



Photos courtesy Terri Florio
Khylee picks up her gifts.

Holiday Angels needed

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewslines.com

It began with a simple question that MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation Executive Director Terri Florio posed to a 10-year-old girl: “What do you want for Christmas?”

The answer: “It doesn’t matter. I won’t get anything anyway.”

That’s when the Holiday Angels Program was born at the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation in 2000 at the same time as it started a comprehensive afterschool program. The foundation realized that many of its low-income participants likely faced holidays without any gifts. The Holiday Angels program at first

Holiday cont. on pg. 8

Ringling in the Christmas Season: An easier way to watch the Palm Valley Boat Parade

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewslines.com

If you are looking for an easier way to watch the 2024 Palm Valley Boat Parade, park at Landrum Middle School, hop on a free shuttle and take a seat on the bleachers under the east side of the Palm Valley Bridge. It is a new option being offered by the Palm Valley Community Association (PVCA) in collaboration with the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department to provide a new viewing area for the community. It is expected that 120 people will be able to sit on the bleachers and enjoy the parade, which will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 6 p.m. Many more will be able to enjoy the surrounding bleacher area, watch the local tradition and kick off the Christmas season.

“We wanted to make the parade more accessible to people and to give more opportunities for families to see it,” said St. Johns County Commissioner Krista Keating-Joseph, who took the PVCA’s request before the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners where it was approved unanimously.

In addition to very limited parking under the east side of the bridge, St. Johns County will offer a remote parking location at Landrum Middle School’s back parking lot where folks can be picked up by a free shuttle service. The Parks and



Photos courtesy Beacham Still

Recreation Department will provide two shuttles in continuous rotation from 4:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., according to St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Director Ryan Kane. Signs will be up at both locations to alert the public, and safety officers will be in place to help direct traffic.

Palm Valley Community Association President Greg Leonard said this is an important and cautious first step to opening the parade up to the surrounding and growing community. Leonard said it is a great opportunity for those not wanting to make a restaurant reservation or those who do not live on the waterway. The plan is to add more to this initiative in the coming years, he said.

This year in addition to the bleachers, Kane said there will also be portable

restrooms, trash barrels, light towers, Christmas music and a food truck, all courtesy of Parks and Recreation. The Board of County Commissioners approved \$5,000 of additional funds to the Parks and Recreation Department’s operating budget to cover these costs.

“St. Johns County Parks and Recreation is excited for the ‘Launch Party’ and encourages families to come out and see the amazing flotilla of lights to help kick off your holiday season,” said Kane.

Capt. Bob Brindle, who has been driving boat No. 77 in the lighted boat parade for the past 24 years as the lead boat, said interaction with the docks is what makes the parade so special. He is looking forward to the parade and the new viewing area.

“For me, it is a family event. We have our children, grandkids, and great grandchildren with us,” he said.

The parade will begin at Marker 3 just south of the Palm Valley Bridge. From there, the procession will continue north and is anticipated to reach Marsh Landing around 8:05 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Live updates on pacing and expected arrival times at various landmarks will be given out as well. Water safety assistance is also provided during the event by the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office, St. Johns County Fire Rescue and Florida Fish

Palm Valley Boat Parade cont. on pg. 5





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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Breed:

Labrador Retriever

Favorite Activity:

Playing chase with the ball and eating

Favorite Treat:

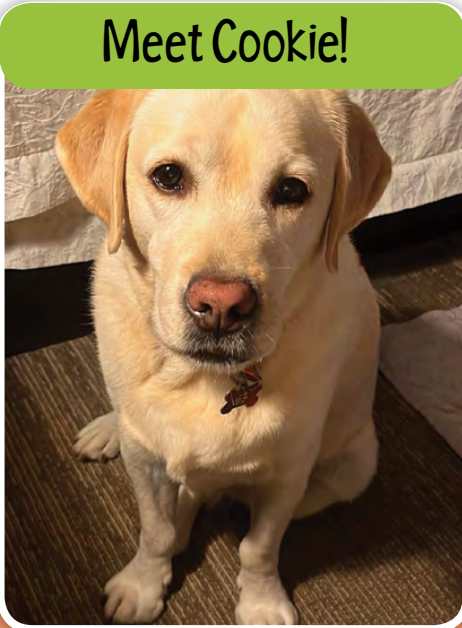
Peanut butter and turkey breast

Favorite Friend:

Colby and Sammy

How Did Your BFF Get Her Name:

Our daughter, who was four years of age when we got Cookie, gave her the name. She loved cookies!



Meet Cookie!

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 Ponte Vedra NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Ponte Vedra NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewslines.com to enter your pet.



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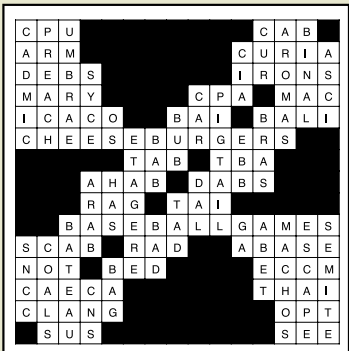
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MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to:
mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.
Last month's Mystery Photo was THE PLAYERS Senior Center.



