



page 3
BFF Best Furry Friend
Meet Jag!



page 5
Q&A with
Clerk Designee John Rundgren



page 9
Get to Know ...
Ron Hiett



page 10
Puzzles

St. Augustine's iconic Nights of Lights now aglow

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

St. Augustine has celebrated the holiday season festively for more than 30 years — during the annual Nights of Lights, millions of twinkling white lights come to life and illuminate the historic architecture of the nation's oldest city. The festival has roots in the Spanish tradition of placing lit white candles in the windows of homes to mark the Christmas season. Today, Nights of Lights has a global audience, recognized by National Geographic, Conde Nast Travelers, and AAA Auto Club as one of the best cities for holiday lights displays.

The City of St. Augustine offers a free Park & Ride Shuttle during peak days throughout the holidays. Multiple pick-up and drop-off locations are available. Visit www.visitstaugustine.com/event/park-and-ride-shuttle for dates and times.

With the festival encompassing more than 20 blocks of the historic district, there are many ways to experience the Nights of Lights. Historic buildings, museums, inns, hotels, restaurants, boats, carriages, trees, and more are all lit with soft

St. Augustine's iconic cont. on pg. 15

Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights signals start of holiday season

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

The Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights will light up Julington Creek on Saturday, Dec. 7 beginning at 7 p.m. The annual event, sponsored by the Julington Creek Prop Club, is celebrating its 36th year — and Prop Club Commodore Bob Ponik is extending an invitation for St. Johns County and Mandarin neighbors to come out and get in the holiday spirit.

"Spectators can view the parade from the Julington Creek Bridge walkways," Ponik said.

Established in 1988, this annual event features an estimated 40 boats of all shapes, sizes, and themes, all decked out in their holiday finery. The parade route begins at the Julington Creek Marina,

goes underneath the Julington Creek Bridge and motors around Bulls Bay (where Julington Creek empties into the St. Johns River), then returns under the bridge and continues down Durbin Creek.

Homeowners with docks located on the parade route also join in the fun as decorated docks can vie for a variety of prizes. Tradition holds that the boaters judge the docks.

Boat Parade cont. on pg. 10



Photos courtesy Julington Creek Prop Club





SHOP

LOCAL

Support
our
Advertisers!



Board & Brush

creative studio®

WOOD SIGN WORKSHOPS TO GUIDE YOUR INNER-DIY!

Register for Workshops
boardandbrush.com/stjohns



USE CODE
CREEKLINE
FOR \$5 OFF
A PYP WORKSHOP!*

*Good thru YE2025

530 State Rd 13 North • (904) 798-0900



THE FUTURE IS HERE.

At The Bolles School, students are prepared for launch — into college, life and the future. They receive comprehensive training, instruction and guidance, providing them with the opportunities to pursue their next steps with confidence.

For many, it's college. And for others, it's reaching for the moon.

Explore what Bolles has to offer by visiting www.Bolles.org or calling us at (904) 256-5030.

Future Focus

 **BOLLES**
ALL THINGS POSSIBLE

Bolles.org
*Pre-K through Grade 12
Day & Boarding School*

450 State Road 13 North
Suite 106 PMB 101
St. Johns, FL 32259
(904) 886-4919
www.FloridaNewsLine.com

Publisher

Mark Pettus

Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

Editor

Martie Thompson

Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Bookkeeper

Emily Whitehead

Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

Social Media

SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

Advertising Sales

Linda Gay

Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com

(904) 607-5062 cell

The CreekLine is a free monthly publication delivered to all addresses in Zip Code 32259 and selected routes in 32092. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication October be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2024.



BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Breed:

King Charles Cavalier

Favorite Activity:

Tug of War

Favorite Food:

Pepperoni

Favorite Friend:

My mom — I'm her shadow.

How Did Your BFF Get His Name?

Jag is short for Jaguar, of course!



Meet Jag!

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@floridanewslines.com to enter your pet.



When you advertise, you encourage repeat business, create traffic, and attract new customers!

Don't miss our January issue featuring our Health and Wellness Guide! Deadline 12/16/24

Call Linda Gay today to reserve your space! 904.607.5062



Coming in January! Health & Wellness Guide

Call 904-607-5052 to include your business!

Table of Contents

- 4 What's Happening in St. Johns
- 5 School Board update
- 6 Briefs
- 7 St. Johns Business Monthly
- 16 Travel

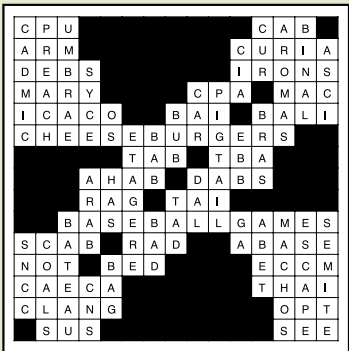
MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?

Submit your answer to: mail@floridanewslines.com

Last month's Mystery Photo was JW Heating & Air building on State Road 13.



Answers to our Puzzles PG 10

CRYPTO FUN

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

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



All About BALLROOM

Your Local Dance Experts

- Adults-Teens-Kids
- Beginner to Advanced
- Private and Group lessons

Call today to schedule your FREE 30 Minute Lesson!



Ask About our Wedding Packages

Venue Rental

Private Parties, Weddings or Special Events
200 person capacity - 4,000 Sq ft

Visit our online Calendar and Class Schedule at www.AABDance.com



Beachwalk Storage

Secure RV, Boat, Trailer Storage

Comprehensive storage solutions to meet every need offering both security and flexibility.

Secure Your Spot Today (904) 525 9881 BEACHWALKSTORAGE.COM

Convenient Location 125 Cumberland Park Dr, St. Augustine, FL 32095



AUTO TOY VAULT

A SAFE HAVEN FOR YOUR AUTOMOTIVE LEGACY

The perfect sanctuary for your cherished automotive treasures. We redefine auto storage setting the standard for excellence.

Secure Your Spot Today.

(904) 525 9881 AutoToyVault.com



December

Community Calendar

What's Happening in St. Johns

Trout Creek Senior Center offers activities for seniors on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 6795 Collier Road in Orangedale. Cards, crafts and games start each day at 9 a.m. with trivia, nutrition/exercise, Bunco and Bingo among the additional activities before lunch at 11:30 a.m. each day. Contact Program Coordinator Myra Fisher at (904) 209-3658 or mfisher@coasjc.org for more information.

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 Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road in St. Johns. Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookie2022@gmail.com for more information.

Jokers Wild, a local card group, plays the game of "Hand, Knee, and Foot" on Wednesdays. If you are interested in joining, please call (904) 230-6962 and leave a message.

1st: Friendsgiving Potluck Dinner at Unity Church for Creative Living, 2777 Race Track Road will be held on Dec. 1 at 11:30 a.m. All are invited to join the Unity Community and share a meal immediately following the 10:30 a.m. service. Please bring a dish to share. Call (904) 287-1505 or email UCCLOffice2777@gmail.com for more information.

3rd: Happy Hookers crochet group will meet at the Bartram Trail Branch Library on Dec. 3 and Dec. 17 from 5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. The group crochets or knits blankets for cancer patients at area hospitals. All skill levels are welcome. Visit www.sjcpls.org or call (904) 827-6960.

3rd: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church on the Mandarin Road Campus in the Woody Room (left-side far door) at 11844 Mandarin Road for a Holiday Party. Bring \$20 for the catered meal. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

4th: Widow to Widow, support group for widows by widows is held at Council on Aging

(COA) River House, 179 Marine Street in St. Augustine on Wednesday, Dec. 4 and Wednesday, Dec. 11 from 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Call (904) 209-3655 (Monday – Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org for more information.

