



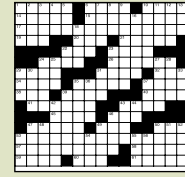
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Photos courtesy Glo Jackson

Local seniors enjoyed a picnic at Alpine Groves Park on June 9.

## Trout Creek seniors reconnect at picnic

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com

Approximately 20 seniors, who pre-COVID participated in activities at the Trout Creek Senior Center, got together for the first time in more than a year at a picnic organized by Glo Jackson at Alpine Groves Park on June 9.

“This was the first time many of us had gotten together since the lockdown,” Jackson said. “The weather was perfect, nice and breezy, and everyone brought their own picnic to the park.”

According to Jackson, one couple, Carol and Norm Leno, celebrated their wedding anniversary at the picnic. The seniors were also able to

Trout Creek cont. on pg. 13

# Science is a Family Af-FAIR

By Heidi Brososky Weaver  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Rising Creekside High School sophomore Benjamin York has a shirt that reads, “Math is My Superpower.” However, one might argue that science can’t be too far behind after the rising Creekside High School sophomore’s science project made it all the way to the International Science and Engineering Fair.

A science fair participant since second grade, York won region and state this year and then participated in the international competition with his efficient and compact steam turbine creation. Although he did not place in the international fair, he received a first place award from the Air Force Research Laboratory on behalf of the United States Air Force.

To get to this level requires thorough and meticulous research, according to York, who won his first school science fair in third grade and first district one in sixth grade.

“The judges said he presented really well, and he certainly knows his subject,” says Marna Fox, Secondary Science Program Specialist for St. Johns County Schools.

Regardless of the accolades, York emphasizes that he doesn’t enter for the prizes.



Ben York works on his science fair project.



Photos courtesy Heidi Brososky Weaver

Emma York works on her science fair project.

“The best part of the science fair is the people you meet and the friends you make along the way in the competitions,” he said.

This school year, he was able to connect with students from Greece, Israel, Australia, Turkey, and other places around the world and across America.

What’s more, this science gene runs in the family. His sister Emma, a rising seventh grader at Freedom Crossing Academy, also won state this year with a project on wind turbines.

Both consider this a hobby and work on projects year-round. In fact, summer is time to go back to the workshop and plan for next year. The new member of the Engineering Academy at Creekside High School said he uses CAD software as a design tool. He also works in a shop full of electric tools, such as a lathe band saw and vertical mill, to assist him.

Only time will tell what his next project will be, but one thing is for sure — York’s ideas will continue to contribute to making the world a better place.

## Bartram Trail AFJROTC Raiders take first place ... again!



Photo courtesy Antone Lefevre

On May 15, the Bartram Trail High School Air Force JROTC Raider Team went to West Nassau High School to compete in their third and final Raider competition of the year. The team won overall first place in the first two competitions and brought home a host of individual medals as well. The West Nassau meet was no different; led by seniors Bella Brewton, Kylie Maldonado, Chloe Hill, Andrew Keener, Logan Howard, and Troy Craven the team won first in six of seven events.

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**FAVORITE ACTIVITY:**

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**FAVORITE TREAT:**

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**FAVORITE FRIEND:**

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**HOW YOUR BFF GOT HIS NAME:**

We are both Boston Red Sox fans, and we named him after Fenway Park.

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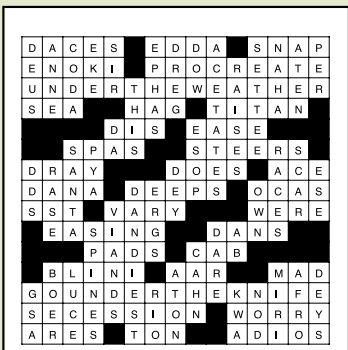
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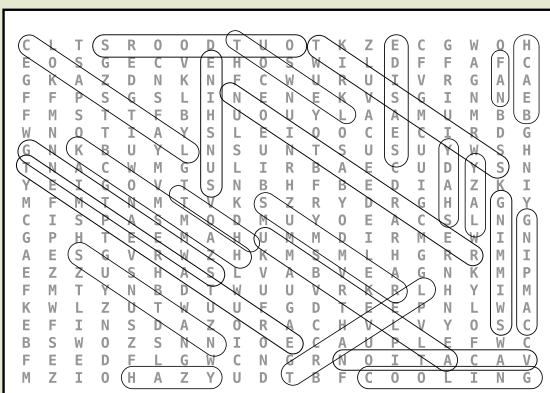
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Answers to our Puzzles PG 14

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## MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is? Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com

Last month's Mystery Photo was one of the entrances to Julington Creek Elementary. Our winner was Cassandra McCabe. Congratulations!



**Q&A with Florida State Representative Cyndi Stevenson, District 17**

**Q: Can you give us a budget summary from the recently concluded legislative session?**

**A:** Every year the state of Florida is required by the state constitution to pass a balanced budget. Due to uncertainty over the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, revenue was expected to be down across the board, which would lead to a very tight budget year; however, through the fall and spring, revenue estimates continued to trend upwards leading to more optimism in the legislature for crafting the budget. Combined with the 10 billion dollars provided by the American Rescue Plan,

the Florida House passed a better than expected budget. Some highlights of the \$100 billion budget Gov. DeSantis signed on June 2 include:

- \$6.7 billion for various projects (including infrastructure, environmental and education) with funding provided by the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund, all subject to receipt of the state's portion of these funds.
- \$2.1 billion for protection of Florida's water resources, including projects for Everglades restoration, springs, storm water and wastewater grants and the Resilient Florida Grant Program

- \$402 million for Florida Forever for the acquisition of conservation lands
- \$150 million for Beach Restoration Projects, which is the highest level of funding for these projects in history
- \$4.3 billion to fund the Medicaid Price Level and Workload. These funds will serve an anticipated 4.8 million beneficiaries with no reductions to eligibility groups or services. This is the highest caseload in Florida's history, with more than 20 percent of the state's population enrolled in Medicaid.
- \$22.8 billion in total funds for the Florida Education Finance Program, (\$12.9 billion in state funds and \$9.9 billion in local funds).
- \$53.42 increase in the base student allocation for total funds of \$4,372.91 per student
- \$50 million increase in the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation to support a minimum base salary of \$47,500 for all full-time classroom teachers.
- \$185.7 million to continue the State-wide Law Enforcement Radio System
- \$63.8 million for repair and maintenance of state buildings including the Capitol Complex
- \$30 million for cybersecurity initia-

tives to secure the state's IT infrastructure, systems and network.

**Q: Can you share some funding highlights for local projects in St. Johns County?**

**A:** We had success with local funding. Here is a list of projects in St. Johns County and the region for which were able to secure funding totaling \$13,986,136:

- \$3,800,250 for mental health and substance abuse treatment and youth services;
- \$4,494,000 to rebuild damaged dunes in Ponte Vedra, West Augustine Septic to Sewer and St. Augustine Beach Flooding remediation;
- \$4,134,628 for intersection improvements in World Golf Village and Ponte Vedra, as well as maintenance for the St. Augustine Lighthouse;
- \$975,000 for the Northeast Florida 21st Century Workforce development project that engages youth in STEM opportunities and future career paths in a fun and inspiring way.

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

**A:** Readers can email me at [Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov) or call my local office at (904) 823-2300.

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

**Q: What can you share about the recently concluded school year?**

**A:** We just finished all of our graduation ceremonies and more than 3,000 seniors were sent off to their next great adventure in life. As someone who attended all of the graduation ceremonies (at TIAA Bank Field), I can tell you we experienced the gamut of weather. From getting drenched at the Nease graduation to roasting at Creekside's... it was nevertheless a joyous time at each one.