Answers
Puzzles
PG 10

CRYPTO FUN

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A. jolly B. holiday C. December D. presents



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December

Community Calendar

What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

Council on Aging offers interest groups at the COA Center at UF Health Nocatee. Meetings are free and self-guided. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required; email pbrunell@Stjohnscoa.com or call (904) 814-9407. Tuesday clubs include: Open Card Play, every Tuesday 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. and Caregiver Support Group, every Tuesday 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Wednesday groups include: Mah Jongg Meet-up, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Palm Valley Market is held inside and on the grounds of the Palm Valley Community Center at 148 Canal Road, every Tuesday from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. The market offers organically grown produce, microgreens, eggs, grass-finished beef, all natural chicken, Mayport shrimp, prepared meals, preservative-free bread, honey, tea, natural skincare, custom jewelry and soy candles. Visit the Palm Valley Market Facebook page for more information.

3rd: Vicar's Landing monthly Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. Jewelry will include both costume and designer 14K gold and sterling silver items. Framed art will be featured in the hall. The Christmas Shop will be in full swing with lovely decorations and many holiday items. Shop in the knick-knacks area for stocking-stuffers, small gifts, and tiny treasures. The sale will include antiques, household items, home furnishings and art in The Cottage. The public is welcome. Checks or cash only please. The Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives all the proceeds. Call Janet Nicosia at (904) 607-2078 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610 for more information.

3rd: Essential Tremor Support Group Meet, Greet and Educate will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 11 a.m. at Baptist Health Place in Nocatee, 400 Colonnade Drive. Dr. Zhigao Huang, MD, PhD with the Baptist neurology group will be discussing information about "ET"

treatments and answering questions about this condition. All are welcome. RSVP to Jan Kary at jkary@verizon.net or (202) 438-6750.

4th: Coastal Friends will host Gene Nordan, formerly of Le Chateau, who will regale attendees with holiday tunes at a luncheon on Dec. 4 from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club. The luncheon is open to members and guests, as well as the community. The cost to attend is \$25. Space is limited; reservations must be made in advance by contacting bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible.

5th: Bingo will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Thursdays from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. for four weeks beginning Thursday, Dec. 5. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

7th: Wellness events at Sawgrass Village will be held every Saturday in December from 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Hosted by Mind Body Social, all events are free and open to the community. Events include wellness classes such as yoga and barre, all held on the lawn in front of ABC Liquors. Visit <https://mbs.events/sv/> for more information and to register.

8th: North Florida Women's Chorale presents "Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi, including other Christmas and Chanukah favorites, on Sunday, Dec. 8 at 4 p.m. at Community Presbyterian Church, 150 Sherry Drive in Atlantic Beach. This is a free concert open to the public; suggested donation is \$10. Visit www.womenschorale.org for more information.

10th: Floral Arranging with Angela Sieja will be hosted by the Ponte Vedra Woman's Club on Dec. 10 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Palm Valley Barn, 531 N. Wilderness Trail. The cost is \$35, which includes instruction, flowers/vase, and refreshments. Registration required; visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more information.

com for more information.

10th: PVB Adult Coloring Club at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library will be held on Dec. 10 from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. This program adults older than 18; bring a snack or drink for yourself or to share with others. Call the library at (904) 827-6950 for more information.

10th: Decorate Gingerbread Houses and Cookies with Humana on Tuesday, Dec. 10 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane. Decorate cookies to take home; if you're lucky, you may win a gingerbread house! Call the center at (904) 209-3659 for more information.

12th: Elf and Cocoa: A Festive Movie Experience will be held at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on Thursday, Dec. 12 at 3:30 p.m. Watch the movie "Elf" and enjoy a hot cocoa bar complete with a variety of festive toppings. All ages are welcome; children must be accompanied by a participating adult. Call (904) 827-6950 to RSVP.

12th: Free Tech Help with David will be held on Thursday, Dec. 12 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Drop in for tech assistance with your Android, Apple, and Reader devices; no RSVPs required. Visit sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/ for more information.

14th: NE Florida Sisters in Crime will host holiday game time on Dec. 14 at 1:15 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Attendees will play a Cold Case Detective game to investigate the fictional death of a victim found floating face down in his backyard swimming pool. Prizes will be awarded. Bring your coffee and bring a friend; the group welcomes misters and sisters to learn about writing, promoting, and enjoying crime fiction.

Visit nefloridasistersincrime.org for more information.

14th: Ponte Vedra Writers will meet on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 11 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Area writers can share their work at this annual Open Mic meeting. The meeting is open to writers of all genres, whether poetry, fiction, or nonfiction, and they may read excerpts of present or past work before an audience of their peers. Advance notice is required; email group leader Vic DiGenti at vicdig@mac.com to participate. Visit www.floridawriters.org for more information.

15th: PVB Friends of the Library Book Sale will be held during regular library hours from Dec. 15 through Jan. 3, 2025. All proceeds go directly to books, materials, and programs at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Call Seymour's Bookstore at the library at (904) 295-3202 for more information.

18th: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club general meeting will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 12 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club. The program will feature speaker Andrea Jevic, who will discuss "The Latest in Family Law." Registration required; visit www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more information.

19th: St. Johns County Republican Party District 4 monthly meeting will be held on the third Thursday of each month (this month, Dec. 19) at 6:15 p.m. at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd. Visit stjohns.gop for more information.

28th: GTM Research Reserve will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, Dec. 28 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. No registration is required; meet at the Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Visit gtmnerr.org for more information.



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Guest Column

School Board update
By Kelly Barrera, School Board Member, District 4
I would like to share my thankfulness and gratitude to our community regarding the passage of our two school referendums. They are critical for the future of our schools and community. The referendums will allow us to maintain programs that support our students, provide monetary supplements for our excellent teachers, bus operators, and educational support staff, and continue to build and maintain schools, increase safety and technology.