5th: Open Game Play at Council on Aging (COA) River House, 179 Marine Street in St. Augustine. Bring your deck of cards or board game (there are also games available at River House) and socialize over a friendly game of your choosing Thursday, Dec. 5 and Thursday, Dec. 12 from 12:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Call (904) 209-3655 (Monday – Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org for more information.

6th: First Friday Adult Book Club will meet at the Bartram Trail Branch Library at 10 a.m. on Dec. 6 to discuss favorite books of the past year and celebrate the holidays. Beverages and a light snack will be provided by the Friends of the Library. Call the library at (904) 827-6960 for more information.

10th: Newcomers of North Saint Johns will hold a luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 10 beginning at 11 a.m. at Al Dente's Restaurant Italiano, 90 Shops Blvd., Unit 60 in St. Johns. The event features a hands-on demonstration of decorative tablescapes designed by NNSJ members Jean Weller and Linda Green. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$35 for members and \$40 for guests. Visit <https://newcomersofnorthstjohns.org> for more information.

11th: Holiday Cheer with Santa will be held on Dec. 11 from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. at the Bartram Trail Branch Library. Children of all ages are welcome to share their holiday wishes and take a photo with Santa and enjoy holiday refreshments with family and friends. Sponsored by the Bartram Trail Friends of the Library; no registration is required.

14th: Friends of Alpine Park group will meet on Dec. 14 at 11 a.m. at the Harris-Bennett Farmhouse in Alpine Groves Park, 2060 State Road 13. Docents will conduct tours of the historic farmhouse from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. The tours are free,

and everyone is invited. Email friendsofalpinepark@gmail.com for more information.

14th: The Bartram Trail Genealogy Club meets the second Saturday of each month (this month, Dec. 14) from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. at the Bartram Trail Branch Library. This month, club members will discuss family traditions and foods of the holiday season. Email ginglish@comcast.net for more information. Visit www.facebook.com/groups/BTGenClubGroup to send a request to join the club.

14th: Dress a Girl Around the World at the Bartram Trail Branch Library will be held on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 10 a.m. Learn to make dresses and shorts for girls around the world. You can pick up a kit to create at home, or turn in dresses you created to the Bartram Trail Branch. We also accept fabric and notion donations. Call the library at (904) 827-6960 for more information.

16th: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, Dec. 16 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program will be a TREEmendous Holiday celebration. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

17th: Bartram Trail Women's Club will host its "Christmas on the River" December luncheon on Dec. 17 beginning at 11 a.m. at Club Continental in Orange Park. Robbie Trice, a solo acoustic guitar musician, will be providing live music as lunch is served. Checks for \$32 should be made payable to BTNC and mailed to Brenda Jenkins, 2204 Fort Mellon Court, St. Augustine, FL 32092. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for more information and a membership form.

18th: Free Tech Help with David will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 18 from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Bartram Trail Branch Library. Drop in for tech assistance with Android, Apple, and reader devices; no RSVPs required. Bring your device fully charged and know your passwords. Visit sjcpls.org/

branches/bartram-trail-branch/ for more information.


19th: William Bartram Scenic Highway Group will meet on Thursday, Dec. 19 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Westminster Woods, Gathering Place Room. Join the discussion to keep NW St. Johns County Scenic and Historic and preserve the State Road 13 Scenic Highway. Virtual meeting access is available; contact alabbat@comcast.net or call (904) 699-8475.

21st: Growing Little Founders – Exploring Innovation will be held on Dec. 21 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Bartram Trail Branch Library. Kids aged seven through 12 will unleash their creativity and dive into the exciting world of problem-solving to spark brand-new ideas. They'll explore the basics of entrepreneurship, brainstorm innovative concepts, and understand how ideas turn into reality. Registration opens Dec. 7 at 10 a.m. Contact Paula pgradella@sjcfl.us with any questions.


23rd: ESOL Learn to Read, with partners at Learn to Read St. Johns, will be held on Monday, Dec. 23 at the Bartram Trail Branch Library. The beginner class is from 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. and the intermediate and/or conversation class is from 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Register at www.sjcpls.org. Walkins will be welcome as space allows. Call 904-827-6960 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.

31st: New Year's Eve Burning Bowl Service will be held at Unity Church for Creative Living, 2777 Race Track Road on Dec. 31 at 7 p.m. Join us for a time of release and renewal. All are welcome. Call (904) 287-1505 or email UCCLOffice2777@gmail.com for more information.



Smiles by DR CRAIG HADGIS ORTHODONTIST





Dr. Craig Hadgis
Board Certified Orthodontist

**TWO
STATE-OF-THE-ART
LOCATIONS**




ST JOHNS

ST AUGUSTINE



Free Initial Visit

904.79.SMILE (797.6453)
www.DrCraigOrtho.com





Florida's Number 1 Youth Soccer Program

Programs for ages 2-19 - Boys & Girls

NEW PROGRAMS & CAMPS NOW OPEN

Year round program for all levels of play
Multiple locations



www.FloridaEliteSA.com

Guest Column

School Board update

By Beverly Slough
School Board Member, District 1

I am so very grateful to the voters of St. Johns County for resoundingly approving the two referenda the School Board had on the ballot for the November election. The first, the extension of the half-cent sales tax for building and maintenance of our facilities, as well as enhanced safety for our students, will allow us to continue to provide educational space for our ever increasing student population. The second, an additional one mill of property tax, will provide additional resources for salary supplements for our teachers and staff, enable us to do extra things like additional nurses on large campuses, and also help with the expense of the School Resource Officers. Without public support, this would not have been possible. It is gratifying to see that 68 percent of our voters recognize the importance of recruiting and retaining the very best teachers for our children.

Our board welcomes a new member

following the election. Linda Thomson will fill the vacant seat created by Patrick Canan's retirement. I am grateful for Mr. Canan's 12 years of service on our board. His experience as an attorney really provided assistance to the board, and his focus on the welfare of children in every decision he made helped us all to provide an excellent education for the students of St. Johns County. We welcome Mrs. Thomson to our board. She was a former principal at Nease High School and a member of the district curriculum team before her retirement several years ago. She represents District 5.

We have begun the zoning process for the K-8 school currently under construction in RiverTown. Starter plans were presented to the School Board on Nov. 19, followed by a Town Hall meeting that same evening at Bartram Trail High School to present the plans to the public. There will be multiple opportunities for parents to weigh in on the potential choices and to provide input on potential changes. The board

plans to adopt a final plan at its January meeting.

Perhaps the biggest news this month is the announcement by Tim Forson that he will retire as our superintendent, effective June 30, 2025. The board has engaged Florida School Boards Association to facilitate the national search for his replacement. There will be many opportunities for community members to provide input and opinion as we move forward with the process.

Q&A 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.

PARISH BINGO
Bingo Night at St Joseph
LOTS OF GAMES, 50/50'S & DOOR PRIZES

CASH BINGO

PLENTY OF LIGHTED PARKING AND SECURITY ON THE PREMISES. GREAT FOOD, DRINKS, & SNACKS.

DOORS OPEN AT 6:15PM
GAMES START AT 7:00PM
Cody Center - Tally Room
4152 Loretto Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32223
NO CHILDREN ALLOWED PER STATE LAWS.
849.093101(A)

GAME DATES: January 18 | February 15 | March 15

For more information, contact Vinny Terlizzi at 904.742.8777 or vaterlizzi@gmail.com

TURN THE HOLIDAY SEASON AROUND
for Local Kids in Crisis

This season you can flip the odds for children who have been abused, neglected or have serious emotional issues. Whether you send holiday gift cards or make a financial donation, you will help them unwrap a brighter future.

