

Ponte Vedra NewsLine

JANUARY 2026 Volume 13 Issue 1

Ponte Vedra, Palm Valley, Nocatee and South Ponte Vedra Beach

A Florida NewsLine Publication



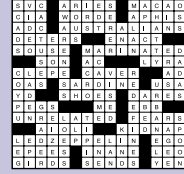
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Dr. Keith Ashley

Digging into Florida's ancient past

By Brooke Freeman

Dr. Keith Ashley, University of North Florida associate professor of anthropology, will speak about "Archaeology and the Indigenous History of Northeastern Florida" at the next Coastal Friends luncheon on Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026. The indigenous history spans over 10,000 years and will be followed by a question-and-answer period. Ashley has been affiliated with UNF for over 17 years and is also an assistant professor of archaeology.

The luncheon will be held at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte

Digging cont. on pg. 6

Fresh Fridays

New market makes fresh, local food a Friday tradition

By Tracy McCormick-Dishman
editor@floridanewline.com

What started on a wing and a prayer has blossomed into a thriving Friday tradition in Ponte Vedra.

Retired dentist Dr. Leslie Taylor launched the Ponte Vedra Friday Farmers Market at Palm Valley Outdoors in July 2025 with a simple goal: create an affordable gathering place where the community could buy local food and know exactly where it came from.

Six months later, the waterside market has tripled its vendors from 12 to 30, offering everything from organic vegetables and grass-fed beef to the state's only certified raw dairy farmer.



Photo by Leslie Taylor

Market cont. on pg. 2

Rotarians fill bags, fill bellies



Photo courtesy Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra

Volunteers from the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra and Blessings in a Backpack packed nearly 300 weekend food bags for local students at Christ Church.

NewsLine staff
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The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra made sure nearly 300 local students didn't go hungry during the holiday break,

donating \$500 and stuffing backpacks in December for children facing food insecurity.

Rotarians joined volunteers from Blessings in a Backpack to pack weekend

food bags for elementary and middle school students who are fed through federally funded meal programs during the school week but may return home

Rotarians cont. on pg. 2

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Photos courtesy Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra
Sharon Kehoe, right, accepts a \$500 check from Rotary Club of Ponte Vedramembers.

Rotarians cont. from pg.1
to empty cupboards.

“This year we added 60 additional children to our Backpack program, and the support from the Rotary Club will have a significant impact on our ability to ensure that children will have nutritious meals on the holiday break,” said Sharon Kehoe, a Ponte Vedra resident who leads the local Blessings efforts.



Photos courtesy Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra
A volunteer arranges snacks during the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra's backpack-stuffing event for Blessings in a Backpack.

The holiday bags included notes of affirmation written by Interact Club members from Bartram Trail High School.

The Ponte Vedra/Palm Valley Blessings in a Backpack volunteer group meets every Thursday morning at Christ Church to pack weekend food bags. Volunteers distribute them to eight local schools, including Ponte Vedra-Palm Valley/Rawlings Elementary, Ocean Palms Elementary, Landrum Middle School and Seabreeze Elementary in Jacksonville Beach.

The group relies on funding from organizations like THE PLAYERS Championship, Christ Church, local Rotary clubs and private donations. It costs approximately \$150 to provide weekend food for one child for the school year.

“We are a totally volunteer group, and 100% of the money raised by donation or grants goes towards the purchase of food for the student food bags,” Kehoe said.

The Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra meets on the first or third Tuesday of each month at Really Good Beer Stop in Nocatee at 11:30 a.m.



Photo by Leslie Taylor

Market cont. from pg. 1

“My goal in starting this market was to make it just the very best possible,” Taylor said. “I hope that people will do their weekly shopping with us.”

Taylor has long loved farmers markets, but noticed they'd become expensive for vendors. She wanted to create something more accessible. After making soap and lotions for years as a hobby, her husband suggested turning it into a business when they moved to Florida.

“I approached Paul Rohan, who owns the Palm Valley Outdoors Bar and Grill, just kind of on a wing and a prayer, and he was all about it,” she said. “This is better than I ever could have dreamed for.”

The market runs every Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. year-round, except Christmas and New Year's weeks. Set along the Intracoastal Waterway at 1 Palm Valley Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, it features organic vegetables, locally raised grass-fed beef and pork, pasture-raised eggs and chicken, gluten-free baked goods, sourdough breads, fresh-pressed juices, kimchi and local artisans.

“The community support has been phenomenal,” Taylor said.

One standout vendor is JD Rogers of Udders and More, Florida's only certified raw dairy farmer. He tests every single batch of milk for bacterial and fat content. There are only 57 certified raw dairy farmers in the country.

