



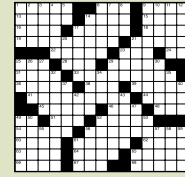
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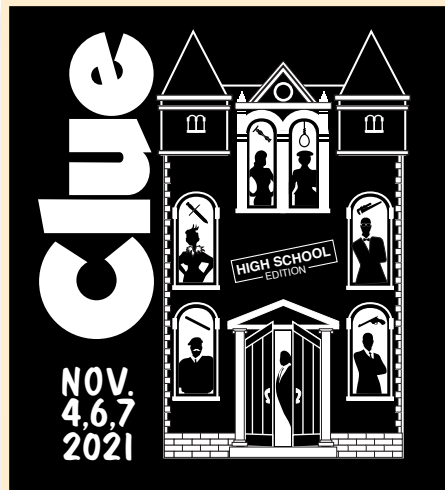


Photo courtesy Bartram Trail High School Theatre Department

## “Clue: On Stage” to be presented at Bartram Trail High School

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Bartram Trail High School Theatre Department will present “Clue: On Stage” on the first weekend in November. Based on the classic board game and the 1985 film, this is a hilarious farce-meets-murder mystery. Audience members will join six mysterious suspects at Boddy Manor and have an evening (or afternoon) filled with murder, mystery, and mayhem.

Performance dates are Thursday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 6 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 7 at 2 p.m. The show will be staged in the Bartram Trail High School auditorium, 7399 Longleaf Pine Pkwy. in St. Johns. Tickets are \$15 and are available at the door; cash only is accepted. Visit <https://bit.ly/2UoWupk> for more information or to purchase tickets online.

## Homeless Coalition creates secure environment for homeless families



Photos courtesy Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County  
Some of the Homeless Coalition's transitional homes.

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com

The Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County is a true coalition, according to executive director Debi Redding, and it works with a lot of different agencies to provide its services — but its main focus is on homeless families and bringing them to self-sufficiency. Back in June 1998, several groups that were concerned about homelessness in the county as well as mental health issues came together and co-founder Jean Harden (along with husband Jim) came up with the idea to help homeless families.

“It was a big eye opener that homeless families existed in St. Johns County,” Redding said. “The group formed a 501 c 3 organization and a board of directors in November 1998.”

Those very first board members all signed the mortgage

note and bought the Homeless Coalition's first house on West King Street to be used for transitional housing. In 2001, the coalition purchased a block of seven homes in West Augustine that had been condemned. Again, the board members all personally signed the mortgage notes. Redding said through



Pastor Jeff St. Clair of Longleaf Church volunteered on a recent Saturday.

The Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County has recently started an “Adopt a House” program, where groups or individuals may donate funds for specific home repairs. Redding said that 12 of their houses are more than 100 years old and many repairs are needed! Call (904) 819-0059 for more information about this program.

donations and hard work from the community, they were able to renovate these homes and ultimately buy more homes and vacant land in the immediate area as it became available. Today, the Homeless Coalition has 23 houses for use by families with minor children.

Redding said the coalition receives its referrals from St. Johns Care Connect (Flagler Health+), which determines the most vulnerable families after an assessment process.

“Families that come to us are either living in a place not suitable for human habitation, including the woods, or living at St. Francis House or Betty Griffin Center,” Redding said. “When they get to us they don't have anything, which is why all of our homes are fully furnished, down to the dishes, linens, and personal hygiene products, all from community donations.”

As a housing first provider, the Homeless Coalition will refer individuals that come to them to appropriate agencies to address the barriers which led to their homelessness — like mental health issues or substance abuse.

Much help and assistance is given, but expectations are high.

Homeless Coalition cont. on pg. 8

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Photos courtesy tag! Children's Museum

tag! Children's Museum groundbreaking with donors, local community and business leaders, family, and friends.

## tag! Children's Museum of St. Augustine breaks ground on four-acre campus

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

tag! Children's Museum of St. Augustine broke ground on the first phase of construction on Oct. 7. Phase 1 of the interactive experience will be completed during the coming year. Once completed, tag! will be a community resource, local destination, an educational laboratory, and an advocate for children. tag! announced Phase 1 with a generous lead gift from The Newman Family Foundation.

"We are thrilled that tag! Children's Museum will soon begin construction of one of the most unique museums in the country. tag! will become a critical part of arts and sciences enrichment and allow children, students, and adults to recapture the pure joy of discovery. It also makes good business sense. tag! will become another destination drawing more people into Northeast Florida and boosting our economy," said Chuck and Diane Newman of the Newman Family Foundation of St. Johns County.



Janice Dusseau Jones, chairperson, tag! Children's Museum board of directors, at the groundbreaking.

indoor and outdoor spaces including the Lastinger Big Backyard, the Florida Blue Healthy Gardens, The Cofrin Family Tree Story Garden, and The PLAYERS Championship STEM programming. Phase 2 includes additional buildings

Phase 1 will include a playful collection of

**Children's Museum** cont. on pg. 4

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# BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

## Meet Caesar!



**Breed:**  
Jack Russell Terrier

**Favorite Activity:**  
Hunting lizards and chasing basketballs

**Favorite Treat:**  
Crunchy chips!

**Favorite Friend:**  
Leo, my best friend and protector

**How your BFF got their name:**  
The Dog Whisperer was popular on TV, at first sight, Caesar it was!

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in The CreekLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in The CreekLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.



## Senior NewsLine

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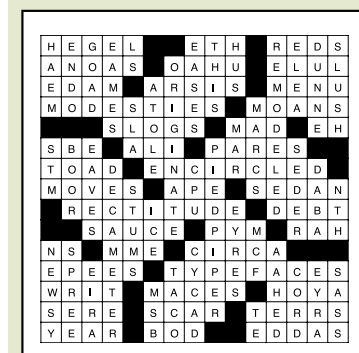


## MYSTERY PHOTO



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

Last month's Mystery Photo was the Memorial Hospital Emergency Room on Race Track Road. Our winner was Nikki Fifer. Congratulations!

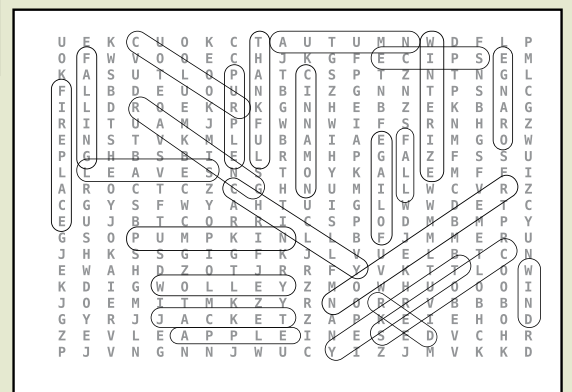


Answers  
to our  
Puzzles  
PG 18

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

**Q: Can you tell us about the recent certification of the tax roll?**

**A:** On Oct. 7, our office certified the 2021 Tax Roll to the St. Johns County Tax Collector. The tax collector is now preparing the tax bill, which will be mailed on or about Nov. 1.

As a reminder, homeowners can receive a discount if they pay their tax bill early: If they pay in November, they receive a 4 percent discount; in December, they receive a 3 percent discount; in January, they receive a 2 percent discount; and in February, they receive a 1 percent discount. The full amount is due in March, with a deadline of April 1, 2022.

**Q: Do you have any interesting facts about this year's tax roll?**

**A:** This is the largest tax roll in the history of St. Johns County, which is probably not too surprising. This year, we assessed approximately 157,000 parcels. The just value of the tax roll in 2021 is \$46.9 billion, as compared to \$42.7 billion in 2020, a \$4.2 billion increase. The taxable value that we certified this year is \$33.3 billion as compared to \$30.4 billion in 2020. There was almost \$1 billion in new construction added to the roll. Our expectations for next year, based upon the property sales this year as well as building permits issued, are for the tax roll to be bigger.

**Q: What's next for the Property Appraiser's office?**

**A:** We have now moved forward to the assessment period for 2022. We call it a

working tax roll and we will be in this period until June 2022, when we finalize the roll and send it to the Department of Revenue and the taxing authorities.

This is a good time to remind people, especially new homeowners this year, to apply for homestead exemption prior to the deadline of March 2022 if they qualify. To qualify, the property must be your primary residence and your driver's license must show the address. Additionally, you cannot receive property tax benefits in any other state in the United States. In 2021, we took in 14,840 new homestead exemption applications.

**Q: What else do you have to share with northern St. Johns County residents?**

**A:** Beginning in January, our office will resume our outreach efforts. We go out to neighborhoods and give presentations and even take homestead and other exemption applications on site. We already have plans to visit Nocatee, RiverTown and Durbin Crossing and would like to visit all neighborhoods. If your homeowners association or community development district would like us to come out, please call our office to schedule.

