



# News Happening Around Town

## May 2021 Newsletter



City of Ocala  
Office of the Mayor

### *Message from the Mayor*



“As an Ocala native, I deeply care about what happens in our city. The people and places that make up this town are an important part of our community. Serving as your mayor for nine years is both an honor and a privilege and I remain committed to staying connected to our citizens. My hope is that through this monthly newsletter, you will see the continuous progress of our city as we work together to make this city a great place to live, play and prosper.”

### Calendar | Upcoming Events

**31**  
**May**

**Memorial Day**  
**Ocala-Marion**  
**County Veterans**  
**Memorial Park**  
**10 a.m.**

**1**  
**June**

**City Council**  
**Meeting**  
**City Hall**  
**5 p.m.**

15  
June

City Council  
Meeting  
City Hall  
5 p.m.

## Updates from the Police Department

### Fallen Officer Memorial Ceremony

On Thursday, May 13, law enforcement agencies and citizens of Marion County came together to honor all officers who have given their lives in the line of duty. We thank them for making the ultimate sacrifice. Their dedication to protecting their community and the legacy left behind will never be forgotten. [Click here](#) to view a video of the service.

#### Roll Call

Burrel Dawkins – 1881	M.W. Tuck – 1955
Bill Hudson – 1908	R.L. Wooten – 1955
Bill Hutson – 1910	Curtis Youngblood – 1955
Perry Bostick – 1924	C.M. Starry – 1958
Henry Gordon – 1924	Bill Rutherford – 1990
A.O. Warren – 1926	Brian R. Litz – 2004
Nathan Hattaway – 1930	Chelsea Richard – 2014
Edward Porter Jr. – 1951	Jared Forsyth – 2015



Marion County Commissioner Craig Curry, Attorney General Ashley Moody, Chief Mike Balken and Sheriff Billy Woods.  
*Photo courtesy of Jeff Walczak, Multimedia Coordinator, Marion County Board of County Commissioners*



Wreath placement by the Florida Department of Corrections

### Law Enforcement Appreciation Week

May 10-14 was Law Enforcement Appreciation Week. Thank you to all the community members and businesses who showed us support throughout the week. We love our Ocala community!

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# From Around the Community

## Kentucky Derby

Each year I look forward to the Kentucky Derby and the excitement that surrounds this race within the equine industry. Not only is the Derby a thrilling sports moment, but also an opportunity to connect with my friend and fellow Mayor of Louisville, Greg Fischer. For the last seven years we have placed a friendly wager between the cities of Ocala and Louisville to see who will be crowned victorious, a Florida or Kentucky bred horse. As we mentioned in the last issue, this year I selected Soup and Sandwich, a horse that was bred at Live Oak Stud, owned by Live Oak Plantation, and trained by Mark E. Casse.

Out of the gate, Soup and Sandwich lead the pack at the beginning of the race and it looked like this might have been my year. Sadly he was edged out, but for those few fleeting moments I was excited to see my Derby pick take the lead. At the conclusion of the race, my horse ended up second to last and Mayor Fisher's horse Essential Quality came in fourth place. It appears our losing streak is still in tack, but I'm looking forward to next year where I'm hoping that the eighth time is the charm to finally win this wager.

Did you know, Ocala proudly boasts the title, Horse Capital of the World®, a moniker that was trademarked by The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' & Owners' Association more than two decades ago when the American Horse Council study showcased that Marion County has more horses and ponies than any other county in the United States. The area is further setting the stage with the addition of the prestigious World Equestrian Center. Visitors to the area are encouraged to check out this world-class equine and events center located in Marion County. Large scale arenas throughout the property host a variety of horse events throughout the year, along with entertainment options and several restaurants and cafes. It is amazing to see this kind of growth happening and I look forward to its evolution over the next few years.

## Mayor's Recognition - Hot Wheels



As the Mayor of the City of Ocala, I am always pleased to recognize residents, community members and events through ceremonial documents. May marks my first recognition for a very special dog in our community. Francis of Assisi once said, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible." This quote comes alive with the heartwarming story of Hot Wheels!

