

The CreekLine

OUR 22ND YEAR!

JANUARY 2022 Volume 22 Issue 1

A Florida NewsLine Publication



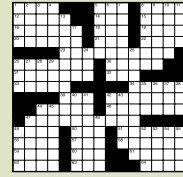
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Photo courtesy Bartram Trail Friends of the Library
The official 2022 medal.

Lace Up for Libraries 5k in January

By Caroline Dow
mail@floridanewline.com

St. Johns Reads, the annual county-wide reading event hosted by the St. Johns County Public Library System, will once again be held in January and take place at all library locations around St. Johns County. The third annual Lace Up for Libraries 5K will be held on Saturday, Jan. 29 in Nocatee beginning at 8 a.m. All race proceeds go to future St. Johns Reads programs.

Residents are invited to enjoy programming centering on the theme of “secrets.” This year’s program is a bit different because there are four chosen titles for patrons to read and enjoy. The four books chosen for St. Johns Reads 2022 are:

- “Crossing the Creek: The Literary Friendship of Zora Neale Hurston and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings,” by Anna Lillios
- “Children of Blood and Bone,” by Tomi Adeyemi
- “Little Fires Everywhere,” by Celeste Ng

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New SJSO center designed to efficiently accommodate employees who serve community



Photo courtesy Rhonda Ramos

The Emergency Communications and Training Center, located on Law Enforcement Way off Interstate 95.

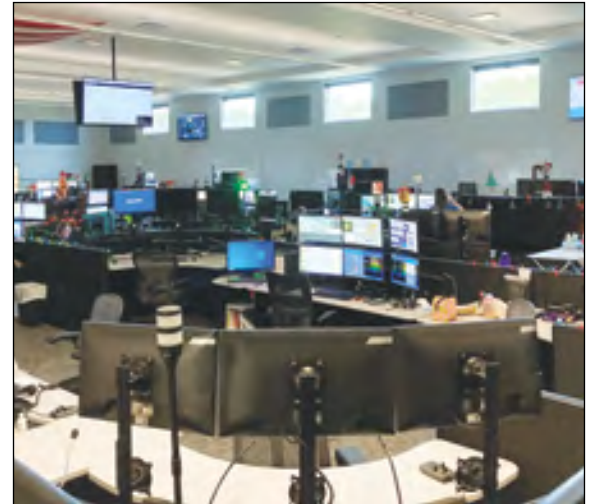


Photo courtesy Martie Thompson

The Comm Center operates 24/7.

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewline.com

Have you ever wondered about the sizable building clearly visible on the west side of Interstate 95, just south of State Road 16? Known as the Emergency Communications and Training Center, it is the fruition of a years-long vision by leaders in the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office to have a facility to accommodate multiple departments under one roof.

The building houses the Operations Division, which encompasses training, communications, special operations, and the marine and air units. Slightly over half of the building is dedicated to training functions and includes classrooms with state of the art technology, a defensive tactics room for physical training, and a simulator room, where specialty cameras project realistic situations on a screen for trainees to learn to assess and react quickly in life or death situations.

Behind the building is a driving track where deputies can practice PIT (pursuit intervention technique) maneuvers, a tactic by which a pursuing car can force a fleeing car to turn sideways abruptly, causing the driver to lose control and stop. Multiple gun ranges onsite provide for the most modern firearms training in a very controlled environment. Also on the property is a large retention pond, which in addition to providing drainage, also contains part of an old plane, a school bus, and a vehicle — all submerged to allow

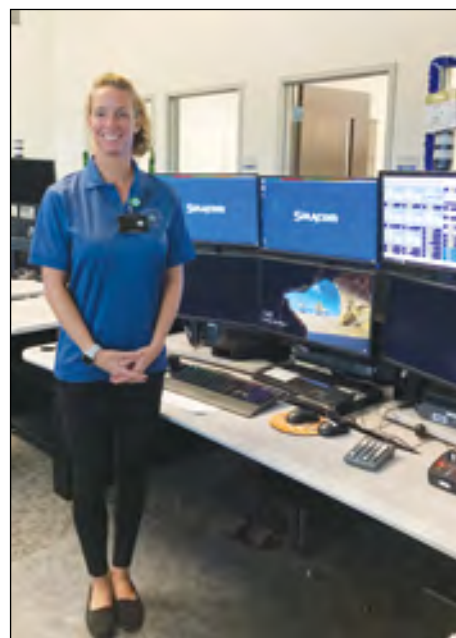


Photo courtesy Martie Thompson

Nadyne Sneyd, Communications Manager, has been with the agency for 15 years.

for practice drills for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office dive team.

Director of Operations Russ Martin said having the agency's training available locally and in one place allows the sheriff's office to save money on travel to out-of-county facilities.

“We can set the culture with new hires on the very first day on the job,” Martin said. “We provide training designed by us, for us, and given by us — plus we get to host it in our own county. We can leverage these cost savings to provide better customer service to our St. Johns County residents.”

Since the building also serves as the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office's emergency management center, it needs to be self-sufficient. An expansive locker room as well as a full kitchen and dining room allow for 24-hour stays by essential personnel in the event of a natural disaster.

The remainder of the building is occupied by the Communications Center, which includes the 911 call center for the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and St. Johns County Fire and Rescue, as well as dispatching for the St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach police departments. Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST), or 911 operators, work on shifts around the clock handling hundreds of 911 calls daily. Each station is set up with six large screens that allow the PST to access the phone system, multiple CAD (computer aided dispatch) screens, as well as maps that allow them to track the closest deputy to a call or determine the location of a call.

“All calls for service come through us,” said Communications Manager Nadyne Sneyd. “We have to answer a 911 call in 10 seconds or less. It's busy all the time. I like to call it controlled chaos.”

