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INSIDE

**Eat healthy
at 50 and
beyond**

**Local
resources**

**Building
community
through
music**

**#Local
runner
nationally
ranked
at 53**

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Senior Attitude is a reflection of the current generation of seniors, active and involved. Seniors with attitude! Our goal is to empower and motivate, as well as provide helpful information and resources for yourself or a loved one.

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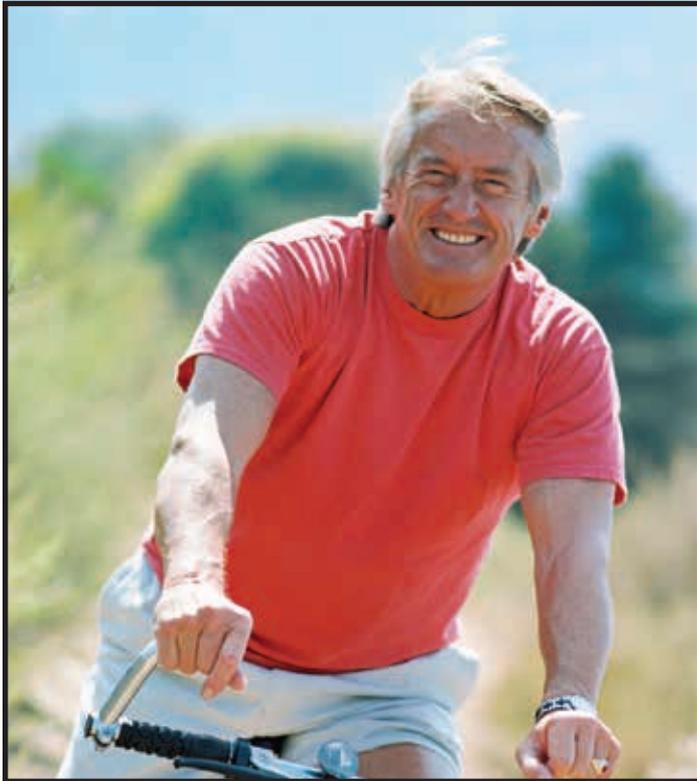
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Popular sports for seniors 50+



Age doesn't have to stop older men and women from enjoying their favorite sports. In fact, remaining active can improve physical and mental health.

If a doctor has confirmed that it is okay to participate in sports, these activities can help men and women 50 and older enjoy friendly competition and physical activity.

Fishing is more than just a leisurely day at the lake. Casting and reeling in your catch provides a good workout for the arms, legs and core muscles of the body. If you fish on the water, rowing out to your lucky spot provides additional cardiovascular exercise.

Golf is enjoyed by people of all ages. Requiring a combination of strategy and skill, golf also pays several physical dividends. Play at your own pace, taking your time walking from hole to hole so you can enjoy the sunshine and soak in the beauty of the course.

A few laps around a pool works your whole body. Swimming is attractive to seniors because it works the muscles and provides a cardiovascular jolt without putting any strain on the joints.

Many seniors are avid cyclists. You can ride a bicycle in competition or for pleasure. You can even vary your route depending on how physically intense you want the ride to be.

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Making a difference one patient at a time

ORANGE PARK – You see all sorts of things while volunteering in the emergency room. Ede Watson saw a man with his finger in a jar of ice water, Jerry Trumble saw a man who brought his thumb in a bag and a man who cut his legs off with a chainsaw.

They remember when helicopters could land directly outside the ER room, sending dust, cigarette butts and dirt surging into the hospital like a sandstorm, causing the staff to scramble.

“When the helicopter is coming, lock the doors,” Trumble said. “You leave it open one time and you never do it again.”

Trumble, 87, and Watson, 89, are volunteers at Orange Park Medical Center. Being a volunteer at OPMC is all about

assistance. Jerry and Ede check in patients at the kiosk machine, walk them back to rooms, transport people in wheelchairs and help visitors find what they’re looking for. Jerry bakes cupcakes for patients on Monday mornings and cookies on Tuesday and Thursday. Ede makes cookies on Monday and Wednesday.