**Q: Have you learned of any test results from the Florida Department of Education yet?**

**A:** We have so far [as of interview date of June 15] only received our third grade reading scores and we are so excited that the students held their own and the score did not slip. Our third grade readers scored 78 percent in proficiency and we are really pleased that the students didn't lose ground. The Florida Department of Education will not issue school grades or school recognition dollars this year.

**Q: Do you have any school administration shifts to announce?**

**A:** This is the time of year for new principals and some years, like this one, we have a lot of movement. Of the 12 schools in the Northwest, four will have new principals in the fall, all because the original principals moved on to other schools. At Durbin Creek, we welcome Ashley McCormick; at Hickory Creek, the new principal will be Yvette Gonzalez; Linda Carnall will lead Switzerland Point and Greg Bergamasco has been announced as the principal for new High School III.

**Q: What is the latest update on High School III?**

**A:** The school board officially adopted the zoning plan at our June 8 meeting and as of July 1, the principal will officially start his job and will begin reaching out to the community to start the process of naming the school. We expect there to be community meetings and the name proposals to be presented to the school board in the fall. The principal will also begin hiring administrative staff; teachers will likely be hired in spring 2022. Greg has a lot of experience and will be a great fit to get this school going from scratch.

As for the school itself, vertical construction has begun. It's going to be a beautiful school, just like Toco Creek (which should be finished with construction in July).

**Q: What is the school board busy with during the summer?**

**A:** During the summertime, the district and the school board are busy with planning and staff development. This summer will look more "normal" on our school campuses, with summer camps etc. We're looking forward to the first day of school, Aug. 16, which will allow the completion of the first semester prior to winter break. This start date is still about a week later than our "usual," but since we started last year two weeks late, we are trying to preserve a bit of summer while gradually getting back on our regular schedule.

**Q: How can our readers contact you?**

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

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**with St. Johns County Property Appraiser  
Eddie Creamer**

**Q: It is budget time of year in St. Johns County. What are some of your thoughts on budgeting, expenditures, and taxation?**

**A:** I think a lot has to do with quality of life. It's no surprise to anyone that St. Johns County has a high quality of life, with exceptional schools, law enforcement and recreation. It's also no surprise that our county is rapidly growing, with an estimated population now of 275,000; some estimates say that could double in the next 10 years. So, if we want to continue our high quality of life, we as a community and as government need to plan and forecast how we will keep up with things like schools, fire and rescue, parks — or we will find ourselves in a position less than where we are today.

**Q: What can citizens do?**

**A:** This is the time of year that taxing agencies are preparing their annual budgets, and we use these to establish millage rates. These budgets are all public record. Citizen and taxpayer input and constructive scrutiny is critical at this time. I think citizens should take the time and ask the questions of why we are spending money as we are and what we are doing to plan for growth while maintaining our quality of life. We must consider budgets, expenditures and

even other potential revenue streams if necessary.

**Q: How can citizens educate themselves?**

**A:** Start by reviewing the draft budgets of the various county departments. Most, including my office's, are available on their website. Then it's time to begin the conversation with elected officials — we don't want money wasted, but we also realize to have what we want, we have to pay for it. At this time, property owners in St. Johns County are bearing the entire burden. Should we consider additional revenue streams to address the burden put on our infrastructure by the more than one million tourists per year that visit historic St. Augustine and our beaches?

Additionally, in August, each taxing authority will hold a public meeting. Citizens should attend those and ask questions. The dates and times of these meetings will be included in the TRIM notices sent out in mid- August.

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

**A:** Our office is located at 4030 Lewis Speedway Ste. 203, (904) 827-5500. It is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Also, readers can email me at [Eddie@sjcpa.us](mailto:Eddie@sjcpa.us) or call me at (904) 827-5500.

## What you need to know about Florida Senate Bill 90

By St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes  
[mail@floridanewsline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewsline.com)

In late April, the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 90, an Election Administration bill revising certain sections of Florida's Election Law. Governor Ron DeSantis signed the bill into law on May 6, with immediate effect. Here is a brief summary of changes that may affect voters as it relates to voter registration updates, vote-by-mail requests, and ballot drop boxes:

**Voter Registration Updates:**

**Address Changes:** Voters must provide their date of birth and their Florida driver license number or Florida ID card number, or last four digits of their social security number when making an address change by phone or electronically. Alternatively, voters may change their address by submitting a Florida Voter Registration Application or signed written notice.

**Name or Party Affiliation Changes:** Voters are required to submit a Florida Voter Registration Application when making a name or party affiliation change and must include their Florida driver license number or Florida ID card number, or last four digits of their social security number.

**Vote-by Mail Requests:**

A voter must have a request on file to receive a vote-by-mail ballot. One request for a vote-by-mail ballot will cover all elections through the end of the calendar year of the next scheduled general election. Existing vote-by-mail requests on file are valid through the end of 2022.

A voter requesting a vote-by-mail ballot for themselves must provide the following information:

- Voter's name
- Voter's address

- Voter's date of birth
- Voter's Florida driver license number or Florida ID card number, or last four digits of social security number
- Voter's signature (written requests only)

An immediate family member or legal guardian requesting a vote-by-mail ballot on a voter's behalf must provide the following additional information:

- Requestor's name
- Requestor's address
- Requestor's Florida driver license number or Florida ID card number, or last four digits of social security number
- Requestor's relationship to the voter
- Requestor's signature (written requests only)

A request for a ballot to be mailed to an address other than the voter's address on file must be in writing and signed by the voter including the voter's Florida driver license number or Florida ID card number or the last four digits of their social security number.

**Ballot Drop Boxes:**

Secure ballot drop boxes must be continuously monitored by elections staff and will only be available inside the Supervisor of Elections Office and at all Early Voting sites during Early Voting hours.

Note: The 24/7 drop box located outside of the Supervisor of Elections Office will no longer be available; however, voters may still utilize the drop box inside the Elections Office during business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

It is unlawful for any person to physically possess more than two vote-by-mail ballots per election in addition to his or her own ballot or a ballot belonging to an immediate family member.



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# July

**What's Going On in St. Johns?**  
A modified calendar of events

## Community Calendar

**The Jacksonville Camera Club** will present digital contest results at its meeting on Wednesday, July 7. There will be a social hour prior to the 7 p.m. meeting. Visit [jax.jaxcameraclub.com](http://jax.jaxcameraclub.com) for more information and meeting location updates.

**The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable** will meet on Monday, July 12 at 12 p.m. and feature Isabelle Renault, president and CEO of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. This meeting will be via Zoom video conferencing. Email [info@sjcroundtable.org](mailto:info@sjcroundtable.org) to register for the meeting or for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

**First Coast Florida Lifestyles Newcomers Recreation Card Club** will host board games (Rummikub or suggestions) at a Kookaburra Coffee South in St. Augustine on Sunday, July 18. Arrival is at 2:15 p.m. and games will be played beginning at 2:30 p.m. Masks must be worn while playing and one item must be purchased to satisfy restaurant management. Call the club organizer at (904) 829-0643 (no texts) to RSVP or for information about the club. The club is open to both men and women and is a smoke- and drug-free club.

**The All Star Quilters Guild** will meet at 10 a.m. on Monday, July 19 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program is Pick-A-Card Challenge (Viewers' Choice Awards). No refreshments will be served due to Covid 19. Bring your own mask. New members are welcome. Visit [www.allstarquilters.org](http://www.allstarquilters.org) for more information, including options for joining the meeting via Zoom.