Public Safety Telecommunicators transfer calls for fire or EMS to the St. Johns Fire and Rescue dispatchers, which share the room with them. Large screens on the wall of the Comm Center show Florida Department of Transportation cameras at

Emergency cont. on pg. 15

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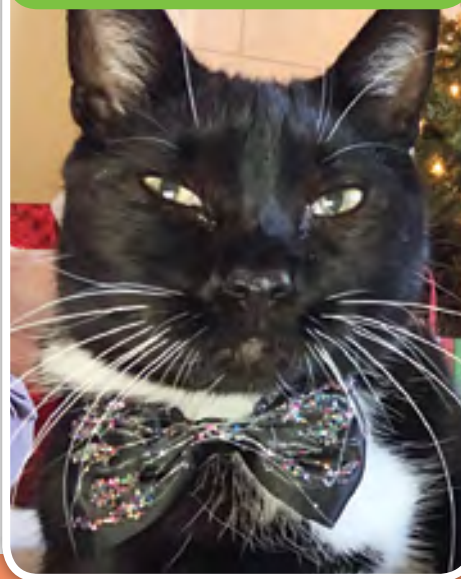
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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Roscoe!



Breed:

Tuxedo Cat

Favorite Activity:

Napping and Bird Watching

Favorite Treat:

Temptation Kitty Treats

Favorite Friend:

His brother Ramsey

How your BFF got their name:

Roscoe was named after Sheriff Roscoe P. Coltrane on the Dukes of Hazzard.

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.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Guide 2022



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MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?
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Last month's Mystery Photo was the Sonic Drive-In in Fruit Cove. Our winner was Nicki Hap. Congratulations!

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Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Answers: A. orderly B. neat C. sort D. organize

Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 14

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with St. Johns County Commission Vice Chairman Christian Whitehurst, District 1

Q: Can you give your thoughts on the recent county redistricting?

A: This is an exercise that only happens every 10 years due to the census. We are required to have balanced districts according to population and District 1 was 13,000 people over the limit. Our district had to shrink the most geographically due to the population density. We had a joint meeting with the St. Johns County School Board on Dec. 9 and we approved the final maps that will be used for the next 10 years. School board members are elected by district, so some residents might have a different school board member representing them, but County Commissioners are elected at large and will continue to be on all St. Johns County ballots. I thought it was cool to be a part of this historic process.

Q: What do you know about the newly named [as of interview date of Dec. 14] county commissioner for District 2?

A: I knew that several people, including Sarah Arnold, were being considered for the position. I’m really excited that she will be the new commissioner for

District 2 and think she will do a great job. I believe she will be sworn in prior to our meeting on Dec. 21 and will get right to work.

Q: Can you comment on the proposed rezoning of the parcel of residential real estate at the entrance to The Parkes of Julington Creek neighborhood to commercial?

A: I’ve been hearing about this from a lot of residents and encourage people to continue to send their thoughts and opinions. This is a proposed major modification, which means that it is a quasi-judicial matter. I am required to withhold making a decision until I hear all the evidence up to and including at the BCC meeting. Neither the PZA nor the Board of County Commissioners meeting have been scheduled as of today [Dec. 14], and the developer will be required to hold an official neighborhood meeting that residents should make sure to attend.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc1c-whitehurst@sjcf.us or call me at (904) 584-5348.



with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: Is the redistricting process complete?

A: Locally, yes. The Board of County Commissioners and the School Board adopted their new voting districts on Dec. 9, 2021. Maps of the new districts are available on our website at votesjc.gov. Click on the “Redistricting 2021” icon to view all related documents and maps. The largest changes in district lines occurred in District 1 and District 4, which have both been greatly reduced in size. Districts 2, 3 and 5 increased in size to equalize the population across the districts.

Statewide redistricting continues. The state legislature scheduled to meet between Jan. 11 and March 11, 2022 in Tallahassee to review potential maps and adopt new districts. New Congressional, Florida Senate, and Florida House district lines will be adopted during the session. A link to the State’s 2022 redistricting page is also available on our website. Many maps have already been proposed and are available for public viewing. This is a great place for you to keep up with the committee meetings and action being taken on adoption of the new districts by the state legislature.

Q: What Is the Supervisors of Elections’ role in the redistricting process?

A: Since our voting precinct lines are based on County Commission and School Board district lines, precinct lines must now be redrawn based on the new districts. Many precinct numbers will be changing, and polling places are also under review. Due to population growth in our county, we anticipate adding precincts and polling places in preparation for busy elections in 2022 and 2024. Once the state adopts their districts and my office receives their in-

formation, we can finalize our precinct lines and new polling places.

Q: How does that affect me as a voter?

A: District lines affect representation of your elected officials, the races that appear on your ballot and who you vote for in an election. Your representatives, precinct number and polling place may change.

Q: When and how will I be notified of these changes?

A: At the completion of the redistricting project in Tallahassee, all voters in St. Johns County will be mailed a new voter information card. The card will reflect your new district, precinct and polling place. Our goal is to mail these in May.

Q: Will these new changes affect the 2022 elections?

A: Yes. Candidates who wish to run for office must file their paperwork with the Elections Office, or the Division of Elections in Tallahassee to obtain a position on the ballot. The deadline to file to run for office is noon on June 17, 2022.

Q: How can I keep up with the changes and other pertinent election information?

A: In order to help keep you updated on current elections news, my office is launching a new email newsletter in March. Visit votesjc.gov and submit your email address to subscribe.

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

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

January

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

Community Calendar

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, Jan. 4 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. The guild will feature the new owner of Calico Station. Masks are optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

The Jacksonville Camera Club will meet on Thursday, Jan. 6 and will feature members' photographs which the audience will critique. Visit jax.jaxcameraclub.com for more information and meeting location updates.

The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable will meet on Monday,

Jan. 10 at 12 p.m. via Zoom. Cory Darling, site administrator, Ascension St. Vincents, St. Johns County Campus will be the speaker and will discuss the new hospital. Email info@sjcroundtable.org to register for the meeting or for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

NW St. Johns County United for Progress Club will meet Monday, Jan. 10 for a social at 6:30 p.m. with meeting start at 7 p.m. featuring speaker Anne Russell, who will discuss "Social Activism: Worldwide to St. Johns County." Email nwsjcp@gmail.com for in person meeting directions. The club also plans an evening social on Tuesday, Jan. 18 at 5:30 p.m. and Coffee and Conversation on Monday, Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. at Maple Street Biscuit Company.

