



Fort King 1800's re-enactment was the conflict between the United States and the Seminole Indians over land dispute. Visitors can see the Fort and learn the history of the Fort and the battle.

Historians are at the Fort to answer questions as well. The Seminole Indians and the United States wage war from 1816 to 1858. Photo by C Kay Johnson / CKJphotos13



Visiting Marion Cultural Alliance, Board of Directors of the Marion Cultural Alliance. The Marion Cultural Center A Director and Nick Navetta Financial great place to visit and experience the arts. Nick is on the

## "It's Berry Time Again"



OCALA, Florida – On Saturday, March 4, 2023, from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm, Habitat for Humanity of Marion County will host its annual fundraising event, the "Habitat Ocala Strawberry Festival" which will be at the McPherson Complex, 601 SE 25th Avenue Ocala.

This event attracts thousands of fans from all over to enjoy a family fun day and to bring awareness about Habitat for Humanity of Marion County.

The festival will have bands, entertainment, a pie eating contest, over 200

vendors (to include arts & crafts, business, non-profit, farmers market, and food vendors throughout the event), sponsor booths, a kids' area, a food court, a car show, a petting zoo, and lots of strawberries. Admission is FREE, parking is \$5 which will benefit Habitat for Humanity and the Marion Therapeutic Riding Association.

Habitat for Humanity host this event each year so our community and guests can enjoy a day filled with joy and happiness for the entire family. All proceeds benefit the Habitat Home Ownership program to build another Habitat home which will be called the Strawberry House. This program gives low-income families the opportunity of homeownership with affordable mortgage payments.

If you would like to be a vendor or a sponsor for this event, visit our webpage at [www.habitatocala.org/strawberry](http://www.habitatocala.org/strawberry) or contact Joanne Black at [jblack@habitatocala.org](mailto:jblack@habitatocala.org)

See page 7 for more.



After two years of working and planning, the owners of Brick City Flowers, Julie Bennett and Brenda Carroll, have recently moved into their new location, 1820 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL. We are located directly across the street in the old Jim Jernigan Photography building. We can supply all your floral, designs and event needs. Check out our weekly displays in the hotel lobby of the World Equestrian Center.

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Kevin Sheilley

## OCALA/MARION COUNTY CHAMBER & ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP



Last month marked the CEP's tenth anniversary. It is a milestone worth celebrating and we will be celebrating this anniversary throughout the next year. The celebration will be about the CEP's impact on

businesses and impact on our community. The CEP is nothing without the involvement and engagement of our 1,200 business partners. It is that engagement when businesses are positively impacted that the magic happens. It is nearly impossible for businesses to be positively impacted and it not positively impact our community. We have seen that play out time again over the last decade and hearing those stories over the next year will be incredibly inspiring.

But how did all of this happen? What sparked this effort? The catalyst for the CEP is no different than the catalyst for any other – it is leadership. In particular, leaders within the business community stepped up and decided they wanted more for their community. Leaders stepped up and committed to an out-of-the-box approach. Leaders stepped up and committed their time, talent, and treasure to bringing this vision to reality. In other words, leaders lead.

Among those leaders (and there have been many over the last ten years), the six business leaders who have served as Chair of the CEP Board are some of the most influential. Any discussion of the CEP or leadership must begin with the inaugural chair, Doug Cone, who led the charge to see the CEP birthed and has passionately worked to grow our community. The incredible emotion with which he speaks on why Ocala is so important to him will and has engaged many

a business and community leader to become involved.

Kevin McDonald fought strenuously for a robust business engagement effort with our schools. Today, the CEP's NEXTworking initiative is engaged with all aspects of education and is viewed as a model around the country. Without Kevin's leadership, that program would not exist. Ken Ausley led efforts to strengthen the Farmland Preservation Area and spearheaded the initial local option sales tax which is so vital to funding our transportation and first responder needs. I can think of no one who was better suited to lead the business community (and really our community) than Angie Lewis through the pandemic. Her compassion and desire to see businesses positively impacted pushed CEP staff to work strategically and creatively to assist our business community. It was not by mistake that the Ocala Metro outperformed the nation during this time.

Finally, Chad Christianson has been a phenomenal leader in continuing the drive to think differently about our community and our economy. One of the most significant efforts of the CEP moving forward is the Sphere initiative presented by IHG. This effort seeks to grow our healthcare economy by attracting and growing our healthcare businesses to support and expand our strong existing partners. Long term this may be one of the most impactful areas of work at the CEP and it happened because of catalytic leadership.

The leadership bench at the CEP is strong with incoming Chair and officers Chris Langley, Charisse Rivers, and Navroz Saju. Each is a leader not because of their position but because of their engagement. Again, these are but a few of the leaders making a difference in and for our community. Leadership IS the catalyst.

## First Friday Art Walk

02/03/2023 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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Add to my Calendar

Various artists will be setting up easels / stations and work on arts / crafts throughout Downtown Ocala. Performance on the Downtown Square. For additional information, please contact the City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Department's Cultural Arts Division at 352.629.8383.

## Mark Your Calendar

### After Dark in the Park Movie Series

It's movie time! Join us for FREE movies throughout the year at different City of Ocala parks. Be sure to bring a blanket or chairs to sit on. We will have concessions available for purchase like snacks, popcorn and soda. No registration is required to attend our movies, simply show up, get comfortable and enjoy the show!

