



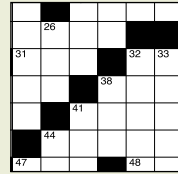
new contest
page 3
BFF Best Furry Friend



page 8
Meet new St. Johns County Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker



page 17
Get to Know... Cole Slate



page 22
Puzzles

Local resident chosen to decorate White House

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

This past holiday season, St. Johns resident Reisha Rust marked an item off her bucket list — for the third time.

“It has always been a dream of mine to help decorate the White House for Christmas,” Rust said. “My sister, a freelance florist, and I are known as ‘repeat offenders’ because we have been selected to volunteer for this three times.”



Photos courtesy Reisha Rust
Reisha Rust and daughter Delaney Rust.

Rust said she grew up in the floral industry, as her grandmother and then her mother ran a flower shop in Texas that has now been in business for more than 65 years. She said she was put to work in the flower shop at a young age, but after college, she didn't continue in the business.

Four years ago she and her sister, Mandy Barkley, applied in July to be volunteers for the White House Christmas decorating and they were selected in late October. They returned again most recently for the 2018 season. Rust said that she was in Washington D.C. for about 10 days, including before, during and after Thanksgiving Day. The last day the volunteers are invited to a big party to celebrate their efforts.

White House cont. on pg. 11

Thursday, Jan. 31, 2019, will mark the return of the SOUPer Bowl at Nease High School for the fourth consecutive year. The event, which runs from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., will be graced by some of the finest chefs on the First Coast, who will join forces to offer their signature creations in an evening guaranteed to delight the taste buds.

Primarily a soup-tasting event, the SOUPer Bowl is planned, organized and hosted by the Nease students with two goals: to raise funds needed to run the Blessings in a Backpack program in St. Johns County schools and to create more widespread awareness about student hunger in our community.

Blessings in a Backpack is a program for students on free and reduced-price lunches in school who are dependent on school meals for nutrition during the week. Many of these children do not have guaranteed meals waiting for them at home over the week-end. First Coast Blessings steps in to fill that gap by sending food home with these students who are at risk for hunger. Often, this is the only nourishment available to them during the 65 hours between lunch at school on Friday and the start of school on Monday.

The consequences of hunger in schools range from the inability to concentrate to poor academic performance. Extensive studies have shown that grades are better, and morale higher, when students do not have to worry about an empty belly.

“Hunger should not be a worry or challenge for today's youth,” said Kimberly



Photos courtesy Nease High School
SOUPer Bowl IV is primarily a soup tasting event.

Ward, executive director of First Coast Blessings in a Backpack. “It is important that as a community we do everything we can to feed them. I have seen the direct and powerful impact that this program has on the students, as well as the families and school as a whole.”

The hope that no child in St. Johns County should go hungry has been the driving force behind the SOUPer Bowl event. Nease students have been



SOUPer Bowl IV will be held at Nease High School, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. on Jan. 31, 2019.

packing food for school children at Webster Elementary for more than eight years in the only student-led

and organized program in the area; however, four and a half years ago, it was discovered available funding would be insufficient to feed the rising numbers of students in need at Webster Elementary, which included more than 200 children on a waiting list.

As a result of the needs of these children, the SOUPer Bowl event was envi-

SOUPer Bowl IV aims to combat hunger

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

sioned and implemented by a group of parents, students and administration at Nease to raise the necessary funds to cover the deficit. Today, more than one hundred Nease students combine talents from the Hospitality and Tourism, Digital Design, International Baccalaureate and Television Production academies to tackle hunger in the county schools. The response of participating restaurants has been overwhelming.

Returning this year will be Sawgrass Country Club, the People's Choice Award winner at the 2018 SOUPer

Bowl, as well as steadfast supporters like The Restaurant Medure, The Ice Plant, Trasca & Co., Palm Valley Fish Camp, Fifth Element, Sysco and Publix Cooking Schools. Also participating in the event for the first time will be South Kitchen & Spirits, MAA Kitchen, Trelor Park & Hitch and Fionn MacCoole. Over the past three years, this undertaking has raised more than \$90,000 for First Coast Blessings in a Backpack.

The goal for SOUPer Bowl IV is to raise \$40,000, which will support 400 students for one school year. Seventeen schools in St. Johns County, depend on the program to support their students. The cost to cover a single student is \$100 per year. Tickets for the event are \$25 per person.

To purchase tickets, obtain information or sign up as a participating restaurant, visit www.StudentsTackleHunger.org.



Patrons enjoy soup at a previous SOUPer Bowl.

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www.FloridaNewsLine.com

Publisher
Bill Guthrie

Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

Editor

Martie Thompson

Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Creative Director

Julie Gerona

Graphics@FloridaNewsLine.com

Reporter

Angela Higginbotham

Angela@FloridaNewsLine.com

Bookkeeper

Emily Whitehead

Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

Social Media

SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

Advertising Sales

Linda Gay

Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com

Heather Seay

Heather@FloridaNewsLine.com

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Blaze & Beau!



BREED:
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FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Going for rides in the car and meeting new humans!

FAVORITE TREAT:
CHEESE!!

FAVORITE FRIEND:
They love each other - then Mom.

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THIER NAME:
Blaze: Dad is a firefighter/paramedic with St. Johns County.
Beau: Mom and brother are Auburn fans and he is named after Bo Jackson.

This months sponsor:
Palencia Pet Clinic
159 Palencia Village Dr #101
www.palenciapetclinic.com

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answers to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and you could win a Gift Certificate!

Does your business cater to pets? Would you like to sponsor our contest?
Email editor@floridanewline.com to enter your pet or sponsor the BFF contest.

February's Enhanced Section Love & Marriage

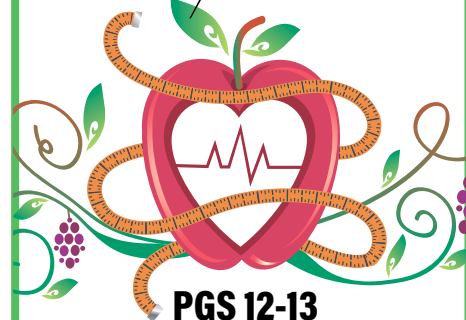
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Special Section



PGS 12-13

HEALTH & WELLNESS GUIDE

Table of Contents

- 4 Around Town
- 5 Take 5
- 6 Inquiring Minds
- 9 St. Johns Business Monthly
- 10 Briefs
- 18 School Briefs
- 21 Faith-Worship-Praise
- 22 Adopt A Shelter Pet
- 23 Community Marketplace
- 24 Gardening
- 25 Fishing
- 26 Travel

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Advertisers' Index

A New U Massage.....23	Famous Automotive2	Linda's Home Cleaning.....23	Starlight Gymnastics10
Access Church.....1	Fine Jewelry & Diamonds.....21	Mark Spivak Dance Studio26	State Farm-Jim Register13
Affordable Water.....19	Flagler Cremation.....6	Memorial Emergency Center.....28	Staverman Hearing.....12
All About Ballroom16	Forever Vets.....28	Nautilus Behavioral Health.....16	Strandz Hair Studio.....8
Allstate-Linda Ventura10	Fresh Look Lawn Maintenance.....23	Nemetz Dental Associates.....4	Switzerland Community Church.....21
Baptist Hospital2	Freyman CPA.....10	NFL OBGYN -Dr. Chithriki11	The Right Cleaners.....23
Baptist Primary Care Julington Creek.....25	Fruit Cove Baptist Church.....21	Obtain Health12	The UPS Store #611318
Bishop Kenny High School24	Goddard School.....19	Orthopaedic Associates of St. Augustine ..5	Travel Leaders.....13
Center for Health and Sports Medicine13	Harbor Chase of Mandarin.....18	Pavers Concrete & More.....23	UF Health27
Compass Health26	Huntington Learning Center- CR210.....16	Preddy Law Firm7	United Way of St. Johns.....16
Concrete Works23	I T Promise Inc23	Premier Homes Realty.....15	Weaver & Stratton26
Craig Funeral Home.....21	Ian MacDonald-Regions Mortgage.....9	River Garden11	Westminster Woods.....14
Creeks Track & Field.....6	Julington Creek Chiropractic7	San Jose Episcopal18	Wild Birds Unlimited.....24
David Tromble23	Kitchen Design Cabinets14	Silver Creek.....8	Yoga Den World Golf Village.....13
Deerwood Academy6	Krantz Dental Care.....14	Smiles by Glenos.....10	
Donna Mancini Interiors.....19	Laino & Assoc Financial.....9	Southlake Dental.....20	
Eye Center of St Augustine6	Lane's Lawn Service.....23	St Johns Orthodontics.....17	

Jan

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

around town

Feb. 2 - Character Counts! 6 Pillars 6K/3K Run/Walk
9 a.m.

Palencia Elementary School, 355 Palencia Village Drive
Register at www.racesmith.com/races/Character Counts.html

Through Feb. 3 - St. Augustine Nights of Lights
www.visitstaugustine.com

February 14 - Shorebird Walk at Matanzas Inlet with St. Johns County Audubon Society
9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Matanzas Inlet West Parking Lot, 8655 A1A S., St Augustine
www.stjohnsaudubon.com

March 2 - 26th annual Chocolate and Beyond, sponsored by RSVP
2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

First Coast Technical college, 2980 Collins Ave., St. Augustine
www.rsvpstjohns.com or (904) 547-3952

March 31 - 10th annual Dog Day Afternoon presented by St. Johns CARES
12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Plantation Park, Julington Creek Plantation
www.stjohnscares.org

save the date!

Jan. 2
First Coast Newcomers Club trivia evening/dinner

Dinner 5:30 p.m./trivia 6:30 p.m.
Call (904) 829-0643 for name of Murabella restaurant and to be added to attendee list

Jan. 3
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.
St. Augustine Yacht Club near the St. Augustine Lighthouse
pa@mysafeboating.com

Jan. 4
Rotary Club of St. Johns meeting

7:30 a.m. (repeating event on Fridays)
St. Johns Golf and Country Club Clubhouse
www.rotarystjohns.org

Jan. 5
Bingo Night at St. Joseph's

Doors open 6:15 p.m.; Games start 7 p.m.
Cody Center, 4152 Loretto Road
Open to the community; (904) 742-8777

Jan. 7
Current Events Discussion Group

10 a.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
New location: Fionn MacCool's Irish Pub, 145 Hilden Road
adsilby@yahoo.com

Jan. 8
Dementia Support for Caregivers

3:30 p.m.
River Garden, 11401 Old St. Augustine Road
Repeating event on the second Wednesday of each month

Jan. 8
Bartram Trail Newcomers and Women's Club Old Fashioned Bingo

11 a.m.
St. Johns Golf and Country Club
RSVP by Jan. 2, bartramnc@gmail.com

Jan. 8
First Coast Card Club - adult card players

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
St. Augustine Main Library, 1960 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
(904) 829-0643

Jan. 10
Garden Club of Switzerland featuring Master Gardener Karen Matulina, "All about Community Gardens"

10 a.m.
Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd.
www.switzerlandgc.org

Jan. 10
Shorebird Walk at Matanzas Inlet with St. Johns County Audubon Society

9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Matanzas Inlet West Parking Lot, 8655 A1A S., St Augustine
www.stjohnsaudubon.com

Jan. 10
Rotary Club of Bartram Trail

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)
Westminster Woods, 25 State Road 13
lancedmalcolm@gmail.com

Jan. 10
Palencia Bridge Club plays Party Bridge

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)
Donovan's Irish Pub, 7440 US Highway 1
Diane Tamplin, (904) 808-7326

Jan. 10
American Association of University Women (AAUW) featuring Mary L. Gatta, Ph. D.,

11:30 a.m.
Amici Italian Restaurant, 1915 A1A South, St. Augustine.
RSVP by Jan. 3: (505) 980-7865 or pkinchen02@gmail.com.

Jan. 12
Friends of the Library Book Sale

9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Bartram Trail Branch Library
(904) 827-6960

Jan. 14
Northwest United for Progress Club meeting

Social 6:30 p.m./Meeting 7 p.m.
2777 Race Track Road
nwsjcp@gmail.com

Jan. 15
Newcomers of North St. Johns featuring county leaders

11 a.m.
Amici Italian Restaurant, 1915 A1A South, St. Augustine
RSVP by Jan. 6: sjaird@comcast.net.

