

KDC AND THE SUNSHINE SLIDERS



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County Commission Meetings
July 1 and July 15
9 a.m.

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

Ocala City Council Meetings
July 1 and July 15
4 p.m.
110 S.E. Watula Ave.,
Ocala, FL 34471

Marion County School Board
July 8 and July 22
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.



TOWN Talk MAGAZINE

Sharing the good news happening
in our community.

Founders

Monica Bryant & Cynthia Wilson-Graham

Editor

Monica Bryant

Photography/Editor

Cynthia Wilson-Graham

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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.

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Contact Us:

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or Towntalkmagazine.org.**

EDITOR'S DESK



Summer is here, and this heat is nothing to play with! It seems like it gets hotter every year and lately it's been HOT!

As you're making plans to spend time with family and friends for the Fourth of July, at a Family Reunion or other outside gatherings or activities, please take precautions to keep everyone safe.

Check out the tips below to ensure you stay safe during this Summer and holiday weekend AND be prepared to deal with this hot weather.

Tips to stay safe this Fourth of July

- Be careful if you're going to be near water. Keep your eyes on your kids at all times!
- Protect yourself from the sun. If you're going to be spending time outdoors, make sure you apply sunscreen at least 15 minutes before going out and reapply every two hours, especially after swimming.
- Use fireworks with caution. Only adults should handle fireworks. Make sure you check to see what fireworks are legal where you live.
- If you're barbecuing, never leave a lit grill unattended. Grill outdoors only and do not overload the grill to avoid potential flare ups.

How to Stay Safe in Severe Heat:

Be sure to take precautions to protect yourself and others from heat-related illnesses.

1. Stay Hydrated:

- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Encourage family and friends to drink lots of fluids too.
- If you sweat a lot, consider drinking a sports drink to replace lost salt and minerals.
- Avoid alcohol and sugary drinks because they can dehydrate you.

2. Keep Cool:

- Spend as much time as possible in air-conditioned places. If you don't have AC, go to a library or a mall to stay cool.
- Take cool showers or baths.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting and light-colored clothing.
- Keep windows and curtains closed to keep your home cooler and try not to use heat-generating appliances like stoves and ovens.

3. Limit Outdoor Activities:

- Avoid activities that are strenuous during the hottest part of the day.
- Schedule activities for the cooler parts of the day, like early morning or late evening if you must go outside.
- Wear a hat or look for shade to protect yourself from the sun.

4. Be Aware of Heat-Related Illnesses:

- Know the signs and symptoms of heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.
- If you suspect heatstroke, call 911 and get the person to a cooler place.

5. Check on Others: Check on family members, older adults and neighbors who may be more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.

Let's Talk!

Monica Bryant

Monica T. Bryant, Editor

6. Never leave children or pets in cars, even for a short time.

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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

ARTS AND LEARN EXHIBIT, LLC



Tania N. Sutherland

Tania N. Sutherland believes that during these times everyone can use a little emotional boost. For more than 30 years, Sutherland has been independently recording and publishing music as well as working in the field of education. She uses Arts & Learn Exhibit, LLC., to boost self-esteem through the arts - specifically songwriting and broadcasting. Sutherland's consulting business operates remotely, in public settings or in agreed upon spaces, assists with portfolio development and homework help in specific subjects for students and sells advertisement slots on their Caribbean platform, Island Worldwide, a 24 hour broadcasting platform that connects broadcasters from all over the world including The United Kingdom, Canada and several states in the United States. It also provides opportunities to go live on their platform when you sign up for a session.

"This unique small business also connects interested parties for professional mixing and mastering services as well," she said.

Sutherland said many Black Women Educators (BWE) in leadership have endured challenges of job sustainability, lack of job support and have been victims of systemic racism, but they are competent, educated, trained and serve populations that look like them but are lacking in education, yet, a very small proportion of BWE have achieved longevity in the field as evidenced in research in the United States.

While attending Howard University, Sutherland majored in Radio/Television/Film with a minor in Education. After graduating, she worked for several production companies including Showtime Networks, WNET, VP Records, NY Caribbean 93.5 FM and Westwood One Radio for several years. She said Howard University instilled entrepreneurship in its cultural and educational thread and as an alumnus, entrepreneurship was instilled in her. With influences, educational and life experiences and teachings from Howard University, recognized as the top historically black college and university (HBCU) in the nation, she birthed Arts and Learn Exhibit, LLC in 2023.