Every bottle of milk Rogers sells is labeled with the name of the cow that produced it - Doris, Betty Mae and others.

“His dairy is safe, delicious and wonderful,” Taylor said. She even gets whey from Rogers to make some of her soap.

The market's fruit vendor brings perhaps the biggest selection of fresh fruit available in Northeast Florida. He drives throughout South Florida and Georgia to source locally grown produce.

“Right now he's bringing us incredible variety from South Florida and Georgia,” Taylor said. “We have probably the biggest selection of fresh fruit available.”

Rohan's community-minded approach extends beyond hosting the market. He provides a free spot each week to an animal rescue group, reflecting both his and Taylor's passion for helping local rescues.

“The owner of Palm Valley Outdoors Bar and Grill is very community minded and just has a big heart,” Taylor said. “So that's kind of one of our things - we want to try to help the animal rescue groups if we can.”

Taylor said the market has attracted many repeat customers, creating a sense of community each week. The market often features live music and includes a bouncy house for children, making it a family-friendly destination.

“We get to know our customers because we have so many repeat customers,” she said. “It's very reassuring, I think, for all of us to know where our food is coming from and who is making our products and who is baking our bread. There's a lot of accountability that way.”

That accountability and personal connection is what Taylor values most about the market she's created.

“I think everybody sees the value in supporting local,” she said.

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Breed:

Siberian Husky

Favorite activity:

Snuggling, playing with sticks and hiking with his moms.

Favorite food:

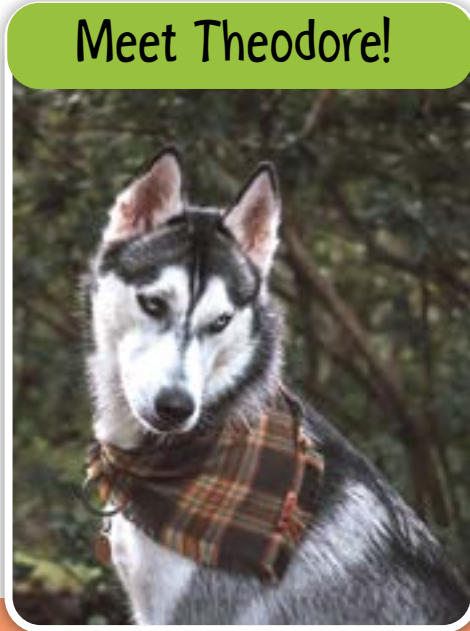
Apple slices and broccoli.

Favorite friend:

Atlas the dachshund mix.

How did your BFF get his name:

As soon as I picked him up, I knew he was a Theodore!

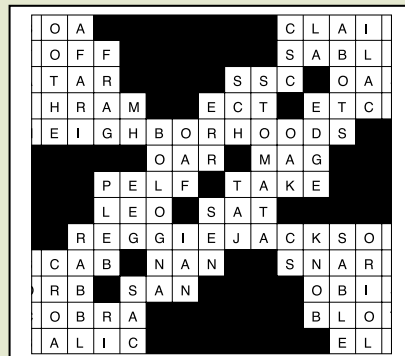


Meet Theodore!

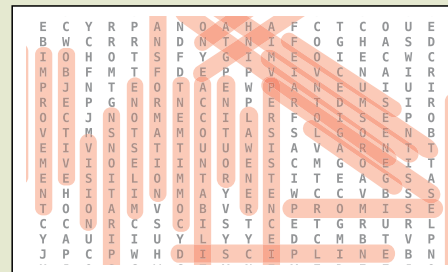
Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in Ponte Vedra NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Ponte Vedra NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewslines.com to enter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



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A. resolution B. promise C. healthy D. goal



Answers
to our Puzzles
PG 9

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January 29- February 1, 2026

A full weekend of exciting events for storytelling fans of all ages!

Andy O'Leary Irwin

Carmen Agra Deedy

Amelia Island, Florida
www.storyandsongarts.org/festival

Don White

Rev. Robert James, Sr.

Christine Lavin

January

Community Calendar What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

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

**Nov. 15 - Jan. 11
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/

**Jan. 4
St. Augustine Film Society: "The Crimson River"**

A sleek, wintry French police drama with a serial killer narrative wrapped in an art-film atmosphere. Sunday, Jan. 4 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2487 A1A S., St. Augustine. Doors open 3:30 p.m., film begins 4 p.m. Visit www.staugustinefilmsociety.org for more information.

**Jan. 6
Vicar's Landing Boutique Sale**

The sale features framed art, knick-knacks with many \$1 items, antiques and household furnishings. The sale will be held Tuesday, Jan. 6 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Vicar's Landing-Sawgrass Community Building, 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The public is welcome and signs will point the way to the three shopping venues. Checks or cash only. Proceeds benefit the Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund. Call Beverly Webb at 904-315-2610 for more information.

