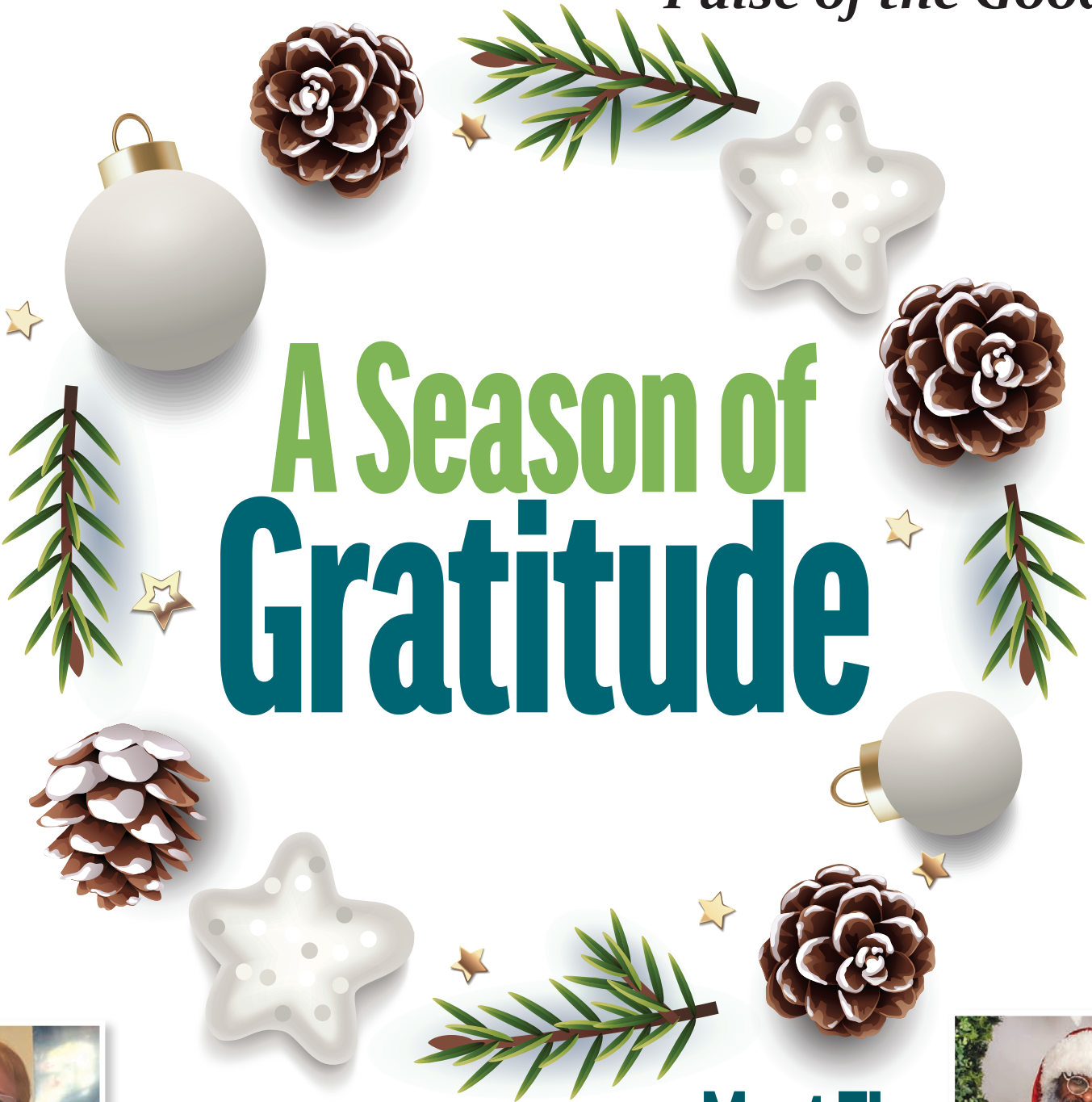


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Gratitude



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Dementia Caregiver Support Group

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Next Meeting: Nov 11

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Refreshments will be provided.

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or Anita.Howard@HavenHospice.com.



Riverside
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Publisher's Note

The year is winding down, and festive lights are beginning to shine across our neighborhoods. We are reminded how this time of year brings people together in the most beautiful ways. It's a season for laughter, kindness, and a few well-earned celebrations with friends and family.

In this issue, we're toasting to good company with a story about a local happy hour club where the conversation flows easily and the friendships run deep. These folks prove that fun doesn't have an age limit.

We're also taking time to recognize the selfless work of caregivers in our community. A Caregiver's Story is a reminder that caring for others starts with remembering to care for yourself, too.