"Arts and Learn Exhibit believes that there is genius in everyone and aims to boost self-esteem through identity and social and emotional wellness through music, mentorship, broadcasting, tutoring and more making communities healthy with a sense of accomplishment, identity, value, victory and belonging," Sutherland said. "We showcase your work!"

Masterclasses are taught by an artist and educator who has a passion for giving back to the community. They serve adults and K-12 students and participants interested in broadcasting learn firsthand techniques of on-air nuances, script writing and programming.

An award winning songwriter and vocalist, as well as a former teacher, principal and assistant principal, Sutherland is passionate about the arts and education. An extension of the business allows professional mixing and mastering by her husband, Gary O. Sutherland, an esteemed audio engineer, whose catalog includes renowned Reggae artists and producers.

"The variety of creative services offered are unique in itself," she said.

To connect with Arts and Learn Exhibit, follow Chyna Nicole Artist/Educator on Facebook; Island_Worldwide on Instagram; Website: <https://padlet.com/techartist7/arts-and-learn-exhibit-llc-8vsjtqjzu2flyrt5> or islandworldwide.com. For more information, go to email taniaartexhibit@gmail.com.



ARTS and LEARN EXHIBIT, LLC.

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- Scriptwriting
- Mentorship (includes music production/college applications and more)
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- STEAM (K-6)

Services Available

5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Weekends, Saturday
and Sunday 24 hours
(scheduled sessions)

The **Community Spotlight** highlights a person, place or event in our community. Tell us what's happening around town so we can share your **Good News** with others. Email submissions to Towntalkmagazine@yahoo.com.

BRAND EXPERIENCE VS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

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

As business strategists, marketing is a large part of the foundational structure of building and maintaining a successful business. Digital marketing has taken the game to a whole new level with social media, commentary and reviews.

As often as I am able, I read industry and trade articles to keep up with the latest trends in digital marketing and social media and have come to realize small business owners don't stand a chance in trying to keep up with all of the social delivery systems used by our customers. Just as we get our heads around one platform, our target audience has moved to the newest platform.

One of my staffers was telling me about Snapchat a few months ago and I was totally in the dark. As I researched, I found out more than 300 million photos and videos are shared on Snapchat per day!

How are small business owners, who do not have the funds to hire a social media management company, supposed to keep up?

Instead of focusing on having a presence on the latest social media platform, focus on creating a brand experience that makes your company the subject of conversation no matter what the platform. Dedicate time, effort and resources in your people, products and processes and you will find more of the “snaps,” “tweets” and “posts” will be about your company and the exceptional experience customers have had in your establishment.

From a customer point of view, social media provides an honest narrative of how they have engaged your product or service. Companies that provide a high brand experience are rewarded with loyalty and those who have challenges are held accountable in public. Remember your product or service is no longer what you tell customers they are, it's what the customers tell each other it is.

Focus on one or two social media platforms frequented by your customers and use superior content to keep them interested in who you are and what you stand for. Deliver high brand experience and it will not only benefit your company in peer-to-peer recommendations, but with consumers like me who use reviews exclusively for products and services that I have no experience with. Therefore, treat every customer as if they are your only customer and the social media will take care of itself (for a while).



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COME CHECK OUT THE SUMMER NIGHTS LECTURE SERIES

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Each week different topics will be presented by professionals in the natural and historical resource fields.

July 11: Edible Florida with Don Philpott, Florida Master Naturalist, environmentalist, and author Edible Florida covers basic foraging skills and many of the 1,700 wild plants found in Central Florida that are edible or have medicinal uses.

July 18: The Way It Was: Stories that Shaped our Community with Dave Schlenker, Local writer/journalist Be transported to a bygone era through a nostalgic journey across Central Florida's past. Guests will explore the rich history and stories that shaped this community. Don't miss this unique opportunity to delve into the past and uncover the treasures of heritage.

July 25: Citrus and Fruit Trees in Florida with Mark Bailey, UF/IFAS Extension Agent

An iconic emblem for the sunny state of Florida, explore the history and origins of citrus fruits, and varieties cultivated throughout the years, including the future of good gardening fruit trees in this area

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MARION COUNTY BRANCH

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BWR BLACK WOMEN'S ROUNDTABLE

For more information and to schedule a stop in your community email us at Info@Equal-Ground.Com

STAYING ON TRACK FOR THE SUMMER: WHAT KIDS CAN DO!

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

Are you halfway through the summer and wondering if your child is on track for a successful school year? In last month's issue, I wrote about teachers' expectations. This month, I would like to share some activities that your child can do now to prepare for next school year.