**Jan. 7
Coastal Friends Luncheon**

Dr. Keith Ashley, UNF Associate Profes-

or of Anthropology, will speak about "Archaeology and the Indigenous History of Northeastern FL" at this luncheon on Wednesday, Jan. 7, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway. Cost is \$25. Reservations required by Jan. 2 at bartshar@comcast.net. Open to members, guests and the community.

**Jan. 15
Arbor Day Slewing Prep**

Volunteers are needed starting at 10 a.m. to bag and staple info sheets to 1,000 bareroot trees. Sign up on Better Impact.

**Jan. 16
Arbor Day Tree Giveaway**

Held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Anastasia Island, Bartram Trail, Hastings (Harris Center), and Southeast Branch libraries, as well as the main office. Volunteers should arrive at 9:30 a.m. Trees include Red Maple, Red Buckeye, Mayhaw, American Sweetgum and Smooth Sumac.

**Jan. 23
Savvy Job Hunters Ministry Workshop**

The Savvy Job Hunters Ministry of Christ Episcopal Church will host a free virtual workshop, "Do What You Are: Connecting Personality Types to Careers Using MBTI," on Friday, Jan. 23 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Presented by Margaret MacNaughton, MBTI Qualified Practitioner. Email [Pam Ottesen at savvyjobs@ccpvb.org](mailto:savvyjobs@ccpvb.org) to register and receive the Zoom link.

**Jan. 23 - 25
78th Annual Jacksonville Boat Show**

Features watercraft, seminars and family fun at the Prime Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water Street. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday; and 10 a.m.

to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$5 for children under 12, and \$12 for seniors/military/first responders. Visit www.boatjax.com for tickets and information.

Jan. 25 St. Augustine Film Society: "Blancanieves"

A 2012 Spanish silent, black-and-white reimagining of Snow White, set in 1920s Andalusia. Sunday, Jan. 25 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2487 A1A S., St. Augustine. Doors open 5:30 p.m., film begins 6 p.m. Visit www.staugustinefilmsociety.org for more information.

**Jan. 26
North Florida Women's Chorale Rehearsals**

The North Florida Women's Chorale begins rehearsals for spring concerts on Monday, Jan. 26. The group is open to anyone interested in joining. Visit www.womenschorale.org for more information.

**Jan. 2 - 31
Nocatee Events**

Events this month include: First Friday Trivia, Jan. 2, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Paradise Park; Family Bingo, Jan. 8, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Paradise Park; Food Truck Friday, Jan. 9 and Jan. 30, 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field; Polar Plunge, Jan. 10, 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. at Splash Waterpark; Toddler Storytime, Jan. 15 and Jan. 29, 9:30 a.m. at the Nocatee Room; PJ Jam, Jan. 16, 6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the Nocatee Room; Kickin' Off the New Year Farmers Market, Jan. 17, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field; Unwined Wednesday, Jan. 28, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. at Crosswater Hall; and Yappy Hour, Jan. 31, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field.

**Ongoing Activities
Council on Aging programs**

Council on Aging offers interest groups

at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, Ponte Vedra Beach, and the COA Center at UF Health Nocatee. Programs include lunch programs, duplicate bridge, tap dance, painting classes, chair exercise, tai chi, canasta, bingo and board games. Most activities are weekly beginning Dec. 2. THE PLAYERS Center is closed Dec. 24-26. Call (904) 209-3659 or visit www.coajc.org/ponte-vedra-center. For Nocatee programs, email pbrunell@stjohnscoa.com or call (904) 814-9407.

Palm Valley Market

Palm Valley Market will be held at Palm Valley Community Center, 148 Canal Blvd., every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The market offers organic produce, pasture-raised meats, local honey, baked goods and local crafts. Email info@PalmValleyMarket.com.

Ponte Vedra Beach Ruck Club

Free beach ruck every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. Meet on the top floor of the parking garage at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach. Rucking is carrying weight in a backpack while walking. The rucks are 3-3.5 miles. All fitness levels welcome.

Ponte Vedra Friday Farmers Market

The market is held every Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Palm Valley Outdoors Bar & Grill, 377 S. Roscoe Blvd. Overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway, it features fresh organically grown produce, Florida grass-fed beef, pork, local honey, pasture-raised chicken and eggs, certified raw dairy, wholegrain breads, gluten-free baked goods, natural botanical skincare, local artisans and more in a family-friendly atmosphere.