#### 2023 Movie Lineup

• **Friday, Feb 24 - "Spider Man"** starts at 7 PM at Webb Field

Teen Miles Morales becomes the Spider-Man of his uni-verse and must join with five spider-powered individuals from other dimensions to stop a threat for all realities. Run time 117 mins

Rated PG

• **Saturday, April 1 - "The Monuments Men"**

Starts at 8 PM at Tus-cawilla Art Park  
An unlikely World War II platoon is tasked to rescue art masterpieces from Nazi thieves and return them to their owners. Runtime 118

Rated PG - 13

## Urgent Vehicle Safety Warning



**Urgent Vehicle Safety Warning Ahead Of Holiday Travel Season**

(NAPSI)—As you prepare for the busy holiday travel season, you should be aware of an urgent

stop-drive warning issued to owners and custodians of certain older model Dodge and Chrysler vehicles who have not replaced their recalled driver-side Takata air bags.

Approximately 276,000 2005-2010 Dodge Magnum station wagons, Dodge Challenger coupes, Dodge Charger and Chrysler 300 sedans fall under this warning. FCA US LLC has distributed notices to owners and custodians of these vehicles to immediately stop driving them.

If you are unsure if your vehicle falls under this recall, you can check by visiting [www.mopar.com/recalls](http://www.mopar.com/recalls), [www.checktoprotect.org](http://www.checktoprotect.org) or [www.nhtsa.gov/recalls](http://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls) and entering your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). The 17-character VIN is usually located on the driver's side dashboard near the windshield and is also often on insurance and registration documents.

If your vehicle is affected by this stop-drive order, you should call 833-585-0144 to discuss the best options for your free repair. FCA US LLC will help arrange for your car to be transported to your authorized dealership or schedule a mobile repair unit to come to your home to replace the recalled air bag. Air bag recall repairs can take as little as one hour and dealers

*Continued page 3*

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Florida State Senate

**DENNIS K. BAXLEY**



Dear Friends,  
We have a new year! Thankful for a wonderful time spent with family and friends over the holiday season and for new opportunities that arise as we start 2023.

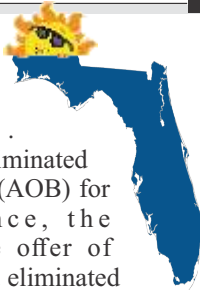
In the Florida Senate, we are already hard at work on behalf of Florida's citizens. This month and the month of February, the legislature will hold six weeks of committee meetings, in advance of the 2023 Legislative Session, which will begin March 7. Just before Christmas, the legislature convened a special session to address the property insurance crisis, tax relief, and toll fees. Three bills were passed and have made their way to the Governor's desk. SB 2A, SB 4A, and SB 6A.

SB 2A increases insurer transparency to improve the marketplace for consumers, will reduce frivolous litigation that drives up costs, expedites the claim review process to verify that insurers maintain consistent communication with policyholders, stabilizes state-run Citizens Property Insurance to reduce taxpayer liability, and

increases access to reinsurance to stabilize the insurance marketplace. Specifically, this bill eliminated assignment of benefits (AOB) for property insurance, the reinstatement of the offer of judgement process, and eliminated one-way attorney fees for property insurance claims. These key legal reforms will reduce the amount of cost inflating frivolous lawsuits that plague our state.

SB 4A provides necessary relief to Floridians impacted by the historic hurricanes that made landfall on Florida this fall. This bill provides tax relief to owners of destroyed or uninhabitable homes, assists local government in the acquisition of FEMA Grants, allocates funding to assist displaced Floridians, and provides funds to reconstruct impacted beaches and water infrastructure. Overall investment: \$750 million in tax relief and funding for critical infrastructure.

SB 6A provides a 50% credit to Floridians who utilize Florida's turnpike system and engage in 35+ transactions each month. This legislation helps to further alleviate financial burdens placed on hardworking



Floridians who are required to commute daily or travel for work or school. With the potential to save Floridians \$500 million for this upcoming year, this is one more step the Florida Senate can take to ensure Floridians keep more of their hard-earned money.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and staying engaged in your government. Our work continues and we press on.

Onward & Upward,  
Senator Dennis Baxley

**Recalls** *continued from page 2*  
make the process as easy as possible for drivers.

This issue requires immediate attention because the longer these particular vehicles remain unrepaired, the greater the risk of an air bag rupture which can cause serious injury or death in the event of a crash where the air bag deploys.

Keep yourself and your family safe this holiday season and check your vehicle for recalls.

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Nick Navetta  
Financial Advisor  
Ocala, Florida  
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Yandle Building Materials  
Owner  
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Tom Loury  
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References needed for those who would like to be in this ad.  
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**Bringing our community together**  
Ocala Downtown • Seniors Voice of Ocala  
Locations to pick up papers

- Cherrywood Estates
- Library Silver Springs Blvd
- VA at the west end of the Cascades Plaza
- Senior Center 8th Ave
- Barbra Washington Adult Activity Center
- Tax Collectors building
- Health Department
- Walt's Brake & More
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Tom Loury Tom Loury Long time member of CEP/Ocala Chamber of Commerce, Past President of the Ocala Business Leaders and current member, Co-Founder and past President of Select Business Associates, Past President of the Lady Lake Chamber and current member.