Jan. 15
World Golf Village Toastmasters

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
First Florida Credit Union, 1950 County Rd 210W
Worldgolfvillage.toastmastersclubs.org

Jan. 15
St. Johns CARES meeting

7 p.m.
Bartram Academy, 164 Everest Lane, Ste. 1
www.stjohnscares.org

Jan. 15
North Business Council of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce

8 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Westminster Woods on Julington Creek, 25 State Road 13
Register at www.sjcchamber.com or call (904) 829-5681

Jan. 17
Adult Coloring Club

10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Bartram Trail Branch Library
(904) 827-6960

Jan. 19
Fruit Cove Cruise In sponsored by Sunshine State Chevelles

4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
PDQ parking lot, 194 State Road 13
Repeating event on third Saturday of each month

Jan. 21
All Star Quilt Guild

9:45 a.m.
First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd.
www.orgsites.com/fl/allstarquiltguild or (904) 502-5254

Jan. 22
Ben Williams of St. Johns Riverkeeper presents an hour of science, history and preservation

6:30 p.m.
Bartram Trail Branch Library
(904) 827-6960

Jan. 25
Crafty Women make a clothespin memory catcher

10:30 a.m.
Bartram Trail Branch Library
(904) 827-6960

Jan. 25
Helping Hands of St. Johns County

10 a.m.
Faith Community Church, 3450 County Rd 210W
jacqphil@aol.com

Jan. 31
SOUPer Bowl to combat hunger

6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Nease High School
www.StudentsTackleHunger.org

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take 5

Help save a billion gallons of water this winter

The St. Johns River Water Management District is asking homeowners across its 18-county region to join the statewide “Skip a Week” campaign to save water during the cooler months of December, January and February. Using less water encourages deeper grass and plant roots, which makes them more drought-tolerant and less susceptible to pests and disease. To make sure your yard stays healthy, turn on your irrigation system if you see signs (grass blades folded in half; grass blades are blue gray or do not spring back) your grass needs water. If you see signs your lawn is wilting and decide to irrigate, the University of Florida recommends an average of one-half to three-quarter inches of water per application. Saturating the root zone and then letting the soil dry encourages healthy, deep root growth. Visit sjr-wmd.com/SkipAWeek to learn more.

Library to host clothing swaps

The Bartram Trail Branch Library is offering an affordable alternative for clothes for youth, teens and ladies: swap instead of shop. Bring baby, kids, or junior clean, lightly used clothes, hats, and jackets in good condition to the library on Friday, Jan. 4 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. or for women’s clothing, Friday, Jan. 18 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. For each item you bring, you will receive a ticket which can be swapped for a “new to you” item on Saturday, Jan. 5 (baby,

kids, youth clothing) from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. or Saturday, Jan. 19 (women’s clothing) from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. No undergarments. Patrons not interested in swapping can still participate by bringing in donations. Any remaining clothes will be donated to the Betty Griffin Thrift Store to help other families in the community. Call the library at (904) 827-6960 for more information.

“Tree-cycling” program announced for St. Johns County residents

St. Johns County is hosting its annual Christmas “Tree-cycling” Program for those who wish to recycle Christmas trees after the holiday. Residents are encouraged to bring Christmas trees Wednesday, Jan. 2 to Friday, Jan. 4 between 2 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and on Saturdays, Jan. 5 and Jan. 12 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to the following northern St. Johns County locations: Mills Field, 1805 Race Track Road and Cornerstone Park, 1046 A1A North. Artificial trees will not be accepted and trees should be free of decorations and debris. Designated areas and signage will direct participants where to drop off their trees. Call (904) 209-3740 for more information.

Creeks Softball announces registration

Creeks Softball, part of Creeks Athletic Association, will hold registration for

the spring season on Wednesday, Jan. 9 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 12 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Tuesday, Jan. 15 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 19 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.; and Thursday, Jan. 24 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at Aberdeen Softball Fields (1401 Shetland Drive) in the room upstairs above the concession stand. Evaluations will be held Saturday, Jan. 26. Practices will start the first week of February with Opening Day slated for Saturday March 9. Contact Chris Januchowski at (407) 443-3030 or Chris@RoundTableRealty.com or visit www.facebook.com/creekssoftball for more information.

Character Counts! run/walk registration open

The Character Counts! 6 Pillars 6K/3K Run/Walk will be held on Saturday, Feb. 2 at 9 a.m. at Palencia Elementary School located at 355 Palencia Village Drive. Walkers and runners will enjoy a course running through the neighborhoods of Kensington and Las Calinas and can choose to participate in the

6K (3.73 miles) or 3K (1.86 miles) distance. Registration fees for the 6K are \$30 until Feb. 1 or \$35 on race day and for the 3K, \$25 until Feb. 1 or \$30 on race day. Race proceeds will support Character Counts! initiatives throughout the St. Johns County School District. Visit www.racesmith.com/races/CharacterCounts.html to register or for more information.

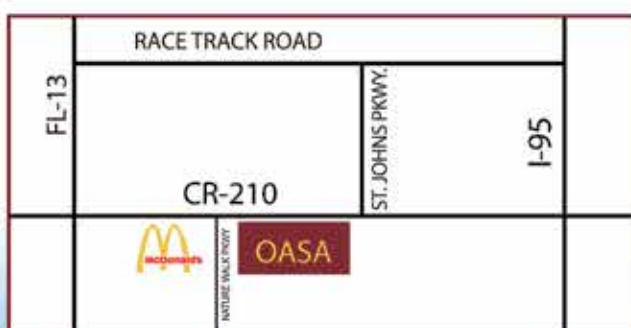


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Inquiring Minds want to know!

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Are you puzzled about something going on in NW St. Johns County or wondering about whatever happened on a topic from a previous issue? Email your question to us at editor@floridanewslines.com by the fifth of the month and we will do our best to track down the information for you.



with State Attorney, 7th Judicial Circuit,
R.J. Larizza

Q: What is one of the priorities of your office?

A: One of the things our office is focusing on is domestic violence. I formed a domestic violence initiative because of the disturbing statistics that I don't believe are limited to the 7th Circuit: one of four murders that we prosecute are domestic related, to include husband/wife, brother/sister, parent/child and boyfriend/girlfriend. The recently sentenced Colley case is an example of how domestic disagreements can escalate to violence quickly.

Q: What does your domestic violence unit do?

A: One thing is we are trying to educate prosecutors and law enforcement about the correct way to question domestic violence victims including techniques to interview and explain their options. We offer free training for law enforcement in all four counties in the circuit. I often participate in this along with members of the domestic violence unit. If nothing else, even if we end up not prosecuting, we want victims to get help, whether it is mental health, medical, or housing. We work closely with Betty Griffin House in St. Johns County and keep an open communication with them.

Q: How difficult is it to prosecute these cases?

A: Domestic violence cases are very difficult to prosecute. It often depends on whether we have a participating victim (who cooperates with law enforcement and with testimony). But oftentimes, these victims are going through a lot. Sometimes, they truly love the perpetrator or have to depend on them for financial support. It's hard to understand why a spouse would continue to return to a violent partner, but it happens. We try to make the victims feel that we are

not judging them in this regard, but are willing to help.

Q: Are you able to prosecute if you have a non-participating victim?

A: Victimless prosecutions are when we don't have the victim's participation to prove the case. This is difficult. We encourage law enforcement to find witnesses, security camera footage or even use their own body cameras to try to get evidence.

Q: How is your domestic violence unit set up?

A: The 7th Judicial Circuit covers St. Johns, Flagler, Putnam and Volusia counties. Each has a different number of employees assigned. In St. Johns County, we have two prosecutors who handle all misdemeanors, not just domestic violence. So we are using existing staff. Putnam County, however, has the dubious distinction of being the number one county in the state in number of domestic violence instances, so we have one prosecutor who only handles these cases.

I have requested the Florida Legislature to fund our domestic violence initiative. I'm committing existing resources to it and hope they will fully fund the entire circuit.

Q: What advice would you give to someone who is suffering from domestic violence?

A: If someone is a victim of domestic violence, and that can include emotional abuse or controlling behavior as well as physical abuse, I would recommend reaching out to the Betty Griffin Center. They have trained counselors who can help victims make plans to get away and become financially independent. Their 24-hour hotline is (904) 824-1555.

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Creeks Track & Field

2019 SPRING PROGRAM
Registration Opens December 1st
Our Spring 2019 Program runs
Monday February 25th - Tuesday May 7th

WE OFFER A FLEXIBLE PRACTICE PROGRAM:
1-day Practice week **\$100.00** • 2-day Practice week **\$150.00**

- All Practices are at Bartram Trail High School
- Practices will begin at 5:30 or 6:00 depending on grade.
- A detailed practice schedule is on our website
- 2nd grade and older: Monday and/or Thursday
- Mini Group Pre-K, K, and 1st Grade: Tuesdays only (Must be Age 5 before 2/25)

Inter-squad Track & Field meet dates:

2nd Grade and Up: All Meets begin at 7:30 a.m. with staggered start times for events	Pre-K, K, and 1st Grade: All meets will be on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m.
Sunday March 31st	Tuesday April 2nd
Sunday April 14th	Tuesday April 16th
Sunday April 28th	Tuesday April 30th
Sunday May 5th	Tuesday May 7th

www.caatrackandfield.com to register

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The Sheriff Reports

By St. Johns County Sheriff David B. Shoar

Identity theft

In order to combat identity theft you should know how it is committed and take precautions.

In public places, criminals may engage in “shoulder surfing” or watching you from a nearby location as you punch in your PIN or credit card number. Some criminals may engage in “dumpster diving” where they go through your garbage cans or commercial dumpsters to obtain copies of your checks, credit card or bank statements or other records that may bear your name, address or telephone number. They may simply steal your wallet or purse.

If you received any applications for “pre-approved” credit cards in the mail and discard them without shredding the information, criminals could retrieve them and attempt to activate the cards without your knowledge. Thieves could open up a new credit card account, using your name, date of birth and Social Security Number. When they use the card and don't pay the bills, the delinquent account that is in your name is reported on your credit report.

Consider limiting the amount of confidential or personal information you carry in your wallet or purse. Avoid carrying more blank checks than you actually need and never have your Social Security Number printed on your checks. Keep information about your accounts in a safe place in the event your wallet or purse is lost or stolen. When on vacation, have a list of phone numbers for your banking and credit card companies and keep the list in a safe place other than your wallet or purse. Never respond to unsolicited requests for your Social Security Number or financial data. If you do not have one, invest in paper shredder and be sure to shred any documents containing your name and any other personal information. Check all credit card and bank statements regularly for accuracy and obtain a copy

of your credit report yearly and check that for accuracy.

Check out www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0235-identity-theft-protection-services. They have a wealth of valuable information about protecting your personal information.

Here are some additional tips from the F.B.I. in an effort to combat identity theft: Never throw away ATM receipts, credit statements, credit cards, or bank statements in a usable form. Never give your credit card number over the telephone unless you make the call. Reconcile your bank account monthly, and notify your bank of discrepancies immediately. Report unauthorized financial transactions to your bank, credit card company, and law enforcement as soon as you detect them. Review a copy of your credit report at least once each year. Notify the credit bureau in writing of any questionable entries and follow through until they are explained or removed. If your identity has been assumed, ask the credit bureau to print a statement to that effect in your credit report.

If you have been the victim of identity theft take the following measures. Keep a log of all conversations, including the dates, names and phone numbers when dealing with authorities and financial institutions. Confirm those conversations in writing and send all correspondence by certified mail with return receipt requested and keep all copies of that correspondence in a safe place. File a report with your local law enforcement agency providing as much documented evidence as possible. Obtain a copy of that report along with the name and telephone number of the investigator and provide it to creditors and others who require verification of your case. On the Federal level, the Internet Crime Complaint Center, or the IC3,

Identity theft cont. on pg. 20



with St. Johns County Commissioner Jimmy Johns, (District 1)

Q: On Nov. 16, you hosted a meeting of community leaders at the Main Library in St. Augustine. Can you share what you hoped to accomplish at this meeting?

A: I had the idea to get as many community leaders of organizations together as possible around a table so we could try to identify and prioritize the needs of the community. I know we [St. Johns County] can't meet all of the needs presented by attendees who represented nearly 20 different agencies (everything from beach renourishment groups, to West Augustine, to the St. Augustine Art Association, to the mayors of St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach), but I thought if we discussed needs in the open, we could move in the right direction and maybe different organizations could find ways to help each other. We want to use our limited resources in the most efficient way possible.