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Fresh produce, fresh purpose at Vicar's Landing

By Sally Green

Vicar's Landing broke ground on an aquaponics greenhouse that will bring more than fresh vegetables to its Ponte Vedra Beach campus.

The eco-friendly greenhouse, designed by OneWorldFresh and supported through a naming partnership with Auld & White Constructors, will produce organic fruits and vegetables while offering residents hands-on opportunities to plant, harvest and learn about sustainable agriculture. The facility is slated to open in early 2026.

"This greenhouse isn't just about food—it's about opportunity," said Bruce Vorsanger, chief development officer at Vicar's Landing. "It gives our residents access to fresh, nutrient-rich produce year-round, while also offering new ways to engage with one another, stay socially and physically active, and experience the joy of cultivating something from the ground up."

The closed-loop system will grow food right on the campus at 1003 York Road, bringing sustainable food production directly to residents. Volunteers will have the chance to participate in all aspects of the greenhouse operations, supporting a healthier lifestyle and promoting a sense of personal purpose.

Auld & White Constructors, a longtime leader in Northeast Florida's construction industry, serves as the naming sponsor. The Jacksonville-based company brings both financial support and a commitment to sustainability and community development.

OneWorldFresh, also based in Jacksonville, specializes in aquaponics systems that support health, education and local food resilience.





Residents will be able to walk among vertical growing towers inside the aquaponics greenhouse at Vicar's Landing.




Photos courtesy Vicar's Landing


A rendering shows the exterior of the aquaponics greenhouse at Vicar's Landing in Ponte Vedra Beach.









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Fishing

Jimmy's Fishing Report January 2026

Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewsline.com

Happy New Year! We left off last month talking about specks so we are going to get right back into it. Specks, speckled perch, or crap-pie are a very popular freshwater fish to target all over the country. We have a targetable population of them in the river, but probably not as many as further south or in larger lakes around the state. Current, salinity, and lack of habitat play a large role in limiting their numbers in our area of the river, but area creeks see a seasonal push each year as they search for spawning areas.

If you're looking for a fish to keep you on the water on the coldest days you've got your fish. Specks don't seem to mind. I've caught them in water temperatures as cold as 46 degrees and ice on the boat. That's not appealing to most, I know, but I just want to let you know that you can.

The most popular method for catching them is with live minnows. Using small slip floats allow you to target the specks at various depths. They are a schooling fish and they suspend at various depths, so you need to keep the bait where they are.

I also like to catch them on jigs and



Jimmy Tomazinis

one of the best methods I've tried is using both jigs and minnows on the slip floats. The jigs allow you to cover different depths until you find the fish. Once you find where they are with the jig you can use the minnows and floats to keep baits where

they need to be. If you are good with electronics on your boat you can find them that way too.

The creeks will have the highest concentration of fish, but average size will trend on the smaller side until the larger females show up to spawn. That can fall from February to March most years. I think the females wait out in the river somewhere before the water temperatures get right. You can catch them on docks, isolated holes, and structure out there. Keep in mind they don't like current. In the creeks they like docks, lay downs, and holes. Deeper water is best unless they are spawning.

We've covered a lot but if you have any questions feel free to send me an email. The bite has been pretty good so get out there. Tight lines.

Digging cont. from pg. 1

Vedra Beach, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The menu will consist of house salad, chicken cordon bleu, potatoes au gratin, roasted broccoli and cauliflower florets, and key lime pie. The cost to attend is \$25 and the lunch is open to Coastal Friends members and guests, as well as the community. Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net as soon as possible. The deadline for checks to be received is Friday morning, Jan. 2, 2026 at the latest.