We highlight volunteer musicians at Jacksonville International Airport. Their songs greet travelers coming and going, adding a touch of hometown warmth to the busiest time of year. And don't miss our story about a local Mr. and Mrs. Claus, an interesting duo who dedicate their time to spreading holiday spirit.

It's been a rough year for many folks. Don't put too much pressure on yourself now. Enjoy the gift of life today and be kind to one another.

Cheers,

Mischelle Grant, *Publisher*
mgrant@firstcoastseniorliving.com

FIRST COAST SENIOR LIVING

Mischelle Grant, *Publisher*

Chris Ramaglia, *Partner*

Karen Davis, *Client Liaison*

Carolyn Bell Audije, *Creative Director*

Contributing Writers

Susanna Barton

Lorrie DeFrank

David Patterson

Nancy White

Digital Solutions by BroadBased Communications

For editorial inquiries, email editorial@firstcoastseniorliving.com

For general media, advertising or sponsorship inquiries,
email partners@firstcoastseniorliving.com

For print copies, email info@firstcoastseniorliving.com



Florida Press Association

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FirstCoastSeniorLiving.com

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



MISHELLE GRANT



SUSANNA BARTON



LORRIE DEFRAK



NANCY WHITE



DAVID PATTERSON



CAROLYN AUDIJE & FAMILY



DAVE KOZ

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Carry on My Wayward Bag!

How to Outsmart the Overhead Bin

Holiday travel can test even the calmest people, especially when it comes to that sacred piece of real estate known as overhead bin space. Do you remember when flying meant dressing up and getting free peanuts? The modern boarding process feels more like a competitive sport with your carry-on bag as the star player.

First rule of flying is that your bag must look like it belongs. That means no overstuffed duffels bulging like Santa's sack or tote bags that wheeze when zipped. Airlines may say "one carry-on and one personal item," but they really mean "whatever you can disguise as something smaller." Pro tip: a backpack counts as a "personal item" if you say it confidently enough.

The boarding gate is where the drama begins. You'll see folks clutching roller bags

like life preservers, hoping to board before the bins fill up. That's when strategy matters. Become a master of airline group numbers. If you're in Group 8, consider "casually" drifting toward the line early, looking confused but determined. Bonus points if you mutter or wear your headphones, "They called my group, didn't they?"

Once onboard, the real test begins. Try to find space near your seat. This is where teamwork and timing pay off. Offer to help someone lift their bag. It makes you look helpful while secretly scouting for open space. And never, ever take your eyes off your luggage. Blink too long and it'll be ten rows behind you, out of reach until landing.

If the bins are full and the flight attendant gives you that pitying smile, stay calm. Hold your ground, clutch your carry-on like a

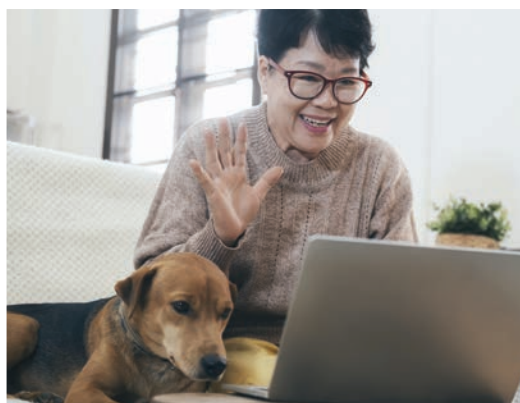


precious heirloom, and plead softly. Say something like, "It fits, I promise." Nine times out of ten, it will if you believe hard enough.

By the time you're wheels up, relax. Your bag made it, your dignity (mostly) intact, and you've earned that mini pretzel pack. Besides, holiday travel isn't about the destination, it's about the triumph of keeping your luggage with you. d

FITNESS

Senior Planet Defines the Online Workout



Stay active, and sharp, by exploring online fitness options presented by AARP's Senior Planet from Older Adults Technology Services (OATS). Without leaving the comfort of your home or office, you can participate in meditation, dancing, stretching and other classes. Senior Planet provides online wellness group sessions that are simple to join, safe to follow, and friendly for different athletic levels.

The majority of the classes are free of charge, and you do not have to be an AARP

member to join. To participate, you'll need to click the class link and sign up to receive the link for the session you're interested in.

How to sign up

- **Go to SeniorPlanet.org** and navigate to the "Online Classes" or "Fitness & Wellness" section.
- **Browse the list of upcoming classes and find one you like** (for example, "Morning Stretch," "Stronger Bones").
- **Click the class listing.** Fill in your name, email, etc. You'll receive a Zoom link (or phone-in option) for the live class.
- **At class time, join via your device** (computer, tablet or smartphone). Make sure you have internet access, the Zoom app (or browser version) ready, and possibly a chair or water bottle for support if the class involves seated/standing moves.
- **If you run into issues, call the Senior**

Planet hotline for help.