**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 [Ed-die@sjcpa.us](mailto:Ed-die@sjcpa.us) or call me at (904) 827-5500.

**Children's Museum** cont. from pg. 2

with more indoor exhibits, learning labs, and outdoor learning adventures.

“Our mission calls on us to inspire play, discovery, exploration, and innovation through science and creativity, and to be a partner and resource for those who work with or on behalf of children, youth, and families,” said tag! Executive Director Kim MacEwan.

Corporate partners and stakeholders include Dr. Jimmy and Karen Glens, The Platt Family, Danielle and Gene Fraser, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, and Bozard Ford Lincoln.

Fundraising efforts for the museum are ongoing and the \$7 million capital cam-

paign provides families, businesses, and others the opportunity to invest in the future of Northeast Florida. The organization is currently \$2 million from the goal needed to complete the facility.

tag! Children's Museum will be the first cultural institution built in Northeast Florida in more than 20 years and is anticipated to have an estimated \$2 million annual impact on the community. tag! will enrich the lives of an estimated 300,000 area students, 76 school districts, and engage 85,000 expected visitors annually.

tag! Children's Museum, a 501 c 3 nonprofit, will be located off Arapaho Avenue, just behind Target on US Highway 1 near Windward Marina in St. Augustine. Visit [tagmuseum.org](http://tagmuseum.org) for more information.







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

**Q: Do you have an update on High School III?**

**A:** At our workshop on Oct. 19, we were presented with the top five selections for names by the school's principal. We will vote on these names at the Nov. 9 school board meeting. After that, the principal and the community will decide on a mascot. Construction of the school is on schedule so far and we will have a topping out ceremony, where the last girder goes up, on Oct. 21. We expect staffing, to include hiring the athletic director and maintenance coordinator, to begin in earnest after the first of the year.

**Q: What can you tell us about the changes to school breakfasts and lunches?**

**A:** Months ago, we opted in to a waiver to allow us to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students at all schools; however, we were recently informed by the director of food services that we are running into so many supply chain problems and staffing shortages that he recommends we return to our pre-COVID position of charging for meals except for those who qualify for free and reduced meals as well as our 10 Title 1 schools who already receive this. Parents should be on the lookout for more information coming to them about this before the start date of the first of 2022. For informational purposes, St. Johns County currently has 19 percent of students who qualify for free and reduced meals, as compared to a median of 54 percent for the state.

**Q: Do you have any update on redistricting as a result of the Census?**

**A:** There will be a public meeting at the School Board building in St. Augustine on Nov. 1 at 6 p.m. and

another one at Nease High School in the media center on Nov. 2 at 6 p.m. for public input. Our consultants will present the four possible plans which are already on the website, [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/redistricting](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/redistricting). Also on Nov. 2 there will be a joint meeting between the Board of County Commissioners and the School Board for continued discussion of these plans, leading up to the final meeting on Dec. 9, when we will vote. Whatever plan we adopt on Dec. 9 will go into effect that very day.

This redistricting only affects the county commission seat and the school board seat and has nothing to do with school redistricting. We draw our county's five district lines the same for the Board of County Commissioners and the School Board. Separate is the redistricting for state and national legislation and congressional districts.

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

**A:** The St. Johns County School District has many open positions, especially for paraprofessionals, which require either an associate's degree or 60 hours of college credit. Because our support staff deficit has been so large, one thing we have done to entice applicants is offer the ability to work two jobs, such as a bus driver before and after school and cafeteria worker during the school day. We offer overtime if earned as well as benefits for full time employees. All open positions are listed on our website ([www.stjohns.k12.fl.us](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)).

**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.

## New location for audiology and speech clinic

By NewsLine Staff  
[mail@floridanewslines.com](mailto:mail@floridanewslines.com)

Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center, the area's only nonprofit audiology and speech clinic, is expanding its accessible services to a satellite location at 14595 Philips Hwy. The vision for the new location is to expand Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center's reach into southern Duval County and St. Johns County to meet soaring population demands and a growing need for audiology and speech-language pathology therapies.

Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center has operated its primary clinic in downtown Jacksonville for more than 70 years. The advent of the clinic came to fruition in 1949, when speech therapist Sarah Barrett recognized that her own practice would not be able to meet the growing caseload of children needing speech therapy. Barrett collaborated with local pediatrician Hugh Carithers, and Junior League member Jane Grey Scott to bring the Children's Speech Correction Clinic to life — Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center's first incarnation.

Over the following decades, Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center experienced some changes and additions to move with the times and continue to offer quality, equitable care to its community; however, the clinic also experienced various periods of austerity, bearing the brunt of economic recessions, scarce funds, and the need for upgraded facilities. In recent years, the organization has grown its services. Currently, Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center operates its downtown clinic at 1010 N. Davis St. and its administrative offices in the Jessie Ball DuPont center, where it collaborates with other nonprofits. Local philanthropists and volunteers wanting to make a difference are what have made the clinic's mission and expansion possible.

"We are extremely grateful for our donors and board members for their generosity in funding the buildout of our new location," said Jacksonville Speech and Hearing Center CEO and President Michael Howland.



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**with St. Johns County Sheriff  
Rob Hardwick**

**Q: What can you tell us about the sheriff's office's personnel?**

**A:** The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office has a total of just under 900 employees, to include full time, part time, civilian, sworn, and reserves. Approximately 350 of these are deputy sheriffs in law enforcement and 150 are deputy sheriffs in corrections. The remaining are support staff, or what I like to say are those that actually make the sheriff's office work. We have our own human resources department, records division, telecommunications (911 operators), correction control operators and forensics department.

**Q: Are there job opportunities for any of these positions?**

**A:** Yes, especially in the support staff areas, we are short staffed.

**Q: What full time positions do you have open?**

**A:** We have some sworn officers in the corrections division (who work in the jail) positions open. The starting pay is \$45,000 and that is for entry level with no experience or college degree. These positions require shift work (12 hour shifts).

We also need telecommunication department employees, or 911 operators. Here, the starting pay is \$41,000 and training is on the job under the watchful eye of a field training officer. This position also requires shift work.

**Q: What part time positions are avail-**

**able?**

**A:** First, we have school crossing guard positions available. This is a great position because it is seasonal; you only work when school is in session. It's approximately one hour in the morning (about a half hour before and after the start of school) and an hour in the afternoon. This pays an hourly rate of \$15.87 and all uniforms and training are provided by the sheriff's office.

Also, we have PSA (Public Service Assistants) positions open. These are also hourly positions and pay \$17.31 per hour with uniform and training provided. The PSAs assist with patrol and our youth resource division and will work more hours than school crossing guards, since after the PSA works the school arrival in the morning, they go on to other duties such as neighborhood patrols and other non-criminal law enforcement. There is a lot of community engagement and they work up to 29 hours per week.

**Q: Where can we find more about these open positions and how to apply?**

**A:** Visit [www.sjso.org](http://www.sjso.org) and then "Join SJSO" to see the current jobs available.

**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.



**with St. Johns County Supervisor of  
Elections Vicky Oakes**

**Q: Can people find out who I voted for?**

**A:** The fact that you voted in an election is public information. Anyone can ask for a list of people who cast a ballot in an election in Florida; however, you are the only person who knows how you voted. Strict procedures are in place to make sure that no one, not even election workers, can find out how you voted.

**Q: How do you prevent Vote-by-Mail ballot fraud?**

**A:** We can only mail a Vote-by-Mail ballot to a voter upon request. We track every ballot issued to voters and whether the ballots have been returned. You can track your ballot by visiting [votesjc.gov](http://votesjc.gov) to see when your ballot has been requested, mailed to you, and counted. When our office receives your ballot, we check to make sure your signature matches our records and that you have not already voted in the election. Once you return your Vote-by-Mail ballot, we update your voter registration record so you cannot vote twice.

**Q: How do you prevent dead people from voting?**

**A:** When a voter dies, we receive official notification from other government agencies, such as the Florida Department of Health and the Social Security Administration. Once we receive notice, we remove the voter's name from the voter registration system.

**Q: How do you prevent people from voting more than once?**

**A:** We use real-time technology to update

voter records as soon as someone votes, either in person or by mail. If our records show that you have already voted, you may only vote a provisional ballot, which does not count if it is determined you have already voted in the election. Otherwise you are not allowed to vote again.

**Q: How do you prevent people who moved out of state from voting in Florida?**

**A:** We share information with other states and other government agencies to keep our voter registration information up to date. When you move and register in a new state, we remove you from the Florida voter registration system.

**Q: How do you prevent pets, made-up people or other ineligible persons from voting?**

**A:** You must first register to vote before you can vote. To register, you must provide a state issued ID or Social Security Number. We verify this ID information against official databases during the registration process. This step ensures that only eligible voters are added to the voter registration system. When a voter votes in person, we check their photo and signature ID to make certain that the person is a registered voter.

