



(Ocala, FL)- Tickets are on sale for Florida's premier Draft Horse Show, Grandview International, taking place February 1st through the 3rd. Twenty-one wagons and six to eight one ton Belgians, Clydesdales, and Percherons

will compete under the covered arena in what some describe as "organized chaos". Some Hitches have a single horse while others have an eight horse hitch, and everything in between. Hitches are put into competition based

on the breed of Draft horse, number of horses in their hitch, and gender of the driver. Gates will open every morning at 8am and the show will begin with opening ceremonies followed by the action. This is a great event to bring the

entire family to! To purchase tickets and check out the schedule visit <https://grandviewinvitational.com/schedule/>.

American "True Grit!"

By TomL

Many Americans have been known for their bravery, grit, pride, family, God and country. Most have a lot of grit meaning they face danger with resolution, take action and move on to the next challenge.

I remember when the movie "True Grit" came out starring John Wayne. In the movie John Wayne had a lot of grit. Here was an old Sheriff / Bounty Hunter, alcoholic that was a real True American. At the end of the movie he was on one side of a clearing and a number of bad guys were on the other side making fun of him. He was on his faithful horse, took the reins in his teeth and a gun in each hand and charge the group of bad guys. That is true Grit!

That is what we need, not necessarily a cowboy but a person of courage. Not necessarily a goody goody but a bit of a rough who throws caution to the wind and does the right thing. We have someone who has some of those characteristics in the name of "Donald Trump". The Democrats are afraid of him because he will hold them

accountable for the wrong things they have done. The Dictators around the world are also afraid of him because he will, no questions asked retaliate if we have been wronged. He will hit them harder then we got hit. If a Terrorist continuously keeps coming into view by killing our people or trying to kill our people "he will take them out!"

I think if there is a modern day True Grit, it would be Donald Trump. We need to gather up our American grit and with God at our side, get behind him and stand up for him and take him all the way into the White House, then trying to keep him alive! I'll bet once he is back in the White House we will all sleep better and if you make your personal stand you will feel better about yourself.

You ask where are we now and how could Trump fix our Border / Illegals problem. Our current administration think more of Illegal Aliens than they do our starving Americans and our homeless Veterans that live here. They just took a school away from our students and gave it to the aliens to keep them comfortable. There were three

Presidents in the past that dealt with Illegals. "It is called Deportation." President Hoover deported millions! President Truman deported two million during World War II.

President Eisenhower deported thirteen Million Mexicans.

You ask why they could do it then and Biden can't, "They were men of Honor!"

Trump says let's be honest about this. They are after you and your tax money. If they control what you eat, what job you do, the car you drive, take all the children at age 15 into the military and indoctrinate them, we will no longer be a free society. In Cuba if a person does something the government does not like they shut the power off in that neighborhood and the people suffer, that is why they don't want gas stoves. If you have nothing but electricity they have you. It's called control of power grid. CONTROL of you! We have many Warriors in this Country, we need a WARRIOR LEADER! Vote Trump!

Hunter Biden Stunt



Thomas, this is just another stunt by Hunter Biden and the Democrats to change the narrative and distract and obstruct the investigation into the Biden Family.

Let me be clear, the President's son isn't above the law.

He can run, but he can't hide from accountability.

His refusal to comply with my lawfully issued subpoena is a criminal act, and I won't let him get away with it.

The Biden's are pulling out all the stops and doing everything they can to obstruct my investigation, but I will not be deterred.

Hobby Shops



Hobby Shops and Recreational Buildings Popping Up All Over

(NAPSI)—If you're like many homeowners seeking to enhance your property and support your lifestyle interests, adding a freestanding hobby shop, vehicle storage building or recreational facility can be a great idea.

For hobby enthusiasts, projects range from a small garage to an elaborate workshop to support a wide range of interests, such as woodworking, classic car restoration, various collections or simply for storage of equipment and tools, said Andy Brown, Morton Buildings suburban product line manager. Also popular are man caves and she sheds, which offer a place to get away to relax and unwind, enjoy hobbies and spend time with friends.

“Our customers have used their Morton buildings for such diverse interests as an art studio, a family game room, a space for music and instruments, doing meditation and yoga, brewing beer and exercising,” Brown noted. “Some couples split the space in their hobby building so they each have separate areas for their own interests.”

Many owners of boats, RVs and other recreational vehicles, such as motorcycles and ATVs, he added, want an attractive, well-designed storage facility to protect and enhance the enjoyment of those assets. Many of these vehicle storage facilities also have amenities, such as an office, kitchenette, lounge, bathroom and space for hobbies.

“Homeowners want a building that will not only support their hobby and recreational needs, but is also stylish and can be customized to complement the existing structures on the property with design features such as brick and stone, cupolas and porches,” he said.

Learn More

Save now through February on select new buildings during Morton's Building Value Days event. Visit mortonbuildings.com/projects/residential or call 800-447-7436 to learn more. Certain restrictions may apply.

