



October 2017 Volume 17 Issue 10

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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Q&A with St. Johns County School Board member Beverly Slough



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Get to Know ...
Rhonda Gauger



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Puzzles

Bartram Trail High School makes the most of televised spotlight

By Shelley Howard and Melissa Mulley
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Aug. 26, Bartram Trail High School traveled to North Georgia to face Cartersville in what could be called a quarterback showdown, pitting Bartram's nationally recruited quarterback, Joey Gatewood, against Carterville quarterback Trevor Lawrence, who is also highly sought after by college teams.

The invitation to play in a nationally televised game on ESPN2 instantly created a buzz of energy throughout Bartram Trail and the local community. One booster club officer said that Carterville underestimated Bartram Trail's following — additional game tickets had to be overnighted to St. Johns to supply the demand brought on by parents, family members and community supporters.

Although ESPN provided financial assistance to the football players, coaches and managers, other school groups jumped at the opportunity to

Bartram Trail cont. on pg. 17



Photos courtesy Shelley Howard and Melissa Mulley

Quarterback Joey Gatewood makes a play.

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Scenic Highway group plans Switzerland Community Center restoration as part of Corridor Master Plan

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Across from Alpine Groves Park on State Road 13 sits an old volunteer firehouse that hasn't been in use since the county built Fire Station 2 in Switzerland in 2000. What many people don't know is that behind this old firehouse is a truly historic building that is also in a state of disrepair: The Switzerland Community Center.

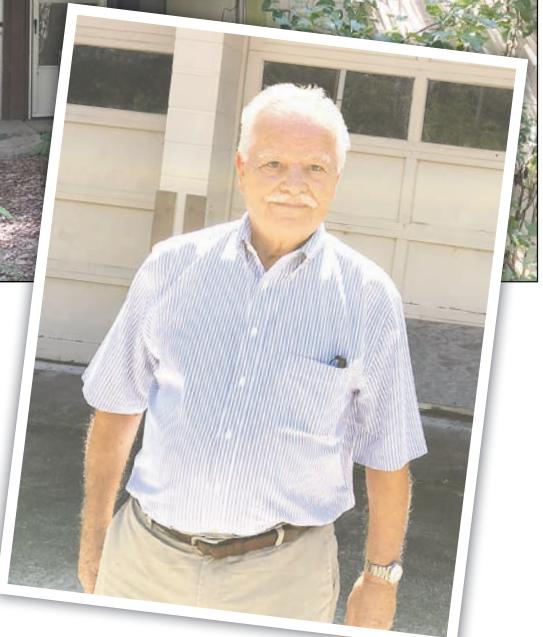
The William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway Group, headed by Al Abbatiello, has had rebuilding or replacing this community center as part of its Corridor Master Plan since 2012 and Abbatiello said the group decided in 2016 that it was time to take on this project. The group is currently working with the Stetson Kennedy Foundation and Karen Roumillat, who is its vice chairman, is equally invested in getting this project off the ground.

Abbatiello said that in 2007, St. Johns County, which owns the half acre property containing the Switzerland Community Center, planned to restore the building via a grant, but unfortunately the grant request was rejected. Abbatiello is now in the process of getting a structural analysis of the building to determine if it is structurally sound and able to be restored. If it passes muster, county approval would then be needed for any restoration or private grant applications to finance it.

The Switzerland Community Center's history dates to 1900, when the structure was built as a church in a



The Switzerland Community Center sits behind the old volunteer fire department on State Road 13 across from Alpine Groves Park.



Photos by Martie Thompson

Al Abbatiello and the William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway group plan to restore the Switzerland Community Center

different location in the area. In 1947, the building was donated by the Methodist Conference and moved to its current location, where it became the area's recreational building. It hosted dances, meetings, Sunday dinners and was generally the focus of community living. It was also the voting precinct for this area. The volunteer fire station was added on to the front of the community center in the mid-1950s.

"Saving the community center might be our most important project long term, because we would also be sav-

ing the history of this community," said Roumillat. "That building was 'the' gathering place for this vibrant community in the '40s and '50s."

Scenic Highway cont. on pg. 17

St. Johns CARES Kids 9/11 Never Forget banner and dinner delivery

St. Johns CARES Kids held its annual 9/11 Never Forget Banner and Dinner Delivery on Sunday, Sept. 17. The event was rescheduled due to Hurricane Irma. Everyone had a great time showing sup-

port for Station #18 in Nocatee and first responders everywhere.



Photos courtesy Katrine Strickland



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take 5



Photo courtesy UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County

Datil peppers

Food drive coming in November

St. Johns CARES will sponsor its ninth annual Food Drive on Nov. 4. Donation bags will be placed on mailboxes in participating neighborhoods mailboxes the week of Oct. 30 and donations should be placed by mailboxes no later than 10 a.m. on Nov. 4 for pickup by volunteers. The food will be distributed to St. Francis House, Christ's Cupboard, SEA Community and Shepherd's Haven food pantries. Volunteers are needed to help make this event successful; visit www.StJohnsCares.org for details and to volunteer.

Northwest United for Progress to meet

Northwest United for Progress will welcome Dr. David Schwam-Baird to its

Oct. 9 meeting at 7 p.m. at the Unity Church for Creative Living, 2777 Race Track Rd. Dr. Schwam-Baird, an associate professor of political science and public administration at the University of North Florida, will speak about the Israeli-Palestinian Middle East peace process. Northwest United for Progress is an organization of democratic and progressive members from NW St. Johns County. All are welcome. Email nwsjcp@gmail.com for more information.

College entrance test prep classes scheduled

The Bartram Trail Public Library will offer ACT and SAT Prep Courses beginning Oct. 24. Instructors, one for

English and one for math, are licensed teachers with experience in test preparation. Each course will meet six times — four classes are instructional, the fifth class is a practice test which will be timed and graded, and during the final class the students will be able to ask questions about the completed tests and the test process. Enrollment packets will be available at the Bartram Trail Public Library front desk beginning in early October. The fee for each course is \$45. These courses often fill up, so plan to register early. Email foltbl@gmail.com with any questions or for more information.

Datil Pepper Fall Festival scheduled

UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County will host the 2017 Datil Pepper Fall Festival at St. Johns County Agricultural Center, 3125 Agriculture Center Drive, on Oct. 7 and 8. The festival will offer educational events, a food court, plant and rain barrel sales by St. Johns County Master Gardeners, and a 4-H Youth Kids Zone. On Saturday, the very popular Datil Pepper Restaurant Cook-Off will showcase local chefs and their datil-inspired cuisine. For a dollar a sample, attendees can taste these culinary delights. Also on Saturday, there will be an amateur Datil Pepper Hot Sauce Contest for locals to compete with their favorite homemade hot sauces. Visit <http://>

bit.ly/datfest17 for more information.

Coin Club to host show

The Ancient City Coin Club of St. Augustine will host a fall Coin and Currency Show on Saturday, Oct. 21, at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #113, 5050 Inman Road in St. Augustine. Doors open at 9 a.m. and admission and parking are free. The show features U.S. and foreign coins and currency, silver and gold bullion, medals, jewelry, tokens and more. There will be hourly door prizes and raffles of a \$5 gold piece, 2017 silver eagle, \$20 CSA note and 1963 proof set. Visit Facebook.com/acccstaugustine or contact Jerry Walden at (904)-940-6245 for more information.

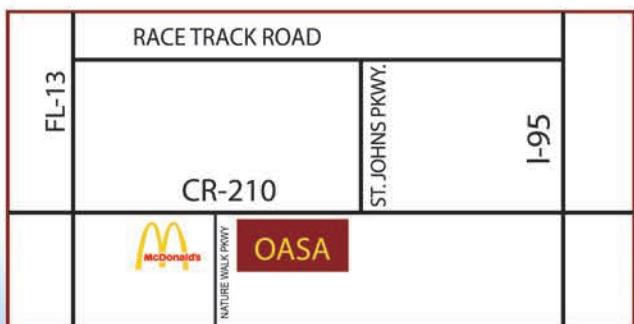


Photo courtesy Ancient City Coin Club

The Coin and Currency Show will be held on Oct. 21.