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

**A:** Readers can email me at [voakes@votesjc.com](mailto:voakes@votesjc.com) or call me at (904) 823-2238. Our website, [www.votesjc.com](http://www.votesjc.com) also has a wealth of information.

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**JEA offers rebates for off peak electric vehicle charging — and new location for making payments**

By NewsLine Staff  
[mail@floridanewline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewline.com)

JEA is launching a new program to support Jacksonville residents who opt to drive electric vehicles. Starting Oct. 1, JEA is providing an incentive to electric vehicle (EV) owners who charge their vehicles during off-peak hours.

Additionally, customers now can make their JEA payments at any Walmart location. Customers should have their bill and / or account number and can pay with cash or debit card at Walmart.

The electric vehicle incentive offers JEA customers a rebate that roughly equates to the electricity needed to drive up to 2,000 miles per year. The EV Charging Rebate is

available to any JEA customer and electric vehicle owner who charges their vehicle at home using a Level 2 charger. The customer must register for the program and limit their charging to weeknights or weekends. There are no special devices to buy and no specific type of charger to install.

Peak hours (the hours to avoid) are weekdays from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. All other times are considered off-peak under the JEA Drive Electric Program.

Visit [JEADriveElectric.com](http://JEADriveElectric.com) to learn more about electric vehicles and to apply for available rebates. Visit [JEA.com/payment-methods](http://JEA.com/payment-methods) to find a convenient payment location near you.

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY  
PROPERTY APPRAISER**  
**Eddie Creamer**

**NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF TAX ROLL**  
Pursuant to Sections 193.122 and 197.323, Florida Statutes, Notice is Hereby Given that the Tax Roll for St. Johns County was Certified to the St. Johns County Tax Collector on the 7th day of October, 2021, for the Collection of 2021 Taxes Pending Value Adjustment Board Changes.

**EDDIE CREAMER**  
PROPERTY APPRAISER ST. JOHNS COUNTY

**For additional information, please visit our website at [www.sjcpa.us](http://www.sjcpa.us) or contact us at (904) 827-5500**

# November

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

### Community Calendar

**The Newcomers Alumnae** will hold this month's luncheon on Nov. 3 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach. Numa Saisselin, president of The Florida Theatre Performing Arts Center, will be the guest speaker and will discuss The Florida Theatre, a 1,900-seat theatre in downtown Jacksonville that first opened its doors on April 8, 1927. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The cost for this luncheon is \$23. Reservations for lunch must be made by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible in order to reserve a seat.

**Playing HOOKie**, a group for those who enjoy knitting, crocheting and looming (with all items donated to charity) meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the outside eating area at Belgian Sweet House Bistro, 12276 San Jose Blvd. (next to Harbor Chase). Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookie31@gmail.com for more information.

**The Honeybee Quilters Guild** will meet on Tuesday, Nov. 2 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church in the loft on the County Dock Road side of the church at 2501 Loretto Road. Colleen will be teaching about edge

to edge machine embroidery. Masks are optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

**The Jacksonville Camera Club** will meet on Nov. 3 and Nov. 17. On Nov. 3, Bronwyn Horvath, an accomplished photographer, will present "12 Tips for Better Travel Photography." On Nov. 17, the results for images entered in the club's final digital contest for 2021 will be presented. Visit jax.jaxcameraclub.com for more information and meeting location updates.

**The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable** will meet on Monday, Nov. 8 at 12 p.m. at St. Augustine-St. Johns County Airport Authority, North East Florida Regional Airport. This will be an in-person meeting inside of the Passenger Terminal. RSVP to info@scjroundtable.org if you would like to attend. Email info@scjroundtable.org to register for the meeting or for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

Crosswater Community Church will host an **Overdose Awareness Seminar** on Nov. 9 from 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. at the church, located at 211 Davis Park Road in Nocatee. This event will bring awareness to the opioid addiction crisis and features panelists St. Johns

County School District Superintendent Tim Forson, Fire Rescue Medical Director Dr. Kerry Bachista, Sheriff Rob Hardwick, Medical Director Dr. Michael Sorna and Florida National Guard Captain Michael Coy. Registration is free.

**The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club** will hold its meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021 at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club, 205 St. Johns Golf Drive, St. Augustine. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. Lenora Spence from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will address the various types of consumer fraud and phishing scams whether through email, social media, or telephone calls and how to avoid being scammed. The cost of the luncheon is \$23. Make checks payable to BTNC and mail to Lin Collier, 6409 Autumn Berry Cir., Jacksonville, FL 32258. Payment must be received no later than Nov. 4, 2021, no exceptions. Be sure to indicate entrée choice on the check memo line. Visit [www.facebook.com/BTNC1](http://www.facebook.com/BTNC1) for food choices and updated information.

**Herbal Medicine from Mother Earth's Garden** will be offered on Nov. 13 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.

**The All Star Quilters Guild** will meet at 10 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 15 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program is "What's New or Repurposed." Guests are welcome, but masks are required. Christmas quilt raffle tickets are available for \$1 each. Visit [www.allstarquilters.org](http://www.allstarquilters.org) for more information.

**The Newcomers of North St. Johns** will host a meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 11:15 a.m. at Blackstone Grille, 112 Bartram Oaks Walk in Fruit Cove. Doors will open at 11 a.m. The event will feature a presentation about what's trending in travel, both stateside and overseas, by travel agent Janice Vanormer. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$33 for members. All reservations must be received by Nov. 5. Contact Sue Aird at [sjaird@comcast.net](mailto:sjaird@comcast.net) to register. Members are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item (non-glass container) to donate to the food pantry at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church.



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Photo courtesy Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County  
Volunteers help with landscaping at the Homeless Coalition's campus.

**Homeless Coalition** cont. from pg. 1

After giving the new residents a month or so to settle in to their transitional homes, the work begins to get them back on their feet.

“They must get a job, they must work to get out of the situation they are in,” Redding said. “We help with resume building and referrals to staffing and employment agencies. We also work with them on budgeting and parenting. We try to make it as painless as possible, but we have to see results.”

The estimate is about 18 months for the clients to spend in the transitional housing. By that time, Redding said they should be on their way to self sufficiency. She said the Homeless Coalition has an 80 – 85 percent success rate. When the client is able to leave, they may take all of the items from their transitional home, including furniture and household goods, so they can set up their new permanent home. Since they had the utility bill in their name from the onset, they have built up credit. Once a family moves out, the Homeless Coalition works with community donors to clean and re-outfit the house and then a new referral moves in.

The Homeless Coalition has just four employees and relies heavily on volunteers, particularly groups from area businesses and churches, to do things like sort food pantry items and clothing

donations, as well as help with home repairs, landscaping and general upkeep of the five-acre campus. A group of volunteers from Longleaf Church signed up to volunteer on a recent Saturday. Pastor Jeff St. Clair, who has volunteered a few times at the Homeless Coalition, said some of the things he has helped with include organizing a storage shed, painting a porch, folding clothes and some basic landscaping.

“I was introduced to the Homeless Coalition in December 2020,” St. Clair said. “The Homeless Coalition is a powerful outreach to the St. Johns community and is a great way for a family to get involved in serving their community and to help empower those who have recently gone through tough times find a way to greater stability.”

The Homeless Coalition is always looking for donations of items to furnish and outfit its transitional homes, as well as clothing, personal hygiene items and games and toys to put in the children's rooms. Redding asked that those wishing to donate or volunteer call or email first to ensure that the items are needed at that time as storage space is limited.

“We have a very generous community,” Redding said. “And we are thankful for everything they do.”

Visit <http://homelesscoalitionstjohns.com>, call (904) 819-0059 or email [homelesscoalition@comcast.net](mailto:homelesscoalition@comcast.net) for more information.

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Photo courtesy Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County  
Volunteers from Longleaf Church, and other groups like them, are invaluable to the Homeless Coalition.

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# ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

## Market Insight



### "The Cracker Messiah"

By Scott A. Grant  
mail@floridanewline.com

If you want to understand Florida politics, you need to understand Sidney Johnston Catts. Known as the "Cracker Messiah," Catts rose from obscurity to seize the governor's office in a whirlwind 1916 campaign. The spectacular and improbable election led to a four-year term in office that is still one of the most colorful and controversial in Florida's rich history.

Catts was born in Alabama and educated at Auburn. While still in Alabama, he ran for Congress. Catts ran a conventional campaign and lost badly. He would not make that mistake again. Shortly after the loss, Catts had a "Come to Jesus" awakening at a camp meeting. He remembered himself clinging to an 'ole brown stump shaking with religious fervor. He became a Baptist minister in his home state. It did not pay well. One Sunday when his congregation ignored a call for donations, he quit.

