

Volume 5, Issue 10 ~ October 2025

MAGAZINE

I'M DOING NO MORE FOR MY MOTHER THAN MY MOTHER DID FOR ME!



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Comparison Shopping Can Save You Money

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County Commission Meetings
October 7 and October 21

9 a.m.

McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium 601 S.E. 25th Ave. Ocala, FL 34471

Ocala City Council Meetings
October 7 and October 21
4 p.m.

110 S.E. Watula Ave., Ocala, FL 34471

Marion County School Board
October 14 and October 28

5:30 p.m.

School Board Meeting Room 1614 E. Fort King Street Ocala, FL 34471

Our mission is to record the rich history of the people, places and events in the community and share information that impacts the lives of residents in Marion County.



Sharing the good news happening in our community.

Founders

Monica Bryant & Cynthia Wilson-Graham

Editor

Monica Bryant

Photography/Editor

Cynthia Wilson-Graham

Contributors

Scott Hackmyer Elgin Carelock Monica M. Jacobs

Let's Talk We want to hear from you:

Email your submissions, events, comments or questions to **Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com**. Please include contact information (name and phone number) on the submission. Deadline is the first Monday of each month for the following month's publication.

Policy Statement

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Town Talk Magazine P.O. Box 6212 Ocala, FL 34478 (352) 897-1817

Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com or Towntalkmagazine.org.

EDITOR'S DESK



When the Board of Directors kick-off the Community With a Heart (CWAH) program in mid-November this year, being able to sustain the program will be a big priority.

For the past 38 years, the CWAH program, which has been totally supported by donations from the community since its inception, has been a lifeline for many, and in some cases, the only option available to help families get

back on their feet after experiencing a major unexpected life event.

With no hotel funding and limited funds for rent and mortgage assistance available in the community, organizers anticipate the request for assistance to increase. To meet those needs, CWAH needs the community to support the holiday program, which runs through mid-January, although donations are accepted year round.

The Star-Banner initially organized the annual campaign in 1986 to bring social service and charitable agencies together to assist those in need. In 2012, control of the program passed to the agencies that served on the board.

The problems is that longtime residents may not realize the program is still operating and residents who are new to the community may not know that it exists since the Star-Banner does not have the staff to write the weekly stories that generated donations and increased awareness as it once did. Without those stories, donations to the program have dwindled significantly in the past few years.

The CWAH board meets weekly beginning the second week of November to discuss requests for assistance and allocate funds. Assistance is capped at \$1,200 per request, and individuals do not receive any money directly. All payments are made on their behalf, and if approved, applicants can not apply again for three years.

The CWAH program does not accept phone calls or have a direct phone number. For questions or information, call one of the agencies on the board or go to https://www.facebook.com/profile.php? id=100075921828652 to send a message. Please allow 24 - 48 hours to receive a response.

Let's Talk!

Monica Bryant

Monica T. Bryant, Editor

The Community With a Heart program is a hand up, not a hand out!

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Community

Heart

Now in its 39th season, CWAH has collected more than \$1.8 million, of which \$30,04.61 was raised during the 2024 - 2025 campaign to help those in need in Marion County.

HOW TO HELP:

To donate, mail checks to Community With a Heart, P.O. Box 1777, Ocala, FL 34473. To donate online, go to https://www.ocalafoundation.org/community-foundation-funds/community-with-a-heart/ or you can scan the QR code below.



Donations are taxdeductible. There are no overhead costs and every cent donated goes to help residents of Marion County.

How to apply for assistance from CWAH:

To seek help from CWAH, individuals should contact one of the agencies below for a referral to see if they qualify for assistance from the program:

Marion County Children's Alliance,
Interfaith Emergency Services,
Marion County School Social Services,
Brother's Keeper, Community Legal
Services, Ocala Housing Authority,
Isaiah Foundation, Central Florida
Community Action Agency, Marion
County Community Services, Habitat for
Humanity, Cleve Butler and James
Jackson, Community-at-Large Members.

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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT MEET ZUMBA INSTRUCTOR TINA FENNELLY



Tina Fennelly didn't grow up in a family where fitness or maintaining a healthy lifestyle was a priority. But in 2010, when she found out she was borderline diabetic and had two young children, she started her journey to be a healthier version of herself.

"I needed to make lifestyle changes to be a healthier mother to be able to keep up with my children. I have worked hard to change that for my own family," she said. "My husband and I put our health and fitness goals in the forefront of our busy schedules. We made working out together a priority."

Fennelly took her first Zumba class in 2010 and fell in love with the dance style. She said she left the hour-long dance fitness class smiling and looking forward to the next one.