Here are a few upcoming class dates to give you real-world options:

- **Mindful Meditation & Breathing** Thursday, November 13 at 2:00 pm EST
- **Fit Fusion Workout** Monday, December 1 at 9:00 am EST
- **Stronger Bones** Tuesday, December 2 at 9:00 am EST
- **Taijiquan (Tai Chi)** Friday, December 19 at 12:00 pm EST

Keep your body moving during this overeating season. Work off the turkey and apple pie by taking advantage of practical, no-cost online classes you can join from your kitchen. It's a serious, reliable opportunity to keep things moving.

If you have questions or need help accessing the website, there is a free hotline to help. Call 888-713-3495 or go to seniorplanet.org/classes. d

What's At the Top of Your Gratitude List?

In this month's "Just Askin'" column *First Coast Senior Living*, we caught up with John Reardon, a well-known Reverse Mortgage Specialist who's been part of Northeast Florida's senior industry for years. We asked him what he was most grateful for this year. Here's what he told us:

" I'm especially thankful for the chance to live and work in a community I care deeply about. St. Augustine has been home for many years, and I feel fortunate to serve seniors throughout town. They are people who have built this area into the fantastic place it is today.

I grew up in New York, but Florida has truly become home. What I love about working with older adults here is how each day offers an opportunity to help someone stay comfortable, safe, and independent in their own home. By taking time to listen to their life stories, needs and being a friend, I help guide them through housing or financial decisions, or connect them with people in my network of senior service providers who may also help.

Many of the seniors I meet have raised families, served their communities, and worked hard their entire lives. Now, they deserve care and respect in return. I try to help make that possible, even in small ways.

I'm also grateful for the professionals I partner with from healthcare and home care specialists to senior living advisors and real estate experts. I recognize that seniors need well-rounded support and I don't have all the answers. I just want them to be cared for and valued.

This year, I plan to stay local for the holidays, spending time with family and friends here in St. Augustine. I'm going to take this time to appreciate where I am, who I'm with, and the work I get to do each day.

When I think about what I'm most thankful for, it's honestly just being part of a community that looks out for one another, and having the opportunity to serve people who have given so much to others. **"**



John Reardon, St. Augustine

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Gate Grooves at Jacksonville International Airport



As the travel season ramps up, there's a special touch waiting for you at the Jacksonville International Airport (JIA). A dedicated group of volunteer musicians perform in the terminal, creating a warm, human moment amid the hustle of flights, bags and goodbyes.

The volunteer musician program at JAX is part of the broader arts-and-culture initiative of the Jacksonville Aviation Authority (JAA).

Picture arriving or departing, you're at the baggage claim, or waiting near a gate, maybe a

bit anxious about connections, time or meeting someone. Then you hear live saxophone, violin or other music floating through the concourse.

Cheryl Choate Bowen has been a JIA volunteer musician for the past ten years. She says her passion and enthusiasm for what the musicians do has only increased.

"I realize more and more how much of a difference our music truly makes in what can be at times, a highly charged, emotional environment. We participate in young people leaving home for college, people coming and going for marriages, deaths, births, vacations and it can be tough," she said.

Airports can be hectic at this time of year with longer lines, more bags, delays. Live music helps reduce tension and encourages people to slow down. For visitors arriving in

Jacksonville, the program shows the region's culture welcoming guests in a special way. Hearing familiar melodies or seeing musicians they recognize is a nice touch.

Bowen is working on her Yuletide tunes and getting her Mrs. Claus outfit ready. Expressing the pleasure and gratitude she gets from performing, she notes, "Being able to use God-given talent to share the greater good is a happiness I can barely describe. We need to share more love in the world."

If you're flying the friendly skies for the holidays, stop for a listen and take a deep breath.

The music might just set the tone you want for a smooth flight.

If you're interested in participating as a volunteer musician contact JIA's Arts & Culture office at 904.741.3546. d



Cheryl Choate Bowen



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GIVING THANKS FOR A Seat At the Table

CHEERS FROM THE HAPPY HOUR CLUB

By Lorrie DeFrank



Friends gather
for fun.



Charlie Sellers,
95, the oldest
member with
his wife Colette.



Nancy and Bergen Gregian with friends.

For the seniors who support the Happy Hour Club, it's about giving thanks year-round.

"Almost every happy hour, someone has come up to me and said, 'Thank you for doing this. I don't know what I would be doing if it weren't for Happy Hour Club,'" said Lina Ingraham, who started the group in 2009 and has kept it thriving.

