

VENETIAN BAY

SEPTEMBER 2018



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A Social Newsletter Exclusively for Venetian Bay Residents

Living



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Our monthly community magazine *Venetian Bay Living* is featured online on the top left side of our website homepage. Please visit our website at www.venetianbayhomeowners.com for a complete list of our community information, local entertainment and events, and many printable discount coupons and offers from our local advertisers. Email: vbhomeowners@att.net
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editor's note



By **Audrey Costa**

**NO NEED TO LEAVE THE PREMISES:
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blast**



As a resort-like community, it's easy to have fun without stepping off Venetian Bay property. With sprawling acreage garnished with beautiful woodland and tropical wildlife, nature trails that get the blood pumping as you glimpse a soaring bald eagle, and lakes generously carved throughout the landscape, it is Venetian Bay's amenities and people who make it so easy to enjoy a full day of recreation and indulgence. For those new to the community, and even those of us who have been here for years but rarely get out of our hobbit holes, there are many things to do to keep everyone happy.

THE CLUB AT VENETIAN BAY

Having newly come back under the management of the Johnson Group, this 18-hole golf course caters to hobbyists and pros alike. If you don't want to leave the kids with your in-laws or they are just as obsessed with their swing as you are, don't fret! Kids play free! After a round or two, or a golf cart drive around the course, dine at their newly revamped restaurant. With open-to-the-community events like Bingo Night, Wine Tasting, and Italian Thursdays for inexpensive fine-dining or leisurely noshing on any given day, The Club is sure to have a special which will ignite the foodie in you all without breaking the bank.

HERSEY'S ICE CREAM OF VENETIAN BAY

Yet another VB establishment that has upped the allure of cheating on one's diet. This old-timey, wonderfully retro ice cream parlor transports its patrons back to a time when sharing a root beer float with a crush was the crowning achievement of a baby-boomer's teenage years. The flavors and candies are off-the-charts, and the cherry on top (pun absolutely intended) – the people who own and operate it are the most welcoming and polite staff! Grab a cone and sit on one of their outdoor tables or benches as your cone melts in the setting sun.

SWIM CLUB AND TIKI BAR

They had us at tiki bar, but then they had to go and throw in the pool which is now accessible to any VB residents for a reasonable annual membership. Where else do you need to go, really? We love our local beaches, but just soaking up the sun at the community pool while sipping a cocktail or two and listening to live music can be exactly what a weekend calls for. Or if you're in a mood for a movie, the Tiki Bar hosts a Movie Night which is the most summery mix of bar convos and pool lighting one can get while taking in a flick under the stars.

THE SPA AT VENETIAN BAY

Recently celebrating their 2 year anniversary in the community, The Spa at Venetian Bay is just what the doctor – or, well, maybe

what the body – ordered. Offering mani and pedis, facials, and other body treatments, there is no way you can walk out of this tranquil business without feeling as relaxed as a sleeping sloth, and groomed enough to break out those uncomfortable yet gorgeous platforms you bought at Nordstrom's on clearance. Luckily for us, The Spa is always offering deals so that those tight on cash don't necessarily exclude anyone from being pampered.

BOREN BEAUTY

My roots are dying to head into this beauty shops (puns – can't stop, won't stop!). Owned by mother-daughter team, Kelly and Paige Boren, this is a great local salon which our hair so deserves. Not because we should support our local businesses, but because their reviews are excellent! After your trip to The Spa, and after having a delectable lunch at one of our restaurants, this is the place to get your hair done and feel like your tan isn't the only thing strutting its stuff. Boren Beauty is making a name for themselves and I look forward to getting my hair done there soon. Quality services and products offered in a tranquil, posh salon – sign me up!

HAPPY DELI

Happy Deli doesn't need any introduction. Now what feels like the hottest spot in our community, Happy Deli is more than just an exemplary place to eat, it's become the local live music hub! A gourmet delicatessen, it also has dinner offerings that would make for an unsuspecting perfect dining option. Sip wine and order a light summer salad and soup, and you're set. Personally,

our family loves their breakfast sandwiches. Their "Happy Wife" is my husband's favorite sandwich, as I informed him.