AI Homebuying

AI in Homebuying: Separating Fact from Fiction

(NAPSI)—The homebuying journey has undergone a radical transformation in the digital age. Long gone are the days of sifting through stacks of paperwork, replaced by a streamlined, tech-driven consumer experience. As part of this progression, artificial intelligence (AI) is being woven into the fabric of daily life and has the potential to have a massive effect on the path to homeownership, offering tools that make finding and purchasing a home easier than ever before.

How AI Changes Homebuying

AI has the power to streamline the

Continued page 12

Turning 65 or new to Medicare?

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Kevin Sheilley

OCALA/MARION COUNTY CHAMBER & ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP



Recently, my wife and I were invited to attend a dinner event. It was a lovely evening, and we were sat at a table with a gentleman to my right whom I had not previously met.

questions.

What questions am I asked? Well, usually they are around growth and development though they sometimes wander into other areas. Here are some of the most common questions—

What are they building now at World Equestrian Center? (hotel #2, the Special Events Center, the Shoppes at 80th, Arena 6. Basically, I can just make up answers to this question and it will probably eventually be correct).

What is going up behind Market Street? (two different multi-family developments)

What's happening with the Mall? (it is 100% leased, has several additional national tenants moving in in 2024, and is set for another record year in sales per sq ft and visitors)

Did that cannabis company ever build their facility? (which one? Usually, the one people are referencing is GTI or Green Thumb Industries. They demolished the former Mark III complex and phase I of their facility is built and operational.)

Are we ever getting a Costco? (I really,

truly, honestly wished I knew the answer to this question)

POV: Ocala

I truly love being able to answer people's questions. Our community is growing so quickly, and we have so many incredible things happening it is hard to keep track even for me. However, I do not want you to feel like you need to hunt me down to stay informed.

The CEP created POV:Ocala presented by Ocala Flooring to help educate and inform our community. This video series posts new episodes twice a month (2nd and 4th Wednesdays) and allows me the opportunity to share about 3 new developments, businesses, and/or stats. If you are one of those people who likes being "in the know" then POV: Ocala presented by Ocala Flooring is for you! The videos are posted on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Takeaways

Two key take aways from this column - please stop me, introduce yourself, and ask your questions! Watch POV: Ocala presented by Ocala Flooring so you can amaze your friends at your next get together with all your insider knowledge.

Ocala Events

Live On the Square-- Halfway Hippie

02/03/2024 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Downtown Square, 1 SE Broadway St.

The Lee Boys: Sunset Songs Series

02/07/2024 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Downtown Square, 1 SE Broadway St.

Music lovers of all ages will enjoy the new free Sunset Songs Series!

Live On the Square Nate Mercado

02/10/2024 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Downtown Square, 1 SE Broadway St.

Live On the Square Charity Cox

02/17/2024 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Downtown Square, 1 SE Broadway St.



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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



Farmers I read on the internet that bamboo charcoal will get rid of rodents. Believe it or not! OK farmers there is your answer. Actually you can order it online. That would even work in the fields if it's not to expensive, check

it out!.

I am getting notes from reader which is a good sign. The notes are 99% positive. I get one from a soldier overseas. Keep the notes coming. It tell me you are a reader.

I see Texas has finally had enough of being accused of things they were not doing! The rest of the states need to follow. This administration is letting these Illegals come in. Border Patrol was accused of drowning Illegals, but when they watched the video's they were saving peoples from drowning. They were accused of whipping the aliens

with their horse reins and they were using long reins to control the horses. Again watching the video's and realized they were not hitting anyone. They were using the horses as barriers to stop illegal entree.

Remember the movie True Grit? We need a Rooster Caugburn for president. Get on his horse, take the reins in his teeth with, a gun in each hand and charge the bad guys. Just a scene from True Grit! Maybe something like "Donald Trump!"

I really believe that Trump will be our next President, It's not that Biden is to old it's because he does not always have the thought process he needs to get off the stage or go up or down the stairs. The Left is making up things and call them laws and some of the appointed judges are going along with it. I believe that oil and the border are the two things that need to be addressed the first day. Three past presidents deported millions of people that need to go home. This is not their home, this a free ride. A bunch of them pile up in a hotel room that we the tax payers pay

for, they are getting credit cards, expense money. They should not be allowed to be sent home with a lot of money in their pocket. Just enough to get home. It won't take long for the incoming will get the picture NO FREE RIDES! Get in line and ask for asylum.

I was proud that our referral lunch group (The Select Business Association) was able to donate \$500 to the Fort McCow Veterans Village. We meet every first and third Wednesday for lunch at MOJO's. Call me if you want an invite we'll talk. It takes a

special invitation to join. 352-804-1223. Only one of the same category, no acceptance's. It cost \$40 per year, we pray. we pledge, we do business and a little social talk. Each person gets a fair amount of time to talk about their business. We help each other! Call me! 352-804-1223

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Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator
12am, February 28th

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DENNIS K. BAXLEY



Dear Friends,
We are over half way through the 2024 Legislative Session and have plenty of more ground to cover. Over the course of the 2024 Legislative Session, the Republican Caucus

is committed to being focused on delivering real results for Florida's families and ensuring that Florida continues to lead the nation with a world-class education system and thriving economy.