In 2012, she became a Zumba instructor and now teaches Zumba classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. at Phoenix Fitness,10451 S.E. US Hwy. 441, Belleview, FL 34420. Monthly memberships or daily rates are available, or you can just drop in.

Fennelly offers personal training online and in person; Bodybuilding coaching along with conditioning and a variety of group fitness classes including Zumba, Zumba toning, Aqua Zumba, Zumba Gold and Hiit, Spin

Stretch and Mobility and Silver Sneakers. She will adapt classes to fit any fitness level and private lessons are available.

Fennelly, a certified personal trainer and health coach, will kick-off the Pre-Race Celebration at the Wear Your Wings 5K Fun Run/Walk on Saturday, October 11, at the College of Central Florida, 3001 S.W. College Rd., Ocala. Registration and packet pickup starts at 7 a.m.; Pre-race Celebration at 7:30 a.m. and the Fun Run/Walk Race begins at 8 a.m. To register, go to https://runsignup.com/race/FL/Ocala/WearYourWings5KFunRunWalk. The cost is \$35 until October 10 and \$40 day of race.

"I am honored to help out with this event as it is very important to me," she said.

Fennelly, a National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) certified personal trainer and Women's Health Specialist, is qualified to work with all ages and fitness levels including peri menopausal and menopausal women. She also holds state records in Florida Powerlifting and Strongwoman.

She takes trainings and certifications through Athletics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) to stay current and works at Aviv Clinics, the leading medical center for hyperbaric treatment therapy, which continues to research and develop protocols for physical and cognitive health. She started working at Aviv Clinics, located in The Villages, in April of 2024 as a Physical Trainer in their Strength and Conditioning program.

"A career as a fitness professional is my dream job," said Fennelly, who worked over a decade as a dispatcher and administrative assistant in law enforcement. "My personal fitness and health journey ignited a passion for helping others change their lives through movement."

For more information, follow Tina Fennelly on Facebook or connect with her at **@tina_fennelly**; **@tinafennellyfitness** or **https://www.zumba.com/p/tinafennelly**.

SO WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S YOUR IDENTITY?

By Elgin Carelock, Chairman of the Greater Ocala Community Development Corporation

For most of my life, I believed I knew the answer to this question. I was the performer, the competitor, the one who would stand at the summit and claim victory. My formative years were filled with extraordinary opportunities that shaped my identity—attending a school for the performing arts marching with what I proudly consider the best college marching band in the nation. These experiences weren't just activities; they were crucibles that forged my understanding of excellence and instilled in me an unrelenting drive to win at all costs.

The performing arts taught me discipline, creativity and the power of preparation. Every rehearsal was a step toward perfection, every performance a chance to showcase mastery. In the marching band, I learned what it meant to be part of something greater than myself while still striving for individual excellence. The precision, the dedication, the thousands of hours spent perfecting formations and musical arrangements—all of it reinforced my belief that success meant being the best, being number one, being the person everyone looked to when they thought of greatness.

This mindset naturally transferred into my professional life. I approached every opportunity, every challenge, every career milestone with the same intensity that had driven me through my performing years. I wanted to be the CEO, the thought leader, the industry titan whose name would be synonymous with success. I chased promotions, accolades and recognition with the same fervor I had once brought to hitting the perfect note or executing a flawless routine.

But here's the thing about always striving to be number one: the universe has a way of humbling you. Time and again, I found myself in the position of the bridesmaid, never the bride. I consistently landed in the top four, earned recognition as a finalist, received praise for being "almost there." I was good—sometimes even great—but never quite the gold medalist I had envisioned myself becoming. Each near-miss stung a little more than the last creating a pattern of professional achievement that felt simultaneously successful and unfulfilling.

For years, I wrestled with this paradox. How could someone who had learned excellence so thoroughly, who had dedicated so much energy to winning, consistently fall just short of the ultimate prize? Was I lacking something fundamental? Was my definition of success flawed? These questions gnawed at me, creating a restlessness that success couldn't quite satisfy.

Then, a few months ago, everything changed. I was sitting in my family room lost in one of those deep contemplative moments that seem to arrive uninvited but carry profound significance. The house was quiet, my mind was racing through the familiar litany of professional what-ifs and maybenext-times when something extraordinary happened. In that stillness, the Holy Spirit spoke a single word into my consciousness: "Sherpa."

The word hit me with unexpected force. Sherpa. Not CEO, not champion, not gold medalist—Sherpa. At first, I wasn't entirely sure what to make of this revelation. But as I began to research and study what Sherpas actually do, the pieces of my life's puzzle began falling into place with startling clarity.