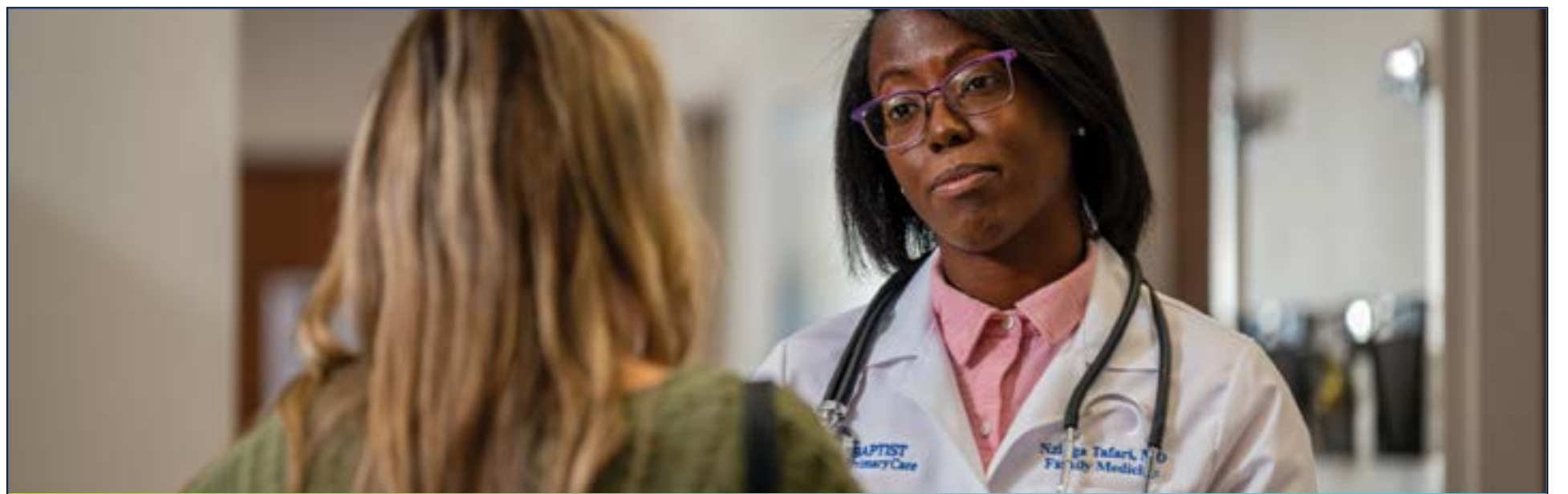
Coastal Friends (formerly Newcomers Alumnae) was established in 1998. The social club is comprised of women

who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach, St. Augustine, Jacksonville and the surrounding area. Some of the activities offered are: Ladies Adventures & Outings, book club, bunco, canasta, happy hour, lunch in, lunch out, mah jongg, samba and wine socials. All of these activities allow women to meet other women and have fun in the process.

Luncheons are held on the first Wednesday of every month except for July and August. New members are welcome throughout the year. For more information about Coastal Friends, contact the membership chair at brookemeister@msn.com.

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Students shadow clerk's staff to explore careers

By Tracy McCormick-Dishman

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's Office launched a new shadowing program last fall to give students hands-on experience in public service careers.

Scholars in Service: The Clerk Experience is designed for upper-level high school students, college students and recent graduates. The personalized, single-day program provides direct exposure to the work of the clerk's office and its roles within local government.

"Our goal is to inspire the next

generation by giving students a meaningful look inside the work we do every day on behalf of our community," said St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller Brandon J. Patty. "This program offers valuable experience, mentorship and insight into careers that make a difference."

Tailored to each student's interests and goals, the program offers opportunities to shadow courtroom proceedings



Jahkaris Johnson

and observe real cases in action, explore administrative operations and meet with members of the leadership team and courthouse partners to discuss career paths in law, government and public affairs.

Jahkaris Johnson, a pre-law Florida State University student studying criminology and international affairs, participated as the program's first scholar in November 2025.

"Participating in the Scholars in

Service program gave me an incredible opportunity to experience the clerk's office firsthand," Johnson said. "From attending the adoption day celebration and learning how the process works behind the scenes, to engaging with judges and exploring the criminal and civil court divisions, I gained a deep appreciation for the work done every day to serve the community."

For more information about Scholars in Service: The Clerk Experience, visit stjohnsclerk.com/scholars-in-service or call (904) 819-3600.

Forever Families

Four families celebrate forever homes on National Adoption Day

NewsLine staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's office hosted a special ceremony to celebrate National Adoption Day.

The Nov. 21, 2025, event recognized four families who have grown through adoption this year and highlighted the continued efforts in St. Johns County to provide permanency and stability for children in foster care.

"National Adoption Day is one of the happiest days at the courthouse as our community comes together to celebrate these families," said Clerk Brandon J. Patty. "Our Family Clerks are proud to support the court proceedings that help make these moments possible."

St. Johns County Commissioner Sarah Arnold emphasized the community's role in supporting adopted children.

"Supporting children adopted from foster care is a community effort," Arnold said. "When a child finds a permanent, loving home, it strength-

ens families, neighborhoods, and our entire County."

Deputy Secretary Kate Williams of the Florida Department of Children and Families emphasized the dedication of local partners, the judiciary and the community.

"Thanks to the steadfast leadership of Governor DeSantis and his commitment to supporting strong and resilient families, more children in Florida are finding the permanency and stability they deserve," Williams said. "The adoptions finalized today and just in time for the holidays, are a powerful reminder of what is possible when our partners, the judiciary, and our communities come together on behalf of children. We are deeply grateful to the families who opened their hearts and homes, and we celebrate the new beginnings that each child and family will carry with them into this season and beyond."