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of St. Augustine

Oct

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2nd

Current Events Discussion Group
10 a.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
Donovan's Irish Pub, US Highway 1
adsilby@yahoo.com

3rd

First Coast Card Club - adult card players
1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
St. Augustine Main Library,
1960 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
(904) 829-0643

World Golf Village Toastmasters

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
First Florida Credit Union, 1950 County Road
210W
Worldgolfvillage.toastmastersclubs.org

Oct. 3rd - Nov. 7th**Northeast Florida AHEC Quit Smoking Class**

Tuesdays, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Flagler Hospital
Free; call (904) 482-0189 to register

5th

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7
7:30 p.m.
St. Augustine Yacht Club near the St. Augustine Lighthouse
(904) 460-0243

Palencia Bridge Club plays Party Bridge
11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)
Donovan's Irish Pub, 7440 US Highway 1
Diane Tamplin, (904) 808-7326

5th - 6th & 7th - 8th

St. Johns Riverkeeper Eco Heritage boat trip
St. Johns River
Shannon@stjohnsriverkeeper.org or
(904) 256-7613 or www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org

6th

Rotary Club of St. Johns meeting
7:30 a.m. (repeating event on Fridays)
St. Johns Golf and Country Club Clubhouse
www.rotarystjohns.org

7th

Fall Craft Festival
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Mandarin United Methodist Church

8th

St. Johns Chapter of the Catholic Writers Guild
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Father Felix Varela Center,
5110 Lourcey Road
www.dosafli.com/outreach/catholic-writers-guild/

9th

Fore the Kids Golf Tournament to benefit Palencia Elementary
11 a.m. registration; 1 p.m. shotgun start
Palencia Club
www.Palenciaforethekids.com

The Northwest United for Progress club meeting
7 p.m.
Unity Church for Creative Living,
2777 Race Track Road
nwsjcp@gmail.com

4-H Science Club

5 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.
Bartram Trail Branch Library
(904) 827-6960
St. Augustine Newcomers Club of Northeast Florida dinner and trivia
6 p.m.
St. Augustine restaurant
Call Lea for location and joining information
(904) 829-0643 or (904) 814-9612

around town

10th**Bartram Trail Newcomers and Women's Club luncheon**

11 a.m.
Maggiano's Little Italy, St. Johns Town Center
RSVP by Oct. 2, bartramtnc@gmail.com

12th**Relay for Life of North St. Johns Kick Off Party**

6:30 p.m.
Nease High School, 10550 Ray Road.
rfl.northsaintjohnscounty@gmail.com

Rotary Club of Bartram Trail

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)
Westminster Woods, 25 State Road
lancedmalcolm@gmail.com

Palencia Bridge Club plays Party Bridge

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)

Donovan's Irish Pub, 7440 US Highway 1

Diane Tamplin, (904) 808-7326

14th**Visit with live raptors and owl from The Alligator Farm**

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Wild Birds Unlimited Store, 450 State Road 13 in Fruit Cove
Free program; \$5 donation to St. Augustine Alligator Farm requested
(904) 230-3242

Friends of the Library Book Sale

9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Bartram Trail Branch Library
(904) 827-6960

Vessel Safety Check by Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Vilano boat ramp
http://vsc.mysafeboating.com

16th**All Star Quilt Guild**

9:45 a.m.
First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd.
www.orgsites.com/fl/allstartquiltguild or (904) 502-5254

17th**North Business Council of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce**

8 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Westminster Woods on Julington Creek, 25 State Road 13
Register at www.sjcchamber.com or call (904) 829-5681

St. Johns CARES meeting

7 p.m.
Bartram Academy, 164 Everest Lane, Ste. 1
www.stjohnscares.org

First Coast Card Club - adult card players

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

St. Augustine Main Library,

1960 Ponce de Leon Blvd.

(904) 829-0643

20th**Cunningham Creek Elementary Bubble Run**

PTO FUNd Run

www.cce-pto.com

20th - 22nd**San Juan del Rio Fall Festival**

Ride tickets, game tickets and food available for purchase
sanjuandr.wixsite.com/fallfestival

21st**Fruit Cove Cruise In sponsored by Sunshine State Chevelles**

4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

PDQ parking lot, 194 State Road 13

Repeating event on third Saturday of each month(904) 827-6960

Fruit Cove Pub Crawl

3:15 p.m.

Bartram Walk, State Road 13/Race Track Road Benefits Rotary and St. Johns CARES; tickets \$35

contact@stjohnscares.org

Cimarrone Ladies' Golf Association Pink Ribbon Golf Tournament

Registration 6:45 a.m.; shotgun start 8 a.m.

Cimarrone Golf Club, 2800 Cimarrone Blvd.

Brenda.bailey55@comcast.net or (904) 287-0723 or http://clga.info

26th**North Business Council After Hours Networking Event**

5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

World Golf Village Renaissance St. Augustine Resort

Free to Chamber members and guests; Register at www.sjcchamber.com or (904)829-5681

National Association of Railway Business Women (NARBW)

6 p.m.

Location TBD

RSVP to NARBW-Jax@yahoo.com or (904) 945-0943

27th**Helping Hands of St. Johns County**

10 a.m.

First Florida Credit Union, 1950 County Road 210W

jacqphil@aol.com

31st**iPad user group**

1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Bartram Trail Branch Library

(904) 827-6960

**Have an event coming up?
Email us at
calendar@floridanewline.com**

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with Jimmy Johns, St. Johns County Commissioner, District 1

Q: What can you tell us about the status of the county budget meetings that were scheduled for early to mid-September?

A: Just about all planned county and state meetings have been delayed by a week or even a month because of Hurricane Irma. With people still not having power, it didn't seem appropriate to conduct business as normal. Additionally, the meetings must be officially noticed and so time is needed for that.

Q: Has there been a date set for the final budget hearing?

A: Yes, the final budget hearing has been set for Tuesday, Oct. 3 at 5:01 p.m. at the County Administration Building. The public is invited to this meeting, but I'd ask that anyone who still has questions about the budget should contact me prior to the meeting. Although of course we will answer questions at the meeting, this meeting can be relatively short if we can get questions answered ahead of time.

Q: Today (Sept. 18) is one week after Hurricane Irma. What is the status of St. Johns County?

A: We are getting close to having all power restored to residents. Tree and debris removal actually began last week. We have had utility trucks and dump trucks for debris removal coming from as far away as California to assist us. I think as bad as this storm was, it really strengthened my pride in our community and our state. I've been encouraged by how everyone came together to help each other. I think it's been more of an "organized chaos" compared to Hurricane Matthew last year, all based on what we learned from that storm.

Q: What do you think have been the improvements over last year's response?

A: Well, I think our communications have improved for one thing. Also, we had a Declared State of Emergency the day following the storm this year rather than a week later like last year. This is critical because it allows all the relief agencies to get involved. One thing that was impressive was the extra effort DEP (Florida Department of Environmental Protection) made to get thousands of yards of sand for dune restoration (that was scheduled as a result of Hurricane

Matthew) delivered before Hurricane Irma hit. Some was even delivered the day prior to the storm and I believe this helped spare some areas.

Also, our people were better prepared after going through Matthew. St. Johns County provides sandbags to residents at taxpayer expense and last year, 70,000 were utilized. This year, residents used 200,000. I think this expense is worth it because it surely saved money in damaged property.

Q: What is the next step?

A: We have transitioned from a search and rescue to a recovery effort. We are still assessing the damage in the county and should have a timeline for restoration by next month. The main number for residents to call is (904) 284-5550 for St. Johns County Hurricane Recovery. Callers will be directed to the correct agency to help them out.

In the meantime, I'd like to encourage those who had little or no power loss to be patient with those who were not as fortunate. St. Johns County itself will take some time to get back to normal, such as with parks and recreation facilities, as many county resources have been allocated to more pressing needs.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc1johns@sjcl.us or call me at (904) 615-7437.

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School district celebrates topping off at Aberdeen school



Photo courtesy Beth Sweeny

On Sept. 18, local dignitaries gathered to see the final steel beam lifted to the top of the new K - 8 school under construction in Aberdeen. Known as "topping off," this event was recognized since a formal groundbreaking had not been held for the school previously due to inclement weather. The school will serve approximately 1,400 student in the area when it opens in time for the 2018 – 2019 school year.



