

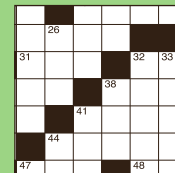
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Choose your Nutcracker

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

“The Nutcracker” is believed by many to be a time-honored holiday tradition. In Northeast Florida, the tradition continues with five productions of the ballet this December. Since each performance is unique, following is a guide highlighting the dates, times and locations of each to help you choose “your” Nutcracker.



Photos by MetroCreative

Community Nutcracker

Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 14 at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Florida Theatre
www.jaxnutcracker.org

Artistic Directors Dulce Anaya, Debra Rankin and Mark Spivak continue this holiday tradition which began in 1992. Community Nutcracker is the only nonprofit, volunteer-run organization that offers a portion of its proceeds to local charitable agencies, particularly Dreams Come True, with each performance — and has donated more than \$750,000 in the past 28 years. The performing company is made up of local talent with more than 200 dancers ranging in age from nine to adult from Northeast Florida

Nutcracker cont. on pg. 20

Annual Julington Creek Boat Parade to spread holiday cheer

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

The annual Julington Creek Boat Parade known as “Christmas on the Creek” returns Saturday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. to delight spectators with festive lights and holiday cheer. The community is invited to come out and enjoy the display.

Established in 1988, this annual event has an estimated 40 boats of all shapes, sizes, and themes that participate in the event. Boats decked out in all their holiday finery navigate the parade route, which begins at the Marina at Julington Creek, goes underneath the Julington Creek Bridge and around Bulls Bay, then returns under the bridge and continues down Durbin Creek. Spectators can view the boat parade from the Julington Creek Bridge walkways.

“It’s just amazing when you’re driving your boat under the Julington Creek Bridge and the people are watching from the bridge and cheering and yelling ‘Merry Christmas!’” Julington Creek Prop Club Vice Commodore Cyndi Marler said.

Marler has participated in the boat parade for four years and said she loves the joyous atmosphere. Boats play Christmas music and people on the boats sing and dance.

Homeowners with docks along the route also join in the fun by decorating their docks and cheering on the festive boats as they pass by, adding to the jovial spectacle.

Cash prizes are awarded to the best decorated boat and all participating boats also receive a gift bag. Marler said there is a judging boat at the end of the creek near the St.

Johns River that the boats pass on the parade route. The dock judged to be the best decorated by the boat captains as they parade by is similarly awarded a prize.

Fireworks conclude the festivities and then after the parade, the captains and all the boaters are invited back to the Julington Creek Marina for the after party, which features live music and food.



Photos courtesy Julington Creek Prop Club

“Christmas on the Creek” returns Saturday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m.

“It’s a nice time for those who are not club members to learn more about the Julington Creek Prop Club,” Marler said.

Christmas on the Creek is sponsored by the Julington Creek Prop Club, which starts preparing for the event in October by contacting boaters, area merchants and residents to gather donations for the event. Approximately half of the boats participating in the parade are Prop Club members; the other half come from all over the area to join in the seasonal celebration.

The Julington Creek Prop Club is a social organization of boaters that meets on the second Saturday of

each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Marina at Julington Creek. Annual dues provide most of the funds for Christmas on the Creek. All interested boaters are invited to join the Prop Club for boating information and fun. View the club’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/jcpropclub/ for more information.



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The CreekLine Community Newspaper is a free monthly publication distributed via mail to all addresses in Zip Codes 32259 and selected routes in 32092 and 32095. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2019.



BFF Best Furry Friend of the month



Meet Lilica!

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Morkie

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FAVORITE TREAT:
Pup-Peroni

FAVORITE FRIEND:
My 6-year-old owner Leticia

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:
Leticia chose this name for her first dog.

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

Holiday Gift Guide

Pgs 12-14

Happy Holidays!

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around town

Dec. 2
Current Events Discussion Group
 10 a.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
 Amenities Annex, 625 Market St., Palencia
 adsilby@yahoo.com

Dec. 3
First Coast Newcomers Club Christmas Party/Lunch with music/trivia/games
 1 p.m.
 St. Augustine location
 RSVP (904) 829-0643

Dec. 4
Jacksonville Camera Club
 6:45 p.m.
 Shepherd of the Woods Church, 6595 Columbia Park Ct.
 www.jax.jaxcameraclub.com (repeating event, first and third Wednesdays)

Dec. 5
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

Dec. 5
Rotary Club of Bartram Trail
 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)
 Westminster Woods, 25 State Road 13
 www.bartramtrailrotary.org/

Dec. 6
Crafty Women: An Ornament Trio
 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
 Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd.
 (904) 827-6960

Dec. 6
Rotary Club of St. Johns meeting
 7:30 a.m. (repeating event on Fridays)
 St. Johns Golf and Country Club Clubhouse
 www.rotarystjohns.org

Dec. 9
Living with Lung Cancer Support Network
 6 p.m.
 Ackerman Cancer Center, 10881 San Jose Blvd.
 RSVP: (904) 880-5522

Dec. 7
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

Dec. 10
Bartram Tuesday Book Discussion: "Winter Storms" by Elin Hilderbrand
 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd.
 (904) 827-6960

Dec. 10
Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club luncheon
 11 a.m.
 Marywood Retreat and Conference Center, 235 Marywood Drive
 RSVP by Dec. 3; bartramtnc@gmail.com

Dec. 10
First Coast Card Club - Christmas Holiday Cards event
 12:50 p.m.
 St. Augustine Library
 Bring treats to share. RSVP: (904) 814-9612

Dec. 10
Newcomers of North St. Johns luncheon featuring entertainment by Roger Dodd and Johnny Piantadosi
 11 a.m.
 The Florida Yacht Club, 5210 Yacht Club Road.
 RSVP by Dec. 4: sjaird@comcast.net

Dec. 11
Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Support
 3:30 p.m.
 River Garden, 11401 Old St. Augustine Road
 Repeating event on the second Wednesday of each month

Dec. 12
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

Dec. 13
Bartram Friday Book Club: Reader's Choice Month
 10 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
 Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd.
 (904) 827-6960

Dec. 14
Friends of the Library Book Sale
 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 Bartram Trail Branch Library
 (904) 827-6960

Dec. 14
Family seining
 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
 Guana Dam, 505 Guana River Road
 (904) 823-4500

Dec. 16
All Star Quilt Guild Christmas Party
 10 a.m.
 First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd.
 www.orgsites.com/fl/allstarquiltguild or
 (904) 735-0506

Dec. 17
World Golf Village Toastmasters
 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
 First Florida Credit Union, 1950 County Road 210W
 Worldgolfvillage.toastmastersclubs.org

Dec. 17
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

Dec. 17
St. Johns CARES planning meeting
 6:30 p.m.
 Celebration Lutheran Church, 810 Roberts Road
 www.stjohnscares.org