**Herbs from Nature's Garden** will be offered on July 24 at 10 a.m. Attendees will learn about traditionally used herbs to promote wellness and health as well as how to create their own tinctures, teas, and salves. Included are guides, plant identification, lecture and herbal snacks. Pre registration is required via phone or text: (386) 972-1891.



## with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

**Q: Can you give us some insight into the Sheriff's Office budget you will be submitting to the county in mid-June [as of interview date of June 11]?**

**A:** The budget does contain an increase, mainly due to the growth in St. Johns County. The federal minimum wage is going up and we have to keep up as well, so a big part of the increase is an increase in wages for sheriff's office employees below the executive level rank. Keeping up with necessary software accounts for some of the increase, and we're also dealing with an increase in the cost of firearms, ammunition, and fuel.

**Q: Can you share some of the latest crime statistics for St. Johns County?**

**A:** We report our statistics twice a year to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in what's called a UCR (Uniform Crime Report). We saw many substantial decreases in St. Johns County from 2019 to 2020: murder was down 20 percent, sexual battery was down 54 percent, and robbery was down 28 percent. We had an increase of 15 percent in aggravated assault, but the overall total index of offenses showed an 18 percent decrease.

We saw an increase in domestic

violence of 18 percent, likely due to the lockdown. People were out of work and stuck in their homes; it was a very challenging time for families.

**Q: Do you have any breakdowns for northern St. Johns County?**

**A:** For the Northwest, we saw significant decreases in calls for service (76,000 in 2019 vs. 59,000 in 2020) and arrests (602 in 2019 vs. 484 in 2020). In the northeast part of the county, which includes Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Palencia and Vilano, there was not as significant of a decrease (calls for service went down from 82,140 in 2019 to 81,451 in 2020 and arrests decreased from 780 in 2019 to 731 in 2020).

**Q: Are there any statistics covering a larger period of time that you find interesting?**

**A:** Something interesting to me is that between 2008 – 2020, with the significant population growth of St. Johns County, our violent crime is down 64 percent and non-violent crime is down 74 percent (when you compare 2008 to 2020).

I believe that the improving averages we are seeing in 2020 are a direct reflection of proactive

policing, to include information sharing, the use of modern technology and also the repurposing of assets. I've pushed policing of the Interstate 95 corridor more than in previous years in an effort to save lives and target human trafficking, the transporting of illegal drugs, and aggressive driving. Many people don't know that we don't only police the 601 square miles of land that is St. Johns County, but also 221 square miles of adjacent water.

Our efforts to solve crime and keep these statistics low are greatly enhanced by the relationships we have with the community. We rely on our community partnerships and ask that anyone with any information or tips call us. We are happy to check the information out and decide if it is critical to a case or not.

**Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you with any questions or suggestions about this article?**

**A:** They can email me at [sheriff@sjso.org](mailto:sheriff@sjso.org) or call me at (904) 824-8304. Also, our website, [www.sjso.org](http://www.sjso.org) has a wealth of resources, from alarm registration to Crime Stoppers to our Neighbors app.

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## Guest Editorial

# Let's talk donations

By Mary Rice  
[mail@floridanewsline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewsline.com)

Have you ever wondered what happens to those books or movies you donate to the Friends of the Bartram Trail Library? Well, donations go through quite a journey once you hand them over. The Friends use donations to fulfill their primary purpose: helping the Bartram Trail Branch meet the needs of the community. Sponsoring programs, purchasing furniture and shelving, supplementing office and operating supplies are just some of the ways money from donated books help the Bartram Trail Library.

Books and movies in circulation wear out and become damaged over time after years of checkouts. As donations are sorted, volunteers and staff work together to find like-new copies to swap with well-loved library copies. This is a manual and time consuming process due to the library system's catalog and the collection development policy.

Have you ever taken a look at the spinner racks at the Bartram Trail Library? These "browser" racks are made possible with donations. Paperbacks in good condition are used to keep these racks stocked with an ever changing assortment of titles in varying genres.

"Browser" books are great for traveling or for our patrons who like to take their time reading a good book. These items do not require a library card and have no due date. Another way donations are used is to stock the ongoing book sale near the Circulation Desk. All items on these shelves are available for purchase for a suggested \$1 donation to the Friends of the Library. Drop your change in the jar, and be on your merry way with a brand new title.

The last stop for donations is the monthly book sales, which are returning on the second Saturday of the month starting in July. Join us on July 10, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

The Friends of the Library are always looking for new members and volunteers to help with the sorting and processing of donations as well as setting up and tearing down book sales. One of the perks of being a volunteer is you get to look at donations first and have an opportunity to purchase them to support the library. Contact Peg Cogswell, president of the Friends of the Bartram Trail Library at [mjcogswell@gmail.com](mailto:mjcogswell@gmail.com) for more information.

*Mary Rice is vice president of the Friends of the Bartram Trail Library.*



**with St. Johns County Commissioner Christian Whitehurst, District 1**

**Q: Can you provide some insight into the recent news about the FEMA allocation for some St. Johns County beach restoration projects?**

**A:** As background, hurricanes Matthew and Irma devastated our coastline nearly five years ago and we now have the federal government stepping in with an allocation from FEMA. The FEMA berm is to cover Ponte Vedra Beach, South Ponte Vedra Beach and a portion of Crescent Beach. These are the communities that opted in for the allocation. For the project, 75 percent of the funds will come from the federal government, 12.5 percent will come from the state and 12.5 percent, or roughly \$3 million, will come from St. Johns County. This was budgeted before I was elected, but I think it was a good policy decision.

**Q: How does this affect NW St. Johns County?**

**A:** This is not a dredging project. Due to the volume of sand required, it will be trucked in and the Board of County Commissioners decided to use Mickler's Landing due to the anticipated 500 dump trucks per day estimated by engineers. Mickler's Landing beach access and parking lot will be closed on weekdays beginning in September for the three months that the project is scheduled. Mickler's will be open on the weekends. People will also still have beach access via Guana and points south.

**Q: Can you give an update on the "bed tax?"**

**A:** The Tourist Development Tax (TDT), commonly known as the "bed tax," had its first reading for a one percent increase, from 4 percent to 5 percent, at our Board of County Commissioners meeting on June 15. It is scheduled for a second reading and vote at the July 20 commission meeting; a super majority, or 4 – 1 vote, is needed to pass. When I ran for county

commissioner, I said I would not raise taxes on St. Johns County residents. This tax is only levied on those who rent a hotel room or short-term rental, mostly tourists. We have the lowest bed tax of any coastal county in Florida at this time and this has been an ongoing conversation for some time. I believe with the popularity of St. Augustine with tourists, it should not be a discount destination.

**Q: What can you tell us about the recently held budget workshops?**

**A:** On May 24, 25, and 26, we attended the county administrator's budget workshops for fiscal year 2022 and this provided us with the first look at the proposed budget. I think it is important to keep our community safe and response times low, so I will be supporting Sheriff Hardwick's and Fire Chief Prevatt's budgets, which both contain increases due to our increased population.

There are also dollars in the budget to address deficient roadways, including County Road 210W between Cimarrone and Greenbriar Road. Unfortunately, it won't be completed until 2023.

Lastly, I know we have a tremendous need for more ballfields in the Northwest. We haven't done a great job addressing this lately, and I'm fighting for more money for this in this year's budget as I don't think we have any time to waste. This is a priority for me, right below public safety and roads.

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

**A:** I'd like to wish everyone a safe and Happy 4th of July!

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

**A:** Readers can email me at [bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us](mailto:bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us) or call me at (904) 584-5348.