Catts relocated to DeFuniak Springs in Florida and took up his ministry there. Disappointed in his \$100 a month salary, he quit again and became an insurance salesman. One benefit of his new job was that it would allow him to travel the state campaigning for the office of governor. He spent the better part of a year traveling back and forth across the state, often to small communities that had never seen a governor before. He bought a Model T and fitted it with a loudspeaker. For many poor rural Floridians, this would be the first car they'd ever seen.

Catts, who often spoke of himself in the third person, spread his message and raised funds as he travelled. The message was anti-booze and virulently anti-Catholic. In his mind, the two went together. "Rum and Romanism." The Catholics, he told his listeners, secretly controlled Florida. Despite being less than 5 percent of the population, Catholics, he alleged without merit, held two-thirds of the jobs in Tallahassee and were also in control of the press. Catts was there to warn the good hard-working protestants of the great state of this menace. As his campaign stressed, there were only three things the "Florida Cracker" could trust: "God Almighty, Sears and Roebuck, and Sidney J. Catts."

Catts ran for the Democratic nomination. Back in those days, it was the only party that mattered. Whoever won the Democratic nomination would usually

win the general election. Initially, Catts won the primary by a few hundred votes. Then on a recount it was determined that his opponent had won by a scant 21 votes.

Catts and his campaign alleged massive voter fraud and entered the general election as a third-party candidate. He ran on the Prohibition ticket. He took to the road again and spread the word of the stolen election. During that campaign, he announced that a group of Catholics from Apalachicola were planning to assassinate "old Catts." From that moment on, he wore a pair of loaded six guns on his belt to defend himself.

In November 1916, Sidney Catts won the governor's race by 9,000 votes. He remains the only third-party candidate to win that office. He would remain Florida's governor throughout World War I. Shortly after America entered the war, Catts announced that the monks at St. Leo's, near Tampa, were plotting to arm Florida's blacks and overthrow the government in favor of the Kaiser. Furthermore, once the Kaiser ruled, the Pope would be relocating the Holy See from Rome to San Antonio, Florida. Public schools and Baptist churches would be closed. Rather than being met by universal ridicule, this just made Catts even more popular with his base. This was exactly the sort of menace the voters had elected the gun-toting demagogue to protect them from!

Catts was accused of selling offices and pardons. One story held that famous murderer JJ Mendenhall acted as his agent at Raiford, recruiting white prisoners willing to pay the governor to get out of jail. Catts beat those charges. Then a federal grand jury brought charges that Catts was holding two black men as slaves on his plantation. Allegedly, he had pardoned them in exchange for their agreement to lifetime peonage. I guess they thought that was a good deal. His first reaction to the charges was to announce that "My political opponents just won't let me alone." Catts beat those charges as well.

*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@standfastic.com.*

## St. Johns County launches Small Business Exterior Improvement Grant Program

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewline.com

Small businesses in St. Johns County can now apply for funding assistance through the Small Business Exterior Grant Program. On Sept. 7, 2021, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners appropriated \$500,000 to this program aimed at helping small businesses enhance outdoor spaces for COVID-19 mitigation. This funding is part of Phase I of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) signed into law by President Biden earlier this year. St. Johns County is estimated to receive \$51.3 million in ARPA funding. To date, the Board of County Commissioners has appropriated \$7,843,500.

Eligible small businesses must be lo-

cated in St. Johns County, be an active and operational business at the time of applying, and have no more than 100 employees as of July 1, 2021. Visit <https://sjcfl.us/sjcarpa/FAQs.htm> to see the full list of eligibility criteria.

Grants will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis and grant applications will be accepted until Friday, July 1, 2022. Each eligible business is limited to one application. St. Johns County is currently seeking community feedback for Phase II ARPA funds. Residents are encouraged to fill out a questionnaire and share their feedback regarding several funding objectives. Visit [www.sjcfl.us/SJCARPA](http://www.sjcfl.us/SJCARPA) to fill out the questionnaire and to learn more about St. Johns County's ARPA program.

## Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs launches program

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewline.com

Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs offers entrepreneurial women the opportunity to apply to its online entrepreneurial workshop, which begins on Jan. 8, 2022.

This 16-week course, offered by Norfleet Integrated Solutions, will provide attendees with the basics of entrepreneurship, and the tools and skills to successfully navigate the path to small business ownership. This uniquely created hands-on training program includes live and video instruction, guest speakers, weekly coaching, networking sessions, and tools and resources. Aspir-

ing Women Entrepreneurs graduates are empowered women business owners offering products and services across the spectrum of industries and specialties — representing an infusion of innovation that benefits their local communities and our nation's economy.

This program culminates in a pitch competition that provides the winner \$2,500 of funding for their business. The co-founders of the Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs program are Dr. Wendy Norfleet and Romina Sines.

Visit <https://norfleetsolutions.com/aspiring-women-entrepreneur/> to apply for the program.

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# St. Johns County now offers assistance with past due energy bills for low-income seniors

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Program (EHEAP) that was previously admin-

istered by the Council on Aging will now be offered by St. Johns County. This ongoing assistance is for heating/cooling (electric) bill assistance to an elder who is in immediate danger of

losing home energy. Payment is made to the energy vendor or landlord (if utilities are included with the rent) on behalf of the eligible household that meets income and residency criteria.

• Complete the entire EHEAP Application and provide all required documentation (list found at <http://www.sjcfl.us/SocialServices/index.aspx>).

Benefit payment amounts are determined based on a documented home energy crisis and eligibility guidelines:

- Elder (60 years and older) must be experiencing a verifiable home energy crisis.
- Household income must be below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Utility bills must be past due for assistance with this program.
- Applicant is a St. Johns County resident and cannot be a resident of a group living facility or a home where cost of residency is subsidized through a program administered by the state and cannot be a student living in a dormitory.

All applicant/household EHEAP benefit(s) must be combined. Each applicant/household is allowed up to \$5,000 each until instructed otherwise. Allowable categories for financial assistance include past-due utility payments for heating/cooling, deposits to restore energy, and late, disconnect, or reconnect fees. Categories not eligible for financial assistance include water, sewer, and garbage charges, meter tampering charges, or return check charges.

The application can be found online by visiting <http://www.sjcfl.us/SocialServices/index.aspx>. Completed applications can be mailed to 200 San Sebastian View, Suite 2300, St. Augustine, FL 32084. For more information or assistance with the application process, call (904) 209-6140.

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## Get or Give Help From Home

### Turn to ElderSource for Senior Support and Caregiver Resources



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**Caregiver Support**

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**Caring Connections Telephone Reassurance Program**

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**Get Help with Medicare Questions**

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**LENNAR**



# Medicare Open Enrollment is here

By John Risler  
mail@floridanewsline.com

It's check-up time. Before a long road trip, do you check the tire pressure, belts and hoses, coolant? Before leaving the dock, do you assure sufficient life vests, fishing tackle, bait is on board? How about a trip to the beach — towel,

cooler, sunblock?

Now is the time to check your Medicare health coverage. The Medicare Open Enrollment Period for Medicare beneficiaries, also known as OEP, began on Oct. 15 and continues through Dec. 7. The sooner you start your review of

coverage the better. This allows time for comparison, evaluation, counseling, and changing.

Begin by getting out your insurance cards. This includes your Medicare card, Supplemental Insurance card, Medicare Advantage Plan insurance card, and perhaps your Medicaid card. Next get out your drug plan card, if you have one, and a list of your current medications. Finally dig out your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) or Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) that have arrived in the past several months.

With this information in hand you can better understand what went well during the year, where you had difficulties, and if you wish you had made a different plan selection decision last fall.

You will also want to confirm that your current favorite primary provider and specialist will be accepting the same plans in 2021. Is your pharmacy still the preferred one for your plan? Are your drugs all covered by your plan? This may require changing plans or providers.

Further, you should determine if your financial situation has changed. Are your current plans still within your budget? Do you need to reduce your costs? Do you qualify for, and need to apply for, premium assistance with Medicare Part

B or Part D?

These are just some of the questions that comprise a thorough Medicare coverage check-up. Now is the time to start!

Confused? Overwhelmed? Unsure? There is help available as close as your computer or telephone. Medicare.gov is a user-friendly website with a convenient Plan Finder Tool that can guide you through the options available.

You can also call the ElderSource Program, SHINE ("Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders") Program. This program offers free, independent and unbiased counseling with the goal of helping people find the best information possible to make important healthcare decisions.

SHINE volunteers are not insurance brokers, but rather specifically trained guides to help enrollees understand the possible changes they can make to their Medicare plans. This year, older adults may need additional guidance on coverage options because of the impacts of the COVID-19.

An ElderSource SHINE volunteer may be reached by calling (888) 242-4464.