YOUR DONATION CAN:

- supply counseling for abused children
- connect kids with foster families
- provide homeless teens with shelter
- strengthen high-risk families

Please Donate!
danielkids.org
904.296.1055

CELEBRATING 140 YEARS
daniel
Improving the odds for kids
SINCE 1984

THE BLUE CRAB
A Maryland Style Crab House

Buy a \$50 Gift Card and get a \$15 Gift Card for FREE!

Serving Maryland inspired dishes in Jacksonville since 1996!
Come see for yourself what makes us the premier Crabhouse in N.E. Florida
On Julington Creek Road - Off San Jose Blvd
FULL BAR • HEATED PATIO • PRIVATE DINING ROOM
RESERVATIONS • ONLINE ORDERING • WEEKLY SPECIALS

Call or visit us online today!
www.BlueCrabCrabhouse.com (904) 260-2722



Visit us online!
www.floridanewsline.com

Funeral • Crematory • Memorial Park

 **CRAIG**
FUNERAL HOME • CREMATORY • MEMORIAL PARK

Pre-Planning advisors are available to assist you.

WWW.CRAIGFUNERALHOME.COM • (904) 824-1672
Call for a no cost consultation

Give your brain what it needs so you can hear better

Introducing **Oticon INTENT™** a life-changing hearing device with **BrainHearing™** technology.

Oticon **INTENT™** helps your brain decipher intricate details of relevant sounds for **better speech understanding with less effort and the ability to remember more.**



You're invited to try **Oticon INTENT™** *RISK FREE*

Dr. Leslie A. Staverman
Audiologist/Owner

STAVERMAN
HEARING CENTERS

- **FREE** Consultation
- **Risk-Free 60-Day Free Trial**
Try it at home, work and play!

300+ Five Star Reviews

Call 904-262-5550 Today! *Your Community Resource for Better Hearing*
www.StavermanHearingCenters.com 12276 San Jose Blvd., Suite #710

Guest Columns

Sheriff hosts second annual SJSHo-Ho-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.



When you or a loved one are in need of post-acute care following a planned or unexpected hospital stay, request the best. During your stay, our top priorities are to help you regain your best quality of life, maximize your independence, and connect you back to your best health.



- Spacious therapy center
- Individualized treatment plans
- Specialized therapists
- Available 7 days a week
- Green, lush campus



Scan code to visit RiverGarden.org or call us at 904.886.8420.

A not-for-profit agency sponsored by the organized Jacksonville Jewish community.

William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway Group update

By Al Abbatiello, Chairman, William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway Group

The William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway management team is about to change! As of Dec. 31, 2024 I will be stepping down as chairman of the group. I've been a member of this amazing group since its inception in 1998 and chair for the past more than 20 years.

Although I will be retiring as chairman, I plan to continue my involvement in Scenic Highway activities in an "advisory " capacity. Leadership of this scenic highway group will continue with a new leadership transition team and will continue our efforts to protect, preserve, inform, and promote our treasure the Scenic and Historic Highway and the American Heritage St. Johns River.

In order to continue these efforts, we invite everyone to join our outstanding group of volunteers to preserve our quality of life in Fruit Cove, Switzerland and the entire Northwest Sector of St. Johns County.

Over the years we've fought hard to minimize the effects of residential overgrowth in the Northwest area, including a continuing discussion with our Board of County Commissioners to either restore or replace the old Switzerland Community Center on State Road 13. This is an ongoing effort and with your help, by joining our group we'll eventually have a community gathering place for local activities as well as a probable Council on Aging activity location.

Our area of St. Johns County is the only district without a community center/gathering place, yet this district has experienced a very large percentage of St. Johns County's residential growth — and we need a gathering place for local activities.

Our Scenic Highway mission is to protect, preserve, inform, and promote our treasure the Scenic and Historic Highway and the American Heritage St. Johns River. Please join us to continue working to preserve our area's treasures.

To join our group, email me at alabbat@comcast.net. Thank you.

Briefs

ACT and Digital SAT Prep Classes offered by Friends of the Bartram Trail Public Library

The Friends of the Bartram Trail Library are sponsoring a series of ACT and SAT prep classes to be held at the Bartram Trail Public Library. The dates of these classes are Jan. 9, 16, 23, 30 and Feb. 13, 2025. Classes are one hour and 15 minutes each. Students may sign up for either or both series. The ACT classes will be from 5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. and the SAT classes will be from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.

The sessions will include two English/Reading and two Math. Following a practice test completed at home, the fifth and final session will be a review session from 5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. for English/Reading and from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. for Math. Students should bring their calculators.

Each series of five sessions costs \$50 or \$100 to attend both. These proceeds are a donation, and with the other donations are used to fund all library programs at the Bartram Trail Public Library. Purchase of a specific review/prep book is also required. There is a cap of 25 students per series.

The last day to register is Jan. 4, 2025, unless the cap is reached prior to this date. Registration information can be obtained at the Bartram Trail Branch Library or by contacting Phyllis Macy at macypl7@yahoo.com.

Bartram Trail Women's Club celebrates "Christmas on the River"

The Bartram Trail Women's Club will hold its meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 17 at 11 a.m. at Club Continental on the St. Johns River, 2143 Astor Street in Orange Park. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. The December luncheon theme is "Christmas on the River" and attendees are encouraged to wear Christmas/holiday attire.

Entertainment will be provided by Robbie Trice, a solo musician who will be providing live music as lunch is served. Trice, with his acoustic guitar and vocals with wonderful accompaniment tracks, will perform holiday favorites.

Checks for \$32 should be made payable to BTNC and mailed to Brenda Jenkins, 2204 Fort Mellon Court, St Augustine, FL 32092. Payment must be received no later than the first Tuesday of the month, Dec. 3; indicate your entrée choice on the check memo. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for entrée choices, pictures of meetings, and a membership form. Email bartramtnc@gmail.com for club information.

The Bartram Trail 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, including Bridge, Continental Rummy, Pennies Canasta, Mexican Chicken Train dominoes, Bunko, Mah Jongg, golf, recipe exchange, monthly special events, book club, lunch and matinee, Lunch Divas, Ladies Night Out, a nature walk group and community projects.

Field of Dreams spring registration in process

Registration is now open for the Spring 2025 season of Field of Dreams. The season begins on Jan. 18, 2025.

The Field of Dreams baseball league enables children with special needs (intellectual or physical disabilities) to have the opportunity to play baseball in an organized league, to wear a uniform, to have their names announced, to participate in the singing of the National Anthem before each game and to be a player on an athletic team. Players have a buddy to assist them as they play on a turf and fenced field with an announcer and an umpire.

The mission of Field of Dreams, 501c3 nonprofit organization, is to provide a sustainable voluntary organization that provides a safe, ADA compliant facility where special needs children of all ages can play baseball for free and be an active part of a thriving athletic association.

Visit www.fodbaseball.com to register your child or to learn about sponsorship opportunities.

ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

How a Donor Advised Fund can help you maximize charitable gifts in 2024

By Chris Thompson
CFP®, CMFA®, CRPC®

Charitable giving is often a key pillar of estate and legacy planning for many investors. If philanthropy is important to you, consider the following details of donor advised funds and evaluate if they make sense for your plans to support causes that matter most to you.

What is a donor advised fund? A donor advised fund (DAF) is a monetary fund or charitable account managed and operated by a sponsoring organization, commonly a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, religious or financial entity. Contributors to a DAF make an irrevocable donation to the fund that is managed by an investment professional in accordance with the fund's long-term goals and objectives. The donor is then able to advise the fund manager on which organizations and grants to allocate the money to.

