

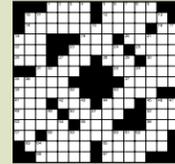
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Photo courtesy Linda McQueen

The introductory meeting for this year's braille volunteer class will be Sept. 23.

Learn Braille to help the blind and visually impaired

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

For more than 60 years, the Temple Sisterhood at Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Mandarin has sponsored a program to teach Braille, a form of written language designed for the blind and visually impaired. This program teaches volunteers to convert printed books into braille versions used by the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, other institutions serving the visually impaired, and individuals who make special requests. These services are provided at no cost to all recipients.

During 2020, the program's volunteers contributed more than 20,000 hours, equating to more than

Braille cont. on pg. 13

NW St. Johns County heads back to school

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Monday, Aug. 16 dawned bright and early for students in NW St. Johns County — the first day of school for the 2021 – 2022 school year. The typical opening day heavy traffic occurred, as parents were more likely to drive their student to school for the first day. Officials with the school district and sheriff's office expect these delays to settle down as the school year progresses and everyone gets into a routine.

"I was really excited as I went to the schools on the first day, especially to see how happy the students were to be back with their friends and teachers," School Board member for District 1 Bev Slough said. "At many of the schools I saw the new kindergarteners with wide eyes on their school tours. It was just a great day."

The student count for the St. Johns County School District the first day of school, Aug. 16, was 41,744, an increase of 4,986 students or 13.6 percent over last year's first day number of 36,758. St. Johns County continues to be one of the fastest growing school districts in the state; however, a portion of this extreme growth reflects students returning to in-person learning.

The high school student count was 14,051 with 3,096 students at Bartram Trail High School, 2,297 at Creekside High School, 1,336 at Pedro Menendez High School,



Photo courtesy Katelyn Ostpick

The Toco Creek Toros had their first ever pep rally on Aug. 20, in advance of the football game vs. Paxson. Earlier in the week, the school recorded its first FHSAA win for any sport when the Lady Toros volleyball team was victorious over Flagler Palm Coast.

2,340 at Allen D. Nease High School, 1,814 at Ponte Vedra High School, and 1,642 at St. Augustine High School. The opening day number for the new high school, Toco Creek, was 1,281.

Toco Creek High School principal Jay Willets was delighted that all the planning and hard work to open the new school was paying off — despite the fact that two of his school's buildings were still under construction.

"Our theme for the first week was celebration and flexibility," Willets said, noting that opening the school with just grades nine through 11 allowed for extra classrooms to be available so the construction didn't impact student learning or safety.

"My first day impression was ... great start!" he said.

Middle school attendance totaled 6,869, with student

with 1,249.

The district's K-8 schools totaled 9,398. Liberty Pines Academy had a first day headcount of 1,289, Patriot Oaks Academy with 1,153, Valley Ridge Academy with 1,136; Freedom Crossing Academy was the largest with 1,937, Palm Valley Academy with 1,358, Mill Creek Academy with 1,556 and new district's new K-8, Pine Island Academy, with 969.

The elementary school population totaled 11,282. This count only includes approximately 25 percent of all kindergarten students since schools stagger the kindergarten start date over a four-day period.

"The hard work and dedication from administration, teachers and support staff to make opening day the very best was impressive," said

Back to school cont. on pg. 12



Photo courtesy Heidi Karl

Students excitedly exit their school bus at Julington Creek Elementary on the first day of school.

headcounts ranging from 676 at Sebastian Middle School to 1,301 at Pacetti Bay Middle School. The other first day figures were Alice B. Landrum Middle School with 1,162, Fruit Cove Middle School with 1,083, R. J. Murray Middle School with 563, Gamble Rogers Middle School with 835, and Switzerland Point Middle School

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Corvette Club revs up in Ponte Vedra Beach

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewline.com

Bert Rasmussen first wanted to own a Corvette when he was a child and watched the television show “Route 66.”

“I never wanted anything else,” said Rasmussen, who with his wife Wylie has three daughters, one son and 11 grandchildren.

It didn’t happen right away, but eventually he purchased a C6, a C7 (2015) and now a 2021 C8. In fact, his wife picked out his first Corvette in 2007. Now Rasmussen has recently established the Ponte Vedra Beach Corvette Club, looking to bring together other Corvette enthusiasts.

Other than owning a Corvette, there are no requirements or dues to join the club,

and that is a priority for Rasmussen, a Jacksonville lawyer. So far, there are eight members.

“I want it to be something fun, to go on drives and maybe meet for lunch or coffee. That’s my vision,” he said, adding that he is working to find a sponsor. “We are also interested in using this as a way to have fundraisers for different causes.”

One cause that is close to his heart is ALS because a close friend has the disease and attended the Ponte Vedra Beach Corvette Club’s First Drive in Rasmussen’s Corvette.

The club took its “First Drive” on July 24, meeting at the Sawgrass Village Shopping Center parking lot and driving to Angel’s Dining Car in Palatka. In late August, they met at the same parking lot and then drove to the “Caffeine and Octane Jacksonville” car show at The Avenues Mall. The next get together will be on Sept. 11, also a “Caffeine and Octane” car show, and all are welcome.

Rasmussen said he has enjoyed getting to know new folks from all walks of life through the club.

“These are super fun cars and super fun people. It just puts a smile on your face,” he said. “The common denominator is our love of cars.”

Rasmussen also shares his passion for cars with his 14-year-old grandson, Waylan.

“He recently turned 14, and he is my car buddy,” said Rasmussen. “We go to shows and auctions together whenever possible.”

Club member Adrien Marsoni, a former



Adrien Marsoni and Bert Rasmussen look at the engine of Rasmussen's 2021 C8. Photo courtesy Tiffany Merlo Phelps

chef from France and current builder/developer, also loves meeting a variety of people with a similar passion for cars. Prior to living in Ponte Vedra Beach, Marsoni lived in Washington, D.C., for 15 years, running Marsoni Home Restoration.

“I would like the club to be more ‘performance’ oriented than ‘cruise ride.’ It would be nice to organize track and autocross (a timed competition in which drivers navigate one at a time through a defined course) days,” said Marsoni, who owns a 2008 C6 Z06.

Marsoni, who has been racing cars and motorcycles for about 10 years, said he always loved American cars. Once he tried a Corvette, he was sold.