Sherpas are the unsung heroes of mountaineering. They are the guides who possess intimate knowledge of the world's most challenging peaks, who have traversed dangerous terrain countless times, who understand the mountain's moods and mysteries better than anyone. They have been to the summit—often multiple times—but their role isn't to claim the glory of the ascent. Their purpose is infinitely more valuable: they ensure others reach the top safely.

The more I learned about Sherpas, the more I recognized myself in their story. They don't get the book deals or the speaking tours. Magazine covers don't feature their faces alongside headlines about conquering Everest. But among those who understand what it truly takes to achieve something extraordinary, Sherpas are revered. They are essential. They are the difference between success and failure, sometimes between life and death.

This realization reframed my entire personal and professional narrative. Those times I came in fourth place, those moments when I was the finalist but not the winner—I hadn't been failing. I had been training. Every near-miss had been building my expertise, developing my ability to understand what it takes to reach the summit and, more importantly, what it takes to guide others there safely.

Looking back at my journey through this new lens, everything makes sense. My experiences in the performing arts didn't just teach me about excellence; they taught me about preparation, coaching and bringing out the best in others. My time in the marching band wasn't just about individual achievement; it was about understanding how to help a team function at its highest level. My professional near-misses weren't failures; they were graduate-level courses in recognizing what separates good from great.

Now, this revelation has fundamentally changed how I approach every relationship—from my family to my mentees to my clients. Instead of trying to be the star, I focus on helping others shine. Instead of seeking the spotlight, I work to ensure my clients are prepared for their moment in it. Instead of chasing personal recognition, I find deep satisfaction in knowing that my guidance helped someone else achieve their dreams.

The beautiful truth about being a Sherpa is that while the world may not always know your name, the people whose lives you've changed never forget you. Sherpas make good livings for their families, earn respect within their communities and experience the profound fulfillment that comes from knowing their work matters. They understand that true success isn't about personal glory—it's about sustainable impact, about building something that lasts beyond individual achievement.

Recognition of "who you are" as a guide, as someone whose greatest skill is ensuring others reach their goals, isn't just a purpose—it's the key to long-term success and sustainability. In a world obsessed with individual achievement, there's something revolutionary about finding your identity in lifting others up.

So, who am I? I am a Sherpa. And I've never been more certain of my purpose.





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JOIN US:

DATE: Saturday, October 11, 2025

TIME: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

ADDRESS: Get "N" Formation Fitness Dance-A-Thon Breast Cancer Awareness Fundraiser at Paddock Mall, 3100 SW College Rd., Ocala, FL 34474

- Be a Florida resident.
 Do not have health insurance.
 Have not had a mammogram within a year.
- Have not had a mammogram within a year.
 40-64 years of age OR
 Under age 40 with a 1st degree family history of breast
 cancer (parent, sibling, or child) or symptomatic.
 Earn less than or equal to 200% of the poverty level.
 Women of any age who have completed treatment for
 breast cancer may be eligible.



- Have not had their mammograms within a year. At average risk for breast cancer should begin receiving mammograms at age 40. Most health insurance plans cover screening
- mammograms with no out-of-pocket cost. Florida women who are insured can
- schedule their mammogram directly with 3D MammoLink

FREE Gift Card for eligible uninsured women who complete the virtual breast health education and keep their scheduled screening appointment. FOR MORE INFORMATION contact:







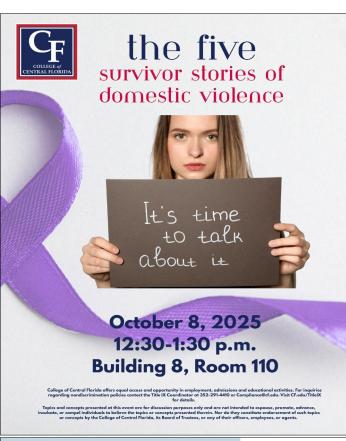








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- Breed Paw-tv
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- Dock Diving
- Doggie Races
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CULTIVATING HOBBIES TO HARVEST FUTURE CAREERS

By Monica M. Jacobs, Teacher and Author of "My New Church," a children's book

It's never too early to start prepping your children for their adult life. Previous articles encouraged you to teach your kids how to clean up behind themselves, how to cook and how to budget in preparation for the future. Did you know that some children show signs of their purpose in their primary ages?

The day I met my second-grade teacher, I knew that when I grew up I wanted to be a teacher just like her. She was nice, protective, smart and pretty. She was also a security guard which everyone in my class thought was cool including me. She was the teacher who ironically taught me the writing process. I immediately took interest in it. My fourth-grade teacher knew that I wanted to be a teacher, so she taught me



Monica Jacobs

how to look at the teacher's manual and to grade my peers' classwork. Fast forward to today, I am currently a first-grade teacher and a professional writer.