Q: Will there be another such meeting?

A: I felt the meeting was a good start. The hope is that we can eventually find solutions. The group is not meant to be exclusive and if anyone would like to join the next meeting, which will be held sometime in mid-January, please contact me and let me know.

Q: Can you shed any light on the “Infrastructure Fee,” which is being added to shoppers' purchases at the new store in the Pavilion at Durbin Park?

A: The developers have chosen to form a Community Development District (CDD) for the shopping center, much like the ones residents are familiar with in various single family neighborhoods in northern St. Johns County. By law, the CDD is a taxing authority and is one of many ways that developers have available to pay for a project's infrastructure, such as roads, stormwater, com-

monly owned property, and utilities. I'm glad people are asking about this as it's important to understand the cost of building these projects that provide goods and services to the community. I'm in favor of this method, as it is easy to follow the money. This fee is easy to track and it must go to a specific purpose. It is important to note that none of the money from the Infrastructure Fee goes to the county.

Q: Do you have anything else to share?

A: As always, I am asking to hear from people if they think the county commissioners are concentrating on things that are important to them. Are we spending time and resources on what people want? I do feel that our board is representative-based rather than agenda-based.

One of the things we recently decided was to pull \$5 million from reserves to fund road safety and maintenance. Several months ago I had requested that staff prioritize different infrastructure and deferred maintenance needs. They did a good job of providing this information and so we as a board approved this spending. We are proceeding cautiously, because we are trying to meet the needs we have without burdening future generations.

I'd also like to thank everyone for allowing me to serve as county commissioner and I'd like to encourage people to recognize our many blessings in St. Johns County in 2019.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you?

A: Readers can email me at bcc1jjohns@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 615-7437.

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Supervisor of Elections: Vicky Oakes, voakes@votesjc.com, (904) 823-2238

Tax Collector: Dennis Hollingworth, taxcollector@sjctax.us, (904) 209-2250

Clerk of Court: Hunter S. Conrad, (904) 819-3600

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

District 1: Jimmy Johns, bcc1jjohns@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0301

District 2: Jeb Smith, bcc2jsmith@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0302

District 3: Paul Waldron, bcc3pwaldron@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0303

District 4: Jeremiah Blocker, bcc4jblocker@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0304

District 5: Henry Dean, bcc5hdean@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0305

St. Johns County School Board
(www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)

District 1: Beverly Slough, beverly.slough@stjohns.k12.fl.us, (904) 547-7510

District 2: Tommy Allen, tommy.allen@stjohns.k12.fl.us, (904) 547-7510

State of Florida Elected Officials

State House District 17: (904) 823-2300
Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov,
State Senate District 7: (386) 446-7610
Senator Travis Hutson

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Meet new St. Johns County Commissioner Jeremiah Blocker

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Recently elected St. Johns County Commissioner for District 4, Jeremiah Blocker, has attended two Board of County Commissioners meetings and is endeavoring to learn as quickly as he can.

"I was sworn in on Nov. 20 and just had my second meeting on Dec. 4," Blocker said. "I think it's important to take the time to learn the lay of the land."

Blocker said he and wife Lauren made the conscious decision to move to St. Johns County from Jacksonville because they wanted to start a family and find a great community, and then would find jobs. They settled in Nocatee shortly after they were married in 2010 and now have two children under the age of three.

Despite loving St. Johns County, Blocker said he and his wife felt that though the area has great potential, there are some important challenges.

"I prayed about it, and felt it was important for me to step up and try to be a problem solver rather than a complainer," Blocker said. "I'm not a politician, but I thought maybe we needed someone who wasn't a politician."

He said deciding to run for County Commissioner was the "craziest" thing he had ever done, but believed he had the experience and most importantly, the right attitude, to be successful. His wife encouraged him and with her support decided to run.

"I do have concerns as a citizen," he said. "So I put on my citizen hat and consider the issues and problems, and now I can put on my county commissioner hat and attempt to solve them."

His top three priorities are safety, to include crime and road safety (overdue infrastructure repairs and improvements); the beach renourishment; and growth.

Regarding the beaches, Blocker said, "Our beaches in St. Johns County are special and affect the entire county. We are unique in that we don't have a beach renourishment program, so we need to catch up — and try not to burden the taxpayers. We need to try to get state and federal tax dollars."



Photo courtesy Jeremiah Blocker
The Blocker family.

He believes growth is a major challenge. "There's a balance," he said. "Everyone wants to live in our county, but our citizens are concerned that the growth is too fast. We can't have 'no growth,' but we can scrutinize projects and make sure we are growing at the right time and in the right areas."

Blocker was born and raised in Ocala, one of five boys and a sixth generation Floridian. He received his undergraduate degree at the University of Florida, where he was also a member of the Army ROTC. He joined the Army Reserves and it was after his first semester of law school that he was deployed as a Company Commander of 200 troops, four platoons, to Iraq. He spent a year there living and working with the Iraqi police. He described it as a tough but necessary and important mission. He came home and returned to law school. Wife, Lauren, is an attorney as well, whom he met at the University of Florida. She clerked for federal judges for five years and presently is in-house counsel for a company in Jacksonville.

After his law school graduation, Jeremiah Blocker worked as a prosecutor, first for the 4th Circuit in Jacksonville and then in the 7th Circuit which includes St. Johns County. In 2015 he went into private practice with some colleagues from the Army and specializes in business and real estate law. Continuing his priority of service, he is also a JAG attorney with the Air Force Reserve.

Faith is important to the Blocker family and they are very involved with their church, St. John Paul II.

"I think one of the great things about St. Johns County is that so many people are involved with volunteering — with their church, synagogue, in schools and in the community," Blocker said. "It sets us apart from many other places in the state I've lived."

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What Would Tiger Do?

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

A Jacksonville legend passed away recently. His name was Rogers Baldwin “Tiger” Holmes. Holmes was a World War II veteran. He served in the Army Air Corps and retired, years later, as a colonel in the Air Force Reserve. Tiger flew planes. He wrote an account of his service entitled “The World’s Greatest Pilot,” something he admitted he was not, although it was his firm aspiration. After the war, Holmes owned a local hardware store. He was very successful.

Tiger is best known for swimming. He is a member of the University of Florida Sports Hall of Fame. He set swimming records throughout a long lifetime. In his 90s, Holmes and three other buddies with a combined age of more than 360 years were still setting records. Tiger loved the water and he was responsible for teaching more than 1,200 Jacksonville youths to swim.

I had the good fortune to interview Tiger earlier this year. His apartment was festooned with pictures of his accomplishments, both in and out of the water, including pictures of himself with five presidents. He told me a bunch of interesting stories, including the story I had come to hear. Tiger was on the beach the night that the U-123 sank the Gulfamerica a few miles off our coast in the spring of 1942. That was the story I wanted, the others were a bonus.

According to Tiger, he was working at the Inn & Club as a Cabana boy on that fateful Friday night in 1942. He was in the locker room, having finished work, when someone came in and announced, “The ocean is on fire.” Of course, they all ran out to

look. When they got there, they found a man in his underwear, obviously a little inebriated. The man was from the North and on his honeymoon. He kept saying how he couldn’t just stand there and watch those poor men dying and not do something. He convinced the boys to help him drag a row boat from the lagoon to the surf. He then paddled out toward the burning wreck.

The ill-fated rescue went awry. His new bride was scared to death and more than a little angry. She consoled herself with room service gin and tonics. When her husband finally came home the next day, he was sunburnt and sore. Five days after the event, the local paper of record identified that man as R. McCollum, a “Winter visitor...with more gallantry than wisdom.” According to the reports, he was rescued 20 miles out to sea after noon of the next day, some 14 or 15 hours after setting out.

I guess that the moral of the story is that when you find yourself in troubled waters, just keep swimming (or rowing if that is the case.) When Gertrude Ederle was swimming across the English Channel, the waves kicked up. Someone in the chase boat suggested she get out of the water. Her classic response: “What for?” It takes some grit to keep going. The market has turned choppy and many of us might be getting a little seasick. The best advice is to stick to your plan and keep going. I’d like to think that’s what Tiger would do.

Scott A. Grant is President of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.

Fountains at St. Johns announced for 210 corridor

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Yet another commercial project is slated for the NW St. Johns County area: Fountains at St. Johns is the brainchild of developer David Ergisi of Cross Regions

Real Estate. The 23-acre mixed use development will include 70,000 square feet of retail space as well as 40,000 square feet of medical/office space in its first phase on a site that is uniquely situated with frontage on Interstate 95 and County Road 210.

“There is a lot of traditional retail development in the area, but I didn’t want to create just another one,” Ergisi said. “I wanted to create a synergetic development as a medical and retail destination.”

Ergisi said his vision is to create a hub where people can park their car, eat or have coffee or drop off dry cleaning, and then walk to their doctor’s office for their appointment. He said he named the development after the fountains that will be constructed to provide a warm and inviting atmosphere. He chose to design multiple buildings, rather than one or two large ones, with walkthroughs and a patio/

covered area for people to sit outside and people watch or relax.

The buildings at the back of the property, which will be visible from



Renderings courtesy Cross Regions Real Estate

Interstate 95, will be the medical buildings, with mostly retail in the buildings towards the front of the property. Ergisi said that he is concentrating on key needed

retail services for the area and leasing is moving along rapidly with some leases to restaurants already executed. He expects to announce tenants in the first quarter of 2019, with groundbreaking in March 2019. Multiple phases are planned and two building are expected to to operational by the end of 2019 with construction continuing through 2020.

Ergisi said he has also developed Diane’s Marketplace in St. Augustine as well as other similar retail and medical offices in the Jacksonville area.

“This is our latest and greatest — and largest — project,” Ergisi said. “I want to bring unique ideas I’ve collected from around the world and across the country to Fountains at St. Johns. This project is personal to me. I’m excited about this one.”

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Briefs

St. Johns County announces board and committee vacancies

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners provides residents who have an interest in serving their community and participating in local government with a variety of board and committee opportunities. The volunteer positions consider and make recommendations regarding myriad topics, including planning and zoning issues, development projects, libraries, parks and recreation facilities and programs, and arts, culture, and tourism matters.

The following boards and committees are currently accepting applications:

- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (application deadline: Dec. 28)
- Recreation Advisory Board (application deadline: Dec. 28)
- Architectural Review Committee (application deadline: Jan. 4)
- Cultural Resource Review Board (application deadline: Jan. 4)
- Fire Code Board of Appeals (application deadline: Open until filled)

Visit the Appointed Boards and Committees webpage at www.sjcfcl.us/Boards to view the requirements and duties of each

board and committee or download an application. For more information, contact the Board of County Commissioners office at mlundquist@sjcfcl.us or (904) 209-0300.

FDOT to host third open house for S.R. 9B landscaping project

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will hold a third open house Monday, Jan. 7, 2019 at MissionWay Church at 14985 Old St. Augustine Road #101 to share information with the community on proposed landscaping plans on State Road 9B south of Interstate 295 to Interstate 95.

Those interested can drop by anytime between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to learn more about the overall landscaping project and provide feedback to FDOT staff and project design consultants who will be available to answer questions regarding the project.

The open house will be an informal event to inform the public and display phase IV plans of the project. The full-color renderings will demonstrate what the landscaping may look like upon completion of the project and will incorporate comments received at the previous open house. No formal presentation will be made.

The current proposal for this \$4 million landscaping project will include plantings of numerous species of trees, palms, shrubs, ornamental grasses, irrigation

and other incidental work relating to the overall landscape for the corridor. The landscaping project is expected to begin late 2021.

The project has been developed through District Two's FDOTree program, which was developed to promote communication, delivery and construction of the Florida Department of Transportation's Northeast Florida landscaping program.

College test prep courses offered

Bartram Trail Public Library will host ACT and SAT Prep Courses beginning on Tuesday, Jan. 8 through Feb. 12. The SAT test date following the course is March 9 and students will have completed and reviewed a practice SAT test before that date. There is an ACT test scheduled for Feb. 9 and students will have completed the practice test and will have an opportunity for review prior to that date.