Singles and married couples in their 60s to 90s gather three times a month around the Beaches to socialize with old and new friends. Always, it's like walking into a Cheers bar.

Besides the camaraderie, benefits include healthier lifestyles and the satisfaction of helping others, especially this time of year. By getting together during the holidays, a lonesome time for many, seniors are likely improving their mental and physical health and adding years to their lives.

Numerous studies have linked socialization with longevity. They show that people with strong social networks have higher survival rates and lower risks of heart disease, strokes, depression and anxiety.

After recently reading an article in *AARP: The Magazine* about centenarians who credited their long lives to socializing, Ingraham emailed this excerpt to members: "Strong social connections are linked to a 50% greater chance of living longer. The bond between you and the people around you might be the ultimate key to aging well."

Most of all, Happy Hour Club members are thankful for each other's friendships.

"Since my husband passed away 20 years ago this has helped keep me more outgoing and building friendships," said Debbie Luke, a regular who travels a good distance to attend.

"One of the important things about this organization is that it gets us older retired people out into social situations that are fun and relaxing," agreed Dottie Cernik. "People who just sit home age a lot faster than we do in the Happy Hour Club."

Cernik praised Ingraham for bringing people together, organizing each event and spending countless hours soliciting businesses to sponsor the club's charity events.

"I'd be sitting at home alone, too, if it weren't for the Happy Hour Club," quipped Ingraham, who made cherished friends herself there.

"Lina is one of my best friends in Florida and I did not know her before Happy Hour Club," said Cernik.

Although the Happy Hour Club is in no way associated with the former Martini Club that had disbanded several years earlier, Ingraham said its



concept of getting people together is the same. "About six of us were sitting around and decided we could start our own club," she said. "Also, in 2008 the economy was bad and my objective was to help the businesses at the Beaches that were struggling."

Others played key roles in building the foundation but Ingraham took off to make it happen and she's still going strong at 84.

"It was all word of mouth for the first few months," said Ingraham, who maintains a database of nearly 150 current active members. Membership is free. "It's not a meet-up group for relationships but sometimes that happens, too. They are the nicest people and that's part of its success."

Ingraham selects three places to meet each month and emails members the dates and locations. She spends many hours developing a rapport with restaurant owners and managers, coordinating schedules and communicating information. "I look for places that have good happy hour pricing and specials on the food and try to do every happy hour on Monday or Tuesday when business is slower," she said.

"It's part of our embedded social life," said Berge Gregian, who with his wife Nancy has attended nearly every happy hour since the beginning unless they were out of town.

"It's a safe place to meet new friends and go to a variety of restaurants in the Beaches area. Lina finds the newest and best places to go," said Marcie Ryan. "She is my best friend. I would not have known her if it weren't for Happy Hour Club."

Ryan said she is thankful to be part of this group that brings people out of their shells to socialize and helps the less fortunate through its fundraisers.

Since 2011, members donated 4,186 pounds of food and \$2,865 to Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry. Last year, they raised \$1,600 for Beaches Community Kitchen.

In addition to the happy hours, members gather to celebrate the club's anniversaries and other special occasions. If there's music, Charlie Sellers, at 95 the oldest member, entertains with his signature rendition of "New York, New York."

"We're out every night and Happy Hour Club is the one we find most comfortable and fun," said Charlie's wife Colette.

"I love this group," Charlie said. "Hopefully, it will keep on going from season to season. To me it's the laughter. That's what life is all about." d



From left: Marcie Ryan, Dottie Cernik and Lina Ingraham

UPCOMING HAPPY HOURS:

November 18

PUSSER'S

Ponte Vedra Beach, 5-7 pm

November 24

BONEFISH GRILL

Jacksonville Beach, 4:30-5:30 pm

December 2

TIDES BEACH BAR & GRILLE

Hampton Inn, Jacksonville Beach,
4:30-6:30 pm

December 16

**Holiday Celebration
SIZEMORE'S COASTAL
KITCHEN**

Jacksonville Beach, 4-6 pm

Dude, Guard Your Waterworks!

Preventing Urinary Tract Infections

As men age, their health priorities shift in subtle but important ways, and one area that often gets overlooked is urinary health. Urinary tract infections (UTIs), commonly thought of as a “women’s problem,” can and do affect men, especially those over fifty. UTIs in older men can be more serious and are often linked to other underlying issues.

According to doctors at Mayo Clinic, the urinary tract, which includes the kidneys, bladder, ureters, and urethra, is designed to stay sterile. But with age, natural defenses weaken. The most common culprit behind male UTIs is bacterial growth due to urinary retention, often caused by enlarged prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH). When the bladder doesn’t empty completely, bacteria have more time to multiply.