Dec. 17
Happy Hookers crochet group
 6 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.
 Bartram Trail Branch Library
 (904) 827-6960

Dec. 21
Fruit Cove Cruise In sponsored by Sunshine State Chevilles
 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
 PDQ parking lot, 194 State Road 13
 Repeating event on third Saturday of each month

Dec. 21
Herbal Medicine for Beginners
 10 a.m.
 Garden of Eatin', Lake Beluthahatchee
 Pre registration required: (386) 972-1891

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take 5

County golf course attempts Guinness World Record

St. Johns Golf Club, 4900 Cypress Lakes Blvd. in Elkton, is attempting to break the Guinness World Record for “Most Participants to Hit a Golf Ball into a Target Area simultaneously” on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. All golfers are invited to attend; the golf club is aiming for 120 participants to beat the existing record of 70 people. Participation is free, but guests must bring a golf club to hit a 100-yard shot. All participants will receive a commemorative golf ball. Advance sign-up is required to reserve a spot. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/yydhw886> to sign up.

Newcomers to celebrate the season

Newcomers of North Saint Johns will hold its December luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 10 beginning at 11 a.m. at The Florida Yacht Club, 5210 Yacht Club Road. The event features a delicious lunch and entertainment by Roger Dodd and Johnny Piantadosi, who will lead attendees in singing holiday and popular songs. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$30 for members and \$35 for guests. Two luncheon choices will be offered, bronzed chicken with andouille dirty rice and seared pork loin with apple raisin compote, and all entrées include a BLT salad, iced tea or

coffee and key lime pie with pina colada sauce for dessert. A cash bar is also available. All reservations must be received by Dec. 4. Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net to register for the luncheon or for more information about the Newcomers of North St. Johns.

Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital announces “Paris in Full Bloom” Art & Antiques Show

The Women’s Board of Wolfson Children’s Hospital will welcome nationally acclaimed lecturers and internationally recognized art and antiques dealers to the annual Art & Antiques Show, Dec. 6 – 8, at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center in downtown Jacksonville. Proceeds fund state-of-the-art services, programs, equipment and facilities to provide healthcare for all children in the Northeast Florida/Southeast Georgia region. Show hours are from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Friday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Saturday and 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. on Sunday. Daily admission to the show is \$15 and lecture tickets are \$30. Tickets are available online at www.artandantiquesshow.com, by email at womensboard@bmcjax.com or by calling (904) 202-2886.

Santa to make phone calls to St. Johns County children

St. Johns County Parks and Recreation

Department has partnered with the North Pole Telephone Company for the annual phone calls from Santa, Dec. 10 – Dec. 12.

Parents with children under the age of eight can sign up to have Santa call their child at home between 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Visit www.sjcff.us/youth and download the request form; email or fax completed forms to abrown@sjcff.us or (904) 209-0321. Santa will be making his calls at no charge; request forms must be received by 5 p.m. on Dec. 6 so Santa may finalize his call schedule.



Photo by MetroCreative

St. Augustine Orchestra starts Christmas music season with “Happiest of Holidays” concerts

The St. Augustine Orchestra will kick off the city’s first holiday concerts of the season on Wednesday, Dec. 4 and Thursday, Dec. 5 at the Lightner Museum at 8 p.m. each night. The city’s namesake orchestra will be presenting more than a dozen holiday classics, including the Nutcracker, Hugh

Martin’s “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” and Mel Torme’s “Christmas Song,” Bill Holcombe’s “’Twas the Night Before Christmas,” “Concert Suite” from “Frozen” by Kristen Anderson-Lopez, and music from the movie “Elf” by John Debney. They will be accompanied by Lee Weaver and by the St. Augustine High School Chorus. Ticket prices are \$27.50 for adults; \$12 for youths 11 – 17 and free for children 10 and younger. Visit <https://staugustineorchestra.ticketleap.com/holiday-sao2019/> for general seating tickets.



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

Q: The holiday season is upon us, which unfortunately often means that scammers are out in full force. Do you have any tips to avoid being taken advantage of?

A: The irony of the season is that among the goodwill, gifts, and parties, there is an opportunity for scammers to take advantage of the generosity of the community. I have a few things to look out for.

First, the old adage “If it seems too good to be true, it probably is” is a true one. Don’t let your wish to save a few dollars cost you more in the long run. Be skeptical and do your due diligence with things like online shopping and donation solicitations. If you are buying online, shop at legitimate retailers with secure websites. For donation solicitations, be wary of phone calls asking for money for seemingly good causes. Call local organizations like the VFW to determine if they are truly behind the phone call asking for money to fund a veteran’s Christmas dinner.

Parents, look out for your children who are susceptible to scams with their online presence. Make sure they know that if they are meeting someone they don’t know to do a transaction, such as from Craigslist, to meet someplace safe, like at the sheriff’s department or police department parking lot. Take some

time to educate your kids and instill in them the patience to do their own due diligence so they don’t get ripped off.

Q: Do you have any other holiday season tips?

A: I’d like to also stress to people to enjoy their time with family and to enjoy food and alcohol responsibly. Don’t over indulge and if you do, there are many options to get home safely including Uber, Lyft and taxis. Or just stay at the location of the party.

Finally, what with people visiting, family decisions as to where to spend the holidays and potential financial burdens due to the time of the year, there is a lot of family stress. Unfortunately, we see domestic violence cases increase at this time of the year. If you are in a domestic violence situation, in St. Johns County, the Betty Griffin House offers counseling, emergency shelter and relocation. EPIC Community Services also offers family, alcohol and substance abuse counseling. These are all available for anyone to use — and please do, so you don’t need to have contact with law enforcement or the State Attorney’s office.

I’d like to wish everyone in our community peace, love and joy over the Holiday Season.



Photos courtesy Chuck Mulligan

Local gymnast to become Michigan Wolverine

On Nov. 13, St. Johns County resident Jenna Mulligan officially signed to continue her gymnastics career at the University of Michigan, where she will be a member of the Wolverines gymnastics team. Mulligan is a senior at the Bolles School, where she is a member of the National Honor Society and the National Spanish Honor Society and carries a cumulative 4.11 grade point average. She is an 11-time state qualifier, six-time regional qualifier and qualified for level 10 Nationals in 2018. She has earned four state championships — one in bars, two in vault and one All-Around Champion title. She also holds the first place Beam Champion title in the 2016 regionals competition. Mulligan intends to pursue a major in biology with a pre-med track and a minor in Spanish and aspires to become a neurosurgeon. She has attended Gymnastics United, founded in 1987 by owner and head coach Lisa Beadle, for six years. Since its inception, Gymnastics United has assisted 17 young women achieve their academic goals through athletic scholarships and team offerings from colleges across the country.