The Senate Committee on Fiscal Policy passed the Live Healthy Legislative Package with unanimous support. This robust policy proposal addresses key shortages in Florida's health care workforce and stimulates innovation in health care. This Legislative Package combines targeted policy enhancements and critical investments to increase Florida's health care workforce and efficiency across the health care sector.

Senate Bill 7016, presented by Senator Colleen Burton (R-Lakeland), Chair of the Senate Committee on Health Policy, seeks to enhance Florida's healthcare workforce by addressing key shortages of physicians, nurses, technicians, and other health care professionals.

Senate Bill 7018, presented by Senator Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services, funds strategic investments in health care innovation through a revolving loan program.

The Florida Senate also passed a critical deregulation package that enhances our public schools and empowers them to

deliver an educational experience fit to the needs of their local community.

Senate Bill 7000, presented by Senator Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami), enhances the authority of local school districts to recruit and retain the very best teachers. Specifically, this legislation provides flexibility to districts in setting salaries for instructional personnel, in offering multiyear contracts, and in personnel evaluation systems.

Senate Bill 7002, presented by Senator Travis Hutson (R-St. Augustine), removes burdensome administrative guidelines on local school districts that have hindered the operational success of Florida's neighborhood public schools for far too long. This legislation provides flexibility to schools regarding communications, finances, construction, and administration.

Senate Bill 7004, presented by Senator Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee), directly improves the educational experience for students and families. This legislation enhances progress monitoring processes to allow for early intervention, ensuring that student's get the support they need before retention is necessary. Senate Bill 7004 also reduces high-stakes testing and revises graduation requirements, allowing for students to be evaluated in a more holistic manner.

We have made tremendous progress towards improving Florida's healthcare landscape, as well as the education that our children receive. We will continue to work diligently on behalf of all Floridians.

Thank you for letting me be your Senator, and for allowing me to fight for faith, family, freedom, opportunity, and life.

Onward & Upward,
Senator Dennis Baxley

FAIRTAX



"Is anything happening with the FAIRtax? Why don't I ever hear about the FAIRtax on tv? Will the FAIRtax ever pass?" These are a few of the questions that I hear on a fairly regular basis. Let's take them one at a time:

"Is anything happening with the FAIRtax?":

Just a few weeks ago Steve Hayes (Chairman of Americans for Fair Taxation) was invited to testify before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Taxation in Washington, D.C. This proved to have both negative and positive results. Those members who do not like the FAIRtax and enjoy the rewards of having an incomprehensible income tax code to further their own political gains asked scripted questions to people other than Steve. They in turned gave scripted answers that misconstrued or lied about the FAIRtax without giving Steve a chance for rebuttal. Fortunately, the chairman asked Steve direct questions that gave him the opportunity to set the record straight. After the meeting, Steve was approached by 3 different Congressmen wanting to talk more about the FAIRtax. Steve is in the process now of trying to set up one-on-one sessions with these members to teach them more about the FAIRtax and find common ground in hope of pushing the FAIRtax bill forward.

Why don't I hear about the FAIRtax on tv?":

The FAIRtax Bill is sitting in the House Ways and Means Committee and, so far, we have not been able to get the bill out onto the floor for an open debate. It would be very helpful if our movement were financially able to put big splashy ads on tv but,

unfortunately, we are an all volunteer organization with limited funding. That doesn't mean we are invisible. We have a presence in every state and we are always looking for more volunteers and more funding. There are 5 states that our volunteers are in various stages of working with their state legislators to eliminate their state income tax and replace it with a statewide FAIRtax program. We are also on FaceBook, YouTube, X (Twitter), iHeartRadio, Apple Podcasts, WTOB and WAME radio in N. Carolina, WLSC radio in S. Carolina as well as having information booths at local events throughout the country. You can also browse our website at FAIRtax.org for Steve Hayes' Chairman's Report and Jim Bennett's Grassroots Corner, news, information and to sign up and/or donate.

"Will the FAIRtax ever pass?":

I believe it will because the income tax has become so complicated, inefficient and corrupt that it will eventually implode. Hopefully we can get the FAIRtax implemented before that happens as the FAIRtax is the only sensible alternative on the horizon. So keep the faith and keep pushing forward. This is a brand new year so let's work together to make it a FAIRtax year.



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Florida Horse Park



Ocala Polo Club

(Ocala, FL) - The Ocala Polo Club's Winter Circuit is underway. They kicked off their Winter season on December 3rd with a very special Polo Match by partnering with Run for the Ribbons to support the Florida Thoroughbred Transformation Expo, an opportunity for previously raced Thoroughbreds to showcase their new careers in Polo, Show Jumping, Eventing, Dressage, and

Western. The Ocala Polo Club will have matches every Sunday through the end of March. Matches start at 1pm and all are welcome! Opportunities to purchase VIP tailgate spaces are available online at <https://www.ocalapolo.com/watch-polo.html>. After watching a game, if you discover your new passion, private polo lessons on a Team Resolute Polo pony can be scheduled with Coach David.