“Usually, the car or bike has a weakness — lack of power, stability, cornering speed. Those domains require constant improvements. When I tried my instructor friend’s C6 Z06, I could not believe that there was a Corvette out of the box that came with incredible power, speed, handling and

braking.”

Marsoni is an amateur track racer at the Florida International Rally & Motorsport Park in Starke, racing around five times a year. He looks forward to racing even more once he gets his local construction company, Mistral Design+Build, up and running this fall.

“It is a rush of adrenaline, freedom and respect for the car,” he said. “I love going as fast as possible and driving faster than my peers.”

Rasmussen said he is open to all members’ ideas and wants the club to be a group effort where there isn’t one person necessarily in charge. And all ideas are welcome as the club hopefully expands its goals and mission. Whether it is a leisurely ride, a fundraiser or a trip to the track, there is something for everyone, Rasmussen said.

For more information on the Ponte Vedra Beach Corvette Club call Bert Rasmussen at (904) 422-5411.

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back to SCHOOL

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Answers: A. animals B. forest C. nature D. explore

Answers to our Puzzles

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In loving memory of
John Lee Haines

In loving memory of...

JOHN LEE HAINES
John Lee Haines, formerly of Rockport, Ind., passed on December 21, 2020 at his home in Orlando, Fla., surrounded by his loving family after losing his battle with cancer. He was preceded in death by his mother Marjorie K. Haines, who passed in 1982 and his father John W. Haines who passed in 1988. His survivors include his wife of 56 years, Ann (Kin) of Orlando, Fla.; Matthew Pettus (Angela) of Coral Springs, Fla.; Jeremy Pettus (Josh), of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; 10 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. He graduated from Rockport High School in 1958 and was later a partner in H&B Custom (stands for Haines & Byrth), a local car repair and customization facility. A memorial is planned in his hometown of Rockport and following his wishes will take place on the banks of the Ohio River, which he loved.

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with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: With school having just started in St. Johns County, can you go over the requirements for motorists and stopped school buses?

A: Yes, with schools recently opened, our concern for the safety of our students is paramount. According to Florida Statutes, if a school bus is stopped on a divided highway, then only traffic traveling in the same direction as the bus is required to stop when the bus stops. A divided highway has the lanes of traffic in opposite directions separated by a raised median, such as Race Track Road. If the roadway is not divided by a median, then traffic in both directions must stop when the bus stops.

Q: What other back to school safety tips would you like to share?

A: When a motorist enters a school zone and sees the flashing lights, they must reduce their speed to the posted speed limit. The flashing lights come on approximately a half hour before the start of school and again for approximately half an hour after school dismisses. Check the signs at your school for exact times and heed them.

We have crossing guards and public safety assistants assisting with the ingress and egress to schools, as well as our traffic units and patrol deputies enforcing traffic and pedestrian safety in school zones. Keep in mind that we also have unmarked cars with deputies that move around to various schools to catch speeders.

It's important for motorists to back-plan their day now that school has started and give themselves more time to get to work or school. Be cognizant of your surroundings. We don't want

to risk the lives of our students because someone is in a hurry.

We want families to go to school safely and we want students to attend school safely. I encourage all families to meet the Youth Resource Deputy at your school. There is one at each school in St. Johns County this year. We want to make direct contact with families via this officer.

Q: Can you clarify the use of sidewalks for bicyclists and pedestrians?

A: If a particular sidewalk is not specifically designated for bicycles, then the pedestrian has the right of way. Having said that, we certainly encourage our young students to ride their bikes on the sidewalk for safety rather than the road (if there is no bike path), but we also encourage common courtesy. Be sure to alert pedestrians on the sidewalk if you are coming up behind them and slow down as you pass them. Also, helmets are required for bicyclists under the age of 16 in Florida.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with northern St. Johns County?

A: As neighborhoods in the northern part of the county continue to grow, I encourage all drivers to be patient with traffic. We want to make our county a safe place to work, live, and play. Slow down and pay attention.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you with any questions or suggestions about this article?

A: They can email me at sheriff@sjso.org or call me at (904) 824-8304. Also, our website, www.sjso.org has a wealth of resources, from alarm registration to Crime Stoppers to our Neighbors app.



with Florida State Representative Cyndi Stevenson, District 17

Q: Can you give us an idea of where we are currently in the legislative calendar?

A: Committee Weeks for next session will start the week of Sept. 20. Session starts on Jan. 11, 2022 and runs for 60 days, with a conclusion date of March 11. We have also set our legislative delegation meeting for St. Johns County, which features the county's state representatives (myself, Sen. Travis Hutson and Rep. Paul Renner) for Friday, Oct. 1 at the St. Johns County Auditorium. At this meeting, citizens can let us know their thoughts and priorities for the upcoming session. I just finished a series of mobile office hours around the county in August. Going forward, people can contact me at my office with any questions or concerns.

Q: Redistricting is on a lot of people's minds. Can you let us know what citizens can expect?

A: We will be working on redistricting this session, utilizing the 2020 Census data. It is constitutionally

mandated that we complete the redistricting during the 2022 regular session. It is of utmost importance that the process is seen as fair and transparent.

My understanding is that the House will have a tight procedure and we have many state and federal laws with which we must comply. To the extent possible, we try to nest our districts with state senate and congressional districts. This is difficult, as the district lines must be drawn to as close as one to two people.

There will be a Redistricting Committee as well as subcommittees that will do a lot of the work, such as using the sophisticated software available to us (as well as the public) to help draw the district boundaries. Members of this committee are expected to be announced, along with other committee members for the upcoming session, in early September.



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

Q: The first day of school for St. Johns County was yesterday, Aug. 16. Can you share any insights on the day?

A: I visited 11 schools yesterday, in keeping with my tradition of visiting as many schools as I can on the first day of school. I was so pleased to see that all was well — students and teachers were happy to be there and all were engaged in learning. Year over year, we experienced 13 percent growth at our schools, some of which can be attributed to a lot of students returning to brick and mortar schools from virtual. Additionally, since we do the staggered start for our kindergarteners, only one-quarter of kindergarten students are included.

Q: Can you address the traffic issues?

A: On the first day of school, we experienced traffic issues throughout the district. We are well aware that there were a number of headaches, but we expect them to be ironed out very soon. This is not uncommon on the first day of school.