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with St. Johns County School Board Member, Beverly Slough, District 1

Q: St. Johns County continues to grow. Does the school district have plans for additional schools beyond the recently announced new High School HHH and K-8 School MM?

A: At our meeting in November, the school board approved our latest five year plan for facilities. In addition to High School HHH and K-8 School MM, we are planning for another K-8 and another high school, in addition to two school expansions, one of which will be to Liberty Pines Academy.

Q: Do you know where these additional new schools will be located?

A: We have several school sites available as possibilities. The exact location will depend upon where the people are. For a high school, we have sites available in Twin Creeks (the Beachwalk community) and Silverleaf. We actually have several sites in the Twin Creeks DRI (Development of Regional Impact).

Q: How will these schools be funded?

A: We have a large bond — that was used to build Creekside High School and Ponte Vedra High School among others — that will mature in 2021 and free up about \$150 million in bonding capacity. This is enough to build a few schools.

Q: When do you expect zoning conversations to start for High School HHH and K-8 School MM?

A: Both schools are scheduled to open in fall 2021. Zoning for the high school will start in winter 2020. It takes a long time for high school zoning to be finalized, due to the complexity of high school scheduling. Zoning for the K-8 school will start in winter 2021. We will get a lot of input from the community and stakeholders in the process. After the first of next year, we expect to be announcing community meetings to begin the zoning discussion for the high school.

Q: Will any of these schools have capacity for controlled open enrollment?

A: In accordance with the school dis-

trict's controlled open enrollment procedures, new schools will not be eligible until the completion of the third year of operation. In fact, only three schools in St. Johns County will have capacity next year: PVPV Rawlings and The Webster School for elementary students and Murray Middle School. There are 379 total elementary spots available and 153 middle school spots. The window to apply is January through March of next year. If we receive more requests than we have spots available, then a lottery will be held.

Q: Do you have an update to share on teacher contracts?

A: We recently approved the latest teacher contract and I'm happy to say we are giving a nice raise to our teachers as well as increasing beginning teacher pay by \$1,000 to \$39,000. We are also raising substitute teacher pay from \$12 to \$15 per hour as well as bus driver pay in an effort to attract more of both. As the community grows, we need more of all these employees.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 1?

A: I'd like to congratulate Kelly Barrera for a wonderful year as chairman of the school board and I'm grateful for her leadership. The school board operates on a rotating basis for chairmanship, and I'm set to be the new chairman with Patrick Canan serving as vice chairman. Long ago, the school board decided that if someone is strong enough of a leader to be elected, they were strong enough of a leader to serve as chair, so that's why we rotate.

I'd also like to wish everyone a safe and happy and healthy Holiday Season.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

A: They can email me at beverly.slough@stjohns.k12.fl.us or call me at (904) 547-7510.



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

Q: Can you give some background on the recent closure of the Mickler's Beach parking lot?

A: First of all, the contractor working on the current beachfront restoration project is working for the private party homeowners. Initially, the Board of County Commissioners listened to the request from the homeowners' contractor about using 25 percent of the Micker's parking lot for staging equipment. Somehow, through some miscommunication, things got changed and the entire lot was blocked, negatively impacting the well being of the community.

Q: What is being done now?

A: At our last meeting the commissioners discussed how staff could rectify this. We don't want to have additional expense to the taxpayers and we charged county administration to resolve the situation immediately. I've apologized to all who have sent me emails. This should not have happened and should not happen again. We will learn from it and we're putting more protocols in place for better communication internally. *Editor's Note: The Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously on Nov. 19 to end County Administrator Michael Wanchik's contract due to "lack of confidence."*

Q: What about the issue of the actual work being done by the beachfront homeowners?

A: The project restoration work being done by the private contractor is permitted through the State of Florida. St. Johns County is an affected party, but we have no say so in what or how beach restoration takes place. But just because we don't have control over the permitting doesn't mean we don't have a voice. So we would still like to know if anyone has questions or concerns and they can contact me or the other com-

missioners. This is a microcosm of how complicated beach restoration is for 42 miles of St. Johns County beaches and it's an opportunity to education others and myself.

Q: Can you shed some light on how the commission is handling the \$15 million budget surplus?

A: This money has been allocated to a broad spectrum of needs throughout the county, including parks and recreation, beach restoration, and infrastructure improvements. Staff has been charged to bring to the Board of County Commissioners specific timelines and realistic budget estimates for specific projects within these areas.

This surplus gives us an opportunity to go beyond the core health, safety and welfare of the county, which thankfully we have covered. But we need to identify whether this surplus is a one time event or a trend, so we can look forward to whether we can tackle the backlog of maintenance issues or perhaps decrease taxes into the future. For instance, should we restore staff and library hours to existing libraries before building a new library that we will have to maintain into the future? This is the type of thing we have asked our staff to determine.

Q: Is there a timeline for when any projects will be determined?

A: We want to get all the projects available as a group and staff needs time to develop this. The first step is to identify projects that will benefit the most people in the county. There is still time for public input and we will be holding public meetings at a time and date to be determined.

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.



FYI Contact Numbers

St. Johns County Local Government (www.sjcfl.us)
 Sheriff's Office: Sheriff David B. Shoar, dshoar@sjso.org, (904) 824-8304
 Jurlington Creek Field Office: (904) 209-2150
 Property Appraiser: Eddie Creamer, sjcpa@sjcpa.us; (904) 827-5500
 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

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State House District 17: Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov, (904) 823-2300

State Senate District 7: Senator Travis Hutson, (386) 446-7610

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CHS divers hurdle to new heights

By Heidy Brososky-Weaver
mail@floridanewslines.com

Call it what you want: physics in action or aerial gymnastics. Either way, diving is a popular spectator sport, and Creekside High School's three divers know it also requires extreme mental toughness, dedication to 12 hours of weekly practice, and the occasional belly flop.



Photo courtesy Heidy Brososky-Weaver
CHS divers Trinity McNall, Madison Kellam, and Brooke Shon

Although three seems like a small number for a sports team, it is actually a "fair size," according to Nathan Schreiber, who has assisted with CHS's diving team for the past three years. He says only four divers can score for a team at a championship meet. "Any more than that would mean you would have to leave someone home, which is never an easy decision to make," Schreiber says.

The trio, consisting of junior Trinity McNall and sophomores Madison Kellam and Brooke Shon, is "our most successful team to date," according to Schreiber. All three did well in regionals, with McNall placing third. She then placed seventh at the state meet in mid-November.

Recently, McNall moved from Wisconsin to dive year-round in Florida's warmer climate with a goal of earning a scholarship to a Division 1 school. Originally, McNall aspired to be an Olympic gymnast, but she switched sports seven years ago. "Diving is not as hard on your body," she says. "Also, my mom was a diver, and I've always liked being in the water."