So, if you want a nice mix of fun in the sun, decadent foods and creamy treats, and serene pampering, crack open your door and actually see what's right in front of you. Legend tells of a tale when residents who stayed within the boundaries of this palm tree-lined, picturesque community who once spent their entire day enjoying local outdoor or indoor events, powerwalking on our sidewalks, and carting around our landscaped grounds, no one ever ventured outside Venetian Bay again for a fun day out. Be forewarned: You are in the right place, so enjoy your own stomping grounds support local businesses as seek to have a fulfilling and relaxing day off.

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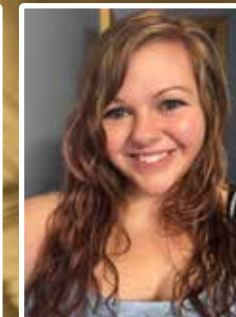
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WORKING PART-TIME IN RETIREMENT Can Impact Your Finances in Surprising Ways

Traditionally, retirement means leaving the workforce to pursue decades of relaxation. However, today's retirees and pre-retirees are reshaping what it means to leave the workforce. Retirement may be an opportunity to pursue a small business, start consulting or land a side job that explores your passions. If your next phase includes earning an income, there are some financial considerations to keep in mind:

Social Security could be reduced. If you haven't yet reached full retirement age (65 or older) and already collect benefits,

the wages you earn through continued work could result in reduced Social Security payments. In 2017, an individual earning more than \$16,920 who hasn't reached full retirement age will see a \$1 reduction in Social Security benefits for every \$2 earned above that level. The earnings limit is higher in the year you reach full retirement age, and no longer applies after you reach full retirement age. If you haven't already claimed Social Security, you may wish to delay your benefits to earn a higher amount later in life.

Prepare for higher taxes. If you are

taking income from retirement accounts or generating earnings from your savings or investments, at least some of that money is subject to tax. Earning income from work may move you into a higher marginal tax bracket, meaning those distributions and investment earnings could be taxed at a higher rate. Be prepared for a potential bump in your tax bill.

Keep saving money. Ongoing work may allow you to preserve your retirement savings for later in life and even continue to build those savings. As long as you have earned income, you can put money away in tax-advantaged retirement plans. This includes an employer-sponsored plan, if it is available to you, a traditional IRA, or a Roth IRA. Contributions to traditional IRAs can only continue up to the year in which you turn 70-1/2. If you earn income past that point, you may be able to continue making contributions to a Roth IRA indefinitely, based on your income level.

Pay attention to health insurance. Even if you retain health care coverage from an employer, you should consider signing up for Medicare Part A at age 65. There is generally no cost, and it provides coverage for care in hospitals and other institutions. Talk to your employer about whether you should sign up for Medicare Part B (a monthly premium applies). You may

be able to delay doing so if you are covered by your employer's plan without being subject to a 10 percent annual penalty for delaying enrollment in Part B. Check the rules carefully before you turn 65.

Whatever your motivation for continuing to earn a paycheck, the income you earn could impact several aspects of your financial life. Evaluating and planning for the effects working will have on your finances may help you feel more confident about living decades in retirement.

David Carson, CFP® is a Private Wealth Advisor and Vice President with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. in Daytona Beach, FL. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 20 years. To contact David, visit his website at www.CarsonWheeler.com.

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yard of the month

Q. Should I have my irrigation turned on?

A. With all the rain I'd let your lawn dry out for a least 5 days. Too much water can create weeds in your lawn. Make sure to turn your rain gage on.

Q. After my crepe myrtle stops blooming should it be trimmed back? If so, how far back?

A. I trim the old blooms back to the next branching Y, which is where it would have been trimmed the last time. If you have any questions or would like help please give me a call.

Do you have questions you'd like to ask Jim?

Please send them in to VenetianBayLiving@theadjunkies.com and you could read his answer to your question in a future issue of Venetian Bay Living.

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meet
**DON BRACKENHOFF
& VALLI HAMMER**

Just One More Rubber Duck!

Family member names: Don Brackenhoff and Valli Hammer

Neighborhood: Portofino Reserve

How long have you lived in this neighborhood? Four months

What college/university did you attend? Illinois Wesleyan University and University of Hawaii

Profession(s): We are both happily retired now, but Don was an Officer in the U.S. Air Force and Valli was a staff member at the University of Illinois





• • •

FAVORITES

- Activities/Hobbies:** Biking, travel, water activities, game nights
- Restaurants:** The Garlic, Black Beards, Courtyard Grill, Riverside Grill and we love discovering mor-
- Vacation destination:** It was always Florida, but we live here now! Now we go see the grandchildren all over the US.
- Sports team(s):** Cardinals

- What do you like to do to relax?** Go to the beach or hang out around the pool.
- How are you involved in the community?** Still unpacking so have not ventured out much yet.
- What is your favorite part about living in your neighborhood?** The quietness and friendliness of the neighborhood and it is a short drive from the beach.