On Nov. 20, we celebrated our School Related Employees of the Year. I would like to recognize the flowing individuals and thank them for all that they give each day to support our students: Ian Carpenter, Landrum Middle School; Peggy Tierney, Nease High School; Jennifer Dean, Ocean

Palms Elementary; Nicole Hastings, Palm Valley Academy; Carlos Fernandez, Pine Island Academy; Janine Rosati, Ponte Vedra High School; Christine Mineer, PVPV/ Rawlings; and Mat Fairchild, Valley Ridge Academy.

In anticipation of the opening of our newest school in the RiverTown community, we have begun the process of zoning students and neighborhoods for our new school. This school will open as a K-7 in August 2025, and become a K-8 in August 2026; however, the school will eventually revert to a middle school once the elementary schools in RiverTown are built.

While opening a new school is always full of excitement and positive energy, changing schools can be stressful as well.

Our school district has experienced ongoing growth over the past 20 years and is committed to providing the best transition possible. Excellent experienced school leaders work to develop an inclusive school culture, add familiar teachers and support staff that students know and recognize, and build a new school community that families can be excited about and feel welcome to join. To those who are newer to our community, the rezoning process may not make sense and cause apprehension. We certainly understand and welcome suggestions to the attendance plans options that are presented, as we always want to evaluate every aspect.

The school board continues to take a slow and measured approach to attendance zoning, evaluating the options and suggestions provided, taking steps to avoid

rezoning the same group of students' multiple times, examining future growth areas and trends, evaluating safety and operational needs, and prioritizing providing the best educational environment for our students.

In December, our school board will also begin the process of selecting a new superintendent. Superintendent Tim Forson will be retiring on June 30, 2025 after servicing our students and school community for 44 years in various capacities. The process will be led by the Florida School Board Association and will be somewhat more streamlined than in the past, with more online opportunities for our families and the public to learn about the candidates and submit feedback. The timeline will span over several months.



with St. Johns County Clerk
of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller
John Rundgren, Clerk Designee

Q. What is property fraud?
A. Property fraud is when someone illegally uses your property for financial gain. Examples of this would be someone recording a fraudulent deed, mortgage or lien against your property in the Official Records of the St. Johns County Clerk's Office.

Q. Why should people be concerned about fraudulent recording activity?
A. According to the FBI, property and mortgage fraud is the fastest growing white-collar crime. Unless you continually monitor Official Records recorded under your name, undetected fraudulent documents could interfere with future transactions such as selling or refinancing your property.

Q. Since 2018, your office has offered a service to help property owners combat potential fraud related to property transactions. How many people have signed up for the alerts?
A. More than 22,000 residents have registered since the rollout in 2018, with more than 7,000 sign ups since January 2024. It's been a priority of our office

to inform both residents and businesses about our property fraud alert system. All property owners in St. Johns County received a flier with details on how to sign up in their recent property tax bill.

Q. How does your service compare to companies that market fraud alert services?
A. Commercial alert companies charge a monthly fee for fraud alerts, but our office offers this free of charge. Like commercial alerts, our free service doesn't prevent the actual fraudulent activity from occurring — but it does provide an early warning system. Subscribers can then take quick action if they see something fraudulent. Residents can sign up at www.stjohnsclerk.com.

Q. What is the best way for people to contact your office with questions about property fraud alerts?
A. If residents have questions about how to sign up for our property fraud alerts, or any other services we offer, they can call us at (904) 819-3600 or email us at clerk@stjohnsclerk.com.

Palm Valley Boat Parade cont. from pg. 1
and Wildlife.

Parade coordinator Beacham Still said in addition to the bleachers, the best places to view the parade are the restaurants along the seven-mile boat route of Palm Valley's Intracoastal Waterway as well as Mickler's Wharf.

Still said the parade's real mission is to support the community by creating scholarships for local high school students at Ponte Vedra and Nease.

He added that the parade is funded by generous participants, businesses, and neighbors, and it also benefits the Palm Valley Charities via the Palm Valley Community Association board.

For more information, visit palmvalleyboatparade.com or look for parade updates on their Facebook group page www.facebook.com/groups/Palmvalleyboatparade. Cash prizes will be given to boat winners in different size categories and to the best decorated docks.

Guest Column

Sheriff hosts second annual SJSHo-Ho Christmas event
By St. Johns County Sheriff Robert A. Hardwick

The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office is excited to host the second annual SJSHo-Ho-Ho with Sheriff Hardwick at the main office, located at 4015 Lewis Speedway in St. Augustine. This year's event will be held on Dec. 14 from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. and will feature photos with Santa, Buddy the Elf, the Grinch, and more. There will also be a Christmas movie playing, snow, facepainting, reindeer food, and more

activities for all to enjoy. All purchases are tax-deductible. Tickets are available on the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office Special Teams Eventbrite page.

I'd also like to take this moment on behalf of my wife Kendell, myself, and the more than 1,000 members of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office to thank you all for another great year. Your continued support of our agency is truly humbling. It is an honor to serve St. Johns County, which we believe is the best place to live, work, play, raise a family, and retire. We wish you all a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends.



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Landrum's "Anything but a Backpack Day" unleashes student creativity

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Landrum Middle School celebrated its annual Spirit Week with a stand-out theme, "Anything but a Backpack Day," bringing out impressive levels of creativity, enthusiasm, and school spirit. Students were encouraged to swap their traditional backpacks for unconventional items to carry their school supplies, showcasing their originality and resourcefulness.

From wagons and laundry baskets to strollers and luggage, students arrived with all kinds of imaginative "backpacks," adding a sense of excitement and camaraderie to the school day. The creative challenge not only made for a fun-filled day but also strengthened the sense of community among students, faculty, and staff.