Q: How did the openings go at the two new schools, Toco Creek High School and Pine Island Academy?

A: These two schools also had smooth openings. Due to some supply and contractor shortages, there are a few unfinished items at the schools, but nothing that is interfering with teaching, learning or safety. For instance, at Toco Creek, there is landscaping to be completed, some work on the auditorium needs to be finished before it can open, and some areas still need paint.

Q: Can you give an update on the new administration at Freedom Crossing Academy, in light of the recent resignation of Principal Allen Anderson?

A: We created a different model than we

used before. We have an interim principal, Gina Fonseca, and rather than just having assistant principals, we now have two vice principals: Donny Hoessler is responsible for the elementary school portion and Melissa Lime is responsible for the middle school portion. They each have at least one assistant principal reporting to them. This is a pilot program; if it works well, we might replicate it at some of our other large schools. Freedom Crossing Academy has nine grade levels and nearly 2,200 students — the largest of our K – 8 academies.

Q: What's upcoming for the school board?

A: One big thing is that we are working collaboratively with the Board of County Commissioners on redistricting. We are finally in receipt of the census numbers and are presently setting up meetings with our consultant and with each other to start determining the new layout of the districts. Certainly District 1 and District 4 will have to be adjusted because they are so large. By law, districts need to be somewhat the same size. We are working with the Board of County Commissioners because we like the districts to be the same for both offices; it's very helpful for the Supervisor of Elections and less confusing for voters. This will be a several month project that will culminate in a final vote in December. The process must be completed before the end of the year to have the new plan in place for the next election. There will be community meetings announced as we get closer to the end of the project.

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.

Q: What are some other session priorities?

A: Every year we have to present a balanced budget. So far, the numbers look promising, but we will have an increase in costs due to increases in Medicaid and social services costs.

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

A: Readers can email me at Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov or call my local office at (904) 823-2300.

Q&A with Cyndi Stevenson cont. from pg. 4

Q: Florida will be gaining a U.S. Congressional district, but how about the state districts?

A: In Florida, we will keep our 120 house districts, we will just move the district lines to keep up with the population. Again, the districts need to be the same size down to just one to two people. At present, my district is the second largest one in the state, so I expect some changes to my district lines.



with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: Can you explain list maintenance as it pertains to the voter rolls?

A: To comply with Florida Statute 98.065, all Supervisors of Elections must conduct a general voter registration list maintenance program to protect the integrity of the electoral process by ensuring the maintenance of accurate and current voter registration records in the system. We have a number of processes in place to keep accurate and current voter rolls.

Q: What are examples of these processes?

A: Quarterly, we check our voter rolls against the National Change of Address (NCOA) list from the US Post Office. In this way, we can mail notices to voters who have moved to other Florida counties or out of state. Also, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles provides us with information on voters who have received a driver's license in another state and we receive address change information from the Clerk of Courts based on jury notices.

Q: What is ERIC?

A: Florida joined the non-profit consortium of member states known as ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center) in 2019. Its mission is to assist states in increasing voter participation and improving the accuracy of America's voter rolls. The consortium is governed and managed by the member states, of which there are currently 30. Our state laws actually had to be changed to allow us to become a part of ERIC, and I'm thankful that our legislators did this.

Q: What is the benefit?

A: It has greatly assisted our efforts in identifying and conducting list maintenance activities. For instance, this was the first year we received CrossState maintenance from ERIC. In St. Johns County in July, we sent out approximately 4,000 notices to voters who had moved to another state. I was surprised how many voters had moved out of state since the election.

Q: Is there a timetable for performing list maintenance?

A: We have to stop all list maintenance processes 90 days prior to any federal election; therefore, we send out most notices during off election years.

Q: What happens if a voter does not respond to one of the notices?

A: If they do not respond to an Address Confirmation Final Notice, they are placed on an inactive status. Florida Statute 98.065 (4) (c) allows for voters on the inactive list to be restored to the active list upon the voter updating their registration, requesting a vote by mail ballot, or appearing to vote; however, if they do none of these things by the second general election after being placed on the inactive list, the voter's name will be removed from the statewide voter registration. The voter would have to reregister to become active again at this point.

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

A: Readers can email me at voakes@votesjc.com or call me at (904) 823-2238. Our website, www.votesjc.com also has a wealth of information.

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What's Going On in St. Johns?
A modified calendar of events

Community Calendar

Playing HOOKie, a group for those who enjoy knitting, crocheting and looming (with all items donated to charity) meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the outside eating area at Panera Bread in the RiverPlace Shopping Center, 11111 San Jose Blvd. Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookie31@gmail.com for more information.

The Jacksonville Camera Club will feature results of the recent print contest at its meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 1. The Sept. 16 meeting will be the results of the monochrome print contest. Visit jax.jaxcameraclub.com for more information and meeting location updates.

The Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, Sept. 7 at 7 p.m. after a 6:30 p.m. social at Mandarin Presbyterian Church's front lobby, 2501 Mandarin Road. Melanie from Bee's Quilt Shop and Studio will be teaching about sewing machine maintenance. Masks are optional due to the larger meeting space. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable will meet on Monday, Sept. 13 at 12 p.m. with guest speaker Carol Saviak, strategic partnerships manager of the St. Augustine-St. Johns County Airport Authority, Northeast Florida Regional Airport. Email info@sjcroundtable.org to register for the meeting or for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

Herbal Medicine in the Garden will be offered on Sept. 18 at 10 a.m. Attendees will learn about traditionally used herbs to promote wellness

and health as well as how to create their own tinctures, teas, and salves. Included are guides, plant identification, lecture and herbal snacks. Pre registration is required via phone or text: (386) 972-1891.

The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 10 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 20 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program is a live auction featuring fabrics and quilting supplies. Guests are welcome and masks are optional. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

Northeast Florida AHEC announces a free **Tools to Quit Tobacco Class**, which includes free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges on Monday, Sept. 20, from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at Flagler Health and Wellness Center, 120 Health Park Blvd. in St. Augustine. Call (904) 482-0189 for more information or to sign up.

The Newcomers of North St. Johns will host a meeting and first luncheon of the season on Tuesday, Sept. 21 at 11:30 a.m. at Queen's Harbour Yacht and Country Club, 1131 Queen's Harbour Blvd. in Jacksonville. Doors will open at 11 a.m. The event will feature renowned pianist Carl Grant. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$30 for members. All reservations must be received by Sept. 10. Contact Sue Aird at sjaird@comcast.net to register.