Our "Love Story" ... The last two years have been really exciting (and exhausting) for us. We met in 2016, and in February of 2017, we committed to building our home here in Portofino Reserve. We

flew home, put both our homes on the market, Valli retired on April 1, we got married later that month, sold a motorhome and two homes, packed, and moved down on 1 November, 2017. **What a whirlwind!**

So, What's the Story Behind All of These Ducks? I started collecting in 2000 after my youngest son found his older brother's ducks in a closet we were cleaning out and he wanted one of his own. I bought one for him and a few more over the next few years since he enjoyed them. When he was in indoor soccer, I talked to some of the other moms who were talking about what they collected. They said if you have a small duck collection, you should check eBay to which I replied (who could guess?), "What is eBay?" After they told me, I went home and checked to find there were two pages of rubber ducks! I bought a few and then decided if I got three of one duck, I would keep one, and sell two which paid for mine and gave me some \$\$ for the next purchase. When I first started selling and checking for ducks on eBay, there were just a few pages of ducks. I just checked for rubber ducks and there are **Now** 169 pages of ducks for sale!

Around 2005, I was the #2 or #3 collector in the world with the most reported rubber ducks - no duplicates! I had them from every state, some antique ones and from all over the world. I had

• • •



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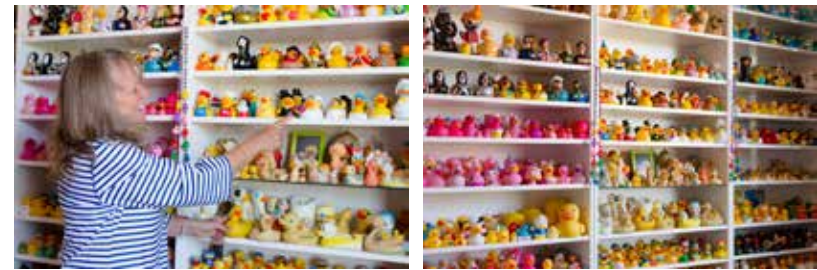
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... a mentor named Charlotte who is in the Guinness Book of World Records and we hosted several "Duck Fests" where collectors came from five to seven states to sell and talk about rubber ducks. She has a wonderful site called **Duckplanet** where people share their collections from all over the world. Family members would find them for me for the holidays and never once called me duckin' nuts (to my face). I sold on eBay until about 2014 when a move and a new job took a lot of my time.

When I downsized and moved last year, I donated many of my ducks to churches who made Christmas boxes for children from all over the world. I knew I would not have room to display 3500 rubber ducks in my Florida home, so now I "only" have about 1200. I still have boxes full of extras that I give to fussy children on a plane or as gifts to friends. Do I still buy new ones? Yes, but only if they are really funny or old.

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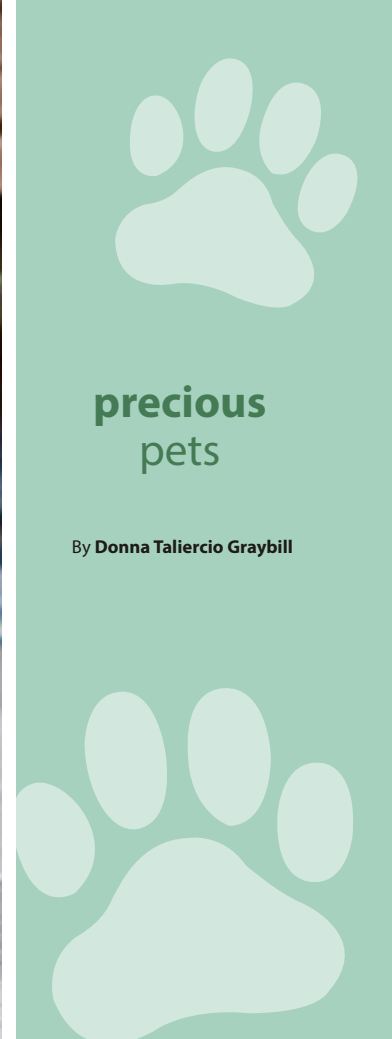
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-Nick L.