The ACT Prep Course will be from 5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. each Tuesday and the SAT Prep Course will be from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. All students will attend from 5 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. on the evening of the practice test. The cost of each course is \$45 or both courses for \$90, which includes the practice test. The practice test will be graded and the results will be reviewed. Each student will need a book for the course, which is available at bookstores here in town or on the internet.

The courses are designed for students who have already completed or are enrolled in Algebra II. Students who are not yet in Algebra II may take the course as well, but may need to spend a little more time on the Math portion of the course.

The instructors are well-experienced in test preparation. Both instructors are dedicated to helping students understand both the test content and the test process in order to be confident on test day.

Enrollment packets are available at the Bartram Trail Public Library Front Desk. Instructions (including required book information) are included in the packet. Email folbtl@gmail.com with any questions about enrollment.

Armada FC to field U-23 team in 2019 NPSL season

The Jacksonville Armada FC announced the return of the U-23 team to the National Premier Soccer League (NPSL) for the 2019 season. The U-23 team was on hiatus in 2018 as the first team competed in the NPSL.

"The Armada FC continues to navigate the changing United States professional soccer landscape. Last season, the first team competed in the NPSL as a temporary home. It was a historic season. We made our longest run into the U.S. Open Cup and secured the Armada's first playoff victory," said club President and General Manager Nathan Walter. "Our goals this upcoming year are to continue our winning tradition and to make an exciting move for the 2020 season."

Walter named Aaron Pitchkolan the head coach of the U-23 team. Pitchkolan was the Armada FC team captain in the 2017 season and a key part of the defense. He was then promoted to the first team technical staff in 2018 as assistant coach upon the announcement of his retirement. Pitchkolan was the longest-tenured player in the history of the North American Soccer League (NASL).

The Armada FC U-23 matches will be free to attend and the schedule is expected in early 2019. Tryouts are scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 26 and Sunday, Jan. 27 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. both days. Registration is \$100 and open to men 17 to 25 years old. Registration is open at JacksonvilleArmada.com.



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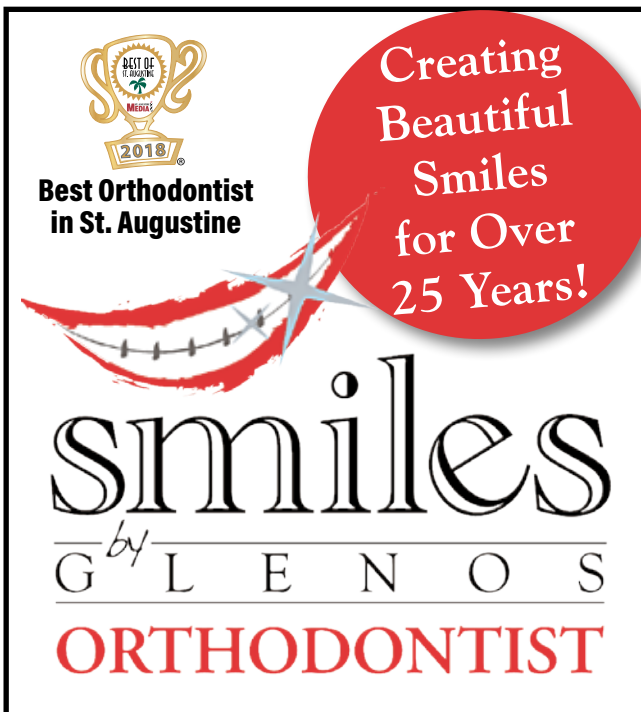


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White House cont. from pg. 1

About 120 volunteers from all over the country work first in the warehouse, prepping the decorations, and then work in the White House to bring the visions of the First Lady and the White House design team to life. Rust said that while new decorations are added each year, the



The mantel in the Green Room that Reisha Rust worked on.



Reisha Rust with the "Be Best" wreath she made for the Red Room.

ing the fresh cranberry trees, which have been a White House tradition since 1975. These four 24" trees require the artist to attach 1,000 fresh cranberries to each in painstaking fashion, a process which takes about 10 hours per tree. Since the cranberries are fresh, Rust said the trees have to be remade two weeks later and she pointed out that these trees are not to be confused with the red topiary trees in the East Colonnade that were in the news.

Rust said her favorite part of the experience was the camaraderie of the volunteers.

"It's like summer camp for people who love Christmas," she said. "It's a lot of hard work, but we all bond together. Everyone is truly excited to be there."

So, will she apply to volunteer again? Rust, who said Christmas is her favorite season and admits to playing Christmas music in November, is unsure.

White House staff goes to great lengths to try to reuse ornaments from year to year in different rooms and combinations.

"I was the co-leader of the decorations in the Green Room this year," Rust said. "This included the decorations on the mantel, the tree and the wreaths. I also made one of the 'Be Best' pencil wreaths in the Red Room."



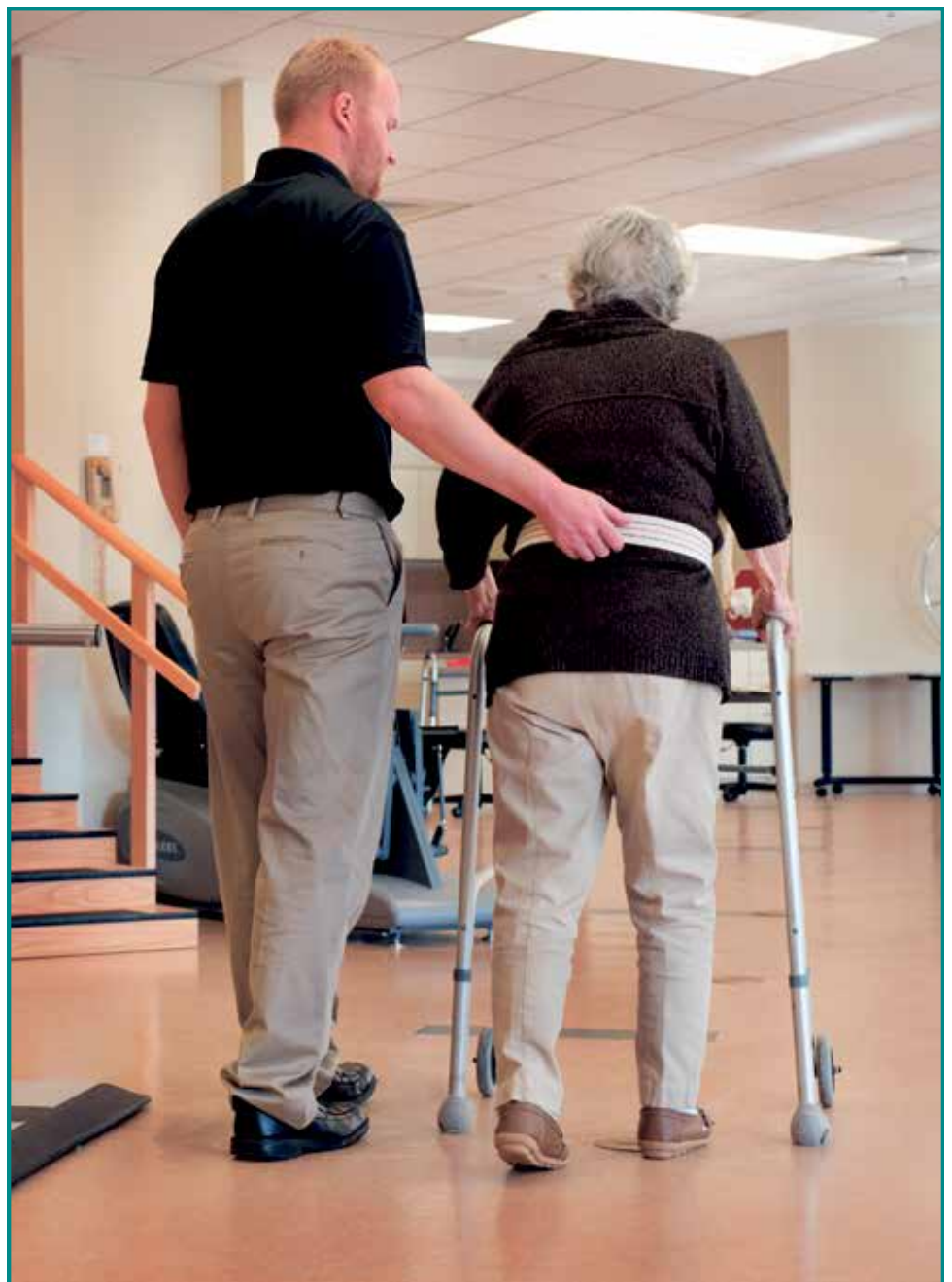
One of the "Be Best" wreaths.



Cranberry tree.

She was excited this year to learn from "Cranberry Jenny," a volunteer who for 20 years has been responsible for mak-

"I would love to go again, but it's hard to be away from your family for Thanksgiving, so I'm still undecided about next year," she said.



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HEALTH & WELLNESS GUIDE

Nutrition Check: Starting the Year off SMART

By Kristen Hicks Ph.D., RDN, LDN and Paige Chaffin
mail@floridanewsline.com

The start of each New Year is always a bittersweet time in terms of judging our health. At this time, new goals are starting to be made and goals from the previous year are assessed for success or failure. Each year around 41 percent of Americans make New Year resolutions, over half of which set out to lose weight or eat healthier. Yet only 9 percent of those individuals feel that they were successful in achieving their goals. (Statisticbrain.com, 2017). Why is this?

People tend to set goals that are unfeasible in hopes that a wave of motivation will arise with the New Year. Although this is a great concept and shows that individuals want to better themselves, it often leads to disappointment when the high expectations are not met.

SMART goals are an effective goal setting strategy that helps set Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic goals in a Timely manner. For example, a basic goal would be "In 2019, I want to be healthier." This goal is hard to reach because it doesn't define what "being healthier" means to you. Vague goals can become overwhelming and often result in a sense of failure.

A SMART goal style could be either "In January, I want to consume at least two

vegetables each day" or "In 2019, I plan to limit going out to eat to less than twice per week for the next three months." Setting more specific goals sets a more realistic foundation to complete them.

When setting your goal(s), make sure they are meaningful and clear in regard to your desired outcome. This will make achieving your goals more rewarding. More importantly, share your goals with your friends and family. Having social support may be beneficial towards completing your goal, and who knows, maybe one of them will want to join in on the fun.

Lastly, reward yourself! The path to reaching your goals doesn't have to be a miserable one. When you have hit milestones, or are simply feeling accomplished, it's okay to schedule some "you time" or treat yourself to something you've been wanting. This can keep you motivated to set and complete more goals.

Setting SMART New Year's resolutions will ensure that the outcome is more effective and positive.

Kristen K. Hicks Ph.D., RDN, LDN is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida.

What part of the plant are you eating?

By Dianne Battle
mail@floridanewsline.com

Master Gardener Barbara Purple presented a humbling and educational program at the November Garden Club of Switzerland meeting. Attendees took a multiple choice test, "What Part of the Plant Are You Eating," based on instructional materials provided by the University of Florida

Extension Service, UF/IFAS, to public school children and 4-H youth. (See http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasotadocs/4-h-recordbooks/Judging_Hort.pdf.)

Attendees were asked to identify the plant parts commonly sold as produce in supermarkets. She pointed out that white potato tuber is produced on stolons, underground stems, not the roots. The town of Spuds, in St. Johns County, is the potato capital of Florida, growing sweet potatoes in the summer and white potatoes in winter.

Next, Purple asked for a show of hands indicating whether the tomato was a fruit or a vegetable. Botanically speaking the tomato is a fruit, but in a Supreme Court decision in 1893, the tomato was declared to be commercially a vegetable. The basis for the decision was not biology, but how the tomato was used by the public: it was used in the main meal, not as a dessert, and as such was considered a vegetable. By classifying the tomato as such, New York Port Authority mogul, Chester A. Arthur, was able to apply the interstate vegetable tax on tomatoes from southern

states. Money talks. In 1981 proposed USDA legislation would have reduced the nutritional requirements for school children's lunches, paving the way for counting ketchup as a vegetable portion. It didn't pass.



Photo courtesy Dianne Battle
What's on your table?

Purple said that Johnny Applesseed didn't plant apple seeds indiscriminately. He planted and fenced them in so his family, friends, and persons in need of income could cultivate the crop as a nursery, selling the new

seedlings to others. This would make him perhaps the first franchisor in America; it was a charitable enterprise as he made no income from the trees. While the old saying goes, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," in fact, the sweet potato is more nutritious. And ketchup doesn't even come close.

