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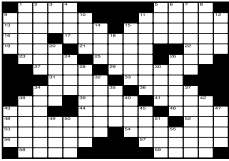


Photo courtesy Trout Creek Senior Center
Janice, 97, reads in the center's newly refreshed library, which now features clean new bookshelves and a cozy feel.

Trout Creek Senior Center gets a fresh new look

NewsLine staff

Trout Creek Senior Center has a new look, thanks to a county-funded upgrade that includes new floors, new paint and a refreshed library area with clean new bookshelves and a cozy feel, according to Jessica Curry, program coordinator for Trout Creek Senior Center.

The renovation benefits not only the seniors who use the center regularly, but also community members who rent the building for weekend events such as weddings, bridal showers and baby showers, Curry said.

With the new look complete, the center is hoping to draw in more local seniors to enjoy its coffee, games and friendly meet-and-greets, Curry said. Fresh coffee and snacks are available for anyone who wants to stop by, check out the space or stay and spend the day.

Trout Creek Senior Center is located at 6795 Collier Road, Orangedale. For more information, call Jessica Curry at 904 209 3658.



Photo courtesy Trout Creek Senior Center
Seniors gather for games and fellowship in the newly renovated activity room at Trout Creek Senior Center.



Photo courtesy The Bolles School
The inaugural class of Jones Fellows gathers with mentors, members of the Jones family and School leadership at the Welcome Dinner marking the launch of the Jones Fellows Program.

The Jones Fellows program kicks off at The Bolles School

NewsLine staff

The Jones Fellows Program at The Bolles School officially kicked off on August 22 with an evening filled with celebration and remembrance of the program's namesake, J. Malcolm Jones Jr. '71.

The Welcome Dinner marked an important milestone as fourteen Bolles juniors, selected to be the inaugural Jones Fellows, met their mentors — all

Bolles alumni — for the very first time, beginning a year-long journey of personal reflection, career exploration and self-discovery. Each Fellow was carefully paired with a mentor by Mentorship Program Coordinator Ellie Dalkin.

The inaugural Jones Fellows and their mentors are: Eva Beardsley '28 and Sally Ball Sharp '92; Mamie Burkett '28 and Christine Gaitantzis '14; Eamon Cantor '28 and Joey Frisco '16; Alyssa Castle-

man '28 and Chanley Dudley '99; Mia Lee Chong '28 and Paula Aduen '07; Adam Grinberg-Korczyn '28 and Ryan Williams '06; Reema Nihalani '28 and Lindsay Tygart '98; Kaliyah Perkins '28 and Rachna Krish '99; Paige Sandifer '28 and Morgan Perry '13; Jack Thomas '28 and Aarian Afshari '07; Charlotte Verlander '28 and Courtney Reames '01; Brendan Walrath '28 and Ralph

The Bolles School cont. on pg. 4

Landrum Middle School creates award-winning memories

By Lisa Farese

Landrum Middle School was honored this fall by the School Photographers of America, the national trade association for school photography and yearbooks, for their 2025-2026 yearbook. In fact, they took home the top prize - Grand Champion.

The association began honoring top yearbooks across the country in celebration of the creativity, photography and storytelling students were weaving into the pages of these cherished memories, and this was the inaugural year.



Landrum Middle School photographer Alexia Hefflin prepares for a photo shoot.



Editor-in-Chief Sasha Qu Yan of Landrum Middle School's yearbook staff.

Middle School cont. on pg. 4

2026 General Election

November 3, 2026



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Vote-by-Mail

The deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed is October 22, 2026, by 5 PM. Visit www.votesjc.gov or call the Elections Office to request your ballot.

Vote-by-mail ballots must be returned to the Elections Office by 7 PM on Election Day, November 3, to be counted. Vote-by-mail ballots can also be returned to Secure Ballot Intake Stations available at all early voting locations during the hours of voting.

Know Before You Go

Visit www.votesjc.gov to get **ELECTION READY:**

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October 21 – October 31, 2026
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For a map and list of locations, visit our website at www.votesjc.gov

Election Day

November 3, 2026
Polls open 7 AM to 7 PM

To vote on Election Day, you must go to your assigned polling place between the hours of 7 AM and 7 PM on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.

Some precincts have changed since the 2024 elections. Verify your Election Day polling place at www.votesjc.gov before heading out to vote!



Executive Chef Hermann Muller, left, from Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, and Chef Chris Polidoro, from Doro Restaurant, helped make Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation's 24th Annual Delicious Destinations event a success.

Delicious Destinations raises funds for Ascension St. Vincent's

NewsLine staff

Ascension St. Vincent's Foundation recently brought caring philanthropists together for its 24th Annual Delicious Destinations fundraising event. The Celebrity Chef By The Sea Luncheon and Main Event were filled with exceptional chefs, fine wines and a shared commitment to the community.