## Bartram Trail student named Senior of the Year



Photo courtesy Lauren Wolfe

L. Spencer Wolfe, V was named 2021 St. Johns County Senior of the Year by James Wheeler through the Take Stock in Education Program of St. Johns County. Wolfe was chosen for exceptional academics; graduating from Bartram Trail High School with a GPA in excess of 4.58 and with his associate's degree St. Johns River College on Dean's List, as well as his commitment to community service and leadership within the community, his peers and his family. Wolfe was awarded a two-year college scholarship as well as a new laptop, courtesy of generous donations from community businesses. Wolfe will attend the University of Florida, where he plans to study Mechanical Engineering.

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• Leslie Janik - MSN, APRN, ACNP-BC  
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### Briefs

#### New Florida state budget includes funding for a variety of St. Johns County projects

Governor Ron DeSantis recently signed the “Florida Leads” fiscal year 2021 – 2022 state budget, which totaled \$101.5 billion and includes \$169 million in tax relief. The “Florida Leads” budget focuses on education, environmental incentives, infrastructure improvements, and support for military and veterans.

The budget contains funding for a variety St. Johns County projects and initiatives including \$3.5 million for Ponte Vedra Beach/North Beach dune restoration, \$2 million for County Road 2209 and International Golf Parkway intersection and roadway improvements, and \$1.65 million for improvements to the State Road A1A corridor from Mickler Road to Marsh Landing Parkway. In addition, \$300,000 was appropriated for the St. Augustine/West Augustine septic-to-sewer program, \$694,000 for St. Augustine Beach resiliency improvements, \$1.3 million for the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office detox program, and the county has acquired a new County Judge, the first to be allocated to St. Johns County since 1973.

Funding was also allocated to economic development, substance abuse treatment programs, health and human services programming, the St. Augustine Lighthouse, and law enforcement pay increases.

Visit [www.boldvisionforabrighterfuture.com/HomeFY22.htm](http://www.boldvisionforabrighterfuture.com/HomeFY22.htm) for more information on the 2021 – 2022 state budget.

#### Summer reading volunteer opportunity

If you are willing to spend a little time this summer helping others, there is an opportunity waiting for you: RSVP of St. Johns County is looking for community members to assist once a week in the St. Johns County School District summer reading program by remotely assisting in reading activities.

Hours are flexible, and you will be able to help from the comfort of your home. Volunteers will be meeting with students on their computers. Training for computer connection,

reading strategies, and logistics will be provided.

“This year has been a very challenging time for students,” said Cheryl Freeman, RSVP director. “Assistance from community volunteers can make all the difference in helping these students succeed.”

Contact RSVP at (904) 547-3952 or [Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Cheryl.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us) for more information.

#### Newcomers Alumnae takes summer break

Newcomers Alumnae held its last monthly luncheon before the summer hiatus on June 2 at Marsh Landing Country Club. The luncheon theme was “A Trip Around The World” and a fun and challenging game of trivia based on the travel theme took place after an international menu of either chicken cordon bleu or beef stroganoff. As a treat for the attendees, a champagne toast and special dessert closed out the fiscal year. First and second-place prizes and gift cards were given out to the winning tables and lucky winners.

The next monthly luncheon will take place at Marsh Landing Country Club on Sept. 1. Over the summer, members are encouraged to renew their membership for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 by contacting [brookemeister@msn.com](mailto:brookemeister@msn.com) to get a membership application. Potential new members are encouraged to visit [newcomersalumnae.wildapricot.org](http://newcomersalumnae.wildapricot.org) for more information on this club or contact [brookemeister@msn.com](mailto:brookemeister@msn.com).

Newcomers Alumnae is a social group of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville and St. Augustine. It was formed in March 1998 to give graduates of other newcomer groups an opportunity to continue growing in the community and to foster friendships through social activities. Some of the activities offered are book club, Bunco, canasta, happy hour, lunch-in, wine socials, mahjongg, adventures and outings, and monthly luncheons held on the first Wednesday of each month with guest speakers. Newcomers Alumnae welcomes new members throughout the year.

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# ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

## Market Insight



### A Brief History of the Sneaker

By Scott Grant  
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

#### Who was Chuck Taylor?

A lot of people think the popular Converse sneakers must be named after a famous athlete or specifically after legendary basketball Coach Fred Taylor who led Ohio State to the NCAA title in 1960. They are not. Chuck Taylor was a Converse salesman. He haunted gyms for decades selling shoes to every high school and college coach he met. He was so successful that Converse named the shoes after him.

Chuck, a former high school and semi-professional basketball star, would roll into a town with a trunk full of Converse All-Stars and arrange with the local coach to put on a basketball clinic for the kids. While he taught, he wore the shoes. Afterwards, everyone wanted a pair. Chuck also put out his own magazine featuring his own national champion and his own All-America team. Converse All-Stars are the best-selling sneaker of all time.

#### Why are they called Adidas?

Adolph and Rudolph Dassler owned a shoe company in Nazi Germany called Dassler Brothers. Before the war, they made athletic shoes. They custom designed a pair for Jesse Owens during the 1936 Olympics. Owens wore the shoes to win two gold medals in the 200 and the long jump. Some credit that event with being the first celebrity endorsement of an athletic shoe.

The 1936 Olympics, held in Berlin, were meant to highlight Hitler's notions of Aryan Supremacy. The Germans collected their share of medals, but there was no question that the hero of those games was the son of a sharecropper and grandson of a slave. Owens won four gold medals, two of

them in German shoes.

After the war, the brothers had a falling out and went their separate ways. Some sources blame their wives. Adi Dassler called his new company Adidas. Rudy Dassler called his Puma.

#### Why are they called Nike?

Legendary University of Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman had a long history of crafting custom-made shoes for his distance runners like Steve Prefontaine. He was obsessed with making the shoes lighter and his runners faster.

One day in 1971 Bowerman was experimenting in his workshop making new rubber soles using his wife's waffle iron. The waffle iron was destroyed, but the new shoes, called "waffle trainers," would help launch an empire. They say Mrs. Bowerman was not happy.

Bowerman and a local businessman started a company to sell the new shoes. They named it Nike, after the Greek goddess of victory. The iconic swoosh logo was designed by a student at Portland State. She was paid \$35 for her efforts. Later, the company gave her some stock. That stock is now worth more than a million dollars.

Bowerman was obsessed with making runners faster, not making money. He gave away most of his shares to loyal employees. Still, he kept enough that when he died, he was worth \$400 million — which will buy a ton of waffle irons.

*Scott A. Grant is a local columnist, author, speaker, and historian. By day he is a fiduciary asset manager and president of Standfast Asset Management. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfast.com.*

## New hospital breaks ground in Durbin Park



Photo courtesy Flagler Health+  
Local dignitaries participate in the ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony of the new Flagler Health+ Durbin Park.

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Flagler Health+ broke ground on June 10 on its new health and wellness campus located in NW St. Johns County's Durbin Park development. With targeted services slated to open in early 2023, the 42.5-acre campus will feature a state-of-the-art hospital and outpatient surgery center as well as the signature Flagler Health+ Village concept. The health village will incorporate family medicine, specialty care, urgent care, imaging, laboratory services, healthy lifestyle programming and community engagement space with an emphasis on integrating nature and technology to enhance experiences.

Flagler Health+ Durbin Park will also include a wellness facility, walking trails, and retail offerings.

"We are creating a premier health and wellness destination. The campus has been designed to create a sense of community, deliver uniquely personalized experiences, and achieve the best possible health outcomes for all people," said Flagler Health+ President and CEO Jason Barrett.