"Seeing the students' unique ideas and



their enthusiasm was incredible," said Troy Kasting, principal of Landrum Middle School. "Events like these allow



Photos courtesy Jennifer Werba
Students' creative "backpacks."

students to express themselves and contribute to our positive school culture. The energy on campus was infectious!"

Charity gala held for Ukraine

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

In the spirit of neighbors helping neighbors, a Charity Gala for Ukraine will be held on Dec. 8 at 6 p.m. All the proceeds will go directly to the Ukrainian refugee families in the Jacksonville area. The event, being hosted by the nonprofit Helping Ukraine, Inc., will include DJs with 80s music, an art exhibit, silent auction, catering and wine and cash bar. The event will be held at

The Link, 425 Town Plaza Ave. in Ponte Vedra. Advance ticket purchases would be greatly appreciated, starting at \$125, with sponsorships starting at \$1,000.

Helping Ukraine Founder Natalia Plyam said as an immigrant herself, the mission resonates with her because these new community members had to leave Ukraine to save their children's lives from the war.

"I am so passionate about helping newly arriving families from Ukraine because I know how difficult it is to come to a new country after losing everything back home," said Plyam, a Ponte Vedra Beach resident. "My reason for doing this is the butterfly effect: I love seeing how helping just a few families two-and-a-half years ago became such an amazing thing where hundreds of neighbors are

helping hundreds of Ukrainian refugees." The event will include dinner, dancing, silent auction and a toy drive.

"My goal is to raise \$50,000 so I can help the neediest families to get on their feet by buying an inexpensive car, send their children to summer camp and just use the money for the urgent needs," she said. "I am humbled by and thankful for the support of my community. I couldn't do it without their help."

For more information, message Plyam at nplyam@gmail.com or visit www.helpingukraineinc.com. Zelle payments are also accepted via Plyam at (904) 837-5555. All contributions are tax deductible. Checks can be made to Helping Ukraine, Inc., 216 Settlers Row North, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082.

Stetson Mansion voted as USA Today's #1 Christmas Display in Florida

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Christmas Mansion, also known as Stetson Mansion, Florida's most historic home and only Gilded Age mansion, has opened its doors, allowing visitors to enjoy the decorations once again for

the 2024 holiday season. The Christmas Mansion features 10 elaborately decorated rooms on display with various themes including An Angelic Celestial Celebration, A Country Christmas, A Bing Crosby Christmas, An Iconic Stetson Christmas, Enchanted Christmas, A Santa Convention and more. There are guided and self guided tours.

The Christmas Mansion has been recognized in the 2023 USA TODAY 10 Best Readers' Choice travel award contest for Best Holiday Historic Home Tour and was the only Florida attraction to make the list. The Christmas Mansion has also maintained status at TripAdvisor's No. 1 rated Landmark Tourist Attraction since 2014 and Top 10 Attractions in the USA since 2022.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to share history and festivity with visitors and members of our community," said owner Michael Solari. "Each year, we meticulously design and curate a magical holiday experience in hopes of spreading joy. It is an honor to return to the 2024

Stetson Mansion cont. on pg. 7

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Life

travel • pantry raiders • gardening
fishing • entertainment • puzzles

Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Ron Hiatt

After more than 30 years in the fitness industry, Ron Hiatt knows that there is no short-cut to good health. “Diet, exercise and sleep. These are the three pre-requisites,” said Hiatt, who is a group fitness instructor for the Brown Family, the Nocatee and the Williams YMCAs. “You can spend your time being either proactive or reactive. If you are proactive, you are working out, watching your diet and getting enough sleep. Or you are reactive, and you can sit in a doctor’s office because you got an ailment because you didn’t move,” said Hiatt. That is how Hiatt, 67, has lived his life — being proactive and finding balance. His fitness journey began when he got a job at a gym to get a free membership since he could not afford one. After getting certified as a group fitness instructor, Hiatt taught floor aerobics. “I was awful at it, but I was so enthusiastic,” he said. Soon, Hiatt improved. By day, Hiatt, who grew up in Washington, D.C., worked as an accountant (eight years in private industry and 23 years with the United States Department of the Army). At night, he worked at Sport and Health Fitness, eventually earning his personal training certification. “I just really enjoy working with people and helping people,” he said. At 33, Hiatt sustained a back injury after reaching for something in the kitchen. He later found out that he had two degenerating discs in his back. After