Held at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, the event raised \$420,000 to support Ascension St. Vincent's mission of bringing quality healthcare to families throughout Northeast Florida and Southeast Georgia, regardless of their ability to pay.

The Bolles School cont. from pg. 1

Rizk '05; Reggie Wilson '28 and Jordan Garside '10; and Adi Yadav '28 and Tim Miller '05.

The evening also honored the program's namesake. Malcolm's wife of 45 years, Leslie Jones, shared how the idea for a mentorship program came to be: in the years following her husband's passing, she and her son, Malcolm '96, began hearing stories from people of all walks of life about how Malcolm had impacted them through mentorship. Those stories, along with Malcolm's deep love for Bolles, inspired the Jones family to create something that could carry his legacy forward.

"Maybe down the road sometime, you'll think about something one of these

mentors has said to you — something that impacted you and you didn't know it at the time," Leslie told the Fellows.

Each Fellow later introduced their mentor to the group — a fitting start to a year Dalkin hopes will help students "get to know your mentor, not simply for what they do, but for who they are and how they became that person."

Over the coming year, Fellows and mentors will meet monthly and hear from guest speakers and community leaders. "When we pour our time, our treasures and our talents into people, we're the ones that are the most blessed," Leslie said.

Learn more about the J. Malcolm Jones Jr. Mentorship Program at bolles.org/bolles-alumni/jones-mentorship-program.

Middle School cont. from pg. 1

Judges considered many aspects of the yearbooks, including photography, design, theme, storytelling, journalistic quality and more; however, they were especially interested in how photography was used to tell the school's story. Lan-

drum students, led by advisor Sandra Pagliughi, locked in the win with this unique quality, making this a memory worth keeping.

Lisa Farese is a member of the Landrum Middle School PTO.

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Submissions

Community news and photos are due by the 10th of each month to ensure inclusion in the upcoming issue. Thank you for your support of trusted community journalism.

First Coast NewsLine community newspaper is a free monthly publication delivered to all addresses in Zip Codes 32081 and 32082. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2025.



BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Leo!



Breed:

Domestic Shorthair

Favorite Activity:

Venturing through the woods

Favorite Food:

Temptation cat treats

Favorite Friends:

His sister, August

How did your BFF get their

name:

By embracing the spirit of a lion

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 First Coast NewsLine.

Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in First Coast NewsLine!

Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.



BREAST CANCER

AWARENESS MONTH

Answers to our Puzzles PG 8

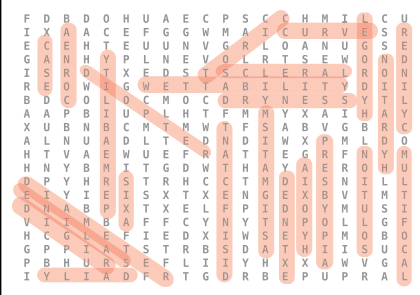
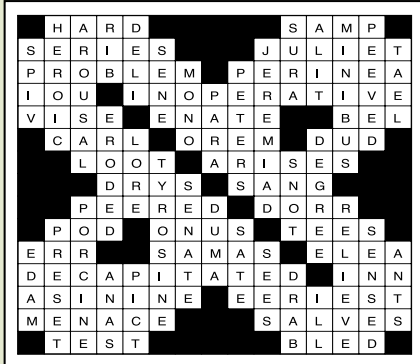


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October

Community Calendar

What's Happening in St. Johns

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email editor@floridanewsline.com.

October 6
Haunted History of Florida

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library hosts "Haunted History of Florida" Tuesday, Oct. 6, from 3 to 5 p.m. The immersive, story-driven presentation explores Florida's most historic hauntings, blending folklore, eyewitness accounts and verifiable history. RSVP at 904 827 6950 or sjcpls.org.

October 7
Tai Chi Gung

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library hosts Tai Chi Gung classes Wednesday, Oct. 7, from 11 a.m. to noon. The gentle, standing form of yoga is designed to increase energy and stamina, enhance focus and improve range of motion and sleep. Classes are taught by certified instructors from the Circle of Chi Wellness Center and are suitable for beginners. RSVP at 904 827 6950 or sjcpls.org.

October 17
Community Shredding Event

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library hosts a free Community Shredding Event Saturday, Oct. 17, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. St. Johns County residents are invited to securely dispose of old paperwork, bills and confidential documents on-site.

October 22
Cricut Workshop: Faux Leather 101

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library hosts a Cricut Workshop on faux leather crafts Thursday, Oct. 22, from 1 to 3 p.m. Participants will learn to use a Cricut machine to create a faux leather project to take home. Familiarity with Cricut Design Space software and general laptop use is recommended, and participants must use a library-provided computer to complete the project. RSVP at 904 827 6950 or sjcpls.org.