Trumble served 26 years in the U.S. Air Force training pilots. Then he spent 20 years in civil service at the depot and he worked for Habitat for Humanity. He began volunteering after advice from a friend. Trumble started driving golf carts at OPMC in 2009, and then he later worked in intensive care and the ER.

“A long time ago a gentleman told me when you retire,

‘do not sit around the house, you don’t live if you do.’”

Watson worked as a secretary and freelance paralegal for most of her life. She came to Orange Park to live with her son and daughter-in-law. But boredom set in for Watson. She always wanted to work in a hospital, so she started volunteering at OPMC, and now she’s helped patients for 13 years.

Both Trumble and Watson enjoy volunteering because they get to help people and both have family in the medical field. Trumble’s grandson is a nurse at OPMC and Watson’s daughter-in-law works for St. Vincent’s.

“I started baking and bringing cookies and it got to be a habit,” Trumble said. “The patients look forward to it.”

“I think people feel most alone and frightened when they’re sick and the best way to help them is to be available, a shoulder to lean on type of thing,” Watson said.

Trumble said volunteering in a hospital is perfect if anyone is lonely and has nothing to do.

“Helping people is my favorite part because the people really appreciate it. It makes a big difference,” Trumble said. “I gave a cookie to an elderly lady yesterday with a cane outside the door and she said, ‘Now don’t let anyone give you a hard time for the rest of the day.’ It’s enjoyable work.”

Watson said volunteering is almost like having a job. One four hour shift a week is the minimum at OPMC.

“People might ask, ‘What difference do I make?’ But it makes a difference when you’re interested in something,” Watson.

—Nick Blank



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Runner vows to let nothing get in her way

ORANGE PARK – At 66 years old, she has completed 19 half marathons, four 25Ks, over a half-dozen 10 milers, six Gate River Run 15Ks, who knows how many 5K and 10K races, and she only started five years ago. Meet Jean Schubert, local naturalist and senior citizen, with an attitude.

“I will live life to the fullest. Some days that “fullest” is sitting on my porch, drinking a cup of strong coffee and watching the world around me. And some days it is running by myself, with some friends, or a few hundred (or thousands) at a race. In any case, I’m always happy to wake up in the morning to discover I’m not dead. As I come and go from my house. On my front door I have this saying: There will come a day I can no longer

do this...today is NOT that day.”

As a park naturalist, Schubert does a lot of walking and talking. A lover of outdoors, she educates the general public about the 509-acre Tillie Fowler Park off of U.S. Highway 17. “If it’s alive, dead, a plant, or animal,” says Schubert, “it’s part of my job.”

As a mother of three adult children and a grandchild, she stays involved with family activities. As a matter of fact it was her own daughter that persuaded her to start running. “My daughter Erin convinced me that since I walk every day to work, I could participate in races, even if I just walked them.”

As an active senior citizen, Schubert’s lifestyle speaks

for itself. Her many races have awarded her top-three places in her age group. Just last spring, she was asked to join the Florida Striders Running Team because she is a ‘fierce’ competitor, but also embodies the image of a positive, active and fit lifestyle. Besides distance races, she participates in the Jacksonville Senior Games and has earned several gold medals for track events. She’s done yoga, competitive tennis, practiced Tai Chi, and spends time at outdoor music concerts. Most of her time is in the great outdoors.

Her advice for others: “I try to keep all of me active. I feed my mind by reading, having good conversations, and being a life-long learner. I feed my heart by making new friends and keeping the good friends close, and having a group of ‘chosen’ loved ones. I used to be an introvert, but that’s a waste of time. I used to tell my children “don’t talk to strangers,” but now I find them very interesting [still good advice for children, though]. Plus, I remember what it was like when I first started running and didn’t know anyone, so I now make it a point to approach people and try to make them feel welcomed to the sport. Most of all, my personal belief is to be positive!”