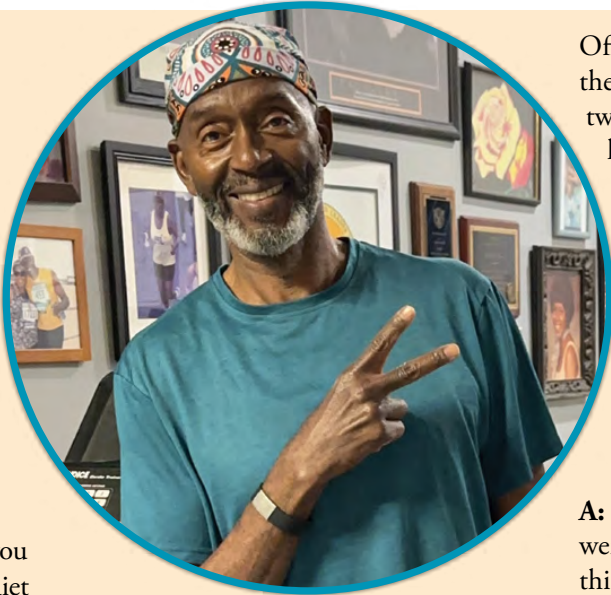


Photo courtesy Ron Hiatt
Ron Hiatt

several visits to the chiropractor, Hiatt said a friend suggested that he practice yoga regularly. Hiatt researched it, tried it and felt instant relief. Unfortunately, Hiatt later reinjured his back, and this time yoga did not help. Instead, Hiatt discovered Pilates, which not only helped his back, but improved his other workouts and led him to get certified in Pilates and practice daily. Exercise and group fitness are also what helped Hiatt maintain some sense of normalcy when his late wife Vicki Brown battled pancreatic cancer. She was diagnosed with Stage 4 terminal pancreatic cancer in August 2023 and died on Jan. 7, 2024, at the age of 69. “I say that she transitioned. I have to believe that we do not pass away. Energy just transforms. Her energy that she had for life and living and supporting people. It does not go away. It just transitions to something else.”

Q: Could you share more about Vicki.

A: Vicki was not just my wife but also my beautiful friend. She was the chief learning officer and director for the

Office of Employee Development at the Department of the Army. We have two adult children, Jason, 42 and Valoree, 41. We moved here four years ago and built our house from the ground up. Vicki had the vision. She insisted on purchasing two big palm trees for the property and putting in a swimming pool because she always said, “What is the point of waiting?”

Q: How does Pilates help you?

A: Pilates made my yoga, running and weight training better. It makes everything better. I always try to incorporate that into my training. It really helps my posture and my core, and I weave it into my yoga class, into my client’s weight training, and I put it into my warm-ups so they can see the benefits.

Q: How do you approach group fitness and everyday fitness?

A: When I am in front of the class, it is not my workout. It is your workout. I teach to the back of the class and try to offer encouragement and motivation. I recommend incorporating small amounts of exercise and activity throughout the day.

Q: You have a signature look. Explain.

A: It is a rarity that you will ever see me in long pants. I always wear barefoot shoes, a bandana and shorts. I have collected 70 different bandanas.

Q: What is your perspective on life?

A: We are here to have experiences. Put your effort there — into helping people and sharing your gifts with people. You always think that you will have time to do it later, but sometimes this is the only time that you have.

Stetson Mansion cont. from pg. 6

holiday season with more opportunities to share our love for Christmas and an incredible historic home which we are grateful to look after.”

The Christmas Mansion, known as the “House That Hats Built”, was the home of famed hat maker and philanthropist, John B. Stetson, Florida’s first “snow-bird.” Not only did Stetson become the main benefactor for Florida’s first private university — Stetson University — but his presence in DeLand and the building of his home brought modern amenities into Florida. Built in 1886, Stetson’s mansion is the first and only Gilded Age estate in Florida and was the first home in the state to incorporate Edison electricity, steam heat, indoor plumbing, and a call bell system. It has always remained occupied as a residential home, even through restorations, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Christmas Mansion is open for tours showcasing specially themed holiday decorations throughout the home, offered two to seven times daily through Jan. 18, 2025. Reservations required; visit stetsonmansion.com to sign up.

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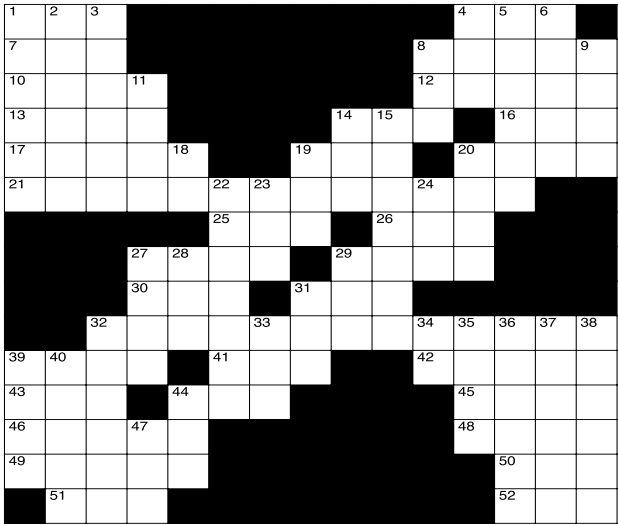
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Central processing unit
- 4. Taxi
- 7. Body part
- 8. Papal court
- 10. Young women making their public debuts
- 12. Metal shackles
- 13. Joseph's wife
- 14. Licensed professional
- 16. Partner to cheese
- 17. Mild fruits
- 19. File format
- 20. Province of Indonesia
- 21. Beloved grilled foods
- 25. Bar bill
- 26. Don't know when yet
- 27. Whale ship captain
- 29. Touches softly
- 30. Mock
- 31. Red-brown Pacific sea bream
- 32. Summer entertainment option
- 39. Protective crust
- 41. Cool!
- 42. Behave in a way that belittles
- 43. Denial
- 44. A place to sleep
- 45. Electronic counter-countermeasures
- 46. Intestinal pouches
- 48. SE Asia family of languages
- 49. Sound
- 50. Select
- 51. Give the impression of dishon
- 52. Witness

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Of cadmium
- 2. Deliver a sermon
- 3. Inner regions of a shadow
- 4. Aggressive dog
- 5. Smells
- 6. Twofold
- 8. Former OSS
- 9. Computer language
- 11. Indian groom
- 14. Automobile
- 15. Hairstyle
- 18. Atomic #76
- 19. Guy (slang)
- 20. Ladies' undergarments
- 22. Furniture with open shelves
- 23. Back-arc basin
- 24. Partner to flow
- 27. A type of horse
- 28. Possesses
- 29. Split pulses
- 31. Small amount
- 32. Flat-bottomed riverboat
- 33. Not good
- 34. Atomic #31
- 35. Assist in committing a crime
- 36. Chauvinists
- 37. Get away
- 38. One of a people who speaks a Semitic language
- 39. Civil rights college organization
- 40. Combustible dark rocks
- 44. Grocery container
- 47. Central nervous system