Northeast Florida AHEC will host a free **arthritis exercise program** via an online live webinar for people 60 years and older on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Sept. 23 – Nov. 23, from 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Attendees will learn how to better manage arthritis pain. Call Northeast Florida AHEC at (904) 482-0189 or (877) 784-8486 to register.



with St. Johns County Property Appraiser
Eddie Creamer

Q: Are there any legislative updates you'd like to discuss?

A: Yes, Florida Statute 119.071 was amended this past legislative session and the new requirements go into effect on Oct. 1, 2021.

Q: What does Florida Statute 119.071 pertain to?

A: This statute provides for confidentiality and protection of information maintained by state agencies for certain individuals. These individuals include victims of violent crimes, sworn law enforcement officers, investigators with the Department of Children and Family, state attorneys, judges, public defenders, probation officers, tax collectors, etc. At this time, the personal information of these individuals is exempt from public viewing. So for example, if you went online and searched, either by name or by property address, you would find no records at all. Additionally, our response to a phone call to our office would be that we have no information.

Q: What does the amendment allow going forward after Oct. 1?

A: After Oct. 1, the only thing we will now protect is the individual's name. Parcels of property will be publicly viewable online, we will just suppress the name and any link to official records. We will also protect the individual's name on any other real estate parcel, whether homesteaded or not. But the only way to find information is to search by the address of the property, not by the name, as that is still protected.

Q: Why was this change made?

A: Companies like title insurance companies, mortgage companies and general contractors didn't have access to parcel information that they needed to do their jobs.

Q: Will these protected individuals be informed of the upcoming change?

A: Our office will be reaching out to all protected status taxpayers shortly. But if they have any questions in the meantime, they can call our office at (904) 827-5500 for more information."



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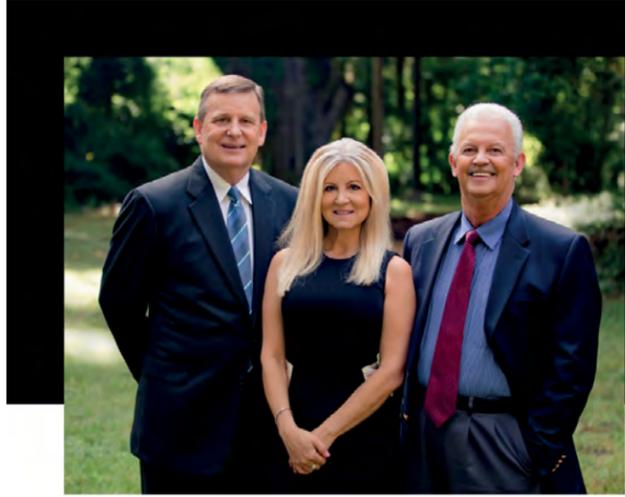
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with St. Johns County Commissioner Christian Whitehurst, District 1

Q: In the July issue, you discussed the budget process and your plan to advocate for more money for roads and ballfields in the Northwest. Can you give an update on that?

A: The county's budget won't be finalized until October, but early indications are that we will have a significant amount of money for ballfields and roads — enough that will make a difference. County Administrator Hunter Conrad and his staff did a fantastic job helping me evaluate and prioritize needs and getting dollars to meet those needs.

Q: What is the latest on the Helow project?

A: The applicant came to our July 20 Board of County Commissioners meeting without answers to a lot of questions; however, the Board of County Commissioners did approve the project for transmittal only (to the state) by a vote of 4 – 1. Without transmittal, they can't apply for concurrency or PUD status. I did vote for transmittal and I would encourage anyone who was not at the meeting to watch the video, because I was clear that my vote for transmittal was in no way a vote for approval of the project. I made clear that if questions regarding things like parks and drainage, among other things, weren't answered to my satisfaction I would be a "no" vote.

The Helow Company and their engineers are hosting monthly meetings at the Bartram Trail Branch Library for the public to come and ask questions and get more information. The first meeting was held in mid-August. Interested parties can call England, Thims and Miller at (904) 642-8990 and ask for Lindsay Haga to get the date of the next meeting or any other details on the project.

Q: Can you give us an update on the lack of yard waste removal?

A: Every commissioner has received emails from the public regarding the lack of yard

waste pick up. We have been in touch with Republic Services every weekday for many weeks to learn the cause of the problem and potential solutions. Over the summer, Republic Services has hired third parties for assistance, increased their minimum pay, and offered sign on bonuses to attract new hires.

Yesterday, at our Board of County Commissioners meeting, Republic Services was our first agenda item. Every commissioner and many members of the public had comments; Republic Services understands the situation and has given us a date certain when the problems will be resolved. They will not be servicing Jacksonville customers any more and will be moving all of their crews to St. Johns County as of Oct. 1. It's encouraging to know that there is a date certain for a remedy.

Q: Has the county been able to provide any new Covid testing?

A: In response to public demand and in light of the uptick in cases due to the delta variant, St. Johns County has opened up a free testing site at the Agricultural Center, 3125 Agricultural Center Drive, St. Augustine, 32092. The site will be open seven days a week from 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day until further notice. There is no appointment or insurance required and the testing is completely free to the public.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 1?

A: We know school has started and traffic around the schools is a problem. We have reached out to the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and the School District to work on short and long term solutions. We're all working together and we're asking for everyone's patience at this time.

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc1cwhitehurst@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 584-5348.

Golden Pineapple Hospitality Awards to be announced

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Womens Food Alliance will host the annual Golden Pineapple Gala Award Dinner on Sept. 29 at Deerwood Country Club. Now in its ninth year, the Womens Food Alliance cultivates and advances education, collaboration and networking for professional women in every career associated with the hospitality, food, beverage and event industry.

The Golden Pineapple Award Dinner recognizes women for their business accomplishments, courage to launch new companies, their dedicated hard work, creativity and support of others in hospitality.

Announcing the winners this year is Mr. Henry Flagler, a legend of hospitality, portrayed by John Stavely. The Golden

Pineapple Award sponsors include Culhane's Irish Pub, 5 Sisters Spirit Vodka and Visit Jacksonville!