Schubert is shown at left at this past April’s Run to the Sun 8K here in Orange Park. Needless to say with her standout style and team jersey, Schubert has a fan following on social media and at the local races.

“There will come a day I can no longer do this. Today is Not that day.”

—Bernie J. Berania





Eat healthy at 50 and beyond

A balanced diet is an integral element of a healthy lifestyle for men, women and children alike. But while kids and young adults might be able to get away with an extra cheeseburger here or there, men and women approaching 50 have less leeway.

According to the National Institute on Aging, simply counting calories without regard for the foods being consumed is not enough for men and women 50 and older to maintain their long-term health. Rather, the NIA emphasizes the importance of choosing low-calorie foods that have a lot of the nutrients the body needs.

But counting calories can be an effective and simple way to maintain a healthy weight, provided those calories are coming from nutrient-rich foods. The NIA advises men and women over 50 adhere to the following daily calorie intake recommendations as they attempt to stay healthy into their golden years.

Women

- Not physically active: 1,600 calories
- Somewhat active: 1,800 calories
- Active lifestyle: between 2,000 and 2,200 calories

Men

- Not physically active: 2,000 calories
- Somewhat active: between 2,200 and 2,400 calories
- Active lifestyle: between 2,400 and 2,800 calories

When choosing foods to eat, the NIA recommends eating many different colors and types of vegetables and fruits. Phytochemicals are substances that occur naturally in plants, and there

are thousands of these substances offering various benefits. The Produce for Better Health Foundation notes that a varied, colorful diet incorporates lots of different types of phytochemicals, which the PBH says have disease-preventing properties.

The NIA also advises that men and women over 50 make sure at least half the grains in their diets are whole grains. Numerous studies have discovered the various benefits of whole grains, which are loaded with protein, fiber, antioxidants and other nutrients. Whole grains have been shown to reduce the risk for diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer.

Another potential hurdle men and women over 50 may encounter is a change in their sense of smell and taste. A person's sense of smell may fade with age, and because smell and taste are so closely related, foods enjoyed for years may no longer tantalize the taste buds. That can be problematic, as many people instinctually add more salt to foods they find bland. According to the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, older adults should consume no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day. That equates to roughly 3/4 teaspoon of salt. Older men and women should resist the temptation to use salt to add flavor to foods, instead opting for healthy foods that they can still smell and taste. In addition, men and women should mention any loss of their sense of smell to their physicians, as such a loss may indicate the presence of Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease.

Maintaining a healthy diet after 50 may require some hard work and discipline. But the long-term benefits of a healthy diet make the extra effort well worth it.

Fleming Island runner still blasting fields at 53

FLEMING ISLAND – At 53 years of age, Fleming Island master runner Shelly Gornick Allen can easily take pride in an age group award every now and then, but....

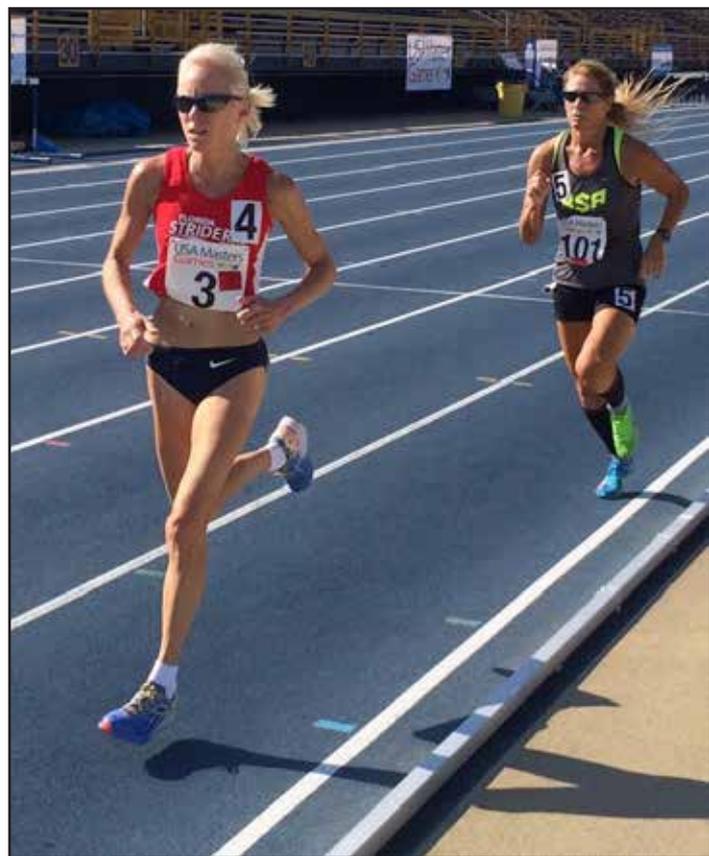
“What fun is that?”