*John Risler is an ElderSource SHINE volunteer.*



*"If I were still in my house I would not be doing half of what I'm doing here. And I've never had so many friends in my life."*

— Resident Mary M. (with her dog, Jade)

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# The basics of long-term care insurance

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Many older adults get some peace of mind by taking steps to finance long-term care should they become incapable of living independently.

LT Care Consumer, a health care advisory company, says 70 percent of people over age 65 will require some type of care at some point in their lives. According to the 2017 Cost of Care study by Genworth Financial, the average annual cost for a private room at a nursing home is \$97,455. Such costs illustrate why long-term care insurance can be a wise investment.

Long-term care, or LTC, encompasses services and support that assist individuals with the activities of daily living, which include bathing, eating, dressing, toileting, and more. In addition, LTC may support needs such as caring for pets, household chores, medicine management, and meal

preparation. LTC may be provided by specialized assisted living facilities or by in-home care workers.

The resource Long Term Care Primer advises that individuals typically must fund their own long-term care. Many facilities are not subsidized by government assistance programs under Medicare in the United States. Medicaid may step in for certain individuals who are of limited means, but that assistance may be exclusive to those living in skilled nursing facilities. That means the bulk of paying for long-term care rests on the individual.

Long-term care insurance can pay for care to treat chronic health conditions and meet personal needs over an extended period of time. This is known as custodial care. Individuals who have habits or health issues that could result in the need for LTC in the future should look into LTC insurance. LTC insurance also can be a sound investment for individuals who

cannot afford extended nursing care out-of-pocket.

The Ohio Department of Insurance notes that policies may vary, but they typically include a deductible or elimination period, which is a time when the policy holder is liable for payment before the insurance begins. Policies typically include a daily benefit as well. This is the maximum amount the insurance company will pay toward each day in the nursing facility; the policy holder may be responsible for the difference. Policies also include a benefit period, or the length of time the policy will pay the daily benefit, which can be a few years or a lifetime.

Individuals also have other options in regard to securing long-term care. Care.com says comprehensive LTC policies, combination policies and riders to current life insurance policies may help augment long-term care needs. Because LTC insurance — and paying for health care in general —

can be quite confusing, people are urged to speak to professionals about their options and whether LTC insurance is necessary. A 2014 study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College estimated that only 20 to 30 percent of people would benefit from a policy. Researchers concluded that, while many people do need long-term care, they may not need it for an extended period of time and may be able to cover their care with their own savings. Furthermore, the cost for policies may be \$2,000 a year, which is a concern for some people.

Individuals who purchase LTC insurance should know that medical underwriting for policies can be extensive. Coverage may be denied for current or past health conditions. Most people find that the best age at which to buy LTC insurance is in one's mid-50s. Healthy individuals may be eligible for discounts on LTC premiums.

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# Safe ways for seniors to volunteer

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Charitable organizations rely on the efforts of volunteers to meet their missions every day. People of all ages can volunteer, and a great number of volunteers are seniors.

A 2016 survey from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that nearly one-quarter of American volunteers are age 65

and over. That was never more apparent than during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many nonprofit organizations were suddenly forced to confront a volunteer shortage due to the adoption of social distancing guidelines that were designed to keep vulnerable populations, such as seniors, as safe as possible. One study from Fidelity Charitable found that two out

of three volunteers decreased or stopped contributing time during the pandemic.

The rollout of various COVID-19 vaccines has allowed vaccinated individuals to return to a certain degree of pre-pandemic normalcy; however, the threat posed by strains of the virus like the Delta variant has made some seniors apprehensive about returning to volunteering. Though each individual should consider various factors before returning to volunteering during the pandemic, the following are some options seniors can consider as they aim to safely pitch in once again.

- Look for contactless opportunities. Interactions with the people they help and work alongside is what drives many volunteers to lend a helping hand. That's especially so for seniors whose children have grown up and moved out. In person interactions may be too risky during the pandemic, but seniors can still volunteer via contactless opportunities. For example, in lieu of delivering meals by hand, seniors who work with organizations such as Meals on Wheels can deliver prepackaged meals outside recipients' residences.

- Pitch in with fundraising. A report from Giving USA released in 2021 revealed that Americans gave more to charity in 2020 than in 2019. That increase came in spite of an economic downturn that saw

millions of people lose their jobs or take pay cuts as companies scrambled to deal with lost revenue related to the pandemic. Though giving might have increased in 2020, many nonprofit organizations, including local community theaters, likely suffered due to cancellations and audi-



Photo courtesy MetroCreative  
Seniors concerned for their safety can still lend a hand by volunteering with their favorite nonprofit organizations.

ence restrictions. As a result, many local nonprofit organizations are in need of financial support. Seniors who want to pitch in but stay safe can volunteer to help local organizations raise funds. Seniors can participate in fundraising efforts from the comforts of their own homes.

- Offer professional expertise. Many seniors retired after spending decades mastering their crafts, and that experience can be an invaluable resource to local nonprofit organizations. Seniors can offer professional advice and mentor youths remotely via apps like Zoom without putting their physical health at risk.



## Exceptional Care From Generation to Generation

The Adult Day Program (ADP) at River Garden offers a purposeful, safe environment for seniors who require extra support. It also provides a worry-free time during the week, allowing caregivers to work or manage other appointments.

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- Outpatient therapies, as ordered
- Primary care from on-site physicians
- Barber, salon and personal care

### Schedule a Visit Today

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## Trout Creek seniors enjoy activities at senior center

The COA Trout Creek Senior Center is open on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. for group activities, events and programs. The center provides a healthy lunch, games, fitness classes, educational classes, arts and crafts, and opportunities for socialization. Pictured are some seniors enjoying time together at COA's

Trout Creek Senior Center, one of COA's six senior centers in St. Johns County. The Trout Creek Senior Center is located at Trout Creek Park Pavilion at 6795 Collier Road in Orangedale. Registration is required in order to participate. To register, please visit the senior center the Wednesday before you plan to attend.



Photo courtesy Council on Aging



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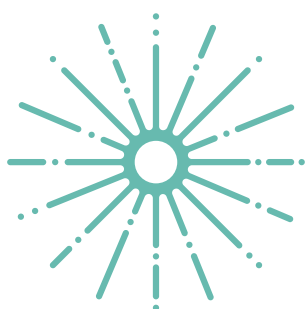
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**Briefs**

**St. Johns County adds new location for free disposal of yard waste**

Residents in St. Johns County may be experiencing a delay in yard waste collection due to the national workforce shortage. Republic Services and Advanced Disposal have encountered difficulties completing yard waste routes on scheduled service days. In an effort to provide additional options to the community, residents may bring yard waste to the following locations free of charge:

- Tillman Ridge Transfer Station, 3005 Allen Nease Road, Elkton. Drop off hours are from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday through Friday and 7 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturday.
- Republic Services Facility, 445A Republic Drive, St. Augustine. Drop off hours are from 7 a.m. – 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Drop off service is for St. Johns County residential customers only. No commercial trucks or vehicles will be allowed. In addition, all garbage and recycling routes will remain on schedule.

St. Johns County Solid Waste Division is working with Republic Services and Advanced Disposal to ensure yard debris collections are being conducted as quickly as possible. Call the Solid Waste Division at (904) 827-6980 or visit [www.recyclestjohns.com](http://www.recyclestjohns.com) for updates.

**Governor Ron DeSantis announces judicial appointments**

In anticipation of Constitution Day 2021 on Sept. 17, Gov. Ron DeSan-

tis announced the appointments of 20 rule of law judges to the following five circuits and 10 county courts: Fourth, Ninth, Eleventh, Fifteenth and Eighteenth Judicial Circuits, as well as Citrus, Hillsborough, Lee, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Orange, Palm Beach, Pasco, Polk, and St. Johns counties. Nine of the judicial appointments will fill new vacancies that were created by the Florida Legislature. With these appointments, Gov. DeSantis has made 150 total judicial appointments.

In St. Johns County, the new judicial vacancy on the St. Johns County Court created by the Florida Legislature was filled by Lauren Blocker. Blocker has served as Corporate Counsel to Fidelity Information Services since 2018. Previously, she served as a Judicial Law Clerk to U.S. Magistrate Judge Carol Mirando, U.S. Magistrate Judge Patricia D. Barksdale, and U.S. District Judge Marcia Morales Howard. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and her law degree from Florida Coastal.

**Giving Tree to benefit 41 local non-profit organizations**

The St. Johns CARES 15th annual Giving Tree initiative will occur from mid-November to early December. The wishes of clients from 41 non-profit organizations in St. Johns County serving elderly, veterans, homeless, abused, children and animals are printed onto holiday wish tags. The wish tags and posters are displayed in participating businesses, schools and organizations

throughout the county from mid-November until Dec. 7. The donations placed in the collection boxes are then sorted and provided to the non-profit organizations for the holidays. Monetary donations are used to purchase wish items that were not donated.