For women who are interested in learning more about membership and background of the Womens Food Al-



Photo courtesy Leigh Cort

Last year's Golden Pineapple recipients: Sherry Stoppelbein, Lakita Spann, Wen Raiti, Sabine Juskowiak, Lorna Macdonald, Anne Urban, Laddie Dwyer, Faye Lance, Nancy Slatsky, Carrie Eagle, Rebecca Reed, Barbara Golden and Leigh Cort.

liance, contact founder and president, Leigh Cort, at leigh@leighcortpublicity.com or (904) 806-3613. Visit www.WomensFoodAlliance.com for more information.



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Briefs

College prep test classes offered

The Friends of the Bartram Trail Library are sponsoring a series of SAT and ACT review classes to be held at the Bartram Trail Branch Library. The dates of the classes are Sept. 14, 21, 28 and Oct. 5, 12 and 19.

Classes are one hour and 15 minutes each. Students may sign up for either or both series. The SAT class is from 5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. and the ACT class is from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. The sessions will include two math and two English as well as a practice test and a test review session. Each series of six sessions costs \$45, and attendance will be capped at 15 students. There will be social distancing and masks are recommended, but not required.

Registration information can be obtained at the Bartram Trail Library or by contacting Phyllis Macy at macyp17@yahoo.com.

ElderSource seeks St. Johns County representation for advisory council

ElderSource, a nonprofit organization that works to empower elders, adults with disabilities and their caregivers in order to age with dignity and indepen-

dence, is seeking volunteer members to its Advisory Council, specifically seniors who reside in St. Johns County.

Duties for an Advisory Council member are to report on the needs of elderly and emerging issues in their respective counties; review and comment on the agency's Area Plan; study legislative issues and advocate on behalf of the elderly; assist in promoting the mission, programs and activities of the agency; and to educate the public about the needs and the contributions of the elderly.

"Our Advisory Council members are an important asset to our organization," said Linda Levin, CEO of ElderSource. "They are an active voice we need to hear in order for us to stay in touch on the senior issues affecting the communities in which they live."

Meetings are held the third Thursday of every other month from 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. and conducted virtually using the Zoom platform.

For more information about how to become an ElderSource Advisory Council member, call (904) 391-6631 or email Volunteer Coordinator Anita Thaxton

at Anita.Thaxton@MyElderSource.org.

First Coast Cultural Center begins new school year

First Coast Cultural Center (formerly The Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach) has served the community for more than 26 years as a gathering place to learn, experience, and appreciate the arts and culture in its many forms. The nonprofit 501(c)(3) provides opportunities for adults, children and families through classes, exhibits, programs, services, activities, and memberships open to the local community, and beyond.

First Coast Cultural Center is starting its 16th year of music therapy for children with special needs. Sound Connections® Music Therapy has expanded from four St. Johns County schools to six, including two Title I schools. The outreach is provided at no cost to the school district or parents, and three nationally-board certified music therapists use music experiences to help children reach their educational goals. The expansion is supported by the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Fund and The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida. Additionally, Sound Connections® private music therapy sessions are available. Contact board-certified music therapist, Minda Gordon MT-BC at (904) 993-8940 or email MGordon@ccpvb.org. Visit the website at <https://firstcoastculturalcenter.org/arts-outreach/outreach-programs>.

Adult classes, lectures, and workshops are open to novice and professional artists and musicians with programs designed to enhance the creative process. A variety of class pricing and membership levels are available. The programs are sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. Visit <https://firstcoastculturalcenter.org/arts-programs/adult-arts-programs> for more information.

First Coast Cultural Center is located at 3972 3rd Street South in Jacksonville Beach. Hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., with after hour appointments available.

Furniture store celebrates 100 years and four generations

Hugo's Interiors is proud to celebrate 100 years (1921 – 2021) of a family tradition of providing quality services and selection to generations in the Southeast. Famous for North Florida's largest selection of fine furnishings and accessories, the Hugo Family and its extension of more than 55 talented artisan craftspeople continue a family tradition. Their American-made business resonates with quality and style with their finely crafted home furnishings, including their signature brand (Crosby Designs) of fine upholstered furniture, along with accessories for homes and businesses.

In 1921, Albert Hugo, a German-trained "tapezierer" or decorator skilled at paper hanging, cabinet making, upholstery, and other crafts, came by train to Jacksonville. Albert and Euna set up shop in the dock house of Arthur and Ninah Cummer's mansion on Riverside Avenue. He traded their furnishings

expertise for workspace to begin Albert Hugo and Associates. His clients grew to include other internationally known families such as Alfred and Jessie Dupont for their mansion, Epping Forest. As Albert Hugo Associates expanded, they moved to the present Philips Highway site in 1947.

Following in their footsteps at Albert Hugo Associates were sons Edward and Charles. Grandson Richard, trained in furniture styles, periods, and the use of color and textiles, took over. Then came his children, Mathew, Jennie, John, and Paul – the fourth generation.

Today, Hugo's Interiors maintains its leadership role in providing fine design in home furnishings and accessories for people with discerning tastes interested in new trends in furniture, fabric, and accessories. The Hugo Family looks forward to its young fifth generation continuing as purveyors of taste, quality furnishings, and beautiful accessories.

The Hugos also give back to the community with volunteer participation in The American Cancer Society, The Women's Board of Wolfson Children's Hospital, The Rotary Club, Community Hospice and Palliative Care, and other organizations.

Senior living facility sets vaccine mandate in motion for employees

River Garden Chief Executive Officer Mauri Mizrahi announced in early August that she will make the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory for all River Garden personnel. River Garden is taking this necessary step to keep the residents it serves safe and to best protect its employees.

River Garden currently has the highest vaccination rate (greater than 80 percent) among skilled nursing facilities in northeast Florida, according to an AARP study published in late July. Effective immediately, River Garden will require vaccination for all newly hired employees. Existing employees will have approximately eight weeks to become fully vaccinated.

"We want to be a safe place for health-care workers to work and for patients to receive care. Ensuring everyone has some level of protection against the virus is an obvious step in the right direction. The vaccine is a game-changer," Mizrahi said.

In anticipation of FDA approval of COVID-19 vaccines this fall, River Garden has set its deadline for full vaccination for Oct. 1, 2021. In the event that the COVID-19 vaccine is not approved as expected, the timeline may be adjusted to coordinate with approval.