Take the "plant parts" test yourself at www.switzerlandgc.org and if you are interested in attending our next informative presentation on Jan. 10, let us know. If you shop at Hagan Ace Hardware's garden department, you can ask Barbara Purple more horticultural questions.

Dianne Battle is a Master Gardener, St. Johns County and member of the Garden Club of Switzerland

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HEALTH & WELLNESS GUIDE

Your Guide to Health and Wellness in the New Year

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Center for Health & Sports Medicine is now offering early enrollment to our new wellness facility, opening in March 2019. We are excited to take a large step forward in providing our community an opportunity to achieve their health and wellness goals. Our new office, including the RISE Wellness Center will offer proven methods to help you achieve your goals, while working with experts in the fields of exercise science, sports performance and health prevention. In a professional atmosphere with state of the art equipment, our programming will focus on losing weight, improving your physical fitness and maximizing your health. Our program includes classrooms and workshops to build a foundation for a lifetime journey to health. Our program also includes biometric testing: body composition, metabolic testing and screening for joint and muscle health. Visit www.jaxfamilysportsmed.com for more information.

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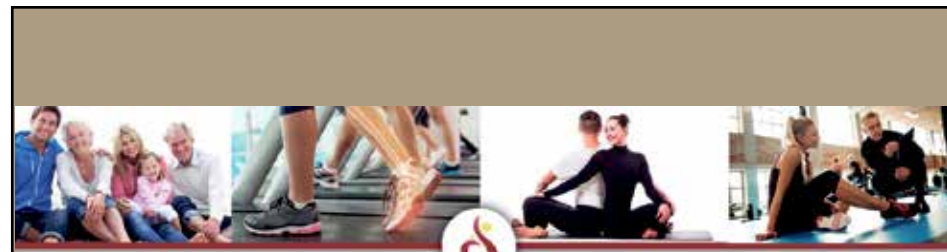
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Get on the fast track to being organized

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Getting organized is on the mind of people throughout the year, but even more so in January, which is National Get Organized Month. According to the data pulled from Google by iQuanti, 33,230,420 searches were made about "getting organized" in 2016. People are still interested in finding out ways to streamline their lives and conquer the clutter. Even though getting organized may seem like an arduous task, there are ways to get organized and do so quickly.

- Keep a cleanup bin handy. Put an empty basket in a central location, using it to gather stray items scattered around main living areas. Once everything has been collected, items can be returned to their rightful place.
- Make the bed. One of the easiest ways to keep a room looking neat is to make the bed each day. Store clean linens in a pillow case so the entire set is together and ready to go.
- Purge closets and cabinets. There's no point allowing old, stained or damaged items to take up space. Set aside days to clear expired medication from the bathroom cabinet, discard ripped or ill-fitting

clothing from the closet, or to dispose of broken toys in a nursery.

- Write things down. Tasks seem more manageable when they are written down in black-and-white and can be crossed off as completed. Writing things down also helps make the mind feel more organized.
- Exercise caution before buying. Don't buy more than you need; otherwise, you'll have to find space for extra items. Also, keep inventory of food and supplies in the house so you're not unwittingly buying duplicates.
- Sort mail and paperwork. Establish different categories for papers so they can be sorted and discarded as needed. These may include bills, invitations, school papers, and junk mail. Reduce paper clutter by opting for digital correspondence when possible.
- Make one repair at a time. Tackle that source of stress by focusing on one repair and seeing it through to completion.
- Delegate the work. If kids want to help organize, let them. It can be a fun project for an adolescent to rearrange the pantry or offer their ideas for corralling messes.



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William Bartram Scenic Highway Happenings

By Al Abbatiello
mail@floridanewslines.com

It's been awhile since readers had news from the William Bartram Scenic Highway Group, so this is a brief update that hopefully generates new interest in helping us with a previously noted restoration project and also to help "save" the scenic highway from extinction.

A few months ago, The Creekline featured a story about our group working to restore the former Switzerland Community Center, across from the entrance to Alpine Groves Park. The good news is we finally have word from St. Johns County we will be able to restore the building, assuming we can agree to the terms of a lease contract. Terms are now being evaluated.

Assuming agreement to terms we can begin fundraising and move ahead with other planning. This will likely be a long process.

Meanwhile we continue to track new residential developments in our north-west area that potentially impact the Scenic Highway and let readers know how they affect or might affect our roads.

Residents need to be aware that the developer of Silverleaf has submitted plans to the county for a new development called Trout Creek South – a 1,219 home proposal on 1,264 acres south of Trout Creek, County Road 16A and north of State Road 16. If interested in learning more, readers can search the county website or contact me at alabbat@comcast.net.

To combat this potential development and its possible impact on area roads, the William Bartram Scenic Highway Group is working to hire an attorney to help argue against this development. We believe this development will seriously affect the William Bartram Scenic Highway Corridor (State Road 13) and potentially the St. Johns River. A GoFundMe Facebook account has been established to hopefully raise money for our legal fund. Thanks for considering a donation to the cause: [gofundme.com/wm-bartram-scenic-amp-historic-highway](https://www.gofundme.com/wm-bartram-scenic-amp-historic-highway).

Al Abbatiello is chairman of the William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway Management Group.



Photo courtesy Deerwood Academy

Preschool donates to Wolfson Children's Hospital

Local preschools Deerwood Academy St. Johns and Deerwood Academy Town Center have donated \$3,000 in proceeds from their fall festivals to Wolfson Children's Hospital. The festivals featured games, raffle baskets, food trucks and family fun at each campus in October. The events are an annual tradition with a higher purpose: contributing to the good works of Wolfson's. This year's donation supported the hospital's Behavioral Health department. Pictured are Deerwood Academy team members Asia Mincey, Sheri Jenkins and Crystal Wilkinson, who are presenting the donation check to Alexandra Burney of Wolfson Children's Hospital.

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Bingo fun with the Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club

By Laura Hernandez
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club is celebrating the New Year with Old Fashioned State Fair Bingo on Jan. 8 at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club, located at 205 St. Johns Golf Drive. Each Bingo card will cost \$5 (exact change required) and all monies collected will be distributed to the lucky winning members.



Photo courtesy Laura Hernandez
Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club members tour the Stetson Mansion in Deland.

Lunch choices include Italian stuffed pork loin, au gratin potatoes and sun dried tomato marinara or crispy chicken cobb salad served with chef's house dressing. Also included is the chef's choice of appetizers, rolls, dessert as well as iced tea, coffee or soda and a cash bar. The cost is \$20 per person and payment must be received by Jan. 2. Make checks payable to BTNC and mail to Hilda Gilpin, 621 Pineland Lane, Saint Johns, FL 32259. Indicate

your entrée choice on the check memo line.

Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for more information. Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club meets the second Tuesday of every month from September to May at local restaurants for lunch. In addition to the monthly meetings, the club has a wide variety of interest groups and special trips, including a day trip to the Morse Museum on Feb. 8 and an overnight trip to the Imagine Museum of Contemporary American Studio Art in St. Petersburg.

County leaders to speak at newcomers' luncheon

By Carol Boehler
mail@floridanewslines.com

Newcomers of North Saint Johns will hold its January luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 15, beginning at 11 a.m. at Amici Italian Restaurant, 1915 A1A South, St. Augustine. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. and all St. Johns County residents are invited.

Luncheon menu includes garden salad and choice of chicken limone with angel hair pasta or eggplant parmigiana with penne pasta or herb crusted salmon with vegetable and potato. Dessert is cannoli. All are served with coffee and iced tea and a cash bar will be available.

Michael Ryan, director of communications for St. Johns County, and Richard Goldman, president and CEO of St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra Beach

Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net to register or for more information about Newcomers of North St. Johns, which offers a wide variety of activities

Visitors and Convention Bureau, will provide useful information about St. Johns County. They will be available to answer questions regarding development, parking, festivals, and advantages of living in St. Johns County.



Photo courtesy Priscilla Cobbs
Michelle Rhinehart, Darra Mairs, Carolyn Rousseau, Nanci Morton, Joanne Nigro and Gayle Richard attend Newcomers of North St. Johns 2018 - 2019 New Members Coffee.

The total cost for the luncheon is \$30 for members and \$32 for guests. All reservations must be received by Jan. 6, 2019.

including smaller lunch groups, wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, holiday parties, day trips, and cultural events.



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Rehabilitated hawk released in honor of master gardener

By Dianne Battle
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Nov. 25, a group of friends of James "Jimmy" Munnerly Shine had the opportunity to honor his life with a red-tailed hawk release at Alpine Groves Park. The hawk had been rehabilitated by HAWKE (the Humane Association of Wildlife Care & Education). It was a fitting way to remember Shine, who had mentored so many Master Gardeners at the UF/IFAS Extension Center.



Photo courtesy Dianne Battle

The hawk was found near Switzerland in May, coated with a mysterious clear oil. Starving and too weak to fly, it could not hunt. St. Johns Veterinary Hospital received the bird, treated it, and removed what oil they could before turning it over to HAWKE for rehabilitation. It took weeks of meticulous cleaning and careful feeding before the bird's health returned; it then had to regrow its flight feathers to exercise its flying skills. The hard work by Melanie Cain-Stage and her assistant, Chelsea McHose, paid off. It was ready to return to the wild.

When Sam Stage and McHose brought the hawk to the park they found a crowd of Jimmy Shine's friends and onlookers who were interested in seeing a red-tailed hawk obtain its freedom. When the time came for the release ev-

everyone waved American flags for Jimmy and the country he loved. McHose lifted "Jimmy Hawk" into the wind and thrust him skyward. "Jimmy" twisted in mid-air to orient himself, and smoothly flew to a tree overlooking the St. Johns River. He perched in the high branches exercising his wings as he surveyed the area. The crowd watched from below. When McHose told onlookers about his rehabilitation, the hawk turned his head and looked down, attuned to the sound of her voice. That week attendees flew their flags to honor Jimmy Shine, and to signal to his newly-freed namesake how much loved he was.

HAWKE operates free of charge and you can support wildlife rescue by joining or donating through www.hawkewildlife.org.

St. Johns County Teacher and Rookie of the Year to be honored



Photo courtesy INK!

INK! (Investing in Kids) will honor all St. Johns County outstanding educators at the Teacher of the Year Celebration, to be held at the Renaissance World Golf Center from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. on Jan. 17. Each school nominates its Teacher of the Year and then after each educator is evaluated by their academic experience, recommendations and professional development, the panel of judges selects five finalists for classroom observation. The representative for St. Johns County will be named on Jan. 17 at the event. Pictured is 2018 St. Johns County Teacher of the Year Amy Grimm. Email david.hartzel@stjohns.k12.fl.us or visit ink-stjohns.org for more information about supporting the event.



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Get to Know . . .

Cole Slate

By Angela Higginbotham
angela@floridanewslines.com

Born and raised in the Jacksonville area, Cole Slate is a long time resident of St. Johns. As a child, Slate resided in Julington Creek. Now a resident of RiverTown, he is still proud to live in the community that means so much to him. A graduate of Bartram Trail High School and a 2010 graduate of the University of Florida, Slate remains heavily involved with both of his alma maters. Often attending games, offering sponsorships and volunteering, Slate enjoys giving back to the people and places he holds dear. Currently enjoying his work in Real Estate, Slate takes pride in helping old and new friends find their home in St. Johns. He met his fiancée, Laura Lander, during a kickball tournament and the two will marry in May 2019. Slate is currently serving on the advisory board of Best Buddies International and is a long time volunteer for this organization that focuses primarily on special needs children.

1. What do you enjoy most about living in St. Johns?

For me, it's the community itself. A big part of my success is because of this community and others feel the same way. That's why they come back and raise their families here. It's a

wonderful place to raise kids.

2. St. Johns has changed a great deal over the years. What remains the same that made you want to come back to live and work here?

The area has changed so much, but it's still the same type of people that live here. People are still doing what they did 20 years ago — they are enjoying each other and the community. The neighborhoods are what make my demographic want to come back and live here.

3. What would you consider your greatest accomplishment thus far?

I'm just so appreciative and happy to be in a position to help out around Bartram Trail High School and with the Best Buddies organization. I've been with Best Buddies for 17 years. I'm also proud of my real estate team and the ability to help the community I love.