Unlike younger individuals, older men may not always experience the classic burning sensation when urinating. Instead, symptoms might include:

- Frequent or urgent urination
- Cloudy or foul-smelling urine

- Pain in the lower abdomen or back
- Fever or chills
- Confusion or sudden changes in alertness (*especially in frail or elderly men*)

If these symptoms appear, medical attention should not be delayed. Left untreated, UTIs can lead to kidney infections or sepsis, both of which can be life-threatening.

Stay Hydrated

The good news: UTIs are largely preventable with a few practical steps. Drinking enough water helps flush bacteria out of the urinary tract. Aim for clear or pale-yellow urine as a hydration guide.

Practice Good Bathroom Habits

Empty the bladder completely when urinating and avoid “holding it in” for long periods. Men with prostate issues should talk to their doctors about strategies or medications that improve urine flow.

Monitor Prostate Health

Regular prostate exams can detect enlargement or other issues early. Treating BPH can dramatically reduce the risk of UTIs.

Keep Diabetes in Check

Good blood sugar control strengthens the immune system and reduces bacterial growth in the urinary tract.

Maintain Hygiene

Wash the genital area daily and after bowel movements, front to back, to minimize bacterial contamination.

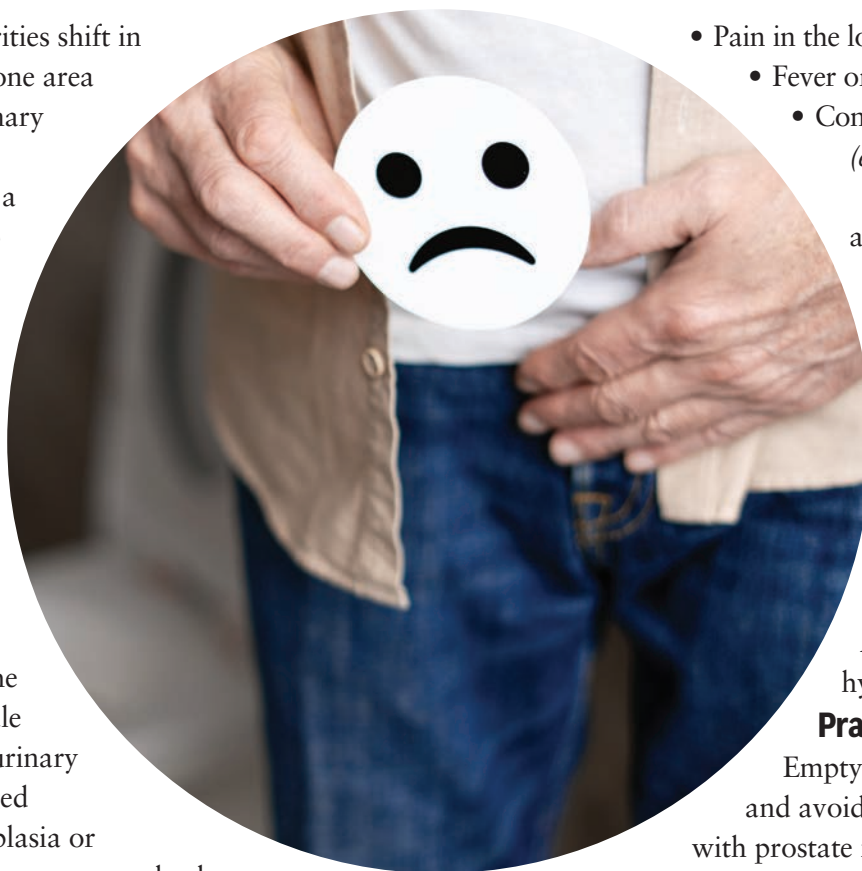
Use Catheters Carefully

If a catheter is medically necessary, ensure it’s used and cleaned properly. Healthcare professionals should provide specific guidance on safe catheter care.

Any man who experiences pain, fever, blood in the urine, or unexplained fatigue should seek prompt medical evaluation. UTIs in men often signal an underlying issue that needs treatment and ignoring it could make things worse.