In 2024, Family Clerks provided support during court proceedings that formed 70 new families through adoption. This year, 42 adoption cases have already been completed in St. Johns County.



Photo courtesy St. Johns County Clerk

A 16-year-old adoptee embraces his new forever family during a November 2025 National Adoption Day celebration at the St. Johns County Courthouse.

Clerks play a vital role in the process by assisting petitioners, administering oaths, processing adoption petitions and providing certified copies of the final judgment.

Circuit Judge Christopher Ferebee, who presided over the final hearing during the ceremony, noted that adoption days are some of the happiest and most rewarding days for judges.

St. Johns County handles all family-related cases, including adoptions, under a Unified Family Court model. This comprehensive framework assigns one judge to oversee all matters involving one family, offering consistency and continuity for children, particularly those adopted out of foster care.

The celebration was hosted in partnership with the St. Johns County Family Integrity Program, the Seventh Judicial Circuit, Guardian ad Litem Office and the Florida Department of Children and Families.

For more information, contact the Clerk's office at (904) 819-3600 or visit www.stjohnsclerk.com.

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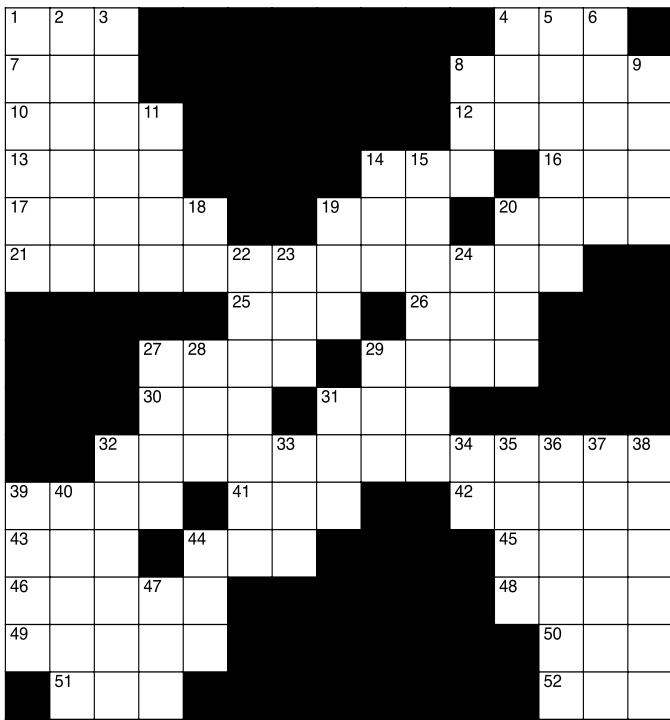
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Former CIA
- 4. Language
- 7. Constrictor snake
- 8. Demand
- 10. Rich man
- 12. Short-tailed marten
- 13. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- 14. Superconducting super collider
- 16. International group of countries within the Americas
- 17. Sacred state for Muslims
- 19. Shock therapy
- 20. Engrave
- 21. Localities
- 25. Paddle
- 26. Periodical
- 27. Dishonestly gained money
- 29. Gain possession of

- 30. Actor DiCaprio
- 31. High schoolers' test
- 32. Mr. October
- 39. Sign of healing
- 41. One's grandmother
- 42. Entrap
- 43. One who simultaneously buys and sells
- 44. __ Francisco
- 45. Web-based data provider of marit life
- 46. Type of snake
- 48. Dark mark or stain
- 49. Member of the Sali
- 50. Former measure of length
- 51. CNN's founder
- 52. Witness

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Acquire
- 2. Console
- 3. Hunting expedition
- 4. Pie __ mode
- 5. Simple shoes for peasants
- 6. Eurasian shrub
- 8. Reciprocal of a sine
- 9. Work together in harmony
- 11. Grenade
- 14. File extension
- 15. Minute pores in a plant
- 18. Medal of Honor
- 19. Make a mistake
- 20. Advance slowly, as if by inches
- 22. Sandwich meat
- 23. An awkward stupid person
- 24. Strong tree
- 27. Commoner
- 28. Electroencephalograph
- 29. __ Mahal
- 31. Congressman
- 32. Disorderly crowd
- 33. 007's creator Fleming
- 34. Atomic #55
- 35. Part of a door
- 36. Short-tail martens
- 37. Baltimore ballplayer
- 38. Cuddle
- 39. Gang in "The Outsiders"
- 40. Of Croatia
- 44. Body cavity
- 47. Get free of