After speaking with a number of K-12 teachers, one thing is for sure, they want students to rest and enjoy their summer! It is understood that both teachers and students have had a long and tiresome school year. Everyone needs a break. However, just like teachers prepare over the summer for the next school year, students should too.

Some academic activities for elementary school students include reading and mathematics flashcards. I asked teachers if there were any computer programs that could help students, and they gave me the following list:

Cool Math 4 Kids, Epic! (Free for Educators); Khan Academy Kids; IXL; Brainzy and Educational videos on YouTube and PBS Kids

One elementary school teacher told me that she not only wants students to learn academic skills, but also life and independence skills. You can teach your child how to cook, do laundry, mow the lawn, and clean up after themselves. One second-grade teacher suggested her students complete summer camp.

After talking to secondary school teachers, it is apparent that they also had a long year and want your child to rest. However, there are things that middle school students can do during their down time to get them prepared for the next school year like going to the public library and reading all kinds of books. There are also educational videos on YouTube and other educational sites that are fun and engaging to watch.

For all students, it is important to note that when reading, one should sample multiple genres. One third-grade teacher told me that she wants her students to read at least one autobiography, a classic fictional novel, and some poetry. She encourages them to write in their journals and think of goals for the next school year. Finally, she wants them to practice multiplication fluency by timing themselves.

As a teacher certified to teach K-12 grades, I believe that all students should practice some type of mathematics flashcards over the summer. Elementary students can practice with number recognition, addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division flash cards. Secondary school students can practice the formulas and theorems that they learned in the previous year.

In conclusion, summer should be fun, but as rational beings, we are always learning. So, summer should be educational too! I suggest you support your child by helping them continue to learn throughout the summer. Teach your child life skills that will eventually make them independent adults starting in their primary grades. Have them read all types of genres of literature. Help them practice their math skills too, but most importantly, rest!

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



Monica Jacobs

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KDC AND THE SUNSHINE SLIDERS

Katrina Colston Thomas' love for dancing started with Oralee Jackson when she was six years old and it's still a passion.

"I've loved dance ever since and have praised dance throughout my life," she said. Dance has always been a significant part of my life and spiritual practice."

In 2015, driven by her love for dancing and a personal story of passion, KDC and the Sunshine Sliders were started after Grace Huffman, who oversees the Barbara Washington Senior Center, asked her mother Annie Mae Colston if she could teach line dancing to some of the seniors.

Thomas said the name was inspired by KC and the Sunshine Band, an American disco and funk band that was founded in Hialeah, Florida in 1973. Since her mom liked the band so she suggested KDC and the Sunshine Sliders. The K represents Katrina, the D represents her sister Daphne and the C is for Colston and their love for dance and positivity.

KDC started with about three members and has grown to nearly 60 people. About 30 people attend the Beginners class and the other half attend the Intermediate and Advanced classes. They perform about two to three times a month. Currently performances are free, but beginning in 2026, they plan to charge a set fee to perform.

Thomas recently saw the need to add a children's line dance class after Ms. Dowling, one of the ladies in KDC, suggested it. She agreed to start a class if Dowling led it. When Dowling moved away, Thomas' daughter Kristy Robinson and her sister Daphne Colston took over the class, which is called KDC Kids.



The youngest participant in the adult class is 13 years old and the youngest in the kids' class is 3 years old. Classes are unisex and anyone can participate in any class.

"It's been a blessing and the kids love performing," she said. "The program promotes development, learning and positive values beyond dance."

Thomas said KDC is her full-time focus, but she dedicates time to nursing homes and churches when she's not dancing. She said KDC supports various community initiatives such as organizing Christmas gift drives, hosting Mother's Day events, participating in the local Martin Luther King Jr., activities and the Ocala Christmas parade. KDC also adopted the Avante Nursing Home and organized prom dress drives and hosts two annual yard sales at New Zion Missionary Baptist Church in partnership with the Ocala

Police Department.

KDC also partners with the City of Ocala Recreation and Parks, Smooth Flavor, which is based out of Gainesville and others. Currently, they don't receive any outside funding but rely on annual fundraisers, i.e., a popcorn sale and scholarship event, but they welcome community support although they are currently not a 501(c)(3) organization. The goal, she said, is for KDC to become one in the future so they will be eligible to apply for grants, receive tax-exempt status and contributions from donors would be tax-deductible.

