always been my family. My career was important but was secondary to my family. What I am doing now is something that I like to do but it is not the focus of my life — it is my family.

Flag rescue program cont. from pg. 1

He said, "After seeing two American flags discarded in a drop-off trash container at the county landfill, I proposed and was given permission to initiate an effort to establish public access for collecting and properly retiring old and worn American flags. A pilot program commenced in December 2019 with collection boxes donated by WSOS radio station owner Kevin Geddings. The community's response has been incredible. More than 11,000 flags have been gathered to date."

Benjamin explained that the VFW Post 2391 in St. Augustine conducts the official decommission ceremonies, and seven retired veterans have enlisted to monitor and maintain the various collection sites.

A proclamation in recognition and support of the American Flag Rescue Program spearheaded by the Solid Waste Division of the St. Johns County Public Works Department was presented at the June 18 meeting of the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners.

There are American Flag Rescue Program flag drop-off locations throughout the community, including county libraries, annexes, and every Ace Hardware store in St. Johns County. Visit <https://www.sjcfi.us/outreach/#flag> for a complete list of locations.

Briefs cont. from pg.8

an overhead track. The system supports the patient's body weight and allows for easy interaction between the child and the therapist. The need for rehab services is growing rapidly worldwide, fueled by increases in the aging population and sedentary lifestyles that result in chronic conditions requiring rehabilitation services, according to the World Health Organization.

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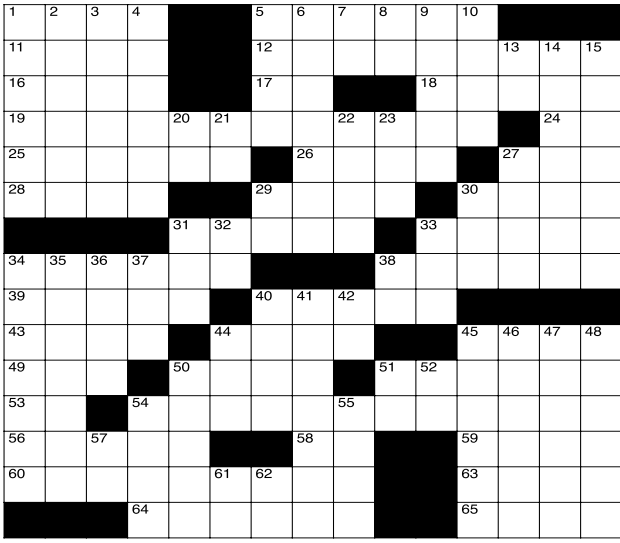
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904.209.5754
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Average damage per system (abbr.)
5. Lustful woodland gods (Greek mythology)
11. Colombian Town
12. Sour
16. A way to stuff
17. Former AL MVP Vaughn
18. Carried or transported
19. Cannot even fathom
24. Hammer is one
25. A way to separate
26. Not moving
27. Women's service organization (abbr.)
28. German river
29. Quantitative fact
30. A person's head
31. Process that produces ammonia
33. French modernist painter
34. Too much noise
38. Agree to a demand
39. One a line at right angles to a ship's length
40. Employees
43. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
44. Component of hemoglobin
45. Quick and skillful in movement
49. Passing trend
50. Part of the eye
51. One who acclaims
53. Deadly amount (abbr.)
54. Taste property
56. Genus of mosquitoes
58. Blood type
59. A group of countries in special alliance
60. Institute legal proceedings against
63. Shade of a color
64. Spoke
65. Work units

CLUES DOWN

1. Charge with a crime
2. Mended with yarn
3. North Atlantic flatfish
4. Boil at low temperature
5. Lapps of northern Scandinavia
6. Poisonous plant
7. Atomic #22
8. 36 inches
9. Monetary unit of Russia
10. Type of gin
13. An alternative
14. Alone
15. A way to ooze
20. Publicity
21. American firm
22. Jewish calendar month
23. Popular sandwich
27. Comedian Cook
29. The NFL's big game (abbr.)
30. Political action committee
31. Make a low, steady sound
32. Legendary sportscaster Michaels
33. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
34. Designed to keep ears warm
35. One who scrapes
36. Tear into two or more pieces
37. Supervises flying
38. Flying arm of the U.S. military (abbr.)
40. District in Peru
41. One died leaving a will
42. Morning
44. The world of the dead
45. Widen
46. Drink containing medicine
47. Celebrating
48. Secret encounters
50. A type of tag
51. Halfback
52. Modern tech
54. Monetary unit
55. Resigned to one's sleeping chamber
57. Execute or perform
61. "The Golden State"
62. "The Beehive State" (abbr.)