meet DAISY LUNA

Hi, there! I'm Daisy Luna, a happy-go-lucky, seven-month-old brindle boxer. I have soft, brownish ears and the most adorable droopy eyes that just beg for love. I like chewing on bones, playing tug-of-war with my family, and chasing frogs and crickets in the field near my house. Despite my small size, I am all muscle. I can easily body slam a full-grown adult and I am sure I can already jump as high as your head!

I was born on a farm outside of Jacksonville, Florida, and last Christmas, my owners brought me to my new home in Venetian Bay and I love it here! Venetian Bay has lots

of great places to explore and lots of friendly people to say hello to on my walks. My owners are working with a great local trainer, Maureen from M'Obedience Dog Training, and I'm learning to be a polite member of the community.

We live in Portofino Club Homes overlooking the golf course, a neighborhood that is growing and changing every day. It is so exciting for me to see the new houses go up. The roofers look like they are having so much fun up there, and the cranes they use are

...



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TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER *is what community is all about.*

Brenda Campbell, General Manager, Volusia Memorial Park

Q: I know I want to be cremated, but I'm not sure I want a memorial service. Any advice?

A: In my experience, a funeral or memorial service can be very important for two reasons. First of all, your life is unique! Why not celebrate all you are and how much you meant to others? With cremation, you aren't limited when it comes to memorialization or remembrance. Cremation provides a great deal of flexibility. A tribute of any kind can be held before or after the cremation has taken place and with or without the casket or urn present. The service itself can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. And whether you opt for a tribute with catering or calla lilies, it's your special celebration and should reflect your life and your passions. Secondly, many people who don't want a memorial service may not realize that a ceremony can help your loved ones begin to accept your passing. Cremation is simply one way of preparing for remembrance and memorialization. There is still a need for a meaningful gathering to celebrate the special life of that loved one and to assist survivors in the grieving and healing process. A memorial gives people who are close to you the time to come together

Ask the Expert— Choosing Cremation and remember your life—and the chance to say goodbye.

Without such a service, people sometimes struggle to find the closure they will need.

Q: What happens to the “ashes” after the cremation service?

A: As the number of people choosing cremation has grown, so have the available options for permanent memorialization. Today there are many ways to create a lasting and beautiful memorial for those choosing cremation. From simple remembrances to more elaborate family memorials, cremation allows you to choose from a wide variety of memorial types. Families often choose options such as family estates, cremation niches, in-ground burial or personal memorials in specially designed cremation gardens. After cremation, creating a lasting, personal impression of a special life helps to ensure that memories will live on in the hearts and minds of family and friends.

Your funeral arranger can provide information about ways you can memorialize your loved one or plan ahead to leave your own lasting legacy.

If you have additional questions, visit your local licensed funeral provider. They are a good source of information for funeral, cremation and cemetery options.