Western Dressage Association of America

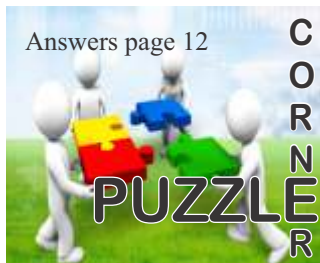
(Ocala, FL)-The annual Western Dressage Association of America Florida Affiliate Show will be held at the Florida Horse Park January 19-21st. This show will be open to all breeds and focus on all things Western Dressage, offering all levels of tests, rail classes, and musical freestyle. This show will feature several opportunities to win some fun prizes and awards including the High-Score Breed Award, the Belt Buckle Award, and Championship Award for Saturday and Sunday in the Youth, Amateur, and Open

Division. All classes are WDAA, USEF, and AQHA points eligible. The WDAFL was created as an opportunity for riders to find a partnership with their horses working on lightness and the ability to have harmony among horse and rider while holding onto the foundation of American West riding. If you're interested in joining in the fun, the prize list and additional information can be found at <https://wdafl.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-showbill.pdf>.



Horse Park Trials

(Ocala, FL)- The Eventing Horse Trials kick off their 2024 season February 15th through the 18th. Over the four days, horses will compete in Dressage, Stadium Jumping, and Eventing with Beginner Novice through Advanced courses and tests offered. This will be the first of two Winter Horse Trial events. The second Winter Horse trial will take place February 14th through the 17th. Volunteers are always welcome to help run in-gates and keep things flowing. If you're interested in volunteering please sign up at <http://www.eventingvolunteers.com>. Those interested in competing in the horse trials can find prize lists, course maps, and all other show information on our website <https://flhorsepark.com/ocala-eventing-series/>.



Answers page 12

CORNER

Across

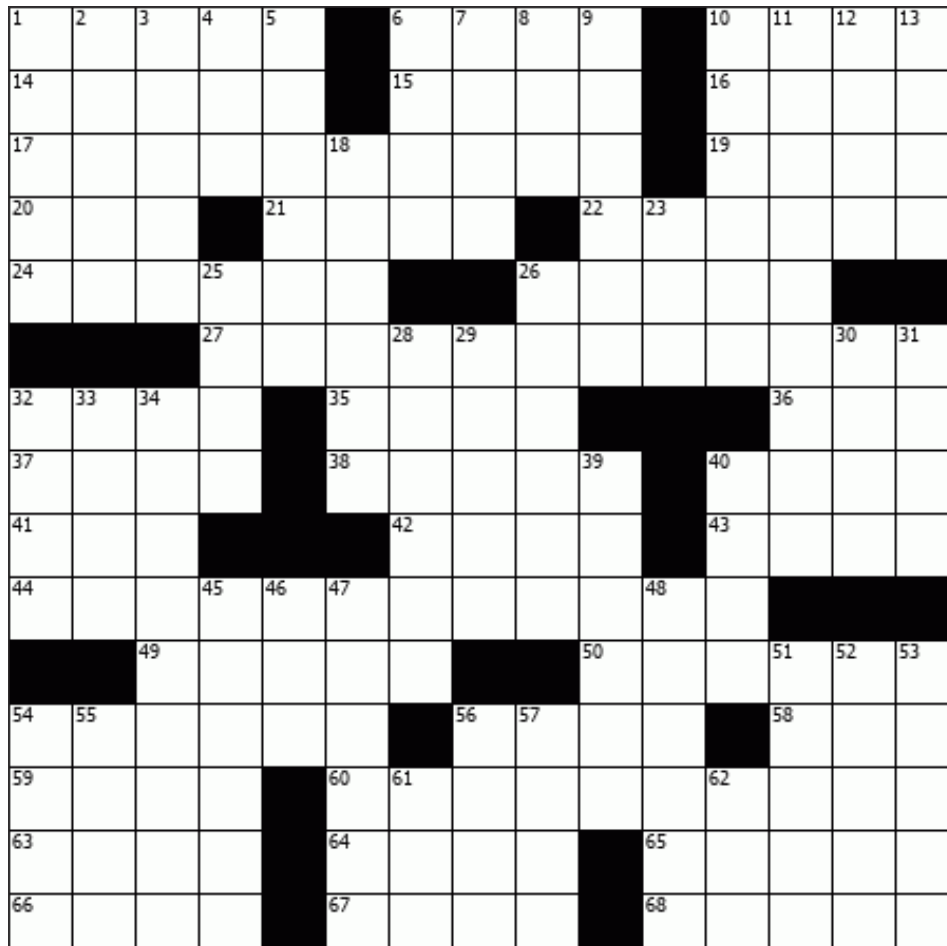
- 1. Browning's Ben Ezra, e.g.
- 6. Epps, the actor
- 10. Sgt. Preston's grp.
- 14. With force
- 15. "Aida" backdrop
- 16. Author Wiesel
- 17. Book protection
- 19. Parent's warning
- 20. Invite
- 21. Peter Fonda role of '97
- 22. Debate subjects
- 24. Hilton Head Island, for one
- 26. Put to the test
- 27. Be in control
- 32. Church part
- 35. ___ avis
- 36. Fury
- 37. Parts of mins.
- 38. Some are blind
- 40. "There's ___ day dawning . . ."

