

GOC GAZETTE



Rebuilding lives
 Removing stigma
 Restoring dignity
 Resource for mental health recovery

Buddy and Holly: My Gifts, and My Givers



To me the Holidays are a time that represents being thankful for what I have, and also it is a time of giving—and receiving. Recently I adopted two Chihuahuas—Buddy and Holly. Before I adopted them, they belonged to a neighbor of mine. I would go for walks around my apartment complex a lot, and I would sometimes see my neighbor walking Buddy and Holly. I would often stop and say, “Hello,” to Buddy and Holly, as well as my neighbor.

Sadly, my neighbor developed a terminal illness, and I started taking care of Buddy, and Holly, as well as Lacy (a cat that eventually was surrendered to Animal Services where she is currently up for adoption). When my neighbor passed away, I adopted Buddy and Holly—and let me just say that they are definitely a gift for me!

Buddy and Holly, besides giving me their doggie love, friendship, and companionship, give me a reason to get up in the morning. I must say that sometimes after I get up to feed them, and give them a walk, I go back to sleep again—at least until noon when I give them another walk. And sometimes I even go back to sleep after I give them their noon walk—but am usually awake by the time it is their dinner

time and time for their evening walk which is at 5:30 pm. But even though some days I go back to sleep after I tend to Buddy and Holly, I DO get up around 9:00 a.m. to feed them and give them a walk; I DO get up again to walk them at noon. That is something that I wouldn't do if I did not have Buddy and Holly in my life. And this DOING is something that is a part of my recovery.

I know that DOING is not all that life and recovery are about (for example I believe that BEING is at least as important as DOING), but having Buddy and Holly as a reason to get up in the morning even though I may feel not motivated to, I get up anyway—because it is my responsibility to take care of them.

So, by having Buddy and Holly in my life I, as well as they, give as well as receive. I give them food, I take them for walks, I give them love and attention—but as I mentioned earlier, they give to me, too—their doggie friendship, doggie companionship, and their doggie love (which I believe is something that sort of gives as well as receives).

And I am thankful, too, for all of this giving and receiving going on. THAT is what I believe is a big part of what life is all about.

-By David S.



2014 Holiday Schedule

Friday December 19th: Holiday Party at GOC with a fun gift swap. Come join us for lunch, a gift swap (\$5 limit on all gifts, re-gifting is encouraged) 12-3pm. Please RSVP

Tuesday December 23rd: Dinner at GOC at 6pm and then a trip to North Florida to see the lights and Starbucks afterwards. Please RSVP. Transportation Provided

Wednesday December 24th - Friday December 26th CLUB CLOSED

Wednesday December 31st: GOC's First Annual New Year's Eve Party. Join us for games, music, movies and more. Watch the countdown on TV and bring in 2015 with us. 5-12pm Transportation home will be provided, please RSVP.

Thursday January 1st and Friday January 2nd: CLUB CLOSED

We go back to our regular schedule on Monday January 5th



Gainesville & North Central Florida
 www.NamiGainesville.org



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The Gainesville Opportunity Center's Board of Directors

- Bruce Stevens - President
- Andy Bernard - Vice President
- Jennie Whitson - Treasurer
- Trish Sokol - Secretary
- Markus Dietrich
- Jodi Irving
- Ryan Jones

IMPORTANT DATES

19th GOC Holiday Party and Gift Swap
 23rd Dinner at GOC and trip to NFMC
 for the lights
 24th –26th **GOC CLOSED**
 31st GOC 1st New Years Eve Party
 Jan 1&2 **GOC CLOSED**

★HAPPY★HAPPY★HAPPY★HAPPY★
 BIRTHDAY! BIRTHDAY! BIRTHDAY! BIRTHDAY!

DECEMBER 2014

December:
 4th Sherman C.
 14th Travis H.
 17th Andrew B.

20th Jennifer D.
 22nd Philip W.
 23rd Eddie F.
 27th Rosa M.