4. What do you enjoy most about your work with the Best Buddies organization?

Just spending time with people involved. All kids have differences and shouldn't be treated differently for it. A lot of them don't realize they are different and they just want to be treated equally.



Photo courtesy Cole Slate
Cole Slate with fiancée Laura Lander.

5. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I do spend a lot of my free time doing things at Bartram Trail High School. I enjoy being there and seeing everyone. I play Santa Claus at the faculty Christmas lunch every year and sponsor different things going on. Best Buddies is important to me as well, but in my spare time, I also enjoy just relaxing, watching sports and hanging out with friends.

Get to Know . . .

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Bartram Trail varsity cheer team takes home regional championship

By Delaney Cantrell
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Bartram Trail Cheer Team now has a new goal to work toward this year — winning a national title. The team received the good news at the December regional competition in Tampa where both the varsity and junior varsity teams placed first in their divisions.

The 24-girl varsity team was up against eight other teams at regionals. Under the guidance of head coach Danielle Parker, and with the help of Katie Tax, the team has practiced three days a week since the beginning of the school year at a local All-Star gym. This is Parker's seventh year coaching the Bartram team and their fourth time going to nationals.

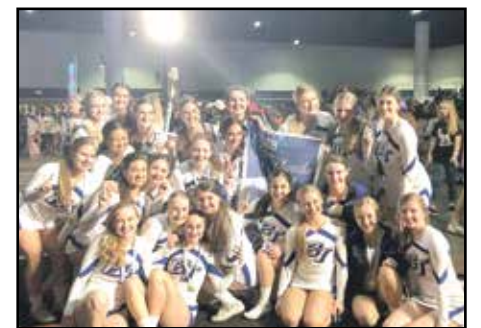


Photo courtesy Danielle Parker
The Bartram Trail High School cheer team is headed to nationals.

The equally impressive and winning JV team is coached by Jennifer Aston and Kayleigh Aston. Their team will compete against other JV teams at nationals.

The varsity girls expect to compete against 40 – 50 teams at the national competition, held at Disney's ESPN Wide World of Sports, on Feb. 9 – 10. The team's hard work has clearly paid off and the cheer members are elated to be invited to the competition. Go Bears!



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School Briefs

Liberty Pines Academy looks forward to 2019

Happy New Year and welcome back, Wolves! Mark your calendars with the many exciting events happening this spring:

Jan. 23: Firehouse Subs Spirit night. Mention LPA PTO and 20 percent of all sales after 5 p.m. will go to the PTO.

Feb. 4 – 8: Book Fair

Feb. 13: Papa Murphy's Spirit night. Mention LPA PTO and 20 percent of sales all day go to the PTO.

March 1: Yankee Candle sale kick off.

March 27: Another Firehouse Subs Spirit night.

April 5: Annual Spring Carnival.

May 22: Final Papa Murphy's Spirit night.

In other news, Liberty Pines Academy's Senior Volunteer of the Year is Gayle Cormier and the Volunteer of the Year is Erin Gulden.

The annual student Talent Show is fast approaching. Auditions will be held on Jan. 10 from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

The school library will be celebrating Literacy Week from Jan. 28 – Feb. 1. Guest readers will be coming in to share their love of books with the students as well.

Finally, the school's recent Boosterthon was a success. The students raised more than \$35,000, which will be used for a new PA system and playground equipment.

Nease Navy JROTC victorious at Mandarin Drill Meet

Nease Navy JROTC's varsity drill team dominated across the board in Personnel Inspection, Academics, Drill and Athletics to take home the championship at the Mandarin High School NJROTC sanctioned drill meet on Nov. 17 — marking the sixth consecutive year of taking home top honors. Nease beat out 11 other NJROTC units from northern Florida and Georgia.

With the victory, Nease has secured its slot in the Area 12 Drill Championships



Photo courtesy Scott LaRochelle
Nease Battalion Commander Erin Sass and Executive Officer Troy Barber receive the overall championship trophy at the Mandarin Drill Meet on Nov. 17.

to be held in Douglas, Ga. on March 2, 2019 where they attempt to defend

their title as four-time defending Area-12 Drill Champions.

In addition to claiming the overall trophy, Nease picked up 10 of 13 first place trophies for Personnel Inspection, Academics, Overall Athletics, Push Ups, Sit Ups, 16x100 Relay, 8x220 Relay, Overall Drill, Armed Basic and Armed Exhibition.

Several cadets took home individual medals for exceptional performance. Chris Oliver and Sass took first place in Male and Female Pushups; Teagen Pettit took second place in Female Pushups and Situps; Thomas Olinger finished second in Male Situps; and Abigail Vidler and Hayden Rowe placed third in Female and Male Pushups.

Palencia Elementary celebrates grandparents

In November Palencia Elementary School hosted its seventh annual Grandparents' Day — an event so big it takes up two days during the week of Thanksgiving. With a student population of 845 this year, Palencia Elementary is a growing school. This year's event had approximately 570 grandparents attending over the two days, making it the school's highest attended Grandparents' Day for to date.

Grandparents of first, third and fifth graders were invited to come on Monday, Nov. 19, while those with

grandchildren in kindergarten, second and fourth grades attended the following day. Some lucky grandparents, with grandchildren in both odd and even numbered grades, got to visit twice.

Upon arrival the grandparents checked in with volunteer greeters before having the opportunity to take a brief tour of the school and visit the children's classrooms. Many students created a special gift or craft for grandparents. Then the seniors accompanied their grandchildren to the cafeteria for a tasty Thanksgiving lunch. Afterward they were able to visit the photo booth, where a professional photographer from Leonard's Studio was hired to get some fun snapshots of the families. They also had the chance to purchase school spirit tees for their grandchildren or for themselves.

The response from the guests was overwhelmingly positive.

"This was our third Grandparents' Day," said Nancy Pattishall, who along with her husband Edward, dined with their fifth and first grade grandchildren. "As before, it was very well organized and everyone was very welcoming and helpful. It was a great opportunity to meet the teacher, participate in a class activity, and meet fellow students in the class."

Happy New Year!

New Beginnings Open House at HarborChase Saturday, January 26 | 11am

The new year is a time of new beginnings. Join us at HarborChase as we celebrate the beginning of a happy and healthy new year with a New Beginnings Open House. Take an exclusive tour of our community and enjoy festive appetizers and refreshments prepared by our amazing culinary team. It's the perfect opportunity to experience the exceptional lifestyle of HarborChase!

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Free little library now open at Timberlin Creek Elementary



Photo courtesy Beverly Slopey

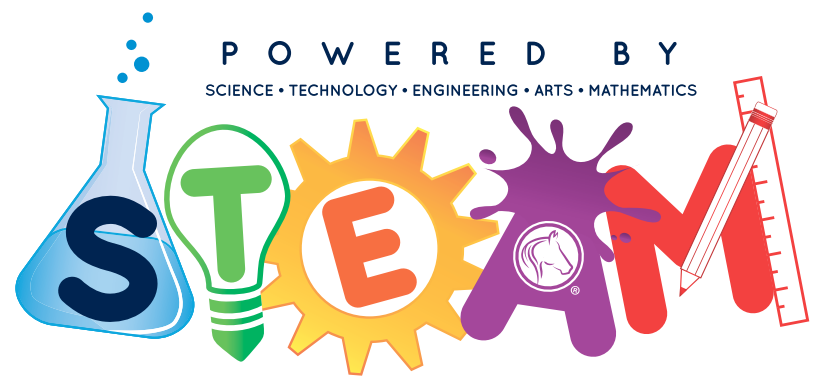
During a monthly planning meeting, BETA students from Timberlin Creek Elementary formulated an idea that would benefit all children — a library box for all surrounding communities to use. Trey Hogshead, a BETA student at TCE, and his father built and installed the library box just outside of the first gate to the school, allowing anyone to access it at any time. BETA club students painted it and filled it with books for all ages and it is now open for reading. When picking out a book, it is not necessary to put a book in, but patrons are encouraged to trade books to keep the box full.



Photo courtesy Carla Chin

Bishop Kenny students volunteer at Camp I Am Special

The Bishop Kenny High School Chapter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul participated in a Camp I am Special mini-camp over the weekend of Dec. 15. The high school students were paired up as buddies to help the campers enjoy festive holiday activities and fellowship. The day was filled with various craft activities including decorating a Santa hat and making a picture frame. Campers also participated in a candy cane scavenger hunt. Camp I am Special provides a camp experience for people aged five and up who have mental, physical, and behavioral differences. Volunteer buddies are there to assist campers so that they enjoy the experience and feel good about participating to the best of their individual abilities.



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CABINET



Photo courtesy Holly Ross

Hugs Across the County hosts food drive

Hugs Across the County, a local all-volunteer nonprofit organization, hosted a “No Hungry Holidays” food drive for local kids who depend on free school-based breakfast and lunch programs in order to provide these meals over winter break. As early December, Hugs Across the County provided 1029 “No Hungry Holidays” food bags to the neediest students in the county. Hugs delivered food bags to 35 of the 38 schools; two schools had no need and one school had its PTO provide for their students in need. Hugs Across the County works closely with the St. Johns County School District to confidentially identify children in need of assistance and provide them with necessities such as food, shoes, clothing and new school supplies. Visit stjohnshugs.org, email info@stjohnshugs.org or call (904) 580-4847 for more information.

Identity theft cont. from pg. 7

accepts online internet crime complaints from either the actual victim or from a third party to the complainant. They can best process your complaint if they receive accurate and complete information from you. You can file a complaint with the IC3 at www.ic3.gov.

Visit www.ftc.gov, the Federal Trade Commission, for more information. You can also find additional information through our Crime Prevention Section on our website at www.sjsd.org, or by calling the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office at (904) 824-8304.

Student makes big impact outside the walls of Bartram Trail

By Delaney Cantrell
mail@floridanewsline.com

Bartram Trail High School senior Hannah Fliess was recently named the 2018 – 2019 Student Volunteer of the Year. Fliess received this award not only on the basis of her high number of service hours, but also on her natural, charitable spirit.

When asked what this award entailed, Fliess said, “I was first interviewed by a panel of three judges. They asked about different service projects that I have participated in, my roles in each one, and how I feel my volunteering has impacted my community. I found out that I won the following week.”

Fliess became actively involved in a program assisting teen mothers. At a program retreat, she helped provide childcare for the babies while the moms attended life skill classes and enjoyed personal time.

“I definitely want to continue volunteering with the program that helps teen moms,” Fliess said. “I would also like to volunteer with organizations that help children in the foster care program.”

In addition, Fliess has become a Power Up Club Leader at her church. “Power Up Club is a domestic mission trip organized by Christian Family Chapel.

I organized and led skits, games, and lessons for elementary-aged children,” she said.

To add to the long list of good deeds in which Fliess has taken part, she also had a major role in implementing a club at Bartram Trail dedicated to fighting hunger. Along with her co-president, they organized an annual “Trick-or-Treat for Canned Goods” event.

Volunteerism runs in the Fliess family.

“For as long as I can remember, my mother has been an active volunteer in all areas of her life,” Fliess said. “Seeing her serve others has inspired me to do the same.”

Fliess hopes to attend a four-year university after graduation and pursue a career in health sciences, but she anticipates that she will continue on with her passion for volunteering for the community.

“The more I volunteer, the more I want to find ways to incorporate helping others into my future career,” Fliess said.

In total, Fliess has earned 460 service hours, but it is evident that the number of hours is not her motivation. Her charitable heart has led her this far and will continue to do so in her future endeavors.



Photo courtesy Michelle Kisch

Hannah Fliess with Bartram Trail Principal Chris Phelps.