RESOLUTIONS WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- ACCOUNTABILITY
- ACHIEVEMENT
- ASPIRATION
- CHANGE
- COMMITMENT
- DETERMINATION
- DISCIPLINE
- FOCUS
- GOAL
- HABIT
- IMPROVEMENT
- INTENTION
- MILESTONE
- MINDSET
- MOTIVATION
- OBJECTIVE
- PERSISTENCE
- PLAN
- PROGRESS
- PROMISE
- RENEWAL
- ROUTINE
- TRANSFORMATION
- VISION



CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to the new year.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 21 = O)

- A. 24 11 8 21 23 22 4 13 21 16**
Clue: Made on January 1
- B. 20 24 21 2 13 8 11**
Clue: Pledge
- C. 25 11 3 23 4 25 17**
Clue: Good for you
- D. 15 21 3 23**
Clue: Objective

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Local artists showcase talents at juried exhibition



Photos courtesy First Coast Cultural Center

By Heidy Brosofsky-Weaver

First Coast Cultural Center will showcase the work of local photographers and artists at its annual Juried Art Member exhibition on Friday, Jan. 16.

The JAM exhibition opening reception runs from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at FCCC, 6000B Sawgrass Village Circle, Ponte Vedra Beach. The event is free and open to the public, with Puerto Rican and Peruvian food provided by Chorican Fusion.

“JAM was created to showcase the talents of FCCC Artist Members, and the great diversity of creations always makes this an anticipated event,” said

Kimberly Sheridan, FCCC’s fundraising and events manager.

The exhibition features original art pieces in both 2D and 3D categories that were evaluated by jurors. Winners in each category will receive a monetary prize and have the opportunity to display more pieces in a future exhibition called “Best Of” in the fall of 2026.

For more information, visit firstcoastculturalcenter.org or contact Kimberly Sheridan at ksheridan@firstcoastculturalcenter.org or (904) 280-0614.

Heidy Brosofsky-Weaver is the Public Relations Specialist for First Coast Cultural Center



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Photographer focuses on food, brands

By Leigh Cort

The Women's Food Alliance has welcomed a new member who sees the world through a lens focused on food and creativity.



Elizabeth Leitzke

Elizabeth "Beth" Leitzke, owner of Elizabeth Anne Photography, specializes in branding, product and food photography for creative entrepreneurs and produce-based businesses. Growing up in Jacksonville surrounded by a family that believed deeply in hard work and creativity, her artistic outlets were numerous - art, photography, handwriting. Photography eventually became the path to express her creativity.

In recent years, working as a photographer for a marketing firm, Leitzke studied and understood the world of small businesses. She decided to take what businesses do and show it to the world through artistic branding photography.

"I'm the owner and lead photographer, where I help businesses tell visual stories that feel like a vibe but function like a strategy," Leitzke said. "My work blends artistic perspective with com-

mercial purpose - images that stop the scroll, spark connection and elevate brands with visuals that feel real, intentional and uniquely them."

Leitzke's favorite part of her work comes when clients see themselves or their creations in a new light.

"Is that really mine?" and "I've never seen myself like this before" are the reactions that make everything click, she said.

In the coming year, Leitzke's focus is on expanding deeper into the food and hospitality industry, launching subscription-based visual content packages and becoming a creative partner for restaurants, chefs and product brands across Northeast Florida.

"I joined the Women's Food Alliance because community matters and I believe that creativity and business grow faster when we collaborate, support each other and open doors instead of guarding them," she said. "The energy, passion and purpose with this group of women is exactly the kind of environment I want to contribute to and grow with."

Zesty wings make a perfect playoff party palate pleaser

Football fans know there's nothing quite like the playoffs. Whether your passion rests with college football or the action on the professional gridiron, there's plenty of exciting football to watch in the early weeks of winter.

Game watch parties are wildly popular. Indeed, big games are even more enjoyable when watched alongside fellow fans. When hosting a game watch party at home, certain culinary staples, including chicken wings, need to make an appearance. Fans hosting playoff parties this playoff season can ensure guests get what they need by offering up these "Zesty Chicken Wings" from Lines+Angles.



Zesty Chicken Wings

Makes 4 servings

For the marinade:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small white onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups Barbecue sauce (your favorite)
- 1/4 cup sherry vinegar
- 1 teaspoon turmeric

For the chicken wings:

- 11/2 pounds chicken wings
- Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon oil, for the grill

1. Combine all of the ingredients for the marinade in a food processor. Pulse until blended well.

2. Rinse chicken wings under cold running water and pat dry with paper towels. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Place the marinade and chicken wings into a large resealable plastic storage bag. Seal the bag securely. Squeeze the bag several times coating the chicken wings thoroughly with marinade. Place the bag in the refrigerator and marinate overnight.

4. Prepare the grill for direct grilling. Brush the grill grate lightly with oil. Barbecue the wings over medium hot coals or at medium high-heat for 5-7 minutes on each side (turning once, halfway through) until they are cooked through and golden brown.

5. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce (optional). PC261553

Travel

It's 2026: USA 250 Celebrations

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

The United States celebrates the Fourth of July with fireworks that light the sky and echo the bold words of the Declaration of Independence. In 1776, weary but determined delegates in Philadelphia proclaimed that all people are created equal, that governments draw power from the consent of the governed, and that laws and representation, not royal decrees, should guide daily life.



Debi Lander

Those ideas still feel daring as the nation approaches the 250th anniversary of that signing in 2026.

Philadelphia is preparing for a year-long birthday party. Visitors can expect concerts, parades, museum exhibits and lively festivals around Independence Hall. A huge "Red, White, and Blue To-Do" parade and block party will take place July 2. On July 4, Lincoln Financial Field hosts a FIFA World Cup match, a modern gathering of many nations cheering together in the city where self-government first took root.

Other places that carried the weight of the Revolution are creating their own America 250 moments. New York City, once occupied by the British and later the capital of the young republic, plans celebrations on a grand scale. Expect a towering fireworks display, something new from the cast of "Hamilton" and

major exhibits at the New-York Historical Society and the Museum of the City of New York. Their shows will highlight women's roles, examine life under British occupation and display treasured artifacts from the era.

Boston, where so much unrest began, will widen the lens on its familiar Freedom Trail. New programs will share more stories of women, Indigenous people and people of color whose courage shaped the fight for liberty but whose names often go unmentioned.

Farther south, Virginia adds its own powerful voice. In Williamsburg, the restored capital will fill with fifes, drums and carriage wheels as Colonial Williamsburg introduces programs about the founders and the everyday people who supported or questioned them. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, visitors will find updated exhibits and talks that follow Washington from ambitious young surveyor to first president.

Washington, D.C., will be another focal point. The Smithsonian museums, National Archives, Library of Congress and other institutions plan exhibits and lectures that invite visitors to look closely at original documents and artifacts. It is difficult to stand before the faded parchment of the Declaration or



Photo by Debi Lander

Reenactors play fifes during a historical demonstration. Colonial Williamsburg and other historical sites are preparing special programs for the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026.

the Constitution and not feel the weight of the promises written there.

Charleston, South Carolina, adds a coastal chapter to the semiquincentennial story. The city endured British occupation during the war and nurtured strong Patriot resistance. For America 250, Charleston is planning waterfront concerts, expanded tours of Revolutionary sites and living-history programs at museums such as the Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon. Carriage and harbor tours will highlight where patriots plotted, prisoners suffered and the war's momentum shifted in the South.

In Atlanta, America 250 will explore the connections between the Revolution's ideals and later struggles for freedom. The Atlanta History Center will compare the Revolutionary period alongside its Civil War and civil rights exhibits.

Even places far from the original 13 colonies are joining the celebration. At Walt Disney World's EPCOT, a patriotic all-USA version of "Soarin'" will fly guests above dramatic American land-

scapes. In Branson, Missouri, organizers hope to set a Guinness World Record on Flag Day for the largest display of American flags in one destination.

As the country counts down to its 250th birthday, the hope is that the celebration becomes more than a long weekend of parties. Ideally, it nudges each of us to think about what it means to be an American today—and what kind of nation we want to be honoring when the tricentennial arrives.

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 Bylander-sea.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@floridanewslines.com.

Gardening

The Good Earth: January gardening

The Good Earth: January gardening

By Connie Doyle, Master Gardener UF/IFAS

January may seem like a sleepy month in the garden, but in Northeast Florida it's one of the most important times of the year for setting the stage for a healthy, beautiful spring landscape.

While plants slow down, gardeners can get ahead. One of the smartest January tasks is soil testing. Many common landscape issues can be traced back to

pH or nutrient imbalance.

It's also an ideal time to refresh mulch, aiming for a consistent 2 to 3 inches. With many trees bare, take a day to evaluate how light moves through your landscape - which areas receive full sun, partial shade or deep shade. This will be of great benefit in spring plant selections.

Finally, January is prime time not only for irrigation checkups - repairing broken, leaking sprinkler heads, coverage adjustments - but planning a new bed or refreshing an existing one.

Plant of the month: Snapdragon

Snapdragons get their charming name from the unique shape and behavior of

their flowers. Each individual bloom resembles the head of a dragon, complete with an upper and lower "jaw." When you gently squeeze the sides of the flower, the mouth opens and closes, much like a dragon snapping its jaws. This playful feature has delighted gardeners and children for centuries.



Photo courtesy Connie Doyle

Snapdragons get their name from flowers that resemble dragon heads.

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