What can be donated to a DAF? One of the attractive features of a donor advised

fund is that multiple appreciating asset types, such as publicly traded securities, mutual funds, restricted stock, and cash, can be donated to the account.

Why utilize a donor advised fund? In addition to the possible upside on invested assets, potential tax advantages for donors and charities alike are another DAF benefit. Because this type of fund is typically professionally managed and operated by a section 501(c)(3) organization, the donated assets can appreciate tax-free over time, therefore increasing the value of funds that can be distributed to grants and organizations.

Beyond having access to investment professionals, donors can generally take advantage of an immediate tax deduction on the amount of assets contributed, even if the funds are not going to be allocated directly to the intended charitable organizations until future years. Cash contributions are eligible for a 60 percent deduction of your adjusted gross income. Other assets may be eligible for

up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income. Be sure to work with a CPA or tax adviser to determine the most effective way to give to a DAF.

What are the downsides of donor advised funds? There are three main limitations of donor advised funds that are important to keep in mind. To start, there are administrative costs for donor advised funds. The cost for management of different funds can vary, but it is important to understand cost structures to determine if the benefit of having professional management outweighs any administrative costs. Depending on the donor advised fund that you chose to utilize, there may be restrictions on the organizations or grants you can support. While donor advised funds allow investors to maintain a relationship with the fund management as an advisor and make recommendations on where to direct the donation, the investment professional will ultimately decide what causes to support. Lastly, contributions to a donor advised fund are irrevocable.

Once you allocate assets to a DAF and a sponsoring organization, they no longer belong to you. It is important to work with a financial professional to determine the appropriate amount and asset types to donate to a fund, so that you can do so with confidence.

Consult with a financial professional and your tax adviser to determine if a donor advised fund is right for your financial plan.

Chris Thompson, CFP®, CMFA®, CRPC® is a Private Wealth Advisor and Managing Director with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. in Ponte Vedra Beach. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 32 years. To contact him, email chris.thompson@ampf.com; visit www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson or call (904) 380-2290.

Ameriprise Financial, Inc. and its affiliates do not offer tax or legal advice. Consumers should consult with their tax advisor or attorney regarding their specific situation.

Personalized financial advice to help achieve your goals

Ameriprise Financial

Not FDIC or NCUA insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value
Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC. © 2022 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.



Chris Thompson
CFP®, CMFA®, CRPC®
Managing Director – Private Wealth Advisor
Certified Financial Planner
Certified Military Financial Advisor
Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor

904.380.2290
818 A1A North, Suite 301
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
chris.thompson@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson
St Johns County resident since 1993

Prudential Financial Planning



Andrew E. Laino
CLU®, CFP®, CLTC®
Financial Planner
CA Insurance License #0E93910
844-954-8700
andrew.laino@prudential.com
Comprehensive Financial Planning

Offering financial planning and investment advisory services and programs through Pruco Securities, LLC (Pruco), under the marketing name Prudential Financial Planning Services (PPFS), pursuant to a separate client agreement. Offering insurance and securities products and services as a registered representative of Pruco, and an agent of issuing insurance companies. 1008115-00005-00





Happy holidays, neighbors.

Jim Register, Agent
12058 San Jose Blvd, Suite 302
Jacksonville, FL 32223
Bus: 904-268-5522
Fax: 904-262-7999
www.jimregister.com

I wish all my neighbors a safe and happy holiday season and the very best in the New Year. It's a true joy to be part of such a wonderful community.

Like a good neighbor,
State Farm is there.®

State Farm
Bloomington, IL
2006051



Wishing you and yours peace, joy and hope this holiday season!





Mitch Wright
Financial Advisor



Heather Wright
Financial Advisor

605 Sr 13n Ste 101, Fruit Cove, FL 32259 • 904-230-3385

Edward Jones > edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

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 col-

lection 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.

Durbin Creek Elementary welcomes international students

By Martie Thompson
mail@floridanewslines.com

Durbin Creek Elementary now has about 10 percent of its student population who are speakers of languages — Ukrainian, Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, French, Spanish — other than English. According to St. Johns County School Board member Beverly Slough, this increase in non-English speaking students is the case more and more in all St. Johns County schools, but Durbin Creek presently has the highest percentage.

“When I started at the school four years ago, I had heard that we had the highest percentage of non-English language

students and I felt it,” Durbin Creek Elementary Principal Ashley McCormick said. “But now I can see it. It’s really booming.”

McCormick said that they have more than 100 such students in a school population of 1,100 and have English Language Learners (ELL) in every single classroom.

“It’s now actually part of our interview process,” McCormick said. “We look for teachers with the ESOL certification.”

The St. Johns County School District issues non-English speaking students in the district an iPad with a translator downloaded on it so that the child can

learn their teacher’s lesson with the rest of their class. A recent large purchase of these items by the district means that every student at Durbin Creek has an iPad, according to McCormick.

And the Durbin Creek ELL population continues to grow, especially at the kindergarten level as more families move to the area. Ukrainian and Russian families in particular are making NW St. Johns County their home.

“With this increase in population, we can now intentionally place these children and so we pair them with others who speak the same language in the same classroom,” McCormick said. “Students can walk in and have an instant friend. I’ve seen decreased behavior issues as a result.”

McCormick described mentor opportunities that also exist at her school. Older students who speak the same language

are invaluable in helping a new, younger student understand American culture and school rules.

While the students are fully immersed throughout the school day, McCormick said that this semester, the school is starting an after school cultural club so they can play and socialize together. Adult mentors are being identified and teachers and staff members from other backgrounds will be brought in on a guest basis.

There are many challenges to implementing full immersion of these students, according to McCormick, not the least of which is helping them express their emotions and overcome the language barrier so that they feel safe.

“But the first time they speak to me in English, or introduce me to their new friend, that is so rewarding,” McCormick said. “I enjoy seeing them just take off.”



Photo courtesy Ashley McCormick
Durbin Creek Elementary secretary Christine Southworth, who is starting the ESOL club and the school’s IEA clerk and School Related Employee of the Year Soojin Atwater.

Bears Clay Classic supports Bartram Trail athletes

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The inaugural Bears Clay Classic, a clay target event presented by the Northeast Florida Builders Association (NEFBA) Charitable Foundation to benefit the

Bartram Trail High School Athletic Booster Club, took place on Saturday, Sept. 7. Through the generous support of sponsors, donors, and participants,

Bartram Trail athletes cont. on pg. 9



Photo courtesy Ian MacDonald
The inaugural Bears Clay Classic was held on Sept. 7.

Two red dice with white pips, one slightly behind the other, on a red background.

DON'T LEAVE YOUR FUTURE TO CHANCE

SECURE A PLAN FOR LIFE

Make the safe bet with an active, engaging, maintenance-free lifestyle at Westminster Woods on Julington Creek. Enhance your lifestyle with:

- Housekeeping
- 24-hour security
- Delicious, chef-prepared dining options
- Fishing and boat docks
- Heated, outdoor swimming pool
- A wide range of important aging services
- And more!

Call (904) 861-6425 today to learn how you can save thousands!

The logo for Westminster Woods on Julington Creek, featuring a stylized cross-like symbol and the text "Westminster Woods on Julington Creek" and "WestminsterWoodsFL.org".

25 State Road 13
Jacksonville, FL

travel • pantry raiders • gardening
fishing • entertainment • puzzles

Life

Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewslines.com

Ron Hiatt

After more than 30 years in the fitness industry, Ron Hiatt knows that there is no shortcut to good health. “Diet, exercise and sleep. These are the three prerequisites,” 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, a Fruit Cove resident. 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. 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 several visits to the chiropractor, Hiatt said a friend suggested that he practice yoga regularly. Hiatt researched



Photo courtesy Ron Hiatt
Ron Hiatt

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 in 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.”

