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St. Johns County Holiday Event Guide

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The holiday season is here, and St. Johns County is brimming with festive events to help you celebrate. From the twinkling lights of St. Augustine's Nights of Lights to classic Nutcracker performances, winter festivals and special holiday gatherings, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Whether you're looking for family-friendly activities, cultural performances or community celebrations, our Holiday Event Guide has you covered. Inside, you'll find dates, times, locations and details for more than a dozen events happening throughout December in Jacksonville, St. St. Johns County and surrounding areas.

This year's lineup includes beloved traditions like the Community Nutcracker at the Florida Theatre, the Alpine Groves Park Winter Festival and multiple ballet performances that bring the magic of the season to life. You'll also discover unique experiences like the St. Johns Snow Globes at Julington Creek Plantation and the illuminated wonder of Glowing Gardens at Jacksonville Arboretum.

Planning your holiday season just got easier. Turn to page 8 for the complete guide and start making memories with the people you love most.

Lights Ahoy!

Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights signals start of holiday season

By Tracy McCormick-Dishman
editor@floridanewslines.com

The Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights will illuminate the waters of Julington Creek on Saturday, Dec. 6, at 7 p.m., marking the 37th year of the beloved holiday tradition.

Sponsored by the Julington Creek Prop Club, the annual event invites boat owners to deck their vessels in holiday finery and join the festive flotilla.

"The people along the shores of the creek put on quite a show for us every year," said Julington Creek Prop Club Commodore Bob Ponik in a recent release. "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."



Boat cont. on pg. 2

Decorated boats during a past Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights.

Photos courtesy Julington Creek Prop Club

Sing-alongs and celebration at Newcomers holiday luncheon

By Michele Oliver

Newcomers of North Saint Johns (NNSJ) invites members and their guests to its December luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 16, at 11 a.m. at Club Continental, 2143 Astor St., Orange Park.

The event features lunch and entertainment by Roger Dodd, who will be singing traditional holiday favorites.

"The very talented Roger Dodd does not disappoint! We're looking forward to celebrating the holiday season with our members and lots of fun sing-alongs," said Michele Oliver, co-president of NNSJ. "The cost of the event is partially subsidized for our members by the club."

Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. Cost for the luncheon and program is \$35 for members and \$40 for guests and non-members. All reservations must be received by Dec. 8. For further information about the luncheon and membership, visit newcomersofnorthstjohns.org. Raffles for gift baskets and a 50/50 drawing will also be held.

Entree choices include Tuscan chicken served with a squash medley and roasted potatoes; pan-seared mahi accompanied by a squash medley and roasted potatoes; or pasta primavera. Beverages include coffee and tea. Dessert is chef's choice and all entrees come with a mixed tossed salad and rolls and butter. A cash bar is also available.

Dodd was an Air Force pilot for 22 years and Northwest Airlines pilot for 18 more. He won the Air Force talent contest in 1978 and entertained on layovers in Paris, Rome, London and Frankfurt. He currently performs in the band Shades of Gray as keyboardist and vocalist.

NNSJ offers a variety of activities for St. Johns County and surrounding area residents including wine socials, golf, book club, walking group, Mah Jongg, card groups, bunco and a weekly golf outing.

"We also have December trips to the Jacksonville Symphony to enjoy a holiday pops concert and annual Red Train ride around St. Augustine to celebrate the holidays and enjoy the fabulous Night of Lights event," said co-president Charlene Lim, adding NNSJ members are also headed to The Alhambra Theatre in January to see "Menopause the Musical."



Newcomers of North Saint Johns members dressed in Western attire and pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month at a past luncheon featuring line dancing at Club Continental.

Photo courtesy Newcomers of North Saint Johns



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Boat cont. from pg. 1

The parade route begins at the Julington Creek Marina, motors underneath the Route 13 bridge, circles Bulls Bay and continues down Durbin Creek. Spectators can view the parade from the Julington Creek Bridge walkways.

Established in 1988, the event typically features an estimated 40 boats of all shapes, sizes and themes, ranging from 17 to 40 feet in length, all decorated in holiday finery. Some participating boats belong to Prop Club members while others come from all over the area. Homeowners with docks along the route are also invited to participate, as tradition holds that boaters judge the shore displays.