October 26
Memory Cafe

The Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library hosts a Memory Cafe Monday, Oct. 26, from

1:30 to 3:30 p.m., in partnership with the St. Johns County Dementia Care and Cure Initiative Task Force. The monthly gathering offers a welcoming social space for people experiencing cognitive challenges and their caregivers. Both the person living with cognitive decline and a caregiver or loved one should attend together. RSVP at 904 827 6950 or sjcpls.org.

October 23-24
Creatures of the Night

The St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park hosts Creatures of the Night, a family-friendly trick-or-treat event, Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23 and 24, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at 999 Anastasia Blvd., St. Augustine. Guests can wear costumes, visit themed treat stations and meet ambassador animals. Tickets are recommended in advance; pricing varies by age and membership. Visit tickets.alligatorfarm.com.

October 28
Golden Bachelor Auction: Season Three

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club hosts its Golden Bachelor Auction, Season

Three, Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 5:30 p.m. at The Barn at Palm Valley, 531 N. Wilderness Trail, Ponte Vedra Beach. The event features six local bachelors and dream date packages, benefiting local charities and scholarship recipients. General admission is \$75; VIP tickets are \$100 and include early access with the bachelors. For tickets, visit pontevedrawomansclub.com/Events.

Save the Date
North Florida Women's Chorale presents "Christmas Bells"

The North Florida Women's Chorale, directed by Kerry Fradley with collaborative accompanist Hiromi Nasife, presents "Christmas Bells: Familiar Carols of Christmas" at two performances in December. The first is Sunday, Dec. 6, at 4 p.m. at Trinity Parish Church, 215 St. George St., St. Augustine. The second is Sunday, Dec. 13, at 4 p.m. at Community Presbyterian Church, 150 Sherry Drive, Atlantic Beach. Both performances include photos with Santa, with a suggested donation of \$10.

PVPV Rawlings welcomes Ruth E. Cortés as assistant principal

NewsLine staff

PVPV Rawlings Elementary School welcomes Ruth E. Cortés as assistant principal, joining Principal Jill Hillier and Assistant Principal Christi Thomas on the school's administrative team.

Cortés has worked in the St. Johns County School District since 2014, serving as a Spanish teacher, dean of students and assistant principal. Her new role marks a return to Ponte Vedra, where she previously taught Spanish at Ponte Vedra High School.

"Ponte Vedra has always held a special place in my heart, and I am honored to be coming back home to serve at PVPV Rawlings. I believe great schools thrive when people work together, serve one



Photo courtesy PVPV Rawlings Elementary School
Ruth E. Cortés.

another and genuinely care for each other, and I look forward to growing and learning alongside our students, staff and families," Cortés said.

Most recently, Cortés served as assistant principal at Landrum Middle School and Pine Island Academy. She previously served as dean of students at St. Augustine High School. Her experience spans grades K-12.

At PVPV Rawlings, Cortés is especially focused on students in grades 3-5 and preparing them for the transition to middle school. She emphasizes building student confidence, resilience and the skills needed for their next steps.

Cortés describes her approach to working with families and the school

community through her ABCs: Always Communicate, Build Relationships and Celebrate each other.

Cortés holds a Master of Education with a specialization in educational leadership from Concordia University Nebraska, a Master of TESOL with a specialization in teaching ESOL K-12 and a Bachelor of Arts in education with a major in Spanish education K-12 from Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania. Her training also includes Air Force Officer School. Before joining the St. Johns County School District, she served as a fifth-through 12th-grade electives teacher and ESOL coordinator at Helen Thackston Charter School in York, Pennsylvania.

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Q&A with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: When is the 2026 General Election, and are there any deadlines approaching?

A: The 2026 General Election is on Tuesday, November 3. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The deadline to register to vote for this election is October 5, 2026.

Q: When will early voting be available for this election?

A: Early voting will be conducted from Wednesday, October 21, through Saturday, October 31, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily at all 10 locations. Dates include two Saturdays and one Sunday, and registered St. Johns County voters can vote at any early voting location — making this the most convenient option. For a map and list of locations, please visit our website at www.votesjc.gov.

Q: Where do I vote on Election Day, and has my polling place changed?

A: On Election Day, you must vote at your assigned precinct. Many polling places have changed since the 2024 elections. I recommend using the My Voter Status or Find My Polling Place tools on our website to make sure you head to the right location the first time.

Q: I voted by mail in 2024. Do I get a vote-by-mail ballot automatically this year, or do I need to request one?

A: All vote-by-mail ballot requests on file expired after the 2024 General Election. If you plan on voting by mail for the November 3, 2026, General Election, you must put a new request on file. To request a vote-by-mail ballot, visit our website at www.votesjc.gov, or call the Elections Office at 904 823 2238. The deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed is 5 p.m. on October 22.

Q: I received a vote-by-mail ballot, but I want to vote in person. Can I?