Over the years the generosity of the community during the Giving Tree drive has been so appreciated by the receiving organizations and made a significant impact on their clients. Now as much as at any time, so many people are in need.

Donation boxes with posters will be displayed at the host sites. A list of participating host sites is available on our website at [www.stjohnscares.org](http://www.stjohnscares.org). Monetary donations can also be made on the website. Contact [president@stjohnscares.org](mailto:president@stjohnscares.org) with any questions.

**Protect yourself from vaccination text scam**

Attorney General Ashley Moody recently issued a Consumer Alert warning Floridians of a new COVID-19 vaccination text scam. There have been reports of fraudulent text messages being sent to Floridians asking for driver license details in order to remake licenses that show vaccination status. The text messages provide a link that sends targets to a spoofed Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles website with input boxes requesting Social Security and driver license information — including a place to upload a photocopy of a driver license.

Moody said, “COVID-19 cases have decreased drastically across the state, but that hasn't stopped scammers from finding new angles to exploit the pandemic. Please be on the lookout for phony messages and remember that the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles will never reach out via text and ask for personal information. Florida is not updating driver licenses to include proof of vaccination — any solicitation making this claim is a scam that should be reported immediately.”

Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles Executive Director Terry L. Rhodes said, “The best defense against scams like this is to know how FLHSMV interacts with our customers. We do not text Floridians regarding the status of their driver license or request personal or medical information via text message. If you receive a text asking for this information, it is a scam. With only the information on your driver license, scammers can create many fraudulent financial accounts. All under your name, all without your knowledge. Do not respond to these texts and do not click on the links contained in the text message.”

Moody is asking Floridians to follow the tips below to avoid these types of imposter scams:

- Know that the FLHSMV is not requiring driver license updates listing proof of vaccination;
- Do not automatically trust a number listed on a caller ID or in an unsolicited text message;
- Do not post photos of vaccination cards or driver licenses online, as they

can be used to commit identity fraud; and

- Avoid clicking on links in a suspicious email or in a text message received from an unknown sender.

Report suspicious solicitations or COVID-19 vaccine-related advertisements to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting [MyFloridaLegal.com](http://MyFloridaLegal.com).

**Veterans receive preferred parking at St. Johns County Courthouse**

Veterans now have preferred parking when doing business at the St. Johns County courthouse.

“It's just one small way we can thank our veterans for their service to our country,” said St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty. “While this designation is an active demonstration of our appreciation, reserved parking also is a functional benefit for our veterans.”

Circuit Judge Howard O. McGillin Jr., Chairman Bill Dudley of the St. Johns County Veterans Council and Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator Cynthia Thompson joined Clerk Patty to formally designate two parking spaces near the south entrance to the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, located at 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine.

“A priority parking space is a small but meaningful gesture to extend to our veterans,” said Judge McGillin, who presides over Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County. “Many of the veterans in our program and other veterans who need to access the courthouse suffer from physical disabilities that do not qualify for handicapped parking. These spaces extend a courtesy to them in particular that simply says ‘thank you for your service.’”

With the north entrance closed indefinitely since spring 2020 due to the pandemic, the south entrance provides the only public access to the complex. Disabled veterans with the appropriate permit from the Department of Motor Vehicles or a Disabled Veterans license plate or placard should continue to use designated parking spaces for disabled persons.

**Application deadline for Emergency Rental Assistance Program is Nov. 30**

St. Johns County is urging all eligible residents to apply for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program no later than Nov. 30, 2021, which will ensure all county funds are sent to recipients by the federally mandated deadline of Dec. 31, 2021.

The St. Johns County Emergency Rental Assistance Program is a public relief program providing rental and utility assistance to County residents at risk of eviction because of COVID-19. Households in St. Johns County that have individuals qualified for unemployment benefits, incurred significant costs, or experienced other financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are highly encouraged to apply.

For more information or to apply for



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# Life

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## Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com

### Dr. Daniel Williams, Jr.

Dr. Daniel Williams is a relatively new resident to St. Johns, but already he is settling in and appreciating his new hometown. He grew up the oldest of three siblings in the South Side of Chicago and lived most of his adult life in the city. His childhood dream was to be a professional baseball player and he attended college on a four year athletic scholarship. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychiatry and played as a pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates for one year before he was injured. He worked for the state government of Illinois for 38.5 years, in the Departments of Mental Health, Corrections, and Children and Family Services before his retirement in 2016. He is a former faculty member of the University of Phoenix and currently has an online counseling business. He authored his first book, "Why Do Americans Hate Americans?" in which he relays his personal experiences growing up to illustrate his perspective on racism and black on black crime in America. Williams has two adult daughters and four grandchildren. He and his wife Nancy live in St. Johns.



Photo courtesy Dr. Daniel Williams  
Dr. Daniel Williams

**Q: Tell us about your experiences growing up in Chicago.**

**A:** I am a product of the inner city and lived in what you would call "the hood." The South Side of Chicago was predominantly African American and it was violent, with a lot of gangs and crime. I was shot at twice. It was a challenge growing up there as I had to fight to go to school and then fight to come home again. Eventually we moved out into a predominantly Italian neighborhood. We were not welcome there and it felt like we had gone from one extreme to the other.

**Q: How did you become a clinical psychologist?**

**A:** All my life I wanted to be a profes-

sional baseball player and I did play for the Pittsburgh Pirates organization for a year. After my injury, I got married and started a family and went to work for the state. Every year funding was a challenge. Despite high taxes paid in Illinois, social services were not supported. I worked as a mental health specialist dealing with teenagers at first, and then two psychologists I worked with talked me into becoming a clinical psychologist. This involved seven more years of school and internships to get my doctorate degree, all while raising my family and working full time.

**Q: What inspired you to write your book, "Why Do Americans Hate Americans?"**

**A:** Three people told me 15 years ago that I would write a book, but I didn't believe them as I'm trained to write as a clinician, not as an author. But one of my supervisors went so far as to get me a journal and a pen and told me just to write. At one point, a colleague and I got into a dialog about

how badly people treat each other and I said, "Americans hate Americans." That became the idea for my book. Finally on Oct. 3, 2019 I felt a nudge to start writing. It was not necessarily a good time to do so, as my wife and I were looking for a place to relocate prior to retirement. Then in 2020, the pandemic hit, there was the George Floyd killing, unrest and riots. It felt to me like history was repeating itself back to my childhood in Chicago in the 1960s. We moved to Florida in August and I finished the book in October 2020 — and then found that writing a book means you are only halfway. You still need to get the book out to readers and finally a friend of a friend referred me to a self publisher. My book is now sold on Amazon.

**Q: How does your book reflect on you?**

**A:** I want to make a difference. It's important to me as an American; I feel I have an obligation to make a difference. What I hope people learn from reading this book is that it is important to reach out and be receptive to others who may be different from you. Treat people the way you'd like to be treated. The answer is love. Love is a verb and you need to put it into action. If we learn to love each other we will live in a better world.

**Q: How did you come to live in St. Johns?**

**A:** I had vacationed with my family every year in Florida, and I have a cousin who moved to Nocatee in 2019. We came to visit and liked this area, so we got a realtor. I fell in love with St. Johns. The area is beautiful and the people are so hospitable. There is a pond and wooded area behind my home that is just so peaceful.

## Get to Know ...

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Briefs cont. from pg. 16

this program, visit <https://stjohns-crr.unqork.io> or call (904) 344-3188.

**Earn accredited high school diploma for free through library**

The St. Johns County Library System is offering qualified community members the opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma and career certificate for free through Career Online High School, a program brought to public libraries by funding from the State of Florida through a partnership with Smart Horizons Career Online High School. This program is specifically designed to reengage adults into the education system and prepare them for entry into postsecondary career education or the workforce. Currently, more than 9,800 adults in St. Johns County lack a high school degree or equivalent.

So far, St. Johns County has seen 17 students earn their diplomas and career certificates through its Career Online High School program.

"Career Online High School is perfect for the person with a busy adult life. Coursework is available any time, and there's great academic support. Truly, there's no age limit when it comes to learning and accomplishing your goals," said Michelle Kiley, who has been administering the program.

The St. Johns County Library System will award scholarships for Career Online High School to qualified learners looking to earn a high school diploma and advance their careers. Students are able to graduate in as few as six months by transferring in previously earned high school credits but are given up to 18 months to complete the program.

Residents 19 years of age or older who are interested in learning more about Career Online High School may do so by visiting [www.sjcpls.org/cohs](http://www.sjcpls.org/cohs), or contacting Michelle Kiley at [mkiley@sjcl.us](mailto:mkiley@sjcl.us) or (904) 827-6970.

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Create your own includes ice cream + 1 mix-in.  
Served in a cup. Waffle products and extra mix-ins available for addl. charge.  
Limit 1 coupon per visit. Expires 12/4/21.