Our Members at Work: Clubhouse Employment, Education, and Volunteer Work

Education

Member	Location	Degree
Jane B.	At Home Professionals	Med. Transcription
Debbie O.	Santa Fe College	Business
Carlos C.	Santa Fe College	GED

Volunteer Work

Member	Position/Work Site	Hours/Week
David S.	Dog Walker/Gainesville Pet Rescue	2
Greg W.	Horse Care/Mill Creek Horse Farm	8
Chris P.	Volunteer/St. Francis House	varies
Dave B.	Writer/Bread of the Mighty Food Bank	7

Supported and Independent Employment

Member	Position/Employer	Hours/Week
Andy B.	Kitchen Asst./St. Francis H.S.	25
Andy B.	Dishwasher/Meridian	5
Joel A.	Customer Service/Gainesville Carpet & Flooring	32
Regis G.	Clinic Supervisor/Discount Counseling Network	3
Frances S.	Peer Specialist/Meridian	16
Tommy A.	Stocker/Catholic Charities	4
David J.	Groundskeeper/Meridian	4
Regis G.	Social Worker/undisclosed	40
Jade W.	Customer Service/Full Cup	20
Ashley R.	Peer Specialist/FACT Team	40+
Gregg W.	Courtesy Clerk/Walmart	30
Alexis H.	Peer Specialist/Shands Vista	12
Ron M.	Grill Cook/Five Guys	25

Employment Quote of the Month

We need love, and to ensure love, we need to have full employment, and we need social justice. We need gender equity. We need freedom from hunger. These are our most fundamental needs as social creatures. – **David Suzuki**

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Andy B.
 as he celebrates
 3 years on the job at
 St. Francis High
 School!

- *Need a job?*
- *Don't know what you should do?*
- *Submitted applications but haven't gotten a job?*
- *We can help!*

Stop by Monday, Wednesday,
 or Thursday to see Brett
 or call us at 224-5523

December 2014 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 <i>Club Closed</i>	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 <i>Club Closed</i>	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 <i>Club Closed</i>	17	18	19 <i>GOC Holiday Party</i>	20
21	22	23 <i>Dinner & Lights</i>	24 <i>Closed</i>	25 <i>Club Closed Christmas</i>	26 <i>Club Closed</i>	27
28	29	30	31 <i>New Year's Eve Party</i>	<i>Club Closed</i>	<i>Club Closed</i>	

Member Interview: Kelly Ann

Kelly Ann has been a member of GOC for about a year. She came to us after being referred by a caseworker at Meridian. "At the time I was homeless and living in tent city with my then boyfriend. I spent most of my time taking care of my adult disabled son. I wanted help with maybe finding work and learning to use the computer, but the computer was too stressful and my son's needs kept me from working."

Kelly came to club as often as she could but all the responsibility of taking care of her son limited how much time she could spend here. In January 2014, her son tragically died, and Kelly's world crashed in. "My reason for living was gone, I was hopelessly depressed, still homeless and feeling so lost. I was really angry and didn't want to be anywhere. I had a few hospitalizations and over time, came back." Kelly came back to the clubhouse about a month ago. "Honestly, I come to clubhouse to eat. Around the time my son died,

I finally got my SSI, it took a few months to get the check but once I did I was able to get an apartment but my food stamps were cut drastically, so without GOC I'd starve. Coming to the clubhouse has helped me reconnect with people. I like doing things like cleaning and cooking. I enjoy the work and feel like I'm giving back, not just for the meal but the company. People care about me here, they worry about me, and they help me. It feels good to have that because I have no one left.

Kelly enjoys sleeping; she collects hummingbirds (statues, cups, etc.), enjoys cooking and likes walking, reading and gardening. "I have a cat named Bailey. She's part Tabby and part Abyssinian. Abyssinians are an ancient breed and a direct decedent of Ocelots. She and I hang out a lot together, just us girls."

Kelly lives with Depression and Anxiety, "I've lived with that since preschool, and

used to hurt myself a lot, but I learned how to love myself and developed coping skills that helped me to stop. I have a lot of physical issues too....getting old is horrible!"

Kelly offers this advice to others. "Life is too short not to like and love yourself for who you are, the good and the bad. We all have our gifts, but don't be around people who are not a positive influence. I've learned to withdraw and detach from people who aren't positive influences in my life, and it has helped."

When I asked Kelly if she would recommend coming to the clubhouse to others she looked at me and said "of course, I already have. I saw a woman at the bus stop that I knew from the hospital and told her about it. Whether she comes or not, I don't know, but it has helped me so why can't GOC help others."