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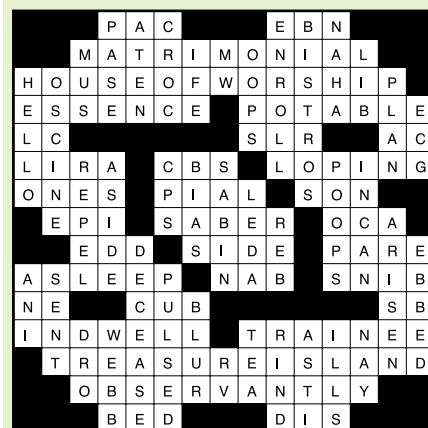
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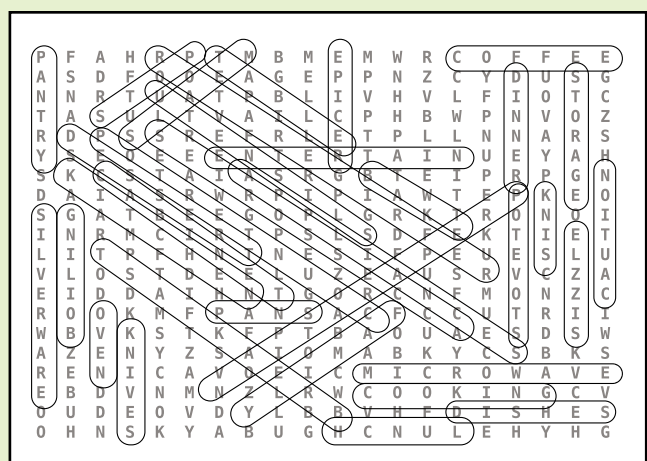
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Answers to puzzles on page 22

Answers to our Puzzles



Answers: A. logs B. hearth C. mantle D. flue





Faith-Worship-Praise Section

Faith News

Jan. 8: Fruit Cove Baptist Church hosts Planting Hope, by In His Image Ministry, which is a faith-based support group for families with special needs children. This group meets the first Tuesday of every month from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. in ROC-Room 202. Contact Barbara Campbell at barbara.inhisimage@gmail.com for more information or to register. Childcare is available by reservation only; contact Windy Keene at windykeene@comcast.net or text (904) 463-4662.

Jan. 9: Griefshare will be held at Fruit Cove Baptist Church from 6:15 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. in Building 3, Room 3. GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. Call Cecille Hammond at (904) 859-6098 for more information or to register. Childcare is provided.

Jan. 9: Prevail, a care and support group for single moms, will be held at Fruit Cove Baptist Church in the ROC-Room 301. This class includes a bible study, fellowship, and childcare. For more information or to register contact Linda Warne or Gwen May at (904) 287-0996.

St. Patrick's dared to dream

On Sunday, Dec. 2, St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 1221 State Road 13, accomplished a year long goal of raising enough money to buy a well for an underdeveloped village. The well will be provided through Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD) and will give clean water to a community in need. Episcopal Relief & Development works to "facilitate healthier, more fulfilling lives in villages struggling with hunger, poverty, disaster and disease" (www.episcopalrelief.org).



Photo courtesy St. Patrick's Episcopal Church
Rev. Rhonda Willerer, Sheri Goreschak and Dave Jennings

Soccer players value veterans by assembling compassion kits

At Veterans Park on Nov. 3, hundreds of young soccer players from Florida Elite Soccer Academy partnered with We Got Soccer and Provision Ministry to stuff 1,000 backpacks with supplies and letters for homeless veterans in the Greater Jacksonville area. We Got Soccer donated the supplies for the "compassion kits" and then Provision Ministry, which works regularly with We Got Soccer to do hands on volunteering with youth athletic club members, delivered the backpacks to the 5-Star Veterans Center, a home for homeless veterans. Other backpacks were donated to the City of Jacksonville Department of Military Affairs. Visit www.provisionministry.org, www.floridaelitesa.com and www.wegotssoccer.com for more information.



Photos courtesy Jeff Eichenlaub



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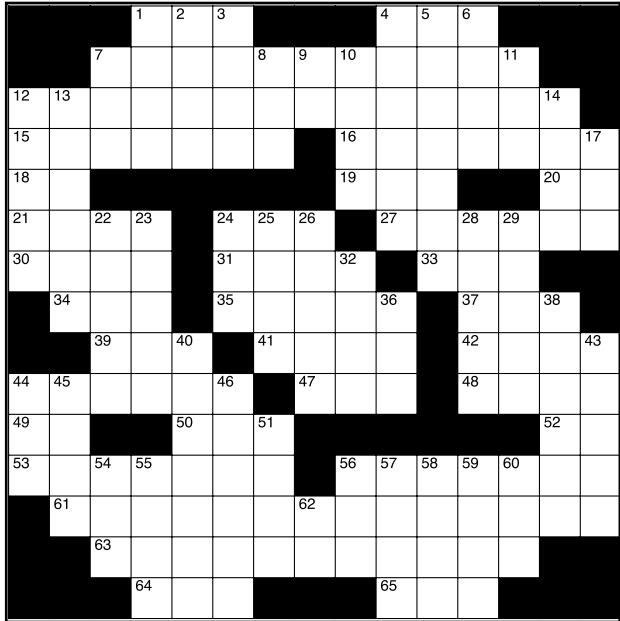
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Puzzles

Answers on page 20
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Political action committee
- 4. One point north of due east
- 7. Marital
- 12. Religious building
- 15. Intrinsic nature of something
- 16. Safe to drink
- 18. Letter of credit
- 19. Single Lens Reflex
- 20. Keeps you cool in summer
- 21. Monetary unit
- 24. The Eye Network
- 27. Moving with a bounding stride
- 30. Figures
- 31. Of the pia mater
- 33. Male offspring
- 34. Indicates near
- 35. Calvary sword
- 37. South American plant
- 39. Doctor of Education

- 41. Something to take
- 42. Remove the edges from
- 44. Inattentive
- 47. Pick up
- 48. Latch for a window
- 49. Region of the U.S.
- 50. Windy City ballplayer
- 52. The NFL's big game (abbr.)
- 53. Be permanently present in
- 56. Novice
- 61. Pirate novel
- 63. In a law-abiding way
- 64. Where one sleeps
- 65. Criticize

- 5. Eating houses
- 6. Japanese port
- 7. Genus of rodents
- 8. Nigerian city
- 9. Milliwatt
- 10. Mistake!
- 11. Women's __ movement
- 12. Greeting
- 13. Songbirds
- 14. An arrangement scheme
- 17. Heartbeat test
- 22. Push back
- 23. Intended for the audience only
- 24. Cycles per second
- 25. Impartiality
- 26. Polio vaccine developer
- 28. Bowel movements
- 29. South American Indian
- 32. Queen of Sparta
- 36. Confederate soldier
- 38. Emerged

- 40. Death
- 43. __ and flowed
- 44. Folk singer DiFranco
- 45. Email folder
- 46. Throbbled rhythmically
- 51. English rockers
- 54. Disaster relief operation
- 55. American model and TV personality Katherine
- 56. Potable
- 57. Tough outer layer
- 58. __ Spumante (Italian wine)
- 59. Troubles
- 60. Negative
- 62. Camper

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Bullfighting maneuver
- 2. Egyptian Sun god
- 3. Predatory semiaquatic reptile
- 4. Register formally



Solve the code to discover words related to fireplaces.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 9 = e)

- A. 25 22 19 10**
Clue: Fuel sources
- B. 7 9 3 21 18 7**
Clue: Floor of fireplace
- C. 24 3 23 18 25 9**
Clue: Fireplace surround
- D. 5 25 17 9**
Clue: Vent or pipe

KITCHEN COOK WORD SEARCH

P F A H R P T M B M E M W R C O F F E E
 A S D F O O E A G E P P N Z C Y D U S G
 N N R T U A T P B L I V H V L F I O T C
 T A S U L T V A I L C P H B W P N V O Z
 R D P S S R E F R L E T P L L N N A R S
 Y S E O E E N T E R T A I N U E Y A H
 S K C S T A I A S R G B T E I P R P G N
 D A I A S R W R P I P I A W T E P K E O
 S G A T B E E G O P L G R K T R O N O I
 I N R M C I R T P S L S D F E K T I E T
 L I T P F H N T N E S I F P E U E S L U
 V L O S T D E E L U Z E A U S R V C Z A
 E I D D A I H N T G O R C N F M O N Z C
 R O O K M F P A N S A C F C C U T R I I
 W B V K S T K F P T B A O U A E S D S W
 A Z E N Y Z S A I O M A B K Y C S B K S
 R E N I C A V O E I C M I C R O W A V E
 E B D V N M N Z L R W C O O K I N G C V
 O U D E O V D Y L B B V H F D I S H E S
 O H N S K Y A B U G H C N U L E H Y H G

WORDS

- ACCESSORIES
- APPLIANCES
- BAKE
- BOILING
- BREAKFAST
- CABINET
- CAUTION
- COFFEE
- COOKING
- COUNTERTOP
- DESSERT
- DINNER
- DISHES
- ENTERTAIN
- FAMILY
- KITCHEN
- KNIVES
- LUNCH
- MEALS
- MICROWAVE
- OVEN
- PANS
- PANTRY
- POTS
- PREPARATION
- RECIPE
- REFRIGERATOR
- SILVERWARE
- SINK
- SIZZLE
- STORAGE
- STOVETOP
- TABLE
- UTENSILS

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

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Photo courtesy Kenny King, Jr.

Troop 280 scouts learn about cooking

Each month, Troop 280 has a theme where knowledge and skills are learned, culminating in a trip where what scouts have learned is tested. In November, the troop focused on cooking and scouts learned about proper nutrition, meal planning, and cooking techniques. This training was put to use during a trip to Camp Blanding Joint Training Center. Each scout participated in cooking for his patrol and no one was left hungry. The scouts also visited the museum and learned interesting facts about the significant role the base played during World War II. The troop also held a food and "loose change" drive to benefit the Mandarin Food Bank and Sulzbacher Center; the scouts delivered 167 food items to the Food Bank and money that will provide 41 meals to Sulzbacher. Troop 280 meets Mondays at 7 p.m. at River of Life United Methodist Church.

2018 - 2019 St. Johns County School Calendar

JANUARY 2019				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

- Teacher Optional Planning
- Teacher Planning (non-student day)
- Teacher Inservice (non-student day)
- Classes Resume
- Student/Teacher Holiday
- End of Quarter
- Underline = testing dates

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# The Pantry Raiders

## Warm up and chow down on chowder

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

When winter arrives, colder temperatures typically arrive as well. Staying warm on cold winter days can sometimes be challenging, but food can be just the thing to make you feel warm on a chilly day. Chowder is a robust dish that can stick to the ribs while warming people up. Just about anything, including beer, can be added to chowder, making it a uniquely flavorful dish. Ideal for cold days, the following recipe for "Blackened Shrimp and Corn Chowder" from John Holl's "The American Craft Beer Cookbook" (Storey) can be just what you need to warm up.

### Blackened Shrimp and Corn Chowder

Makes 8 to 10 servings

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium Spanish onion, finely chopped
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 2 medium banana peppers, finely chopped
- ½ cup red or amber ale
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tsp. chili powder
- 2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1 ½ cups fresh or frozen corn
- 4 cups fish broth
- 1 large sweet potato, baked and mashed
- Fresh dill, finely chopped



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Blackened Shrimp and Corn Chowder

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Add the onion, celery and banana peppers, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the ale and salt and pepper to taste. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue cooking and stirring until the beer's foam subsides and the liquid reduces by half, about 5 minutes.
2. Rinse the shrimp under cold water and pat dry with a paper towel. Toss the shrimp, chili powder and paprika together in a bowl, coating thoroughly. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in a cast iron skillet. Add the shrimp and cook, stirring once, until nicely seared, about 2 minutes.
3. Immediately transfer the shrimp to the soup pot, and then stir in the corn and broth. Bring the mixture to a light boil over medium-high heat and add the mashed sweet potato. Reduce the heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes longer.
4. Divide the soup among bowls and top with the fresh dill before serving.

# Gardening

## Winter — No worries

By Master Gardener Lesley Arrandale  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Preparing for winter should have been no problem, given that we know we will have at least one or two cold snaps, when our temperatures can dip into the mid to upper 20s. Twenty-four to 48 hours before low temperatures are expected, water your landscape if it hasn't rained recently (a simple rain gauge is a useful tool). The day of the anticipated overnight frost or freeze, move potted plants to a sheltered area and wrap them completely, including the pot as roots are particularly vulnerable. Cover tender landscape plants, ensuring that the covering reaches down to the ground so it can trap the warmth from the soil. Any gaps and the warm air will simply rise up and out of the covering while cold air seeps in. It's important to anchor covers if a windy night is expected (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg025>). Commercial frost cloth is the ideal choice, but old sheets or blankets will do. Some of us use plastic, but it must be removed the following morning before the sun has a chance to overheat the plants; they can also suffer cold damage if the plastic has made contact with foliage.