Flagler Health+ purchased the property located between Interstate 95 and State Road 9B from GATE Lands. It is anticipated that the campus will add approximately 1,300 jobs to the area at completion of its buildout.

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# New memory care center to enhance senior living community



Photo courtesy Westminster Woods on Julington Creek  
 A ceremonial turning of the shovels by Westminster Woods on Julington Creek Executive Director Brian Tenney, Florida State Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Westminster Communities of Florida CEO Terry Rogers, Westminster Woods on Julington Creek Resident Council Chair Dr. Joan Hodges, and the Rev. Dwight Bayley.

By NewsLine Staff  
 mail@floridanewsline.com

On May 27, Westminster Woods on Julington Creek broke ground on its new Memory Care building, following a ceremonial turning of the shovels. This new development will feature 32 apartments for assisted living residents with Alzheimer's and dementia with dedicated, specialized amenities and spaces to support these residents.

The new Memory Care building is an expansion of the Life Plan Community, which serves more than 400 residents with Independent living, assisted living, memory care, nursing care and rehabilitation.

Westminster Woods on Julington Creek Executive Director Brian Tenney said, "Over the years, Westminster Woods on Julington Creek has taken the opportunity to expand how we provide living options for our residents. We all know someone with dementia. There is a growing demand for intentional services to meet the

individual needs of seniors with cognitive impairment, in a safe and comfortable environment."

Terry Rogers, chief executive officer of Westminster Communities of Florida, said, "This is going to be a tremendously special opportunity to meet the needs of those who need us. The construction is a really significant investment in this campus, and it's only the first one that we will have, for years to come. We will be supporting hundreds of jobs over the next few years in construction, and then in operation, when we open it to new residents. I can't wait to see today's shovel turning become reality."

State Representative Cyndi Stevenson, an honored guest, expressed her gratitude to the residents and team members of Westminster Woods on Julington Creek. Stevenson said, "It has been an honor to know people who work here, who have come here to live and to create their lives together, and create communities within the community."

# Newcomers of North St. Johns announces 2021-2022 board of directors



Photo courtesy Michele Oliver  
 Newcomers of North St. Johns announced its new board of directors at its May luncheon. Serving for the coming year are co-presidents Pat Lett and Lyn Whitlock; co-vice presidents Charlene Lim and Michele Oliver; co-secretaries Mary Ellen Fleming and Judy Porter; and co-treasurers Laurreta Corsair and Casey Yeomans. Newcomers of North St. Johns was established in April 2004 to offer people the circumstances to become acquainted with others while finding their place in the community. "We're a very friendly, welcoming group that offers many opportunities to enjoy social activities and help form life-long friendships," said Lyn Whitlock. "We have had a lot of fun planning events this year and look forward to a great year ahead. We invite anyone from the St. Johns County neighborhoods interested in membership to contact us for more information." Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net for more information.





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## Saving bluebirds — one nest box at a time

By Brad Buck  
mail@floridanewsline.com

As pest-eaters, Eastern bluebirds benefit Florida farmers. Not only that, they're cute. Two good reasons Hance Ellington has started a program to preserve them. As a UF/IFAS assistant professor of wildlife ecology and conservation, Ellington started a bluebird nest-box building program. A faculty member at the Range Cattle Research and Education Center (REC) in Ona, Fla., he conducts in-person and online webinars to teach the public how to build better bluebird nesting boxes.

On July 10, from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m., Ellington will be joined on a webinar by Katie Sieving, a UF/IFAS professor of wildlife ecology and conservation, who works from the main UF campus in Gainesville. (Register for the free virtual program at <https://tinyurl.com/uv34883m>)

“Dr. Sieving’s research focuses on avian ecology and behavior and how it relates to interactions between birds and the human environment,” Ellington said. “Eastern bluebirds are a frequent study species in her research program, and she will talk about some of the fascinating bluebird research her lab is conducting.”

The guest appearance by Sieving is part of Ellington’s educational video program called “Become a Bluebird Watcher.” Through six sessions, more than 600 people have participated. In the previous sessions, the UF/IFAS researcher covered topics including:

- Bluebird biology and ecology.
- How to build a bluebird nest box.
- Where to deploy the nest boxes.

- How to safely monitor them.
- The roles of birds in rangeland ecosystems.

Bluebirds are called “cavity nesters.” That means they compete for nests with native birds such as chickadees, tufted titmice, nuthatches and Carolina wrens as well as



Photo courtesy Hance Ellington

nonnative birds such as house sparrows and European starlings. Natural nesting cavities have declined over the years because of habitat loss, the removal of dead trees and limbs and a shift from the use of wooden fence posts to metal posts, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Ellington is combining a research program with his outreach effort.

“When we try to help the bluebirds’ habitat by deploying nest boxes, and we combine that with a scientific study, it can also become a learning opportunity for people of all ages,” Ellington said. “Thus, we developed our nest box research program in conjunction with an Extension program.”

*Brad Buck is with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).*

## Camera club visits Paynes Prairie



Photos courtesy Charise Tanner

By Charise Tanner  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Jacksonville Camera Club has long been (since 1935) the place to go for both amateur and professional photographers to nurture their passion. The group provides myriad opportunities to learn and share camera expertise, through bi-monthly meetings, technical and creative workshops, photo contests, inspirational speakers, and local (or not so local) photographic outings.

One of the locales enjoyed recently by the club members is Paynes Prairie Preserve, a Florida State Park in and south of Gainesville. Hiking and biking trails throughout the nearly 23,000-acre park provide a variety of photo opportunities. The resident wildlife can include nearly 300 species of birds, alligators, white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, otters, snakes, wild roaming horses and bison, introduced to the park many years ago.

The visitors’ center and most of the amenities of the park are found at the southern main entrance. This includes a 50-foot-high observation tower that provides panoramic views of sweeping landscape dotted with the horses and bison queuing up for inclusion in photographs. The park can go from wet to dry, depending on the seasons, altering the photo ops, variety of inhabitants and access to them — but one cannot have a bad day at Paynes Prairie unless the heavens open up. Even then, being Florida, that probably won’t last for long. Just make sure to have a way to keep the camera dry — then keep on shooting.

Visit <https://jax.jaxcameraclub.com> for full details of what the club has to offer and how to get in on the fun.

*Charise Tanner is a Jacksonville Camera Club Lifetime Member.*

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# Creeks Softball dominates at All-Star Championship

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

In mid-June, Creeks Softball Association (Creeks) celebrated a dominating performance in Babe Ruth District 1 All-Star Championship play, with teams in all six age divisions moving on to compete in the Florida State Tournament.

Their recent All-Star success comes almost one year to the day of the league celebrating a different — but arguably more significant — kind of victory. One that was not determined by a winning score on the field, but by simply being on the field. In June of last year, Creeks became the first youth sports league in St. Johns County to resume games for their spring recreational season

after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the county to shut down play two months earlier.

Creeks was able to safely complete a modified spring season playing only home games against one another at Aberdeen Park. It's a model they successfully replicated for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 recreational seasons. Their return to the field has also been a welcome return to some semblance of normalcy for a few hundred local girls and their families amid the challenges of pandemic life.

Creeks Softball Association President Chris Januchowski said Creeks not only kept playing during the pandemic, but flourished, continuing its recent growth trend. He estimates Creeks has doubled its number of recreational participants over the last five years to 364 for this past spring season.

"I give credit to our girls, their parents, our board and the community," Januchowski said. "With everything that's been going on the last 16 months, we were able to help put that aside for a few hours each week and at least have a sense of normalcy on the field and give our girls something to look forward to. To thrive in that environment is a huge accomplishment and allowed us an

opportunity to grow."