### PUBLISHER'S NOTES



What I say about "Build back better". The hell with that "put it back like it was!"

Look what happens when you order a president by mail!

Remember this fight now is for our freedom... There is no one else left to resupply us when we are fighting. Who will make food and supply drops to us like we do for other country's. We are it,,, there is no place to escape to by going across a border! Americans are not suppose to do that!

Our Governments job is to protect the people of this country not others country's. Remember "AMERICA FIRST!"

The real enemy today is not from other country's but the fat cat's on the left in Washington!!! They are so disconnected from what life is like in the rest of the country, someone needs to wake them up! All these facts out are eye opener, OPEN THEM AND DO SOMETHING!. The

election was stolen by the left from Trump by our own country. What happens when that is proven. Is the election null and void? Should it be done over? The Twitter releases and the Hunter Biden information release should be enough for Trump to reclaim the office. LAWSUIT? SUPREME COURT?

One of the University's did a poll and their findings were that the people want Trump Policy's but want DeSantis to execute them. That's not smart! Trump know how his policy's work and he has the guts to back them up any other choice is allowing the left to fleece you. Trump never sleeps, he works twenty hours a day, he does multiple projects at once. There is no one like him. He needs to get back into office and finish this "Make America Great Again!" Drain the swamp, there will be some good people left that look out for our well being.

To many people shuffling their residence! To many people in this country who got here and have their hand out. If we can't stop them make them work and pay taxes. No sending money back to their country that

means they are just using us.

Disappointments... I had an online giant who lives within our delivery area ask me to Cease and Desist delivery of our newspaper. How Petty! It is a first for me but I guess I am doing something right!

North America has enough oil to fuel every passenger car for 430 years, enough natural gas to provide electricity for 575 years. In another 430 years, don't you think we will have alternate fuel sources? So tell me why are we paying out the nose to foreign countries for fuel now?

NEW BREAK THROUGH... The Military has a lab that has created a safe new nuclear Fusion that does not create radio active waste. Coming soon to your electric car???

## The Shadows Of HIV

Stepping Out Of The Shadows Of HIV (NAPSI)—Ann is a 74-year-old retired principal and grandmother living in Connecticut. Robin is a 58-year-old community health educator and mother of four living in Maryland. On the surface, these women may seem to have little in common, but what brings them together is that for the last 25 years, both have been living with HIV. They have also chosen to step out of the shadows about their journey and help others get past the stigma surrounding HIV.

Continued page 5

## Newspaper Deadlines

Editorial & Ad Copy for February

Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown

Noon, January 20th

Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator

12am, January 25th

## Seniors Voice of Ocala/Ocala Downtown Products of TomL Publishing, LLC

P.O. Box 1698, Dunnellon FL 34430

Publisher: Tom Loury

Phone: 352-804-1223 | Fax: 352-489-7208

Email: tloury@att.net

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- Dog/cat one year rabies vaccination (must be over 3 months old) \$14
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# God Bless our Troops Support Our Veterans We Endorse The Constitution



**HIV** *Continued from 4*



**Ann's and Robin's Stories**

In 1998, Ann was shocked to receive an HIV diagnosis during a routine medical appointment, ultimately concluding that she may have contracted the virus during a hysterectomy 10 years earlier. After keeping her diagnosis a secret from everyone but some close family and friends for 20 years, Ann decided to open up about living with HIV so she could support others like her.

“When I was diagnosed, people living with HIV faced significant stigma among a number of other challenges,” said Ann. “While HIV stigma is still very much around today, times have changed and we have made progress. I now choose to be open about my diagnosis. My hope is that this will help others know they are not alone and will change the way the world views what it means to be living healthy with HIV.”

Like Ann, Robin was stunned to find out that she was HIV-positive while expecting

her third child with her long-time partner, receiving her diagnosis when she was tested as part of prenatal care. After struggling with her status for more than a decade, Robin became a community health educator and now uses her story to inspire those in the community and ensure they know that HIV does not define who they are.

“When the doctor told me I had HIV, I was devastated, and it was compounded by my pregnancy and the fear that my baby could be born with it as well,” stated Robin. “Fortunately, my daughter does not have HIV and I'm now using my experience to help those living in a similar situation come to terms with their diagnosis and live their lives to the fullest.”

**The Good News**

There has been significant progress in HIV treatment and care since the start of the epidemic more than 40 years ago, and for many people it is now a manageable chronic condition. People living with HIV may be on medication for decades, and with this comes important considerations around the lifelong impact of HIV treatment.

Ann and Robin considered a variety of different factors when discussing their HIV treatment regimen with their doctors, including aging well with HIV, taking fewer HIV medicines, co-morbidities and interactions with other medications they are

on or may be on in the future, as well as other lifestyle considerations.

Much has changed since Ann and Robin were diagnosed with HIV, due in large part to the work of brave advocates like themselves. Today, they are demonstrating what it means to thrive with HIV and using their experiences to advocate for others and

make a difference in the lives of people living with HIV.

**Learn More**

For further information about a holistic approach to HIV care, visit ViiV Healthcare's website ([www.viivhealthcare.com](http://www.viivhealthcare.com)) or speak with your healthcare provider.

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FROM THE DESK OF  
CONGRESSWOMAN KAT CAMMACK



**Congresswoman  
Cammack's  
Legislation To  
Rename Middleburg  
VA Clinic Signed By  
President**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, S.2159, the bill to rename the VA Clinic in

Middleburg, Florida after Andrew Kenneth Baker, was signed into law by President Biden at the White House.