There are various ways to identify which vocation your children enjoy. You can pay attention to how your children play and what they pretend to be. It shows their interests. You can also take notice if they like building, fixing or helping. Books and TV shows also show what interests your children. Try watching if they think critically and like to answer scientific questions because they may want to be a scientist. If they like to comfort others or mediate arguments, they may want to be a counselor or social worker. If they are natural leaders, they may be potential leaders, teachers or managers. Children often tell you what they want to be when they grow up, so listen.

As you watch your children, it is important to guide them. You can teach them behaviors such as manners, sharing, speaking kindly to others and treating others with kindness. Providing more of what interests them also helps. If they like a certain type of book, there are many libraries in Marion County. You can visit one or a bookstore. Libraries have all kinds of books that can be borrowed for free about different kinds of occupations. The books explain what the occupation entails, the salary and some books even prepare the readers for any test that they would have to take to get a certification or license. If your child is interested in science, you can look up activities on YouTube or Google that are child friendly.



There are also programs that are costly but efficient like Generation Genius. If your child is old enough to work a sewing machine and says that he/she wants to be a designer when he/she grows up, if it's in your budget, try getting a machine and some patterns for him/her to try.

Cultivating hobbies can eventually harvest careers. Therefore, it is important for children to get to know themselves and their interests. It is important for parents and guardians to help children develop their skills and hobbies.

To reach Jacobs, contact her via e-mail at Jacobsmonica628@gmail.com.

CAROLYN ADAMS: I'M DOING NO MORE FOR

Carolyn Adams had already made up her mind that if and when the time came, she would step in and take care of her mother, Ruther Lee Holloman.

"No Brainer," Adams said. "I made a decision years ago to never place my mother in an assisted living facility or a nursing facility. This was a shared decision between my husband and I."

Adams, co-founder of the Estella Byrd Whitman Community Health Center, retired 10 years ago and became the full-time caregiver for her mom, who requires assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) including Ambulation, and she utilizes a walker and an electric wheelchair.



CAROLYN ADAMS AND RUTHER LEE HOLLOMAN

Although Adams' husband passed away 13 years ago, her younger sister and brother-in-law have committed to helping if she is unable to continue caring for her mother. She said they try to provide relief every other month and since her sister works remotely, she tries to spend two weeks with her to assist with their mom's care.

A typical day for Adams usually starts at 8 a.m. with medication administration, breakfast, bath and any routine household chores that need to be done after a daily call from her younger sister in Georgia.

"We enjoy all of our meals together everyday. We talk about our feelings, orientation to time, place and person, and we talk about family memories, her childhood and family relationships," Adams said. "Our greatest challenge is which one of us will win the Scrabble game as mom makes up her own words."

On Saturday, November 8, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the Ocala Downtown Square, Rizing Starz Inc., Elder Options and Quad Nurse, LLC will host its first Family Caregivers Appreciation Celebration for

caregivers like Adams, who provide essential support and in many cases "round the clock" care to their loved ones.

The event, which showcases local caregiver support services, wellness resources and community advocates to foster community support and raises awareness for family caregivers also includes coffee and treats by TLC Coffee Enterprise, free massages to the first registered family caregivers, door prizes and much more.

Adams, 79, said her local support system includes Holloman's niece, but when they are involved in the same activity, another niece from Orlando comes to help out. She signed her mom up for in-home physical therapy to assist with strengthening exercises for her mom, who is 97 years old, because she often complains about being weak.

"My biggest challenge is not always being able to attend unplanned events when mom is not interested in attending with me," she said.



According to the National Council on Aging, Family Caregiver Appreciation Month is celebrated in November and is dedicated to recognizing and honoring the vital contributions of family caregivers across the nation. The first observance, was initiated by the Caregiver Action Network in 1994. President Bill Clinton signed the first presidential proclamation recognizing this month in 1997, and every president since has continued the tradition.

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

Elder Options' mission is to ensure that communities have a trusted and unbiased place to turn for information, resources and assistance. For more information,

 ${\bf www.agingre sources.org.}$

Quad Nurse, a leading provider and state-licensed nurse registry in North Central Florida serving 16 counties, is dedicated to understanding and surpassing the needs of our clients. For more information, visit

www.quadnurse.com.

Rizing Starz Incorporated, is dedicated to supporting family caregivers through advocacy, resources, and community engagement. Founded in 2002, they work behind the scenes to empower caregivers with practical tools and to steer students toward careers in the field of care. For more information, visit www.RizingStarzInc.com.