Fast forward a year later and the hits keep coming for Creeks softball. Through their first and second-place finishes in the District All-Star Championship, eight Creeks teams earned a spot to compete in the Florida State Championship held in Lake City.


Babe Ruth District 1 All-Star Championship results:

- 16 and Under : Second place
- 14 and Under: First place
- 12 and Under: First and second place (two separate Creeks teams competed)
- 10 and Under: Second place
- 8 and Under: First and second place (two separate Creeks teams competed)
- 6 and Under: First place

Januchowski said he's most proud that the league continues to be a bustling place for girls of all skill levels to play softball. He highlights Creeks' strong commitment to offering both recreational and advanced ball opportunities in the community. There's concern, however, that those opportunities may soon reach a limit. Januchowski says the league is "busting at the seams" and there is a critical need for more park space to accommodate the rapid growth in the NW St. Johns County.

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Photos courtesy Creeks Softball Association

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# Life

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## Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewline.com

### Katryna Alexis

Katryna Alexis has a busy summer ahead in her quest to meet her goal of having an album completed by the end of 2021. The rising senior at Bartram Trail High School has been singing since the age of seven and performing regularly around northeast Florida for the past few years. Adopted through the foster care system as an infant, she said she is promoting awareness of foster care kids through her singing. Her older brother, whom she calls her best friend and biggest supporter, has autism and she sings to raise awareness for people with autism as well.



Photo courtesy Katryna Alexis  
Katryna Alexis

**Q: How did your parents let you know you had been adopted?**

**A:** I've just always known. They told me they always wanted a baby girl since they already had a son so they were waiting for me. This made me feel so special. It took awhile and finally they thought that the next call they received for a baby boy they would take him — but the next call they received was for me. So it was meant to be!

**Q: How did you know that you wanted to be a singer?**

**A:** My parents put me in all the activities when I was young ... sports and dance, but not singing. When I was seven, I entered myself in a talent competition at the San Juan del Rio Fall Festival. My friend was entered in the dance category and wanted me to participate also, but I didn't want to be in the same category so I entered as a singer. I sang "Castle on the Cloud" from the musical "Les Miserables" and I just stood in the center of the stage and didn't move — but I finished in third place, so I guess I did something right. The choir director heard me and asked me to be a part of the adult choir. I eventually became a soloist. After that, my parents

got me a vocal coach. I really fell in love with singing.

**Q: How did you start singing professionally?**

**A:** When I was 10 years old, I joined a band of kids that were all in the foster care program and performed around the state of Florida. It was called the Next Gen Band. Hearing all their stories during this time is what influenced me to now only sing to promote awareness of the foster care program, but also to start the Foster Closet Club at Bartram Trail.

After I finished my time with the Next Gen Band, my parents sat me down and we discussed if this was something I really wanted to do. I didn't realize how much went into being a professional singer, but I would never give it up now. I'm managed by my mother; I call her my "momager." I sang at many different events until COVID. With the shutdown, I had no shows, so I spent more time writing and honing in on my emotions as to what I wanted Katryna Alexis to be and sound like. I signed with

my label, Nashville Entertainment Weekly in January 2021. In May of this year, I released my song, "Stop," which I hope raises awareness of mental health. In July, "Where I Am" will be released and it's actually kind of a teenage pop song and one of my favorites. Next to come out will be "Pictures on the Wall," where I hone in on my experience of losing a loved one.

**Q: What do you do in your free time?**

**A:** I'm still a teenager and I like to hang out with my friends and go to the beach. Up until recently, I played three sports (basketball, volleyball, which is my favorite, and softball). I didn't want to choose between sports and singing but I eventually had to make the difficult decision to focus on what I see myself doing in my life, so I'm focusing on music.

At Bartram Trail, I am the founder and president of the Foster Closet Club. We work with foster kids in northeast Florida to provide anything they need until the age of 18 as well as interact with the kids on a one-on-one basis.

**Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?**

**A:** In five years, I'll be 22 and graduating from college and getting ready for medical school so I can pursue my goal of being a child psychologist. I want to continue to incorporate music in my life. I hope my music will impact people and if it's only one person, that would mean the world to me.

*[Author's Note: Katryna Alexis' music is available on all streaming platforms. Visit her website, [www.katrynaalexis.com](http://www.katrynaalexis.com) for music videos and coming events.]*

**Get to Know ...**

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at [editor@FloridaNewLine.com](mailto:editor@FloridaNewLine.com)

**Trout Creek** cont. from pg. 1

tour the farmhouse that is onsite at the park. Members of the Friends of Alpine Groves Park showed them the repairs and renovations that are in progress.

The event lasted for about two-and-a-half hours, and the seniors enjoyed reconnecting after their time apart. Jackson said that some of the participants came from as far away as Green Cove Springs and south of Palm Coast. She said this is why the Trout Creek Senior Center is so important, due to its central location.

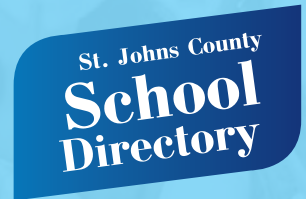
According to Carolyn Karger with the COA (Council on Aging), which handles the facility's programming, Trout Creek Senior Center is planned to reopen in the early fall.

It can't come soon enough for this group of seniors, whom Jackson said rely on friendships made at the senior center. She hopes to hold another picnic at Alpine Groves Park in September.

"Just to be able to come out and relax and see our friends was so healthy," Jackson said. "We have really missed each other."

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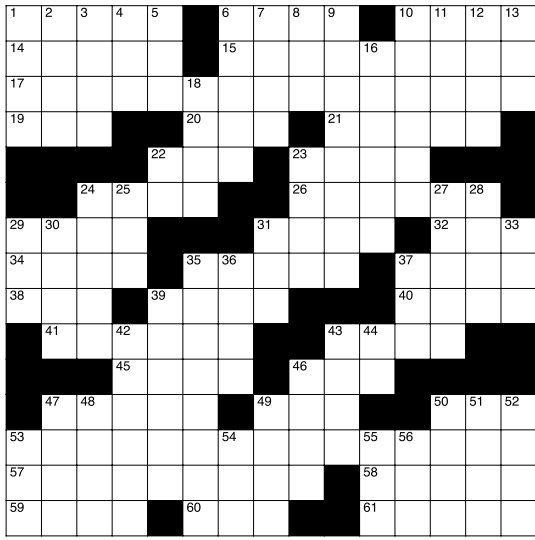
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# Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Cyprinids
- 6. Icelandic literary works
- 10. Break in half
- 14. Japanese mushroom
- 15. Have offspring
- 17. Not feeling well
- 19. A very large body of water
- 20. Witch
- 21. Behemoth
- 22. Speak negatively of
- 23. Absence of difficulty
- 24. Pampering places
- 26. Drives
- 29. Truck that delivers beer
- 31. Makes
- 32. A team's best pitcher
- 34. \_\_\_ Carvey, comedian
- 35. Seas
- 37. S. American plants
- 38. Time zone
- 39. Deviate
- 40. No longer are
- 41. Moving in slowly
- 43. Patrick and Glover are two
- 45. Living quarters
- 46. Taxi
- 47. Pancake made of buckwheat flour
- 49. Swiss river
- 50. Not happy
- 53. Have surgery
- 57. Formal withdrawal
- 58. Give way to anxiety
- 59. Greek war god
- 60. 2K lbs.
- 61. Word of farewell