The Bottom Line

Men’s health isn’t just about the gym or the heart, it’s about every system that keeps you functioning at your best. This November, during Men’s Health Month, take a moment to check in with your body. Protecting your urinary tract means protecting your overall well-being because prevention is always easier than treatment. d



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mciverclinic.com

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Jacksonville, FL 32224
904.953.2000
mayoclinic.org/urology

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10232 San Jose Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32256
904.490.7400
ackermanurology.com

Baptist Urology Group

800 Prudential Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32207
904.202.2000
baptistjax.org/urology

UF Health Urology

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ufhealthjax.org/specialties/urology

Age is NOT a Number

For the past year-and-a-half, I have been pursuing a Master of Science in Gerontology degree from the University of North Carolina Greensboro. It has been the great rewiring of my brain, helping me chisel through crusty, hardened noodle material that has stagnated in its creases since early motherhood. It's brought me new thoughts on life purpose and how a better understanding of aging can reframe personal and professional experiences. Thanks to this column-writing opportunity for *First Coast Senior Living*, I hope it can do the same for you.



Gerontology is a new science that includes a vast array of experts and professionals, it is a diverse field of study and it truly impacts all of us.

A year in Gerontology graduate work has provided me with many new perspectives of aging and how we can approach it effectively. In this column space, I hope to share some of my top “lessons learned” or “key takeaways”. Each month, we’ll unpack new thinking about some of the most foundational elements of aging and how to implement it into our everyday lives. Here are

a few ideas I have simmering:

- The older adult population in the U.S. is increasingly diverse and serving them will require more understanding of and empathy for their unique backgrounds and experiences.
- More than 70 percent of older adults will require long term care.
- Age is not a number — There are different ways to measure aging including chronological, biological, sociological and psychological.

I look forward to sharing all of these thoughts with you and hope this column inspires more conversations about Gerontology best practices in your circles as well. d



Susanna Barton, a member of Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan’s subcommittee on elder care. Her book *Grand Plans: How to Mitigate Geri-Drama in 20 Easy Steps* and its accompanying workbook, *the Grand Planner*, are available in local stores and on Amazon. For more information, <http://www.mygrandplans.com>.



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SCAM OF THE MONTH The Gravy is Hot and Scammers are Cooking



Families across the country are preparing for travel, shopping, and time together. Unfortunately, scammers are also getting ready using the holiday season as an opportunity to trick unsuspecting people out of their money or personal information. Here's how you can keep your family safe from

common holiday scams.

Watch out for fake deals and phishing emails.

Scammers know that everyone is looking for bargains. Be cautious of emails or text messages offering unbelievable discounts or "exclusive" deals especially if they include links. These messages often lead to fake websites designed to steal your credit card information. Always shop directly through trusted retailers' official websites and verify the web address before entering any personal details.

Beware of charity scams.

Thanksgiving is a time for giving, but some criminals exploit that generosity. Before donating to a cause, research the organization on trusted sites like Charity Navigator or the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance. Never donate through links sent by email or social media and avoid giving gift cards or wiring money.

Protect your travel plans.

If you're traveling, be cautious when booking flights, hotels, or vacation rentals online. Scammers often post fake listings with prices that seem too good to be true. Use reputable travel sites and double-check contact details before paying. Always use a credit card for added protection against fraud.

Guard your personal information.

During family gatherings, it's easy to let your guard down. But be careful when sharing on social media, posting your travel plans or location can make your home a target for thieves. Also, remind older family members that legitimate companies will never ask for passwords, Social Security numbers, or payment information over the phone or email.

Talk openly about scams.

One of the best defenses is awareness. Take a few minutes to discuss recent scam tactics with your loved ones, who may be more vulnerable.

By staying alert, verifying sources, and sharing knowledge, families can enjoy a safer, scam-free season. d

The Coleys Are Not Your Typical North Pole Couple

A Modern Take on Holiday Magic

By Nancy White

Growing up on the west side of Jacksonville, the youngest of five siblings with a working single mom, Shawn Coley wasn't always so enthusiastic about Christmas. It was his wife Natasha who opened his heart to the magic. For years she encouraged him to portray Santa.

"Even his initials are SC," Natasha chimes in merrily.

One Christmas she finally convinced Shawn to take on the role for their granddaughter and her little twin cousins. "I'd grown my beard out a bit, and she bought me the cheesiest \$20 Party City spandex costume you've ever seen. I had a black pair of high-top sneakers, which we topped with pleather boot covers.

"As I got dressed, I felt a little change in my heart and in my spirit. We took pictures with the girls and it touched my heart when I saw their faces light up."

When asked to do a reading at a local elementary school, Shawn told Natasha, "I think we need a better suit." An upgrade was found on eBay. "When we got to the

library, a little girl ran up to us and said 'oh my gosh you do exist! Everybody keeps telling me you're not real.'

"So I had her tug on my beard, and I gave her what we Santa's call a whole chuckle. She jumped back and said, 'You ARE real!'

"By the time we got to the car, he burst out in real tears," says Natasha. Shawn had found his calling.