By Chris P.

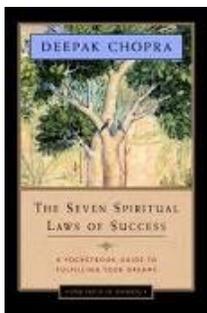
10 Fun Facts About Christmas

1. **French presents:** The French gave the *biggest* Christmas present ever in 1886. It was the Statue of Liberty, and they gave it to the United States of America. (The French have one too, a smaller one, in Paris.)
2. **Saint Nicholas:** Santa Claus was a real saint. He lived in Myra in the 300s. Myra is in what is now Turkey. The German name for Saint Nicholas is *Sankt Niklaus*.
3. **Artificial Christmas Tree:** The first artificial Christmas tree wasn't a tree at all. It was created out of goose feathers that were dyed.
4. **The Many Names of Christmas:** Christmas has many, many names. Do you know some of them – aside from, of course, Christmas? How about Sheng Tan Kuai Loh (China), or Hauskaa Joulua (Finland), or Joyeux Noel (France)? In Wales, it's Nadolig Llawen, and in Sweden, God Jul.
5. **Xmas:** That "Xmas" stems from Greece. The Greek "X" is a symbol for Christ.
6. **First Christmas Tree:** Riga, Latvia was home to the first decorated Christmas tree. The year was 1510. About 36 million Christmas trees are produced each year on Christmas tree farms.
7. **The Candy Cane:** The Candy Cane is one of the most familiar symbols of Christmas. It dates back to 1670 in Europe but didn't appear in the U.S. until the 1800s. The treat we see today, where the shape is Jesus's hook to shepherd his lambs and the color and stripes hold significance for purity and Christ's sacrifice, became common in the mid 1900s.
8. **Christmas Stocking:** The Christmas Stocking got its start when three unmarried girls did their laundry and hung their stockings on the chimney to dry. They couldn't marry, they had no dowry. But St. Nicholas, who knew of their plight, put a sack of gold in each stocking and in the morning the girls awoke to discover they had dowries, and they could now marry.
9. **Christians:** An estimated 1 of 3 people worldwide celebrate Christmas, including 2.1 billion Christians. There are about 7 billion people in the world, so about 2.3 billion celebrate Christmas.
10. **We Wish You a Merry Christmas:** The most popular Christmas song ever is *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. The song can be traced back to England, but its author and composer remain unknown.

Merry Christmas everyone!

These fun facts were taken from <http://socialindc.com/10-christmas-fun-facts/>.

Book Review: The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success by Deepak Chopra



Written in 1994, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* is a self-help, pocket-sized book written by author and physician Deepak Chopra.

It is inspired by Hinduist and spiritualistic concepts. It preaches the idea that personal success is not the outcome of hard work, precise plans or a driving ambition, but rather of understanding our basic nature as human beings and how to follow the laws of nature.

When we comprehend and apply these laws in our lives, everything we want can be created, "because the same laws that nature uses to create a forest, a star, or a human body can also bring about the fulfillment of our deepest desires.

This book changed my life as did Deepak Chopra's writing as a whole. From him, I learned that business is interesting, and there is something spiritual about getting stuff done.

-By Chris P.



Welcome To Our Newest Members!

Matt P.



New Member Interview: Getting to Know Wilson



I found out about the clubhouse during a hospitalization at Shands Vista. Another member who is currently recovered and works there as a peer specialist told me about it.

Before I came I had just quit my job, because I could not cope with my condition and the stress at work was affecting me. I was also isolating myself. My motivation was that at GOC I could learn new skills and possibly find a job in a different field in the future.

I am originally from Puerto Rico. I moved to Alachua in 2005 to accept a position as an area supervisor/operations consultant for McDonald's Corporation in Lake City. Later I moved to Gainesville in 2010 and have been there ever since. I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and depression in 2006 and it was devastating to me. I had to give up on my career, lost several real estate investments and ended up divorcing and splitting away from my family.

Since then I have been getting treatment and it has been a hard road. I have fallen many times, but with the support of my parents and close family members and the unconditional love of the Lord, I have gotten back up and continue my walk to recovery.