"We aim to avoid burdening the community, but would appreciate donations of blankets, toiletries and stuffed animals for nursing home residents," Thomas said. "Our kids' line dance group needs uniforms, and we also plan to buy gifts for our Mother's Day event."



Katrina C. Thomas



Annie Mae Colston



Continued on page 9

LINE DANCING IS WHAT WE DO!

Continued from page 8



KDC Class Schedule

Tuesdays

Kids Line Dance Class:
4:45 p.m. lasts one hour

Adult Beginner Class:
5:30 p.m. lasts 1.5 hours

Thursdays

Adult Advanced Class
5:30 p.m.

Participants are encouraged
to bring a smile
and a water bottle.

Classes are free.
Membership for KDC
is \$60 annually.

Classes are held at the
Mary Sue Rich Center
at Reed Place,
1821 N.W. 21st Ave., Ocala,
in the upstairs dance studio.

Contact Thomas at
(352) 512-5130
to sign up for a class.



This year, KDC & The Sunshine Sliders will host its 4th Annual Scholarship Event "Boots & Bling; It's A KDC Thing" at the Ed Croskey Center, 1510 N.W. 4th St., in honor of Annie Mae Colston, who passed away in 2022, on Saturday, September 20, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The event features the King of Line Dance, Dinner, Music by DJ 44 and a 50/50 Raffle. Tickets are \$35 per person. To reserve a table is \$50. Call Thomas at **(352) 512-5130** for additional information.



Daphne Colston and other members

Long-term, Thomas wants to expand KDC into a community-based program that promotes positivity and youth development, fosters collaborations and creates sustainable, innovative projects that serve the community.

"Right now, we focus on showing up with love, peace, happiness and prayer for prosperity," she said.

Thomas said she never expected the group to be as popular as it is. She said they pray during class, host monthly scripture readings and hold quarterly birthday celebrations for fellowship.

"I feel blessed, it has grown beyond my expectations," she said. "Initially, it was just me, a few women and my mother dancing for fun. Now we have a vibrant youth presence and God's favor has been evident."

Follow KDC on Facebook under KDC and the Sunshine Sliders. To request the group to perform at an event, call Thomas or Daphne Colston at **(352) 351-4413** or any member of KDC. For children dance requests, call Kristy Robinson at **(352) 207-2333** or Colston.

11TH ANNUAL OCALA YOUTH ENERGY ACADEMY

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July 16th & 17th @ 8:00AM

(DAY 1) LILLIAN BYRANT COMMUNITY CENTER > 2200 NW 17TH PLACE, OCALA, FL 34470

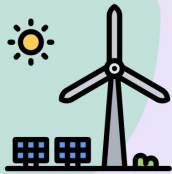
(DAY 2) LILLIAN BYRANT COMMUNITY CENTER (TRANSPORT TO AND FROM OCALA ELECTRIC WILL BE PROVIDED FOR STUDENTS)



Click here to register

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JANICE SHAW @ 352.272.8297, JANICE.SHAW@DUKE-ENERGY.COM



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THE CLARITY EXPERIENCE

MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL EDITION

OBJECTIVES

The Clarity Workshop is designed to guide participants through a transformative journey of self-reflection, intentional growth, and resilience-building. Using evidence-based strategies, interactive exercises, and mindfulness practices, this session will help individuals align their actions with their personal values, fostering greater clarity and purpose in life.

GOAL

The goal of this workshop is to equip participants with practical tools to navigate challenges, shift limiting beliefs, and create sustainable habits that support personal and emotional well-being. By engaging in guided activities and reflective journaling, attendees will develop a deeper understanding of their strengths and a clear roadmap for growth.

Benefits of Attending

1. Enhanced Emotional Resilience

Learn strategies to manage stress, reframe negative thoughts, and cultivate a mindset of self-compassion.

2. Increased Mental Clarity

Gain tools to silence self-doubt, set clear intentions, and make purposeful decisions that align with personal goals.

3. Stronger Sense of Balance

Develop small, consistent habits that improve overall well-being, creating lasting positive change in daily life.

DATE: July 12, 2025

**Time: 10:00 am-12:00 pm
Location: 615 NW MLK Jr. Ave
Community Room**

ADMISSION - \$20



RSVP TODAY



CONSUELLA SHAW
Licensed Mental Health Counselor

The Clarity Experience workshop to empower individuals with the tools to navigate life's challenges, cultivate resilience, and align their actions with their deepest values, fostering lasting personal growth and well-being.

www.assuagecc.com

COME STOP BY AND TAKE A TOUR

The Marion County Black History Museum
at
Howard Academy Community Center
Museum Tours for July 2025



Wednesday,
July 2, 2025 - 1pm

Wednesday,
July 16, 2025 - 1pm

Wednesday,
July 30, 2025 - 1pm

11:00am to 2:00pm

Howard Academy
Community Center
306 NW 7th Ave.
Ocala, FL 34474

The museum features exhibits, artifacts, and displays covering various aspects of local African American history and culture.