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 in Fruit Cove. 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.

Q: Could you share more about Vicki.

A: Vicki was not just my wife but

Bartram Trail athletes cont. from pg. 8

The Bears Clay Classic was able to raise more than \$11,400 for Bartram Trail High School Athletics and more than \$2,800 for NEFBA’s Charitable Foundation.

Forty-six participants competed on the clay course for high score individual, high score team, and enjoyed the morning raising money for two great causes. The winner of high score individual was Sam Davidson and high score team went to the Construction Specialties of North Florida. There was also a drawing where the winners won a fully stocked Yeti 65 cooler or a \$1000 Academy Sports gift card. Each participant not only enjoyed a fun morning on the clay course, but also breakfast, lunch, and a BTHS branded polo.

The Bartram Bears Athletic Booster Club (BBABC) is the direct support group for Bartram Trail High School athletics. Through support from our community, the BBABC supports our student athletes and athletic department in a variety of ways; it also works with the athletic department to help with practice facilities, fields, equipment, uniforms, transportation, and state championship rings. None of this is possible with community engagement, sponsorship, and donations.

A recent project supported by the Bartram Bears Athletic Booster Club is the creation of an athletics meeting space for all sports teams at Bartram Trail High School. This room is equipped with a large projector screen for film viewing, stadium seating, two large TVs with Xbox hookups, and storage for teams. This room is used by teams to break down film, host team meetings, or to hang out before games.

“We’re excited about the start to this annual event and expect next year’s Bear Clay Classic to be even bigger,” said event chair Ian MacDonald. “If you are interested in participating, please reach out to me at ian.macdonald@regions.com for more information.”

Get to Know ...

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

Beer & Wine Available

2016

WILLIE'S OLD SCHOOL RULES OF BBQ

EVERY MEAL comes with a side of SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY.

WILLIE JEWELL'S Old School BAR-B-Q

SMOKED FOR HOURS SERVED IN MINUTES

Seniors Happy Hour Mon - Fri • 4pm - 6pm 15% discount for seniors age 60 & over. Dine-in only

View our full menu and order online!

www.WillieJewells.com • (904) 342-2373

105 Murabella Parkway, St. Augustine FL 32092 (next to the Publix at the corner of SR-16 and Pacetti Road.)

\$5.00 off any purchase of \$25 or more

Willie Jewell's Old School Bar-B-Q

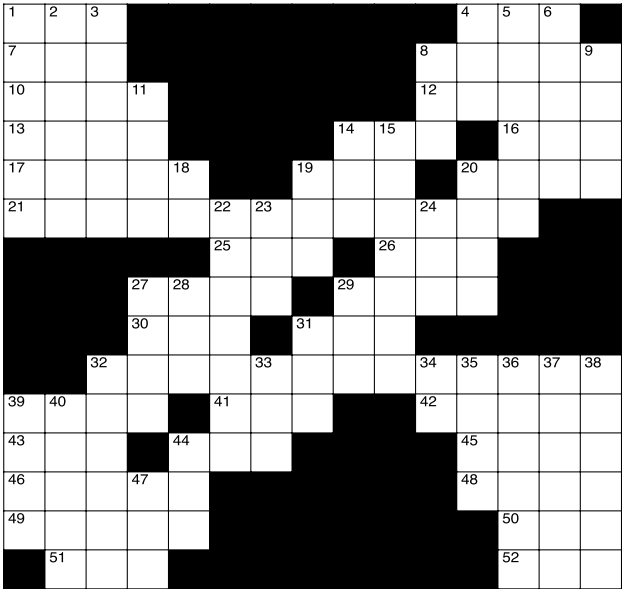
With this coupon. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Offer expires 12/31/2024. No cash value. Dine-In and Take-Out only. One coupon per Customer.

NOW DELIVERING WITH DOORDASH, UBER EATS, AND GRUB HUB!

Like us at facebook.com/williejewellsworldgolf for information on promotions and other events!

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

Boat Parade cont. from pg. 1

“The people along the shores of the creek put on quite a show for us every year,” Ponik said. “We have people shooting fireworks, parties with live bands, and bonfires. Some have as many as 100 people waving and shouting ‘Happy Holidays!’ The people on shore have as much fun as the boaters.”

According to Ponik, the best decorated

boat gets a \$300 cash prize, while second place gets \$200 and third place, \$100. All boaters participating also receive a Captain’s Gift Bag. Prizes are also awarded for “Best Dock” along the parade route.

There is a great deal of planning and organizational prep work done in advance of this event. The Prop Club starts in October each year contacting boaters, area merchants, and residents, gathering donations for the event. Some of

the boats participating in the parade are Prop Club members and others come from all over the area. Boats range in size from 17 to 40 feet in length.

“Annual dues from Prop Club members provide some of the funds for the Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights, but we depend on and appreciate many local businesses’ and waterfront owners’ contributions as well,” Ponik said. “Without their help we would not have

this event.”

The Julington Creek Prop Club is a social organization of past, present, and future boaters that meets on the second Saturday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Julington Creek Marina dock; all interested boaters are invited to join for boating information and fun at the creek. Email commodore@jcpropclub.com for more information.

Community Marketplace
Call (904) 886-4919
for advertising rates

St. Johns Co.
Concrete Service LLC.
Professional • Reliable • Quality Commercial • Residential
Specializing in Homeowner Improvements
Driveways – Patios – Sidewalks
LICENSED • BONDED • FULLY INSURED
“Call us for your concrete needs.” FREE ESTIMATES
Danny Pinkerton (904) 534-5011

SNIP'S TREE & STUMP SERVICE
Tree Preservation • Plant Health Care • Insect & Disease Treatments
Paul Oklevitch
ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST Over 30 Years Exp.
FL-5456A – LICENSED & INSURED
(904) 268-1017 www.snipstree.com

PRESSURE WASHING SERVICE
PROOF IS IN THE WORK
SERVICES
EXTERIOR CLEANING ROOF CLEANING
EXTERIOR PAINTING & RESTORATION POOL ENCLOSURES
HOT WASH & SOFT WASH DOCKS & WALKWAY
POW WASH CALL US TODAY: 904-622-3000
www.powwashjax.com

CONCRETE WORKS
Commercial or Residential - no project too small
• Driveways • Walkways floridaconcreteworks.com
• Pavers • Concrete Removal Free Quote Today!
• Patios • Driveway Extension Catering to the needs of the homeowner since 2002
Call 904.838.1836 and let's talk about what we can do for you!

AUTOS WANTED

Donate Your Car to Veterans Today! Help and Support our Veterans. Fast - FREE pick up. 100% tax deductible. Call 1-800-245-0398

HEATH & FITNESS

Dental insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400+ procedures. Real dental insurance - not just a discount plan. Get your free Information Kit with details! 1-855-526-1060 www.dental50plus.com/ads_#6258

Attention oxygen therapy users! Discover oxygen therapy that moves with you with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. Free information kit. 1-866-477-9045

ATTENTION MEDICARE RECIPIENTS! Open Enrollment for Medicare health plans is here! Call our licensed insurance agents for an affordable quote for your needed coverage. Make sure you

aren't overpaying! Call for a no obligation free quote now! 1-866-714-6165

Home Services

Aging Roof? New Homeowner? Got Storm Damage? You need a local expert provider that proudly stands behind their work. Fast, free estimate. Financing available. Call 1-888-878-9091

Water damage cleanup: A small amount of water can cause major damage to your home. Our trusted professionals dry out wet areas & repair to protect your family & your home value! Call 24/7: 1-888-872-2809. Have zip code!