The thing I have struggled with the most is the ability to sleep well as the racing thoughts associated with my condition keep me up at night. Also, depression has been a big stressor, trying to be stable is work in progress. My motivation to try to live a stable life have been my children who I love the most in this world.

They give me purpose and the will to go on. Also, having a close relationship with God motivates me, because I know I am not doing this alone. Going regularly to my doctor and getting counseling is what is helping me recover and be stable. Most recently, coming to GOC has given me a reason to get out of the house and be productive with my life, which makes me feel really good with myself, because I feel appreciated there.

What I learn during the process of my recovery is my limitations and that there are opportunities and resources for people living with mental conditions, you just have to be willing. For a long time, I haven't socialized with anyone, so coming to GOC helps me interact with other members and helps me build social skills. Also, my goal here is to learn office skills and I am doing just that. I have learned how to use Microsoft Word. I have been filling out documents electronically, and have been using Excel Spreadsheet, so I am loving it. My goal has been achieved.

I have been in management my entire career, so I am good at working with people. I also have a business degree and do consulting in how to buy used cars as a hobby.

My daily goal is to be here at least from 11 to 4 when GOC is open. My long term goal is to have at least 1,000 hours at the center and receive the peer specialist training. I like fishing, watching good movies, and bowling. I search the web to relax.

I am here for a reason, and I want others to have the same opportunity I am having. I don't want GOC to be a hidden jewel!

-By Wilson

THANKSGIVING AT GOC



For all of us who attended the GOC Thanksgiving Lunch Potluck Luncheon we all know that it

was awesome! If you were not able to attend you missed a great time. It was really crowded...about 40 people attended this year! As usual we had more food that we needed. There were appetizers, turkey, tons of sides, and on top of it all, deserts.

For the first time in many years we invited family members to come as well. It felt like a real family gathering. As usual Carlos cooked our turkey...thank you Carlos...it was delicious...they get better every year. Pam made her Virgin Spiced Mulled Apple Cider, which was gone by

the end of the afternoon. People brought some great sides: Green Bean Casserole, Mashed Potatoes (three different kinds), Macaroni & Cheese, Kale, Cranberry Ambrosia, Hawaiian Rolls and Squash. We had cheese and crackers, pepperoni, spinach balls, chips and dip, salsa and chips and other appetizers but the best...as always...was saved for last...DESSERT! We had a ton of desserts, including homemade brownies, cookies and banana nut bread. We had mixed berry pie, squash pumpkin and even a gluten-free Pecan Pie!

The reviews were spectacular! Here are what people had to say:

"There was good food and new friends, and I had a blast" – Brett B.

"It was a good ole' time" – Blake O.

"I met some good friends and had great food!" – April H.

"I had a lot of fun, met some nice people, many that I didn't know. The food was great and the party turned out much better than I expected" – Chris P.

"I was almost full from eating the appetizers even before the main course was served! Dinner with family and good friends it was a great time." – David S.

"I met some nice people" – Tom Z.

Thanks again everyone for coming, bringing things when you could and for sharing this day with us! See the calendar for upcoming holiday events!



MOVIE REVIEW: CITY OF GOD



City of God is a 2002 Brazilian crime drama. The story was adapted from the 1997 novel by Paulo Lins. The plot is loosely based on real events. It depicts the growth of organized crime in the Cidade de Deus suburb of Rio de Janeiro between the end of the 1960s and

the beginning of the 1980s. Most of the actors were residents of Favelas.

The movie catches your full attention from the moment it begins. Quickly after, you realize you are not just watching a regular movie. You are realizing that the movie you are watching will change your life.

Never before have I watched a movie and felt that it was so eye-opening to the life of people in impoverished neighborhoods that I would never forget it. But while watching *City of God* I did.

-by Chris P.

KOSTA KARAGEORGE - ANOTHER PERSON LOST TO MENTAL ILLNESS



Dealing with mental illness, such as depression, is challenging for people and their families. Severe and persistent mental illness can affect people who are not only functional, but perceived over-achievers. Case in point, Ohio State University defensive lineman Kosta Karageorge was found dead on November 30, after apparently taking his own life.