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MY MOTHER THAN MY MOTHER DID FOR ME!

But, the decision to step into the role of a caregiver should not be taken lightly. Although the roles of a caretaker and a caregiver are often used interchangeably, the Caregiver Action Network stated they have distinct meanings, responsibilities and emotional dynamics. A caregiver is someone who provides psychological, emotional and physical support to individuals who cannot fully care for themselves due to illness, disability or aging. Regardless of whether they are a professional or a family member, caregivers typically focus on empowering the person they care for, respecting their autonomy and helping them retain control over their lives. On the other hand, a caretaker is usually someone paid to manage or maintain something, whether it's a property, animals or sometimes even people. While they can provide similar physical assistance to caregivers, the key difference is that caretakers often see their role as a job rather than one rooted in emotional connection or empathy.

Adams advice for anyone who wants to take on the role of caregiver is to realize that their time is not always there's, and they must set limits and always make sure that they include time for themselves. She said they should also treat their responsibilities as a fun activity and privilege knowing that this individual loves you.

"My mother encourages me to go shopping, catch a movie or just take a long walk," Adams said. "I take advantage of such activities and usually face-time her at because she thinks I'm checking up on her."



RUTHER LEE HOLLOMAN intervals, which makes her angry

Although Adams has good and bad days, she wants to encourage others who may find themselves having to take care of a loved one in the future.

Ways to Celebrate and Honor Caregivers

Express Gratitude:

A simple thank you note or card can mean a lot to caregivers, reminding them that their efforts are appreciated.

Offer Support:

Check in on caregivers and offer specific help, such as running errands or providing respite care, to ease their burden.

Raise Awareness:

Share information about Family Caregiver Appreciation Month on social media to help spread the word and encourage others to recognize caregivers.

Participate in Events:

Many organizations host events and workshops during this month. Engaging in these activities can provide caregivers with

valuable resources and a sense of community.

"Love on them. Cherish them for having them in your lives because what you're giving to them, simply put, is what they gave to you," she said. "I accept my responsibility in a positive manner because I'm doing no more for my mother than my mother did for me!"

Sponsorship opportunities are also available. For questions or more information, contact Linda at (678) 814-6099 or e-mail rizingstarzinc@yahoo.com.



THE RICH HISTORY OF BLACK HORSEMEN

Submitted by Cynthia Graham



Back Row (L-R): TK Acosta, Jeremiah Acosta, Courtney Wilson, Wayne Brown, Raymond Wheeler, Rev. Howard Gunn, James Hamilton. Front Row: Gus Gray, David Cayson, Willie Jones, Melvin James.

On September 18, Howard Academy Community Center hosted The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers Exhibit Meet and Greet to honor African American Pioneers of the Horse Industry in Ocala/Marion County, Florida. The evening brought together individuals from the Thoroughbred, agricultural and farming world.

More than 80 youth and adults attended, many donning cowboy hats and blue jeans as they filled the halls of the Marion County Black History Museum at the Howard Academy Community Center. The room

buzzed with laughter and conversation as guests exchanged compliments, snapped photos, and signed autographs.

In July, the opportunity arose through Tammy Gantt, Vice President of Member Services, Events & Sales at Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association (FTBOA), to host the Keeneland Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers Traveling Exhibit, which became the centerpiece of the exhibition held last month. Davida Randolph, Program Manager for the Marion County Black History Museum and volunteers, was excited to host the exhibit featuring eight vibrant, double-sided panels that showcased the rich history of Black horsemen and horsewomen in the racing industry.

What began as a tribute to **Melvin James**, the trainer of Kentucky Derby winner *Affirmed*, and **Lugusta "Gus" Gray**, the first Black American inducted into the Marion County Agriculture Hall of Fame, evolved into a community meet-and-greet for those involved in the agricultural sector.

"It was an honor to be a part of the exhibit," said Tk Acosta, one of the Ranch Bronc Riders. "I met so many wonderful people and learned a little black history on this cowboy lifestyle."



(L-R): Tayelen Seabrook, TK Acosta, Jeremiah Acosta, Melvin James, Wayne Brown, Paul Wallace, Rick Wallace.