Please contact our office at (352) 671-4175 to make an appointment.

Outside food and drinks are not permitted inside the museum.

BOW IN THE CLOUD
PRESENTS 5TH ANNUAL

**BACK
2SCHOOL
DRIVE**

AUGUST 3, 2025
12:30-3:30PM

**MILLA'S AT
MAKING IT MATTHEWS**
BACKPACKS • FOOD • GAMES • MUSIC

PARENTS PLEASE REGISTER YOUR CHILD(REN) VIA WWW.BOWINTHECLOUD.ORG
TO ENSURE THEY WILL RECEIVE A BACKPACK FILLED WITH SUPPLIES

45 Laurel Pass, Ocala, FL 34480
CONTACT TIERRA FOR MORE INFORMATION:
(352) 496-0036

WE NEED YOU! PLEASE JOIN US

The Marion County Black History Museum
at
Howard Academy Community Center
VOLUNTEER MEETING



Thursday,
July 10, 2025
5:30pm - 6:30pm

Howard Academy
Community
Center
306 NW 7th Ave.
Ocala, FL 34474

Topic:
Marion County Black History Museum Volunteers

Please join us to hear information about the museum and how you can be a part of preserving history by volunteering your time.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at (352) 671-4175

MCCA IS COLLECTING **GENTLY USED**
OR NEW CLOTHING FOR
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLERS!
HELP STOCK OUR FREE
BACK-TO-SCHOOL BOUTIQUE



**ALL
SIZES**

✓ We Need:

Teen Clothing -- hoodies, jeans, tees, sneakers, etc.

Hygiene Items -- deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toothpaste, toothbrushes & feminine products, **(Must be New!)**

✗ Please No:

Adult/senior clothing, business wear or worn-out items.

📍 Drop Off:

MCCA - 3482 NW 10th St, Ocala, FL 34475

📞 Call (352) 438-5990 to arrange a pickup!





Dare 2 B Great
Girls Mentoring Program

Dare 2 B Great
MENTORING PROGRAM

An Enchanted Evening in Paris
3rd Annual Cotillion

Saturday, July 19, 2025
4:00p.m.

Mary Sue Rich Center at
Reed Place
1821 N.W. 21st Avenue
Ocala, Florida 34475

Admission is free
Donations accepted



SAVE THE DATE
2ND ANNUAL CHARITY
Taste of the Town Fundraiser

Mark your calendars for
Friday, September 12, 2025, from 5-8p
at the Ocala Downtown Market
for an evening of fun, music, libations, and savory samplings
of many of our community's different restaurants,
including beer and wine vendors.

You won't want to miss this event that will offer
something for every palate, Come Eat For a Cause!

HOSTED BY:



Estella Byrd Whitman
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

352.875.2226 | www.ebwchc.org

CALL TO ARTISTS: EIGHTH BIENNIAL OCALA OUTDOOR SCULPTURE COMPETITION

The City of Ocala Cultural Arts Division invites sculptors from across the United States to submit entries for the Eighth Biennial Ocala Outdoor Sculpture Competition. This juried, two-year exhibition offers artists a unique opportunity to showcase their work in one of Ocala's most visited public spaces, Tuscawilla Park and the adjacent Art Park.

Up to ten sculptures will be selected for display from January 2026 through January 2028. Selected artists will each receive a \$4,000 honorarium to support transportation and installation of their work. The City of Ocala will provide concrete pads, limited installation assistance and insurance coverage for installed pieces up to \$15,000 or the artwork's stated value, whichever is less.

The exhibition will be celebrated at the Tuscawilla Sculpture Stroll on Saturday, February 21, 2026. Juried awards will include Best in Show (\$2,000), Second Place (\$1,000), and Honorable Mention (\$500). Event attendees will also vote for the \$1,000 People's Choice Award.

Eligible applicants must be U.S. residents (excluding Alaska and Hawaii), age 18 or older. Submitted sculptures must be completed after 2020, structurally sound, maintenance-free, and able to endure Florida's subtropical climate for two years. Delivery and retrieval must be made in person by the artist or their representative.