Prizes will be awarded for the best holiday-decorated boats. First place receives a \$300 cash prize, second place receives \$200, and third place receives \$100. All participating boat captains will also receive a Captain's Gift Bag. Prizes

are also awarded for "Best Dock" along the parade route.

Planning for the parade involves considerable organizational prep work. The Prop Club starts in August each year contacting boaters, area merchants and residents, gathering donations for the event.

"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 Prop Club is a social organization for past, present and future boaters. Members do not have to own a boat to join. The club meets on the second Saturday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Julington Creek Marina dock. Interested sponsors or boaters can contact Commodore Ponik at commodore@jcpropclub.com.



Photos courtesy Julington Creek
Prop Club Decorated boats during a past Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights.



Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service

Wednesday, December 24th 7PM

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New Years Eve Burning Bowl Service

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BFF

Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Fala and Finlay!



Breed:

Scottish Terrier

Favorite Activity:

Shopping for plants

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

Happy HOLIDAYS

From all of us at the Florida NewsLine family of newspapers, we wish you a happy holiday season. Thank you for your continued support of local, trusted community journalism.

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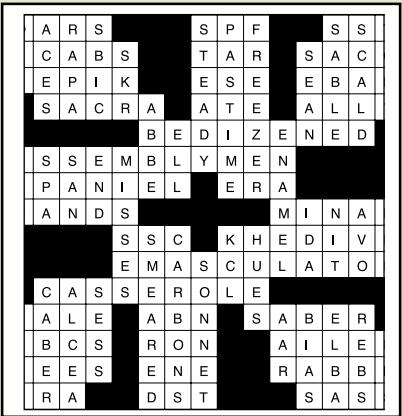
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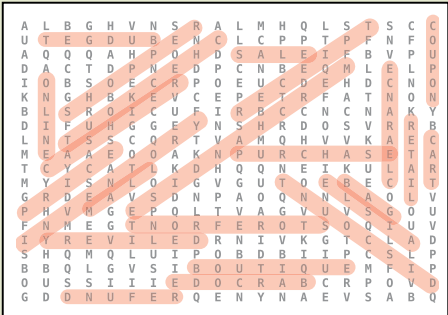
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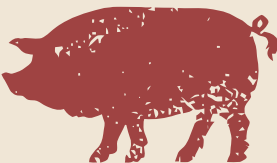
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December

Community Calendar

What's Happening in St. Johns

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email editor@floridanewslines.com.

Dec. 1 - 3
St. Johns CARES Giving Tree Initiative

The 19th annual Giving Tree Initiative will run from Dec. 1 to Dec. 3. Wishes from clients of 40 nonprofit organizations in St. Johns County serving the elderly, veterans, homeless, abused, children and animals are printed on holiday wish tags. Donation boxes with posters will be displayed at participating businesses, schools and organizations throughout the county. Donations are sorted and provided to nonprofit organizations for the holidays. Monetary donations can be made to purchase wish items that are not donated. Visit www.stjohnscares.org for a list of host sites or email president@stjohnscares.org for more information.

Dec. 1 - 31
Bartram Trail Friends of the Library Holiday Book Sale

Bartram Trail Friends of the Library will hold its annual Holiday Book Sale Fundraiser Dec. 1-31 at Bartram Trail Branch Library. The sale features thousands of giftable quality books, games, puzzles and more. This is the library's largest fundraiser of the year. Proceeds fund library programs, books, furniture and equipment.

Dec. 2
Honeybee Quilters Guild Holiday Party

Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church on the Mandarin Road Campus in the Woody Room (left side far door), 11844 Mandarin Road. Join us for our Holiday Party, \$20 for the catered meal. New members and guests welcome; wearing masks optional. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

Dec. 6
Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights

The annual Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights, sponsored by the Julington Creek Prop Club, is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 6. Prizes of \$300, \$200 and \$100 will be awarded for the top three holiday-decorated boats, and all participating boaters will receive a Captain's Gift Bag. Prizes are also awarded for best dock along the parade route.

Dec. 2025
Alpine Groves Park Winter Festival
Friends of Alpine Park will hold its annual Winter Festival Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Alpine Groves Park, 2060 State Road 13 N. The free community event will feature arts and crafts vendors, a blacksmith, food trucks, children's games, Santa, farmhouse tours and more. Free shuttle

service will be available from Switzerland Community Church, 2179 State Road 13 N.