MISCELLANEOUS

Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 5-Year warranty with qualifying purchase* Call 1-855-948-6176 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

Job Finder December:

Starling owns and operates several senior living communities throughout Florida. We are hiring for a variety of positions. Visit www.StarlingLiving.com/careers to apply

Maintenance Tech at Westminster Woods Julington Creek - Full-time. Responsible for basic repair and maintenance, pressure washing, yard maintenance. 1-3 years' experience and HS diploma. Email resume to gchase@wservices.org.

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule free LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-833-610-1936

Bath & shower updates in as little as 1 day! Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & military discounts available. 1-877-543-9189

Become a published author. We want to read your book! Dorrance Publishing trusted since 1920. Consultation, production, promotion & distribution.

Call for free author's guide 1-877-729-4998 or visit dorranceinfo.com/ads

Safe Step. North America's #1 Walk-in tub. Comprehensive lifetime warranty. Top-of-the-line installation and service. Now featuring our free shower package & \$1600 off - limited time! Financing available. 1-855-417-1306

Wesley Financial Group, LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt & fees cancelled in 2019. Get free info package & learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. 833-308-1971

DIRECTV Stream - Carries the most local MLB Games! Choice Package \$89.99/mo for 12 mos Stream on 20 devices at once. HBO Max included for 3 mos (w/Choice Package or higher.) No contract or hidden fees! Some restrictions apply. Call IVS 1-866-859-0405

Replace your roof w/the best looking & longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! 3 styles & multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off install + Additional 10% off install (military, health & 1st responders.) 1-833-370-1234

Jacuzzi Bath Re-

LeafFilter
GUTTER PROTECTION

CALL TODAY FOR A
FREE INSPECTION!
1-855-595-2102

20% OFF + 10% OFF
Your Entire Purchase* Seniors + Military



++ We offer financing that fits your budget!

*See Representative for full warranty details. *One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. †Subject to credit approval. Call for details. AR 3680293, AZ 800 344027, CA 1035795, CT 800 773520, FL 35206676, IA 0127230, IL 805 51604, LA 559544, MA 179447, MD 26200173, MI 26200173, MN 26200173, MO 26200173, NE 47304, NE 50145-22, 50145-23, NJ 13409953600, NM 408093, NV 80990, NY 119114, H-52229, OR 218294, PA 179643, 069383, RI 01-41354, TN 10861, UT 1078358-5501, VA 270516945, WA LEAFFINW8232, WV W056912.

Call today and receive a
FREE SHOWER PACKAGE PLUS \$1600 OFF

SAFE STEP WALK-IN TUB
1-855-417-1306

With purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-In Tub. Not applicable with any previous walk-in tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445

SPECIAL OFFER

model can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. Offer ends 12/29/24.) Call 1-844-501-3208

Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, is con-

cerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. Call AmeriGlide today! 1-833-399-3595

Home break-ins take less than 60 seconds. Don't wait! Protect your family, your home, your assets now for as little as 70¢/day! 1-844-591-7951

MobileHelp America's premier mobile medical alert system. Whether

you're home or away. For safety & peace of mind. No long term contracts! Free brochure! Call 1-888-489-3936

We buy houses for cash as is! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy three step process: Call, get cash offer & get paid. Get your fair cash offer today by calling Liz Buys Houses: 1-844-877-5833

Briefs cont. from pg. 6

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.

Newcomers of North St. Johns announces December luncheon

Newcomers of North Saint Johns (NNSJ) will host its December luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 11 a.m. at Al Dente's Restaurant Italiano, 90 Shops Blvd., Unit 60 in St. Johns. The event will feature lunch and a hands-on demonstration of decorative tablescapes designed by NNSJ members Jean Weller and Linda Green. As part of the luncheon meeting, NNSJ is also collecting food to benefit Our Lady of Good Council Food Distribution Center. Donation suggestions include canned kidney, black and pinto beans, rice, peanut butter, assorted canned vegetables, canned chicken and tuna fish and canned fruit. No food items in glass, please. The donations will be taken to the church the day of our luncheon.

The cost for the luncheon and program is \$35 for members and \$40 for guests and non-members. Visit <https://newcomersofnorthstjohns.org>



Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewslines.com

Happy Holidays! I feel like it was just yesterday that I was writing last year's report for December. Time flies when you're having fun! I still feel extremely fortunate to write a few words about fishing for all of you every month. So I'd like to say thank you for reading and it has been so great to hear from readers over the years. A very humbling experience all around. I hope to keep perking up interest in our local fishing for years to come.

As I write this I'm not really sure what kind of December we're in for. It's the beginning of November and it's supposed to be 80 degrees for the next 10 days or more. If that keeps up we might as well be calling this a November report. Until the water temperatures get below 70 degrees a lot of things might stay in limbo. Shrimp will just hang around. Fish won't transition here or there. It's just waiting on the consistent cold fronts now. So, unless that happens, I'm going to hold off on specks and bass for now.

If the water temperatures stay above

70, you might as well stick to the river. Catch some shrimp and try for drum around bridges or shell bars. There will be lots of little reds around, maybe even some larger ones. Stripers will still be loving whatever cool down we get, so don't forget about them. If you can't catch shrimp, crab or fresh dead shrimp will work for the drum. Artificial like Gulp are also productive for the stripers.

If water temperatures drop below 70 then look for specks moving into area creeks. Bass will be staging at the mouths. That is one of my favorite places to find them with live shrimp. They will go crazy for them this time of year. It makes the work of catching them worth it. I promise. Minnows will catch the specks as always, but don't forget about a little chartreuse or pink jig. Watch a float go down or feel a thump as a jig sinks? Those are some of the tough choices we have to make. Both are options by the way, so don't stress too much. All we have to do now is wait and see what the water temperatures are. Tight lines.



Heath & Wellness Guide

Coming in our January issue!

If your business is in the health / wellness / fitness industry don't be left out!

Deadline 12/17/24

**Call Linda Gay today!
(904) 607-5062
Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com**



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from your friends at The CreekLine!

No Excuses Running Club earns “three-peat”



Photo courtesy Jill Benavides

By Jill Benavides
mail@floridanewslines.com

Avery Hartley, Eva Delaney, Allie Austin, Brianna Motycka, Ivey Egell, and Emma Godfrey clenched the Florida Youth Running Association (FLYRA) Middle School XC 3K Girls’ Club and overall state championship title Oct. 26 in Lakeland, making it a three-peat victory for the No Excuses Running Club to be the No. 1 girls’ team in all of Florida (2022, 2023, 2024). Hartley dominated the Holloway Park course taking first, followed closely by Delaney (second), Austin (third), Motycka (fourth), Egell (10th) and Godfrey (21st) in the Club Division.

Even more impressive are their overall state

standings in all of Florida with 957 female athletes competing at the state level: Hartley (No. 1), Delaney (No. 4), Austin (No. 5), Motycka (No. 6), Egell (No. 20), and Godfrey (No. 48). These six amazing ladies ran the fastest average in No Excuses Running Clubs’ history with a score of 20 and an average time of 10:53.

To say these six athletes faced adversity during their season is an understatement. All six say their faith in God was their Rock; they did not waiver from their goal. Now they have their sites set on track 2025.

Jill Benavides is the co-founder of No Excuses Running Club and coach of the Fruit Cove Middle School girls’ and boys’ cross country teams.

TOUR NOW
— FOR —
FREE
REGISTRATION



Discover the Deerwood difference and save. **Receive free registration** (a \$200 value) when you tour Deerwood Academy St. Johns — plus your fourth week free for a limited time!*

Contact us today to learn more about our exemplary education and take advantage of these special savings!