SUN SAFETY WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- CANCER
- COVER UP
- DERMATOLOGIST
- HEAT
- INDEX
- INDOORS
- MELANOMA
- MORNING
- PROTECT
- RADIATION
- RASH
- REFLECT
- SHADE
- SKIN
- SPOTS
- SUNBLOCK
- SUNBURN
- SUNGLASSES
- SUNLIGHT
- ULTRAVIOLET
- UMBRELLA
- WIDE-BRIMMED

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to the sun safety. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 15 = N)

- A. 3 6 15 3 4 1 10 10 15
Clue: Skin protectant
- B. 9 23 16
Clue: Headgear
- C. 24 20 1 15 12 15 26
Clue: Early day
- D. 3 9 23 17 5
Clue: Not sunny

Meet the Citizens cont. from pg.1

provides meaningful work, a sense of belonging, dignity and respect for adults with disabilities. Most importantly, Yeager is asking for

input from the citizens to find the best way to empower them through various enterprises such as making dog treats, candles, soap, greeting cards and wax melts. All money from these enterprises would go back into the program to make it affordable.

"Let's find a way to honor what they are asking for and honor what they need, and also continue to help them grow," said Yeager.

Program director Amanda O'Dwyer said it is important that the citizens can fully participate in the production of goods sold. To that end, O'Dwyer breaks down the production steps, but also offers a

look at the overall goal.

"Their brains are amazing," she said. "They need to know why. It is important to lay out a roadmap."

Teacher Keilahi Aldrete said the citizens keep her grounded and inspired.

"It is an experience like no other. They stole my heart and won't give it back," she said.

The Community Center at Bethel Point, which will be fenced and gated, will also include an office, gym, work rooms, multi-purpose room, commercial kitchen and community center. The campus is designed to look residential and peaceful and much like a park. No sign will be displayed to identify the center for this reason, said Yeager.

Reverse inclusion, which brings non-disabled community members into

programs where they can be paired with disabled peers, will also be a key component at the campus. For example, said Yeager, she would love to have community members use the multi-purpose room for crafting, Bible studies and more.

Above all, Yeager said she wants to serve adults with special needs while being a good community partner.

"It is our job to protect them, to find things they can do to contribute to society. That is why we came down to the idea of BiG," said Yeager. "BiG provides that opportunity, and it provides the friendships, the community, the camaraderie, the enterprises." [Author's note: A pickleball tournament fundraiser is scheduled for the fall. More details coming soon. Visit www.bignorthflorida.org for more information about the community center.



Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps
Emma Haywood smells one of the candles made as part of the enterprise program at the center.

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By Scott A. Grant
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PopHistory

Four Dead in Ohio

By Scott A. Grant
mail@floridanewsline.com

On the afternoon of May 4, 1970, shots rang out on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio. Chrissy Hynde and hundreds of other students ran screaming in terror. Most of the students were there to protest the war in Vietnam and the recent escalation of that war into Cambodia. Some, of course, were just walking across campus.

The National Guard was there that day to disperse the protestors. The current round of protests had been going on for four days and had erupted in violence. The protestors carried signs that said, "Stop the War!" and "Impeach Nixon!" with the X in Nixon converted into a Swastika. The protests were largely peaceful, but violence erupted on a number of occasions with students throwing beer bottles and rocks at the police, breaking windows downtown, and starting fires.

There were unfounded rumors of more violence to come, including the possibility of activists spiking the town's water supply with LSD. The university administration, the mayor of Kent, and

Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes were beside themselves. The governor called the protestors fascists and communists and decided to call in the Ohio National Guard "to eradicate the problem."

On the night of May 3, the National Guard used tear gas to disperse a crowd of protestors. When the students reassembled downtown, the guard moved in with bayonets to drive the protestors back to their dorms. Several claimed to have been wounded by either bayonet or rifle butt. The guardsmen shouted "Get back! Get back!" and the crowd ran away in terror.

The next day, the fateful day, student protestors convened again, this time on the commons near the "Victory Bell." The bell was usually rung to celebrate victories by the Kent State football team. The preceding fall the team finished with a record of five wins and

five losses.

The protest began with the ringing of the Victory Bell. At that point, the guard began to advance and used a bullhorn to order the protestors to disperse. They did not. The guard fired canisters of tear gas from M79 grenade launchers, but it was too windy, and the gas did not have the desired effect.