Dec. 10 - 14
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
River City Theatre will present "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" Dec. 10-14 at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Betsy Lovett Hall, 1100 Stockton St., Jacksonville. Based on Barbara Robinson's beloved novel, this wholesome classic tells the delightful tale of the rough-and-tumble Herdman children and celebrates the warmth and community of the holiday season. Performance times are 7 p.m. Dec. 10-12 and 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Dec. 13-14. Tickets available starting Nov. 1. Visit www.rivercitytheatre.com for more information.

Dec. 10
Library meetings
Friends of the Library will meet Wednesday, Dec. 10, at Bartram Trail Branch Library. The St. Johns County Public Library System Advisory Board will also meet Wednesday, Dec. 10, at Southeast Branch to discuss library issues and other business for the St. Johns County Public Library System.

Dec. 13
Bartram Trail Genealogy Club
The Bartram Trail Genealogy Club meets Saturday, Dec. 13, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Bartram Trail Branch Library. This month's topic will be discussing family traditions and foods of the holiday season. Open to the public of all levels of genealogical experience. Email ginglish@comcast.net for more information.

Dec. 22
Santa visits Trout Creek Senior Center
Santa Claus will visit Trout Creek Senior Center Sunday, Dec. 22, at 6795 Collier Road, St. Augustine. Contact Program Coordinator Jessica Curry at 904-209-3658 or jcurry@stjohnscoa.com for more information.

Jan. 16
Florida Arbor Day Tree Giveaway
UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County Master Gardeners will celebrate Florida Arbor Day with a free tree giveaway Thursday, Jan. 16, from 10 a.m. to noon at five locations: Anastasia Island Branch Library, Bartram Trail Branch Library, Hastings Library (temporary location: 400 East Harris Street), Southeast Branch Library and the St. Johns County Extension Office. Bareroot tree and shrub saplings will be distributed, including red maple, red buckeye, mayhaw, sweetgum and smooth sumac.

Ongoing Activities
Open Game Play
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 on Thursdays from 12:15 to 3:15 p.m. Call 904-209-3655 (Monday through Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org for more information.

Trout Creek Senior Center activities
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 Jessica Curry at 904-209-3658 or jcurry@stjohnscoa.com for more information.

Playing HOOKie
Playing HOOKie, a group for those who enjoy knitting, crocheting and loom-ing (with all items donated to charity), meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to noon at Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road in St. Johns. Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookiecares@gmail.com for more information.

Jokers Wild card group
Jokers Wild, a local card group, plays the game of Hand, Knee and Foot on Wednesdays. If you are interested in

joining, call 904-230-6962 and leave a message.

A Course in Miracles Study Group
A Course in Miracles Study Group meets Sundays from 9 to 10 a.m. at Unity Church for Creative Living, 2777 Race Track Road. This is a unique spiritual self-study program designed to awaken participants to the truth of our oneness with God. Cost: Donation. For more information, call 904-287-1505 or email UCCLOffice2777@gmail.com.

Widow to Widow support group
Widow to Widow, a support group for widows by widows, is held at Council on Aging (COA) River House, 179 Marine Street in St. Augustine, on Wednesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Call 904-209-3655 (Monday through Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org for more information.

Shuffleboard
Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at Tommy Hazouri Park. Beginning Tuesday, Dec. 2, the start time will be 1:30 p.m. The courts are located at the park entrance, next to the tennis courts. Arrive a few minutes early for court assignments. Beginners are welcome. Games are cancelled if it rains.



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Mark your calendar: Key 2026 dates for property owners

By Eddie Creamer, St. Johns County Property Appraiser

As we say goodbye to 2025 and welcome 2026, I'd like to share key dates for the upcoming year that are important for St. Johns County property owners to know and add to their calendars.



Eddie Creamer

January 1

All properties are appraised each year as of January 1. The status and condition of a property on this date determines the property's value for the upcoming assessment year.

March 2

For 2026, the deadline to file personal exemptions, including homestead exemption, is March 2. This deadline is always March 1 unless it falls on a weekend, which happens in 2026.

Property owners are eligible to file for personal exemptions for the current tax year if they owned the property as of January 1 of that year. Once a homeowner has applied for homestead exemption, then they do not need to reapply unless there has been a change in marital status, property ownership or title.

Visit www.sjcpa.gov/exemptions to file for exemptions.