DEERWOOD
ACADEMY
ST. JOHNS
Where Learning Comes First



904.230.8200 • DeerwoodAcademy.com
990 Flora Branch Blvd. • St. Johns, FL
FL Dept. of Children and Families License # C07SJ0083

LEARN MORE



Preschool: 6 Weeks – VPK • Before/After School Programs: K – 5
Bus Service to Several Elementary Schools

*Offers valid for new St. Johns enrollees only until 12/31/24. Deposit must be placed in December 2024 to receive fourth week free. Cannot be combined with any other offer.



Advertise in the next issue
Call or email today!

Linda Gay
(904) 607-5062
Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com



“I only want cremation.”
CALL FOR PRICING

Flagler Memorial Cremation Society
(904) 669-1809 • (904) 797-4990
2600 Old Moultrie Road • St. Augustine
serving St. Johns, Flagler and Putnam counties



AFFORDABLE WATER
CONDITIONING • SOFTENING • PURIFICATION

Residential Commercial

CLEAN WATER FOR YOUR HOME

Affordable Water solutions for your home with the best customer service in the industry.

- Water Softeners & Filtration Systems
- Service on most makes and models
- Delivery of Salt & Potassium for your system




License #W-32



Call today **904-262-0197** for your Complimentary Water Test & Analysis.

3760 Kori Road • www.affordablewaterjax.com

Our team at Nemetz Dental Associates is ready to help you with all of your dental needs and we look forward to providing you with personalized service and unparalleled treatment.



NemetzDentalAssociates
SPECIALTY DENTAL CARE FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY
Pediatric Dentistry • Adult Dentistry • Periodontics • Prosthodontics

Your New Smile Awaits!

**Mandarin South Business Center 12421 San Jose Blvd.
Suite 310/320 • Jacksonville, FL 32223**

Pediatric Dentistry: (904) 292-2210
Adult Dentistry: (904) 886-4867

Marinela M. Nemetz, D.D.S.
Board Certified Pediatric Dentist

Robert J. Nemetz, D.D.S., M.S.
Adult Dentistry | Periodontics | Prosthodontics

We offer

- Pediatric Dentistry
- Family Dentistry
- Periodontics/ Prosthodontics



We Welcome New Patients

www.nemetzdental.com



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 nonprofit, 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).

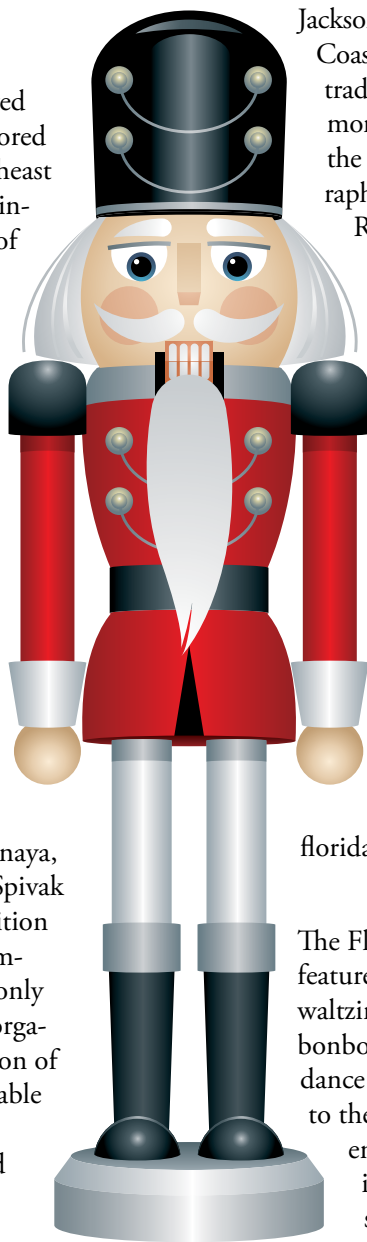
Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet

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/



Graphic courtesy MetroCreative

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.

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?

cheer-cheer-cheer!

per-chick-o-ree!

chick-a-dee-dee!

Oh, What Fun!
Give the Gift of Bird Feeding

20% OFF
One Regularly Priced Item

Valid in-store the participating stores listed. Coupon not valid for Seed/Bird Food, Camera Feeders, Optics, Gift Cards, DSC Memberships, or Sale Items. Cannot be combined with other coupons/discounts. Offer expires 12/31/24

ONE COUPON PER CUSTOMER

St Johns 450 SR13 at Racetrack Rd (next to Publix) 904.230.3242 wbu.com/jacksonville	Jax Beach 4138 Third Street South (between Trader Joes & Staples) 904.246.6832 wbu.com/jacksonvillebeach	World Golf Village 180 Capulet Drive #5 (At Murabella) 904.209.5754 wbu.com/staugustine
--	--	---

Church of Our Saviour
Episcopal

WALK THROUGH
LIVE
Nativity

DECEMBER 6 & 7 5:30-8:30pm

CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
12236 MANDARIN ROAD
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32223
904-268-9457 ♦ www.OurSaviourJax.org





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.

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

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.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 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 “snowbird.” 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.



Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service

Tuesday, December 24th 7PM

Find the peace, calm, and oneness you desire as we join together in celebrating the light of Christ on Christmas Eve.





New Year's Eve Burning Bowl Service

Tuesday, December 31st 7PM

A Time To Release and Renew!

Unity offers a positive, practical, progressive approach to Christianity based on the teachings of Jesus and on the power of prayer. Join us as we travel the journey of spiritual unfoldment together Sundays at 10:30 AM.



Unity Church for Creative Living
2777 Race Track Road, St. Johns, FL 32259
904-287-1505 | unityinjax.com



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from your friends at *The CreekLine*!



Tis the season!



Gold & Diamonds Direct

Serving Jacksonville Since 1984

jewelry repair – custom jewelry design – watch batteries
jewelry appraisals – owner, gemologist

(904) 770 2790

Publix Plantation Plaza | 2758 Race Track Rd., Suite 407 | St Johns Florida
Doing business locally for over 40 years!



Notable Christmas celebrations around the world

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas all over the world. Christmas celebrations include various time-honored traditions that celebrants hold near and dear to their hearts. Depending on where someone lives, their Christmas traditions may look quite different from those in other parts of the globe.

It can be enjoyable to learn how Christmas is celebrated elsewhere and perhaps even incorporate a few new traditions into your celebrations. Take a peek at these customs near and far.

- Seafood and beachside celebrations: Australia is located in the southern hemisphere, which means Aussies are enjoying the peak of their summer come Dec. 25. A white Christmas is unlikely, unless the "white" refers to white, sandy beaches. Santa is probably swapping his thick coat for a pair of board shorts, and heavy, roast-laden meals are unlikely to make it onto the menu. Instead, Australians dine on seafood feasts and spend Christmas outdoors camping or at the beach.
- Krampus parade: Some Christmas elves are not so jolly. Just ask residents of the Austrian, German and Hungarian Alps. Each year in this region, a true "Bad Santa" is the talk of town. Villagers believed that Krampus, a half-man, half-goat creature with a legion of ill-tempered elves, roamed the mountains wreaking havoc. Krampus was said to abduct miscreants and set unruly youth or even intoxicated adults straight. To-day, Krampus is more the "bad cop" to Santa's "good cop" persona. Krampus is celebrated as an antihero at parades and other events.
- Las Posadas: According to scripture, Joseph and Mary had to make an arduous journey from their hometown to Bethlehem for census purposes while Mary was pregnant. When the couple arrived, they found lodgings were nonexistent, and Mary ended up giving birth to Jesus in a manger surrounded by animals. In celebration of that journey, people in Mexico and Guatemala celebrate Las Posadas, a procession representing Mary and Joseph's journey and their struggle to find lodging.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Holiday traditions differ considerably in various regions of the world.