Vicky Oakes

A: Yes, as long as you have not returned your vote-by-mail ballot to the Elections Office. A voter may surrender their vote-by-mail ballot and vote during early voting or on Election Day.

Q: What will St. Johns County voters see on their ballot in the 2026 General Election?

A: The General Election ballot will include a mix of federal, state, legislative, judicial and local races, along with several ballot questions. Sample ballots will be mailed to all registered St. Johns County voters in early October and are currently available on our website using the My Voter Status and Find My Polling Place tools.

St. Johns County voters will see three constitutional amendments on their ballots and one St. Johns County countywide local referendum. Ballot language for the constitutional amendments and local referenda is available on our website under Election Dates.

Voters are always welcome to call the Elections Office with any questions at 904 823 2238 during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Q&A with St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller Brandon J. Patty

Q: Your office just released the sixth edition of “Tracking Your Tax Dollars: A Guide to St. Johns County’s Finances.” What is the purpose of this guide?

A: “Tracking Your Tax Dollars” is our Popular Annual Financial Report, or PAFR. The guide gives residents a clear picture of how their tax dollars were collected, spent and invested over the past year. It’s a refined version of our Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and is designed to help you understand where County funds go and how they support our community.

Q: What kind of information does the PAFR include?

A: The PAFR includes financial highlights from fiscal year 2025, including County revenues and expenditures, the budget process and a breakdown of how the County uses the money to provide necessary services to residents. A snapshot of the County’s investments, reserves and financial health is also included.

Q: Does the PAFR offer any other information that might be of interest to residents?

A: In addition to financial highlights, the PAFR includes economic indicators and community trends, including updates on demographics, housing, population and community growth. The report also highlights the County’s strategic investment in community services.

Q: Where can residents access the PAFR?

A: The PAFR is available to view



Brandon Patty

online at stjohnsclerk.com/pafr. Printed copies can be requested at the St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller’s Office at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, FL.

For a more comprehensive look into the county’s financial reports, the full Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) can also be accessed online at stjohnsclerk.com/acfr.

Q: What is the best way for people to contact your office with questions?

A: For questions about the Popular Annual Financial Report, or any of the services we offer, residents can contact our Customer Care Call Center Monday — Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 904 819 3600, and by email at clerk@stjohnsclerk.com. I can also be reached directly on my cell at 904 599 8688 or by email at BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com.



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Inside the St. Johns County Property Appraiser's Budget

By Eddie Creamer

This month is the start of a new fiscal year for the St. Johns County Property Appraiser's Office, which is from October through September annually. As we embark on another fiscal year, I thought it would be helpful to share information about how our office is funded and the budget process.

Oversight of our office, including the budget, is provided by the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR). Every year by June 1, we submit a proposed budget to the DOR for approval. Each taxing authority pays a proportionate share of the services rendered by our office. St. Johns County, which also pays the St. Johns County School District and local municipalities portions, funds the highest proportionate share of the budget at 82% of the total based on the fiscal year 2027 (FY27) tentative numbers. We return any remaining unspent funds to the taxing authorities at the end of each fiscal year.

The funds provided by the taxing authorities allow us to fulfill our office's core responsibilities that include appraising all properties in the county annually and administering all property tax exemptions. Overall, the budget funds 50 positions, enabling our team to appraise more than 183,000 parcels and administer more than 136,778 exemptions.

This year's budget totals \$7,826,127, which is a 3.88% decrease from the previous year. The budget savings are



Eddie Creamer

mainly due to a reduction in personnel services. This reduction is based on the implementation of process efficiencies. The portion of our budget funded by St. Johns County represents 0.33% of the total tentative FY27 county budget.

Transparency is very important for our office. Florida law (F.S. 195.087(6)) requires the budget of each property appraiser's office to be posted on its website within 30 days of approval. We take that commitment one step further by posting monthly financial reports and the latest audit report. We've been posting these reports since 2017. This information can be found on our Budget and Financial Statements webpage at www.sjcpa.gov/budget.

I'm available to answer questions or provide additional information at eddie@sjcpa.gov or 904-827-5500.

What the 2026 midterms could mean for your portfolio

By Chris Thompson

Election seasons often spark questions about what might come next for the economy and the markets. As the 2026 midterms draw closer, some investors are wondering whether they should make changes to their portfolios or simply stay the course.

It's a fair question. Midterm elections can influence fiscal policy, tax legislation, government spending and the broader regulatory environment. But when it comes to investing, it's important to separate what's truly worth paying attention to from what's simply generating headlines.

What investors are watching

A few themes stand out this cycle. The balance of power in the House and Senate is a big one because it will influence how much legislation can move forward over the next two years. Trade policy, energy production, domestic manufacturing and supply chain resilience continue to be areas of focus, with potential implications across multiple sectors of the economy.