“When I was 48-years-old, I started working out regularly with my sister to help her lose weight, and it didn’t take long before I started feeling stronger, and had the desire to push harder like I used to when I was younger,” said Allen, now a member of the New Balance Tampa Masters’ track team. “I had no idea what kind of times women my age were running at the national level, so I researched it on-line and thought “maybe” I could run some decent times to be competitive again.”

After 25 years of non-competitive running after working 12 years as a Labor and Delivery RN and owning a Jacksonville Pinch-A-Penny franchise, her running itch returned at age 49 in 2013.

In 2016, Allen earned the USATF Florida Masters Track and Field Athlete of the Year for long distance running, running the 800m and 1500m. Allen competed at various state, regional, and national track meets in the past four years, earning All-American awards.

“I cross trained with hard swimming and biking and was



able to return to running stronger than ever in 2015,” said Allen. “In 2016 through spring of 2017, I ran really well at ages 52-53, setting several masters PR’s (personal best times).”

So far, in 2017, Allen has placed third in 50-to-54 in the USATF Master’s 8K (4.97 miles) Championship race in Virginia Beach on March 18 in 33:07 with the top two runners registering times of 29:56 and 32:04.

Allen debuted as one of two new members with the New Balance team in 2016 at the USATF National Master’s 5K Championship in Syracuse with a second place finish in the 50-59 year old division.

“I met Susan Lynn Cooke at the USATF Masters National Track meet and we became fast friends,” said Allen. “She is from Tampa and we had talked a little about somehow coming together as a team from Florida to be competitive on the national level in the USATF Masters Grand Prix series (road races and cross country). She was able to work with the local New Balance Tampa store to obtain sponsorship from them to start a masters racing team.”

Now, one might say second place in the Syracuse race, big deal. But, the rest of the story is unique in that the race involved scoring the combined finishing times of four team members. New Balance had just three members while others in the field of six teams had up to five runners.

Allen, married to husband David Allen, both Florida State University grads and both on their Orange Park High School cross country teams (class of 1982, state girls XC champions 1981 and 1982 with coach Greg Henderson), have taken the dip into masters running with David serving as Shelly’s coach and

mentor. Allen still holds the Orange Park two mile track record of 11 minutes, eight seconds and had third place finishes in the state mile and two mile races. Her personal best high school mile was 5:05 and she achieved All-American status in cross country from the National High School Athletic Coaches Association.

“In high school at OPHS, I was actually injured quite a bit and never felt like I ran my best in cross country,” she said. “I was the captain of the team my senior year in 1981 when we won the state meet, but I was not the fastest on the team. We ran two miles for cross country back then and I usually ran 11:45 - 12:30 (depending on the course and day). When we won state, I think I came in around 13th place at the state meet, but I was probably the fourth or fifth girl from my team to finish.”

Allen’s best high school year was her senior year where, first, she was injury free, and, second, she hit personal bests in track with a 5:05 mile and an 11:08 for two miles.

“I think the two mile is still the school record, but they don’t run “miles” anymore,” said Allen.

After high school, Allen attended Florida International University on scholarship and finished as an NCAA Division II finalist in the 3000 meters and 5000 meters before transferring to Jacksonville University for nursing and still on scholarship where she won the Sunbelt Conference Cross Country title.