Others in attendance or represented by a family member included several distinguished individuals in the agricultural and equine industries: Raymond Wheeler, Master Blacksmith & Farrier; David Cayson, with over 40 Years of experience working with champion racehorses; and Rick Wallace, Manager of the Beef Teaching Unit North at the University of Florida's Institute of Food & Agricultural Science, trainer and mentor of nephew; Tayelen Seabrook, Rick Wallace nephew, made history as the all-Around Champion

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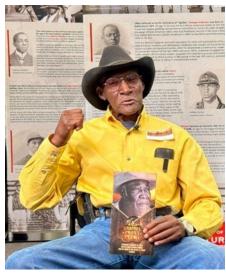
AND HORSEWOMEN IN THE RACING INDUSTRY



title in the Georgia-Florida Youth Rodeo Association. He currently ranks 10th in the world standings for youth competitors from the U.S., Canada and Australia. **Rev. Howard Gunn, Jr.,** Co-founder of the Florida Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Executive Director of Sustaining Environments Through Education and Economic Development, Inc., Owner, I Farm, LLC, and Ag Grow Consultants, LLC, currently serves as a thoroughbred owner and breeder; **Willie Jones Sr.,** known as "The Horse Doctor" for his comprehensive

skills in grooming, riding, breeding, foal delivery and training; Carla Carter-Eldridge "Horsewoman," a founding member of the Thoroughbred Women's Action League (TWAL), an organization of women trainers, agents, jockeys, executives and other professionals dedicated to advancing women in horse racing; Homer Gary II, Rancher and owner, who produces beef for consumers and continues traditional hay bailing as part of his farm's operations. Sterling Hope (deceased), Sales consignor and horse trainer; Stephen Hope, Sales consignor and horse trainer; Courtney Wilson, President of the Florida Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association (BFAA); Wayne "BO" Brown, Jr., Rancher and Owner, a pillar of the Southeastern Youth Fair for over 25 years. He served as the Swine Chairman from 2006 to 2013 and has been an active member of the Marion County Cattlemen's Association Board of Directors for many years. Additionally, he has served as the Ocala Bull Sale Clerk for 10 years bringing valuable experience and dedication to the role; TK Acosta and Jeremiah Acosta, Ranch Bronc Riders; George Thomas "Charlie Davis" Jr. (deceased), Legendary exercise rider best known for working with Secretariat, the Kentucky Derby and Triple Crown winner, as well as other champion race horses.

Wheeler requested that **Samuel Pratt Perry**, a blacksmith, cow roper and horse trainer, be included in the archive. He brought Perry's obituary as evidence of his accomplishments.



Raymond Wheeler is holding an obituary program of his friend, Samuel P. Perry.

"He made it possible for blacks down here (Florida) to be able to rope," Wheeler said.

"Thank you so much for a wonderful and honored event," said Carter-Eldridge. "It was a total surprise to me that I would be included as the only female among all of the "greats" of the Ocala area and the young men from Lake City."

The Friends of Marion County Black History attended to celebrate the first-time event at Howard Academy. If you have local history to share with the museum, contact the Marion County Black History Museum at Howard Academy, 306 N.W. 7th Ave., Ocala, FL 34475, or call (352) 671-4175.

For more information on the Legacy of Black Horsemen exhibit, visit: www.pbs.org/video/placeholder-NnKE4Q/.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT JOB FAIR

CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion will host a Marion County Job Fair offering job seekers the ideal season — and reason — to fall into fresh career opportunities and connect with employers ready to hire.



The job fair is free and open to all job seekers whether they live in Citrus, Levy and Marion, neighboring or other counties on Thursday, October 2, from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the College of Central Florida's Klein Conference Center, 3001 S.W. College Road, Ocala.

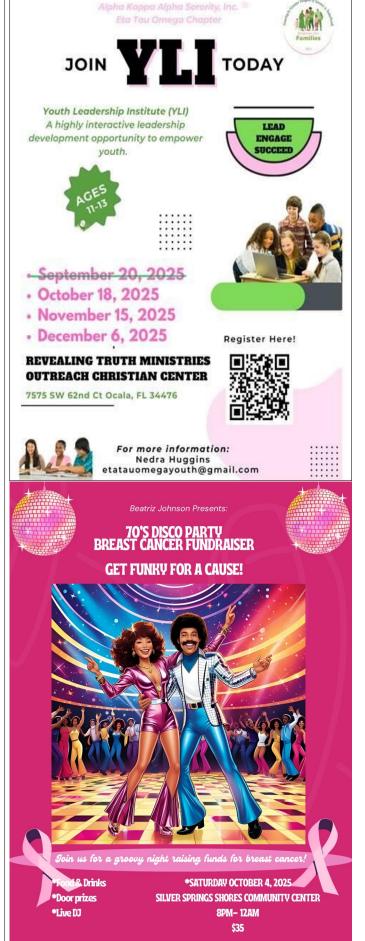
Attendees can meet with hiring managers from a variety of industries and all with immediate jobs to fill.