The couple have researched holiday traditions around the world to bring the magic of Santa and Mrs. Claus to life. Although they have a wardrobe full of custom looks, they still have those first two suits, "so we don't forget where we came from," Shawn says.

At 55, Shawn is a relatively young Santa, and not as traditional as some of the old guard might like. "We've had a few issues with folks who maybe aren't as open-hearted," Natasha shares.

While Santa brings the main character

energy, Mrs. Claus drives their social media presence, and their numbers are impressive.

"The most we've had live on Tik Tok was 18,000 people, from seven different countries," she says.

"We provide an opportunity, especially for our community to say, hey, that's a Santa and Mrs. Claus that look like me," Shawn adds.

This season the pair will partner with the City of Jacksonville, IKEA, and they will appear at several public events in Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville. People can book selfie sessions at their home, which is decked out for the occasion. "We tell people this is the southeastern headquarters of the North Pole," Shawn adds.

"To go from 'I don't think this is for me' because he never got to have magic as a child, to now being the person that creates magic for others... It's amazing to watch," says Natasha.

"You're never too young or too old to believe," Shawn says. "That's probably the most important reason we do what we do." d



Wrapped in Love & Responsibility

A Caregiver's Story



The scent of pine and cinnamon will fill my house by late November, the wreath will be on the front door, and the little battery-operated lights will lay on the mantel. But for me, the holidays feel more like a full-time job than a festive pause.

I'm the primary caregiver for my Aunt Margaret, who turned eighty-nine last spring and now lives with me in Ponte Vedra Beach. She used to read Ken Follett and bake apple pies; now she needs help with the medications, the afternoon nap schedule, and the gait belt when she stands.

When the holiday cards come, I'm the one stuffing, sealing, and mailing when I'm not checking the pharmacy website or scheduling physical-therapy visits. I try to keep smiling at the tree-lighting ceremony, but inside I'm already juggling my job, my social life, and the relentless caregiving rhythm. I heard one caregiver on NPR say, "Dear whatever doesn't kill me, I'm strong enough now. Thanks."

That one line hit me. It's funny and raw, and it carries the weight

of someone who knows the depth of the role.

The holidays make everything bigger, the expectation of "cheer," the extra guests, the dinner planning, the extra errands. For me, it's less about picking the perfect tree and more about how to carve out an hour of time for myself. The clutter of hospital bills and in-home care schedules sits just beneath the wrapping paper and ribbons.

Caregiving is a demanding, and often socially isolating, necessity for many people.

I realized that while people are out at holiday parties, I'm at home changing bedlinens, wiping counters, reminding Aunt Margaret to take her pills. The isolation sneaks

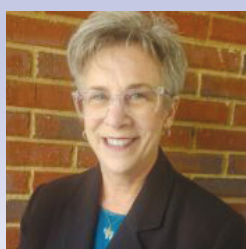
in, friends assume I'm fine, or unburdened; family drops in for a few minutes, then leave. The role doesn't stop overnight.

For thirty minutes, I'm just her niece, not her caregiver. I remind myself that the holidays can also be small glimmers of fun if we sit by the fireplace, bake cookies from one of her recipes, listen to music, and the world feels gentle for a moment.

I've learned (and remind myself often) that asking for help isn't failure. Caregiving is too hard and too isolating to do it on your own."

This holiday season, I'm stepping into two roles, caregiver and celebrant. I'll turn on the lights, serve the pie, welcome the guests but I'll also step back, and say out loud the truth, "This is hard. It's full of love, absolutely. But it's also stressful and exhausting. And that's okay."

To every caregiver reading this, you're doing something monumental. Amid the tinsel and the turkey, remember to care for yourself. Because you matter too. d



"Every day, thousands step into the role of caregiver, sometimes unexpectedly. Many don't know where to begin and that's where ElderSource comes in, to be the first step, the steady hand, and a trusted guide. Caregiving isn't easy. It's an experience filled with love, sacrifice, and challenges. But we know that you're not alone." — Linda Levin, CEO with ElderSource myeldersource.org

Things To Do

November 8, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

A Taste of Amelia

Palace Saloon, 117 Centre Street
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Experience a flavorful community tradition at the 38th Annual Taste of Amelia in Fernandina's charming historic district. Sample dishes from twenty-five local restaurants, enjoy live music, raffles, and a silent auction. Check-in begins at the Shipyard behind the Palace Saloon. Tickets: \$70 fbrotaryclub.com

November 16, 1:00 pm

Jaguars vs. Los Angeles Chargers

Everbank Stadium, 1 Everbank Stadium Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Get ready for gridiron action as the Jacksonville Jaguars take on the Los Angeles Chargers! Expect big plays, fierce defense, and fan excitement when these two AFC teams clash in a high energy matchup. Tickets: \$64 and up. jaguars.com