- 41. Debate side
- 42. Rash reaction?
- 43. Famed fed
- 44. Pompous person
- 49. Stadium levels
- 50. Deceived
- 54. Secret information
- 56. Dark, poetically
- 58. Bullring "Bravo!"
- 59. Printer's blue-green
- 60. Metier
- 63. Cleopatra's love Antony
- 64. Beanery offering
- 65. Become allied
- 66. In ___ (existing)
- 67. Metal-stamping tools
- 68. Conundrum

Down

- 1. Detecting device
- 2. Tickle one's funny bone
- 3. Soaks up sun
- 4. Byte fraction
- 5. Wound
- 6. "For ___ in My Life" (Stevie Wonder)
- 7. Nichols or Wallace
- 8. Pub staple
- 9. Go on a pension
- 10. View from Jidda
- 11. Seventh heaven
- 12. Selfish one's exclamation
- 13. They may be collared

- 18. They have crosses to bear
- 23. Take tea
- 25. Hasn't ponied up
- 26. Island roof material
- 28. Fast waters
- 29. Harness races
- 30. Spanish crowd?
- 31. Keeps folks in stitches
- 32. Egyptian cobras
- 33. Feeling one's oats
- 34. Army reconnaissance transports
- 39. Israel's Peres
- 40. Garden soldiers
- 45. Ring bearer?
- 46. Swampland
- 47. Videotaped over
- 48. Register a sale?
- 51. Heavyweight champ from 1937-49
- 52. Ins
- 53. A way to discourage
- 54. Vertex
- 55. Certain thick-piled rugs
- 56. Noted Harper's Bazaar illustrator
- 57. Nickname for Springsteen
- 61. Mai ___ cocktail
- 62. ___-cone (summer treat)



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Erik Lehane

THE GAITWAY GROUP



For Grownups Only Santa, the Tooth Fairy

By Erik Lehane

I remember the day my world came crashing down. Johnny Picaro, my third grade bestie spilled the beans. Johnny had caught his old man placing his GI Joe with kung Fu grip under the Christmas tree in the wee hours of the morning. Santa was a fraud and the Easter Bunny and Tooth fairy were his accomplices. What next... is Elvis really alive?

Years later I had a similar epiphany, this one more attuned to a sledgehammer smacking me upside the head. I held Betty almost to the same standards of Santa, albeit in a different context. As a physical therapist, one yearns for the perfect client—someone who can muster the strength to leg press 250 lbs., effortlessly palm the floor and gracefully navigate an obstacle course. At the prime age of 78, Betty was all that and more.

Betty's impending discharge was a mere formality. I would document a final assessment based on all the physical/cognitive attributes that an active senior should possess in order to live a safe, productive, high-quality life. As expected, she breezed through the preliminaries, her perm still as elegant as ever. Her final test was "The get up & Go," a gross evaluation of a hodgepodge of functional skills, where from a supine (lying on your back) position, one must then progress to a standing position.

As expected, Betty flawlessly rolled to her right (her dominant side), seamlessly transitioned to a quadruped position (on all fours) and propped a leg up, text book stuff. For the grand finale, Betty would drive off the the propped leg and stand. My pride swelled as my prized pupil drove her foot down into the mat and...

The look in her eyes has been etched into the deep archives of my mind forever. Shock, disbelief and anxiety all wrapped into one, the Santa is a fraud look! Betty dug, pushed and heaved but nothing, she could not budge. After two grueling minutes, her perm now a tangled mess of frizzle, I reluctantly helped her up. The was my Christmas tree moment.

I now refer to the years preceding Betty as BB (Before Betty) and the subsequent years as AB (after Betty). In the BB era, my practice revolved around "traditional" exercise — strength, mobility, stability, balance, and endurance, all deemed necessities for active seniors, right?

In the AB era, a single insight reshaped my entire scope of practice. With aging, we lose approximately 1% of muscle mass, 2-3% of strength, and a staggering 4-6% of power annually. Betty was strong but lacked

power — the vital element for everyday tasks. Power enables seniors to climb stairs, get up from the floor, lift suitcases into overhead compartments, pick up grandchildren, hike hills, and stumble instead of falling. Power is our lifeline, ensuring safety, independence, and a high quality of life.

Look no further than your local grocery for blatant examples of seniors that have lost the ability to exert power.

Science unequivocally asserts, that as we age, unless acted upon, we lose fast twitch muscle fibers at an alarming rate. Think fast twitch as the power houses. Slow twitch (think endurance) fibers are maintained and here is the kicker. If we are exercising inappropriately, focusing on non power producing exercises, we are in fact accelerating the process of fast twitch fiber atrophy (loss).

For my practice, this insight led to the evolution of Revolution Exercise 180 (REX 180) — fast twitch muscle fiber stimulation and growth under the banner of safety. The key lies in speed (fast twitch stimulation) within quality-based functional movement patterns. If you're pain-free with no medical contraindications, you can start today within the confines of your living room.

Here's a snapshot of the REX 180 approach:

Chair Exercises: Sit and stand as quickly and safely as possible with quality movement for 10 repetitions. Progress to a lower chair or step stool, focusing on quality and speed.

Lunges: Stand sideways to your kitchen counter, staggering your feet and holding onto the counter with one hand. Focus on quality as you lunge up and down, gradually increasing speed.