Ironically, the runnerup in the Sunbelt Conference championship race was another Fleming Island master’s runner, Denise Metzgar who ran for Old Dominion University.

Allen is presently ranked eighth in the United States in the 800 meters and 1500 meters in the 50-54 age group for outdoor track and field.

She is also on the Board of Directors for the Florida Striders Track Club with a title of Team Coordinator for the Running Team with members ages 8-65 years old.

Allen claimed cross training, weight training and proper



recovery techniques; massage, stretching and sleep, as critical for keeping her on the roads and being successful.

“Typical training weeks vary based on what races distances I’m training for, but I rarely run over 30 miles in a week,” said Allen. “I usually have 1 long run of 8-12 miles and one day of speedwork (usually on the track). I’ve recently added an athletic trainer to my weekly schedule for soft tissue work and strengthening exercises.”

In the community, both Shelly and David Allen are avid supporters and coaches for the Florida Striders Running Team, a group of young runners that train in preparation for high school competition.

“My husband has been coaching a couple of 11 year old boys at the track on Wednesdays, and its fun to see them racing well,” said Allen. “Sometimes I work out with them too.”

—Randy Lefko



Strumming through adversity, building community

ORANGE PARK – Students formed a crescent around “Uncle” John Davis bearing guitars, mandolins, fiddles and a large double bass, waiting for him to start. Davis and music teacher Gary Murch lead W.E. Cherry Elementary School’s esteemed bluegrass group the Cherry Pickers where they play classic folk songs such as, “Boil Them Cabbage Down” and “Seasick Sailor.”

Davis, 72, is a computer lab assistant who works for free at the school. Even though he’s usually in the computer lab most of the day, he perks up at a mention of the students who call

him “Uncle John.” His niece, Angie Whiddon, is the school principal. A few kids heard her call him uncle, so they started using the beloved moniker and it stuck.

“I think it’s the neatest thing in the world,” Davis said.

Three sixth grade Cherry Pickers with guitars strapped over their shoulders said Davis was a calm and selfless teacher.

“More of a friend than a teacher; he helps you and doesn’t get mad. He teaches songs in a way that everyone can go along,” said Jose Penagos.

“He’s very understanding and patient with you. And he takes the time to learn with you and for you to grow as a musician,” said Cherlyssa Alcineus. “He’s so well-informed and he makes it a loving community where we all play together and feel like family when we play together.”

“Uncle John is a really good guitar player. He doesn’t get paid a dime and he does it all for us and I feel like that’s a true blessing for us,” said Walker Whiddon. “I didn’t even know how to play guitar [at first], I didn’t even know how to hold it.”

“Yeah, he taught us all from the beginning until now,” Penagos said.

During practice, music teacher Murch plays the bass along with the students while Davis plays guitar. Murch came to Florida from Boston and when he got to W.E. Cherry, he felt bluegrass was appropriate for the South, so in 2004, he formed the Cherry Pickers with Davis. Now the Cherry Pickers are asked to play all over the county, including recent stints at the Teacher of the Year awards ceremony and the 2017 Clay County Agricultural Fair.

“Uncle John is a really beloved person at the school, he goes over what most people do even if they’re teachers. He’s really for the kids,” Murch said. “We’re a really tight-knit community at W.E. Cherry. It’s a special place and he’s a special person.”

Davis moved to Jacksonville after his dad retired from the U.S. Navy in 1960. Davis worked for CSX Corp. for 35 years, working his way from a messenger boy to the director of merchandise sales. Since Davis loved working with children, Whiddon asked Davis if he wanted to work with autistic students. Davis did that for six years and recalls the period fondly. He still gives fist bumps and high fives to his former students when he sees them.

“That was the most wonderful six years of



my life,” Davis said. “They all had their unique ways about them and they were so smart.”

When Davis was named School-Related Employee of the Year for Clay County in 2016, he was missing most of his hair, having undergone chemotherapy the day of the celebration.