It all started on March 30, 2021, when a good Samaritan saw a dog on the side of the road with no use of his back legs and decided to pick him up and bring him to the care of the Humane Society of Marion County. Upon arrival, the staff and medical team examined him thoroughly. During the examination, they found that he was severely infested with fleas, was positive for demodectic mange and the x-rays showed that the vertebrae T10-T12 had been crushed. This left him with very limited use of his back legs and incontinent, so he now has to wear doggy diapers. This furry friend received medicated baths to cure him of the demodectic mange and is on a regimen to keep him as comfortable as possible.



Shortly after arriving at the shelter, the medical team decided to outfit him with a wheelchair. The staff wondered how he would adjust to his new wheelchair and decided to take him around the facility and then proceeded to the parking lot for his big trial. Once he set foot in the parking lot, the staff decided to name him Hot Wheels as he took off like a race car driver drifting his wheelchair in the turns. Now the “impossible has been reached.”



Hot Wheels is to be commended for his determination, resilience and positive attitude. On behalf of the City of Ocala residents, we wish him a healthy and happy life in a permanent and loving family that will see all the positive qualities he has to offer. Hot Wheels, congratulations on your courage and fortitude. You have taught us all a valuable life lesson!

## Juneteenth

The Ocala Juneteenth Celebration Commission will be celebrating Saturday, June 19, Webb Field, 1501 W. Silver Springs Blvd., 10 a.m. Known as ‘Freedom Day’ this outdoor festival will commemorate the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States. This outdoor event will serve as an educational reminder surrounding the importance of this day and embrace community activities for the whole family. For more information, follow the [Ocala Juneteenth Celebration](#) on Facebook or email [ocalajuneteenth2020@gmail.com](mailto:ocalajuneteenth2020@gmail.com).

## Reading Rangers Program

Join City of Ocala Recreation and Park Rangers for a story hour in one of our city parks. In partnership with the Marion County Library System, the Ocala Park Rangers and other City staff will read a book in a different park each week. Pack a snack, blanket or chair and get ready to enjoy a good book together. This weekly family friendly activity is free to attend and takes place 11 a.m. Fridays, June 4 through July 30.

## Reading Rangers Upcoming Dates

**June 4:**

Tuscawilla Park, 800 NE Sanchez Ave.

**June 11:**

Jervy Gantt Park, 2200 SE 36th Ave.

**June 18:**

Lillian Bryant Park, 2200 NW 700 Place

**June 25:**

Scott Springs Park, 2825 SW 24th Ave.

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## Proclamations



A proclamation is a formal public statement issued by a person of authority, dealing with matters of great importance or offering recognition to a person or organization. If you or your organization is interested in working with the Mayor's office to receive recognition, please contact Fazillete Gonzalez at (352)401-3977.

## Recent Proclamations

### National Prevention Week

Drug abuse and mental health conditions affect individuals, families and communities across Marion County and the nation. It is imperative that visible, united efforts by community members be launched and sustained to prevent drug abuse and promote mental wellness. According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 31.9 million Americans age 12 and older are current illicit drug users and 47.6 million adults have a mental illness. Through National Prevention Week, people

become more aware and able to recognize the signs of mental health and substance use disorders. We and others across the United States, recognize the seriousness of substance use and mental health issues in our communities, the power of prevention, and the tireless efforts of those working to make a difference.

The Community Council Against Substance Abuse, a workgroup of Marion County Children’s Alliance, and numerous community partners further commit its resources to ensure that prevention continues to be a way of life for Marion County residents. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the Mayor of Ocala, do hereby proclaim May 9-15, 2021 as NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK and encourage the people of Ocala to participate in drug prevention education activities, not only during this important week, but also throughout the year, making a visible statement that we are strongly committed to a drug-free healthy lifestyle.

### **National Public Works Week**

The City of Ocala’s Public Works Department provides a variety of daily public services ranging from streets, traffic and stormwater operations, maintenance, sanitation and recycling services. The services and efforts of our Public Works Department are vital to the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Ocala. The theme of this year’s Public Works Week is “Stronger Together.” Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim Sunday, May 16, 2021 through Saturday, May 22, 2021 as NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK in Ocala and I applaud the staff of the Ocala Public Works Department for the outstanding service they provide to the citizens of this community and I call upon the people of Ocala to recognize and participate in this special observance.