Meanwhile, Brooke Shon changed to diving from swimming after injuring her shoulder. Shon finds her biggest challenge is learning to take her time. "Swimming is much more fast-paced," she says. Thanks to nine years of gymnastics, Shon has a strong technical background and is not afraid to attempt various dives.

Madison Kellam agrees gymnastics provides a solid foundation for divers. The former gymnast says that diving is similar in that it "gets you out of your comfort zone, and once I accomplish a dive, I feel stronger."

During high school championship competitions, divers are required to complete 11 dives from five different categories: fronts, backs, reverses (or gainers, as most people know them), inwards, and twisters. Of course, they have their favorites and their least favorites.

"I don't like front dives," Kellam says.
"I don't like reverses," McNall rebuffs.
As for Shon, she prefers not to do twist-ers.

Regardless of the dive, Schreiber reminds his team that hard work pays off. "Never walk away from practice wishing you would have done what you wanted," he says. As a coach, Schreiber says success comes "when that 'Ah Ha' moment finally happens, and you start seeing athletes realizing their full potential to overcome major obstacles."

Because of the small number of divers in the area, the trio practices at The Bolles School, sharing a 1-meter springboard with drivers from other schools. In addition, they travel to Florida State University in Tallahassee and the University of Florida in Gainesville for practice on 3-meter springboards and tower boards.

While diving may seem like a lonely sport, McNall says it is quite the opposite. "We all encourage each other, and we're like one big 'ole family."

Schreiber agrees. He started club diving at age 10 and dove collegiately with Louisiana State University before becoming a professional diver at Sea World for six years. Now, he is an assistant coach working under head coach Courtney Gills at Atlantic Coast Diving Jax, where divers practice and compete year-round. Atlantic Coast Diving provides coaching support to Tracy DaCosta, Creekside's head swim and dive coach, and to other schools, too.

"Diving provided me with friendships, experiences, opportunities, and life lessons — as well as giving me some great mentors throughout my career," Schreiber says. Now, he adds, "this is my chance to give back."

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

MarketInsight



The Right Tool For The Job

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

Duke Kahanamoku, the father of modern surfing, won his first gold medal at the 1912 Olympics in the 100-meter freestyle. The Games were held in Stockholm and were the last before World War I. The world would not see another Olympics until 1920.

The 1912 Olympics are perhaps best remembered for the heroics of Jim Thorpe. The American superstar won both the decathlon and the pentathlon. At the awards ceremony, King Gustav of Sweden presented the medal for the decathlon with the words, "Sir, you are the greatest athlete in the world." Thorpe's two-word response: "Thanks, King." Thorpe was stripped of both medals in 1913 when it was discovered he had been paid to play baseball, violating the amateur code.

Those games are also remembered for the marathon. At that time marathoners did not believe in drinking water. It was an unusually hot day. Half of the field was forced out of the race. A Portuguese runner died of heat exhaustion. A Japanese runner named Shizo Kanakuri lost consciousness and collapsed. Ashamed of his "failure," he returned home without notifying Olympic officials. The Japanese runner would remain an official "missing person" in Sweden for more than five decades. Then, in 1967, when it was discovered he was still alive, Shizo was invited back to Sweden to finish the race. His official time of 54 years, 8 months, 6 days, 8 hours, 32 minutes and 20.3 seconds is the slowest in Olympic history. "It was a long trip," he remarked. "Along the way, I got married, had six children and 10 grandchildren."

Another American hero also competed in the 1912 Olympics. He is arguably more famous today than any other early Olympian, but not for his performance

in the games. George S. Patton competed in the modern pentathlon. This was the first appearance of the event, which included running, fencing, swimming, horseback riding, and shooting. Patton finished well in four of the five events and would have medaled except for a poor performance in the shooting event. Most of the competitors used a .22. Patton considered that to be unmanly, so he used a .38 which blew huge holes in the target. Officials decided one of his five shots missed the target altogether. Patton said the shot passed through one of the holes his previous shots had made.

George S. Patton would go on to lead American soldiers to victories in two wars. He would become almost as famous for his pistols as his victories. In North Africa he tried to shoot down an attacking German aircraft with a pistol. Patton won dozens of medals during his military career. The only medal that eluded him was that Olympic medal.

A .38 caliber revolver is a fine gun, but it is not the right gun for target shooting or shooting down enemy fighter planes. In investing, it is equally important to use the right tool. If you are unsure which tool to use, ask someone who is not trying to sell you something. Speaking of the right tool for the job, in 1925 Duke Kahanamoku was giving a surfing demonstration near Newport Beach when a fishing trawler capsized. Seventeen of the 29 people on board died. Duke rescued eight men using his surfboard. Turns out that a surfboard is a great life saving tool.

Scott A. Grant is a local author, historian, columnist, and speaker. He is president of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.



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Spotlight on NBC

Meet Lena Hull of VyStar Credit Union

North Business Council program chair Lena Hull said she considers herself a St. Augustine native — and with good reason, as she attended Gamble Rogers Middle School, St. Augustine High School and graduated with a degree in English from Flagler College. While in college, she worked a few days a week at a bank, but still planned to teach English when she earned her degree. Soon, she realized that wasn't a great fit for her and she remembered fondly her time in the financial industry. She said she had always heard good things about VyStar, so she made a career change and has now been with the company for 13 years. She started as lead teller and over the years worked as a member relationship specialist, as a trainer in the training department and also spent some time in the marketing department. This year, she is celebrating her second year at the County Road 210 branch, where she is the member relationship supervisor. She is married to Josh Hull, a vice president at VyStar's Nocatee branch. The two met at work and have been married for 11 years.

Q: What exactly do you do as a member relationship supervisor at VyStar?

A: My main responsibility is coaching and developing our team of six member specialists at the County Road 210 branch. The member specialists do everything from helping our members open new accounts to handling loan requests, to setting up trust accounts and powers of attorney.

Q: What do you do in your spare time?

A: My husband and I like to travel and spend time with family. We are also

very active in our church. And recently I did get the opportunity to go back to my roots and teach — I'm an adjunct professor at the University of North Florida, where I earned my master's degree in English in 2017. I teach one section of a business writing class per semester, which allows me to share my real world business experience.



Photo courtesy Lena Hull
Lena Hull

Q: How long have you been involved with the North Business Council?

A: I've been involved with the council for about a year and a half. My goal for getting involved was to network and meet more people and business owners. I also hopefully would like to let people know about the services VyStar offers to business owners on the commercial side of the credit union.

Q: What are your responsibilities as program chair of the council?

A: As program chair, my main responsibility is to ensure quality programming for our meetings by lining up engaging speakers who can talk about relevant and interesting topics for business owners.

Q: What would you tell business owners about the North Business Council?

A: I would encourage any local business owner to get involved with the North Business Council. There is such a sense of community and camaraderie at the meetings. You can make meaningful connections and relationships.