Investors are also paying attention to broader economic and global developments. Ongoing geopolitical tensions, the rapid buildout of AI-related infrastructure, government spending, retirement policy and affordability concerns are all likely to shape economic discussions long after ballots are counted.

A little history for perspective

Every election cycle feels unique and has its own dynamics, but political change is nothing new. In fact, midterm elections often reshape priorities in Washington. History shows that the party holding the White House has generally lost seats in Congress during midterm elections since World War II.¹ That's not a forecast for 2026, rather it's a useful piece of perspective when thinking about what may lie ahead.

Markets have also tended to respond reasonably well to periods of divided government. In many cases, legislative gridlock limits large policy swings and creates a more predictable environment for businesses and investors. A unified government can lead to more substantial policy changes, which may create both opportunities and uncertainty. Either way, the election could play a role in shaping economic policy and growth expecta-



Chris Thompson

tions for the remainder of the presidential term.

That said, markets generally react more to factors like inflation, interest rates, corporate earnings and global events than to election results alone. Politics matter, but it's rarely the primary driver of long-term investment outcomes.

Volatility is part of the process

Midterm election years often bring a little more market volatility than non-election years, and this cycle may be no different. The good news is that markets have historically performed well in the year following an election as uncertainty fades and investors gain a clearer sense of the path ahead.

Staying anchored

No one knows exactly how the midterms will unfold or how markets will respond in the weeks and months that follow. What we do know is that uncertainty is a normal part of investing. That's why periods like these can be a good reminder to step back and look at the bigger picture. If your investment strategy is aligned with your goals and built with flexibility in mind, it may not need to change every time the political landscape does.

Chris Thompson, CFP®, CMFA®, CRPC®, is a Private Wealth Advisor and managing director with Upper Deck Wealth Management a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 33 years. To contact him, visit www.ameripriseadvisors.com/team/upper-deck-wealth-management, 818 A1A N, Suite 301

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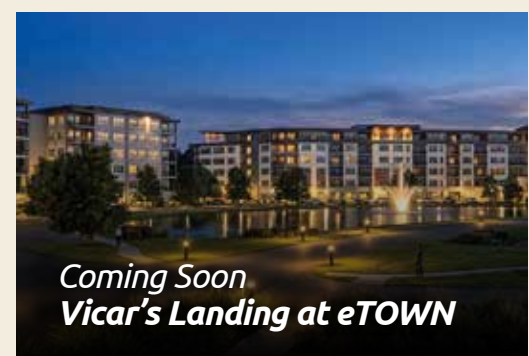
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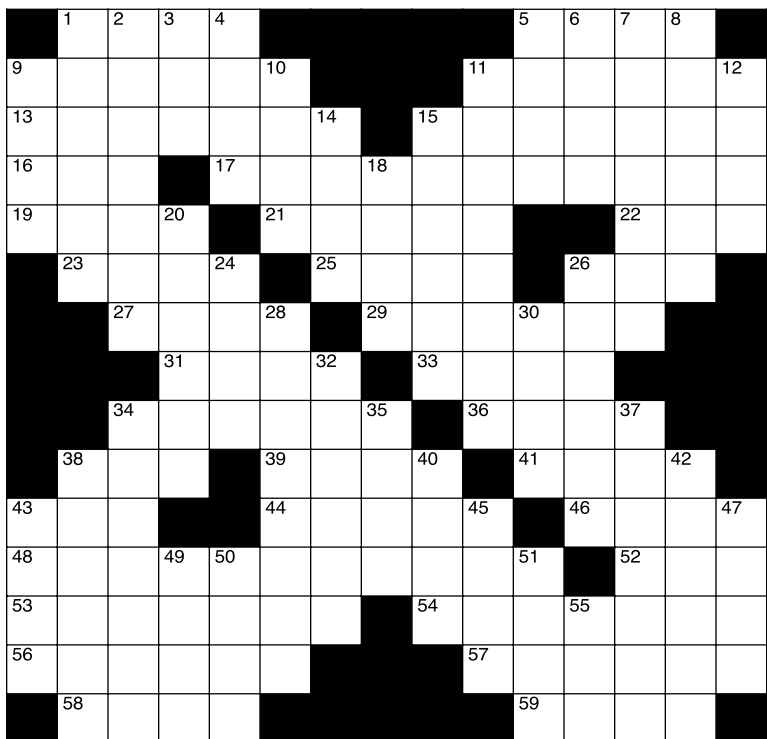
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Difficult
5. Coarsely ground corn
9. A group of similar things ordered one after another
11. Loved Romeo
13. Something to solve
15. Pelvic areas
16. Informal debt instrument
17. Ineffective
19. A device attached to a workbench
21. Related on the mother's side
22. "Fresh Prince of ___ Air"
23. Astronomer Sagan
25. C. Utah city
26. Turkey
27. Informal terms for money
29. Awakens
31. Those who favored Prohibition
33. Blabbed
34. Looked through
36. Rhode Island rebellion
38. A type of "cast"
39. One's duty
41. Where golfers begin
43. Make a mistake
44. Semitic Sun god
46. Ancient Greek City
48. Removed someone's head
52. A place to stay
53. Unwise
54. Most unnatural
56. "Dennis" is a notable one
57. Ointments
58. Examination
59. Leaked fluid
1. Brave
2. A state of excitement
3. Jest at
4. Sandwich store
5. Chapter of the Koran
6. Dismounted from a horse
7. Small vehicle
8. Irrked
9. A disreputable man
10. Monetary unit of Samoa
11. A list of woes
12. Weight unit
14. Alone, single
15. Broadway legend Bernadette
18. Monetary unit of Serbia
20. Worn by exposure to the weather
24. A body of traditions
26. Students seek one
28. Hydrophilic amino acid
30. Nasal mucus
32. Branch of U.S. Congress
34. Swinish
35. Russian assembly
37. Grant an exemption to
38. Set up in advance
40. Satisfy
42. Felt
43. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
45. Witnesses
47. Strong insects
49. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
50. One of an ancient people inhabiting Scotland
51. Cheerless
55. Unhealthy