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

Q: During Hurricane Irma, several schools were used as shelters. Can you give us an update?

A: Well, first I am grateful to our principals, not just those who stayed at their own schools the whole time, but others who also pitched in, for their hard work. I'd also like to recognize those I think are the unsung heroes: members of the transportation department, who picked up residents and took them to and from the shelters in school buses.

We had five planned shelters — Bartram Trail High School, Timberlin Creek Elementary School, Pacetti Bay Middle School, South Woods Elementary School and Pedro Menendez High School. All were about half full except for Pedro Menendez, which was completely full. Then, the governor asked us to open Mill Creek Elementary as a shelter due to its proximity to Interstate 95 as an option for travelers. It was ironic that this school then suffered damage due to tornadic activity — the entire front awning over the parent pickup line was ripped down.

Q: Today (Sept. 18) is the first day back to school. How did things go?

A: I call this our second first day of school. Everything seems to be firing on all cylinders and everyone seems happy to be back. Several principals expressed to me that they were grateful for us bringing back all the staff on Friday to

decompress and plan before the students arrived on Monday.

Q: In all, St. Johns County students missed six days of school due to Hurricane Irma. Are there any plans yet to make up that many days?

A: Since Governor Scott called for every school in the state to be closed for Friday, Sept. 8 and Monday, Sept. 11, I'm hopeful that there may be a waiver from the state for those two days. St. Johns County can compensate for two to three days with the extra minutes that we already have added to each school day. Finally, Veterans Day and the Wednesday before Thanksgiving are already in our calendar as make up days. So we have lots of options and will let parents know as soon as we hear from the state as to the course of action we will take.

Q: How was the topping off ceremony held this morning for the Aberdeen K-8 school under construction?

A: It was so good to have something positive. The contractor told us that he had won a Sunshine State Safety Award for this project due to no injuries onsite and no missed days. We were glad to applaud the workers this morning. We have no worries in the least about the school opening on time for the 2018 – 2019 school year.

Q: Speaking of the new K-8 schools, how did the zoning meetings go earlier in September?

A: We actually had to postpone the third Town Hall meeting due to Hurricane Irma, but we had a large public response at the meetings we held. The rezoning plan presented was a starter plan and the possibility exists that it will be adjusted due to the public input we received. We hope to vote on the rezoning for both schools at our November Board Meeting, but this is the school district's timeline and a vote can be pushed back if necessary. The next step after that is naming a principal for each of the new schools, hopefully in January 2018.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

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Briefs

River of Life to hold 15th annual Pumpkin Patch and Fall Festival

The River of Life UMC Pumpkin Patch and Fall Festival is back for the 15th year on Saturday, Oct. 21 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Located at 2600 Race Track Road, parking will be provided at Julington Creek Elementary, with golf carts and a hayride to shuttle patrons to and from the festival.

The festival will feature live entertainment from local bands and dance studios as well as free bouncy houses, pony rides, face painting, tattoos, snow cones, cotton candy, popcorn, and lots of water.

This year a new attraction will be five food trucks from which patrons may purchase many kinds of tasty foods. The trucks will include Treemendous BBQ, Twisting Roots, Streety Pies and What's the Catch?

Along with games and a maze, there are many photo opportunities staged for family pictures in the pumpkin patch. The pumpkin patch will be open for sales and photo opportunities throughout the month of October, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. The church also offers a one hour excursion through the pumpkin patch for children's groups. Contact River of Life UMC to make a reservation at office@rolumc.com or (904) 230-2955.

Relay for Life kicks off new year

Relay for Life of North St. Johns Coun-

ty will hold its 2017 – 2018 Kick Off party at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 12 at Nease High School located at 10550 Ray Road. At this party, attendees can learn more about Relay for Life, meet new and veteran participants, meet committee members and have questions answered.

Relay for Life is an American Cancer Society annual event. Relay for Life of North St. Johns County is a family community event that will be held on Saturday, April 14, 2018 at Bartram Trail High School from 12 p.m. – 10 p.m. Prior to the event, relay teams work together to raise funds year round to benefit the American Cancer Society's various programs that assist those affected by cancer. This fundraising event empowers survivors, caretakers, and loved ones who want to fight the beast that has either depleted or taken away a loved one's life.

Volunteers are a vital part of Relay for Life of St. Johns County's success year after year and the group is presently seeking volunteers to join the committee. Email rfl.northsaintjohnscounty@gmail.com for to learn more or visit www.relayforlife.org/nstFL for more information.

St. Patrick's to host Trunk or Treat

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church will host Trunk or Treat on Saturday, Oct. 14, from 3:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the church located at 1221 State Road 13.

Briefs cont. on pg. 8

FYI Contact Numbers

St. Johns County Local Government (www.sjcf.us)

Sheriff's Office: (904) 824-8304
Sheriff David B. Shoar, dshoar@sjso.org
Julington Creek Field Office: (904) 209-2150
Property Appraiser: (904) 827-5500
Eddie Creamer, sjcpa@sjcpa.us
Supervisor of Elections: (904) 823-2238
Vicky Oakes, voakes@votesjc.com

Tax Collector: (904) 209-2250
Dennis Hollingworth, taxcollector@sjctax.us
Clerk of Court: (904) 819-3600
Hunter S. Conrad

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

District 1: (904) 209-0301
Jimmy Johns, bcc1johns@sjcf.us
District 2: (904) 209-0302
Jeb Smith, bcc2jsmith@sjcf.us
District 3: (904) 209-0303
Paul Waldron, bcc3pwaldron@sjcf.us

District 4: (904) 209-0304
Jay Morris, bccd4@sjcf.us

District 5: (904) 209-0305
Henry Dean, bccd5hdean@sjcf.us

St. Johns County School Board (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)
District 1: (904) 547-7510
Beverly Slough, beverly.slough@stjohns.k12.fl.us
District 2: (904) 547-7510
Tommy Allen, tommy.allen@stjohns.k12.fl.us

State of Florida Elected Officials

State House District 17: (904) 823-2300
Representative Cyndi Stevenson,
Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov,
State Senate District 7: (386) 446-7610
Senator Travis Hutson