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Photos courtesy Sharon Adams

Nease Band's "Wanderlust" earns awards

The Nease Marching Band just completed a successful marching season. During the month of October, the band won two class championships, and was named a top 10 finalist at a major national regional held in Orlando. It also received straight superiors at the MPA adjudication in Fernandina Beach. The Nease Band traveled to Fayette County High School in Georgia where it competed in the 35th annual Lafayette Classic. Despite less than ideal weather conditions, the ensemble performed beautifully and took home awards for percussion and color-guard, as well as winning the title of Grand Champions. In November, the Nease Band hosted its 2019 First Coast Marching Invitational. Ten bands from Florida to Georgia competed in the day long event, with Duncan U. Fletcher High School earning the Grand Championship. Nease had the opportunity to perform its award-winning show "Wanderlust" as an exhibition at this event. Led by band director, Anthony Cananzi, Jr., the Nease Band program receives strong support from parents and community volunteers. Contact the Nease Band Boosters at neasebandcommunications@gmail.com if you are interested in supporting the musicians and program or to ask questions in anticipation of your freshman coming to Nease High School.



Photo courtesy Heidi Karl

Singing Jags entertain at Fall Festival

Julington Creek Elementary School's "Singing Jags" chorus sang for River of Life's Fall Festival on Sunday, Oct. 20. The chorus, led by music teacher Kathe Isabelle, is comprised of third, fourth, and fifth graders who rehearse one hour a week after school.



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BTHS Happenings

National Honor Society preps for the holidays

By Delaney Cantrell
mail@floridanewslines.com

The main mission of Bartram Trail's National Honor Society is to help others in need through service. These students truly show their character during the holidays.

Amy Huber has been the sponsor of National Honor Society for four years and has witnessed many changes.

"We have worked on many projects both within our school community and our local community," said Huber. "One of the projects we have been most proud of is our cafeteria positive affirmation art wall."

While the National Honor Society has expanded its horizons on community projects, Huber hopes to see an improvement in the general sense of school pride among the student population. She is also seeking students who would be interested in working on a campaign to educate the student population on the dangers associated with the vaping epidemic, which is running rampant in high schools everywhere.

Bartram Trail's National Honor Society consists of 365 hard-working, service-seeking students. A 3.75 GPA is required to be inducted into the club, as well as a completed application and a minimum of 30 service hours at the time of application.

"My goal as the sponsor of NHS is to help coach and develop leadership skills



Photo courtesy Delaney Cantrell
Bartram Trail National Honor Society

among the students who are interested in NHS," said Huber. "For the club as a whole, my goal is that every student finds plenty of service opportunities that are appealing to their interests."

The holidays are a busy time for the club as it is a great time to help those in need. One project that has already been in effect is the Treats for Troops drive. Students are able to donate their leftover Halloween candy which will go to troops deployed overseas. Last year, the National Honor Society donated more than 300 pounds of candy.

Thanksgiving Day baskets will also be donated to families in the district who are unable to afford their own Thanksgiving meal. Coat and jacket drives for students in St. Johns County will also be implemented, as well as a Giving Tree, which will allow students to purchase gifts for a certain child in need.

"Bartram Trail students are always looking for great ways to get involved in our community," said Huber. "We are happy to help with any projects that may need student helpers, and we are also interested in partnering with local businesses and non-profit agencies to brainstorm and get a project off to a successful start."

If any local businesses/agencies are looking for extra help, contact Amy Huber at amy.huber@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

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Hottest Holiday Gift Ideas from Your Local Businesses

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Shopping is a big part of the holiday season, when families and friends gather to reconnect and exchange gifts. The benefits of shopping locally go beyond convenience — shopping locally can directly benefit your community and the people who call it home. Put money back into the local economy and promote entrepreneurship; consider doing some of your holiday shopping in your community this year. Following are some suggested gift ideas by some of our local businesses:

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Hottest Holiday Gift Ideas cont. on pg. 13

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Happy Holidays

Hottest Holiday Gift Ideas cont. from pg. 12

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Hottest Holiday Gift Ideas cont. on pg. 14



- Retail gift boutique & creative workshop
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Happy Holidays

Hottest Holiday Gift Ideas cont. from pg. 13

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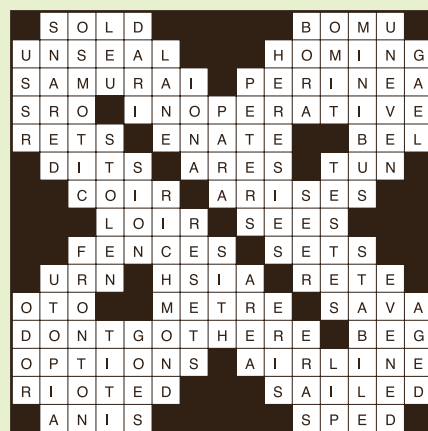
The staff has more than 100 years of combined jewelry experience and has served the Jacksonville area since 1984. Gold and Diamonds Direct carries a full line of diamond and colored stone merchandise, gold and silver chains, bracelets and earrings as well as a wide selection of pearls, watches and gift ideas. Our service department can repair your jewelry, change a watch battery and provide insurance appraisals. You can shop with confidence at our store. Gold and Diamonds Direct does not have to run sales (usually an illusion), but offers the lowest price every day. This Christmas, create a memory with gifts direct from Gold and Diamonds Direct, also known as Julington Creek Jewelers — and yes, gift wrapping is free.



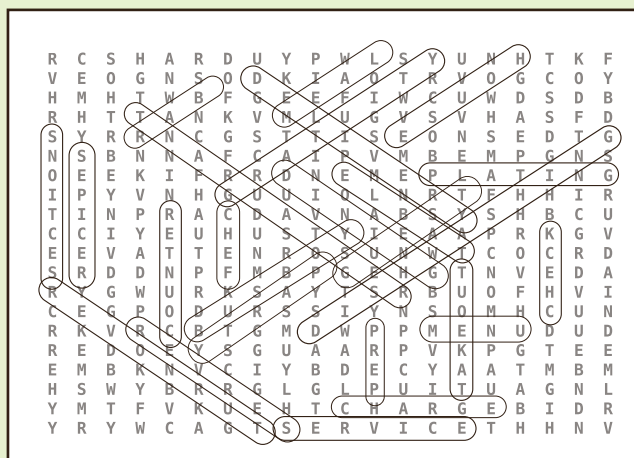
Answers to puzzles on page 18

Answers

to our
Puzzles



Answers: A. customer B. menu C. recipe D. reservation



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Briefs

Leap to the library for the holidays

The Bartram Trail Library is getting ready for the holidays. First the building received all new sprinklers and now it is getting new carpeting. The schedule for carpet replacement has not yet been verified, so watch the library home page and Facebook page for updates.