Each artist may submit up to three sculptures for consideration. Application materials must include at least three high-quality images per work, an artist resume, a statement specific to the submitted work, and artwork details including title, medium, dimensions, weight and value. All applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. PT on Monday, Aug. 25, 2025. Notification of acceptance will be made by Oct. 13, 2025. Installation will take place January 12 through January 21, 2026, with deinstallation scheduled for January 31 through February 4, 2028.

For full submission guidelines and to apply, visit www.ocalafl.gov/sculpture. For more information, contact the City of Ocala's Cultural Arts Division at (352) 629-8447 or artinfo@ocalafl.gov.

MONEY SMART TIPS

By Scott Hackmyer

DO YOUR HOMEWORK SO YOU DON'T GET SCAMMED!

I use Norton 360 as my virus protection for my laptop computer. I like the product but the company's billing policy upsets me every year. Once again they billed me for the next year five weeks in advance and with no advance notice. When they do this, they charge you \$139.99, much more than you can buy this protection from other retailers. As the cliché states, to add insult to injury, nowhere on their website can you find a phone number to contact customer service. After much research I did get a phone number (866) 425-0365 and after listening to a couple of their counter offers, which I turned down, I threatened to cancel and switch to McAfee. Then they offered me the price of \$69.99 which I accepted. The two lessons here are by asking and insisting you can often get a better price and if you have Norton, be warned that this is their standard practice and you need to be very careful with your renewals. If you sign up for automatic renewals to get a better price, make sure you turn off automatic renewals in settings at least two months prior to the expiration date.

Someone I know well almost lost her life savings to a scam in the middle of June. She received an email from Microsoft telling her that her identity had been stolen and all her financial information was on the Dark Web. There was a phone number to call and she carefully verified that the number listed belonged to Microsoft so she thought it was legitimate. When she called she was told she was being transferred to a federal agent and over the next two days they convinced her to withdraw all her money from the bank and because they didn't have a federal agent in this area available to pick up her money for the "required 48 hours" she was told to put her cash in books with the pages hallowed out and to mail them to an address they gave her. They told her she couldn't report this or tell anyone or all her personal information including false criminal charges would be made public. She finally went to the Sheriff's Office and they told her immediately that it was a scam. They tracked it back to its source and she was able to deposit her money back into her bank account. With Artificial Intelligence and modern technology criminals can make a phone number look like it came from or is going to a different number than the one you see. Be very careful when responding to any request for your money or personal information. To verify, go to the company's or agency's official SECURE website (look for a **https** URL, not **http**) and contact them to ask if the information you received is legitimate.

I learn so much from reading Clark Howard's articles and listening to his podcasts. He recently shared another way criminals can get your money. His advice is never use public charging stations for your cell phones. These are often found at shopping centers, some fast-food restaurants, airports and other public buildings. The bad guys have learned how to plug into a public charging port and load malware into that port. When you plug into that port to charge your phone they can then steal all the information from your device, including your passwords stored on your phone. This is called Juice-Jacking, Clark suggests you carry your own charger and USB cables when traveling, bring an external battery for your phone or buy an inexpensive "charging only cable" which will not allow data to pass in either direction to protect yourself.

Last tip of the month. I just had a prescription filled, a onetime need, not a regular script. With my insurance it was \$30.67 so I asked the pharmacist to check the price using GoodRx and my new BuzzRx card that I have with Wellcare. My cost ended up being \$16.84. Even if you have insurance don't forget to check the price with GoodRx or any other discount card you may have.

Happy Fourth of July everyone!

Business Spotlight



Business Name: Desie's Place, LLC

No. of Employees: 1

Business Owner: Julia Collman

Business Address: 5415 N.W. 3rd St., Ocala, FL 34482

Business Phone: (352) 234-4187

What Year Did You Start Your Business? 2020

Hours of Operation: Evenings and Weekends

Products and/or Services: Mental Health Counseling

E-mail Address: desiesplace@outlook.com

Website Address: <https://desiesplace.com>

Are You on Social Media? Yes.

If yes, on what platforms?

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Desies-Place-LLC>

Other: <https://redlinerescue.org/Clinicians.aspx?userId=379>

What or Who Inspired You to Start Your Business?

I have always felt immense pleasure in helping someone achieve a goal, a task or learn something new. Helping someone go from point A to point B, in spite of any challenges that they may encounter along the way and see the expression of gratitude on their face was rewarding to me.