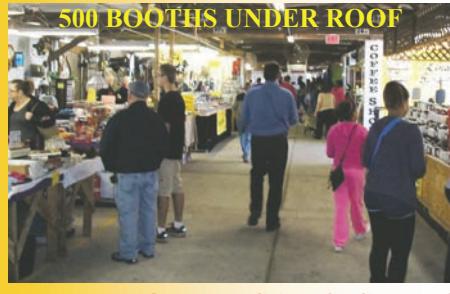
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U.S. Congress District 4:
Representative John Rutherford, (202) 225-2501
U.S. Senate:
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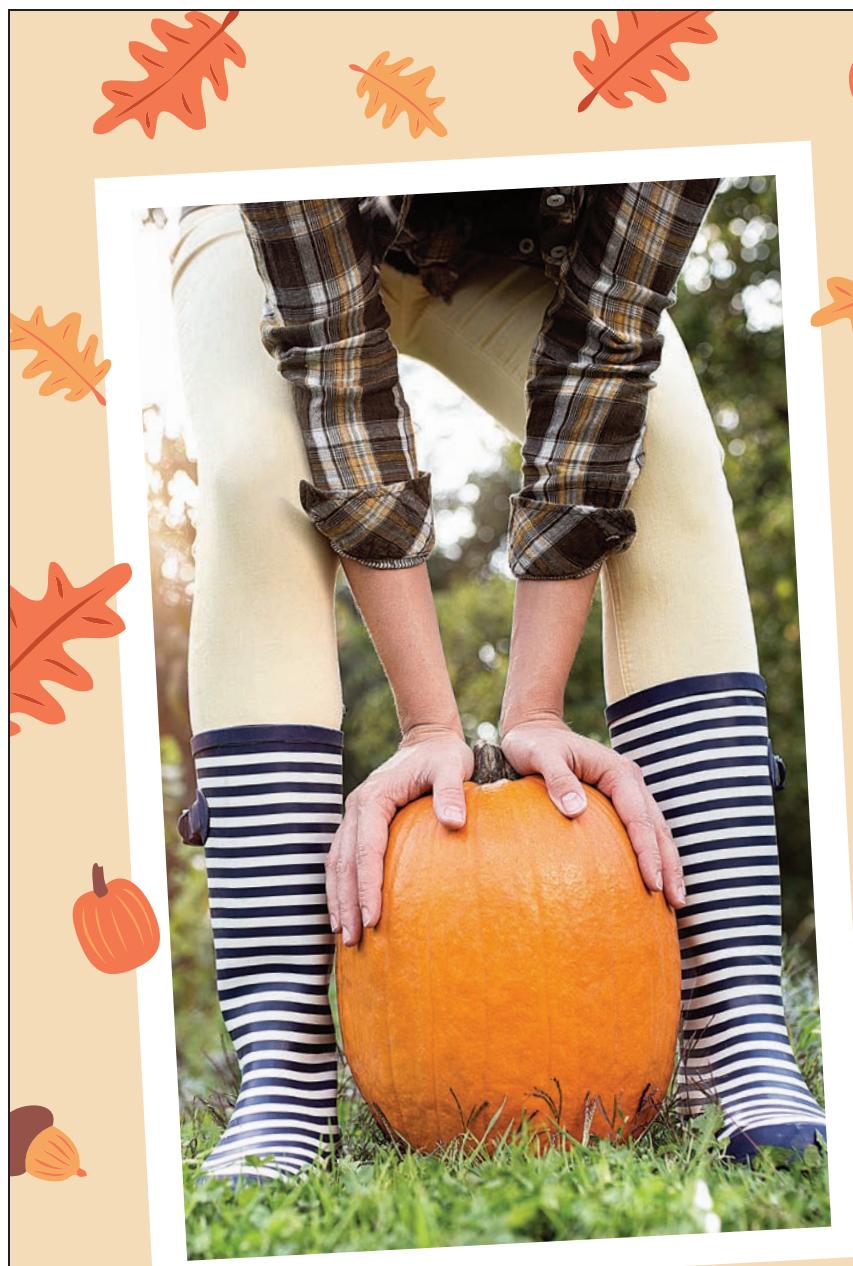


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Briefs cont. from pg. 7

The event is open to the public and will feature games, food, contests and prizes. Donations will be accepted and proceeds will benefit local children's ministries and families in need.

Visit www.stpatricksepiscopal.org for more information.

Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club to feature J.Jill fashion show

The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club will welcome the fall season with the latest in contemporary fashions from J.Jill at the meeting on Oct. 10 at 11 a.m. at Maggiano's Little Italy in the St. Johns Town Center. The family style luncheon will include zuc-

chini fritté and spinach and artichoke al forno followed by a tossed salad with Italian dressing. The entrées are chicken parmesan and baked eggplant parmesan served with a side of rigatoni pasta, followed by New York style cheesecake and spumoni for dessert. The cost of the luncheon is \$27; make the check payable to BTNC and mail to Hilda Gilpin at 621 Pineland Lane, Saint Johns, FL 32259 no later than Oct. 2.

J.Jill will be raffling a gift card, provide discount coupons and catalogs for all who attend. Additionally, since October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, attendees are encouraged to wear something pink to show support.

Also, on October 11, many Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club members will be attending "Dressing Downton, Changing Fashion for Changing Times," an exhibition of 36 costumes and accessories at the Lightner Museum. Visit the group's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/BTNC1, for more information.

The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club meets the second Tuesday of every month from September to May at local restaurants for lunch. In addition to the monthly meetings, the club has a wide variety of interest groups, including Bridge, Pennies Canasta, Mexican Train dominoes, Bunko, Mah Jongg, golf, recipe exchange, special event outings, book clubs, lunch and matinee, Lunch Divas, Ladies

Night Out, a nature walk group and community projects. Contact First Vice President Beth Rosado at bartramtncc@gmail.com for club information or visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 to download a membership form.

St. Johns County Public Libraries offer programs for students and job hunters

St. Johns County has launched Brainfuse, an on-demand eLearning program for all ages and grade levels. Brainfuse is available at all St. Johns County public libraries, remotely at home, and on the go with the free Brainfuse mobile app. Brainfuse offers a wide variety of educational resources, including personalized live tutoring in core subjects such as math, reading, writing, science, and social studies, SAT preparation, and other academic content and support.

Adults can also take advantage of Brainfuse through the Adult Learning Center, a suite specializing in basic skill building and career preparation, and JobNow, which offers real-time resume, interview, and career coaching services, and job search resources.

Brainfuse is available for free to all library patrons, and librarians are available for assistance. For more information, visit www.sjclps.org or call (904) 827-6935.

United Way St. Johns County begins new campaign

United Way of St. Johns County kicked off its 2017 – 18 fundraising campaign

on Thursday, Aug. 24 poolside at the Casa Monica Resort in downtown St. Augustine with more than 100 community supporters, donors and volunteers in attendance. The event, which took place just two weeks before the arrival of Hurricane Irma and with St. Johns County residents still feeling the effects of Matthew, addressed the need for United Way in the community after a natural disaster.

Tony Bernados, 2017/18 Campaign Chair, announced the new goal for the new year – \$1.3 million. Last year, United Way-SJC surpassed its fundraising goal.

To give, to advocate, or to volunteer, visit the United Way-SJC website at www.unitedway-sjc.org or call (904) 829-9721.



Photo courtesy United Way St. Johns County

United Way employees at the 2017 – 2018 campaign kickoff.

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November 4 US Coast Guard Auxiliary About Boating Safely class NE Florida Regional Airport Conference Center, 4730 Casa Cola Way, St. Augustine; Registration required; www.abs.mysafeboating.com

November 4 American Cancer Society's Cowford Ball VIP Party, 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.; Ball, 6:30 p.m. – 12 a.m.; Morocco Shrine Auditorium; Callie.hugo@cancer.org, (904) 391-3607 or www.cowfordball.org

December 1 – 3 41st annual Art and Antiques Show: "London Calling" Hosted by the Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital; Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center; www.artandantiquesshow.com

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E Pluribus Unum

By Jimmy Lee
mail@floridanewslines.com

Being raised in the South, I've experienced an interesting array of cultural contradictions. For example, I was taught the basic value of "love thy neighbor" by family and friends with staunch racist values. Also, my descendants from confederate veterans of the Civil War and from patriot veterans of the American Revolution was a frequent and proud topic of dinner table and family reunion conversations. Like many of you, whether you are from the South or not, I have seen the curious and controversial nuances southern heritage impact our nation and world in monumental ways, positively and negatively. That same heritage has helped me understand that people can look at something and describe it in diametrically opposite ways and that my way of "seeing" something isn't always the right way or certainly not the only way of seeing it.

My parents were wonderful, loving people who came from a deeply impoverished childhood. Though they were deprived of many of the opportunities that most Americans today take for granted, they worked endlessly to provide those opportunities to my brothers and me. They were, however, products of their time and place. They had their faults, failures, attributes and triumphs. Among the legacies they passed down to me, and the one most important to me, is my Christian faith. I mention all of this about my experiences and influences because I think they are much like those of others.

Individually and collectively, we have a nuanced heritage of contradictions of shame, pride, failure, and success. The American population is experiencing a period of remarkable change. We are becoming increasingly diverse in nationality, language, ideology, and religious backgrounds. Because of the importance of my faith to me, I have long been curious about the religious and nonreligious beliefs of others — particularly of my students. Since my first years as a teacher in rural South Carolina, I have witnessed a dramatically increas-

Civics for One and All

ing diversity of faith and non-faith among my students. This diversity is a wonderful thing in the classroom. It offers students the opportunity to learn about these traditions and, more importantly, the opportunity to learn a level of tolerance many adults may never learn; however, the lesson of religious tolerance is not an easy one.

As mine is to me, the beliefs students have regarding religion and spirituality are very often the most important values they carry. Students (and adults) can be critically sensitive to anything that hints of insult to their faith. Those insults, real or perceived, often lead to tension, distrust, and intolerance. I fear our increasing religious diversity, nationwide and locally, could lead to events like the riots in Charlottesville, Virginia. Instead of protesting monuments of war, however, these riots could be about monuments of faith — faith carried in the hearts of believers and nonbelievers of all sorts. But we must prevent such unrest and doing my part has long been a goal of mine, if only in my classroom.