Davis was diagnosed with stage four salivary cancer in the summer of 2015. His chances of survival were slim. Doctors determined surgery or radiation therapy would have been too much for Davis to take. Then Davis underwent chemotherapy sessions. He said the neuropathy from the chemo made his feet feel like concrete and numbed his fingers.

In what Davis referred to as a miracle, his doctor changed his treatment and prescribed Davis a dose of Herceptin every

three weeks. Herceptin effectively stunted the cancer growth at first, and Davis has been well ever since.

“The cancer has been asleep, it’s been a miracle with the support I got from the school. And then to be selected for the employee of the year [for the county] was just a really big thing,” Davis said. “My Cherry Pickers played the night I won, so that even made it greater.”

Davis said he hoped his story would serve as an inspiration for people experiencing cancer.

“I feel bad when people might not have success like I did,” Davis said. “You still should have hope no matter what and fight the fight.”

—Nick Blank



After retiring from a 35-year career at CSX Corp., John Davis began volunteering with special needs students at W.E. Cherry Elementary School. While still a volunteer, Davis co-leads the school’s bluegrass group, The Cherry Pickers.

How to avoid growing bored in retirement

From the moment young men and women first walk into the office for their first day as a working professional until the day they officially retire, the notion of planning for retirement is never far from their minds. But when the day to hang up the briefcase and donate all those business suits arrives, some retirees wonder what to do next. Some retirees know exactly how they will spend their days when they no longer have to work, while others who decide to play it by ear may find themselves battling boredom.

For those among the latter group, it's important to understand that many retirees find themselves bored once they no longer have to focus on a career. Jobs keep men and women busy and provide a sense of purpose in their lives, so it's understandable that retirees feel bored once those jobs are no longer a part of their lives. But just because you no longer have an

office to go to every day does not mean life cannot be as fulfilling or even more fulfilling than it was when you were still working. You just need to find something to avoid succumbing to retirement boredom.

- **Work part-time.** Though it might seem odd to start working right after you retire, a part-time job can provide the type of structure you have grown accustomed to without all of the responsibility that comes with a full-time career. Part-time jobs can range from consultancy work that makes use of your professional experience to something entirely different like landscape maintenance at a nearby golf course that gets you out of the house and enjoying the warmer seasons. Whichever you choose, make sure it's something you find fun and interesting.

- **Embrace a new hobby.** Working professionals often say they wish they had time to pursue a hobby. Now that you are retired, you have all the time in the world to do just that. Whether it's perfecting your golf game, writing that novel, learning to cook like a gourmet chef or whatever else you might have always wanted to do, retirement is a great time to do it.

- **Get in shape.** If retirement boredom has started to negatively affect your mood, one great way to conquer your boredom and improve your mood at the same time is to start exercising. Exercise is a natural mood enhancer. When the body exercises, it releases chemicals known as endorphins, which trigger positive feelings in the body. In addition, regular exercise has been shown to reduce stress, boost self-esteem and improve sleep. Working out at a gym also is a great way to meet fellow retirees in your community, and the energy you have after exercising may give you the boost you need to pursue other hobbies.

- **Volunteer.** If a part-time job is not up your alley, then consider volunteering in your community. Volunteers are always in demand, and volunteering with a local charity can provide a sense of purpose and provide opportunities to meet like-minded fellow retirees, all while helping to quell your boredom. Retirees who love to travel can combine their passion for volunteering with their love of travel by signing up to work with an international relief organization that travels abroad to help the less fortunate.

Upon retiring, many retirees initially find themselves coping with boredom. But there are many ways to avoid the restlessness of retirement.

Embracing a new hobby is one way for recently retired men and women to avoid growing bored during retirement.



Did you know?

Baby Boomers make up the largest generation of Americans born in United States history. Boomers include anyone born between the years 1946 and 1964, as the number of births began to rise as World War II veterans returned home from battle. The greatest number of Baby Boomers were born in 1957, when numbers peaked at 4,300,00. That equates to roughly 8 children born per minute throughout the year. By 2019, the last of the Baby Boomers, or those born in 1964, will be eligible for many senior benefits offered to people age 55 and up. Ten years later, most will be eligible for retirement.