As a college senior in his early twenties, Karageorge was on full scholarship at a major university and surrounded by teammates and a support system. On scholarship for wrestling, he walked onto the football team in December. It was clear that Kosta had the wherewithal to withstand the rigors and time-commitment of playing sports while maintaining academics.

While many people graduate college owing over \$100,000, full scholarship meant Kosta could have had his degree debt free. Coming out of school, his levels of achievement would have been very marketable in the workforce. There is no logi-

cal reason justifying his feelings that led him to his tragic decision. Yet for some reason, he was unable to get the help he needed.

OSU issued a statement that they were "shocked and saddened" by his situation. It is understandable that they were saddened, but the question has to be raised why they were shocked. Somehow, everyone missed the signs and failed to get him the help he needed.

Asking for help can be one of the hardest things to do for someone dealing with severe and persistent mental illness. Even in a close-knit program like a football team at a major university, conditions such as major depression can go undetected. And even if the person experiencing severe symptoms recognizes it himself, asking for help can be a short-term trigger amplifying their negative feelings of worthlessness. Kosta reportedly sent a text to his mother apologizing that he may have been an embarrassment and blamed concussions. According to an Associated Press report, his sister, Sophia Karageorge, had this to say about Kosta: "He had a pretty bad

concussion last fall and he told me about differences in his behavior," she had said. "Just, like, confusion, disorientation, being unable to focus, mood swings — not feeling like himself, basically, not feeling quite right."

At the Gainesville Opportunity Center, we can help. While we do not provide counseling, the fellowship of being around others with similar challenges can help. With the Clubhouse model, we can also put people to work as volunteers, helping raise some peoples' self-esteem.

It's important at the GOC that we educate the public on mental illness, such as depression. Very highly productive people can also be suffering from major mental illness that can cause them great harm. As Employment Coordinator of GOC, this reminds me that we need to help people understand and recognize mental illness, so corrective measures can be found. It's the first step in getting help.

-By Brett B

Quick & Easy Fudge Crinkles

Holiday Cookies are a must for most families and these cookies are tasty and super easy to make!

Ingredients:

1 (18 1/4 ounce) box devil's food cake mix (Betty Crocker Super Moist suggested)
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 large eggs
Confectioners or granulated sugar, for rolling

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Stir (by hand) dry cake mix, oil, and eggs in a large bowl until dough forms. Dust hands with confectioner's sugar and shape dough into 1" balls. Roll balls in confectioner's sugar and place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until center is JUST SET. Remove from pans after a minute or so and cool on wire racks.



TIPS FOR BUYING A USED CAR FROM A PRIVATE SELLER



After you have saved up enough money to cover the price of the used car you have in mind, be sure to factor in the expenses

that you may not have considered yet, such as title transfer, registration fee, and sales tax. In addition, you will need to purchase insurance; check with your agent, or get an online quote to determine how much money you will need for premiums. I recommend using Progressive. They have competitive rates and they offer a pay-in-full option which can save anywhere between \$100 to \$150 a month for a six-month policy.

Next, know the type of used car you would like to buy from a private seller, or at least know the specific makes and models that you are willing to consider. There are many sources for finding used cars being offered by private sellers, from online sites like Auto Trader and Craigslist to classified ads and printed publications.

Contact the seller and ask a series of questions about the vehicle. Get as much information as possible on ownership history, mileage, maintenance upkeep and especially the condition of the car. Is there any damage, even any relatively small dents or dings? Is the exterior paint dull, chipped, scratched or peeling? Is the interior of the car stained, faded, cracked or torn? How does the car drive? Are there any oil leaks?

Is the transmission shifting properly? Are the brakes working well? Do the tires have wear or do they match? Does the steering pull to one side or another? Are you in possession of a clear title without any liens?

Do some research on prices before you visit the private seller to view the used car. Websites like Kelley Blue Book will allow you to find the average wholesale, retail, and private party prices for virtually any used car made from 1992 and up. Prices vary based on the vehicle's condition, but this will give you a useful baseline for negotiations with a private seller.