To date, the following businesses will be recruiting to fill positions ranging from entry-level to experienced: Antebellum Manufacturing, AutoZone Distribution Center, AutoZone Retail, Chick-fil-A Ocala, Colen Built Development (On Top of the World), Comfort Keepers, Cone Distributing, Dollar Tree Distribution, Eckerd Connects Workforce Development, E-One, FedEx, Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Corrections, Florida Department of Health, HCA Healthcare, Heart of Florida Health, Marion County Public Schools, R+L Global Logistics, Ring Power CAT, Starbucks, SunTran, The Vines Hospital, Viceroy Home Health and the World Equestrian Center.

Those planning to attend should bring printed copies of their resume, dress professionally and be prepared for on-the-spot job interviews. For fastest access to the event, participants are encouraged to register ahead of time at bit.ly/
MCJOBFAIR25

Job candidates interested in updating their resume, preparing a 30-second "elevator speech" highlighting their abilities and experience, and/or sharpening interview skills are invited to visit one of CareerSource CLM's career centers for fee-free staff assistance. The centers are open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are located at 2703 NE 14th St., in Ocala; 683 S. Adolph Point, in Lecanto; and 2175 NW 11th Dr., in Chiefland.

For more information about the job fair, including updates on participating businesses and the event registration link, visit careersourceclm.com/calendar or call 800-434-JOBS (5627).



MONEY SMART TIPS

By Scott Hackmyer

COMPARISON SHOPPING CAN SAVE YOU MONEY

I needed to transfer documents, files and other information from an old laptop computer to a new one a few weeks ago, so I called a few companies to see what they charge for this service.

The first one quoted \$129, the second was \$159. I called Office Depot and they told me the cost would be \$49.99. I had the work done there and that was exactly what they charged. The point of sharing this story is to highlight the



importance of comparison shopping. On many items there can be a large difference in price on goods or services. My suggestion is to get at least three estimates before making your purchase.

I got lazy this month and almost paid the price for it. I have never stored my credit card number on company websites until this month when I left my card on two company sites where I shop fairly often. Sure enough my card was hacked and I was billed for a water bottle that was shipped to a woman in Indiana and another purchase that went to a man in California. When I reported this to the credit card company they took away the charges and sent me another card with a new account number but once again, I will not be allowing any companies to store my credit card information when I make a purchase. It is not that hard to enter my number each time I check out. I encourage you to do the same.

I've had a credit card with Belk Department Store since 1978. For the first time when a bill came this month it showed a \$1.99 charge for a paper statement. This card, along with other department store cards and BP gas, is issued by Synchrony Bank. They said they mailed me a postcard telling me of this new charge and change to their policy, but I never received it. They refunded my \$1.99 and I switched to electronic billing with no paper statements. Take a good look at your credit card bills to make sure you aren't also being charged this fee. It isn't worth the nearly \$24 a year just to get a bill in the mail.

There are so many ways you have to guard your money. Checking out at the cash register is another place where it pays to keep a watchful eye. I bought three boxes of crackers at Dollar General as the shelf sign said the cost was 3 boxes for \$6. At the checkout I was charged \$8.25. The cashier took off the extra \$2.25 when I told her about the shelf sign but how many times are you to busy to see what you are being charged. At some stores they check you out so fast it can be hard to keep track but it is worth it if you don't want to be giving your money away.

I have written before that often you can negotiate a lower price. I subscribe online to a national newspaper that I enjoy reading. The renewal charge showed an increase to \$24.99 a month which I was not willing to pay. I called the toll-free number and spoke to a customer service agent who took me step by step through the process online to get a lower price. I was able to renew for another year for \$4 a month, a savings of \$20.99 per month. Don't be afraid to ask for a better deal or a lower price when making your purchases.

If you have extra cash on hand it appears to me that interest rates are going to be going down. Some have already dropped. If you are able to tie up your money for three to seven months or longer, I suggest you lock in some higher CD rates or other investments while you can. Bank OZK and Edward Jones are two of my favorite places to shop for Certificates of Deposit.

Different months offer opportunities for specific items that go on sale. Look for good sales in October on washing machines, refrigerators, dishwashers, jeans, wine, furniture, fans and outdoor furniture. Lots of sales hit right around Columbus Day which this year is October 13.

Business Spotlight



Business Name: Shannon's Southern Sweets

No. of Employees: 2

Business Owner: Shannon Mills

Business Address: 6225 N.E. 1st St., Ocala, FL 34470

Business Phone: (352) 433-7338

What Year Did You Start Your Business? 2023

Hours of Operation:

5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday; Closed on Sunday.