After the bill passed the House and Senate earlier this fall, the president's signature was the final step before the formal designation and name change ceremony in Middleburg.

"It's an amazing day in Florida's Third Congressional District," said Cammack. "To have this bill across the finish line during my freshman term is a major accomplishment, and to do it in memory of Chief Baker and his service and sacrifice is truly an honor. I look forward to seeing the new name go up on the building in the new year, and to celebrate this project's completion. Thank you to Senators Rubio and Scott and all of my Florida colleagues for your support of this effort."

The clinic's new name honors Antisubmarine Warfare Chief Andrew Kenneth Baker of Middleburg, Florida who was killed during a SEAL training event when the Trident 615, an H-60 Seahawk, crashed at sea on March 13, 1997.

Chief Baker served on the USS Carl Vinson and USS Coral Sea as a Ship's Serviceman and completed training in Search and Rescue Swimmer School in Pensacola and Fleet Replacement Aircrewman training at NAS Jacksonville, earning his "Wings of Gold." Chief Baker then reported to HS-9, serving on the USS

Nimitz, then in HS-3, assigned as the Training and Operations Chief.

**Reps. Cammack, Soto Lead Bipartisan Letter To House & Senate Appropriators Requesting Relief For Specialty Crop Insurance Providers**

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Reps. Kat Cammack (R-FL-03) and Darren Soto (D-FL-09) led the Florida congressional delegation in sending a bipartisan letter to House and Senate appropriators, urging them to provide relief for specialty crop insurance providers who are facing steep Administrative and Operating (A&O) costs.

In 2011, a cap on the administrative and operating (A&O) expense reimbursement was established to ensure that, when the prices of crops like corn, wheat, soybeans, or cotton increase, A&O costs associated with these crops' policies do not also significantly rise. Unfortunately, specialty crops have not seen the same price increase as row crops but have been subject to the same A&O caps, resulting in steep decreases to specialty crop insurance funding.

Thus, the downward pressure on specialty crop funding has made it more difficult for crop insurance providers to deliver specialty crop insurance policies to producers in Florida and elsewhere, which in turn threatens the long-term survival of our nation's specialty crop producers

The letter is a follow-up to one sent by Rep. Cammack and Rep. Soto in June of this year, and asks the House Appropriations Committee to provide relief in the FY23 Agriculture appropriations bill to ensure that specialty crop insurance policies are not tied to this A&O cap

"Florida has experienced immense hardship in the last few months, and our producers have been struggling to keep up

with all the hurdles being thrown their way," said Rep. Cammack. "My colleague Rep. Soto and I have been working to tackle these inefficiencies within the specialty crop industry by ensuring fair and equitable access to insurance for our farmers, and with the FY2023 Agricultural appropriations budget still underway, there is no better time than now to deliver relief to our producers who so desperately need it."

The letter earned the support of the Florida Farm Bureau (FFB), Florida Fruit

**Rural  
Entrepreneurs**



**Rural Entrepreneurs Report Growing Economic Anxiety**

(NAPSI)—Rural small businesses face greater challenges to economic recovery and are less optimistic about the future compared to their non-rural counterparts, according to new survey data from SCORE, mentors to America's small businesses.

SCORE's Fall 2022 Megaphone of Main Street: The Small Business Rural/Urban Divide surveyed more than 3,000 entrepreneurs and found that while more than 75% of small businesses surveyed have returned to pre-pandemic levels or better, more than half (53%) of rural entrepreneurs say they feel somewhat or extremely negative about the economy and its impact on their business.

Although customer acquisition remains a challenge for all small businesses, inflation, the overall economy and cash flow are top concerns. In particular, rural entrepreneurs feel more challenged by inflation and supply chain disruptions. Specifically, rural small business owners are:

30.2% more likely than non-rural small business owners to cite inflation as one of their top three business concerns

When compared to non-rural counterparts, are 32.4% more likely to cite supply chain disruptions.

Diving deeper, rural small businesses say cash flow is constrained by rising costs for utilities, supplies, labor and capital. Rural entrepreneurs are:

9.3% more likely than non-rural small businesses to report higher costs of doing business

24.5% more likely to report higher vendor prices, when compared to non-rural entrepreneurs.

Compared to their non-rural counterparts, twice as many rural entrepreneurs say there's a lack of local banks in their area from which to seek financing, further limiting their ability to secure funding.

**What do rural entrepreneurs need in order to overcome these barriers?**

Both rural and non-rural small businesses agree that better access to capital would most help them in the coming year, followed by loan forgiveness or debt relief. Interestingly, rural businesses were 24.5% more likely than

non-rural businesses to desire assistance in the form of infrastructure improvements.

Recognizing that rural entrepreneurs face unique challenges, SCORE Bozeman Chapter Chair Rick Sanders notes: "Rural entrepreneurs deal with limited inventories and slow turns, requests for services from a limited pool of trained resources, few government resources and fierce competition from online stores. Thankfully, SCORE is here to connect the dots in rural communities across the country to provide the advice, tools and information rural entrepreneurs really need."