The guard advanced again with bayonets and drove the protestors out of the commons and up an area called Blanket Hill. Reaching the top of the hill, students moved off to the left and the right. Having reached the top of the hill and being uncertain what to do next as they were now seemingly surrounded by student protestors, some of whom threw rocks at the soldiers, the National Guard, no doubt fearful, spontaneously began to discharge their weapons into the crowd. They fired 67 rounds in 13

seconds, killing four.

Nixon and others hoped the violent response by the state would put an end to the protests. It did not. Following Kent State, anti-Vietnam War protests spread like wildfire across the country. Just five days later, 100,000 people showed up to demonstrate in Washington. Nixon fled to Camp David. Anti-war sentiment grew.

Chrissy Hynde left Kent State and moved to Europe, where she ultimately fronted a band called The Pretenders. Later in life, she would become critical of the protests, saying, "All of us hippies were conned."

Scott A. Grant is a local historian and author. By day he is president of Standfast Asset Management. He welcomes your comments at scottg@standfastic.com.

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Photos courtesy Jennifer Werba
The 8U Jaws Black Tip team with their medals.

Ponte Vedra Lacrosse 8U Jaws teams triumph

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Ponte Vedra Lacrosse 8U Jaws Black Tip and Threshers teams emerged victorious in both 8U divisions at the Orlando Summer Faceoff Lacrosse Tournament, held on June 1 – 2 in Kissimmee. The Jaws Black Tip and Threshers competed against teams from all over the state to secure their championship titles. James Hensley, the Jaws Mascot, was on hand to energize the teams and excite the crowd.

The Black Tips triumphed over the Manatee Wildcats in the final game with a score of 9 – 2, while the Threshers claimed victory against the Lacrosse

Club Orlando Jedi, finishing 14 – 3 to win the championship.

The Black Tip roster includes Ted Beagin, AJ Marrapese, Joey Fugger, Ashton Rose, Hudson Carlson, Akamu Laughlin, Leo Dellavecchia, Gray Roberts, Bradley Johnson, Colin Dunn, Harris Hensley, Jake Werba, Cam “Bones” Eidson, and Pat McKenney.

The Threshers roster includes Zac Baumgartner, Noah Blazosky, Quinn Burke, Keegan Chandler, Liam Grimsley, Remy Hedberg, Reid Hensley, Preston Johnson, Casen Mesaros, Will Polniak, Shep Wilensky, and Wells Barnes.



The 8U Jaws Threshers team with their medals.

Ocean Palms embraces a splash of color, creativity and collaboration

By Lisa Farese
mail@floridanewslines.com

Paint, Shrinky Dinks, and chicken wire? These were among the makings of priceless works of art at Ocean Palms Elementary School, where a new grade-level art auction was unveiled, featuring artists from none other than the halls and classrooms of the school. As part of the school’s Children’s Access to Art Program, art lessons are taught monthly in classrooms of all grades, often centered around well-known artists. Using this concept, Children’s Access to Art Program volunteers had students create a collaborative piece of art as a grade level that mirrored a famous work of

art or used concepts from that piece.

More than 950 tiny pieces of art soon came together to form seven art installations, spanning from pre-k to fifth grade. Each piece of art was showcased at the school’s STEM and Art Show Night, and later auctioned off. Families saw works inspired by Frida Kahlo’s Self Portraiture, Paul Klee’s Untitled, Jackson Pollock’s Blue Poles, and more. Additionally, families perused other Children’s Access to Art Program projects, pictures of students engaged in these artistic lessons, and enjoyed interactive art installations — say cheese with Mona Lisa!



Photos courtesy Lisa Farese

Grade-level art was on display at Ocean Palms Elementary School’s Stem and Art Show Night, where students at the school contributed to a piece of art.



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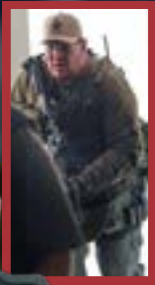
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Jim and his wife, Paula, live in the southern part of St. Johns with their two horses and loyal pup Cadey. They enjoy attending services at the historical First Baptist Church of Hastings.