CLUES DOWN

1. Brave
2. A state of excitement
3. Jest at
4. Sandwich store
5. Chapter of the Koran
6. Dismounted from a horse
7. Small vehicle
8. Irrked
9. A disreputable man
10. Monetary unit of Samoa
11. A list of woes
12. Weight unit
14. Alone, single
15. Broadway legend Bernadette
18. Monetary unit of Serbia
20. Worn by exposure to the weather
24. A body of traditions
26. Students seek one
28. Hydrophilic amino acid
30. Nasal mucus
32. Branch of U.S. Congress
34. Swinish
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50. One of an ancient people inhabiting
Scotland
51. Cheerless
55. Unhealthy



Solve the code to discover words related to contact lenses.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 25 = S)

- A. 25 10 4 15 11 9 10 2**

Clue: Cleaning liquid

- B. 26 24 25 14**

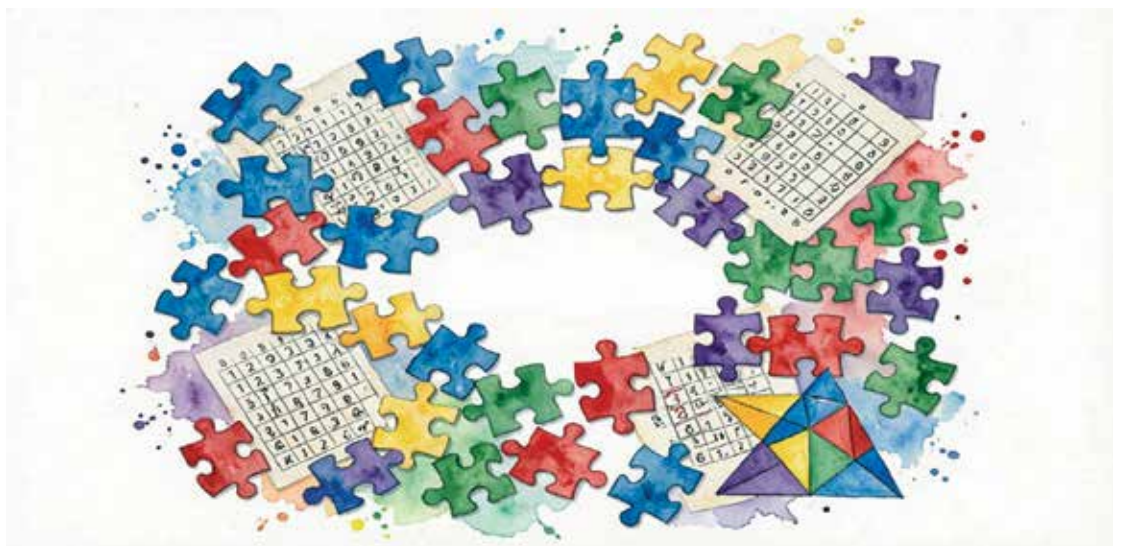
Clue: Container

- C. 14 6 14 25**

Clue: Sight organs

- D. 26 10 2 11 24 26 11 25**

Clue: Fixes vision

CONTACTS CARE WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

ASTIGMATISM
AXIS
CASE
CORNEA
CURVE
CYLINDER
DAILY
DIAMETER
DIOPTER
DISINFECTANT
DRYNESS
EXTENDED
HYDRATION
HYDROGEL
HYPOXIA
MULTIFOCAL
PERMEABILITY
PRESBYOPIA
RIGID
SALINE
SCLERAL
SOLUTION
TORIC
WETTABILITY

Bolles briefs: National Merit semifinalists, bassoon fun for Pre-K

NewsLine Staff

Six Bolles seniors named 2027 National Merit semifinalists

Officials with the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC®) announced the names of more than 16,000 semifinalists in the 72nd annual National Merit Scholarship Program, a list that includes six senior students from The Bolles School. The semifinalists represent less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors.