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. \_\_\_ ex Machina
- 2. WWII diarist Frank
- 3. Concluding passage
- 4. Supplement with difficulty
- 5. Title of respect
- 6. Cubic measures
- 7. Remnant
- 8. \_\_\_ Jones
- 9. Salts of acetic acid
- 10. Long, upholstered seat
- 11. Capital of Okinawa Prefecture
- 12. A one-time aspect of Egyptian sun god Ra
- 13. Prefix denoting "in a"
- 16. Propels upward
- 18. What we are talking about
- 22. Prosecutor
- 23. Employee stock ownership plan
- 24. He brings kids presents
- 25. Burmese monetary unit
- 27. Hurries
- 28. Injury remnant
- 29. Tooth caregiver
- 30. Elvis backup singer Betty Jane
- 31. "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
- 33. Midway between east and southeast
- 35. Most excellent
- 36. Heat units
- 37. Possess legally
- 39. Food items
- 42. Skeletal structures
- 43. Challenge to do something bold
- 44. Blood type
- 46. Sammy \_\_\_, songwriter
- 47. Farmer (Dutch)
- 48. Clare Booth \_\_\_, American writer
- 49. Piers Anthony's protagonist
- 50. Malaysian coastal city
- 51. Hairstyle
- 52. NY-based department store
- 53. Geosciences organization (abbr.)
- 54. Brazilian city
- 55. Niger-Congo languages
- 56. Gesture

## SUMMER DAZE WORD SEARCH

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

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

### WORDS

- BEACH
- CAMPING
- COASTAL
- COOLING
- FAN
- HAMMOCK
- HAZY
- HOT
- LAZY
- OUTDOORS
- RECREATION
- SEASIDE
- SHADY
- SUMMER
- SUNSHINE
- SUNTAN
- SWEATING
- SWIMMING
- SWIMSUIT
- TEMPERATURE
- TOWEL
- TRAVEL
- UMBRELLA
- VACATION

⊙ ☼ ☽ ☿ ♀ ♁ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓ ♔ ♕ ♖ ♗ ♘ ♙ ♚ ♛ ♜ ♝ ♞ ♟ ♠ ♡ ♢ ♣ ♤ ♥ ♦ ♧ ♨ ♩ ♪ ♫ ♬ ♭ ♮ ♯ ♮ ♯ ♮ ♯

## CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to ice cream.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 14 = E)

- A. 8 15 7 5 14 26  
*Clue: Iced over*
- B. 9 14 4 4 14 15 2  
*Clue: Sweet treat*
- C. 6 15 14 19 25 22  
*Clue: Thick and smooth*
- D. 4 3 26 9 19 14  
*Clue: Ice cream with toppings*

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# Keep your family safe this summer: Tips from your poison control center

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewslines.com

As we swing into summer, Florida's Poison Control Center Jacksonville is providing some helpful tips to keep your family safe. Pool chemical safety:

- Ensure you are in a well-ventilated area when using pool chemicals.
- Follow the product instructions carefully.
- Do not store chemicals where flammable items may mix with them (i.e. pool chemicals and fertilizer).
- Never mix pool chemicals because

they could create a toxic gas.

- Always keep pool chemicals stored up and away from children.

Snake bites:

- Call the poison control center (or 911, if unarousable, convulsing, or stopped breathing) if someone has been bitten by a venomous snake, such as the pygmy rattlesnake, cottonmouth (water moccasin), eastern diamondback rattlesnake, canebrake (timber) rattlesnake, copperhead, or coral snake.
- If bitten by a snake, remove jewelry

and tight clothes, immobilize the extremity if possible, keep the affected area at or below the heart, and wash the area gently.

- Do not feed the victim, place ice on the bitten area, or apply a tourniquet.
- Insect repellent usage:
- Read and follow product instructions carefully; some products are not meant to be applied to the skin.
- Do not apply onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth, or cut/irritated skin; spray repellent onto an adult's hands then apply to child's face.
- Do not use combination sunscreen/

insect repellent products. Sunscreen needs to be reapplied every two hours, but repellent should not be reapplied.

- DEET should not be used on children younger than two months old.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.

*Experts staff the Poison Help Hotline at 1-800-222-1222 that provides free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and poison information providers.*

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## Fishing

### Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Capt. David Lifka  
mail@floridanewline.com

Wow, shrimp in the river already. Mostly small to medium sized, and still widely scattered, but they are here. This means that not only has the shrimp run begun, but all the great fishing that occurs with the shrimp run is very soon to follow.

As the season progresses, numbers should increase. At the peak of the shrimp run your shrimp count per net throw could be from three or four dozen, up to over a hundred. During the down time, when the counts are low, catching enough for bait instead of a meal is a great way to do some live shrimp fishing.

Having live shrimp for bait greatly increases your fishing possibilities on any fishing trip. Live shrimp is probably the best bait for all areas of the St. Johns. It can be bottom fished, float rigged, or cast on a jig head. Live shrimp will even work back in the creeks for largemouth bass. Redfish, trout, flounder, weakfish, and croaker are all fans of the shrimp, especially fresh live shrimp from the same waters they are currently inhabiting.

Mandarin Point, Doctor's Lake, and Shands Bridge are all good areas to start looking for shrimp when heading out. As the summer and shrimping season progress, you should be able to fill in the gaps of these locations.

When hunting shrimp try different depths and tides at the same location. Quite often the shrimp will be in shallow waters early in the day and work their way deeper as the day progresses. Same goes for the tides as the shrimp will often bunch up when the water is moving and spread out when the water slows. What's really nice is when they are all so thick and heavy they all just show on your bottom finder.

Fishing Report: The St. Johns River is coming alive with the presence of shrimp. Decent sized croakers are beginning to show with reds and a few flounder around docks and pilings. Bass fishing continues to be good in area creeks and tributaries. Summer-time surf fishing is still offering some good whiting catches, although a little smaller.

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

*Email your Catch of the Month photo to catchofthemonthpictures@gmail.com. Be sure to include the name of the person(s) in the photo, the name of the person who took the photo, the type of fish and date and location of the catch. We will select a photo each month for publication.*

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## Nutrition Check

### Power packed nutrition when eating plant-based

By Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RDN, LDN, CLC and Crystal Liebenberg BS  
mail@floridanewline.com

One of the most popular health trends that is currently on the rise worldwide is adopting a "plant-based diet." The term "plant-based" does not necessarily mean vegan or vegetarian (eliminating animal products), but rather incorporating more plants and less animal products in your diet. If planned well, plant-based diets can support health and decrease risk of disease for all stages of life. Part of having a well-balanced plant-based diet is knowing which nutrients are found in various plant-based foods to reap the health benefits. If you are considering changing your diet to a plant-based approach, it is recommended to consult a Registered Dietitian to help you be successful.

Here is a list of foods that consumes high amounts of these powerful nutrients:

**Iron:** Green veggies (e.g. spinach), nuts, seeds, whole grains, fortified foods, lentils, and dark chocolate. (Note: Adding vitamin C to your iron sources will help your body absorb iron more efficiently)

**Protein:** Legumes (beans and lentils), nuts and seeds, soy milk, tofu, peas, edamame, peanut butter, chickpeas,

nutritional yeast, and quinoa.

**Zinc:** Chickpeas, cashews, almonds, hemp, pumpkin seeds, oatmeal, baked beans, and whole grain products.

**Vitamin B12:** Nutritional yeast, fortified foods, and supplements.

**Vitamin D:** Most food sources of vitamin D include meat, fish, liver, and egg; however, there are fortified plant-based foods that contain vitamin D such as fortified plant-based milks and fortified cereals.

**Omega 3:** Fatty fish (e.g. salmon, mackerel, sardine), chia seeds, ground flaxseeds and oil, hemp seeds and oil, walnuts, edamame, and kidney beans.