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

I help medically complex patients and their caregivers navigate the challenges of loneliness, depression and exclusion by supporting and helping them to gain meaningful connections and a sense of belonging.

What Advice Would You Give Someone Starting A Business?

The road to being an entrepreneur is not straight. There will be bumps, ditches and setbacks that often look like failures, but look at it as a learning experience and grown from there. Never give up on your dreams and never quit. Rest if you must, but keep going and you will attain the life that you have dreamt about.

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.

GENERATIONAL FARMING: A LIVING LEGACY

By Cynthia Graham

As a little boy growing up in a farming community near Belleview Santos, Homer Gary, II said he knew since he was old enough to understand that he would eventually run the family farm. Today, Gary, a farmer and rancher, owns Homer Gary Family Farm, LLC.

Gary's grandfather, William P. Gary, started the farm after moving his family to Florida right before the Great Depression. William and Homer's great-uncle, John Gary, were among the early settlers of Marion County settling on 160 acres in South Ocala. After his grandfather passed away, Gary's father, Homer Gary, Sr., started managing the farm and when he died, Gary stepped in to continue the family legacy.

The Gary Family Farm has a longstanding tradition of hard work and commitment to education despite the limited resources and many challenges historically faced by Black Farmers. Homer Gary Sr., supported by his family, made many sacrifices to ensure his children had the opportunity to pursue a college education. Homer Gary II and his wife, Jacquelyn Boyd Gary, continued that legacy by prioritizing education for their children.

"My Father, Homer Gary, Sr., was my mentor. He taught me things you don't learn in a book. Hands-on experience is the best teacher," Gary said. "He told me to always trust God, pray and thank God for every blessing. The farm must be a top priority, and I must be dedicated and work hard."

Gary still upholds and preserves the family's farming traditions, practices and values, which have been passed down through generations centered around raising cattle and baling hay. They no longer grow watermelons, tomatoes, peas, squash and cantaloupe like they did in the early years.

A typical day on the farm varies depending on the time of year, the weather and unexpected events. This time of year, Gary starts his day at sunrise checking on the animals at the main location and inspecting the fencing. Then, he goes into town to hire laborers to help with feeding and other tasks. He picks up supplies while in town and tries to visit each location to feed the animals, check the water, assess their health and inspect the fencing.

Other tasks include:

- Deworming animals and placing medicine on animals for parasites.
- Weaning calves for replacement and marketing.
- Checking on pregnant cows who might need help delivering.
- Spraying fields for weed control.
- Cutting and baling hay

Gary's most significant achievements so far have been the implementation of sustainable farming practices, which allowed the family to upgrade operations and expand to multiple sites totaling approximately 1,000 acres across the Shady Grove, Sparr, Martin and Fairfield areas. Despite the growth, the heart of the family farm remains in South Marion County where the fifth generation of Gary farmers are preparing to carry on the legacy.

Gary said farming is his livelihood, and he has no regrets about his life as a farmer. He enjoys what he does; however, as he gets older, he is unable to perform many of the necessary tasks to keep the farms running, so his sons, grandson, nephews and other workers are hired to help maintain the farms.

"If you're interested in farming, you need to know that farming is hard work," he said. "You must be dedicated, understand how the market fluctuates, expect disappointments and seek help from experienced farmers."



Homer Gary, II



Gary welcomes visitors to the farm by appointment and teaches farming skills to students at Career Fairs and Youth Fairs. He also shares his knowledge with other farmers and supports the agricultural industry by making financial contributions to several farming organizations and initiatives.

In addition to community engagement, Gary produces beef for consumers and continues to bale hay as part of the farm's operations.

WAITLIST OPENING

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (SECTION 8)



INCOME LIMITS

- 1 Person - \$27,000
- 2 Persons - \$30,850
- 3 Persons - \$34,700
- 4 Persons - \$38,550
- 5 Persons - \$41,650
- 6 Persons - \$44,750
- 7 Persons - \$47,850
- 8 Persons - \$50,900

**Tuesday, June 24 @
9:00 AM through
Tuesday, July 8 @
9:00 AM**

(or until 2,000 applications have been received)

APPLY ONLINE ONLY

<https://ocalahousing.housingmanager.com>

- To apply online, applicants will need the following for all household members: income, social security numbers, and dates of birth.
- Any individual who is income qualified is eligible to be placed on the waiting list. Other eligibility criteria will be required when name is selected from waiting list.
- OHA has bilingual staff available for translation assistance.
- If you need special accommodations, please call Ms. Jacalyn Brown at 352-620-3350.