A few weeks ago I was offered a unique opportunity from the Newseum Institute in Washington, D.C. This organization is devoted to the explanation and defense of free expression and the First Amendment. I will be participating in the inaugural class of its Religious Freedom Center educator's certification program. The goal of this program is to prepare "constitutional and human rights specialists on issues of religion and public life."

I hope to better serve my students and community with what I learn in this program. In the coming months, I hope to be able to share with you some of what I learn and ideas of how to allow our diversity to strengthen our community. In the meantime, love thy neighbor.

Jimmy Lee teaches United States History at Nease High School.

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Hurricane Irma: Storm lashes, then brings community together

By Shelley Howard
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2017, following the relaxed Labor Day weekend, residents woke to a flurry of activity as if an alarm had sounded. Panic across the state of Florida seemed to catch speed and spiral out of control. Almost as soon as business doors opened, word of sold out water and growing gas lines spread. By nightfall, gas stations felt the rippling impact as pump after pump was bagged with yellow "out of service" tape. Lines for propane, gas tanks, plywood and flashlights dwindled to empty shelves. Grocery stores felt a rush on paper goods, water, dry foods and ever popular bread.

St. Johns County residents began lining up in anticipation of restocked store shelves and replenished gas tanks, while Irma reached Puerto Rico as one of the "strongest storms ever recorded in the Atlantic," causing at least 10 deaths by the time she ripped through the Caribbean Islands. The National Hurricane Center warned of a direct impact on South Florida and The Keys, but residents still remained hopeful that the tracking models would see a shift in the eye of Irma; however, Irma was so massively large as a Category 5 that the entire state of Florida would be impacted.

By Saturday, preparations intensified as a Nor'easter rain event took hold

of local skies, dumping up to several inches of rainfall ahead of Hurricane Irma. Conflicting weather predictions kept the local impact at uncertain levels, pushing leery residents to board up doors and windows.

Sunday began a new day with pounding rain and wind from the Nor'easter. Following closely on its path was Irma, determined to not be outdone. She blew into St. Johns County shortly before midnight with whipping winds. By approximately 4 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 11, 2017, the skies began lighting up green as transformer after transformer blew out power to more than half of the county residents. Hours passed, water rose and trees new and old buckled, falling on additional power lines, across streets, cars and houses. Business structures took on damage just as quickly as rivers flooded and sands washed away. Downtown St. Augustine and Jacksonville took on massive storm surge waters that pushed deeper into city streets. First responders and local law enforcement officers reported for extended duty, knowing that they were taking part in historic relief efforts, but refusing to be defeated.

Hours passed and the skies brightened. Residents began checking on neighbors, powering up chainsaws to assist in clearing subdivision entrances, driveways and even uncov-



Photos by Shelley Howard

Julington Creek bridge area had numerous flooded docks.



Downed power lines along St. Johns River from trees falling across State Road 13, volunteers and first responders chainsawed paths to re-open road access

ering vehicles buried beneath fallen trees. Utility linemen sat anxiously in their trucks waiting for officials to deem the winds safe to begin 24-hour work crews braving flooded streets and debris to restore downed lines.

School was cancelled for an entire week and local businesses began to clean up and rebuild if necessary. For most, life began to return to some sort of "normal," but it is important look around, listen to the stories of those who lost everything as a tornado tore their roof away or a wave toppled their home right into the ocean, and feel humbled in what our neighbors have experienced and will continue to suffer through for days, weeks or years to come.

Hurricane Irma cont. on pg. 11

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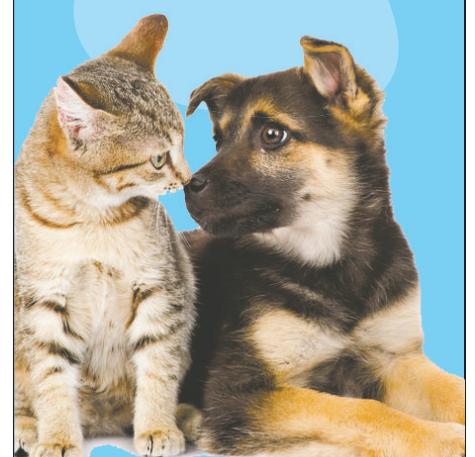
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Hurricane Irma cont. from pg. 10

Evacuation traffic



Sand baggers at Mills Field in advance of the storm.



Swiss Cove Christian Church lost its steeple



Welcome to St. Johns

 A close-up portrait of a female physician with blonde hair tied back, wearing a white lab coat and a stethoscope around her neck. She is smiling at the camera. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

Dr. Phillips is one of the board-certified emergency physicians at Baptist South.

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Scott Grant
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Who wants to be a millionaire?

How would you like to get paid thirty thousand tax-free dollars a year? What if I told you that you could earn that every year for the rest of your life? And your children's life? And their children as well? Most of the time when someone makes a claim like that, I would advise you to run; run far and fast. Get rich quick schemes rarely work. Most of the time they are just a con to separate you from your hard-earned money. This is different, I promise. What makes it different? It is not quick. It is slow. In fact, the whole plan takes 30 – 35 years to implement. My plan relies on two well-known investment concepts called compounding and dollar cost averaging.

So, here is how it works. First you need 35 years. Second, you will need to make an investment of \$450 a month. Now if this was an infomercial, I would describe that as "less than \$15 per day." But, this is not an infomercial. This is math. What I want you to do is to take that \$15 a day and invest it into a Roth IRA. Inside the Roth IRA, I want you to invest into something that resembles a Standard & Poor's Index 500 Fund. Index 500 funds seek to replicate the return on the stock market as a whole. This article presumes you will make a return of 8 percent on your Index fund. (Frankly, you will probably make more, but 8 percent is a good number and one that gets used most often in

examples of this nature.)

So, at the end of 35 years, your \$15-a-day will have increased in value to slightly more than one million dollars. Congratulations! You are a millionaire. The even better news is that because you put the money into a Roth IRA, you are a tax-free millionaire, which is pretty much the best kind of millionaire to be. You can take out as much or as little as you like every year and never pay tax on the income. My suggestion is that you take out thirty thousand dollars a year, but if you wanted, you could take it all out and buy a house or a small yacht or blow it all at the craps table in Vegas. Beware though — if you take your Roth to Vegas and you win, you will have to pay tax on your winnings.

The thirty-thousand dollar a year income is based on you earning a 3 percent dividend. Lots of stocks pay 3 percent, including Coca-Cola and Intel. As long as you receive the dividend inside your Roth and then take it out, it is tax-free to you ... forever. And like all stories with a happy ending, you and your family will live happily ever after.

Scott A. Grant is President of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.

If you plan to fund your retirement by selling your business, start planning now

By Marge Cirillo
mail@floridanewsline.com

Ask entrepreneurs about their retirement plan and it is likely their answer will be, "My business is my retirement plan."

Planning for retirement is a long-term commitment; however, many small business owners don't save for retirement because their priority lies in putting their earnings back into the business to keep it growing rather than paying themselves a salary.

Despite the huge number of entrepreneurs who plan to fund their retirement by selling their business, business owners don't have an exit plan. When planning for retirement, entrepreneurs will often take one of two routes: They will transfer their business to their children for future wealth or they will sell it off in return for cash.

In either case, knowing the value of the business, showing a net profit on tax returns and working on the business (not in the business) will strengthen the business owner's hand in the negotia-

tion process by allowing them to identify potential buyers, negotiate more effectively and increase the chances of realizing the maximum value for the business on sale.

Small-business owners would do well to keep their retirement top of mind and check in on their progress regularly to ensure that they are taking adequate time to invest in their future. Entrepreneurs' mentality usually focuses on generating future revenue for their business, but a few hours a week will help to keep their future needs a top priority.

Valuing a business the day you decide to sell is like planning your retirement the day you decide to retire — you may be left out in the cold.

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

Disaster loan programs activated to aid businesses impacted by Hurricane Irma

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Florida businesses impacted by Hurricane Irma may now apply for various state and federal disaster loan programs. As a principal responder in the state's Emergency Support Function for Business and Industry, the Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of North Florida stands ready to assist businesses with disaster loan applications and with other post-disaster challenges.