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Eagle Scout seeks to eradicate invasive tree species for local church

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The state of Florida calls the Chinese Tallow tree a "noxious weed" because of its rampant spreading and adaptability to any soil condition, and it is forbidden to sell, plant or transfer this tree. Local Eagle Scout Nicholas Storm, who has done other conservation work including building a native plants Prayer Garden at Lord of Life Lutheran Church on Roscoe Boulevard, recently identified this tree on its property with his conversation mentor Ginger Feagle. She is the North Central Regional Coordinator for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

There were 203 trees and saplings on its property. Storm organized a weekend BSA Troop 277 work event, fittingly around Earth Day, to mark, cut down or use an ax to put hatch marks into these trees, followed by applying an herbicide that will eventually kill them, using state guidelines.

"I found out that it was Ben Franklin who brought this tree to the United States, and while they look pretty, it's now recognized that they spread really quickly and will overtake native Florida vegetation," Storm said.

Other states including Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana have followed Florida's lead. The tree has a heart-shaped leaf that is rosy colored when new, light gray



Photo courtesy Sheila Kolesaire

rough bark, and will have a white flower with no petals that resembles popcorn.

"We are grateful for Nicholas's genuine interest in helping our church and being such a good steward of our local Ponte Vedra Beach environment," said Sheila Kolesaire, council president of Lord of Life Lutheran Church. "We had no knowledge what these trees were on our property, but we will now be on the lookout for new seedlings."

The public can find more information about these trees at:
www.fnai.org/species-communities/invasives/invasive-species?ID=167



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Travel

Bentonville, Arkansas: Artful adventures will surprise you

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

If you were a billionaire, what would you do with your money? Alice Walton, daughter of Walmart founder Sam Walton, is one of the richest women in the world. She decided to collect American art and build a museum to showcase it in her hometown, Bentonville, Arkansas. The little city in the Ozark Mountains has a population of around 55,000. Alice Walton wanted to make great works of American art accessible to the public, particularly in a region that lacked major cultural institutions. Her vision was not just about housing art but creating a space where art and nature coexist harmoniously.

She succeeded! The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is like no other art gallery I've toured; it's a really stunning and fun space. I found attractive wood and glass buildings surrounded by ponds that bring the outdoors in. Walkers and bikers enjoy five miles of trails on 120 acres, including outdoor sculptures.

I wandered through five centuries of galleries featuring masterpieces like Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, Norman Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter, Georgia O'Keeffe's painting White Flower, which was purchased in 2014 for \$44.4 million, Chihuly glass chandeliers, and Andy Warhol pop art. I entered the "Infinity Mirrored Room," being thrown off balance by dancing spots of light and reflections. Best of all, the museum is free.

A visit to the world-class Crystal Bridges Museum would be enough to bring one to Bentonville, but downtown offers much more. The Momentary, a former cheese factory, houses an extension of more contemporary art installations. These provocative and whimsical pieces are shown on a rotating basis. The Momentary also includes a coffee house, a Tower Bar with the city's best views, and live music performances.

I also visited the Museum of Native American History (MONAH), founded



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

by David Bogle, a member of the Cherokee Nation. The museum aims to preserve and promote an understanding of Native American cultures from prehistoric times to the present through artifacts, textiles, and artworks. I especially liked a collection of historic handmade dolls and the Hopi tribe's Kachina figures.

Bentonville holds Walmart's headquarters, so naturally, you'll find the Walmart Museum. Located in Sam Walton's original 5 & 10 store on the town square, the museum chronicles Walmart's rise from a single-dime store to a global retail giant. The Interactive exhibits, a hologram of Sam, and historical artifacts provide a likable experience. End your visit with a treat from the old-fashioned soda fountain. To me, Bentonville's main square resembled a Norman Rockwell painting of a typical small American town.

Bentonville, known as the Mountain Bike Capital of the World, offers cyclists the impressive Coler Mountain Bike Preserve and Slaughter Pen Trails. Find umpteen miles of trails from beginner to expert.

Bentonville played a significant role in

the Civil War, culminating in the Battle of Bentonville, one of the largest battles fought in the state. Visitors can explore the Pea Ridge National Military Park and the Benton County Courthouse, which served as a Union hospital during the war.

I spent one night (not enough) at the 21c Museum Hotel in the heart of Bentonville, within easy walking distance of the attractions and restaurants. This boutique establishment blends an immersive modern art experience with luxury accommodations. I found life-size green penguins, the hotel trademark, scattered about. Placing one outside a door or elevator lets you make another traveler laugh. Breakfast in the Hive restaurant was outstanding.

I'd never heard of Bentonville or been to Arkansas before my recent trip (combined with Little Rock), but I can honestly say I'd love to return. I'd spend more time in the museums and enjoy the small-town feel and fine restaurants.

If you go: VisitBentonville.com

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



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