The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club will hold its meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 11 at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club, 205 St. Johns Golf Drive off County Road 210. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. The program will be a fashion show with clothes from the Betty Griffin

Center Thrift Shoppe, modeled by members of the club. 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 Jan. 6, 2022, no exceptions. Be sure to indicate entrée choice on the check memo line. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for food choices and updated information.

The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 10 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 17 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Following the general meeting, the program will be "Happy Birthday, All Stars," the annual lunch to celebrate everyone's birthday. To participate for \$5, contact Linda Wilson at kandsmom1959@gmail.com. Guests are welcome, but masks are required. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

The Newcomers of North St. Johns will host a meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 18 beginning at 11:15 a.m. at Magnolia Point Golf and Country Club in Green Cove Springs. The event will feature entertainment by musician

De Luna, who plays the harp and flute. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$33 for members. All reservations must be received by Jan. 7. Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net to register. The Newcomers of North St. Johns offers a wide variety of activities, including smaller lunch groups, wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, holiday parties, day trips and cultural events.

Herbal Medicine from the Garden will be offered on Jan. 22 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 St. Johns County School District Volunteer Blitz will be held on Thursday, Jan. 27 from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the Character Counts Conference Center, First Coast Technical College, 2980 Collins Ave. in St. Augustine. Come and learn about tutoring and mentoring in the St. Johns County School District.



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

Q: Can you comment on the recently approved Five Year Growth Plan for the St. Johns County School District?

A: We just found out that our growth rate this year is 7.26 percent, which is the highest it’s been in quite some time (and it’s always been high). We will be building or expanding two elementary schools and building three K-8s in the next five years to address our growth. First up will be a K-8 school in the Northwest at a location to be announced sometime after the first of the year. This will address the extreme overcrowding at Freedom Crossing Academy and Timberlin Creek Elementary.

Q: Will this school be paid for with the sales tax proceeds?

A: Likely not. Although the sales tax has generated more money than we thought, we need to complete the construction on the schools listed in the referendum first. This includes an expansion of South Woods Elementary and an additional elementary school in the southern part of the county. As for any extra money after the referendum items are paid for, we will receive recommendations from the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Q: Do you have an update on Beachside High School?

A: This school is coming along and is on track for a Fall 2022 opening. Principal Greg Bergamasco has just hired the school’s athletic director, longtime Bartram Trail softball coach Jen Harman. She is the first female athletic director in St. Johns County. Teachers will be hired after the first of the year; some of the Bartram Trail teachers and staff will go to Beachside and those determinations are in progress.

Q: Can you tell us about the recent countywide redistricting and its impact

on District 1?

A: After redistricting, District 1 is the most compact district geographically, but it contains the most residents. It used to contain 10 schools but now contains nine. I was pleased with the process; the school board and the county commission agreed on the final map with no debate.

Q: How has the school district been spending the federal money it has recently received for COVID relief?

A: We have spent a big chunk trying to remediate reading at the elementary school level. We have after school reading programs in all elementary schools four days a week for those students identified as needing help getting their skills back up to pre-COVID levels. We are also looking at how to remediate math — we saw some slippage at all levels and we need to focus on how to help our students get back on track.

Q: What else do you have to share with District 1?

A: As a district, we have been focused on the recruitment and retention of teachers. Colleges are not producing as many [teacher] graduates and some teachers are leaving the profession. Lack of teachers has been an issue across the state for awhile, but this is the first time we’ve experienced it here in St. Johns County. It’s a challenge to get teachers to come and to stay.

Lately, I’ve been going school to school, thanking our teachers. We really don’t tell them “Thank you” enough, but we are more than grateful for all they do for our children.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

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

Q: Can you comment on the persistent issue of students and threats of school violence?

A: The main message I want to get out is this: parents, kids ... if you see something, say something. Contact the authorities. Never just assume that spoken threats or threats on social media are a joke. These threats are crimes with serious consequences and we always take them very seriously.

Q: Can you elaborate on the crime aspect?

A: There are two primary Florida Statutes that deal with making threats of violence. Both are considered second degree felonies, which are punishable by 15 years in the Florida state prison system.

First, Fla. Statute 836.10 deals with written threats to kill, or do bodily harm or conduct a mass shooting. “Written” includes a letter or an electronic post on social media.

Secondly, Fla. Statute 790.163 deals with making a false report concerning planting a bomb or the use of a weapon in a

violent manner. This can be spoken to someone or via a phone call.

Just the act of making a threat, either written or verbally, is a crime. Even if you think or someone says it’s just a joke, it’s a crime. Saying you didn’t mean it or you were joking is not a defense.

Q: Why is this taken so seriously?

A: There are so many consequences to verbal or written threats of violence, even if they are not actually carried out. We always have to take threats seriously, so in the event a written or verbal threat against a school is received, the school will shut down. Law enforcement commits massive resources to working to protect students. Kids may be locked in classrooms and traumatized, not knowing if the threat is real or not. Going forward in their lives after experiencing something so harrowing, mental and emotional trauma often occur.

So, this is no joking matter. We treat each threat as if it’s real — and we need everyone to report what they see and hear.

Guest Editorial

Rezoning request meets homeowner resistance in The Parkes of Julington Creek Plantation.

By Elaine Gallant

On Dec. 2, I attended the first Parkes Action Committee meeting. Concerned citizens formed the committee to communicate the potential impacts of a requested zoning change for the 1.5 acre parcel at the northwest corner of Durbin Creek Boulevard and Race Track Road. The property owner attempted a similar rezoning effort in 2013, which met with significant community resistance with more than 100 letters sent to the county against the rezoning.

The property is currently zoned residential and has not been developed in part due to arsenic contamination in the soil. Per the property owner, remediation criteria for commercial development are less stringent and costly. The rezoning request would allow 17,500 square feet of office space, 58 car parking lot, and two commercial driveway entrances at an intersection that has had multiple deadly accidents in the last several years.

Many residents believe this development would have significant adverse impacts for surrounding homeowners and would detract from the character of this region of Julington Creek Plantation. Increased traffic and adding points of conflict at this intersection will adversely impact traffic and pedestrian safety. A school bus stop is less than 200 feet from the commercial driveway planned inside The Parkes neighborhood.