Jacksonville Children's Chorus artistic director celebrates 15 years

In August 2006, the Jacksonville Children's Chorus' board of directors appointed Darren Dailey to the position of artistic and executive director. In 2016, during his 10th anniversary with The Chorus, he was then appointed to the role of president and artistic director. This year, Dailey enters his 15th year of leadership and inspiring young

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Market Insight



A Coke and a smile

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

At the height of the Great Depression, whole families were uprooted. Many wandered, seemingly aimlessly, about the country searching for work. They were indescribably poor. They were dirty and hungry and despondent. Some days, a 10-cent candy bar served as a meal for an entire family. A five-cent bottle of Coca Cola was a luxury. Even so, people still spent that five cents and indulged themselves. Sometimes you just have to spoil yourself.

At least one man noticed this phenomenon. He was a banker in Quincy, Fla. named Pat Munroe. He marveled at the fact that dirt poor farmers in his small hometown still seemed to have the money for the occasional Coke. He also marveled at the relatively cheap price of Coke stock. At the time, a single share went for \$19. The company had more money than that in the bank. He urged his customers to invest in the stock, even if it was just a single share.

“Mr. Pat” was a trusted member of the community. He was their banker. They relied on him for the loans that allowed them to plant each spring. Quincy is a little town northwest of Tallahassee. The population was about 3,800 during the Great Depression and about 7,000 today. The principal crop back then was tobacco. Some of Pat Munroe’s customers took his advice and bought what stock they could. Never a lot. Who had the money back then?

The investment paid off, probably even far beyond the wildest dreams of the town’s trusted banker and his following. Over the years, Coca-Cola stock grew and grew and then grew some more. The price

went up. The dividends went up. Eventually, Quincy, Fla., named after President John Quincy Adams, became the wealthiest city in America. At one time, the town boasted 67 “Coca-Cola Millionaires.” A single share of Coke stock, purchased for \$19 in the 1930s would now be worth more than half a million dollars — more than \$10 million if you had reinvested the dividends. This year you would get more than \$15,000 a year in dividends alone. Even better, that dividend has gone up every year for the past 57 years. Not bad for a \$19 investment.

The good citizens of Quincy were not the only ones to benefit. SunTrust Bank was the underwriter of the initial public offering of Coca-Cola stock way back in 1919. The bank was paid \$100,000 of Coke stock for their troubles. A little over a decade later, the value of the stock had been cut in half. Many people might have panicked and sold. Cut their losses. SunTrust did not. They held the stock certificates in a vault for decades. Another vault at the bank held the secret formula for Coca-Cola.

In 2012, SunTrust finally sold those shares for nearly two billion dollars. The return on investment was nearly two million percent! Now, that may sound like a great deal — but the value of that stock has gone up another billion dollars since they sold.

Scott A. Grant is a local columnist, author, speaker, and historian. By day he is a fiduciary asset manager and president of Standfast Asset Management. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfast.com.

SBA announces opening of Paycheck Protection Program direct forgiveness portal

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is launching a streamlined application portal to allow borrowers with Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans \$150,000 or less through participating lenders to apply for forgiveness directly through the SBA.

“The SBA’s new streamlined application portal will simplify forgiveness for millions of our smallest businesses — including many sole proprietors — who used funds from our Paycheck Protection Program loans to survive the pandemic,” said Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman. “The vast majority of businesses waiting for forgiveness have loans under \$150,000.”

This new change will help rush relief to more than 6.5 million small businesses. The new forgiveness platform began accepting applications from borrowers on Aug. 4. Lenders are required to opt-in to this program through <https://directforgiveness.sba.gov>. In addition to the technology platform, the SBA is standing up a PPP customer service team to answer questions and directly assist borrowers with their forgiveness

applications. Borrowers that need assistance or have questions should call (877) 552-2692, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. EST.

Overall, the SBA and lenders have worked to originate more than 11.7 million loans totaling nearly \$800 billion in relief to more than 8.5 million small businesses. In 2021:

- SBA approved more than 6.5 million loans totaling more than \$275 billion
- The average loan size was \$42 thousand (compared to \$101 thousand in 2020)
- 96 percent of loans went to businesses with fewer than 20 employees (compared to just 87 percent in 2020.)
- 32 percent of loans went to businesses in LMI communities (compared to just 24 percent in 2020)

Established by the CARES Act in 2020, the PPP was among the first COVID-19 small business economic aid programs and provided more than \$798 billion in economic relief to small businesses and nonprofits across the nation.

Visit www.sba.gov for more information.

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Eagle project of prayer labyrinth enjoyed by all

Kevin Richard Hodgson from Troop 225 in Fruit Cove has achieved scouting's top honor: the coveted rank of Eagle with Silver Palm on June 14. His project was completed in two weekends this past February. Hodgson designed, funded and provided the leadership and direction to guide his fellow scouts in the troop, who put in altogether more than 150 hours of labor to build a 34-foot brick paver construction prayer / meditation labyrinth. The labyrinth is on the grounds of Unity Church on Race Track Road and the congregation as well as the whole neighborhood may use and enjoy it. This labyrinth is now on the national labyrinth list of places to visit in Julington Creek Plantation. Kevin Hodgson is the son of Martin and Cindy Hodgson from St. Johns.



Photos courtesy Martin Hodgson
New Eagle Scout Kevin Richard Hodgson

Teen hosts another successful school supply drive



Photo courtesy Jennifer Sicilian

Brewer Sicilian, a sophomore at Creekside High School, repeated his successful school supply drive from last year in advance of the 2021 – 2022 school year. This year, he collected, sorted, and donated 3,092 supplies to INK through donations from friends, family, and neighbors, which surpasses

his collection from last summer. Sicilian said, "My mom is an educator. I saw her spend money on supplies for her classroom and students. When I found out that INK! assists teachers with classroom needs, I wanted to help stock their supplies. My family, friends, and neighbors have been incredible in helping with donations to make this such a success." These supplies will be available to teachers in St Johns County starting in September. INK! is The St. Johns County Education Foundation, which provides classroom resources and programs to promote the academic success of students. One of the things they do is provide school supplies to students and teachers in St. Johns County throughout the school year. Visit <https://ink-stjohns.org> for more information.