Computer Availability Sites:

Interfaith Emergency Services
421 NW 1st St.

Career Source
2703 NE 14th St.

Early Learning Coalition
2300 SW 17th Rd.

Mary Sue Rich - Sankofa Library
1821 NW 21st Ave.

Shepherd's Lighthouse
5930 SE Robinson Rd.

Wear Gloves
98 NE 9th St.

More sites may be available on our website

For questions:

Email: contactus@ocalahousing.org
Phone: Jenna Brown - 352-732-1233
or visit our website: ocalahousing.org



Ocala TTY: 352-368-2969
Ocala Video Phone: 352-414-1833
TDD: 1-800-545-1833 x507

4TH ANNUAL

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS & PREVENTION DAY Event



DATE
August 30th, 2025



TIME
11* & 12:30



LOCATION
1712 SE Lake Weir Ave
Ocala, FL 34471

Memorial Ride led
by The Punishers
LEMC. Proceeds
benefitting PUTP

Table
Vendors
\$75

Food
Trucks
\$115

Panels
Speakers
Variety of Vendors
Family Friendly
Music
Raffles/Prizes
Bounce House
Ponies
Food (for sale)

The Event is FREE
and open to all



Register Today!

*KICKSTANDS GO UP AT 11 FOR
ALL RIDERS

WWW.PICKINGUPTHEPIECES.US

FREE MEALS STILL AVAILABLE

SUMMER BREAK SPOT

at Marion County Public Library System

Make memories all summer long. Bring your family to these library locations, do something fun and let your kids, 18 years of age or younger, enjoy free, delicious BreakSpot meals. Check out this menu of offerings!

BreakSpot meals are USDA sponsored in partnership with the Shores Assembly of God. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. program | noon meal

Bellevue Public Library
13145 SE Highway 484, Bellevue 352-438-2500

Tuesdays, noon program | noon meal

Reddick Public Library
15150 NW Gainesville Road, Reddick 352-438-2566

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. program | 11:30 a.m. meal

Fort McCoy Public Library
14660 NE Highway 315, Fort McCoy 352-438-2560

Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. drop-in program | noon meal

Headquarters-Ocala Public Library
2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala 352-671-8551

Thursdays, 11 a.m. program | 12:30 p.m. meal

Freedom Public Library
5870 SW 95th St., Ocala 352-438-2580

Fridays, 10:30 a.m. program | noon meal

Dunnellon Public Library
20351 Robinson Road, Dunnellon 352-438-2520

Fridays, 11 a.m. program | 12:30 p.m. meal

Forest Public Library
905 S. Highway 314A, Ocklawaha 352-438-2540

June 2-Aug. 8



The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Marion County is pleased to announce our ongoing support groups.

NAMI Peer-to-Peer Support Group is a free recovery support group for any adult who has experienced a mental health condition. Groups are led by NAMI trained facilitators who have been there. There is an in-person option that meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. and a virtual option that meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.



NAMI Family to Family Support Group is a free support group for family members, partners and parents of someone living with a mental health condition. The group is led by a trained facilitator with lived experience.

To register for any of the above groups, please contact Steven Leilich, Executive Director- NAMI Marion County at steven@namimariioncountyfl.org

Save-the-Date for the 22nd Annual



DRIVE -THRU ONLY!

**Saturday,
July 26, 2025
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Friends Recycling
2350 N.W. 27TH Ave.
Ocala, Florida**

**~ FREE BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES ~
STUDENT(S) MUST BE PRESENT ~ NO EXCEPTIONS!
THEN, STOP BY OUR BOUTIQUE**

**FREE CLOTHING AND HYGIENE ITEMS,
(WHILE SUPPLIES LAST) FOR TEENS!**

SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2025

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**ED CROSKEY CENTER
1510 N.W. 4TH ST., OCALA**

***Backpacks and School Supplies
NOT available at this location!***



Immunizations (**Must Bring Current Shot Record**),
School Physicals, Vision and Hearing Screenings, dental cleanings,
fluoride, sealants and exams for children birth to 18 years old.

Vendors include: Marion County Health Department, Central Florida
Community Action Agency, Community Home Project, Estella Byrd
Whitman Community Health Center, Ocala Fire Rescue and more.

Sponsored by

Marion County Children's Alliance, Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida, Inc. and the City of Ocala

For information, vendor and sponsorship opportunities or to donate school supplies, call (352) 438-5990