State assistance: Governor Rick Scott activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to provide short-term, interest-free loans to businesses damaged by the storm. Administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) in partnership with the Florida SBDC Network and Florida First Capital Finance Corporation (FFCFC), the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan helps businesses bridge the gap between the time damage is incurred and when a business secures other financial resources, including payment of insurance claims or longer-term Small Business Administration loans. Up to \$10 million has been allocated for the program.

Under the program, eligible small

businesses in all 67 Florida counties with two to 100 employees may apply for short-term, interest-free loans for \$1,000 to \$25,000 for 90 or 180-day terms. To be eligible, a business must have been established prior to Sept. 4, 2017, and demonstrate economic injury or physical damage as a result of Hurricane Irma. Visit www.floridadirasterloan.org for more information and to apply for the Florida Emergency Bridge Loan program; the deadline to apply is Oct. 31, 2017.

Business Damage Assessment Survey: Small businesses that have incurred losses due to Hurricane Irma are asked to complete a Business Damage Assessment Survey, which will help the State Emergency Response Team determine the needs and level of assistance for impacted businesses. Visit www.flbeoc.org to take the survey.

Federal assistance: Following President Donald Trump's major disaster declaration, impacted businesses may now apply for low-interest loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Business Physical Disaster Loans are intended to help repair or replace

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Disaster cont. on pg. 14

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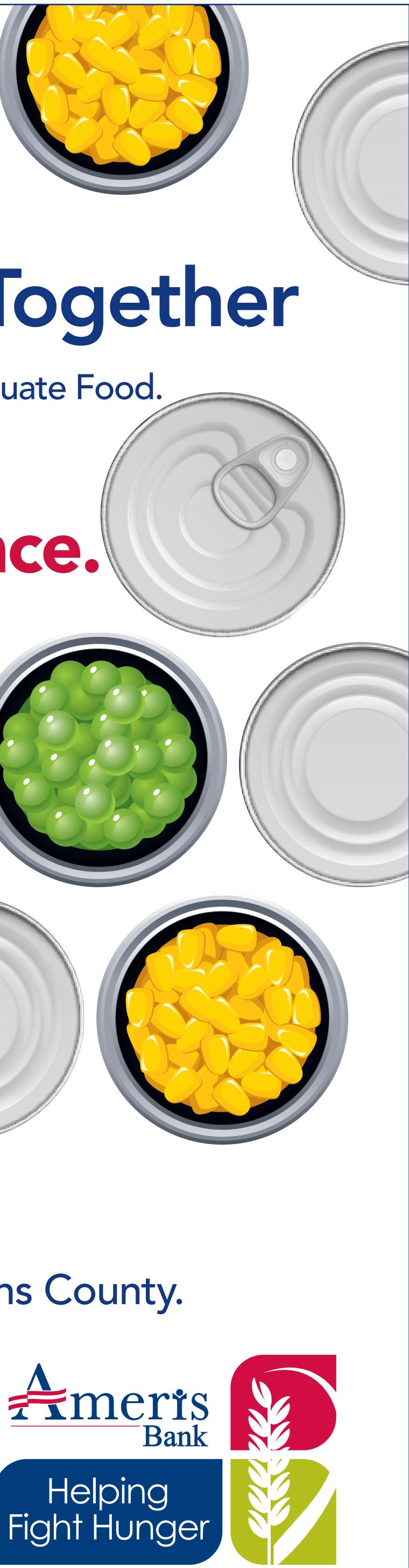
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*Feeding America Map the Meal Gap 2017 Report



Disaster cont. from pg. 12

disaster-damaged property. Businesses and nonprofit organizations may apply for up to \$2 million to repair or replace property, including real estate, equipment, inventory, machinery, and other business assets. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan program provides working capital loans to help small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private, nonprofit organizations meet financial obligations and operating expenses through the disaster recovery period.

Businesses must first register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at www.disasterassistance.gov, or by mobile device at m.fema.gov or call the toll-free helpline at (800) 621-3362. Upon registration

with FEMA, businesses may apply for a disaster loan online at <https://disaster-loan.sba.gov/ela>; by downloading an application from www.sba.gov/disaster; or by visiting a SBA recovery center or the Florida SBDC at UNF for assistance. The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is Nov. 9, 2017 and the deadline to return economic injury applications is June 11, 2018.

The Florida SBDC Network supports disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation through its Business Continuation Services. For questions about the Emergency Bridge Loan Program, the U.S. SBA Physical and Economic Injury Loan Programs, and how the Florida SBDC can help, contact the Florida SBDC Network at (850) 898-3489 or Disaster@FloridaSBDC.org.

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Hurricane Irma impacts Asian vegetable acreage in St. Johns County



Photo courtesy Dr. Bonnie C. Wells, Commercial Agriculture Agent, UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County

Winter melon, also known as ash gourd, is one of the crops included in the nearly 200 acres of Asian vegetables in St. Johns County that were damaged as a result of the high winds and inundating rainfall brought to the area by Hurricane Irma. One of the largest impacts for agriculture in the county will be for cabbage, broccoli and Brussels sprouts that growers will have to delay planting by one to two weeks, during the peak fall growing window, because of waterlogged soils. Small acreages of field corn and sweet potatoes were also impacted.

Property Appraiser requests storm damage reports

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

St. Johns County residents whose homes or properties sustained damage as a result of Hurricane Irma are encouraged to complete a Storm Damage Report through the Property Appraiser's Office. The damage reports will provide a county-wide assessment to assist in expediting recovery efforts.

report, call (904) 827-5500, or send a detailed email to sjcpa@sjcpa.us to report home or property damage. Once a report is submitted, the Property Appraiser's Office will schedule a time to visit the property and document any reported damage.

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A group photograph of the Brush Salon team, consisting of ten stylists and one male manager, all dressed in professional black attire. They are arranged in two rows against a dark background.

The logo for Brush Salon, featuring the word "BRUSH" in large, metallic, serif letters. The letter "B" has a pair of scissors on its left side, and the letter "H" has a pair of scissors on its right side. Below "BRUSH" is the word "salon" in a smaller, cursive script font.

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FEMA advises disaster applicants to beware of rumors, misinformation, and fraud

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslne.com

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is raising awareness that Hurricane Irma disaster survivors should be alert for false rumors, scams, identity theft, and fraud. Although many Americans are working hard to help their neighbors now, during chaotic times, some will always try to take advantage of the most vulnerable.

To dispel some of the false rumors circulating on the internet and social media, FEMA has a dedicated website to address some of the most common themes. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Here are a few guidelines to protect yourself or someone you care about from disaster fraud:

Federal and state workers do not ask for, or accept, money. FEMA staff will never charge applicants for disaster assistance, home inspections, or help filling out applications. Stay alert for false promises to speed up the insurance, disaster assistance, or building permit process.

In person, always ask to see any FEMA employee ID badges. FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance teams may be in impacted communities providing information and assisting survivors with the registration process or their applicant files.

A FEMA shirt or jacket is not proof of identity. All FEMA representatives, including contracted inspectors, will have a laminated photo ID. All National Flood Insurance Program adjusters will have a NFIP Authorized Adjuster Card with their name and the types of claims they may adjust.

If you are unsure or uncomfortable with anyone you encounter claiming to be an emergency management official, do not give out personal information, and contact local law enforcement.

Visit [cane-irma-rumor-control to get the most accurate information from trusted sources.](https://www.fema.gov/hurri-</p>
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If you suspect fraud, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud's hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or email the organization at disaster@leo.gov. You can also report fraud to the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov. Learn more about the National Center for Disaster Fraud at www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud.

In Florida, disaster-related fraud information is available on the State Attorney General's Office website at www.MyFloridaLegal.com, or by calling the office at 1-866-966-7226.

Hurricane survivors are also encouraged to notify local authorities to cases of lawlessness or violence, especially in hurricane shelters. In an emergency, call 9-1-1. For other cases:

In Florida, report suspicious/criminal activity to 1-855-352-7233.