- La Befana: In Italian folklore, La Befana is a witch-like old woman who, like Santa, delivers gifts to children throughout Italy. Instead of this gift-giving taking place on Christmas, La Befana hands out gifts on the Epiphany Eve in a similar way to how the Three Magi brought presents to Baby Jesus. La Befana also is believed to fly through the night sky to sweep away all the troubles of the old year and clear the way for a fresh start.
- Move over reindeer: Although reindeer often garner fanfare this time of year, the Yule goat is a Christmas symbol and tradition in Scandinavia and northern Europe. Each year in towns throughout Sweden and other areas, large statues of Yule goats are built on the first day of Advent and stand throughout the holiday season. This tradition dates back to ancient Pagan festivals, and some believe the goat is connected to the Norse god Thor, who rode in the sky in a chariot pulled by two goats.

St. Augustine's iconic cont. from pg. 1

Photo courtesy St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau
Nights of Lights glows through Jan. 26, 2025.

white lights. The decorated tree in the middle of the Plaza de la Constitución is a holiday staple, while the

scenery from the top of the Bridge of Lions provides an expansive shot of the lights.

Belle Ciel
SALON

Gift Cards

- Purchase \$100 get \$20
- Purchase \$150 get \$35
- Purchase \$200 get \$50
- Purchase \$250 get \$70

Additional amounts redeemable in 2025

www.bellecielsalon.com
(904) 209-1320
2758 Racetrack Road, Suite 403
St. Johns, FL 32259

smashbox Aveda

mpc

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH US!

We invite you and your family to join us this season.
Experience warmth & wonder as we
celebrate the joy of Christmas!

Christmas Music Celebration

A truly magical evening of music & scripture on
Sunday, December 15th at 7pm with refreshments at 6:30pm.

Christmas Eve Services

- 4:30pm // Family & Children's Celebration with Live Nativity
- 7:00pm // Contemporary Candlelight & Communion Service
- 9:00pm // Traditional Candlelight & Communion Service

2501 Loretto Road, Jacksonville

Scan the QR code or visit mandarinpres.com/christmas

Travel

Exploring Tennessee's
Whiskey Trail

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

While I am not overly fond of whiskey, I was curious about the history and production that make Tennessee whiskey special. So, I took a trip along the Tennessee Whiskey Trail starting at Jack Daniel's in Lynchburg, the oldest registered distillery in the United States.

The founder, Jasper Newton "Jack" Daniel, or "Gentleman Jack," established the distillery in 1866 at Cave Spring Hollow, a natural limestone spring free from impurities. Over time, the brand became iconic, with its Old No. 7 recipe and the signature charcoal mellowing process (Lincoln County Process), the key to Tennessee Whiskey.

Guides at the 1,700-acre Jack Daniel's site walk groups through the entire whiskey-making process, from charcoal mellowing to aging in oak barrels. Here, I discovered the unique production rules that define a "Tennessee Whiskey." The rules stipulate that a whiskey must be made in the state, contain at least 51 percent corn in its grain mash, must be distilled at no more than 160 proof (80 percent alcohol by volume) and enter the barrel for aging at no more than 125 proof (62.5 percent alcohol by volume), and must be aged in new, charred oak barrels. The barrels must be freshly charred and used only once for aging.

One of the defining characteristics of Tennessee Whiskey is the Lincoln County Process. This unique process



Jack Daniel's in Lynchburg is on the Tennessee Whiskey Trail.

involves filtering the unaged whiskey through maple charcoal before aging it to give it a smooth and rich character.

A fascinating note about the small town of Lynchburg: While the distillery has been producing since 1866, the city is "dry." The distillery is legally allowed to make and sell unopened bottles of their spirits and provide a tour tasting, but you will not find a restaurant or bar in the town that serves alcoholic drinks. Strange indeed.

Located just a short drive away in Tullahoma, the George Dickel Distillery offers a quieter, more intimate experience. Founded in 1870, George Dickel chills its mash before filtering it through



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Close up of a barrel room.

charcoal, adding a unique smoothness and richness to the whiskey. The distillery's location in Cascade Hollow feels like a hidden gem, with beautiful countryside views. I went into one barrel room that held 57,000 barrels of aging whiskey and had a chance to take a taste sample when I thieved the barrel. That is, lowering a tube into the barrel and removing a single pour's worth of liquid. This sample showcases the color, aroma, and flavor unique to its time in the barrel; however, I chose not to taste it! The distillery tour tasting includes their beloved No. 12 and Bottled-in-Bond varieties, which left me with fond memories.

One of the Trail's newer but most inspiring stops is the Uncle Nearest Distillery in Shelbyville. It's named for Nearest Green, the former enslaved man who taught Jack Daniel the art of whiskey-making. Uncle Nearest products are

dedicated to preserving Green's legacy.

The site rests on a former horse farm and includes a BBQ restaurant and the Humble Baron Bar, the world's longest bar- following a curvilinear path around an immense room and often with live music. The insightful tour includes a Hollywood production documentary, state-of-the-art facilities, interactive exhibits on Nearest Green's life, and a tasting of their award-winning expressions. You can easily spend a half day there.

I didn't visit all 30 Tennessee distilleries on the Trail, but I was doused in history and enjoyed the state's rolling hills and small towns. If you want to raise a glass, look for more information at www.tnwhiskeytrail.com.

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

Famous

AUTOMOTIVE & TIRE CENTER

www.famoustirecenter.com

500 SR 13 N.
Behind McDonald's,
Next to Primrose
904-217-7326

5717 University Blvd. W.
904-337-1695

2560 US Highway 1 S.
St Augustine, FL 32086
904- 203-1390

2430 Blanding Blvd
904-267-1900

1964 Cassatt Avenue
904-634-7923

9962 San Jose Blvd.
904-619-6309

3575 US Highway 17
904-458-4997

Come see us before your next road trip!

\$25 OFF
ANY REPAIR OR SERVICE \$250 OR MORE
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.
Excludes oil change.

FREE Alignment Check
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

\$10 OFF
WHEEL ALIGNMENT
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

\$35 OFF
AC EVAC & RECHARGE
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

\$20 OFF
ANY FLUSH
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

\$5 OFF
ANY OIL CHANGE
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

FREE Brake Inspection
Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer.

2 Year/24K Warranty

Ride Home Available

Store Hours
Mon-Fri 8am-6pm
Sat: 8am-4pm

"Servicing Every Customer Like They're FAMOUS!"

★★★★★

Let Famous Automotive Professionals give you a 5-Star Service.

Find us on Facebook

Limited quantities. Does not include disposal fees, tax, installation. Offers cannot be combined.

Locally owned and operated

Your carefree oasis of luxury awaits!

Feel right at home at one of our Starling communities. Live in unparalleled environments that feature resort-style amenities and comfortable residences. Select from luxurious independent living, assisted living or memory care lifestyles.

Whether you're sampling the delectable dining options, enjoying the full-service salon or pursuing a new hobby, Starling is all about embracing life with friends, family, and community.

Learn more at www.StarlingLiving.com.

STARLING
AT PONTE VEDRA
ASSISTED LIVING
and MEMORY CARE
904-686-3700
ALF#12887

STARLING
AT NOCATEE
ASSISTED LIVING
and MEMORY CARE
904-834-4199
ALF#13109

STARLING
AT NOCATEE
INDEPENDENT
LIVING
904-834-4511

STARLING
AT SAN JOSE
ASSISTED LIVING
and MEMORY CARE
904-337-6350
ALF#12887

WELLNESS • ENGAGEMENT • CULINARY • SERVICE

Call today to learn about current specials!