Pushups: Face your kitchen counter, placing hands shoulder-width apart. Walk your feet back, raising onto your toes. Practice pushups with quality movement, gradually increasing speed.

*Remember, master the movement pattern before ramping up the speed

As for Betty — her perm remains a wave of phenomenon, and she can now get up and down without using her hands.

I've observed numerous energetic seniors with admirable intentions fall prey to common pitfalls in traditional exercise routines. Whether you find joy in traveling, hiking, golf, tennis, pickleball, cycling, or simply relishing playful moments with your grandchildren on the floor, it's crucial to move effectively and swiftly. Ensure that your "get up and go" doesn't get up and go.

I hope this resonates as a Christmas tree moment for you.

*Erik Lehane, a dedicated physical therapist with expertise in preventive care, is the visionary founder behind The Gaitway Group. Through this venture, he empowers active seniors with the knowledge and tools to "add life to their years." For inquiries, contact Erik at erik@eriklehane.com.

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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.



Fuchsla 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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FROM THE DESK OF

ATTORNEY GENERAL MOODY



Attorney General Moody Warns Floridians About Rise In Deaths From Dangerous Designer Drug Often Called Fake Xanax

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is warning Floridians about a rise in deaths nationwide from bromazepam, a potent benzodiazepine. The drug is gaining popularity throughout the country and is reportedly being mixed with illicit fentanyl. Benzodiazepines are depressant drugs that produce sedation and feelings of relaxation. According to the [Center for Forensic Science Research and Education](#), bromazepam went from being present in only 1% of toxicology cases submitted to the National Medical Services Labs in 2021 to 13% in mid-2022. Side effects of bromazepam include loss of coordination, drowsiness, dizziness, respiratory depression, coma and death.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “It is imperative that Floridians understand how dangerous bromazepam is on its own. It is also reportedly mixed with fentanyl, leading to adverse health conditions, overdoses and even deaths—including here in Florida. Please, never use an illicit substance. Just one pill can kill.”

Bromazepam is an illicit substance within the category of novel benzodiazepines, also referred to as

synthetic benzodiazepines. Novel benzodiazepines are a classification of drugs that are not regulated by strict clinical guidelines the way that traditional benzodiazepines like Xanax and Valium are. Novel benzodiazepines have similar depressant effects to prescribed benzodiazepines but can be more potent and unpredictable. According to the [CFSRE](#), bromazepam made up just 4% of novel benzodiazepines in circulation in 2021. The CFSRE estimate that bromazepam's presence rose to 73% of the supply of novel benzodiazepines through the first six months of 2023.

Bromazepam may be laced with fentanyl, making the drug even more potent and dangerous. The CFSRE reported that 83% of its samples tested positive for fentanyl. Other [reports](#) claim that naloxone, commonly used to reverse opioid overdose, is ineffective when dealing with bromazepam.

From 2016-2018, [law enforcement seizures of bromazepam](#) never exceeded three per year nationwide. In 2023, that number rose to 2,913. Bromazepam use is rapidly increasing all across the country, leading to rises in overdose and death.

To educate Floridians about the dangers of illicit substances and where to find help, Attorney General Moody developed the Dose of Reality Florida website. The site serves as a one-stop resource to learn about the dangers of opioid misuse, how to receive support for addiction and where to safely dispose of unused prescription drugs.

If anyone is struggling with drug addiction, visit [TreatmentAtlas.org](#) to find

treatment resources and get help.

On National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Attorney General Moody Adds First Florida Hospital To 100 Percent Club

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—On National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Attorney General Ashley Moody is announcing the addition of Tampa General Hospital to the 100 Percent Club. Attorney General Moody's 100 Percent Club recognizes businesses who train employees to spot and report human trafficking. Tampa General Hospital is the first hospital to join the club. Studies have found that more than 88% of human trafficking victims come into contact with the health care system while being trafficked. Now, medical staff at TGH is trained and equipped to spot and report signs of trafficking.

TGH's Clinical Education Department will also be placing informational signage around the hospital so visitors and trafficking victims in need of medical care know how to seek help.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Human trafficking harms victims in various ways—with most seeking medical care at some point during their captivity. That is why it is so important that doctors, nurses and medical staff know how to spot and report human trafficking. I am pleased to announce on National Human Trafficking Awareness Day that we have added our first Florida hospital to our 100 Percent Club, and the staff at Tampa General Hospital will now be trained to be our eyes and ears to help victims escape captivity. TGH's proactive stance sets a powerful precedent in our collective efforts to protect victims, stop trafficking and prosecute traffickers.”

Tampa General Hospital President and CEO John Couris said, “Patients across the state and the nation turn to Tampa General Hospital for world-class care. The care we provide at TGH often extends beyond the walls of our hospital to ensure our patients are safe and have access to basic necessities. Our team can also play an important role in putting an end to human trafficking. Through information and training, we're working to equip our team with the knowledge to act when we come across a victim and engage law enforcement to respond. We're proud to partner with Attorney General Ashley Moody on this important effort, and I am grateful to our team for taking the initiative to join the 100 Percent Club, further elevating our care for the patients and communities we serve.”