April 1

For businesses, the deadline to file a Tangible Personal Property (TPP) return is April 1. TPP is property used in the operation of a business or other income-producing venture, such as machinery, furniture and computers. This return needs to be filed yearly unless a TPP exemption has been approved

and the TPP value is less than \$25,000. Visit www.sjcpa.gov/tangible-personal-property for additional information.

August 11

The 2026 Truth in Millage (TRIM) notice will be mailed on August 11. This exact date changes each year but always occurs during mid-August. The TRIM notice provides property owners with their proposed property taxes for the upcoming tax year before the tax bill is mailed. Property owners have 25 days from the date of the TRIM mailing to request changes to their property

value and to also file a petition with the Value Adjustment Board. Visit www.sjcpa.gov/TRIM for additional information.

November 1

Tax bills are mailed to property owners by November 1 by the St. Johns County Tax Collector's Office. Also on this date, tax bills are available to view at www.sjcpa.gov.

I'm available to answer questions or provide additional information at Ed-die@sjcpa.gov or 904-827-5500.

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Symphony appoints Bolton as VP and general manager

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Jacksonville Symphony announced Alison Bolton as its new vice president and general manager. Bolton brings more than two decades of leadership experience in operations, production and orchestral management, including previous roles at the Nashville Symphony and Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

As vice president and general manager, Bolton will oversee all production operations and performance logistics, managing concert production, budgets, touring



Alison Bolton

"It's a privilege to join the Jacksonville Symphony's senior leadership team at such an energizing moment for this remarkable organization," said Bolton.

Bolton will officially begin her role on Nov. 24, 2025. For more information, visit jaxsymphony.org.

ing and recording projects, and labor agreements with musicians and stagehands. She will also organize major annual productions such as First Coast Nutcracker and serve as the primary liaison between musicians and Symphony leadership.

Local wealth advisory practice earns award

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Upper Deck Wealth Management LLC, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Inc. in Ponte Vedra Beach, has earned the Ameriprise Client Experience Award for 2024. This is the fourth consecutive year for Chris Thompson and second year for Todd Perkins.

The practice was honored for its ability to consistently deliver personalized, goal-based advice and exceptional client service. Award recipients earned



Chris Thompson

an overall client satisfaction rating equal to or greater than 4.9 out of 5.0 and maintained stellar business results.

Thompson, Perkins and Sarah Blackley provide financial advice anchored in a solid understanding of client needs and expectations delivered in one-on-one relationships.

For more information, contact Thompson at 904-380-2290, Perkins at 904-380-2322 or Blackley at 904-380-2302, or visit the Ameriprise office at 818 A1A N Suite 301, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Rotary and Interact clean up local roadways

By Al Kalter

Earlier this fall, members of the Rotary Club of Bartram Trail-Julington Creek and students from the Creekside High School Interact Club came together to make a positive impact on our community. As part of the St. Johns County Adopt-a-Road program, these dedicated volunteers spent a Saturday morning picking up litter and helping to keep Racetrack Road looking its best.

The collaboration between the Rotary and Interact Clubs is a testament to their commitment to community

service. This volunteer effort is not a one-time event; it is something that the clubs participate in several times each year. Their ongoing dedication to maintaining the beauty of our local region is truly commendable.

The Adopt-a-Road program is an excellent opportunity for community members to take an active role in preserving the cleanliness and appearance of our surroundings. By working together, Rotary and Interact are setting a wonderful example of civic responsibility and teamwork.



Photo courtesy Rotary Club of

Bartram Trail-Julington Creek. Volunteers from the Rotary Club of Bartram Trail-Julington Creek and the Creekside High School Interact Club pick up trash and litter alongside Racetrack Road as part of a quarterly effort through the county's Adopt-a-Road program.

Interact is the Rotary-sponsored service organization that is part of thousands of high schools around the world. At Creekside High School, instructor Regan Asher from the Academy of Future Teachers serves as the faculty advisor for the school's Interact Club.

The Rotary Club of Bartram Trail-Julington Creek meets every Thursday morning, from 7:30-8:30 a.m., at Westminster Woods on Julington Creek. Guests and prospective members are always welcome. More information about our local club can be found at www.bartramtrailrotary.org.