The special holiday book sale is on display through December. Every year people are amazed at the wondrous treasures to be found as gifts and for themselves. The regular book sale will be Saturday, Dec. 14. Friends of the Library members get early admittance to the sale at 9 a.m.

New board members for the Friends of the Library were recently elected for the 2020 year: Peg Cogswell, president; Mary Rice, vice-president and membership chair; and Joe Warner, treasurer. The position of secretary is still open. The board meets six times a year at the library and Jan. 14, 2020 will be the next meeting. New volunteers are welcome.

In May, the Bartram Trail Branch will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. There will be a special table of books on the subject and the Friends are seeking a veteran of the war to come and speak. If you know anyone, call the library at (904) 827-6960 and leave their name and phone number for Peg Cogswell. The library is also interested in old photos and letters to put together a memory wall.

Visit the Bartram Trail Friends of the Library's Facebook page it keep up with all that goes on at the Bartram Trail Branch Library.

Construction of new St. Johns River Bridge to begin in 2022

The Florida Department of Transportation will begin construction in fiscal year 2022 on a new bridge over the St. Johns River as part of the First Coast Expressway project, a year earlier than previously scheduled. The accelerated schedule was made possible by support from Gov. Ron DeSantis for a Public-Private Partnership to fund the design-build project.

The bridge will be constructed just south



Photo courtesy Florida Department of Transportation
The Florida Department of Transportation will begin construction on a new bridge over the St. Johns River in fiscal year 2022.

of the existing two-lane Shands Bridge and will include four travel lanes as well as emergency shoulders and a multi-use pathway for bicyclists and pedestrians. The vertical clearance of the new bridge will be 65 feet from the water line, compared to the current 45-foot clearance. The additional 20 feet will match the height of the Buckman Bridge and improve marine commerce in the region.

Construction of the new bridge is expected to cost approximately \$324 million and take about five years to complete, weather and unforeseen circumstances permitting.

The First Coast Expressway project is the result of a partnership between the Florida Department of Transportation District 2 and Florida's Turnpike Enterprise. This multi-lane, limited access, all-electronic toll facility project will ultimately span 46 miles across parts of Duval, Clay and St. Johns counties. Visit www.FirstCoastExpressway.com for more information.

Preschool hires new chief development officer

Development and management veteran Gordon Bass recently joined the team at the Jacksonville-based preschool group Deerwood Academy.

Bass brings a highly successful record of professional experience to the early childhood education centers, including positions with the federal government and in the nonprofit and private sectors. The new hire comes as Deerwood Academy seeks to expand its operations into additional campuses.

"It's an exciting time to join the Deerwood Academy team," Bass said. "Deerwood Academy's holistic approach to early childhood education is poised for growth, and I am delighted to use my experience to help the organization reach an even higher level of success."

Before joining Deerwood Academy, Bass served the U.S. Department of Energy as director of the Cybersecurity Operations Office and director of Implementation and Testing in Germantown, Md. His experience with the department includes assessing the security of the vital government agency's critical systems, developing risk management plans, and crafting an enterprise approach to security assessments and authorizations to save money and expedite the security review process.

His career history also includes roles as Chief of Information Security Branch and Program Manager of the Information Assurance Cyber Range at the Defense Information System Agency; Chief of Security Operations, Chief Information Security Officer, and Director of Systems Engineering at the American Red Cross; and Director of Management Information Systems at 24/7 Real Media, Inc. In each position, he led large teams to achieve organizational goals.

Bass's educational background includes an MBA from the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, a BS in Chemistry from Atlantic Union College, and a certification in Project Management.

St. Johns Reads 2020 book announced

The St. Johns County Public Library System is excited to announce that Delia Owens' "Where the Crawdads Sing" is the title for St. Johns Reads 2020. Plus this year's annual community-wide reading adventure will include a special 5K event, "Lace Up for Libraries."

Having written several books about her experiences in Africa, "Where the Crawdads Sing" is Owens' fiction debut and has spent more than a year on the New York Times bestsellers list. It is the story of an unforgettable young woman making her way alone in the wilds of North Carolina. The tale centers on her treatment by local society, and the story of the murder of a former local football hero.

This is the 15th year that the Library System has hosted St. Johns Reads. A variety of programs inspired by the chosen book are offered by all library locations throughout the month of February 2020, including food and art programs, movies, lectures, children's programs and much

more. Subject matter will range from Coastal Carolina cuisine to the flora and fauna of the South.

This year will feature the first-ever Library 5K in Nocatee, called "Lace Up for Libraries," to be held Feb. 29, 2020. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library of St. Johns County, through a partnership with Vystar Credit Union and the Community of Nocatee, "Lace Up for Libraries" will help raise funds for programming and author visits for future St. Johns Reads events.

Visit <https://laceupforlibraries5k.itsyourrace.com/event.aspx?id=12794> for more information or to sign up. Visit www.sjcpls.org for more information about St. Johns Reads 2020.

Baptist Health executive to retire

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer John F. Wilbanks, FACHE, has announced his plan to retire at the end of the calendar year. Wilbanks joined Baptist Health as Vice President of Professional Services in 1986.

Wilbanks' operational and strategic responsibility spans all five hospitals in the Baptist Health system, Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center, Baptist Physician Enterprise, all outpatient care campuses, as well as capital and construction planning, business development and innovation, nursing, and home health care.

Matt Zuino, who has more than 20 years of physician and hospital operations experience, will assume the role of Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Baptist Health in early January 2020. Zuino joined Baptist Health in 2017 as the President of Physician Integration.

Over Wilbanks' 15 year tenure as chief operating officer, the health system increased its market share with major hospital expansions, including the addition of Baptist South, Baptist Heart Hospital, and several freestanding emergency centers for children and adults. In addition, he was a key member of the executive committee that facilitated the partnership between Baptist Health and MD Anderson, the No. 1 cancer center in the nation. In 2017 and 2018, Wilbanks was named one of the Top 25 COOs in Healthcare by Modern Healthcare magazine.

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Get to Know . . .

Joiray Khalfani

By Cassy Fiano-Chesser
mail@floridanewslines.com



Photo courtesy Joiray Khalfani
Joiray Khalfani and family.

Joiray Khalfani was a New York girl who never thought she would live anywhere else. But after moving to Florida, she found a new home that offered her a second chance at love, and a friendly, welcoming community that felt like a vacation every day. A real estate agent, Khalfani loves to spend her time meeting new people, volunteering with the elderly, and as a self-professed foodie, enjoying the amazing food the First Coast has to offer.

1. How did you come to live in the St. Johns area?

I am originally from the Bronx, NY. I came down here after my mother and brother moved; I swore I would never leave the city, but I came to visit, and fell in love. It's been 20 years. I moved here right after Thanksgiving, and my first Christmas here was sunny, and people were barbecuing, and I was like, "What is this?" I got in the pool with Anthony in February. It's wonderful! But try to get me in the pool now in February — no way, Jose!