**SCORE supports rural small businesses through challenges**

"As a small rural business, there are days where it seems like everything is an obstacle to overcome. From dealing with a remote location and lack of WiFi to physically demanding agricultural work and trying to get our products to customers, I can absolutely say that our business would not have grown without our SCORE mentor," said Teddi Maslowski, owner of Birch Creek Farmery in Burgettstown, Pa.

"Our SCORE mentor gave us the groundwork to plan aggressive business projections, make decisions before they are high-pressure, and to continuously monitor the direction we are headed—all things that are giving us the confidence to rapidly expand our business in an unstable economy," Maslowski adds.

Currently, her business' biggest concern is the increasing cost of product production, but she has strategies in place, including calculations, creative solutions and both short- and long-term plans to work through this phase, thanks to SCORE, she reports.

**SCORE provides tangible solutions for rural entrepreneurs**

In response to rural small business challenges, SCORE offers a centralized resource hub, SCORE for Rural Entrepreneurs. There you can download the full Megaphone of Main Street: The Small Business Rural/Urban Divide and the full infographic.

Since 1964, SCORE has helped 11 million entrepreneurs start or grow a business. SCORE's 10,000 volunteers provide free mentoring, workshops and educational services to 1,500+ communities nationwide.

Learn More

Visit SCORE at [www.score.org](http://www.score.org). Follow @SCOREmentors on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Felony Human Trafficking**

**Man Faces Life Sentence for Felony Human Trafficking Charges and Manslaughter**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution charged a human trafficker with manslaughter and human trafficking causing great bodily harm, permanent disability or permanent disfigurement. The defendant, Daniel Rhodes, faces a maximum sentence of life in prison. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement arrested Rhodes, who used several women's drug addictions to coerce the victims into engaging in sexual activity

Continued page 8





**SATURDAY MARCH 4TH, 2023**

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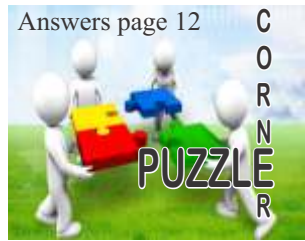
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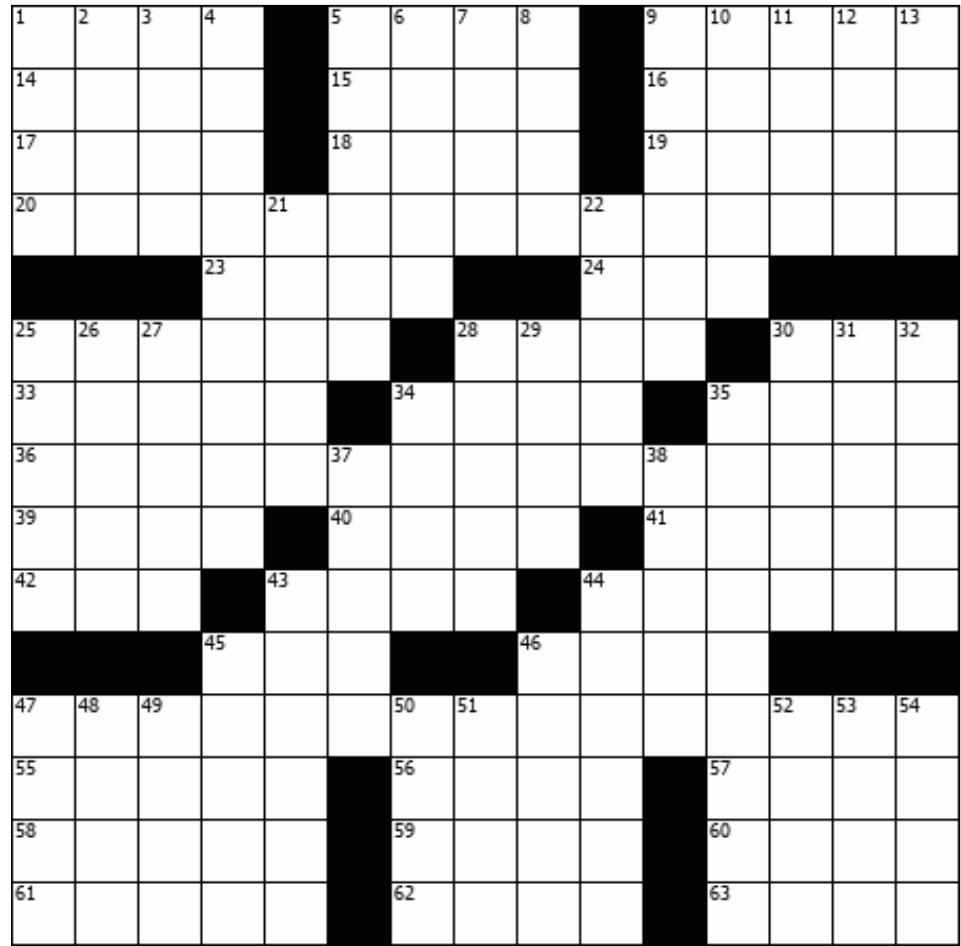






- Answers page 12
- Across
1. It may be spiked
  5. Indiana Jones' dread
  9. Master of spin?
  14. Radius neighbor
  15. Classic TV's Carla
  16. Scrap for Rover
  17. At the acme of
  18. King George III loyalist
  19. Dilapidated
  20. Start of a lazybones' remark
  23. Graft recipient
  24. Bighorn breeder
  25. Most reliable
  28. Catcher's putdown?
  30. Atty. group
  33. Wee atoll
  34. Jane you may have read about
  35. Emulate a checker
  36. Part 2 of the remark
  39. Ranges of understanding
  40. It might lead to a check