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

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

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



Solve the code to discover words related to Christmas.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 16 = E)

- A. 15 22 5 5 8
Clue: Happy
- B. 23 22 5 20 9 12 8
Clue: Special occasion
- C. 9 16 11 16 18 7 16 26
Clue: Twelfth month
- D. 1 26 16 24 16 19 3 24
Clue: Gifts

Holiday cont. from pg. 1

aimed to get one pair of new shoes, one new outfit and one new toy for its 230 children (K-12) in the program.

“That morphed into not just getting gifts for our kids, but also including siblings of those participants (birth to 18). We serve a total of 500 children through the Holiday Angels program,” said Florio, who has worked for the foundation for 28 years.

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation is an afterschool and summer youth development program in Jacksonville’s Urban Core that promotes academic achievement and positive life skills. It was started in 1996 by pro-tennis player, Olympian and Wimbledon finalist MaliVai Washington to introduce urban youth to the sport he loved. It has grown into a comprehensive afterschool youth development program, “Tennis-n-Tutoring.” Washington lives in Ponte Vedra Beach and remains active in all



Photos courtesy Terri Florio
Holiday Angels gift delivery.

aspects of the foundation, including as a Holiday Angel.

For Makayla H., 16, a recipient of the Holiday Angels program since she was in the second grade, the entire experience has been a blessing.

“The program is like a family. I know that I can count on my friends here — no doubt about it,” she said. “It feels like a warm hug.

Makayla said her very first gift from her

holiday angel was a pink bicycle, which helped her to learn how to ride.

“When the bike was delivered, I felt so much love from everyone,” she said.

Makayla, who attends Riverside High School and has an interest in fashion design and forensic science, said angels

play a key role during the holidays and even a small gift serves to brighten the life of a child.

Participants can make gift requests, and foundation staff stress that the requests should be made by the child for a true “gift” as opposed to something that could be seen as more of a necessity, such as underwear or pajamas.

Becoming a Holiday Angel simply involves sending an email to the foundation. Angels can indicate whether they

wish to adopt a child, a family or to just donate cash (\$150 will cover the cost of one child). Requests can be made to adopt a child or family with similar ages as the donating family to make shopping for new gifts easier, said Florio. Participants are also asked to wrap the items per instructions to help save staff time. Gifts are due by Dec. 16 and are delivered to families on Dec. 23.

While gifts are being dropped off, Florio said the office gets transformed into a Santa’s workshop during the final weeks.

“For me, that whole season between Thanksgiving and Christmas is a very crazy time. It is a lot of work, but being able to see the kids and their faces is amazing. It is a very tangible way to see the impact that we have year-round,” said Florio. “The look on their faces when they receive the gifts is pretty exciting.”

For more information or to become a Holiday Angel, email champion@mal-washington.com.

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PopHistory

By Scott A. Grant
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Nullification Crisis

The Nullification Crisis of 1832 is considered to be the greatest crisis faced by our Republic prior to 1860 and a precursor of our Civil War.

The Tariff Act of 1828 was known as the “Tariff of Abominations” and with good reason. The Act was written by future Vice-President John C. Calhoun of South Carolina and future President Martin Van Buren of New York to be so reprehensible that it would go down to defeat and end tariffs for good. Shockingly, the bill passed and was signed into law by President John Quincy Adams. The bill passed because people were rabidly angry with England. Fourteen years earlier, British soldiers had captured Washington and sacked and burned both the US Capitol and the White House. (Dolley Madison famously rescued a portrait of George Washington as she fled before the invaders.)

The tariff was unpopular everywhere, but especially in the agrarian South. Factions in South Carolina

began to lobby for “nullification,” declaring the act unconstitutional and therefore null and void in the state. The concept of nullification had first been advanced by Thomas Jefferson. In 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president. John C. Calhoun was his VP. Calhoun began to lobby hard for repeal of the “Tariff of Abominations.” Jackson liked tariffs and he had as good a reason as anyone to hate the British. Less than a year after the sack of our Capitol, “Old Hickory” had defeated a British invasion of Louisiana at the Battle of New Orleans. The invaders were Napoleonic War veterans who expected to annihilate the rag tag army of volunteers and pirates assembled by Jackson. Jackson and his troops shocked the world.

In 1832, Andy Jackson signed the Tariff Act of 1832 into law. The new tariff was not as objectionable as the Act of 1828, but still went too far for Southerners who imported most of their finished goods from Eng-

land. John C. Calhoun resigned the vice presidency to return to South Carolina, run for the Senate, and fight the tariff. In November 1832, Calhoun drafted an Ordinance of Nullification declaring the tariff acts void in South Carolina. The Palmetto State began preparations for a Civil War. They hoped other southern states would join. They did not.

Andrew Jackson responded by issuing the Nullification Proclamation. The proclamation was written by Secretary of State Edward Livingston. Livingston was a Princeton graduate who has been called “the first legal genius of modern times.” The proclamation declared nullification to be “incompatible with the existence of the Union.” The document went on to declare that “Disunion by armed force is TREASON.” South Carolina continued plans to oppose the collection of tariffs by armed force. Congress passed the “Force Bill” giving Jackson the

power to use the army to collect the tax.