2. What made you decide to settle in Julington Creek?

We were in the Southside area at first, and I was married when I came down, like a year later. But my husband ended up passing away, and I was a widow with three children. And I was thinking to myself, "Where can I live where I can provide something good for my children?" I knew I couldn't send them to private school or anything like that. I wanted

to be in an area that had amenities, since as a single mom, I couldn't take them on all the vacations I could with their dad, but they could still have a good life, and feel like they were on vacation, with the amenities and swimming pool. And they have the good schools. St. Johns really gave me that homey feeling, helped me to feel complete, even if we couldn't do all the wonderful things we used to do. It helped them not feel the impact as much. They ended up feeling like, "Wow, we're at Disney World without being at Disney World!" They were very, very little when we moved here, and now my oldest is in the military, so that tells you how long we've been here.

3. What is your favorite thing about living in the St. Johns area?

It's family oriented. I got remarried, and we have seven children now — he had four kids, and I had three, so we have seven now. So I have two that have graduated from Bartram Trail, and three that are there now. There's such great community. We have Principal Anderson, who was at Cunningham Creek and now is my youngest son's principal at Freedom Crossing Academy. The best feeling you have here is community. You have to be involved with the people in your community, have a relationship, and I have that here.

4. You're a realtor now. What made you decide to pursue that career?

I've always had mortgage backgrounds. I've done everything from processing to underwriting. And what made me want

to be a realtor is that I wanted to be on the front end. I've always been on the back end, making deals happen. But I like talking to people; I like to be face-to-face, helping them solve problems. Not only can I help you find a house, but I can help tell you about rates, or why the underwriting does this or that. When I decided to do it, this is an example of community. I called Mark Greenwell, who our kids had played football with, and asked him what he thought. He brought me into the office, really guided me, and helped me get up and running.

5. What do you like to do in your spare time?

I'm a foodie! And I'm a people person. So we always like to find the best restaurants to eat, especially seafood. We love J. Alexander's carrot cake — it's the best, and I don't like carrot cake! They also have great crab cakes. Local in St. Johns though, I give my number one to Taps. They have great music, bands coming in, great wings. They have great drinks, too. It's one of my favorites. We like to watch movies, and I do a lot of reading on holistic foods and medicines. That's appealing to me.

Get to Know . . .

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Email Martie Thompson at
editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Girls on the Run to host semi-annual celebratory 5k

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

On Saturday, Dec. 7, Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida will host thousands of Girls on the Run participants, community runners and spectators at its celebratory 5k at the University of North Florida. The 5k is an un-timed fun-run for more than 900 Girls on the Run participants from schools and community sites throughout Northeast Florida. Celebrating with them will be volunteer coaches, event volunteers, running buddies, which are community runners and family members that encourage and run alongside each girl, as well as thousands of family members and friends that come to spectate and cheer.

Girls on the Run is a positive youth development program that uses activity-based lessons to teach life skills to girls in third through eighth grade. During the 10-week program, the lessons foster confidence, build peer connections and encourage community service, while preparing participants for the end-of-season 5k. In 2017, Girls on the Run was recognized as a top research-based social-emotional learning program by Harvard University and the Wallace Foundation. Dr. Stephanie Jones, lead researcher and expert in the field of social-emotional learning, labeled Girls on the Run a vanguard and acknowledged that there are few evidence-based programs like Girls on the Run that have been specifically designed for out-of-school time.

This groundbreaking study found that 97 percent of girls learned critical life skills at Girls on the Run — including managing emotions, resolving conflict, helping others or making intentional decisions — that they are using at home, at school and with their friends. The study affirms that at an age when girls are constantly trying to measure up to ideas of who they should be when they're still discovering who they are, Girls on the Run shows them that their potential isn't just enormous, it's beyond measure.

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Nutcracker cont. from pg. 1

auditioning and performing in the production. In an effort to promote the arts in schools, Community Nutcracker also offers performances on Dec. 12 and Dec. 13 at 10:30 a.m. for school groups as well as a Community Service Night (invitation only) on Thursday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m.

Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet
Dec. 14 at 6 p.m.
Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Department
www.missfeliciasdance.com

This year marks the 24th performance of the Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet, directed by Felicia Rhoden of the Christ Church Dance Ministry as well as owner of Miss Felicia's Dance. Nearly 300 performers, aged two to 90 years old, will take the stage. Proceeds from the performance support children with life threatening illnesses in the Dreams Come True Foundation, Community PedsCare and the Amistad Orphanage in Bolivia.

Jacksonville Symphony's First Coast Nutcracker
Dec. 13 at 8 p.m.
Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Dec. 15 at 2 p.m.
Moran Theater at the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts
www.jaxsymphony.org/first-coast-nutcracker/

Jacksonville Symphony's First Coast Nutcracker has been a tradition in North Florida for 45 years. Under the direction of choreographer and artistic director, Rhonda Stampalia, the First Coast Nutcracker showcases internationally renowned principal dancers, the area's finest young dancers, and Tchaikovsky's best-loved melodies performed by the Jacksonville Symphony. Educa-

tional performances are offered on Dec. 12 – 13 in an effort to introduce more than 7,500 school children to the symphony, the ballet and how to be a good audience member.

The Nutcracker 2019 by the Florida Ballet
Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 22 at 2 p.m.
Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Center
www.floridaballet.org

The Florida Ballet's Nutcracker features swirling snowflakes, waltzing flowers, and dancing bonbons. From the captivating dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy to the iconic snow scene, this enchanting classical ballet — set to the beloved music of Tchaikovsky — features Boston Ballet Principals, Lia Cirio and Paul Craig, along with more than 100 local dancers.

St. Augustine Ballet Nutcracker
Dec. 21 at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Dec. 22 at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College
www.saintaugustineballet.com

This year's production of "The Nutcracker" marks the 11th annual performance by the St. Augustine Ballet and features sparkling snowflakes, dancing dolls and mischievous mice. The St. Augustine Ballet, under the artistic direction of Luis Abella, is a non-profit organization with a mission to involve community members of all ages in meaningful dance experiences.

All of these performances are designed to enchant, enthrall, and bring families and community members together for the holiday season. Which one is right for you?

Sports clinic provides health and wellness information for youth baseball players

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Julington Creek Baseball (JCB) has pioneered a unique opportunity to gain important sports health knowledge for its coaches, players, and families.

Mark Harvey, JCB president, said, "The health and wellness of our JCB ballplayers is as important as teaching the game of baseball."

Recently, Dave Alberts, JCB Majors commissioner, developed and coordinated a sports clinic with the Center for Health and Sports Medicine in St. Johns. The 30-minute JCB Sports Clinic, mandatory for all JCB recreational and advanced baseball teams, provided beneficial health and wellness information within the framework of baseball.