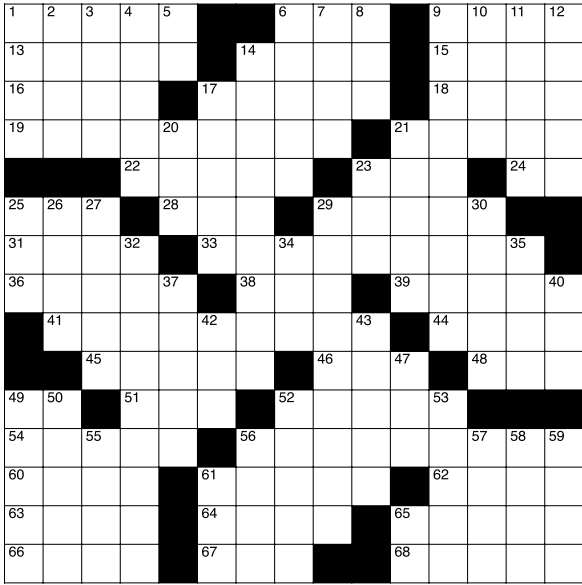
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# Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



### CLUES ACROSS

1. German philosopher
6. A type of stock trading (abbr.)
9. Cincinnati ballplayers
13. Deerlike water buffaloes
14. Island
15. Jewish calendar month
16. Round Dutch cheese
17. Unstressed syllable of a metrical foot
18. A restaurant needs one
19. Decent behaviors
21. Groans
22. Works hard
23. Upset
24. A sound made in speech
25. One point east of due south
28. Boxing's GOAT
29. Whittles
31. Tailless amphibian
33. Surrounded
36. Doesn't stay still
38. Copycat
39. Four-door car
41. Morally correct behavior
44. Something that is owed
45. Pasta needs it
46. Ant-Man's last name
48. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
49. Small period of time (abbr.)
51. Woman (French)
52. On or around
54. Fencing swords
56. Fonts
60. A command in the name of the court
61. Sprays with an irritant
62. Georgetown athlete
63. Dry or withered
64. Sign of injury
65. Tracts of land (abbr.)
66. 365 days
67. Physique
68. Icelandic poems

### CLUES DOWN

1. Bodily substance
2. Internal
3. Provoke or annoy
4. Type of lounge chair
5. Losses
6. Makes less severe
7. Identifies a thing close at hand
8. Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
9. Rebuilt
10. Ancient Greek City
11. American investigative journalist
12. Partially melted snow
14. Take shape
17. Mexican beverage
20. Patti Hearst's captors
21. Jacobs and Summers are two
23. Disfigure
25. Scientists' tool (abbr.)
26. Ill-mannered person
27. Overhang
29. Famed rat catcher
30. Passover feast and ceremony
32. Equal to 10 meters
34. Central processing unit
35. Chinese native religion
37. Unfermented juices
40. "To the \_\_\_ degree"
42. Frozen water
43. Medieval circuit courts
47. 1,000 cubic feet (abbr.)
49. Gossipy
50. Shopping is one type
52. Palmlike plant
53. Partner to "oohed"
55. Welsh name meaning "snow"
56. Popular Mexican dish
57. It helps power devices
58. Reddish-brown wildcat
59. Impertinence
61. Legal financial term (abbr.)
65. Atomic #52

## AUTUMN WORD SEARCH

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

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

### WORDS

- APPLE
- AUTUMN
- CHILLY
- CINNAMON
- CLOVES
- COLOR
- FALL
- FALLING
- FIREPLACE
- FOLIAGE
- JACKET
- LEAVES
- NOVEMBER
- ORANGE
- PUMPKIN
- PURPLE
- RAKING
- RED
- SPICE
- THANKFUL
- TURKEY
- WIND
- WINTERIZE
- YELLOW

## CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to autumn.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 26 = U)

**A. 12 26 2 26 20 22**

Clue: One of the seasons

**B. 25 19 12 14 19 5**

Clue: Parts of trees

**C. 15 26 20 15 3 21 22**

Clue: Orange gourd

**D. 16 8 21 5 3**

Clue: Cold but refreshing

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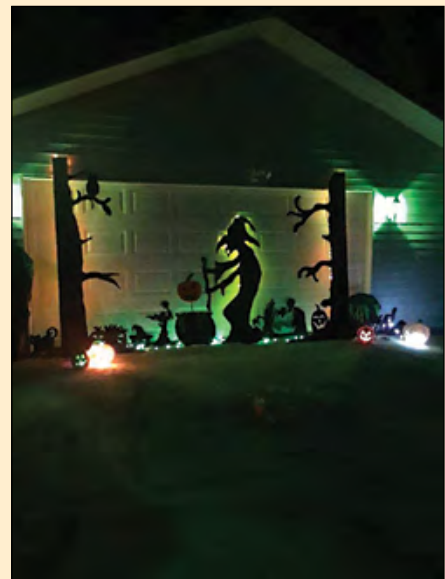
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**Trout Creek seniors enjoy Halloween party**



Photos courtesy Glo Jackson

Seniors from the Trout Creek Senior Center gathered at the home of Glo Jackson on Oct. 9 for an early Halloween party. Nearly 100 people were able to spread out and enjoy the ambiance of Jackson's two outdoor fire pits. Attendees each brought food and drinks to share. Jackson shared that the Trout Creek Senior Center is now open on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

# Innovative new outdoor classroom coming to Julington Creek Elementary

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Julington Creek Elementary School and Creekside High School's Environmental Academy have joined forces to design and build an outdoor classroom at Julington Creek Elementary. The classroom will include outdoor seating, as well as a shade structure, and different learning centers. This will be an area

for discussions and exploration.

"We are excited to bring our students the opportunity to push past the indoor environment by letting their curiosity and a natural wonder for learning spill out into our great world," said guidance clerk Abra Murrell, one of the coordinators of the project. "This outdoor classroom will foster and strengthen the

educational ties between our teachers and their students by providing a whole new teaching tool and location. Along with science standards and environmental topics, we are also implementing the SJCSO Character Counts Pillars throughout this project."

Teachers will be able to utilize the outdoor classroom for special instruction

and projects, as well as teaching grade-appropriate science standards. Outdoor classroom coordinators Julington Creek Elementary Principal Jeanette Murphy, Creekside High School Environmental Academy teacher Ali Pressel and Murrell are extremely excited about this project and say that it will continue to evolve each year with new additions.



Work on the outdoor classroom taking place on the first day.



Photos courtesy Heidi Karl

Julington Creek Elementary School and Creekside High School's Environmental Academy have joined forces to design and build an outdoor classroom at Julington Creek Elementary.

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# First Deputy's Character Coin awarded

Deputy Mincey of Julington Creek Elementary School has awarded the first coin in the Deputy's Character Coin Program to Elena Heavener. The Deputy's Character Coin represents Caring, Courage, Integrity, and Respect and each month, Deputy Mincey will award one of these coins to one of that month's Good Jaguar students.



Photo courtesy Heidi Karl

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# Gardening

## Autumn Pleasures

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale  
mail@floridanewline.com

It's been dry again in my neighborhood, but we're not subject to flash floods or other unpredictable weather events, and for that I'm grateful. I do have some relatively new shrubs and a young tree, which is why I need to pay attention to rainfall.

Autumn is a good time of year to plant trees and woody plants, as it gives them the chance to establish their root systems over the cooler months; however, it's wise to wait until the dry season is over. When you decide to plant, make sure to pay attention to rainfall amounts and take care to water new plants adequately. These websites are particularly useful: <https://tinyurl.com/mp5j88tu> and <https://tinyurl.com/yrw82tpf>.

Hardy perennials that have been established for a few years can still be dug up and divided before winter. Each division makes a new plant at no cost, which is much appreciated! For more information, see <https://tinyurl.com/muw55x3>.

I recently drove to Gainesville and really enjoyed the roadside attractions, which for me are the wildflowers that grace the hedgerows and ditches along the highway. From late September into October there are plenty of fall-blooming sunflowers and coreopsis — those yellow daisy flowers — and tall clumps of frothy goldenrods. With a little more time to look, I would have expected to see lavender colored asters, threading their long stems up through shrubs. The deciduous trees along the way had dull foliage, a prelude to them dropping. Maple leaves were beginning to turn to their fall red color. It was a lovely time to see the countryside on the cusp of seasonal change.

I have plenty of seeds on the goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.), ironweed (*Vernonia* sp.), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and wandflower (*Liatris* sp.) in my own front garden bed, which I expect will sow themselves around. I won't leave them all on the plants; some will be left for the birds to eat, and I'll sow some in small pots to

overwinter in a sheltered position. The flower bed was only planted up in early summer and I'm really looking forward to seeing how it matures and changes through the seasons.