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

Mitch Wright
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Holiday Event Guide

Nov. 15, 2025 - Jan. 11, 2026
St. Augustine Nights of Lights

The 32nd annual Nights of Lights illuminates historic downtown St. Augustine with over 3 million tiny white lights nightly. Recognized by National Geographic as one of the "10 Best Holiday Light Displays in the World." Light-Up! Night is Saturday, Nov. 15, with entertainment at 4 p.m. and lighting ceremony at 6:30 p.m. Free Park & Ride shuttle available. Visit www.floridashistoriccoast.com/nights-lights/

Nov. 26, 2025 - Jan. 1, 2026
Deck the Chairs

Free event featuring decorated lifeguard chairs at Seawalk Pavilion, Jacksonville Beach. Includes live performances and DTC Christmas Market on Nov. 29 and Dec. 6. Visit deckthechairs.org

Nov. 28 - Dec. 28
Glowing Gardens

Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens transforms into a winter wonderland with illuminated displays. Open Fridays 5-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 3-9 p.m. at 1445 Millco Rd. Adults \$22, Kids (4-17) \$19, under 3 free. Visit jacksonvillearboretum.org/events/glowing-gardens

Late Nov. - Dec. 2025
St. Johns Snow Globes

Unique Christmas experience on weekends at Julington Creek Plantation. One-hour bookings include private holiday-themed geodesic dome, charcuterie boxes by LetsCheese Jax, s'mores, photo opportunities and classic holiday movie. Proceeds support Southside Saddle Club's equestrian programs. Visit www.stjohnssnowglobes.com

Dec. 6
Alpine Groves Park Winter Festival

Friends of Alpine Park presents its annual Winter Festival Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Alpine Groves Park, 2060 State Road 13 N. Free event features arts and crafts vendors, blacksmith, food trucks, children's games, Santa, farmhouse tours. Free shuttle from Switzerland Community Church, 2179 State Road 13 N.

Dec. 6
St. Augustine Christmas Parade

Annual Christmas parade starts at 9 a.m. in downtown St. Augustine at Mission Nombre de Dios. Visit www.floridashistoriccoast.com/events/christmas-parade/

Dec. 6
Christmas in Avondale

Free community event Friday, 5-9 p.m. on St. Johns Avenue in Historic Avondale,

Jacksonville. Street closures for festivities. Visit historicavondale.com/cia/

Dec. 10 - 14
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

River City Theatre presents this wholesome classic at Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Betsy Lovett Hall, 1100 Stockton St., Jacksonville. Based on Barbara Robinson's novel about the rough-and-tumble Herdman children. Performances 7 p.m. Dec. 10-12 and 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Dec. 13-14. Visit www.rivercitytheatre.com

Dec. 11 - 13
Community Nutcracker of Jacksonville

Nonprofit production featuring 200+ local dancers ages nine to adult at Florida Theatre. Has donated over \$900,000 to local charities in 33 years. Visit www.jaxnutcracker.org

Dec. 12 - 13
Jacksonville Symphony's First Coast Nutcracker

50+ year tradition at Moran Theater, Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts. Features internationally renowned principal dancers, local young dancers, and Tchaikovsky's melodies performed by Jacksonville Symphony. Shows Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. and Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Visit myjaxsymphony.org/overview/nutcracker-2025

Dec. 14
Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet

30th annual production at Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Center at 6 p.m. Nearly 300 performers ages two to 90. Directed by Felicia Rhoden of Miss Felicia's Dance. Proceeds benefit children's charities. Visit www.missfeliciasdance.com

Dec. 19 - 21
The Nutcracker by the Florida Ballet

Classical ballet at Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Center. Features 100+ local dancers performing to Tchaikovsky's music. Shows Dec. 19 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 20 at 4:30 p.m., Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. Visit floridaballet.org/thenutcracker

Dec. 19 - 21
St. Augustine Ballet Nutcracker

16th annual production at Lewis Auditorium, Flagler College. Features professional ballet dancers and local dance students. Shows Dec. 19 at 7 p.m., Dec. 20 at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. Visit www.saintaugustineballet.org

Dec. 22
Santa visits Trout Creek Senior Center

Santa Claus visits Sunday at 6795 Collier Road, St. Augustine. Contact Program Coordinator Jessica Curry at 904-209-3658 or jcurry@stjohnscoa.com