Evaluate the used car thoroughly when you visit the private seller. Test drive it under a variety of conditions, don't just give a ten minute test drive, most cars can be made to work fine for a ten minute drive. Try getting on the freeway, passing and stopping. Find a parking lot and drive in circles to the left and right to reveal steering issues. Make sure all systems work, including the air conditioning and the heater. Finally, check all the electronics and accessories: the CD player, the power windows and the power locks. Also ask to see maintenance records and repairs. If you like the car, ask the seller if they are willing to allow you to take it to a mechanic to be checked. Even though this will cost you some money, it will give you peace of mind that the car is in good mechanical condition or catch potential problems. If the private seller is

not willing to let a mechanic look at the car, take that as a warning and do not buy it.

Next negotiate the sale price; most private sellers who are selling used cars will leave some negotiating room in the price. If you are interested in the car, make an offer and let the seller know why you feel it is fair. Reference your research materials, the condition of the car, and anything else that backs up your offer. The seller may accept it or make a counter-offer. If you can't come to an agreement, thank the private seller for their time and move on to the next car.

If a private seller makes any promises or guarantees to you, have them put them in writing and sign the document. Car sales between private parties are typically as-is unless there is a signed contract stating otherwise. No matter how convincing a seller's words might be, you will not be able to legally hold them to verbal promises. Lastly make sure you get the clear title completely filled out and signed by the private seller, make sure to match the VIN number on the title to the one in the car and take it immediately to the tax collector's office to transfer ownership of the car.

-By Wilson V.

EMPLOYMENT CORNER—HOLIDAY JOB SEARCH



The holidays are here. Time for good friends and good cheer. Harder though to get a job.

In most industries, people take significant time off during the month of December. Contacting decision makers for hiring can be difficult, if not impossible in many cases until after the first of the year.

But December can be the perfect time to tune up your resume and sharpen your job-hunting skills. The GOC offers resume and job-coaching skills free of charge to members.

As Employment Coordinator at the GOC, I can help you redo or fine-tune your resume and help you find your next job. We can practice interview skills, and sign you up for alert services that will help you find

what you are looking for.

If you're interested in looking for work, or just talking to me about what's out there, stop by GOC on Mondays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays from 11 to 3 p.m. to make an appointment.

We look forward to helping.

-By Brett B.

“Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect.” - Oren Arnold

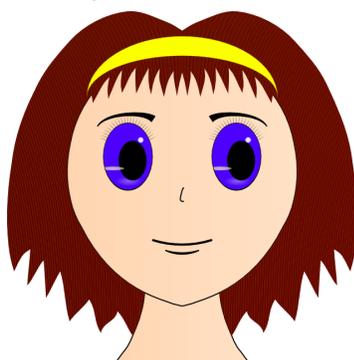
ART PAGE

Cotton Candy and Blue Snowflake



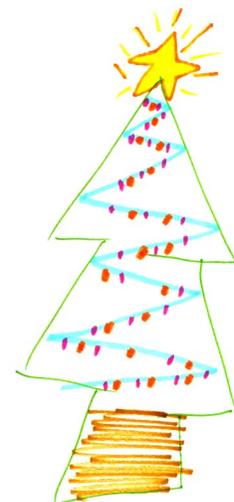
By April H.

Blue Eyes



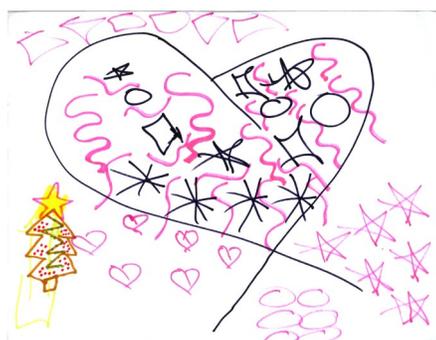
By Tom Z.

Christmas Tree



By April H

Christmas Pink and Black



By Rosa M.

Wolf



By Laura M

Blue Light



By David S.

LAST WORD

“Peepers.” - April H.

“Lifewater.” - Matt P.

“Friends.” - Chris P.

“Blessing.” - Wilson V.

“Japanese.” - Brett B.

“Chanting.” - Pam D.

“Tiger.” - Mike L.

“Wine.” - Ryan J.

“No war.” - Blake O.

“Holy.” - David S.

“Clueless.” - Kelly Anne

“Entice.” - Mike S.

“Pterodactyl.” - Ashley R.

“Jazz” - Jake

“Bid” - Rosa