**Calcium:** Calcium is found in high amounts in dairy foods and is arguably one of the most important minerals in our body. Calcium can also be consumed in plant sources such as broccoli, kale, collard greens, bok choy, tahini, soy products, and fortified foods.

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

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# Gardening

## Summer, Florida, and the problem with peat

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale  
mail@floridanewslines.com

According to NOAA ([www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/)), as of May 20, the forecast was for a more than 50 percent chance of higher than normal temperatures for the next three months, and up to a 40 percent chance for higher than normal precipitation. Much of May was extremely dry in my area of town, so the rain in early June was very welcome.

All you efficient and organized gardeners have likely got your yard in good order and will be concentrating on dealing with the weather, tending the vegetable patch, and keeping flowers dead headed to encourage more blooms. Insects will also be increasingly obvious, so scouting regularly will help. Each gardener has a tolerance limit for insects, but if there aren't many pests it is to your advantage to simply pick them off and destroy them, rather than reach for that pesticide.

My long beans are doing well, but they are a magnet for black aphids. Consequently I spend a peaceful 10 minutes or so, maybe twice a day, searching them out and squishing them. I have found ladybug adults and larvae in among the aphids, so I take care to avoid killing the larvae, and leave them on the vines to continue eating the aphids. Adult ladybugs are also carnivores. Assassin bugs have found the bean plants, so I have their help in my endeavors, but sadly I spotted one with its mouthparts embedded in a ladybug.

There are definite downsides to using chemical pesticides as they can cause insects to develop resistance, thereby rendering a product less effective. If pests do become a big problem, be sure to identify them. (Contact the Extension Service for help, if needed.) Rotate appropriate pesticide products with different chemical actions, and follow the recommendations for homeowners on "using pesticides wisely."

During rainy seasons, it's important to monitor your lawn and watch for diseases and insects, both of which are encouraged by lush green growth. Adjust your irrigation system, to make sure you

don't over water, and follow best fertilization and watering practices. To green a lawn in summer, avoid nitrogenous fertilizers and use an iron-containing product (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/ep236>). Remember, a thirsty lawn looks slightly blue, the grass blades become folded lengthwise, and footprint impressions stay visible. If it is your scheduled watering day, water before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. applying no more than one inch of water (<https://www.sjrwmd.com/wateringrestrictions/>).

Two good sources of current information are our local "A New Leaf – Yard & Garden" newsletter (<https://tinyurl.com/2h6ppf8e>) and "The Neighborhood Gardener" (<https://tinyurl.com/ym838vz2>), from the Master Gardener program at the University of Florida.

I know that peat is a component of most bagged potting soils and some British gardening experts always use peat-free products; however it hadn't made a huge impact on me. What truly hit home was watching a TV piece featuring a professional gardener touring a protected peat bog in northern England. The scene was beautiful: low clumping plants in a meandering boggy substrate; images of greens, browns, and dusky purples, with a distant view of hazy blue hills. I learnt that the peat itself is many feet deep and has been laid down over hundreds or even thousands of years; in untouched bogs the process is still ongoing. Astonishingly, "Globally, peatlands store half a trillion metric tons of carbon, twice as much as the world's forests." (Professor Dave Goulson, of the University of Sussex, UK) I was surprised to find that the use of peat has been debated here for decades: <https://tinyurl.com/ytdabj55>. So why is the industry still using it for potting soil — "mining" it and releasing huge quantities of a potent greenhouse gas, when there are alternatives, like coconut coir? Well there have been some companies that have made the switch, so it's worth searching out their products. If gardeners can avoid using peat-based potting media, then we will be doing ourselves and our planet a huge favor.

## Beachwalk tennis team wins championship



Photo courtesy Jennifer Sacks

The inaugural Beachwalk Women's Tennis team won the First Coast Tennis of Florida D-league championship on May 28. After battling for the top spot all season against veterans like Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, Palencia, and Marsh Landing, Beachwalk walked away victorious after their first official season. The Beachwalk team is made up of moms who sought out a healthy outlet to release stress — and then fell in love with the game of tennis and gave it their all to win this championship. Coach Liana McCormick is also a mom juggling three kids under the age of eight; she has built the tennis program at Beachwalk and taken the team from 15 original players to 60 in the first year.

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## Travel

### New River Gorge: Our newest National Park

By Debi Lander  
[mail@floridanewline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewline.com)

Many U.S. National Parks recorded their highest visitation rates in 2020, the pandemic year. Seems that after lockdown, Americans want to venture out, get away from computers and TV, and rediscover the joys of outdoor recreation. I felt the same need, so I flew to Charleston, W.Va., to explore our newest national park: New River Gorge National Park. The 53-mile section of the north-flowing river was previously designated a National River, but upgraded to an official national park in December 2020, joining 62 other national treasures.

The designation gives new recognition to West Virginia, provides new jobs, and more money to the old coal mine region. It means a national park within driving distance of the east coast, albeit nine hours from Jacksonville. (Perhaps stop in North Carolina or Virginia to break up the trip.)

The almost heaven gorge itself is majestic. Lush green mountains rise high above the gushing flow of the New River, oddly named as it's the second oldest in the world. The New River Bridge stands as the park icon, the largest single-arch bridge in the Western Hemisphere, resting 876 feet above the water. Sign up for the fun and honestly non-scary Bridge Walk. You step along a catwalk below the bridge roadway, safely tethered in with access to handrails on each side. A guide shares the history of the area and interesting facts about the engineering marvel. The view — breathtaking.

The third Saturday in October draws thousands to Bridge Day. They come to walk, join a 5K run, or watch the thrill-seekers who zip-line, rappel, or BASE jump — a very brief free fall with a parachute landing off the bridge. These activities are legal only on Bridge Day.

Naturally, hiking attracts all ages, and the park offers more than 100 miles of forested foot, mountain bike, and equestrian trails. Some paths follow the old rail lines, and others go down to ruins of coal mining towns. Rock climbing in the "Grand Canyon of the East" appeals to enthusiasts year-round, and hunting is permitted in some areas of the park. Fishing, with a license, promises a variety of bass, walleye, crappie, bluegill, carp, and catfish. And, photographers love it, too.

Whitewater rafting, however, claims the most excitement. The upper course works for families or those wanting smaller rapids or a gentle paddle. The big-water lower run brings thrills and, as I found out, spills. I decided to try the famed lower course and fell off my raft in class 4-5 rapids — and a swirling vortex. Pretty scary. Perhaps I should have left rafting to the more experienced crowd, like those who challenge the Gauley River, also within the national park's grounds. It ranks as one of the top five rafting rivers in the world.

Lodging options run from bare-bones platforms for tent camping to comfy log cabins with outdoor hot tubs. Adventures on the Gorge is the premier outfitter offering everything from accommodations to guided activities with transportation, restaurants,



Photos courtesy Debi Lander  
Bridge Walk participants.



Dawn over the Gorge.



Rafting the lower course.



New River Gorge from the Bridge Walk.

swimming pools, and adventure gear. You'll find cabin rentals and bed and breakfast rooms in the nearby town of Fayette or numerous RV parks and campgrounds in the region.

I highly recommend a visit to the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine to better understand the dangerous work done by coal miners. You ride through the dark passages of a vintage coal mine with a veteran miner. At various stops, this guide provides firsthand accounts of how past miners spent their days. The idea of working in a space no higher than three and a half feet astounded me. You can also visit the period coal camp buildings throughout the grounds. Kids will enjoy the adjacent Youth Museum highlighted by Thomas the Tank Engine exhibits.

For further information: [www.nps.gov/neri](http://www.nps.gov/neri)

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