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The mask cannot hide the smile: St. Johns CARES donates backpacks

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The mask cannot hide the smile of Malinda Peebles, executive director of SEA Community Center in Elkton, as she accepts the recent donation of 50 new backpacks and school supplies for children in the Armstrong, Elkton, Spuds, and Hastings area of southwest St. Johns County. The donated items were provided by the Monat Global Gratitude Program to St. Johns CARES, Inc. for needy school children so they may have a good start to the upcoming school year. The goal of the SEA Community Center this year, as in past years, is to provide several hundred children with new backpacks and supplies.

The aim of Monat Global's Gratitude Program is to generate positive change by partnering with organizations in the areas of education, children and families. The Gratitude Program also donated to St. Johns CARES, Inc. personal hygiene

products, insect repellent and sunscreen for distribution through local Homeless organizations and contributed to St. Johns CARES scholarship fund for St. Johns County School District homeless



Photo courtesy St. Johns CARES

Malinda Peebles receives backpacks from St. Johns CARES

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Internet safety tips to start the new school year

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

As a new school year begins, Attorney General Ashley Moody reminds parents to keep students safe online. With cyber-crime accounting for approximately \$445 billion in losses per year, a child's access to the internet can be costly and damaging to a family — not to mention the threat of human trafficking or sexual exploitation. Parental controls can help protect children from online predators, identity thieves and harmful material.

Moody said, "As a parent, I worry about the amount of time children spend online and with whom they might be communicating. With kids back in school, we want to make sure they stay safe — especially with parents not around to monitor online activity. Parental controls are a great way to enhance a child's online safety and can be easily activated using your mobile phone."

Parental controls can be extremely useful tools for those looking to protect children online. Tips to safeguard children's online activity include:

- Limit search engines to keep results age appropriate;
- Manage screen time on certain apps,

or the device as a whole;

- Place approval requirements when downloading apps so that a parent can choose whether or not to approve the download;
- Monitor what a child is viewing on social media or through other platforms; and
- Know all user accounts and passwords your child has.

Most devices have parental control guides and walk-through videos providing step-by-step instructions on how to set up the features with ease.

Parents can access parental control guides for mobile devices from Android (Google Play Store) and Apple iPhones; video game console companies Microsoft (Xbox), Sony (PlayStation) and Nintendo (Switch); and for computers and televisions, including Samsung TV, Windows 10 and Apple.

Google recently created a resource with tools to ensure children's safety while exploring the internet (<https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/>). The resource includes tips for parents and children, an online game that teaches digital safety and classroom lesson plans for teachers.

Hands-on science lesson demonstrates importance of handwashing

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Handwashing is a personal hygiene habit that has become even more important as students and faculty navigate healthy learning environments during the pandemic. A recent collaborative lesson in the Bolles Lower School Ponte Vedra Beach Campus lab showed students why.

Campus nurse Rachel Ganzel and science teacher Carolyn Houston staged a hands-on blue light lab using a light glow to demonstrate the "germs" they were simulating.

"We talked about how we can't see the germs, but this gave us a visual of how well we can wash the 'germs' when we wash our hands," Ganzel said. "Students saw that many of them forget to clean their thumbs, wrists and fingertips thoroughly."

She said students then got a second chance to wash their hands after the



Photo courtesy Bolles

Students used a blue light to demonstrate "germs" on their hands.

lesson to practice proper hand-washing techniques.

"They did much better at the end of the lesson," Ganzel said.

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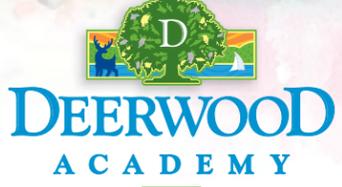


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Photo courtesy Scott LaRochelle

Nease NJROTC instructors and cadets completed the Area-12 Leadership Academy in Duluth, Ga.: GYSGT Duane Hanson, Cadets Braden Holmes, Nicholas Gallego, Peter Lemos, Anthony Tucker, John Alves, Hallie Spell, Isabella Rivera, Kaitlyn Boggs, Lauren Villarreal and Captain Scott LaRochelle.

Nease cadets complete summer leadership training

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Nease NJROTC, the No. 1 program in northern Florida and the state of Georgia, and the No. 2 ranked program in the nation, strengthened its high-performing cadet leadership ranks as cadets completed significant training programs held across the country.

From June 9 – 17, Kaitlyn Boggs, Gabrielle Espedido, Olivia Kerrick, Bernadine Olivier, Isabella Rivera and Harley Shuster successfully completed Florida Girls State in Tallahassee.

From June 20 – 26, Juan Cervantes, Donovan Chapman, Christopher Debus, Nate Fagen, Khush Gandhi, Daniel Mahoney, Brodie Mongon and Ben Prohofskey successfully completed the Florida Boys State program in Tallahassee. Cadet Fagen was elected as Attorney General and Cadet Gandhi was elected as Agriculture

Commissioner.

From June 21 – 26, Cadets John Alves, Nicholas Gallego, Braden Holmes, Peter Lemos, Emmelie Neff, Anthony Tucker and Lauren Villarreal completed the week-long intensive academic, physical fitness, drill and leadership training at Duluth High School in north Georgia. Cadets Alves, Gallego and Holmes received medals for outstanding Personnel Inspection; Gallego also received the outstanding Physical Fitness medal and Holmes received the top Academic medal. Senior cadets Kaitlyn Boggs, Isabella Rivera and Hallie Spell provided weeklong leadership as cadre providing hands-on training to the 26 trainees from six different schools.

From June 28 – July 2, Cadet Braden Holmes attended the U.S. Air Force Academy Advanced Cyber Camp in Huntsville, Ala. Holmes serves as the captain for Nease's CyberPatriot competition team.

Finally, from July 11 – 16, Cadets Kaitlyn Boggs and Isabella Rivera participated and graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Introduction Mission program in New London, Conn. Cadet Rivera received the award for top female athlete among the 250 trainees from around the nation.

Back to school cont. from pg. 1

Superintendent Tim Forson. "As I visited schools it was wonderful to see the excitement of students as they entered the buildings eager to learn, engage with friends, and get acquainted with their teachers."

St. Johns County School District staff will continue to monitor attendance numbers, balance classrooms, and refine bus routes throughout the coming weeks.

See more back to school photos on page 15.