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



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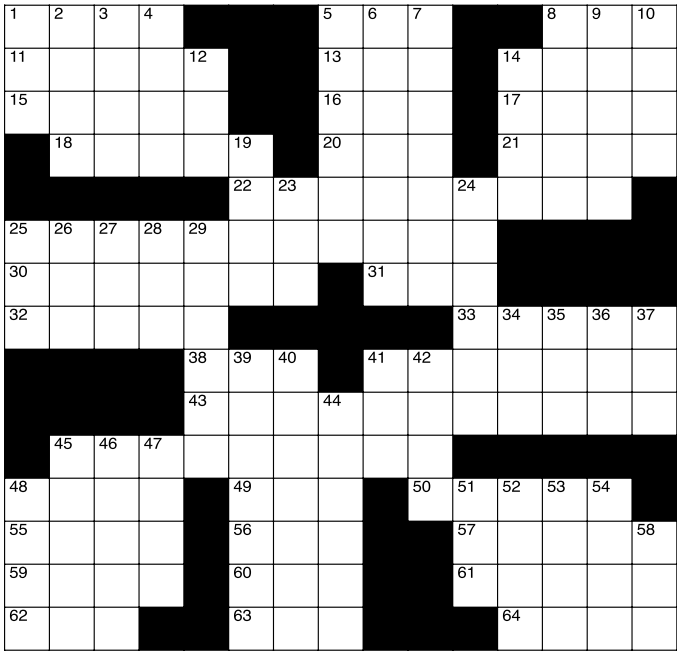
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Paddles
- 5. Sunscreen rating
- 8. Very fast airplane
- 11. Immune responses
- 13. "Partner" to feather
- 14. New England river
- 15. Longest river in New Guinea
- 16. Midway between east and southeast
- 17. Israeli politician
- 18. Back bones
- 20. Consumed
- 21. One you can rely on
- 22. Dressed up gaudily
- 25. Representatives
- 30. Dog breed
- 31. Pitching statistic
- 32. Manpower
- 33. S. Korean entertainer
- 38. Outsourcing firm
- 41. Viceroy of Egypt under Turkish rule
- 43. One who removes antlers from a flower
- 45. Potluck dish
- 48. Discount
- 49. Airborne (abbr.)
- 50. Cavalry sword
- 55. Basics
- 56. Hollywood director Howard
- 57. Afflicted in mind or body
- 59. Horsley and Majors are two
- 60. Midway between northeast and e
- 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 62. Malaysian isthmus
- 63. Fall back
- 64. Check

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Former CIA
- 2. Baseball's best pitchers
- 3. ___ Nui, Easter Island
- 4. Invests in little enterprises
- 5. Constant
- 6. Hobby
- 7. A place to store food
- 8. Short-tail marten
- 9. Burn with a hot liquid
- 10. Left his heart in San Francisco
- 12. Swedish krona
- 14. Legendary actor Connery
- 19. French cleric
- 23. Former measure of length for textiles
- 24. Opaque glassy substance
- 25. Residue of burned item
- 26. A place to unwind
- 27. Japanese honorific
- 28. Terminus
- 29. Fails to make a shot
- 34. Journalist Tarbell
- 35. College hoops tournament
- 36. Monetary unit of Macao
- 37. Of she
- 39. Spoke ill of
- 40. Elements
- 41. Kilocalorie (abbr.)
- 42. Shades
- 44. Poem of fourteen lines
- 45. Pole used in Scottish sport
- 46. Hollyhocks genus
- 47. Street name for marijuana
- 48. Polio vaccine developer
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Actor Idris
- 54. Confederate soldiers
- 58. Criticize

SHOPPING WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- AISLE
- BAG
- BARCODE
- BOUTIQUE
- BUDGET
- CART
- CASHIER
- CHECKOUT
- CLEARANCE
- COUPON
- DELIVERY
- DISCOUNT
- INVENTORY
- MALL
- MERCHANDISE
- ONLINE
- PRICE
- PURCHASE
- RECEIPT
- REFUND
- RETAIL
- SALE
- SHOPPER
- STOREFRONT



Solve the code to discover words related to food service.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 26 = E)

A. 22 26 17 4 26 17
Clue: Waiter/waitress

B. 24 23 13 19 25 26 11
Clue: Cooking room

C. 17 26 22 13 9 12 17 9 11 13
Clue: Place to dine

D. 19 25 26 19 24
Clue: Restaurant bill

D. check

Fishing

Creek fishing offers winter refuge, scenic beauty

Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewslines.com

Hello again and happy holidays. I hope we all have plenty of time to get out to enjoy the water in between the hustle and bustle of the season. It is a beautiful time to be outside.