41. Martian marking
  42. It doesn't hurt to do this
  43. Actress Pinkett Smith
  44. Dowel pin
  45. Good, to some
  46. Where the gang is
  47. End of the remark
  55. Brief advertisement
  56. Oenologist's interest
  57. École chum
  58. It could cause division among the congregation
  59. Ring tightly studded with diamonds
  60. Coquette
  61. Croupier, e.g.
  62. Made do (with "out")
  63. Uptight
- Down
1. Former blacklisting org.
  2. Kind of flute
  3. Knowledgeable about
  4. Criminals' accumulations
  5. One who creates a scene?
  6. Exclamation of disappointment
  7. One-time land of the Incas
  8. States
  9. Spread here and there
  10. Degrade
  11. Small but appreciable amounts
  12. Not behind
  13. Florida extension
  21. \_\_\_ del Sol
  22. Israeli desert
  25. Alaska cruise stop
  26. Sackcloth partner
  27. Cut of meat
  28. Part of the Fertile Crescent
  29. Persian Gulf nation
  30. Getting no returns?
  31. Humdrum
  32. It's sometimes right but always to a degree
  34. "Heavens!"
  35. Hollywood moniker
  37. A, B or C, e.g.
  38. Item in a cheek pouch
  43. Talk nonsensically
  44. Gave a raspberry to
  45. Uncle Miltie
  46. Ho predecessor
  47. Cable attachment to give you a lift
  48. Pelvic bones
  49. Kind of ox or rat
  50. Hunt and peck
  51. Lacking potency
  52. Within or among
  53. High-pitched metallic sound
  54. Like Sadie of song



## Felony Charges

Continued from page 6 for Rhode's financial benefit. According to an FDLE investigation, Rhodes also injected one of the victims with a drug concoction that included fentanyl, resulting in the woman's overdose death.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This monster injected his victims with drugs and coerced them to perform sex acts for his financial gain. An FDLE

investigation also revealed that he caused the death of one woman, by injecting her with a fentanyl-laced drug mixture. My prosecutors will aggressively pursue this case to make sure this vile human trafficker pays for his crimes."

According to the investigation, the defendant ran a human trafficking operation out of several hotels and motels along the Treasure Coast region. Rhodes allegedly entrapped women into the human trafficking ring by supplying drugs until the victims became addicted. Then, Rhodes

coerced the women into performing sex acts to pay off debts and promised to only take a portion of the ill-gotten gains. However, the investigation revealed Rhodes took all the money made from the victims. The defendant listed the victims' sex services for sale on online platforms.

The investigation alleges the defendant created drug mixtures to inject the victims with before each coerced sexual encounter, with the women sometimes going days without sleep. The more acts each victim engaged in, the more times Rhodes injected the drug mixture, leading the victims deeper into addiction. In one case, Rhodes continued to inject a victim with drugs even

though the woman could not control physical movements or hold a conversation. Witnesses recounted that Rhodes injected this woman upward of 10 to 12 times a day.

According to the investigation, Rhodes ultimately caused this woman's death, by injecting a mixture of drugs that contained fentanyl.

Rhodes is currently serving a prison sentence for selling methamphetamine and soliciting prostitution in Trenton. The defendant is being held without bond and will be transported to St. Lucie County to be arraigned.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Josh Dockus.

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## Love is just a leash away!!

The HSMC is here for you and the animals who depend on us. We wanted to share that we will continue to be here to help unwanted pets during this pandemic while following all Marion County and Florida state guidelines.

As this situation is constantly changing, we ask that you continue to visit our Shelter using the safety guidelines in place.

### How can you help?

**Pet Food Bank:** Help stock our Pet Food Bank with pet food and supplies for people who cannot afford them due to job loss or other reasons. You can also bring donations to our Shelter daily from 10-6. Masks required please! If you need help keeping your pet with you during this time, our Happy Paws food program is here for you.

**Volunteer:** A small number of volunteers have returned to help in various departments. We are accepting volunteer applications but do not yet know when we will schedule orientations for new volunteers. Please contact us for more information about volunteering. We are currently working on a digital orientation.

**Opt to adopt:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, there is no evidence that companion animals such as cats and dogs can spread the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Donate:** We know there is a lot of uncertainty right now but homeless and unwanted animals still need us. Donate to help the Humane Society of Marion County so we continue our lifesaving work and make them feel safe and loved.



Bilbie

Bilbie is a 14 weeks old male brought to the HSMC with her brother Wombat! We believe they could be Xolaitzcuinli, or Xolo, which is Mexican hairless dog breed.



Fuchala is a 15 week old paralyzed kitten full of love.



Ninja is paralyzed in his hind legs but enjoys runs with his wheels.

Your donations make it possible to provide medical care, food and shelter to animals in need. On behalf of all the animals, thank you for caring.



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Donations to the Humane Society are tax-deductible. Check with your accountant for more information. No goods or services have been provided to the donor as a result of this gift.