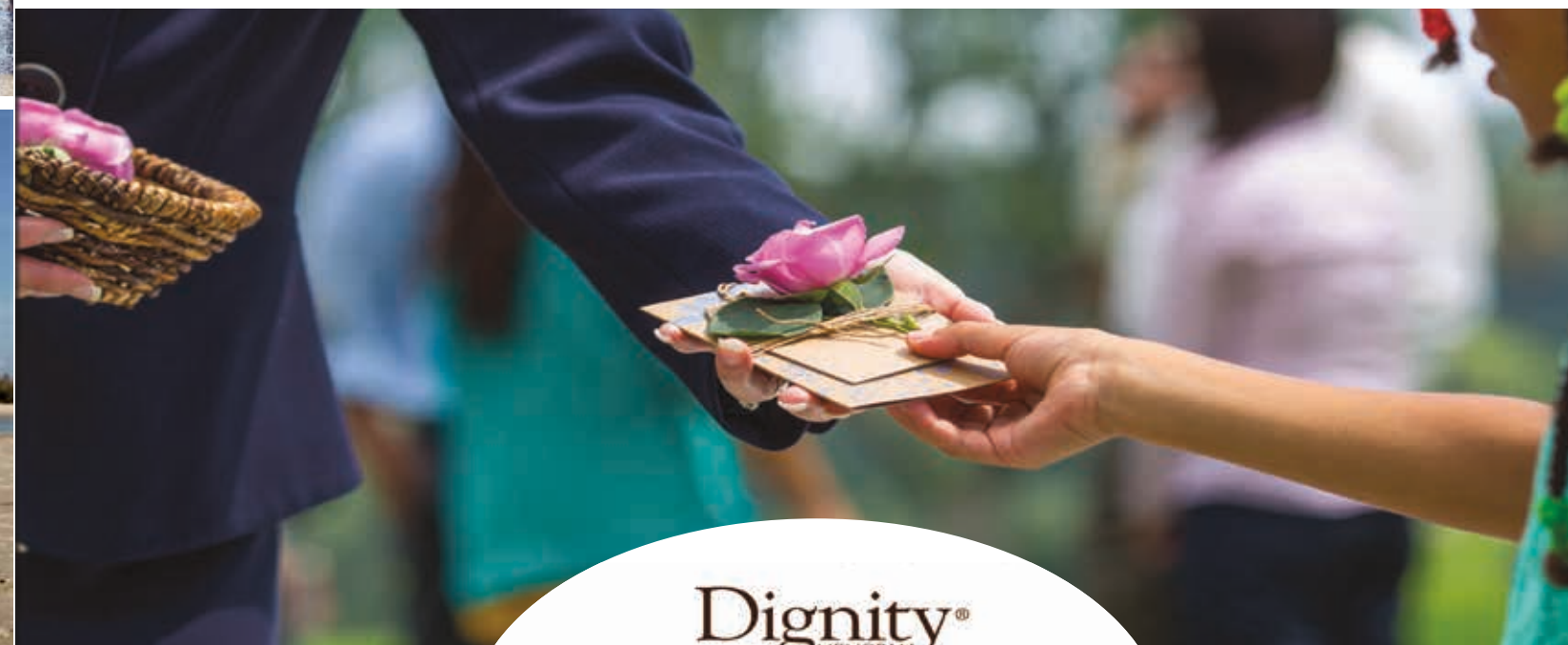
Brenda Campbell is the General Manager at Volusia Memorial Park, a member of the Dignity Memorial® network serving the Port Orange and Ormond Beach area and families nationwide. A proud resident of Venetian Bay, she has provided dedicated service to families for over 27 years.

For more information, contact Brenda at 386-677-8979 or Brenda.Campbell1@DignityMemorial.com, or visit Volusia Memorial Park at www.volusiamemorialpark.com.

...

so big. The cement guys make me stay away, so, sadly, I never get the chance to sink my paws in their gooey mud (I will probably keep trying, though!). My favorite is when the landscapers bring the grass. The scents are **Crazy** and it smells like a distant farm was delivered right to my neighborhood.

So, be sure to say hello when you see me out and about – I am very friendly. But, I'm not promising I'll hold back on the body slams! **You also can follow my adventures around New Smyrna Beach and beyond on Instagram at #beachboxerdaisy.**



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venetian bay kids

Children's PIRATE PARTY

Land Ho! Captain Jack's visit to the Venetian Bay Pool was a big hit with the kids and adults, too! The day was packed with fun activities for the children, there were pirate stories, treasure hunting, pool fun, grilled hamburgers & hot dogs for lunch & each child was sent home with a pirate booty bag filled with lots of goodies. Thank you to Denise Meyers, Jewels Miglioranzi and the Venetian Bay staff.



By Jewels Miglioranzi

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back to school

By resident **Gina Elmazi**

IT takes A Village



It's that time of year again: Back to School is upon us. Whether you're a parent, grandparent, teacher, or just live in the neighborhood, chances are your life is affected by kids getting their learn-on once again.

"It takes a village to raise a child." We've all heard that expression, especially if we have spent any part of our lives raising kids. One of the reasons I love Venetian Bay is because I have the kind of neighbors who help me raise my children. Among those neighbors are some of my favorite people: teachers. My children's teachers, homeschooling parents, college professors, administrative staff, counselors and daycare facilitators all share the same quality – they care about the present and future of all of the children.