If you like strawberries, you have just enough time to plant them now. If you don't have space for a bed, they grow well in large containers. For more information, see <https://tinyurl.com/y56pc62a>.

I'm trying again to grow some methi greens which are used in Indian cuisine. Hopefully I'll do better than in the spring, when nothing came up. Fingers crossed. Talk to any gardener who grows vegetables, however seasoned they are, and you'll find similar stories. One season the okra was beautiful and the following year it did badly. The squash vine borer was a demon this year, destroying every plant, but last year there was enough zucchini to share with neighbors. The moral is: don't give up, and learn from your successes and failures. For sound advice, refer to *The Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide* (<https://tinyurl.com/2k9eh8zm>).

Rotating crops to different areas of your garden will help to minimize pests and diseases returning to damage the same crop. Tackle any problems with the most benign products and methods and use flowering plants to attract a wide range of insects to your yard. Ladybugs are a great helper, devouring aphids in both larval and adult stages, as are tiny parasitoid wasps, which are totally harmless to us.

I love to see insects in my yard. I can't always identify them, but most insect life in the garden is beneficial, and with insects declining around the globe we should cherish them. But no one would blame you for simply aiming to attract the beautiful creatures. Just know that where the butterflies and hummingbirds feed, all sorts of other insects will feed there too. Each species has its own ecological niche and brings balance to the life in our yards, which can only help in our gardening ventures.

## Catholic Diocese begins new mission in NW St. Johns County

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewline.com

The Most Rev. Felipe J. Estevez, Bishop of St. Augustine, has officially begun a new mission in the northwest area of St. Johns County. Named for the Gospel writer Saint Mark the Evangelist, the Mission has been placed under the leadership of Father Thomas Willis as pastor.

"It's exciting to begin a new Catholic community," Father Tom said. "It harkens back to the church in its infancy in the first century. Saint Mark's has people and a desire to form itself into a community of faith. That alone energizes me to lead them and serve them in this process."

The priests of San Juan del Rio Catholic Church began celebrating Mass on Sundays at St. Therese Early Learning Center on County Road 210 several years ago. With a growth in numbers

came the need to find a larger place. Now Catholic Mass is celebrated on Sundays at 11 a.m. in Patriot Oaks Academy, 475 Longleaf Parkway. With the move to a new facility, the Mission was placed under the patronage of Saint Mark.

Father Willis arrives after serving for 13 years as rector of the Cathedral Basilica in St. Augustine. A priest of 37 years, he also served as pastor at Most Holy Redeemer Parish on Jacksonville's Westside from 1996 – 2008. In both places he led building projects.

"But the first and most important part is building the people into a community of faith," he said. "I've already found that the people of St. Mark's are very supportive of each other as well as very welcoming to those who come in to see what we're about."



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Travel

### A close-up look at the Hoover Dam

By Debi Lander  
mail@floridanewline.com



Photos courtesy Debi Lander  
Memorial Bridge and below the dam.

While flying to Las Vegas, I looked out the window and got a surprise — an aerial view of the Hoover Dam. The impressive sight of this American engineering feat filled me with wonder.

After picking up a rental car, I drove a little over 30 minutes to my hotel. The Hoover Dam Hotel & Casino, as you might expect, is not only ideally located for dam visits, but offers scenic views of Lake Mead. Inside, numerous restaurants and small casinos fulfill your needs.

I understood the Hoover Dam Visitor Center was closed (due to Covid), as were tours inside the tunnels, but that didn't stop me. Exploring the U.S. National Monument doesn't require more than a half-day (even including a tunnel tour) and much less if you are in a hurry.

I walked down the promenade toward the dam, reading the signage and photographing as I went along. Hoover Dam was built between 1930–1936 in a wasteland, a forbidding dry, rocky desert. The goal was to help control flooding of the Colorado River and to divert water where needed. Most importantly, the dam would provide massive amounts of hydroelectric power.

Ninety-six workers lost their lives in accidents, but no one was buried alive while pouring the 6.6 million yards of needed concrete. Imagine working in sweltering heat to bore into carbon monoxide-choked tunnels or dangling from heights of 800 feet to clear canyon walls. Over the years, some 21,000 workers contributed to the overall construction.

The sight of the complex staggered my mind. Everything about the place feels supersized. I glanced up at tilted transmission towers supported by massive braces and down at the immense, rounded curtain of concrete. The dam measures 726 feet tall and 1,244 feet long, almost a quarter of a mile. According to some online research, "At its base, the Dam is a whopping 660 feet thick, about two football fields stretched end-to-end. At its top, Hoover Dam is nearly as wide as a four-lane highway."

All visitors notice the 30-foot high Art Deco statues, known as the "Winged Figures of the Republic." The pair resemble seated humans with sharp, angular features and wings that soar straight toward the sky. Sculptor Oskar Hansen created them with more than four tons of statuary bronze. The two are now weathered with a green patina, except where visitors follow the tradition of rubbing their feet for good luck.

A celestial chart embedded in the terrazzo floor surrounds the monument's ceremoni-



Aerial view of the Hoover Dam.



Winged Figures of the Republic statue.

al area. The base marks the day the Hoover Dam was dedicated by President Franklin Roosevelt, September 30, 1935.

The river backed up by the dam creates Lake Mead, one of the largest artificial lakes in the world. As the water reaches the blockade, it falls 500 feet through pipes to a hydroelectric power plant at the base. The water turns 17 hydraulic turbines, which then rotate a series of electric generators. The engineering miracle produces a power capacity of 2,080 megawatts. Nearly half of the generated electric power goes to Los Angeles and Southern California; the rest goes to Nevada and Arizona.

A federal highway traverses the dam's crest, although I didn't approach from that direction. Over the years, as traffic increased, backups occurred, and Sept. 11, 2001, added severe security restrictions. Therefore, a new concrete arch bridge with a 1,060-foot span — the longest in North America for that type of bridge — opened in 2005. I climbed the stairs to ascend Memorial Bridge for a panoramic view, stopping to read plaques while I caught my breath.

Our national parks present spectacular scenery, but some of our man-made wonders also deserve a look.

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

# Fishing

## Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka  
mail@floridanewline.com

Now that the St. Johns River has had time to "flush" and the heavy rainfall we received earlier this summer has eased, fishing has once again improved nicely for early fall. An okay return of shrimp from Green Cove to downtown Jacksonville has also helped bring a much better bite to our area of the river.

Large croaker have been the best bite happening of late. Reds seem to be back in abundance with nice catches coming off docks on both sides of the river. Yellowmouths have been in good numbers around downtown and should start showing farther south soon. Conditions also look good for our seasonal speckled trout run that usually happens this time of year. You can expect the trout to show off docks from San Marco to the Buckman Bridge. Slow trolling a mullet-like lure off the docks is an easy, leisurely way to enjoy a boat ride and catch a few fish.

Flounder regulations have changed for this year for Florida. Not only has the size and limit numbers been changed, but a closed season has also been added. Flounder must now be 14 inches to keep, with a new bag limit of five. The closed season began Oct. 15 and runs to Nov. 30. With Florida's seemingly constant change of fishing regulations, staying current is a must for all anglers.

Shopping for fishing equipment and tackle in many instances has been much harder than usual in recent years. With holiday shopping just around the corner, an earlier start may be needed to get the right gifts for the fishing person you have in mind. Shopping online to see what's in stock might be a benefit rather than visiting a variety of stores to find what you

might be looking for. If you find shopping for tackle and equipment a little bit confusing, remember there are always accessories — hats, clothing, sunglasses, shoes, pliers, knives, dry bags, tackle bags, and more. And when all else fails, there is the ever-giving gift card.

Fishing Report: Reds under docks and speckled sea trout just off docks. Hopefully yellowmouths will work their way south closer to us, but a quick run to

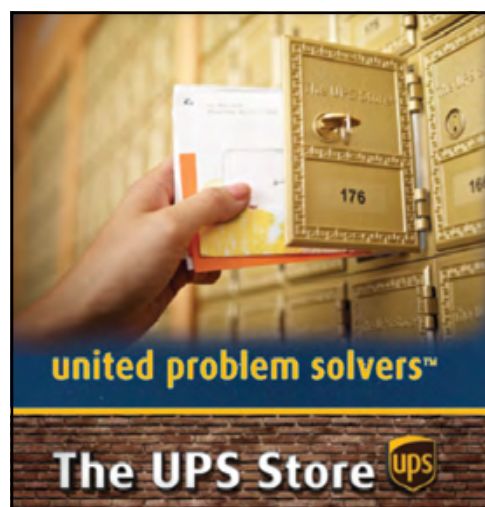


Photo courtesy Ken Ringhaver  
Caden Ringhaver with a 48" redfish caught near the Dames Point Bridge on Sept. 25.

the Florida East Coast Railroad Bridge downtown is certainly a good bet.

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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