## FROM THE DESK OF ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY



**Attorney General Moody Warns of 12 Schemers Scheming**  
TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert highlighting schemes associated

with the holiday season. The [National Retail Federation predicts](#) that overall spending during the holidays is expected to total a record-breaking \$950 million. Schemers know spending increases during the holidays and will craft ways to target consumers.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It's a busy time of year for shoppers, retailers and delivery companies as millions of gifts are sold, shipped and delivered. It's also a busy season for scammers concocting schemes to exploit the holiday demand. Today, I am releasing the 12 Schemes of Christmas Consumer Alert to help Floridians identify and avoid scams they could encounter during this busy holiday shopping season."

Attorney General Moody lists 12 schemes Floridians should be wary of during the holiday season and beyond:

[Gift Card Schemes](#)

· : Some scammers reveal and record codes from gift cards in stores, stealing the value of the card once it is purchased and activated.

[Fraudulent Charities](#)

· : Deceptive and phony online fundraising campaigns may be posted on

crowdsourcing platforms. Ensure legitimacy by researching an organization on [CharityNavigator.org](#) before giving.

[Porch Pirates](#)

· : If a mailbox shows signs of being tampered with or packages are missing from a consumer's front door, this may be a sign of delivery theft. Control delivery times or purchase a secure mailbox to avoid theft.

[Travel Scams](#)

· : Scammers may make fake postings offering vacation rental properties or travel deals that are too good to be true, like holiday pricing and packages.

[Fake Gift Exchanges](#)

· : Fraudulent online holiday gift exchange events are advertised on social media with promises of multiple gifts after paying it forward. Oftentimes, this is a pyramid scheme in disguise.

[Phishing Messages](#)

· : Phishing messages are a year-round attack from scammers, but messages may be tailored around the holiday season. Emails may appear to originate from a trusted merchant, but instead originate from a scammer hoping to gather personal or financial information.

[Package Tracking Scams](#)

· : A form of smishing—text-message phishing—scammers send deceptive messages intended to lure recipients into providing personal or financial information. The messages are disguised as package-tracking updates.

[Temporary Holiday Jobs](#)

· : Seasonal job opportunities are posted

online in an effort to steal information from applicants or obtain free work without paying a hopeful employee.

[Lookalike Websites and Accounts](#)

· : Traffic to fake websites spike during the holiday season. Floridians must make sure a website is secure and the domain is accurate before inputting personal or financial information.

[Counterfeit Toys](#)

· : Scammers create fake discount offers for trending toys, but instead send counterfeit toys—or no toys at all—bilking consumers of money and potentially stealing personal information.

[Shoulder Surfing and Card Skimming](#)

· : Be wary when using an ATM while holiday shopping. Check to see if an ATM looks tampered with and that surroundings are clear before typing in a PIN code or other personal information.

[Public Wi-Fi](#)

· : Refrain from using public Wi-Fi when shopping online since hackers can take advantage of unsecure public networks to steal personal information.

For more safe shopping tips, view Attorney General Moody's free 2022 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide. The guide also provides tips on holiday giving, as well as a list of recalled items.

To report a holiday scheme, contact the Florida Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at [MyFloridaLegal.com](#).

### Attorney General Moody Calls on Apple and Google to Correct TikTok Age Rating

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today called on Apple and Google to take immediate action

and correct the application store age ratings of TikTok by the end of the year. Attorney General Moody and 14 other state attorneys general state that the change will help parents protect their children from being exposed to harmful content online.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "While our investigation into TikTok continues, it is important that action is taken now to better protect children from harmful content they might encounter on this China-owned social media platform. If TikTok isn't banned outright, app stores should at the very least increase the age rating on the TikTok app to ensure parents know that this social media platform is not appropriate for users under the age of 17."

In a pair of letters to Apple CEO Tim Cook and Google CEO Sundar Pichai, the coalition of attorneys general outlined the deceptive nature of the current ratings for the social media platform. The letters state that without taking the necessary steps to increase the age rating and change the accompanying age descriptions, the states reserve the right to take appropriate legal action against the companies.

The current ratings of 'T' for 'Teen' in the Google Play App store and '12+' in Apple's App store, inadequately characterize the objectionable content children are exposed to on TikTok. While TikTok does have a 'restricted mode' available, many users under the age of 13 lie about age in order to create a profile on the platform.

The TikTok app contains frequent and extreme alcohol, tobacco and drug use or references, sexual content, profanity and mature/suggestive themes. TikTok users can search for hundreds of thousands of hashtags related to these topics, with each

*Continued page 12*

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FROM THE DESK OF  
GOVERNOR DESANTIS



**Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Two Bills to Support Disaster Relief and Help Stabilize Florida's Property Insurance Market**

**FORT MYERS BEACH, Fla.** —

Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed two bills following the special session that took place this week. Governor DeSantis signed Senate Bill (SB) 4-A which provides \$750 million for additional disaster relief to Floridians following Hurricanes Ian and Nicole. The Governor also signed SB 2-A, the most significant property insurance reform bill in recent history which helps to stabilize our property insurance market, increase competition, and strengthen consumer protections. More on actions taken during the recent special session can be found [here](#).

“We have taken an all hands on deck approach to cut through bureaucracy to help our communities recover from Hurricanes Ian and Nicole,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “I want to thank the Legislature for bringing additional disaster relief to communities across the state as we continue our historic recovery.

“The issues in Florida's property insurance market did not occur overnight, and they will not be solved overnight. The historic reforms signed today create an environment which realigns Florida to best practices across the nation, adding much-needed stability to Florida's market, promoting competition, and increasing consumer choice. I am thankful the Legislature

answered the call for meaningful reform.”