The Parkes Action Committee is open to

all who wish to take an active role in researching and communicating potential adverse impacts. The next committee meeting will be held Saturday, Jan. 15 at the Bartram Trail Branch Library at 2 p.m. The goal of the committee is to ensure our community is aware of this requested zoning change and has the opportunity to express concerns by contacting the county commissioners and attending upcoming county meetings.

Once the developer responds to the current comments received by the county planning department, the petition for rezoning will be heard by the Planning and Zoning Agency. During this meeting, community members will each be allowed three minutes to speak. The petition will then move to the Board of County Commissioners meeting for approval/disapproval. Again, each attendee will have three minutes to speak.

How can you get involved? Join the Facebook Group: "Concerned Citizens-The Parkes of JCP" to see updates on meetings and share information. Join the Parkes Action Committee and bring your expertise and energy to the growing group. Email your concerns to county commissioners bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us; bcc2jsmith@sjcfl.us; bcc3pwaldron@sjcfl.us; bcc4jblocker@sjcfl.us; bcc5hdean@sjcfl.us. Watch for announcements of the county decisional meetings and attend to speak your three minutes.



with St. Johns County Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon Patty

Q: What are some of the priority projects for the Clerk of Court's office for 2022?

A: A key project for us in 2022 is implementing "taxpayer standards" across the office. Many times, government agencies, especially ones like us that have been in service for decades or even centuries, have procedures and processes in place that are completed a certain way "because that's how it is always done." This is what I consider "office standards" and are generally — though not always — outdated and inefficient with time and resources.

We are actively working to elevate the standards toward what taxpayers would demand. For example, strict financial accounting, modernizing processes and innovative, world-class consumer service. Our goal is to ensure the more than 1,000 functions we accomplish are done as if a resident is reviewing our work.

Q: You recently updated your online veterans' display. What can you tell us about the new exhibit?

A: Our new virtual exhibit showcases St. Johns County residents who responded to the 1941 Pearl Harbor attacks, in observance

of its 80th anniversary on Dec. 7. Like millions of other Americans, our residents lined up to enlist and join the fight. Clerk Historian Dr. Susan Parker assembled county records, including World War II discharge documents and newspapers, for the online exhibit, called "The Greatest Generation," showcasing the men and women of St. Johns County who served during that period. Among them is a farmer from Hastings who enlisted soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor and served the entire war, and a teacher of the hearing-impaired at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine who served on the anti-submarine patrol protecting the shores of the Americas. Each discharge document is a mini-story — that's really fascinating to many of us. The virtual exhibit can be found online at stjohnsclerk.com/pearl-harbor-veterans.

Q: Where can readers get more information about your office?

A: Our website, stjohnsclerk.com, offers a lot of information — from online payment of traffic tickets or court fees to court record searches and much more.

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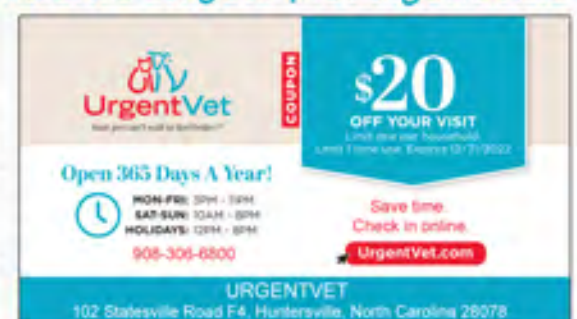
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with St. Johns County Property Appraiser
Eddie Creamer

Q: Can you give some background on tangible personal property?

A: Tangible personal property taxes are confusing to a lot of business owners who either don't know they exist or don't understand them. If you own a business in St. Johns County, you are required to file a tangible personal property tax return. This is an ad valorem tax and applied to the value of your business assets like equipment, furniture and computers. It doesn't matter how large or small your business is, whether it is a lawn care business or hair salon or major manufacturer. It also doesn't matter if you own or rent the real estate that houses your business.

Q: What are some business assets that are exempt from tangible personal property tax?

A: If the assets of a business are tagged motor vehicles, they are not subject to the tax. Inventory held for sale is also not subject to the tax. So, if your business sells widgets to the public, the widgets are not subject to tangible personal property tax, but the shelves that hold them are subject.

On the other hand, if you are in the business of renting furnished residential property, the furniture inside the property is subject to the tax.

Q: What is the deadline to file the tangible personal property tax return?

A: We send out a postcard reminding business owners about the deadline, which is April 1. If you notify our office in advance, we can give an extension until May 1. If you didn't notify us prior to April 1, we cannot give the extension.

You can file your tangible personal property tax on paper or online on our website.

Q: What happens if a business doesn't file a tangible personal property tax return?

A: We are required by the state of Florida to estimate the value of your assets and you will be taxed on that value with no opportunity for appeal.

Q: How much is the tax?

A: If the value of your business' assets are \$25,000 or less, you are exempt from tangible personal property taxes, but you must still file one time. When you file the first time, you will be exempted and not have to file again, unless your business assets grow to more than \$25,000. It's very important to file because if you don't file, or file late, there are penalties.

If your business assets are valued at more than \$25,000, the tangible personal property tax is applied the same millage as real property.

Q: What are the penalties for filing late?

A: There is a 5 percent penalty per month until you file, up to a total of 25 percent.

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 or call me at (904) 827-5500.

Sarah Arnold selected by Gov. DeSantis to fill District 2 seat

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

On Dec. 13, Governor Ron DeSantis announced the appointment of Sarah Arnold to the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners. Arnold will fill the vacancy left in the District 2 seat when Jeb Smith resigned to become the president of the Florida Farm Bureau. She will serve the remainder of the unexpired term, until the 2022 election for the seat, at which time she could run for

election to a full term if she chose.

Arnold, of St. Augustine, is the Director of Resource Development for the United Way of St. Johns County. She serves on the boards of the Dream Big! Foundation and the Child Guidance Center of Jacksonville. Arnold is a member of the Rotary Club of St. Johns and volunteers with Armstrong Meal Distribution and Read for the Record.



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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

It's a wrap for 2021! Here's why....

By Marge Cirillo
mail@floridanewslines.com

Yes, I felt it was more than past due to put a bow on the year so we can put it behind us. But for all the horrible circumstances we experienced in 2021, it's the reflection of the good things that gives us the strength to move ahead.