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The rewards of growing older

Many people are quick to think of growing older in a negative light. Although there certainly are some side effects of aging that one may wish to avoid, people may find that the benefits of growing older outweigh the negatives.

Seniors are a rapidly growing segment of the population. In the United States, the Administration on Aging states that the older population — persons 65 years or older — numbered 46.2 million in 2014 (the latest year for which data is available). Statistics Canada reports that, in July 2015, estimates indicated that there were more persons aged 65 years and older in Canada than children aged 0 to 14 years for the first time in the country's history. Nearly one in six Canadians (16.1%) was at least 65 years old.

With so many people living longer, it's time to celebrate the perks of getting older rather than the drawbacks. Here are some great benefits to growing old.

- **Higher self-esteem:** The insecurities of youth give way as one ages, and older people have less negativity and higher self-esteem. A University of Basel study of people ranging in ages from 18 to 89 found that regardless of demographic and social status, the older one gets the higher self-esteem climbs. Qualities like self-control and altruism can contribute to happiness.

- **Financial perks:** Seniors are entitled to discounts on

meals, museum entry fees, movies, and other entertainment if they're willing to disclose their ages. Discounts are available through an array of venues if one speaks up. Seniors also can enjoy travel perks, with slashed prices on resorts, plane tickets and more. The U.S. National Park Service offers citizens age 62 and older lifetime passes to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites for just \$10 in person (\$20 online or via mail).

- **Reasoning and problem-solving skills:** Brain scans reveal that older adults are more likely to use both hemispheres of their brains simultaneously — something called bilateralization. This can sharpen reasoning skills. For example, in a University of Illinois study, older air traffic controllers excelled at their cognitively taxing jobs, despite some losses in short-term memory and visual spatial processing. Older controllers proved to be experts at navigating, juggling multiple aircrafts simultaneously and avoiding collisions.

- **Less stress:** As people grow older, they are able to differentiate their needs from wants and focus on more important goals. This can alleviate worry over things that are beyond one's control. Seniors may realize how little the opinions of others truly mean in the larger picture, thereby feeling less stress about what others think of them.

Growing older may involve gray hair or wrinkling skin, but there are many positive things associated with aging.

Local Resources:

Senior Centers – Clay County

Senior Centers are open
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday – Friday

Hot lunch is served at each Center at 12:00 p.m. Soup Kitchen is held each Saturday from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Green Cove Springs, Orange Park, Keystone Heights and Middleburg locations.

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Community Transportation Coordinator Clay Transit

To Schedule a Ride: (904) 284-5977
www.claycco.com • www.claytransit.com

Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program assures mobility for those who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation. To accomplish this purpose, the Council on Aging of Clay County has been designed as Clay County's Community Transportation Coordinator. Florida law mandates that each county have a provider who will coordinate transportation services with maximum effectiveness and economy.

A fleet of buses, including wheelchair-lift-equipped buses, are used to provide transportation in Clay County. Transportation is provided as needed to medical facilities, doctor's offices, pharmacies, congregate nutrition sites, and other social services agencies. Three working days advance notice is required for trip reservations.

Individuals wishing to use transportation services may access the system by calling (904) 284-5977 or (904) 284-5978.

Other Helpful Websites

www.caregiverstress.com/
www.helpguide.org/elder/caring_for_caregivers.htm
www.caregiver.org

Home Delivered Meals Program

(904) 284-5977

Home Delivered Meals and nutrition education are provided to elderly who have a physical or mental disability and are homebound, living alone, or with others who need help in the preparation of meals. Outreach is provided to the community for identifying persons in need of service through health fairs, speaking engagements and referrals.

The home delivered meals program provides 1/3 of the recommended dietary allowance requirements for persons over 60 years of age. Meals are packaged in special containers to preserve freshness and maintain food quality. Nutrition education information is provided on a monthly basis.