Scott Marberry, MD, CAQSM, from the Center for Health and Sports Medicine, volunteered valuable time to research, present, and discuss a variety of topics: prevention and recognition of



Photo courtesy David Alberts
Dr. Scott Marberry giving his presentation.

throwing injuries; sports nutrition and hydration; stretching and recovery; skill and strength training; and concussions.

"Self-stretching exercises significantly reduces the incidence of shoulder and elbow injuries in baseball players," Dr. Marberry said.

The full presentation is available online: www.jcbaseball.org/page/show/5360381-health-wellness-and-injury-prevention.

Fishing

Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka
mail@floridanewsline.com

Well it's still hard to believe how long this year's shrimp run has lasted. There are still enough shrimp hanging around to provide plenty of live bait for your next trip out on the river. Although unusual for a shrimp run to last this late into the year, with continued mild weather, small numbers of shrimp could still be around well into January.

As our gift giving season quickly approaches, now is the time to find out just exactly what items your favorite angler has been hoping to add to their fishing supply list. Without having to ask, there are a number of no-fail gift ideas that most any fisherman will be happy to add to their fishing closet.

If any of the folks on your list took part in this year's shrimping, or are hoping to do so next year, then a new shrimp cast net might be just what they are looking for — a 3/8" mesh net with webbing is most widely used. A six-foot diameter net is a good size for the average net thrower, with an eight-foot diameter or larger for the more experienced net thrower.

In two or three months, it will already be time for the spring surf fishing run. A nice surf rod and reel to go after those pompano and whiting would make the perfect gift for anyone who is ready to get out of the house and start fishing again. A beach cart to accompany all that gear going down to the beach would complete any surf fisher's want list.

Also just a few months away this coming spring will be the return of largemouth

bass fishing, starting with their spawn. Arguably the best time of year for bass fishing, any kind of new bass rigs are a must have before the season starts. With so many different types of combinations of rods and reels available, some kind of helpful hint list might be needed to find just which one it is your person is hoping for.

Getting the kids additional tackle, or just getting them started is a gift that could be appreciated well into adulthood. Fishing is and can be a hobby that gets the children out of the house and into the outdoors to see, appreciate, and be a part of the beautiful world that surrounds them. Consider an inexpensive push button rod reel for the youngsters and spinning combo with some tackle for older ones. Most any store that sells fishing equipment should be able to help you with your choices.

Never fail gift ideas . . . hats, polarized sunglasses, quality fillet knife, long term cooler, party boat or fishing trip gift certificate or a gift certificate to their favorite sporting goods or tackle store.

Fishing Report: Reds, croaker, and yellowmouths in the river. Panfish in creeks on pretty, warmer days. Look for speckled perch to begin to bite in area lakes during cool spells and cooler days.

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



Photos courtesy Jim Bagnardi

Creekside golfer qualifies for state championship

Creekside High School junior Andrew Riley qualified for the Florida High School Athletic Association State Golf Championships with his outstanding play at regionals. On Oct. 29 – 30, Riley placed in the top 20 of the 96 golfers who competed on the El Campeon Course at the Mission Inn Resort & Club in Howey-in-the-Hills. College coaches from all over the southeast were on hand looking at potential recruits and Riley was followed by many of the top college golf coaches over his two days of play. Pictured are Coach David Hudson, Andrew Riley and Coach Jim Bagnardi.

Library's "Food for Fines" program to benefit Food Pantry

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns County Public Library System will once again offer patrons a way to lower or eliminate library fines, while providing much needed assistance to the Health and Human Services Food Pantry through the "Food for Fines" program, which will run through Dec. 20.

The donation of one item of non-perishable food will remove \$1 of fines from a patron's library record. This fine-reduction program applies only to overdue fines. Fees related to damaged or lost items are not included in the Food for Fines program.

Food donations and pet supplies/food may be dropped off at any St. Johns County Library branch or with one of our Bookmobiles. Last year, St. Johns County residents provided more than 7,000 non-perishable items through this program. All food collected will remain in St. Johns County for the benefit of local residents. Call (904) 827-6925 or visit <https://sjcpls.org/library-food-for-fines-program-returns/> for more information.

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Cross country coach wants heart more than fast feet

By Heidi Brososky-Weaver
mail@floridanewsline.com

Standing in the middle of a busy corridor at Fruit Cove Middle School, Phillipine Rydel, a new seventh grade student from France, frantically looked for answers for her pressing questions. Lost, anxious, and unable to speak but a few words of English, she breathed a sigh of relief as a French-speaking teacher rescued her by providing directions to cross country (XC) practice.

XC Coach Jill Benavides then warmly welcomed Rydel to the 138-member team. “She quickly found her new family and closest friends,” Benavides said.

When asked about her XC highlights,

Rydel proudly shared the perseverance of a fellow runner.

“Chloe (Iloff) had a really bad knee injury, but she still placed third in State,” she said. “Chloe showed us that when you push to do your best, you can if you believe,” added Rydel, who came in first in the district meet and seventh in the state competition.

Iloff agreed that XC takes “a lot of perseverance and faith to keep going.” The eighth grader originally joined the team three years ago, following her sister’s footsteps and soon discovering her own love for the sport.

“At first, I didn’t want to do it, but it was so fun,” said Iloff. “Also, trusting in God really helps me to have more confidence — you can just see Him working on our team.”

Mia Till also likes the aspects of family, faith, and having a supportive leader.

“Coach Benavides is the best coach I’ve



Photo courtesy Heidi Brososky-Weaver
Jill Benavides and runners

ever had in my life,” said Till, who first joined XC to increase her endurance for soccer. Till said Benavides gives her runners confidence and love and puts their needs before her own. “She has taught us that everyone matters, and we even cheer for

our opponents.”

Benavides joined the team eight years ago as a pacer and has always loved

years later, the mother of four became head coach. Although she was nervous about the time demands, she knew coaching would give her a chance to pour truth and value into the lives of runners, helping them develop a love for the sport and appreciate the importance of a true team. “Cross country is so much more than training the legs of these young people. It is reaching and directing their hearts to be the best person they can possibly be,” said Benavides.

Benavides continued, “Teaching them to lay down their personal agenda for the better of the team takes patience, diligence, and grace. Once they understand the overall goal, they are willing to work hard, and they reach their personal goals, as well.”

Her runners agreed that training can be intense — especially during mile repeats.

Eighth grade student Ariana Brux said of Benavides: “She builds you up — not just saying, ‘Oh, you should be better.’ She runs with us and explains the value of what we are doing.”

Both the XC boys and girls teams won first place in the Florida Youth Championship in Lake City. In addition, the girls’ team won second in the Florida Middle School State Championship in Lakeland.



Photo courtesy Jill Benavides
FCMS XC runners

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