At this point, with South Carolina standing alone, cooler heads prevailed. Senators Henry Clay of Kentucky, Daniel Webster of New Hampshire, and the aforementioned John C Calhoun pushed through a new tariff act that was less objectionable to the South. For this and other compromises that postponed the Civil War, Henry Clay earned the appellation “the Great Compromiser.” The South was not ready to go to war over taxes in 1832. Jackson never forgave Clay and Calhoun for their part in the crisis. He is purported to have said that he only had two regrets: that he never shot Henry Clay or hanged John C. Calhoun.

Scott A. Grant is a local author and historian. He writes sometimes esoteric columns monthly for Ponte Vedra NewsLine and welcomes your comments at scottg@standfastic.com.

Briefs

Gene Nordan to entertain at Coastal Friends luncheon

Coastal Friends has announced that Gene Nordan will be entertaining the group at a special holiday luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 4 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Nordan entertained patrons in the piano bar for almost 15 years at Le Chateau, a former Atlantic Beach oceanfront bar and restaurant.

The holiday luncheon is open to members and guests, as well as the community. There will be a special holiday menu as well as a Trivia game and prizes. The cost to attend is \$25. Space is limited, so reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible.

Established in 1998, Coastal Friends is a social club comprised of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville and the surrounding area, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach and St. Augustine. Some of the activities offered are ladies adventures and outings, book club, Bunco, Canasta, happy hour, lunch in, lunch out, Mah Jongg, samba, stitch and chat and wine socials. Luncheons are held on the first Wednesday of every month, except for July and August. New members are welcome throughout the year. Contact brookmeister@msn.com for more information on how to join.

NE Florida Sisters in Crime to host holiday game time

The final gathering of the year for the NE Florida Sisters in Crime will be Dec. 14 at 1:15 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library. Attendees are invited to join in the holiday party as they play a Cold Case Detective game to investigate the fictional death of a victim found floating face down in his backyard swimming pool. Prizes will be awarded and book promo videos will be created when attendees bring their published books.

This meeting is in person only. Contact floridasistersincrime@gmail.com for more information. The group welcomes sisters and misters, so feel free to bring your spouse, a writing buddy, or a friend, whether or not they want to be involved as a detective.

Pickleball tournament fundraiser to benefit BiG North Florida

“BiG” Pickleball Tournament is a community event aimed at raising money to support BiG North Florida (Brookwood in Georgetown) and School (BridgeHaven Academy) programs for adults and students with disabilities.

“Both organizations serve individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. One hundred percent of all money raised goes directly back into the program,” said Lynn Yeager, BridgeHaven Academy executive director. “We believe every life has a purpose and meaning, and we are all interconnected.”

The event will be held on Dec. 7 at Veterans Park, 1332 Veterans Parkway, in St. Johns. Three rounds are guaranteed plus the day will include player prize packs and tournament shirts. The fee is \$75 and the event will take place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. To register, visit www.bignorthflorida.org/pickleball.

Food for Fines returns to St. Johns County libraries

St. Johns County has announced that the Food for Fines program has returned this year to St. Johns County libraries and bookmobiles. An opportunity to eliminate most library fines, Food for Fines will run through Saturday, Dec. 21. The food items collected will be used to stock the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Food Pantry, providing food for St. Johns County families in need.

A donation of one non-perishable, unexpired food item will remove \$2 of fines from a patron’s library record. This fine-reduction program applies only to overdue fines, and patrons may bring in as many items as

needed to reduce overdue fines. Fees related to damaged or lost items are not included in the Food for Fines program. Any library user is welcome to make donations, and food may be dropped off at any of the St. Johns County library branches or bookmobiles.

Last year, St. Johns County residents provided more than 4,300 non-perishable items through the “Food for Fines” program. Visit www.sjcpls.org for more information.

County’s “Get Hooked” anti-litter initiative wins top honors

St. Johns County’s innovative anti-litter initiative, Get Hooked, received multiple prestigious awards at the Savvy Awards Ceremony, held at the 3CMA (City-County Communications & Marketing Association) Annual Conference in Arlington, Texas, from Sept. 4 – 6, 2024. The initiative was spearheaded by the Office of Public Affairs and Public Works Department.

With more than 1,100 entries from local governments across the nation in 38 categories, St. Johns County was honored to receive the first-place Savvy Award in the Go Green Communication Program Efforts Division for the Get Hooked initiative. Additionally, the campaign was recognized with the prestigious Diamond Award for the Communications and Marketing Processes category, marking it as one of the three top achievements honored at 3CMA.

Launched in January 2024, the Get Hooked initiative was developed in response to the collection of more than 49 tons of roadside debris by the county’s Road and Bridge Division litter crews in 2022. The campaign aims to educate and engage residents, raise awareness, and provide actionable steps to combat litter. Its slogan, “Get Hooked! We need all hands on deck to keep SJC litter-free,” is inspired by the county’s Solid Waste mascot, Captain Reducio, a pirate hooked on keeping his community green. The impact of these efforts is evident: Road and Bridge litter crews collected only 16 tons of litter from

January to June 2024, a significant reduction from the more than 32 tons collected during the same period in 2023.

Light the World Giving Machines help those in need

Have you ever bought a chicken from a vending machine? How about new bedding for a child, a haircut, or a week of groceries for a family? Through Dec. 15, essential items like these can be purchased from a Light the World Giving Machine sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at the St. Augustine Visitors Center Plaza next to the parking garage. With prices starting at \$10, anyone can help those in need in St. Augustine, Northern Florida and around the world.