### **Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month**

Neurofibromatosis (NF) is a genetic disorder that can cause tumors to grow on nerves throughout the body. It affects one in 3,000 people of all populations and there is no effective treatment or cure. Fourteen year old Denver Poore of Ocala was diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis 1 (NF1) at eight months old and fights this progressive disorder daily, enduring learning disabilities, tumors, therapies, countless doctor’s visits, sedated MRI’s every three months to check on the lesions on his brain and spine, migraines, and recently pain throughout his body.



Denver is a hero who wakes up every single day with a smile and faces life with a pure innocence and awe and gives 100% to everything he does. He has asked if awareness could be brought to this neurological disorder which is one of the most common disorders that no one has ever heard of. The Children’s Tumor Foundation, which is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to finding effective treatments for the millions of people worldwide living with NF, has announced that, in honor of May’s Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month, buildings, bridges and monuments across the globe will light up in blue and green, the official colors of NF, including here in Ocala where we will light the gazebo. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim May 2021, as NEUROFIBROMATOSIS AWARENESS MONTH in Ocala and I urge all citizens to wear blue and green and shine green and blue light wherever they can in May.



## General Election 2021

Governing ordinances and charter provisions direct that prior to the first day in July, in any year in which a general election shall occur, a proclamation for such election shall be issued by the Mayor of the City of Ocala.

Therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, I hereby proclaim:

1. That a General Election be held in and for the City of Ocala, Florida, on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, a Run-Off Election, if necessary, will be held on Tuesday, November 16, 2021.
2. That such General Election shall encompass the selection of Mayor, and Council Districts I, III and V, these officials assuming office on the first Tuesday in December 2021.
3. That the qualifying dates shall be Noon, July 12, 2021, to Noon July 16, 2021, and that qualifying papers shall be available at the Office of the City Clerk.
4. That, on the same day as such General Election, a referendum shall be held to determine whether an amendment to the City Charter shall be adopted concerning "Scheduling of Special Elections or Run-Off Elections" pursuant to Ordinance 2021-44.
5. That, on the same day as such general election, a referendum shall be held to determine whether an amendment to the City Charter shall be adopted concerning "Beginning and End Terms of City Council Members and Mayor" pursuant to Ordinance 2021-45.

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## Opioid and Amnesty Information

The Ocala Police Department (OPD) has multiple protocols in place to help alleviate addiction in our community.

All field officers are equipped with Narcan® to aid during a response to a possible opioid overdose call. Narcan® is an FDA approved nasal spray that counteracts the life-threatening effects of an opioid emergency or overdose. OPD's Opioid Amnesty Program continues to be a prominent factor in the reduction of overdose deaths and crime throughout Marion County. If someone is struggling with addiction and needs assistance, upon request by the individual, an

Ocala Police Officer will transport them to a local health treatment facility, free of charge. The officer will also take and properly destroy any drugs and/or drug paraphernalia surrendered to them by the individual without the fear of arrest for possession of those items. The goal of the Amnesty Program is to encourage individuals to seek treatment without the barriers of

### OPD Numbers\* 2021 Year to Date

<b>Overdoses (OD)</b>	111
<b>OD Deaths</b>	17
<b>Narcan® Saves</b>	49
<b>Amnesty Program</b>	
<b>Total Participants</b>	377
<b>2021 Participants</b>	46

\*Numbers are as-of this writing and are subject to change.

cost or arrest. It is the belief of OPD that together, as a community, we can combat this crisis.

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## About the Mayor



Kent Guinn assumed the office of Mayor in December 2011 after serving the City of Ocala for 12 years as the Councilman representing District 4. Mayor Guinn is in the financial services business and is a representative of the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America as well as owner of the firm Guinn & Company, LLC.

For the past 29 years he has served on the Board of the Children's Home Society Mid-Florida Division which covers North Central Florida. He served on the CHS State Board of Directors for 26 years. CHS is a 112-year-old not for profit child welfare agency in the State of Florida. Mayor Guinn was adopted through CHS.

Mayor Guinn is a 5th generation Ocalan. His family has been in Ocala since 1850. He and his wife Sandra have been married for 39 years and have two sons.

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