November 20, 7:30 pm

Rain – A Beatles Christmas Tribute

Florida Theatre, 128 East Forsyth Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202



A Beatles Christmas Tribute is a brand-new holiday production that combines the timeless hits of The Beatles with the spirit of the Christmas season. This concert

is a unique opportunity for fans to enjoy a nostalgic evening filled with beloved Beatles songs and holiday favorites. Tickets: \$34 and up. floridatheatre.com

November 27, 7:00 am

Community First Thanksgiving

Distance Classic Half Marathon & 5k

Pickwick Plaza, 9850 San Jose Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32257

This will be the 42nd running of the Thanksgiving Distance Classic. With over thirty-five hundred participants this Thanksgiving morning run has become a tradition for many families. It is a major fundraiser for the Mandarin Food Bank and the Aterro Recreation Park on Sunbeam Road. Registration: \$24 and up. 1stplacesports.com

November 26 – January 1

5:00 pm – 1:00 am

Deck the Chairs

Seawalk Village, 940 3rd St North
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250



Enjoy the annual Deck the Chairs at Jacksonville Beach. Local artists transform lifeguard chairs into dazzling holiday displays with lights, music,

and family fun through the beginning of the new year. Free admission. deckthechairs.org

November 29, 6:00 pm

Jacksonville Light Boat Parade

North and Southbank Riverwalks
Downtown Jacksonville, FL 32202

Experience the magic of the season at the Jacksonville Light Boat Parade! Watch as beautifully decorated boats glide along the St. Johns River, lighting up the night with dazzling displays. Boats of all sizes sparkle with festive decorations as they cruise along. The celebration culminates with a stunning fireworks display, featuring the unique waterfall fireworks cascading from the Main Street and Acosta Bridges. No Cost to attend. jacksonville.gov/special-events



December 4 - 7, 7:30 pm

Holiday Pops Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra

Jacoby Symphony Hall, 300 Water Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Sleigh the season with the Jacksonville Symphony's Holiday Pops! Broadway vocalists Carole Bufford and Campbell Walker Fields return to light up the stage alongside the Symphony Chorus and the full power of the Jacksonville Symphony in an unforgettable festive spectacular. Tickets: \$32 and up. jaxsymphony.org

December 6, 10:00 am - Noon

Holiday Appetizers & Desserts Cooking Class

Blue Bamboo, 10110 San Jose Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32256

Join Blue Bamboo for a festive Holiday Appetizers and Desserts Cooking Class. Learn creative, crowd-pleasing recipes perfect for entertaining this season. Chef Dennis Chan shares tips, techniques, and tasting samples in a fun, hands-on setting. Bring your holiday spirit and your appetite. Fee: \$85 per person. bluebamboojacksonville.com

December 13, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Jacksonville Maker's Market

Adam W. Herbert University Center, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32246

Shop with more than seventy local artisans, crafters, and retailers. Discover a wide variety of handmade goods, including jewelry, artwork, home goods, clothing, and much more. Free Admission.

jacksonvillebusinessconnections.com



PARTING SHOT

Painting Images and the Season Bright



Sherry Ferber didn't pick up a paintbrush until after she retired from a career in social work but once she did, she never put it down. What began as watercolor lessons with a private tutor soon became a lifelong artistic path, one that has taken her across continents and through countless creative explorations.

While living in Arlington, Virginia, with her husband, who was serving in the Navy, Ferber began honing her watercolor skills through workshops and classes. As the couple moved from Virginia to South Africa, then Connecticut, and a few other states along the way, she finally settled in Fernandina Beach and continued her studies.

Today, Ferber works in watercolor, acrylics, and alcohol ink. She said she is always eager to learn new techniques and express her love of color and form.

After her daughter married, Ferber found herself with more time and space to explore her passion fully, and what had once been a hobby soon became a deeper calling. She spent more hours experimenting with color, attending workshops, and refining her technique discovering in her art a new chapter of life.

Her paintings, mostly of flowers, trees, and water, are as much about emotion as they are about scenery.



"Looking into the face of flowers and painting them lifts my emotions and inner happiness. When I create a piece of art, my hope is that it will do that for others as well," she explains.

Ferber's art has been featured at the Island Art Association, Baptist Hospital Nassau County, and now at the Plantation Artists Guild

and Gallery, a nonprofit cooperative gallery owned and operated by more than thirty local members.

To experience her art in person, visit the gallery at the Omni Resort's Shops on Amelia Island, 94 Amelia Village Circle. You can also reach Sherry Ferber at sherryferber@gmail.com for more information about her work and upcoming exhibits. d



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