“I am honored to stand beside Governor DeSantis and Senate President Passidomo after a productive Special Session that was focused on providing Floridians with much needed relief,” said **House Speaker Paul Renner**. “The Florida House and our Senate partners faced the challenge of stabilizing the property insurance market and providing Floridians affected by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole with critical resources to recover quickly and efficiently. We are all feeling the effects of inflation and rising insurance premiums, so we took action to deliver consumer driven reforms that expedite the claims process and curb frivolous lawsuits that drive up costs. I witnessed the devastation from the recent hurricanes and was proud of how our Chamber came together and rose to the occasion. The results of this Special Session provide Floridians with the peace of mind that they will be able to access a robust property insurance market and our local communities will have the financial assistance to recover and rebuild better than before.”

“When the Governor and I walked through the communities impacted by Ian in the days that followed the storm, the devastation was almost indescribable,” said **Senate President Kathleen Passidomo**. “The Governor made a promise that he would be here every step of the way as we work to recover, and he has kept that promise. The legislation he is signing today provides three quarters of a billion dollars in additional hurricane relief funding that will make a huge difference for impacted communities in Southwest Florida and across our state. This legislation provides tax relief for owners of destroyed homes, housing assistance for displaced Floridians, and

funding for reconstructing impacted beaches and essential water infrastructure. We are also providing \$350 million to help local government to pay local match requirements for FEMA Grants. With the continued leadership and support of our great Governor, our community is bound and determined to rebuild stronger and better than ever.”

SB 4-A, Disaster Relief, provides property tax relief for homes rendered uninhabitable due to the storm. Additionally, the bill provides \$750 million for the communities impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole, including:

- \$350 million to support the entire portion of local government match for FEMA Public Assistance, freeing up local funds to undertake additional hurricane recovery and mitigation projects.
- This important matching money may provide up to \$7 billion in reconstruction and recovery projects undertaken by local governments depending on the applicable federal cost share.
- \$150 million to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to support local beach renourishment projects and a new Hurricane Restoration Reimbursement Grant Program to assist homeowners with coastal hardening and fortification to protect their property against the severe coastal erosion from both Hurricanes Ian and Nicole.
- The bill also authorizes DEP to waive local match requirements for beaches in these impacted areas.
- \$100 million to DEP to repair and reconstruct community stormwater and wastewater infrastructure that was damaged by Hurricanes Ian or Nicole.
- \$150 million to continue efforts to support homeowners and renters impacted by the storms through the Hurricane Housing Program and Rental Recovery Loan Program.

SB 2-A, Property Insurance, is the most

significant property insurance reform bill in recent history, strengthening Florida's property insurance market by:

- Eliminating one-way attorney fees for property insurance claims, which will disincentivize frivolous lawsuits, and realigning Florida's market to best practices that will promote more market competition in the private insurance industry.
  - Reducing the burden of excessive and predatory litigation will help bring down costs for homeowners.
- Enhancing the Office of Insurance Regulation's ability to complete market conduct examinations of property insurers following a hurricane to hold insurance companies accountable and prevent abuse of the property appraisal process.
- Reducing timelines for insurers to get payments out the door and back into the hands of policyholders as they rebuild their lives.
  - Building on reforms passed earlier this year by committing additional funding to provide temporary reinsurance support to help stabilize our market.

SB 2-A, Property Insurance, builds on progress made during the Special Session held earlier this year to address concerns with the property insurance market. After that Special Session, [Governor DeSantis signed SB 2-D](#) which enacted pro-consumer measures to help alleviate rising insurance costs, increased insurance claim transparency, and cracked down on frivolous lawsuits which drive up costs for all Floridians. This built upon previous actions taken by the Governor on property insurance including [signing House Bill 7065](#) in 2019 to curtail Assignment of Benefit abuse and [SB 76 in 2021](#) which restructured litigation rules for insurance claims to reduce the burden of excessive litigation.

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# Letters to the Editor

Tom,

You are an extraordinary gentlemen! You always fight for the people and what's good for the community. You're always an advocate for doing the right thing. That doesn't exist in the World. Your paper allows another voice and in some cases an opposing view that challenges the local

medias. Thank you for all you've done in the community!

M. Frank

**Publishers note:** "DON'T CALL ME A GENTLEMAN!" Ha!

To the editor

I read your article on DeSantis and agree with you 100%. We the people of Florida voted him in again as Governor because he

is doing a good job. He knows how to run the State. He should not consider running for President until he finishes what he has promised the people of Florida, to be our Governor.

Trump will be President again because the people love him and he did a great job as our President, he knew how to handle trade and the leaders of other countries.

We just have to get Congress to get strong and take a lead in putting the Democrats

through what they put Trump through.

Trump 2024

Patricia

# Atty General

Continued from page 10

search returning thousands of videos in the following categories—instructional videos about drug use, descriptions of drinking games, recipes for cannabis edibles, demonstration of vaping tricks, pole dancing routines and millions of videos set to songs with explicit lyrics, which TikTok makes available to users in its music library.

TikTok not only allows users to find this type of harmful content, it also auto-populates such content for users through its search function and fills users' 'For You' page with dangerous recommended content from strangers.

See MyFloridaLegal.com to read more.

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