They don't teach for the money or the prestige. They teach because they want to leave this world a little better than it would've been without them. They want to shape future leaders. They want to inspire future entrepreneurs. They want to show students the world in a way that creates life-long learners. They want every single student to reach his/her full potential. They know the potential that lies within the children in our community, and they want to ensure they make it.

Teachers fill their classrooms with supplies and their lesson plans with facts. They make learning as fun as possible while keeping 20+ students disciplined and orderly. Their career choice is one of the most challenging and demanding. Oftentimes, their job is thankless. They catch concerns from parents, field complaints from the administration and tackle offensive behavior from kids. But, they still love what they do so much that they do it every day despite the low wage and non-existent budget. They rely on the community to assist them with what they can't afford to pay for out of pocket and what local government can't afford to supply them outside of the basics.

Chisholm Elementary School : 2018-2019 Supply List

Kindergarten			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pencil pouch (not box)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 packs sharpened pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box 24 crayons	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 glue sticks
<input type="checkbox"/> Scissors	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 spiral notebook	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pocket folder	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack fine tip & wide tip dry erase markers
First Grade			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pencil box	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box sharpened pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box 24 crayons	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 glue sticks
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack of markers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 spiral notebook	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pocket folders	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 composition notebook
<input type="checkbox"/> Scissors	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box cap erasers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box colored pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> Headphones
<input type="checkbox"/> Post-it notes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack dry erase markers (fine tip)		
Second Grade			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pencil box	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box sharpened #2 pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 boxes 24 crayons	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 glue sticks
<input type="checkbox"/> Scissors	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 large pink erasers	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 plastic pocket folders	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack dry erase markers
Third Grade			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pencil box/pouch	<input type="checkbox"/> 24 sharpened pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box crayons	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 glue sticks
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box markers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 wide ruled notebook	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 folder with prongs and pocket	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack 3x5 index cards
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pink erasers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box cap erasers	<input type="checkbox"/> Headphones	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-4 pack dry erase EXPO markers
Fourth Grade			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 boxes sharpened pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box 24 crayons	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack colored pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pack glue sticks
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pack cap erasers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 ring binder (2 inch)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 bottle liquid glue	<input type="checkbox"/> Scissors
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow highlighter	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pack lined post-it notes	<input type="checkbox"/> Headphones	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 dry erase markers
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack notebook paper (and copy paper)	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 pocket folders (3 pronged)	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 spiral notebook (no composition)	
Fifth Grade			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 boxes 24 pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 box 24 crayons	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack colored pencils	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 glue sticks
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pack cap erasers	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 packs notebook paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Headphones/earbuds	<input type="checkbox"/> Scissors
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 highlighters (assorted colors)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 pack post-it notes	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 large pink erasers	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 dry erase markers
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 sturdy plastic folders w/ pockets	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 ring binder (1 inch)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 spiral notebook (1 subject/100 pages)	

Optional for all grades: Copy Paper, Tissues, Wet Wipes, Unscented Hand Sanitizer

Students are the future of this community. They will grow up to be our leaders. They will perform lifesaving surgeries on our elderly bodies. They will introduce bills both local and federal that will decide our health care, our borders, our environment, and safety. They will fight to keep our constitution upheld and all of us employed, fed, housed and healthy. Whether you have kids in school or an empty nest, all students should be held to the highest standards and the ones educating them to the highest esteem. Every one of

us should want to give teachers all the tools they need so they can help our future working class succeed.

Even if we are not educators ourselves, there are so many things we can do! Here are some tips I've gathered from teachers who live in Venetian Bay:

Volunteering at a school would be a great help! Showing up a day or two a week (or month if that's what you can spare) to grade papers or organize classrooms is a fantastic way to assist a teacher and free up some of his/her time. Teachers work hours beyond the school day doing all the things they cannot do while they have students. How great would it be for them to spend Saturday with their family instead of going into their classroom or grade papers every single school night at their dining room table because you spent three hours of your week doing it for them?

Go through your books and donate any you no longer want to a school library.

Obviously, ensure they are age appropriate but don't forget about the high schools, too! The same can be done with old office supplies. All schools need everything from pencils to calculators to printers and tablets. Even paints can be used in art classes!