A very dear friend of mine, 91 years young, offered me some very sage advice over the past decade. Some of his advice has never been as important as it is now and below is a tidbit that has really hit home this past year:

"You must always have something to look forward to, whether it's a vacation, new project, new career, or something you've chosen to learn. It keeps you young and keeps you looking forward. Always be learning." (FYI, my 91-year-old friend is still doing business deals, still looking forward and making his plans for 2022.)

So, I started thinking about how to look ahead. This year has worn me out such that I'm so ready to start 2022. I'm bound and determined to work hard on creating more positives in the New Year with

all my clients. I want to help others start the year right and wanted to share some excerpts from a book I read recently.

The book is "The Noticer" by Andy Andrews; it is 156 pages — a very fast read. There are about 10 chapters, each a story about some different people. At some later chapter in the book, we start to see how their lives are intertwined. The best part about the book is that each chapter has a simple yet profound lesson. Below is a summary of the lessons from the book. By the way, my 91-year-old friend is the person who gave this book to me.

- A life filled with opportunities and encouragement finds more opportunities and encouragement and success then becomes inevitable.
- If being around other people promotes success, ask yourself: What is it about me that other people would change if they could. Would more want to be around me?
- Speak and communicate with others in their dialect. The way we feel loved is the way we express our love.
- There are four types of dialect that

people use to express love: through favors and deeds, through spoken words of approval, physical contact, and quality time.

- Deflect most worries by calculating the odds. About 40 percent of worries will never happen anyway and 30 percent of worries are about things that have already happened. Around 12 percent of worries are needless imagery about our health while 18 percent of our worries are about what others think of us. Finally, 8 percent of our worries are legitimate concerns.
- Does your mate like your friends? Your friends are whom you can be your true self with. A true friend will be honest if you request it.
- There is proof of hope. No matter your age, physical condition, or financial situation, every move you make matters.
- As long as you are breathing, you have not completed what you were put on this earth to do. Your purpose has not yet been fulfilled.
- We judge ourselves by our intentions, and we judge others by their actions. There is no power in intention. There is only power in action.
- When we make a mistake, a simple

apology is enough. When we make a bad choice, the only way to repair a bad situation and bad relationship is by exhibiting true remorse and seeking forgiveness.

Forgiveness is about the past. Trust and respect are about the future and must be earned.

- You must become a person others want to be around to be successful. The greatest secret to success: What is it about me that others would change if they could?

- Most people seek an answer in times of turmoil. An answer is not always available due to lack of perspective. In desperate times, people need perspective. It brings calm, clear thinking. This allows for new ideas which opens the doors to answers.

Let's keep these thoughts with us in 2022 and see if it makes a difference. I would love to hear from you about how you wrapped up your year.

Marge Cirillo is the Florida Small Business Development Center consultant for St. Johns County. She can be reached at m.cirillo@unf.edu or (904) 209-1295.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS *Guide* 2022



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Herbal teas can be part of a health plan that involves all-natural remedies for common ailments.

Guide to popular herbal teas

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Tea is a healthy beverage. Black, green and oolong teas get their fair share of health-boosting attention, but a grouping of teas, which technically are not true teas at all, also can be a boon

to the body.

Consumption of herbal tea predates consumption of Chinese black tea. Since they do not contain leaves of the *camellia sinensis* (tea) plant, herbal teas really aren't tea, but have been given the tea moniker because they are often steeped in a manner similar to tea. Herbal teas are made from herbs as well as dried fruits, flowers and spices. The health and wellness information site Healthline says that certain herbal teas have health-promoting properties. Herbal teas have been used by various cultures for medicinal purposes for hundreds of years.

Herbal tea can be used to boost the immune system, to relax and unwind, to alleviate pain, or just to warm you up on a chilly day. Even though herbal teas may seem all-natural, it is wise to check with a doctor before including them as part of a health-boosting regimen to confirm that they won't produce any adverse reactions with medications. That's especially important for women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

Herbal teas come in various flavors. The following are some of the more popular herbal teas and their potential health benefits.

Chamomile tea: Chamomile is best known for its calming effects, and it is

sometimes used as a mild sleep-inducer. A study of 34 patients with insomnia found marginal improvements in waking up during the night, time to falling asleep and daytime functioning after taking chamomile extract twice a day, as published by the National Institutes of Health's PubMed Central. Some studies suggest that chamomile can reduce symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, and it may have anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties as well.

Peppermint tea: Those who enjoy peppermint tea often do so to soothe an upset stomach. Nutritionist Dr. Simran Saini from Fortis Hospital in India says that peppermint tea also can promote weight loss and reduce heartburn and may help people relax.

Turmeric tea: Turmeric tea has anti-inflammatory properties that may be beneficial for anyone who has an autoimmune disease like arthritis and fibromyalgia. The anti-inflammatory properties also can help with symptoms of migraines and other minor aches and pains.

Ginger tea: A 2012 study from researchers at Columbia University who examined 10 overweight men found that drinking hot ginger tea increased the men's feelings of fullness and reduced hunger. Ginger also may improve blood sugar control for people with type 2 diabetes.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS *Guide* 2022



Alleviate everyday aches and pains

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Pain occurs for a variety of reasons. Pain may be a byproduct of overuse of a particular part of the body, or it could signal an underlying illness or condition. Sometimes injury is at the heart of aches and pains.

Daily aches and pains may be seen as a normal byproduct of aging, but that does not mean aging individuals should simply accept pain. In fact, daily discomfort can be remedied with some relatively easy techniques.

- **Get moving.** Lower back pain is common among adults, and most often appears when individuals are in their mid-30s and 40s. Strength training and cardio exercises can remedy this pain because these activities increase blood flow and help build core muscles, which support the spine. Support can alleviate pressure on the discs in the back. Exercising also will build strength in other areas of the body and support joints.
- **Practice good posture.** Sitting and standing with optimal posture can help the body feel better. The body is designed to stand in a “neutral” position

that stacks the pelvis, head and torso, according to DMC Healthcare. When posture is out of whack, this puts undue stress on muscles, leading to pain. Drooping your head or shoulders also can create unnecessary tension that leads to headaches. Good posture can alleviate this.