These popular red vending machines will appear in 106 cities in the U.S. and in nine countries worldwide, offering all who visit a fun, unique, and memorable way to perform an instant act of kindness. Following their time in St Augustine, they will travel to the Altamonte Mall in Orlando to finish the Christmas season.

“We are so excited to have the Giving Machine in our area again,” said Michael S. Lavoie, leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in St Augustine. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has a mission to relieve suffering and give hope to individuals who need it. The Giving Machine is a way for everyone to take part in that mission, especially during the holiday season.”

Local and regional charities in St. Augustine’s machines are the Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County, Sharing Putnam’s Bounty of Putnam County, Kim’s Open Door of Duval County, BASCA of Clay County, and Peaceful Paths of Alachua County. The two global charities in the machines are Catholic Relief Services and Lifting Hands International.

Visit www.instagram.com/givingmachine-florida and www.facebook.com/GivingMachineFlorida for information.



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Choose your Nutcracker

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

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

Community Nutcracker

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

Artistic Directors Dulce Anaya, Debra Rankin and Mark Spivak continue this holiday tradition which began in 1992. Community Nutcracker is the only non-profit, volunteer-run organization that offers a portion of its proceeds to local charitable agencies with each performance — and has donated more than \$900,000 in the past 33 years. The performing company is made up of local talent with more than 200 dancers ranging in age from nine to adult from Northeast Florida auditioning and performing in the production. In an effort to promote the arts in schools, Community Nutcracker also offers matinee performances for school groups as well as a Community Service Night (invitation only).

Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet

- Dec. 14 at 6 p.m.
- Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Department
- www.missfeliciasdance.com

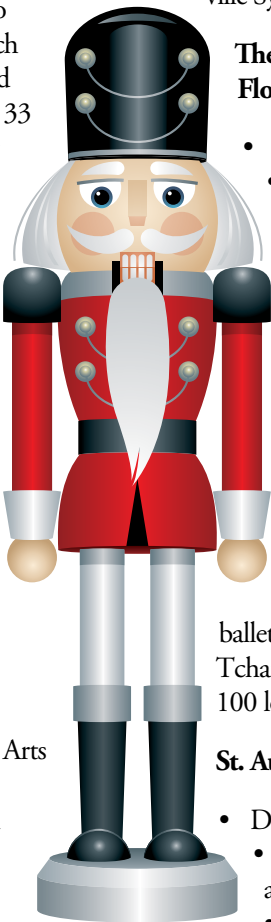
This year marks the 29th performance of the Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet, directed by Felicia Rhoden of the Christ Church Dance Ministry as well as owner of Miss Felicia’s Dance. Nearly 300 performers, aged two to 90 years old, will

take the stage and proceeds will benefit children’s charities.

Jacksonville Symphony’s First Coast Nutcracker

- Dec. 13 at 8 p.m.
- Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.
- Dec. 15 at 2 p.m.
- Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts
- www.jaxsymphony.org/first-coast-nutcracker/

Jacksonville Symphony’s First Coast Nutcracker has been a tradition in North Florida for more than 50 years. Under the direction of choreographer and artistic director Rhonda Stampalia, the First Coast Nutcracker showcases internationally renowned principal dancers, the area’s finest young dancers, and Tchaikovsky’s best-loved melodies performed by the Jacksonville Symphony.



Graphic courtesy MetroCreative

The Nutcracker 2024 by the Florida Ballet

- Dec. 20 at 7:30 p.m.
 - Dec. 21 at 4:30 p.m.
 - Dec. 22 at 2 p.m.
 - Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Center
 - floridaballet.org/thenutcracker
- The Florida Ballet’s Nutcracker features swirling snowflakes, waltzing flowers, and dancing bonbons. From the captivating dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy to the iconic snow scene, this enchanting classical ballet is set to the beloved music of Tchaikovsky and features more than 100 local dancers.

St. Augustine Ballet Nutcracker

- Dec. 20 at 7 p.m.
- Dec. 21 at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Dec. 22 at 2 p.m.
- Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College

www.saintaugustineballet.com
This year’s production of “The Nutcracker”

marks the 16th annual performance by the St. Augustine Ballet and features professional ballet dancers as well as dance students from St. Augustine and surrounding areas. The St. Augustine Ballet, under the artistic direction of Luis Abella, is a non-profit organization with a mission to involve community members of all ages in meaningful dance experiences.

Christmas FANTASTIQUE

- Dec. 7 at 7 p.m.
- Dec. 8 at 7 p.m.
- Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College
- www.zoikasdance.com

This original production by Zoika’s Dance tells the classic holiday story of “The Nutcracker” through the language of dance, featuring classical ballet, as well as tap, hip hop, acro, and contemporary dance. Professional dancers join young, local dancers on

stage for the holiday extravaganza.

Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet

- Dec. 26 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Florida Theatre
- www.nutcracker.com/tickets

Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet is a national touring production that features an international cast and prop designers. The production features larger-than-life puppets, breath-taking acrobatics and dazzling costumes. Dancing alongside the full international professional cast are local Jacksonville children from Alius Dance School.

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

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Santa making his list of phone calls

St. Johns County Parks and Recreation is hosting phone calls from Santa this holiday season for children eight years old or younger. Santa will make his phone calls between 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. nightly, Dec. 10 - 12. Parents must register children by Dec. 6 by visiting secure.recl.com/FL/stjohns-county-fl/catalog and selecting a date under the Special Events tab. For more information or registration assistance, call (904) 209-0379 or email abrown@sjcfl.us.



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