Lots of the deciduous trees along the creeks are dropping their leaves, allowing us to look far back into the flood plains where deer and turkeys still have some refuge. Birds abound, and the sound of wood ducks fill the air as they spook out of isolated holes and creek bends. This is still a fishing column, but for so many of us, the fish is just what gets us out there to enjoy the natural world, and that's a special thing.

This time of year, there are fewer and fewer reasons to venture out in the main river. Quite frankly, there are a lot fewer fish out there right now. So where do we go then? We go to the creeks — the tributaries of the river where the freshwater fish are in higher concentrations than the main river. They don't mind the cold, and they are beautiful: specks, bluegill, warmouth, bass, pickerel, bowfins, etc. Creek fish are prettier than river fish — that's all I'm going to say.

The two most popular freshwater fish we have are bass and specks. Specks are also called speckled perch or crappie. If you see a boat fishing this time of year, it's

for one or the other most likely.

My bass fishing is far simpler than a lot of folks make it. If I can catch shrimp, I'll take them to creek mouths or sheltered coves in the river where you'd think the bass might stage for spawning in a month or two. If I can't get shrimp, shiners work too. Fish them under floats near lily pads or some other cover. Don't feel that you have to anchor and stay in one spot. If you have a trolling motor, you can slowly troll the baits on the edges to find fish.

Specks can be in various places, from docks in the main river to submerged lay-downs far up the creeks. Minnows on slip floats and jigs are the two main methods



Jimmy Tomazinis

for them, which I'll discuss in more detail next month. Until then, get out there and enjoy the scenery and catch a few fish while you're at it. Tight lines.

Jimmy Tomazinis is a Jacksonville area native who has fished the St. Johns River his entire life. His passion for fish led him to study coastal biology at the University of North Florida. He has since participated in multiple fishery studies in Northeast Florida, continues to implement fish habitat and water quality improvement projects, fishes as much as he can, and has a monthly podcast called North Florida Fishing and Outdoors where the fishing conversation continues. Jimmy can be reached by email to mail@floridanewslines.com.

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Gardening

The Good Earth: Poinsettias are the holiday star of the season

By Connie Doyle, Master Gardener UF/IFAS

No plant says "holidays" quite like the poinsettia. With its bright, cheerful colors and festive flair, it's no wonder this beautiful plant has become a seasonal favorite in homes, churches and offices alike. But behind its brilliant bracts lies a fascinating story - and a few helpful care tips to keep yours glowing all season long.



Connie Doyle, Master Gardener UF/IFAS

The poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) has deep roots in Mexican tradition, where it was cherished for centuries before making its way to the United States in 1828. We have Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, to thank for introducing this iconic plant to American holiday decor.

Think those vibrant red

"petals" are flowers? Not quite! The colorful part of the poinsettia is actually its bracts - modified leaves designed by nature to attract pollinators to the plant's tiny yellow flowers nestled at the center. These bracts are what give poinsettias their signature look, from classic crimson to creamy white and even soft pink or bold purple hues.

To help your poinsettia thrive, place it in bright, indirect light and keep it comfortably warm - ideally between 60 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Water only when the top inch of soil feels dry, and be sure the pot drains well.

Whether you're decorating your mantel, gifting a plant to a friend, or simply bringing a bit of cheer indoors, the poinsettia continues to symbolize the

warmth, hope, and beauty of the holiday season.

Happy holidays everyone! Thank you for allowing me to share my love of plants and nature with you every month. I look forward to our adventures next year.

Connie Doyle writes The Good Earth, a gardening column inspired by a lifelong passion for plants, nature, and the peaceful rhythm of the garden. With more time in retirement, she has been inspired to take that passion to the next level — learning, growing, and sharing with others in our community by way of earning her Master Gardener Certification. Connie can be reached by email to mail@floridanewsl.com.



Happy holidays, neighbors.

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Travel

John Brown: Harpers Ferry and the spark toward war

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

Few places in America weave so many layers of history into such a small area as Fredericksburg, Virginia. Nestled along the Rappahannock River between Washington, D.C., and Richmond, the town feels like a living timeline—one where the colonial era, Revolutionary War, Civil War and Civil Rights movement all left lasting marks. Walking its brick streets, visitors sense the weight of the nation’s past amid a lively mix of shops, galleries and cafes.