What to expect when you register for FEMA disaster assistance

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslne.com

If you live in one of the disaster-designated Florida counties, which include St. Johns and Duval, and experienced property damage or loss directly caused by Hurricane Irma, register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for disaster assistance — even if you have insurance. This can be an important step to begin the process of recovery.

FEMA assistance for individuals may include grants for rent, temporary housing and home repairs to their primary residences, as well as funding for other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical, dental or funeral costs. If you have insurance, FEMA may still be able to assist with disaster-related expenses that were underinsured or not covered by your policy.

After you apply, a FEMA inspector will contact you to schedule an inspection. The inspection generally takes 30 – 40 minutes or less and consists of a general verification of your disaster-related losses and a review of ownership or residence records. There is no fee for the inspection.

When a FEMA housing inspector comes to visit your home, be sure they show you proper identification. All FEMA inspectors have prominent photo identification badges. If you suspect someone is posing as a FEMA

housing inspector, call our toll-free Disaster Fraud Hotline at (866) 720-5721, or call local law enforcement officials.

Once the inspection process is complete, your situation will be reviewed by FEMA. You will receive a letter by email or physical mail, depending on your preference, which outlines the decision about your claim. For more information about the inspection process and documentation you will need to provide the inspector, visit the FEMA Individual Assistance Inspection Process page at www.ready.gov.

You may register for assistance the following ways:

- Online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov
- If you don't have internet access, call (800) 621-3362.
- People who have a speech disability or hearing loss and use TTY should call (800) 462-7585.
- For those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call (800) 621-3362.

These toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. – 11 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

Visit FEMA's Hurricane Irma web page at www.fema.gov/hurricane-irma for more recovery information.

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Tax Tip of the Month

Your 2016 return has likely been filed by now. It is time to start thinking about 2017 taxes—either planning for your current tax situation, dealing with IRS issues of the past, or getting your books in order for filing your 2017 return. We can help you with all of those. Some examples are 1) a new or old business and your record keeping is severely lacking. You need help getting your books where they need to be; 2) IRS notices regarding the balance due from a prior year threatening a levy. You need help getting a payment plan arranged; or 3) a sale of a piece of property yielding a high gain. You need to know if there is anything you can do to cut your taxes. This is a perfect time of year to plan for 2017—whether IRS, taxes or bookkeeping. Give us a call!



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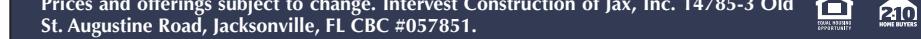
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Fruit Cove Pub Crawl to be held Oct. 21

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Rotary Club of Bartram Trail and St. Johns CARES will host the 2017 Fruit Cove Pub Crawl on Saturday, Oct. 21 in the Bartram Walk Center at the corner of Race Track Road and State Road 13.

The crawl will begin at 3:15 p.m. at Moon Dog Pie House, followed by stops at Bono's, Wakame, La Nopalera and finally, Iggy's. Raffle prizes will be awarded at Iggy's at 7 p.m. The theme this year is Village People and prizes will be awarded for the best male and female attire.

The cost of the event is \$35, which will benefit St. Johns CARES and the local

and international charities of the Rotary Club of Bartram Trail, including the ESE playground improvements at Cunningham Creek Elementary. Attendees receive a souvenir tee shirt and beer mug; only 150 tickets are available as advance purchase only.

The club is also currently selling \$20 raffle tickets for a Big Green Egg donated by Pinch-A-Penny in Fruit Cove. Only 200 tickets will be sold. The winner will be drawn at the conclusion of the Pub Crawl on Oct. 21.

Call (904) 535-8411 for Green Egg raffle or Pub Crawl tickets.

Helping Hands of St. Johns County support those needing extra help



Photos courtesy Mary Safin

On Sept. 5 Helping Hands members delivered pillowcases made by the Rippers to Fresenius Kidney Care in Mandarin. Pictured are Carole Francis Jubert (dietician); Carol Burd; Gail Benett (manager); Helen Piellusch; and Domonique Jackson (social worker). Also in September, Helping Hands members filled Comfort Bags of toiletries for those affected by hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

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Bartram Trail cont. from pg.1

come along even if it meant chartering buses and paying their own way. The marching band, dance team, winter guard and cheerleading squad could not wait to shine under the lights and smile for the camera.

Despite disappointing setbacks that began with a weather lightning delay and worsened with a shut-down by their opponent, the Bears were determined to fight to the end. Carterville's offense just could not be stopped and their defense was shutting down both Gatewood and quarterback Riley Smith in the first half.

At halftime, the Spirit of Bartram marching band showcased their talent before the two teams again took the field for a massive comeback rally by Bartram Trail that pulled them up from a 28-point deficit to nearly win the game. Regardless of the final play not working out for the Bears, they fought a tough battle with a final score of 52 – 45.

Even though they did not secure a win, the pride in the faces of the students who were given the opportu-



The Bartram Trail High School Cheerleaders

Photos courtesy Shelley Howard and Melissa Mulley

nity to travel for a nationally televised game was felt for days after their return home.

Scenic Highway cont. from pg.1

Provided the property proves to be structurally sound, the William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway group hopes to restore the building to its late 1940s architecture. Plans are for it to serve as a meeting place for area civic groups. The volunteer fire station would be torn down and a second building erected, which would function as a welcome center and an interpretive history center for the Northwest area of the county. The group envisions that the combination of these two facilities with Alpine Groves Park across the street will create a civic hub centrally located on the scenic highway.

"Part of the charter of the William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway organization is to educate

residents and visitors on the history of this area and greater St. Johns County," Abbatiello said. "Our group is also working with other organizations for a contiguous Bartram Trail through Florida. Putnam County's Bartram Trail group has done a great deal of work towards that end with an interpretive center on the river in Palatka that travelers should experience. This center is similar to what we envision for our interpretive center in St. Johns."

Roumillat said, "With all of the growth, this area will be transformed forever, but this piece of the William Bartram Scenic Highway can be preserved forever with this restoration. Between Race Track Road and RiverTown is a little piece of Old Florida."



Bartram's offense making a drive.

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Traditions of Halloween from blended origins

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslne.com

October 31 is nearly here, and soon the streets will be filled with costumed revelers eager to get their share of the free-flowing candy and other prizes. Year after year, trick-or-treaters don their costumes and parade from home to home. But have you ever wondered where this and other traditions began?

Trick-or-treating and wearing costumes seem like odd traditions to those unaccustomed to Halloween. Halloween customs are actually a blend of Celtic, Catholic, Pagan, and ancient Roman traditions. It is thought that Halloween celebrations date back to roughly 800 to 600 BC, when they originally were observances of the harvest season and nature before the arrival of winter, which marked the barren state of the landscape. The Celtic festival of Samhain was a major influence on modern day Halloween.

On October 31, Celts also believed the door to the underworld was opened and could let in deceased spirits. Feasts were held and place-settings were left for deceased relatives, as they were believed to return home for a visit. In addition to friendly spirits, mean spirits also could cross over. Bonfires were lit to ward off spirits, and extra candles would be used in homes and churches to keep evil away.

Even the custom of wearing costumes has its roots in keeping evil spirits at bay. Costumes and masks were worn to confuse bad spirits and frighten them so that they could not bestow misfortune on the more fortunate. People also wore masks and ventured out after dark so that envious ghosts who were cold and outside could not recognize residents of warm and inviting homes.

The trick-or-treating custom may have blended origins. Druids believed the dead would play tricks on mankind during Samhain, causing destruction and panic. To appease the spirits, people would give the dead food and other treats.

Another custom, called "souling," can be linked to Halloween as well. Early Christians would walk from village to village asking for "soul cakes," which were square pieces of bread with currants. The more cakes received, the more prayers the faithful would promise to say on behalf of the dead relatives of the cake donors to expedite a soul's passage to heaven.

Irish trick-or-treating customs may be traced back to collecting supplies door-to-door for the festival of St. Columbkille.

How to preserve carved pumpkins

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslne.com

Jack-o'-lanterns and other carved pumpkin designs are frequently the centerpieces of Halloween festivities. The twinkling lights and orange glow of jack-o'-lanterns can add ambiance to any autumn event. The trouble with carving pumpkins is that most people want to do it right away, only to discover their pumpkins wilt and decay long before Halloween.