Every school has students whose parents cannot afford to fully stock their kids' backpacks with supplies. Because of this, these children start the new school year already behind. Teachers are left to provide those students with what they need to get on track. Before the first bell of the school year has rung, teachers have already spent an average of \$500 out of pocket preparing their classrooms and stocking their supplies. That doesn't even include what students are missing! You can purchase or collect needed supplies and drop them off at the front office of any school.

If gathering pencils, paper, glue, tissues, scissors, folders, and crayons won't fit your busy schedule, consider dropping off an Amazon or Walmart gift card instead. Even a card in the amount of \$10 will be put to good use!

The internet has done a phenomenal job of connecting communities. There are websites such as **adoptaclassroom.org** and **donorschoose.org**

that can be searched by school or city and you can pick which project to donate to. If you have a Facebook account there is a sell/buy/trade group called Volusia County Florida Teachers: Buy, Sell, Trade, Search and Giveaway where teachers ask for supplies either they or their students are in need of.

If you'd prefer a paid position, consider becoming a school bus driver or a substitute teacher. These are positions that are extremely short-staffed. Bonus: these positions are part-time with summers off, too!

It takes a village. Our "village" is Venetian Bay. We can raise today's youth to be the upstanding citizens we know they are capable of being. We can all be teachers by helping the ones who head the classrooms. As our neighborhood kids exit the pools and summertime fun and head back to press pencils to paper, let's thank the people who make that possible. Thank the teachers and thank your neighbors!

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family spotlight

MEET
Daniel & Jennifer
HARGRAVE



Family Member Names: Daniel, Jennifer, and Ella (12 years old)

Street: 3459 Luna Bella Lane

Pets: Two Australian Shepherds, Thea and Thor, and a famous neighborhood cat named Pinot

Profession(s):

Dan: Assistant Principal At Burn Sci-Tech

Jennifer: Senior Pharmaceutical Sales Consultant, Novartis Pharmaceutical Sales Corporation

FAVORITES

Activities/Hobbies: Season pass holders at Disney Parks, Paddle Boarding, Swimming, Hiking, Comics, Rollerblading, Yoga, Mov-

ies ... We Are Up For Any Adventure!

Park/Play Area/Hangout: Anywhere outside, particularly by water
Restaurants: so many to choose from in NSB ... hard to pick a favorite!

Vacation Destination: This year we Rv'd across colorful Colorado, our future plans include seeing more of our magnificent country, as well as Spain, Italy, and Greece.

Sports Teams:

Dan: Magic, Notre Dame, Florida State, Buccaneers.

Jenn: Clemson Tigers, any Boston team

TV Show/Movie: *Game Of Thrones*

Music: Love it all

Family Dinner: usually a seafood dish made by Jenn

Do You Have Any Family Traditions? Lots, but a yearly family vacation with Dan's family, Christmas Eve with Jenn's family

What College/University Did You Attend?

Dan: Florida State, Georgia Southern, Stetson University.

Jenn: Clemson University

Where Are You From Originally?

Dan: Born in Kentucky, lived in Ohio, Atlanta and Oveido.

Jenn: Born in Long Island, NY, lived there until I was 13, moved to Deltona, FL, where I graduated high school.

How Long Have You Lived In This Neighborhood? Three years on July 1

What Do You Like To Do To Relax? Go to the beach, go for a walk, read

How Are You Involved In The Community? Lots of volunteer time with the YMCA and Burns Sci-Tech. Participate in 5K fundraisers

If You Have Kids, What Activities Are They Involved With? Ella is a volleyball player at Burns Sci-Tech, and at DME club volleyball. She also loves to bike ride in the neighborhood and swim at the pool

What Is Your Favorite Part About Living In Your Neighborhood? There is so much awesomeness in Venetian Bay ... the neighbors for one, the growing sense of community, nature trails, the pool, the town center, the happy deli, spa and ice cream shop!



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By Richard (Rick) Martorano Ed.D

“living the good life”



Before we dive into this month's topic, I'd like to review some vocabulary. Today I am writing about service animals, not therapy dogs. A therapy dog is trained to provide affection, comfort, and love to people in hospitals, retirement and nursing homes, schools, hospices, and disaster areas. In contrast, a service animal is defined by Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as “an animal that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability.”

So now that we are clear on that distinction, imagine this:

You are walking down the aisle of your airplane trying to find your assigned seat. As you arrive at your bought-and-paid-for seat, you notice a man holding a large parrot sitting across the aisle. In front of you, a teenager is seated with a small pig on a leash in his lap. Behind you is a woman cuddling a little white rabbit. Then you notice an older woman moving to take her seat next to you, holding a large cage. Inside it lies a snake.