TGH reportedly sees more than 780,000 patients a year, and more than 8,000 hospital staff members pass by signage daily on how to report human trafficking. With the addition of the Clinical Education Department, there are nearly 10,000 individuals trained in the 100 Percent Club to spot and report human trafficking.

Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution will also provide an in-depth human trafficking prevention training to TGH's surgical staff. The training will involve specialized instruction in how the hospital staff should interact with identified victims.

Attorney General Moody launched the 100 Percent Club in 2022 to recognize companies taking proactive steps to train employees on the signs of human trafficking. To join the 100 Percent Club, companies commit to providing this training to employees and issuing a quick-reference guide about how to report human trafficking.

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FROM THE DESK OF

GOVERNOR DESANTIS



Governor Ron DeSantis Touts Record-Breaking Success of Great Outdoors Initiative

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Governor Ron DeSantis highlighted the record-breaking success of his three-

month Great Outdoors Initiative, providing 50% discounts on Gold Sportsman hunting and fishing licenses and Annual State Park Passes. First announced on October 14, 2023, the Great Outdoors Initiative encouraged Floridians to get outdoors and explore Florida's natural resources by saving Florida families money. The discount lasted through January 13, 2024, and was the highest discount ever provided for these licenses and passes in Florida history. More than 75,000 Gold Sportsman licenses totaling \$24 million and more than 55,000 state park passes totaling \$2.86 million were sold during the initiative. More than 23,000 of the hunting and fishing licenses purchased were for first time license holders.

“Florida is the Fishing Capital of the World and is home to some of the best recreational lands in the country for Florida families to enjoy,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “The success of this initiative is impressive and I am happy to see so many families take advantage of these savings to enjoy our great outdoors.”

The more than 75,000 sportsman licenses sold through Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) totaled \$24 million in sales, representing an increase of over 400% compared to the 18,300 sportsman licenses sold during this same period last year. The collective

interest, sales and participation highlights the initiative's impressive, statewide success and further underscores the importance outdoor recreation plays within Florida's overall economy.

The more than 55,000 annual state park passes sold through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) breaks down to nearly 15,000 individual passes and more than 40,000 family passes. This is more than four times the number of annual passes sold during this same period last year.

“I want to thank Governor DeSantis for establishing the Great Outdoors initiative between us and FWC to highlight Florida's natural spaces,” said **DEP Secretary Shawn Hamilton**. “It's our hope that everyone gets outside in the coming year and discovers firsthand what makes Florida so special.”

“Since October, over 75,000 people have taken advantage of the Great Outdoors Initiative by purchasing a license that will support conservation and provide an incredible opportunity to enjoy the most beautiful state to live in and recreate,” said **FWC Executive Director Roger Young**.

At a time when soaring inflation is adversely affecting families across the nation, Governor DeSantis signed Executive Order 23-209, which directed DEP and FWC to offer a significant 50% discount on Florida State Parks annual entrance passes and FWC Gold Sportsman hunting and fishing licenses, respectively. These savings helped make the great outdoors more accessible to families looking to enjoy Florida's natural resources.

In addition to creating and maintaining more than 50,000 jobs and benefitting the state economically last fiscal year to the tune of \$3.6 billion, the Florida Park Service

boasts the honor of being the only four-time winner of the Gold Medal distinction which recognizes the nation's best park system.

Legislation signed by Governor DeSantis in 2023 also affords Floridians the firstchance to reserve campsites. Starting January 1, 2024, Florida residents may now make campsite or cabin reservations up to 11 months in advance. Non-Florida residents may make campsite or cabin reservations up to 10 months in advance.

Florida is renowned as the Fishing Capital of the World, and FWC offers freshwater and saltwater fishing licenses for experiencing the best of coastal and inland fishing options, along with unique hunting opportunities. The economic impact on our state through these opportunities is tremendous with nearly \$15 billion contributing to our state's economy.

Governor DeSantis wholly encourages Floridians and visitors alike to experience our state's natural resources, and supports activities such as fishing, hunting and hiking that are family traditions for millions of Floridians.

To find a state park near you, visit: FloridaStateParks.org.

To find more information on fishing and hunting licenses in Florida, visit: MyFWC.com/License/Recreational.

Governor Ron DeSantis Awards \$20 Million for Water Quality Improvement Projects in Biscayne Bay

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Governor Ron DeSantis awarded \$20 million through the Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvement Grant Program to strengthen ongoing efforts to restore water quality in the bay. Since 2019, the state of Florida has invested more than \$70 million for targeted water quality projects in Biscayne Bay. To ensure restoration efforts continue, Governor DeSantis has again included \$20 million for

Biscayne Bay in his Focus on Floridas Future budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

“The Biscayne Bay is a hub for sport and commercial fishing and tourism,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “Our comprehensive approach to addressing water quality statewide and our investments in targeted estuaries, such as the Biscayne Bay, Indian River Lagoon and the Caloosahatchee, will ensure Florida's economic vitality and Floridians' way of life for decades to come.”

“As our administration has shown over the years, protecting Florida's water quality and supply is a priority,” said **Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez**. “This \$20 million investment continues to deliver on the promise Governor DeSantis made to provide significant and meaningful support to Florida's natural resources and preserve it for future generations.”