This year's National Merit semifinalists from the Bolles Class of 2027 are Nicholas Baker '27, Vichy Chen '27, Derrick Dow '27, Akash Gusani '27, Ava Ludwig '27 and Saian Patel '27.

The students will continue in competition for some 6,700 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$24 million that will be offered next spring. More than 1.2 million juniors from about 20,000 high schools around the country entered the 2027 scholarship program by taking the 2025 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, also known as the PSAT/ NMSQT®. That test served as an initial screen of program entrants.

To become a finalist, semifinalists must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about their academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment and honors and



The Bolles Class of 2027 National Merit semifinalists: Nicholas Baker, Vichy Chen, Derrick Dow, Akash Gusani, Ava Ludwig and Saian Patel.



Bolles Associate Head of School Andrew Forrester poses with Pre-K students on the Whitehurst Campus after his annual bassoon performance for the class's "B" Day celebration.

awards received. A semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay and earn SAT® or ACT® scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. About 95 percent of semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and approximately half of the finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar® title.

Forrester brings bassoon fun to Pre-K's "B" Day

Pre-K students on the Bolles Lower School Whitehurst Campus welcomed

a special guest September 3 when Bolles Associate Head of School Andrew Forrester stopped by for his annual bassoon performance as part of the class's "B" Day celebration.

Forrester explained how the instrument works, answered questions and treated the class to a lively rendition of "Baby Bumblebee." Students enthusiastically sang and danced along during the performance.

Special thanks to Forrester and Pre-K teachers Karen Stephens and JoAnna Zvara '05 for helping make the day extra B-right for these Bulldogs.

Ocean Palms Elementary bubbles into fall

By Lisa Farese

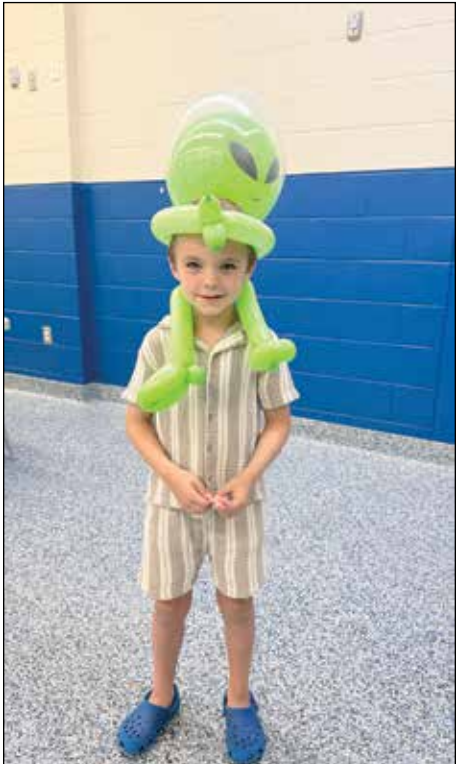
Ocean Palms Elementary opened its doors this September to students and families for a fall celebration. Students visited the school with parents to meet teachers, check out their classrooms and take a peek at projects they had been working on.

Afterwards, this otter community was

welcomed to the cafeteria and outdoor area for some books, balloons and bubbles. Balloon artists created wands, hats and even aliens. Additionally, all were welcomed to join in the bubble party, shop the book fair, or play games set up by area vendors. Finally, families could grab food, or just a treat, from the food trucks. It was a fall night bubbling with fun.



OPE students play a ring toss game brought by a local vendor during the fall open house.



A student shows off an alien-themed balloon creation at the fall open house. Balloon artists crafted wands, hats and more throughout the night.



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Gardening

By Connie Doyle,
Master Gardener UF/IFAS



Connie Doyle

The Good Earth: Slow down and dig in

By Eddie Creamer

Fall is when temperatures are dropping, the light is subtly changing and plant growth slowing. It's like the garden is taking a long deep breath after summer's sprint. The air feels clearer, the shadows stretch a bit longer, and bees are seen working on the last blooms. That slowing down can feel calm, even grounding. With a reminder that rest is part of the cycle too, we begin the much anticipated transition from the hot, rapid growth of summer to the relaxed pace that October invites. Yes, fall is upon us, and welcomed by all.

October is a bit like spring in reverse in Northeast Florida. Summer's heat is finally easing, and you can embrace the quiet joy of working outside in cooler air. Meanwhile, your soil is ready for something new too. Think: What can I do now so my garden looks its best through winter and is ready for spring?