- **Exercise more often.** Certain pains arise when exercising for the first time or performing a new activity. Allan H. Goldfarb, Ph.D., a professor and exercise physiologist at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, says when you do the same activity again and again, your muscles will start to get used to it and soreness will be reduced. Don't give up on exercise too soon, but include off days in your routine to give your body time to become more acclimated to increased physical activity.
- **Get tested.** Speak with your doctor if you have chronic pain in one or more areas. Such pain may be a sign of osteoarthritis, an inflammatory condition that is associated with aging. Rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune conditions can cause aches and pains as well, leaving the joints and tendons inflamed and a body with low energy.

A doctor can rule out these conditions or help you get the therapy and medications you need.

- **Increase stretching and movement exercises.** Incorporate stretching and movement exercises like yoga or tai chi into your daily regimen. These activities slowly stretch areas of the body and can

improve range of motion and flexibility over time.

These are just a few ways to address common aches and pains. Medical interventions, physical therapy, occupational therapy and ergonomics assessments, and massage therapy also may help to alleviate aches and pains.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Lower back pain is common. Various strategies can reduce aches and pains.




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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Guide
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The importance of hearing health

By Chandra Manning
mail@floridanewline.com

Those with hearing loss often cite this quote attributed to Helen Keller: "Blindness separates us from things, deafness separates us from people." Our hearing is one of our most vital senses. It keeps us connected to our loved ones, our coworkers, our doctors and nurses. It may be surprising to know that hearing also is linked to fall risks, dementia, depression, and more.

Our hearing is an important part of maintaining one of our most basic human needs — connection to others; however, the significance of taking care of your hearing goes well beyond your ability to hear your spouse at the dinner table or your grandchild say their first word. It's about keeping your brain healthy. It's no secret that our bodies are systemic. Each part works with another, or several other parts. Hearing is no different. Your ears work closely with your brain, receiving signals that tell you the waitress is asking you a question, a bird is chirping outside of your window, or glass broke in the kitchen. What happens when your brain isn't receiving those signals? Eventually, it affects your cognitive processing.

Just like our muscles need to move to stay healthy and strong, your brain

needs to receive sounds to stay active. If you don't move your arm for an entire year, imagine what would happen to it. Now imagine what happens to the brain if it's not active in an area for an entire year. Unfortunately, the average person waits about seven years to treat their hearing loss, and that's after they notice they're struggling. It's unhealthy to let your brain go without stimulation for that long. It can lead to other, sometimes more serious, health concerns.

When do you know it's time to address your hearing? Several signs help you know it's time. Do you struggle to hear on the phone or when watching TV? Do you ask people to repeat themselves often, or does it seem like people mumble a lot? Has someone close to you said something about your hearing?

The good news is that help is easy to come by. Nearly all insurances will cover a hearing evaluation, so you can start by simply learning your hearing status today. Have your primary care fax a referral, or order for a hearing test, to your local audiologist. Keep your hearing — and keep your brain processing, healthy and active!

Chandra Manning is Chief Operating Officer, Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center.



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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
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Kelly Franklin



Photo courtesy Kelly Franklin
Kelly Franklin and Kiwi

Kelly Franklin was named the new CEO of Betty Griffin Center on Oct. 1, the culmination of her 19 years working with the agency. She had served most recently as Chief Operating Officer of Betty Griffin Center; previous positions included outreach coordinator and shelter director, all of which stand her in good stead in her new leadership role. Franklin is originally from Buffalo, NY and said that she's glad to be out of the cold, but still holds the Buffalo Bills dear to her heart. She is a recent survivor of breast cancer and was excited to ring the bell this past fall after her final radiation treatment. She said she feels healthy and excited about her future. Franklin and her husband James have three grown sons and three dogs.

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

A: My parents retired to St. Augustine and I came down from Buffalo in my early 20s and fell in love with it. My boyfriend, now husband, moved down too. We were neighbors growing up and have known each other since age 11. We've been married for 25 years.

Q: How did you first come to work at Betty Griffin Center?

A: I had worked for 14 years for JC Penney as a visual merchandising manager when I decided I wanted to go back to school. I finished my associate's degree at St. Johns River State College and then my undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of North Florida. While there, I began an internship at the then-Betty Griffin House. It scared me a little when I learned it was a domestic violence center, but I knew I could do it and would benefit from the opportunity to learn in a hands-on fashion. They were short staffed and made

me a case manager while I was interning.

I eventually earned my master's degree from Florida State University and, even though I was on a "break" from Betty Griffin, I volunteered there. I became the shelter director of our 18-bed facility at the time where I was able to work directly with our participants. Several years later, I became program director. We grew the facility to a 54-bed shelter and added more services, since domestic violence and sexual assault encompass everything, including substance abuse and mental health issues.

Q: What can you tell us about the services offered by Betty Griffin Center?

A: We offer a holistic approach. First, Betty Griffin Center, in partnership with Flagler Hospital, is the sexual abuse response team for St. Johns County adults. We provide nurses and advocates and support groups for adults and children. Our Economic Justice Program provides advocates to further education and help with literacy, budgeting and employment. Our INVEST (Intimate Violence Enhancement Service Team) works with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office to go through reports and look for the highest propensity of danger for physical harm. We also offer crisis counseling and safety planning on an outreach basis as

well as in the shelter. So you can see, we are a comprehensive program and much more than just a shelter.

Q: What role do the Betty Griffin Thrift Shoppes play?

A: These are helpful in a number of ways. We often give gift cards to our participants to shop for their own clothes or necessary household items. We also sell items that are donated by community members and this money supports our services. We have plenty of stock and are always seeking shoppers!

Q: How did you become CEO of Betty Griffin Center?

A: It was a long process. I actually wasn't sure if I was going to apply since I was diagnosed with breast cancer earlier this year, but I feel that my focus on my work gave me energy. I'm very excited about the position and where we can go from here. Joyce [Mahr, the previous CEO] left a great organization and I'm happy to keep it going and work on getting more people investing in our mission.

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

A: I love to spend time with my sons, who all live locally. During COVID, I took on lots of DIY house projects. Lately, I've enjoyed painting those small rocks and leaving them for others to find. I also like books, especially autobiographies.