Winter vegetables will be fairly safe, unless the freeze is more than a few hours. Brassicas — collards, cabbage, broccoli and the like — are often sweeter after a cold snap; it's certainly true of Brussels sprouts.

Perhaps surprisingly, there are a number of vegetables that can be planted in January. For a detailed look at the possibilities, refer to the "Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide," <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>. This publication is a must for would-be urban farmers; even if you have only space for a small raised bed, or perhaps a large pot or two, there's every chance that vegetable gardening will grow on you. You will find recommendations of tried and true varieties in the guide, but current seed catalogs will have more information about the newest vegetables. Noteworthy catalogs

include Johnny's Selected Seeds and Totally Tomatoes.

Vegetables like red-leaved mustards, Swiss chard with colorful stems, frilly-leaved carrots, and various kales are attractive enough to incorporate into flowerbeds. Just make sure that if you buy vegetable starts they come from the vegetable section of the nursery, and not the flowering plant area: the latter may either have been treated with chemicals that make them unsafe to eat or are ornamental varieties simply not grown to be eaten.

We are now in Eastern Daylight Time and are restricted to using an in-ground irrigation system once a week, if needed, either before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. Early morning is the best choice, as water will evaporate off of foliage during the day, reducing the chance of diseases. The use of a hose with a cut-off valve is permitted at any time, as is using a drip system — ideal for the vegetable garden — or watering can. For more information see: <https://tinyurl.com/ycaxqway>. There are allowances for watering more often under some circumstances, but the general rule makes sense. Our landscape plants have slowed their growth and consequently need less water. When our clocks spring forward, we will be back to watering twice a week — if needed — when our plants, including our lawns, are starting to leaf out again.

The University of Florida website Gardening Solutions is very user friendly, and if you enjoy reading about your areas of interest, be it native plants, shrubs, trees, or vegetables, you could start here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc-t56umj>. It will certainly help me to keep my New Year's resolution: to make my landscape more wildlife friendly, using native plants as well as Florida-Friendly plants (<https://tinyurl.com/yc3pt6jt>) to supply food, shelter, and water for my non-human neighbors. Have a Happy New Year, everyone!

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## Golf tips from T Shot Ranch Seeing is Not Believing

By Janie C. Farina  
mail@floridanewslines.com

*"Don't believe what your eyes are telling you, all they show is limitation. Believe with your understanding, find out what you already know, and you'll see the way to fly."*

-From "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" by Richard Bach

Recently I took two of my novice golf students to the actual playing field — the golf course — for the very first time. I was curious to see what their priorities would be when we got up to the first tee. Both players calculated yardage and club selection. Great!

Both proceeded to tee the ball up in the middle of the tee markers, without a clue as to where the best spot to tee the ball up was (right or left, back or front, level or not.)

Both players took several practice swings staring face down at the ball, gripping the club several times, getting the ball position and stance comfortable, then looking at the target from the side several times, shifting more and more to the right of the target line with each step.

Oops! The wheels came off right then and there...

The first player hit the ball exactly where she was aiming: way right. The other player yanked it way left coming across the target line with a big pull. The entire middle of the golf hole remained untouched, along with the putting cup remaining empty from two feet out.

I could hear myself repeating, to no avail, "Get back behind the ball looking at the target; don't take practice swings unless

you refocus behind the ball looking with both eyes before placing your feet; tee off on the same side of the tee box as the trouble; pick a level lie off the tee; get your distance first putting; and play more break ...."

By the time we got to the second hole, both players were clearly frustrated.

Why, when these players have great looking golf swings, do their golf shots resemble a bird hit by gunshot? Simply put, each player's aim was not on the right flight path, resulting in a ball flight offline zig zagging to each side of the fairway. Likewise, a putt/approach shot too short, too low on a slope, too far right/left will dodge the intended target every time.

By the third hole, these players were picking better spots to tee off, playing away, not facing, the trouble on the tee box, lining up from behind the ball after a practice swing, aiming for more slope/break from tee through green, prioritized "speed/ distance" on approaches and putts.

Priorities shifted to focus on the destination of the ball versus how to "fly." The result: my players started to settle into a productive formation that showed and greater understanding of ball flight patterns and course/ball migration.

So, if your golf game looks great on the "runway" or driving range, and takes a nosedive on the golf course, reroute, refocus, re-prioritize your thoughts with a better understanding of ball and golf course conditions that affect flight patterns.

Keep it fun...Remember to keep the flow and let it go!

## Fishing

### Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka  
mail@floridanewslines.com



Photo courtesy Patty L. Powl

Grouper season runs through the end of December. This was Fruit Cove resident Patty L. Powl in December of last year in Steinhatchee, Fla. This grouper was caught on a boat called the Blue Diamond and the bait used was squid.

Just like birds and people, many species of fish head south for the winter. Also, just like birds and people, these many species of fish make Florida their final winter destination. And finally, just like birds and people, the further south these fish decide to travel, the more crowded their final destination becomes.

As many areas of South Florida's populations seem to double with the arrival of winter visitors, many may not realize that what's happening on land is also happening at sea. As a matter of fact while much of our North Florida fishing season comes to peak over summer, much of South Florida's fishing peaks over the winter.

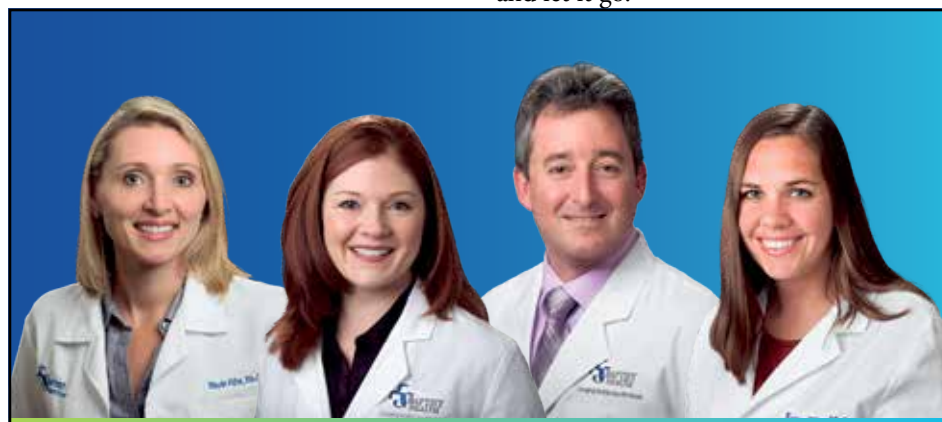
Fishing our areas of North Florida over the winter can often be hit and miss, and sometimes even be flat out difficult depending on the weather. With a narrower list of species to target, often winter days fishing are spent with thoughts of spring, and the soon-to-be onslaught of springtime fishing. Just in case anyone has forgotten, we live in Florida — the Fishing Capital of the World! We don't have to wait for spring to happen here.

With more than 7,700 lakes, 10,500 miles of rivers, and 2,276 miles of tidal shoreline, there is always someplace to fish nearby in Florida. Because we live in Florida, just a two or three hour ride

south, you can leave the hit and miss fishing and a cold winter day, and enjoy some spring-type weather and spring-type fishing. Add a couple more hours of travel time south, and more than likely you'll be able to enjoy some "feels like summer weather" and enjoy some "seems like summer" type fishing. Not only do you get to bring some fish back home to the fryer, you also just might get to bring back a little bit of sunburn for others to admire.

Fishing Report: Intracoastal speckled trout is always worth a try. Winter Speckled Perch (Crappie) fishing should be warming up in area lakes and creeks. Always give a pretty day a chance. Manatees have moved into area springs. Try Blue Springs State Park (Deland/ Orange City) to see dozens at one time. Be sure to pack a picnic.

Whether you catch one, some, or none, the family time spent fishing will last a lifetime.



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# Travel

## Sky high fun in Sevierville

By Debi Lander  
mail@floridanewline.com

Old style leather flying helmet on my head, goggles over my eyes, and a scarf wrapped around my neck: I'm ready to take flight, feeling like Amelia Earhart and those 1920s barnstormers. Actually, I am ready for my photo op. Pilot Marc Hightower at Sky High Air Tours, based in Sevierville's Gatlinburg Pigeon Forge Regional Airport, snaps my pic.

Then he says, "If you'd like you can take off the helmet and let the wind blow through my hair." I do.

Marc instructs me about the biplane and plans for a circuitous flight over historic Sevierville, Pigeon Forge and the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I anxiously sit in the 1927 Model 10 WACO Straight Wing biplane waiting for the miracle of flight. Marc took three-and-a-half years to rebuild the aircraft, his baby, and the engine was fully overhauled. I am more reassured knowing that he has been flying visitors in this area for the past seven years.

Headphones allow me to hear the control tower and communicate with the pilot. Air traffic controllers clear us for



Photos courtesy Debi Lander  
The author at her photo shoot before the biplane ride.

takeoff and this flying machine lifts with ease on its feather-light fabric covered wings. To me, aeronautics remains a mystery, but I am tingling with glee as we ascend. I don't just feel the breeze blowing through my hair; I feel the wind beneath my wings.

Marc's voice comes through the headphones, muted yet comforting. He points out areas of interest: "There's the

clock tower on the courthouse in downtown Sevierville." The spot has become an Instagram icon, beckoning people from all over the world to pose in front of the bronze statue of Dolly Parton. Dolly's considered Sevierville's favorite daughter, pretty much responsible for tourism and thousands of jobs in the region. She funds a reading program for preschoolers and contributed millions to nearby Gatlinburg residents who lost their homes in the 2017 wildfires.



Sevierville's own, Dolly Parton.

The struts or wing supports partially obstruct my view, but I'm feeling the glorious freedom and connection with the sky, remarkably different from sitting in a pressurized cabin of a jet. We fly like birds, low and slow about 1,200 feet and 90 miles per hour. I spy the sprawling Wilderness in the Smokies Resort, the hotel's water park easily identifiable and many cabins available for rent. We pass over the upscale Tangier Outlet

Mall that attracts thousands of happy shoppers.

Taking photos becomes a challenge, but I want to document the experience. When you twist your upper body to the side, a sharp blast of air hits you. Whoa! Be sure to put the camera strap around your neck and restrain your sunglasses. Slowly, the plane circles around mist that looks like smoke rising from the mountains — the reason they were named the Smoky Mountains. Then, I get a head-on peek at Dollywood and the amusement rides. A family can have some serious fun in Sevierville.

I want to linger, but introductory biplane rides only last about 20 minutes. We fly lower as we head back toward the airport. Before long we descend and roll down the runway. My open cockpit ride is over way too soon, but I was literally blown away with my step back to the Golden Age of Aviation. Like Charles A. Lindbergh said, "Sometimes, flying feels too godlike to be attained by man. Sometimes, the world from above seems too beautiful, too wonderful, too distant for human eyes to see." I must agree.

Visit [www.skyhighairtours.com](http://www.skyhighairtours.com) for more information.

Visit [www.bylandersea.com](http://www.bylandersea.com) to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.



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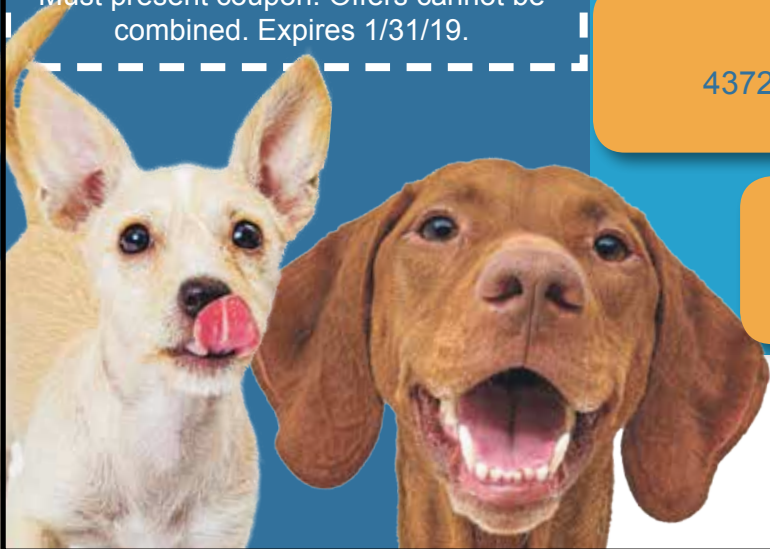
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