The Washington family legacy: Fredericksburg proudly calls itself the boyhood home of George Washington. The story begins at Ferry Farm , where George lived from ages 6 to 16. After his father Augustine’s death, his mother, Mary Ball Washington, guided the family through lean years, shaping her son’s resilience and sense of duty. The reconstructed farmhouse and museum displays reveal what daily colonial life looked like for the future president.

Downtown, the Mary Washington House preserves the home George bought for his mother in 1772. She lived there for the rest of her life, tending her gardens and welcoming visitors, including her famous son. Nearby stands the Rising Sun Tavern, built in 1760 by George’s younger brother Charles. Costumed interpreters recreate the atmosphere of an 18th-century tavern, where politics and gossip mingled over tankards of ale.



Debi Lander

The family story continues at Kenmore, the Georgian mansion of George’s sister Betty Washington Lewis and her husband Fielding Lewis. Fielding sacrificed his fortune to fund supplies for the Revolutionary army, a powerful reminder of the personal cost of independence. The home dazzles with ornate plaster ceilings and exhibits honoring the enslaved community who maintained it.

Don’t miss the Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop , owned by Washington’s friend and fellow patriot Dr. Mercer. The 18th-century pharmacy displays the remedies of its day including herbs, tinctures and even leeches. The guides offer a fascinating glimpse into colonial medicine.

The Civil War crossroads: If Washington’s Fredericksburg represents America’s beginning, its battlefields capture the nation’s near collapse. the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park encompasses four major battlefields—Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House—forming one of the country’s most extensive Civil War landscapes.

At Marye’s Heights, visitors walk the ground where Union troops suffered staggering losses in December 1862. Chancellorsville, just west of town, saw Gen. Robert E. Lee’s audacious victory but also the death of his trusted lieutenant, “Stonewall” Jackson. The 1864 battles of Wilderness and Spotsyl-



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
The Confluence and Gap at Harper’s Ferry.

vania marked the relentless Union drive toward Richmond under Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Trails, exhibits and ranger programs bring these harrowing moments to life.

The Civil Rights trail: Fredericksburg’s story doesn’t end with muskets and monuments. the city also plays a key role on Virginia’s U.S. Civil Rights Trail. the Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) served as a center of faith and activism for African Americans from the Civil War era through the modern Civil Rights movement.

Modern Fredericksburg: Though steeped in history, Fredericksburg thrives as a vibrant modern community. Its downtown brims with galleries, boutiques and eateries, while farmers’ markets, carriage rides and festivals enliven the streets.

A place that holds it all: Fredericksburg is where the American story converges—where a young George Washington grew under his mother’s watchful eye, where patriots risked everything for independence, where a divided nation fought

for survival and where freedom continued to advance.
For travelers, it’s a chance to stand where so many chapters of the American experience overlap.

If you go: Fredericksburg lies about an hour south of Washington, D.C., via I-95 or Amtrak. Allow at least two days to explore the Washington family homes, nearby battlefields and Civil Rights landmarks.

Debi Lander is an award-winning travel writer and photographer who blends her passion for history, culture, food, and personal discovery into captivating stories. Through her website Bylandersea.com and her long-running travel column for Florida Newsline, she explores destinations from small U.S. towns to iconic global landmarks. She hopes her storytelling and practical insights inspire readers to experience the world with curiosity, appreciation, and a sense of adventure. Debi can be reached by email to mail@floridanewsline.com.



John Brown’s Fort in Harper’s Ferry.



Execution Wagon. Photo courtesy Debi Lander





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Bartram Trail Newcomers Club hosts winter luncheon



Photo courtesy Bartram Trail Newcomers Club
Members of the Bartram Trail Newcomers Club enjoy the Witches Brew High Tea Riverboat Cruise in Sanford.

By Dawn Garrity

The Bartram Trail Newcomers Club (BTNC) will hold its December luncheon on Dec. 9 at San Jose Country Club in Jacksonville. The event, themed "An Old-Fashioned Winter Wonderland," begins at 11 a.m. and includes entertainment and a meal for \$37 when paying by cash or check.

BTNC is an organization that provides an opportunity for women to learn about the community and find fellow-

ship through monthly meetings and social and special interest activities. Membership is open to everyone.

In addition to monthly meetings, BTNC offers a variety of special interest groups including bridge, Continental Rummy, pennies Canasta, Mexican Train, Bunco, mah jong, golf, book club, nature walk, Lunch Divas and Girls Night Out.

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