Nothing ruins Halloween more than visiting a home to trick-or-treat and not getting candy. Equally disappointing is a sad pumpkin display withering away on a front porch. Even though all pumpkins will eventually rot, certain tips can keep carvings from collapsing too soon.

- Choose a sturdy pumpkin. Inspect the pumpkin of your choosing carefully, looking for gouges, spots and holes. Even a small blemish can quickly expand into a mushy mess. Select pumpkins with even color and firm flesh, and make sure that the pumpkin doesn't feel tender when you push on the skin.
- Scrape the insides of the pumpkin thoroughly. Any moist bits inside the pumpkin will mold quickly. The pumpkin carving experts at Pumpkin Masters recommend scraping as much of the "guts" out as possible, leaving about a one-inch thickness of the wall of the pumpkin.
- Coat the pumpkin. Preservation methods may aim to keep the pumpkin hydrated and inhibit mold and other microbial growth. Commercially sold pumpkin preservation products, such as Pumpkin Fresh®, hold up well. Soaking and spraying carved pumpkins with
- a bleach-and-water solution also seems to preserve designs.
- Keep it out of the elements. Store carved pumpkins in a cool, dry place. This will help slow down the rotting process for pumpkins exposed to outdoor fungi, other microbes and warm sunlight.
- Use an artificial light source. Reduce the heat inside of the pumpkin and encourage hydration by selecting a battery-powered light instead of a lit candle to illuminate the carving.
- Skip the carving. Once pumpkin skin is compromised, microbes can enter. In lieu of carving, paint or decorate pumpkins in other ways if you want them to stay fresh for a long time. Glow in the dark paint can help pumpkins stand out at night.

Carved pumpkins may last a week or two, while uncut pumpkins can last for a month or more. Keeping pumpkins hydrated and mold-free will prolong your designs.

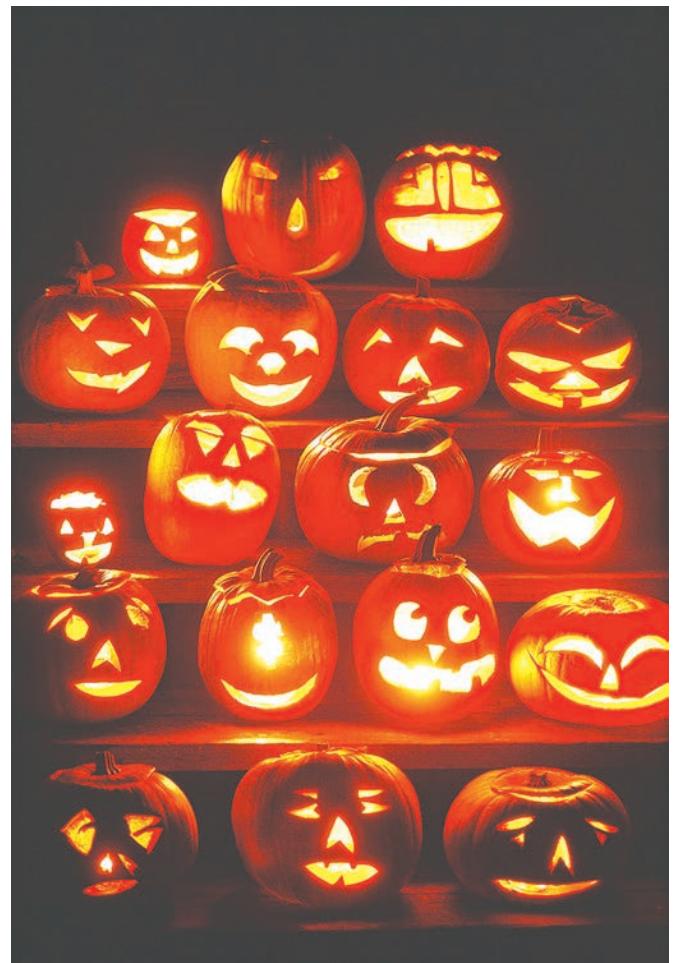


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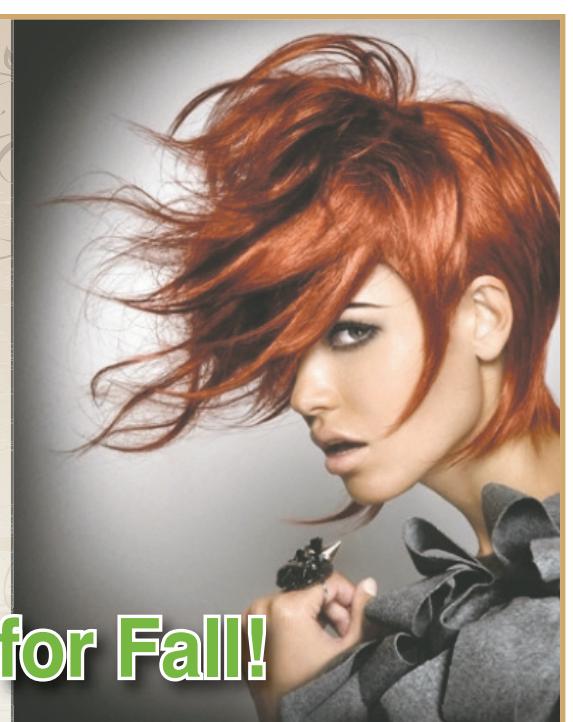


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How to remove a tick and prevent future bites

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslne.com

As tick populations grow and spread across the country, their prevalence is increasing the public's risk for some troubling diseases. Of these diseases, say dermatologists from the American Academy of Dermatology, Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Powassan virus and alpha-gal syndrome — a mysterious red meat allergy — are among the most serious.

"Although most ticks do not carry disease, it's important to be mindful of these risks and keep an eye out while you're outdoors," said board-certified dermatologist Lindsay Strowd, MD, FAAD, an assistant professor of dermatology at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. "If you notice a tick crawling on you or attached to your skin, remove it immediately to prevent any potential infection."

To remove a tick that is attached to your skin, Dr. Strowd recommends the following tips:

Use tweezers to remove the tick. Sterilize the tip of the tweezers using rubbing alcohol and grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.

Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Avoid twisting, squeezing or crushing the tick, as this can cause its head or mouth to break off and remain in your skin. If this happens, use tweezers to remove the remaining parts. If you cannot remove the rest of the tick, see a board-certified dermatologist.

Dispose of the tick. Place it in a sealed bag or container; submerge the tick in alcohol; or wrap it tightly in tape. You may also want to save the tick in a sealed jar. That way, if you develop any symptoms after the bite, the tick can be tested for disease.

Clean the bite area with soap and water.

"Although ticks can bite at any time, they're most active in April through September," said Dr. Strowd. "For-

tunately, there are many things people can do to protect themselves and their families against ticks."

To prevent tick bites, Dr. Strowd recommends the following tips:

Walk in the center of trails. Avoid walking through heavily wooded and brushy areas with tall grass.

If you must walk through heavily wooded areas, wear long pants and long sleeves. Pull your socks up over your pants, and tuck your shirt into your pants to prevent ticks from crawling up your body. It's also a good idea to wear light-colored clothes so that ticks can be spotted easily.

Use insect repellent that contains 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin and clothing. Make sure to follow the product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, making sure to avoid the hands, eyes and mouth.

Examine your skin after spending time in heavily wooded or brushy areas. Conduct a full-body tick check to make sure that no ticks are crawling on you. Since ticks prefer warm, moist areas, be sure to check your armpits, groin and hair. You should also check your children and pets, as well as any gear you used outside.

"If you develop any symptoms within a few weeks after a tick bite, such as a rash, fever or body aches, see a board-certified dermatologist," said Dr. Strowd. "Make sure you tell the doctor about your recent tick bite, when the bite occurred and where you most likely acquired the tick."

These tips are demonstrated in "How to Remove a Tick", a video posted to the AAD website and YouTube channel. This video is part of the AAD's "Video of the Month" series, which offers tips people can use to properly care for their skin, hair and nails. A new video in the series posts to the AAD website and YouTube channel each month.

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