Products and/or Services:

Homemade Sweet Treats; Dipped Pretzels; Dipped Oreos; Whoopie Pies; Cake Pops; Cookies; Pies; Limited Cakes (No decorations).

E-mail Address: gnomemade.treats352@gmail.com

Website Address: N/A

Are You on Social Media? Yes

If yes, on what platforms?

Facebook: Shannons Southern Sweets

What or Who Inspired You to Start Your Business? Heaven Colon inspired me to start my baking business knowing how much I've always loved to bake. We've worked together for 11 years and her encouragement and belief in me played a huge role in turning my passion into a business.

What Makes Your Business Unique or What's Your Specialty?

Shannon's Southern Sweets is a home-based bakery specializing in dipped treats and desserts made modern. From custom cake pops and chocolate-dipped Oreos to handmade whoopie pies and classic cookies, every sweet is crafted with love, creativity and a personal touch - perfect for gifting, parties and celebrations big or small.

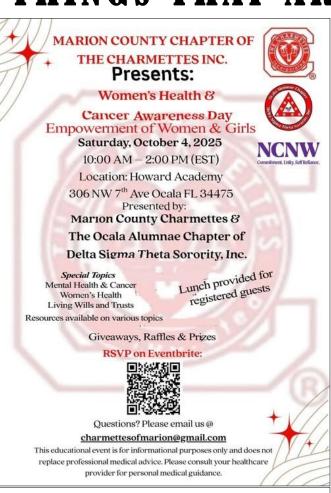
What Advice Would You Give Someone Starting a Business?

Just do it and believe in yourself! Start small. Think big. Learn always!

The **Small Business Profile** is **FREE** and open to small businesses located in Marion County with less than 25 employees or solo entrepreneurs.

To have your business featured in an upcoming edition, please request a form by emailing **Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com**. Completed forms can be returned via email or mailed to P.O. Box 6212, Ocala, FL 34478.

THINGS THAT ARE GOOD TO KNOW!





FREE SCREENINGS

Developmental and behavioral of screenings to include communication, problem solving, personal-social, and gross and fine motor skills

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 202510 AM - 12 PM

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MARION COUNTY 2300 SW 17[™] Rd. Ocala, FL 34471

FREE event for children five and under with FREE:

- games & activity stations
 - educational toys
 - children's books
- community resources

For more information, email HMG@ELC-Marion.org or call 352-369-2315, ext. 225.





Sponsored by the Children's Forum and the State of Florida, Division of Early Learning





APPLY NOW FOR THE TUSCAWILLA ART PARK SERIES

Applications are open for the 2026 Tuscawilla Art Park Series, featuring events on January 24 and February 21, 2026, with opportunities for artists to compete for cash prizes.

OTrak Chalk Walk:

Annual free chalk competition and festival along the OTrak pathway in Tuscawilla Art Park Saturday, January 24, 2026, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Awards announcement at 4:30 p.m.

Tuscawilla Sculpture Stroll:

Biennial free community event celebrating 10 newly installed sculptures in Tuscawilla Park and Art Park Saturday, February 21, 2026, 11 a.m to 5 p.m.

Awards announcement at 4:30 PM

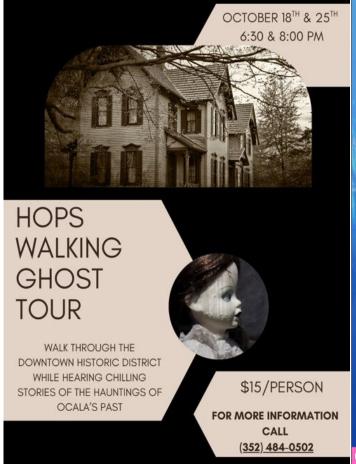
Art Park Literary and Poetry Festival:

Inaugural celebration of literature and spoken word, including poetry competitions, local authors and storytelling

Saturday, April 11, 2026, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Awards announcement at 4:30 p.m.

Apply for the 2026 Tuscawilla Art Park Series Events. For vendor or sponsorship information, Go to https://www.ocalafl.gov/government/city-departments-a-h/growth-management/cultural-arts/cultural-arts-events/tuscawilla-art-park-series





TUSCAWILLA

ART PARK SERIES

Town Talk Magazine, P.O. Box 6212, Ocala, FL 34478



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24

GATES AT 5:30 | MOVIES BEGIN AT DUSK

JOIN US FOR A FREE MOVIE NIGHT TO KICK OFF RED RIBBON WEEK! 4 MOVIES & FUN ACTIVITIES - ALL FREE!

> at the Ocala Drive-In 4850 S PINE AVE | OCALA, FL