[Editor's Note: The Crisis Hotline for Betty Griffin Center is (904) 824-1555. It is available 24 hours a day to offer resources and support for those in crisis. Visit www.bettygriffincenter.org for more information and to find out how you can help.]

Get to Know ...

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

Libraries cont. from pg. 1

"The Vanishing Half," by Brit Bennett For the 17th year of St. Johns Reads, the Programming Committee, composed of library programming staff across the county, chose a selection of titles this year to provide something for everyone. Throughout the month of January, the library system will host a variety of virtual and in-house programs. Programming will be inspired by the chosen titles and will range from art to food to author interviews. There is even a program with local crime scene investigators for true crime fans.

To round out an exciting month of programming, everyone is invited to lace up their running or walking shoes for the third annual Lace Up For Libraries 5K. The first 200 5K registrants will receive a commemorative shirt if registered by Jan. 6 and the first 200 finishers will receive a medal. A huge thank you to our major sponsors: VyStar Credit Union and Nocatee. To learn more about this 5K event, including the virtual participation option, go to the Lace Up for Libraries 5K event page at <https://laceupforlibraries5k.itsyourrace.com>.

To read any one or all of this year's titles and discover more about St. Johns Reads 2022 events and programs, contact your local branch library, or visit the St. Johns County Public Library's website at www.sjcppls.org.

Caroline Dow is Vice President of the Bartram Trail Friends of the Library.

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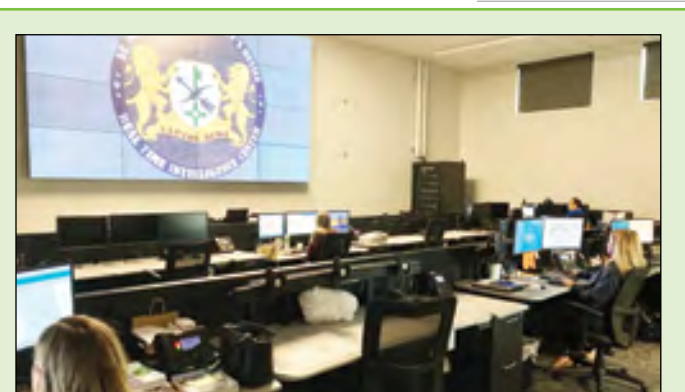


Photo courtesy Martie Thompson

The Real Time Intelligence Center is a secured area within the communications side of the building.

Emergency cont. from pg. 1

the county's busiest intersections, as well as a screen used to monitor the tracking devices of domestic violence offenders.

Next to the Comm Center is the Real Time Intelligence Center. Here, subject matter experts utilize the latest in technology for real time crime solving. They track crime as it is in progress in St. Johns County and relay their research to deputies in the field.

"Our intelligence analysts are civilians assigned as liaisons to investigative units as well as sworn detectives," said George Harrigan, Lieutenant of Intelligence/Property Crimes.

Martin said that due to the increase in the county's population as well as the

desire to proactively hire for the future, more Public Safety Telecommunicators are needed and SJSO is actively hiring. He pointed out that PSTs are the first line of connectivity between service requested by a resident and the service that actually arrives at their door.

"Let us pay you a good salary including benefits, even while in training, and provide you a skill you can use in any organization," Martin said he tells potential employees.

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Briefs

College prep test classes offered
The Friends of the Bartram Trail Library are sponsoring a series of ACT and SAT review classes to be held at the Bartram Trail Public Library on Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 and March 1. Classes are 75 minutes each and students may sign up for either or both series. SAT classes will be from 5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. and ACT classes from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. This is the last set of review classes prior to the end of the 2021 – 2022 school year.

The sessions will include two Math and two English/Reading as well as a review session plus a practice test. Each series of five sessions costs \$45, or \$90 to attend both series and will be capped at 15 students each. There will be social distancing and masks are recommended, but not required.

The last day to register is Jan. 29, 2022. Registration information can be obtained at the Bartram Trail Branch Library or by contacting Phyllis Macy at macy17@yahoo.com.

2022 St. Johns County Beach Driving Passes now on sale
St. Johns County Beach Driving Passes are now on sale. St. Johns County resident passes are \$50, non-resident passes are \$100, and handicap passes are \$40. Passes will be available during normal business hours at the following locations through March 1, 2022:

- Tax Collector's Main Office, 4030 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine
- Tax Collector's DuPont Center, 6658 US1 South, St. Augustine
- Tax Collector's Julington Creek Office, 725 Flora Branch Blvd., St. Johns
- Tax Collector's Ponte Vedra Office, 151 Sawgrass Corners Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach
- St. Johns County Beach Services Office, 901 Pope Road, St. Augustine
- St. Johns County Ocean and Fishing Pier Gift Shop, 350 State Road A1A, St. Augustine

For more information about annual beach driving passes, call the St. Johns County Beach Services Office at (904) 209-0331.

Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club announces January luncheon
The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club will hold its January meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022 at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club, located at 205 St. Johns Golf Drive in St. Augustine. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. The cost of the luncheon will be \$23; make checks payable to Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club and mail to Lin Collier, 6409 Autumn Berry Cir., Jacksonville, FL 32258. Payment must be received no later than Jan. 6, 2022, no exceptions. Be sure to indicate your entrée choice on the check memo line; visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for food choices and updated information.

This month the program will be a fashion show with clothes from Betty Griffin Thrift Shoppe. Attendees will see affordable clothes in addition to helping women of domestic violence, assault and their minor children. Ladies from Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club will be modeling the clothes.

The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club meets the second Tuesday of every month from September to May for lunch. In addition to the monthly meetings, the club has a wide variety of interest groups. There are various game groups (Bridge, Continental Rummy, Pennies Canasta, Mexican Chicken Train dominoes, Bunko, Mah Jongg), golf, recipe exchange, monthly special events, book clubs, lunch and matinee, Lunch Divas, Ladies Night Out, a nature walk group and community projects. Send an email to Donna Holland at bartramtnc@gmail.com for club information or visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 to see pictures of club meetings and download a membership form.