This "meals-on-wheels" program relies heavily upon volunteers to deliver meals. Private citizens donate their time and vehicles assisting in the delivery of homebound meals for these isolated citizens. Voluntary contributions towards the cost of meals are encouraged and all contributions are used to purchase more meals.

The Shepherd's Center of Orange Park

A senior service and support center for Clay County seniors. Explore the website, read current newsletter, review classes, check out upcoming events, and learn more about donating opportunities. www.tscoop.org



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- Prepaid Cremation and Funeral Plans
- We serve Veterans (Jacksonville National Cemetery)
- Cemetery Monument and Marker Design
- We own and operate our own crematory



David & Julie Broadus & Family



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904-284-4000

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- ~ Traditional & Military Services
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- ~ National & International Shipping
- ~ Estate Planning
- ~ Legal & Financial Counseling

Local Ownership with a Tradition of Service

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Aaron Bivens, Managing Funeral Director

Aaron is a product of Clay County. After graduating from St. Johns Country Day School in Orange Park, he received his bachelor's degree in business administration. He says that serving his community as a licensed funeral director has been a lifelong dream. He is truly committed to serving families during their most difficult times.

Burney Bivens, Licensed Funeral Director in Charge

Burney served 20 years in the USMC and the Navy. He has a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in business management. As an attorney for 30+ years, Burney has represented several local funeral homes and their clients in all matters related to the funeral industry. He brings passion, commitment and dedicated service.

Gordon Armstrong, Licensed Funeral Director

Gordon is a Veteran of the United States Army and has been a licensed funeral director for over 26 years. He has a family history in the funeral service industry with his daughter owning and operating a funeral home in New Hampshire.

Monica Kohn, Funeral Services Associate

Monica is a Clay County native. She trained as a medical assistant at Jones College and is currently enrolled in training to become a licensed funeral director. At her church, Monica serves as president of the Pastor's Aid Board, chairman of the Usher Board and president of the Hospitality Committee.

Herman L. Thomas, Funeral Services Associate

Herman has lived in Jacksonville since 1985. He served for 21^{1/2} years in the Navy during which time he completed training for decedent affairs. Upon retiring from the USN, he completed a course of mortuary tech at the Funeral Services Institute in Deerwood, FL. He is an ordained minister, performing both weddings and funerals.

Athliel "Josh" Jones, Funeral Services Associate

Josh served 25 years in the Navy. He served as a flight crew member flying reconnaissance missions in Vietnam. Josh has a bachelor's degree and a law degree. He has been an attorney for 30+ years. Prior to moving to the First Coast, Josh worked as a contract negotiator and for the New York State Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board.

David Plumlee, Funeral Services Associate

An Alabama native, David has been a Clay County resident for 46 years, during which time he has served the community well. During his 20 years at Gustafson's Dairy, David held various positions including manager of processing and production. As an entrepreneur, he has been involved in businesses that benefit the elderly and those in need. He and his wife, Teresa, are actively involved in their church activities.

Marva Watkins, Family Services Coordinator

Marva is a native of Jacksonville and worked 25 years for the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office as a detective and investigator. Marva has many years serving the community especially with her involvement in the Sickle Cell Foundation and various other community support groups. She is a tremendous asset to the families we serve.

Adria Bivens, Communications Director

Adria is a Clay County native having graduated from St. Johns County Day School in Orange Park and has both a bachelor's and a master's degree in communications. She is an asset, assisting our staff and families with all communications, obituary notices and outreach programs.

Our administrative staff is led by **Barbara Bivens**, a retired teacher and 30-year Clay County resident, and includes: **Linda Smith**, retired medical office manager; **Ruthie Lockhart**, paralegal; **Karen Jackson**, retired federal employee; **Mary Reese**, healthcare services; and **Tanica Jamerson**, social administration.



(904) 264-1233

529 Kingsley Avenue
Orange Park

www.bivensfuneralhome.com