You get the flight attendant's attention and tell her that you are uneasy sitting with all of these animals surrounding you. She replies, “**These passengers are permitted by law to have their service animals with them, to assist in their “flight anxiety.” Take your seat or disembark!**”

This situation and the flight attendant's response is not an exaggeration – it can happen. The animals described are called “emotional support animals” and are used by people with flying stress, fear of heights, anxiety with crowds or other types of mental illness or distress. Delta Airlines said it flew 250,000 animals in those categories last year, up 150 percent from 2016.

Though the Americans with Disabilities Act defines service animals specifically as trained dogs, cats, or miniature horses, airlines are bound by more liberal laws. The Air Carrier Access Act

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of 1986 allows free travel for "any animal" that is trained to assist a person with a disability or that provides emotional support.

All airlines can require passengers with creature companions to produce a certifying letter from a physician or mental health professional, but the documents are easily forged or obtained from websites that provide cursory, questionnaire-style "exams." As a result, there is a widespread perception among airlines that some fliers are "fraudulently taking advantage of the federal law to bring untrained pets of myriad species into crowded cabins." The result, airline officials complain, has been a surge in poorly trained animals that have turned some flights into airborne menageries with dogs blocking beverage carts, cats urinating on seats, and ducks wandering the aisles.

It is impossible to determine the number of flights that have unqualified service animals on board. Other airlines have not released their own figures, and the Department of Transportation says it does not collect data on service and support animals on U.S. flights. But the agency's reports on disability-related complaints show that those involving service animals nearly quadrupled between 2012 and 2016 when more than 2,300 were filed.

Scrutiny of service animals is also sharpening on the ground: nineteen states now have laws that criminalize passing off pets as service animals. Enforcing the law is difficult and increases opportunities for lawsuits. Now, airlines are hoping to align their practices with the ADA by limiting permitted species. Some disability supporters suggest defining "emotional support animals" as only dogs and cats; others want to allow rabbits, household birds, and some barnyard animals.

Delta now has requirements effective March 1, 2017, that stipulate "passengers with **trained service animals**" will need to submit a veterinary health form at least 48 hours before travel to the airline's new Service Animal Support Desk. These support desks are estimated to cost Delta \$5 million to maintain in each airport it serves. Customers with emotional support animals or psychiatric service animals must do the same, but must also provide a signed letter from a doctor or mental health professional stating that the animal is trained to behave in public (**Delta also recently expanded its list of prohibited critters, including "farm poultry," hedgehogs, and anything with tusks.**)

The rise in emotional support animals has coincided with the growing publicity of the mental health benefits of pets — an idea researchers say is poorly substantiated through studies but widely embraced by the public. Many owners of legitimate emotional support animals say they, like service animal owners, greatly depend on their companions and face undue suspicion due to fakers and forgers. Unfortunately, like other American freedoms,

unsavory individuals seem to be taking advantage of the privilege of the health benefits of pet ownership.

Do you as a paying airline passenger have the right to not sit next to someone with a duck, rabbit, snake, pig or another farm animal? No — because of the way the law reads today — but you do have a choice! Take your seat or disembark.

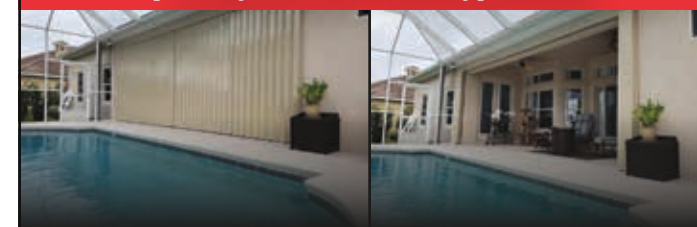
Hopefully, you will not one day have your travel plans interrupted because you are sitting next to a pig, peacock, snake, rabbit, or another farm animal currently deemed acceptable by the current law. Good luck.

Dr. Richard (Rick) Martorano is the owner of R. Martorano Productions and Music, Etc. Inc. He is a prominent musician, producer, composer, music director and adjunct university professor residing in New Smyrna Beach. He can be reached at rjaem222@gmail.com.

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