My favorite activity is replacing tired summer annuals with cool-season color (pansies, petunias, snapdragons, violas, alyssum and dianthus) that say FALL IS HERE and along with it Halloween and Thanksgiving.

After summer's stress, adding a top dress of compost is well worth the effort. If you have pine trees consider the cost-cutting gathering of needles that are dropping and using them as a natural mulch. Be sure to adjust your irrigation system for cooler nights so plants don't stay soggy. Soggy plants invite fungus.

It's also a good time to divide, transplant and establish new perennials, evergreen shrubs and trees. If your landscape is lacking in color consider planting evergreen hollies; their bright berries add color to the landscape when other plants have died back for the winter with the extra bonus of providing food for birds.



Photo courtesy Connie Doyle
Flowers

You're a veggie gardener you say? Time to prepare vegetable beds for bulb onions, salad crops such as arugula, lettuce and spinach. This is the last month to set strawberry plants in the garden or in large containers.

Removing diseased limbs and weak branch unions now means fewer headaches during storm season. Trees with poor structure are less likely to survive storms. Good tree selection, proper structure and routine maintenance is the best defense against weather-related damage. Don't forget to cut back plants that need rejuvenation and divide overcrowded perennials.

If you pride yourself on a beautiful lawn, control winter weeds before they appear. Pre-emergent herbicides must

be applied at the right time to be effective. Apply when nighttime temperatures are 55-60 degrees for 4-5 days.

So as October settles in, take a breath with your garden, make a few thoughtful changes and let nature take the lead as things slow down.

Connie Doyle writes The Good Earth, a gardening column inspired by a life-long passion for plants, nature, and the peaceful rhythm of the garden. With more time in retirement, she has been inspired to take that passion to the next level — learning, growing, and sharing with others in our community by way of earning her Master Gardener Certification. Connie can be reached by email to mail@floridanewslines.com.

Travel

Travel: Central Oregon is worth the wait

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

A passing rain shower could have spoiled my visit to Smith Rock State Park. Instead, it provided the finishing touch. As the weather cleared, the cliffs glowed above the winding Crooked River, their colors freshened by the rain. For a photographer visiting Oregon for the first time, it was quite a welcome.



Debi Lander

make it easy to fill the hours between excursions. You can plan an ambitious day of hiking and paddling, or keep things simple with a riverside stroll and a good meal.

South of Bend, the High Desert Museum helps explain the country you are traveling through. Its mix of indoor exhibits and outdoor habitats connects the landscape with the history, the people, the art and wildlife that call it home. I saw birds of prey, otters and other native animals, while the exhibits explored the challenges of living in the high desert. It is a worthwhile early stop: the scenery means more when you begin to understand it.

At Benham Falls, the Deschutes trades its gentler stretches for a noisy rush through a rocky channel. Think tumbling rapids rather than a single curtain of falling water. White foam surges against dark rock, and a ponderosa pine trail along the river offers places to stop and take it all in. For photographers, the movement of the water and the contrast of light and dark provide plenty to work with. For everyone else, the river supplies its own entertainment.

Smith Rock, north of Bend, delivers drama on a much larger scale. Rock walls and spires tower over the Crooked River, drawing climbers from around the world. Views from above the canyon are rewarding, while trails offer closer encounters with the river and cliffs — some more demanding than others.



Photo by Debi Lander

A 19th-century stagecoach is on display at the High Desert Museum near Bend.



Photo by Debi Lander

Western-style storefronts line Main Street in Sisters, Oregon.



Photo by Debi Lander

Clouds break over the cliffs of Smith Rock State Park as the Crooked River winds through the canyon below.

The town of Sisters offers a gentler afternoon. Western-style storefronts give main street a distinctive cowboy look, with mountain scenery beyond. Shops, galleries and its celebrated annual outdoor quilt show reflect a strong creative streak. It is a place to browse without a schedule and stop for lunch.

Lodging can be part of the experience, too. Sunriver Resort offers upscale accommodations and recreation, Five-Pine Lodge & Cabins in Sisters pairs a wooded setting with a spa, and Brasada Ranch adds horseback rides through the high desert.

What stayed with me was the variety: otters at the museum, white water at Benham Falls, the easy pace of Sisters

and those cliffs emerging from the rain. Oregon may have been number 49 on my list, but Central Oregon deserves far more than a check mark. I can't wait to return.

Debi Lander is an award-winning travel writer and photographer who blends her passion for history, culture, food, and personal discovery into captivating stories. Through her website Bylandersea.com and her long-running travel column for Florida Newsline, she explores destinations from small U.S. towns to iconic global landmarks. She hopes her storytelling and practical insights inspire readers to experience the world with curiosity, appreciation, and a sense of adventure. Debi can be reached by email to mail@floridanewsline.com.

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