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Fishing

Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka
mail@floridanewslines.com

A New Year usually brings us additional new changes to Florida's fishing regulations. Happily there are no new changes for the start of 2022. Florida's fishing regulations can sometimes be confusing. Keeping current to specific regulations to your fishing location is a must as they could differ regionally, or even by neighboring counties or bodies of water. Always have access to the Florida Fish and Wildlife's Fishing Regulations (<https://myfwc.com>) wherever you might be fishing.

Part of the enjoyment of fishing is getting to be outdoors. While we might be experiencing a winter slowdown to our fishing, it shouldn't necessarily translate to a slow down to getting outdoors. Day trips with the family exploring state and federal parks, bridges and piers along the coast and along inland waterways can provide insight to some of Florida's natural beauty and possibly help discover some pretty decent fishing locations at a future date.

Just by doing a quick online search for fishing locations by county, dozens of possibilities will be listed that are no more than an hour and half's ride away. Nassau County to our north offers three state parks that are known for their fishing — Ft. Clinch, Amelia Island, and the George Crady Fishing State Park.

In Duval County, the Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park offers both fresh and saltwater fishing. There are also numerous public parks, piers and docks that line both sides of the St. Johns River that offer access to

some pretty good fishing.

St. Johns County also offers a number of state and county parks, plus docks and piers with excellent fishing histories. Lighthouse Park Pier, St. Johns County Ocean Pier, Vilano Fishing Pier, and Matanzas Inlet Bridge at Fort Matanzas top the list. Guana State Park also offers outstanding fresh and saltwater backcountry fishing along with a dam that can be publicly fished from.

Flagler County probably offers the most public access along with state and local parks to numerous fishing locations. An enjoyable drive down A1A will be an easy way to discover a multitude of park, play and fish locations that are located on the Intracoastal Waterway and Atlantic Ocean sides of the highway — Bings Landing, Washington Oaks State Park, and Flagler Beach Pier are all landmarks to look for while making the ride.

Inland counties offer much of the same. The difference is they can only offer freshwater fishing. In return though, you should get crystal clear springs and lakes, mossy oak trees, and maybe a gator sunning himself on the bank.

Fishing Report: On warm sunny days, winter whiting should be a good choice. Cooler days, lakes and freshwater creeks for speckled perch as their season should be getting close to peaking.

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



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Travel

Getaway to Jekyll Island

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

Jekyll Island, one of Georgia's Golden Isles, rests about 90 minutes north of Jacksonville. The island is owned and operated as a Georgia state park and becomes a relaxing getaway any time of the year.

Before 1954, the only way to reach Jekyll was by boat — but the history of the seven-mile long isle goes back much farther and proves quite interesting. An Indian mound testifies the first inhabitants: the Guale and Mocama tribes. Then in 1747, British General Oglethorpe sent Major William Horton to build an outpost to help protect Fort Frederica. With the help of indentured servants, he made a home. The remains of Horton's House stand off-road, open for visitors. There's a Spanish moss-draped trail to hike and signage across the road to fill you in on the early history.

Next came the DuBignon family, and in 1879 their descendants established a private hunting club that aimed to attract wealthy patrons. The barons of industry and finance (think Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Astor, Pulitzer, Biddle, Whitney, Morgan) were enticed and brought their families. In fact, by 1886, the Jekyll Island Club became, according to Munsey's Magazine, "the richest, most exclusive, inaccessible club in the world."

Some families built winter "cottages"

(mansions), and many still stand. But these wealthy figures didn't just come to Jekyll for hunting and relaxation; they came to meet secretly. Together they formed what became the Federal Reserve System.

The club continued to prosper with the addition of the Great Dunes Golf Course, which opened in 1926; however, when WWII descended, the threat of German submarine activity along the coast caused the US government to evacuate the island.

The 7,500-acre isle sat unused until Georgia purchased it in 1948 for \$675,000. For comparison, in 2020 dollars, that amount would be \$7.8 million, a bargain purchase likened to the sale of Manhattan. The state opened the park in 1954 after constructing the causeway bridge to allow more public access.

The abandoned Jekyll Island Club was eventually renovated and reopened as a hotel in 1987. An overnight getaway at the resort still remains a splurge, but promises grand memories.

A stroll around the luxury property and National Historic District is a must; it's free. Walk down Millionaire's Row, past the restored cottages from the Gilded Age. Again, signage helps you understand the buildings of the former era.

You can also tour this district via a tram; check for times and pricing. History buffs may also enjoy a look through the Mosaic Jekyll Island Museum.

You'll find 20 miles of safe biking paths, especially nice since they sit off the main road. Naturally, there is a mini-golf course and hiking trails. A full-size waterpark may surprise you, considering the zoning restrictions, but kids love it.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Jekyll Island Club.



A "cottage" on Millionaire's Row.



Driftwood Beach.

Indulge in eight miles of uncrowded beaches, my favorite being Driftwood Beach. For decades, the location suffered from erosion, so what was once a stately maritime forest is now a petrified tree toppled expanse. The beach lies covered by what looks like giant pieces of driftwood — a photographer's delight; however, watch for tidal changes.

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center, a hospital for the injured species, makes an excellent educational experience for the whole family. You can look through a

glass wall and watch the veterinary staff working on an animal if lucky.

If a stay at the Jekyll Island Club Resort doesn't fit your budget, consider the Beachview Club Hotel, Holiday Inn, or a lovely Westin directly on the beach. Even less costly is the RV and tent camp park. Whichever, you'll escape traffic, crowded beaches and indulge in open green space.

Visit www.bylandersea.com to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.

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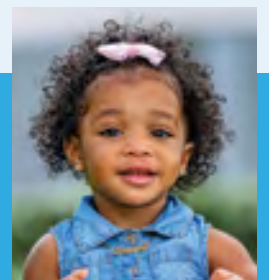
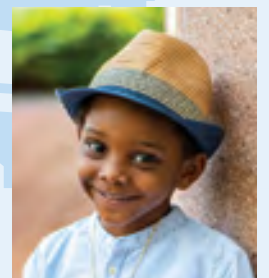
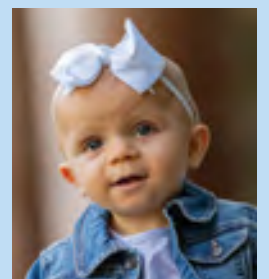
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