Biscayne Bay is important to Florida both environmentally and economically, which is why Governor DeSantis signed legislation in 2021 to expedite water quality improvements in this area. This legislation established the Biscayne Bay Commission, which ensures that objective and sound science informs decision-making regarding the bay.

“Biscayne Bay is Florida's largest estuary and it has a direct connection to Florida's Coral Reef,” said **Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Shawn Hamilton**. “Restoring this vital ecosystem is critical to not only ensure healthy fisheries, but also to safeguard the natural buffer along this populated coastline.”

Selected projects include wastewater improvements (including septic-to-sewer), stormwater management and other projects that will help improve water quality in Biscayne Bay.

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FROM THE DESK OF
CONGRESSWOMAN KAT CAMMACK



Congresswoman Kat Cammack Announces City Of Ocala Grant To Improve Local Road Safety

GAINESVILLE, FL — Congresswoman Kat Cammack announced the City of

Ocala received a \$104,000 grant from the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries.

The City of Ocala will use the grant to conduct supplemental planning to develop a city-wide Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) and a Speed Management Plan targeting safer speeds in residential areas and around schools.

"I'm excited to see the City of Ocala making excellent use of this grant," said **Congresswoman Kat Cammack**. "Safer roadways are important for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists in Ocala, ensuring everyone makes it to their destination and back home safely. I look forward to seeing the City's thoughtful planning in action."

The Office of Congresswoman Kat Cammack provides assistance to

municipalities seeking grant funding opportunities from the federal government.

Rep. Cammack Joins Sen. Rubio, Colleagues Seeking Answers About "Forever Chemicals" At Florida Bases

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Exposure to per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) is linked to cancer and other diseases. Unfortunately, these substances may have contaminated the water of several Florida military bases, putting service members and their families at risk.

Rep. Cammack joined U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and colleagues in sending a letter to U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Secretary Lloyd Austin, asking about PFAS remediation efforts at Florida's military installations and clarifying the extent of the health impacts of PFAS exposure on service members and their families.

"Our service members, and their families, deserve full information on the health risks of PFAS, as well as a commitment by the DoD to mitigate any harm that may be caused by PFAS exposure on military installations. As such, we request a full accounting of the progress for PFAS remediation efforts on each of Florida's military installations."

tours—powered by AI—can virtually transport shoppers to a prospective home, letting them explore every nook and cranny with 360-degree views. AI-driven platforms can also sift through mountains of listings to recommend homes that match a buyer's preferences, budget and lifestyle, creating a personalized experience and saving countless hours of manual search.

The Importance of Human Involvement with AI

While AI is certainly transformative, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. When it comes to such things as credit decisioning, humans still take the lead. Credit decisions are complex and nuanced, requiring a deep understanding of a person's financial history and current circumstances. AI can provide data and options, but the final call should always be made by a human who can interpret the subtleties and make an informed decision.

Moreover, AI cannot replace the personal touch of a real estate agent or the reassurance and expertise of a loan officer. These human interactions and relationships are vital to the homebuying experience, providing knowledge, negotiation skills and emotional support that AI simply cannot replicate.

This combination of AI with the human touch is already showing results. In fact, over the last year, Rocket Mortgage saw it help shorten the amount of time it takes their clients to close on a home purchase by nearly 20%. AI can handle the heavy lifting of data processing and provide valuable insights, but it takes a backseat where humans perform best—building meaningful connections.

The Future Of Homebuying

As consumers embark on their homeownership adventure, AI will open doors while the professionals will help them cross the threshold into their new home.

Learn More

For further facts and stats on buying a home, visit www.rocketmortgage.com.

Puff Pastry Berry Hearts



Puff Pastry Berry Hearts are an incredibly simple Valentine's dessert that your kids will love to help you with!

Ingredients

- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon powdered sugar
- 1 package frozen puff pastry, defrosted
- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries (or mixed berries)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Unfold the puff pastry and cut into hearts using heart-shaped cookie cutters.

Place the puff pastry hearts on a baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden brown.

In the bowl of a standing mixer, or with an electric mixer whip the cream on medium-high speed for 2-3 minutes. Add the powdered sugar and beat on high for 30 more seconds or until thick and fluffy.

Remove hearts from the oven and allow to cool completely. Slice hearts in half. Top the bottom half with whipped cream and berries, and place the other half on top to form a sandwich.

Reference: <https://weelicious.com/puff-pastry-berry-hearts/#wprm-recipe-container-924>

AI Homebuying

Continued from page 2



mortgage process—often the most daunting part of homebuying. A 2023 report by LiveVox found that AI-driven customer experiences scored 20% higher in satisfaction than traditional human-led

approaches. Companies such as Rocket Mortgage are now automating document collection, verifying information instantly and even showing loan officers the best mortgage products for their clients. This efficiency speeds up the process and increases confidence for consumers.

"AI is not just a technological advancement, it is a transformative force reshaping the homebuying landscape," said Brian Woodring, Chief Information Officer for Rocket Mortgage. "AI is the compass guiding us toward a future where homeownership is accessible and stress free for everyone."

Beyond the financing, remote home

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