CAA FLAG FOOTBALL REGISTRATION



JULY 1ST – SEPTEMBER 15TH

AGES 5 - 17

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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Reza Shafii

Reza Shafii came to the United States from Iran in 1970, nine years prior to the overthrow of the Shah amidst the Iranian Revolution. "Iran is a beautiful country with a rich culture," he said. "But we knew the monarchy was not the solution." His father always advised his six children to get a good education and then leave. Five of the six children did just that, with Reza earning a degree in architecture from the University of Michigan. His career included designing hotels for Marriott in Texas and Maryland. He and his wife Barbara now live in St. Johns Golf and Country Club and live an active lifestyle. Reza is a pickleball enthusiast and advocate; he calls the sport "fascinating and humbling."



Photo courtesy Reza Shafii
Reza Shafii in front of one of the oil paintings he painted.

from Amazon. My wife said, "You've never played pickleball before — how do you know you will like it?" That same year, I played at the 2016 National Senior Olympics in Maryland and won the silver medal in mixed doubles and the gold medal in singles.

Q: Why would you recommend pickleball?

A: It is the most fascinating and humbling game with the best social interaction you can find. I have always been athletic and have played soccer, tennis, golf and skiing. But with pickleball, once you start, you don't want to quit. I play three days a week and I also golf three times a week. I highly recommend pickleball, especially for retirees in Florida. It's a great way to meet people and leads to more social interaction, like maybe potluck suppers. Also, it enhances good health — being active helps prevent many things like arthritis and Alzheimer's.

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

A: I love to do things outside; where else but Florida can you wear shorts and tee shirts all year? I enjoy yard work and my garden. I especially love growing citrus — navel oranges, Meyer lemons, mandarin oranges and grapefruit — and I have even grown an avocado from a seed.

Get to Know ...

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

teach them to be responsible and compassionate.

Q: What do you like about living in St. Johns County?

A: It really doesn't matter where you live — you have to make the best of it. You have to quickly learn to adapt and adjust. It was hard at first, because I had so many friends and colleagues in Maryland, but soon I got to know my neighbors, I participated in activities, and then I joined the Ponte Vedra YMCA to play pickleball.

Q: How did you get involved with pickleball?

A: I had played tennis most of my life, but after I hurt my knee in 2016, a friend called me and recommended pickleball. I immediately went to YouTube and learned all the details and technical aspects. I ordered a paddle

Q: How did you meet your wife?

A: We met playing tennis in Michigan. We've been married for 42 years, but I always say we've been married for 50 years, counting the eight years we dated. We waited the eight years to get married because I wanted to buy a house and have my savings in order first. I always say, you should plan it, wait patiently for it, and then achieve it.

Q: When and why did you move to Florida?

A: We moved to Florida three years ago, because our daughter and grandchildren moved here four years ago. Our daughter, who has two Masters degrees, works in administration at Palencia Elementary School. We have two grandchildren, ages five and two; I think my job as a grandparent is to

Braille cont. from pg. 1

\$591,000 in donated value (based on the University of Maryland economic impact calculator.)

The 2021 – 22 class of braille volunteers is forming now. It is open to both men and women of all faiths. An introductory meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 23 at Congregation Ahavath Chesed/The Temple, 8727 San Jose Blvd. Braille classes will start on Sept. 30 and continue every Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. This is a nine-month program on transcribing text into braille, or converting illustrations into tactile graphics.

Course materials are provided to the volunteers at no cost. While no computer is needed for tactile graphics, braille transcribers must have their own Windows computer. Course graduates can go on to be certified as braille transcribers by the US Library of Congress.

For more information, contact Pam Wiker at (904) 610-6733 or wikerpl@gmail.com; Holly Cleveland at (904) 463-0357 or holly.cleveland@att.net; or Nancy Cohen at (248) 250-2406 or r4cohen@gmail.com.

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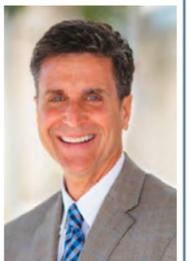
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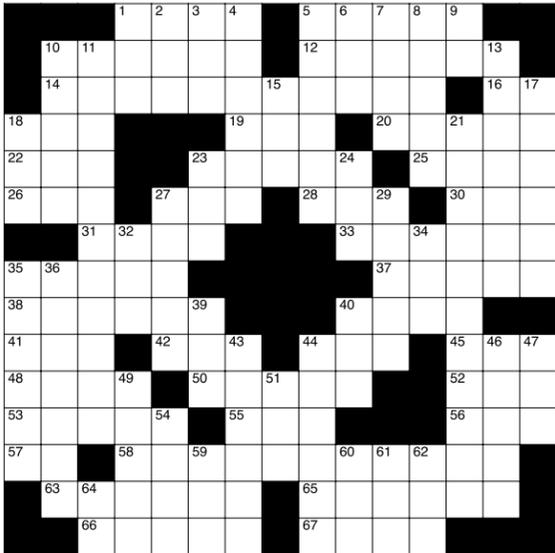
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Religion native to some in China
5. Nursemaids
10. Coats a porous surface
12. Garment of long cloth
14. Containing a broader message
16. University of Dayton
18. Patti Hearst's captors
19. Insane
20. Bristlelike structures in invertebrates
22. Taxi
23. Trainee
25. Comedian Carvey
26. Some couples say it
27. Belong to he
28. High schoolers' test
30. Young goat
31. You drive on one
33. Denotes a time long ago
35. Space between two surfaces
37. By and by
38. A way to sell
40. A line left by the passage of something
41. Indicates near
42. Where wrestlers compete
44. Prosecutors
45. Body part
48. Soluble ribonucleic acid
50. Indicates silence
52. NFL's Newton
53. Ancient Roman garments
55. Drunkard
56. Expression of satisfaction
57. Thus
58. Noisy viper
63. Plants of a particular region
65. Communicated with
66. Latches a window
67. Swarm with

CLUES DOWN

1. Split pulses
2. Brew
3. Ask humbly
4. Distinctive smells
5. Digressions
6. Partner to cheese
7. Father of Arachthya
8. Made a cavity
9. Tin
10. Appetizer
11. Presenting in detail
13. Compound in guano and fish scales
15. Cool!
17. "___ than a doornail"
18. Popular literary form ___ fi
21. Be the most remarkable
23. "Final Fantasy" universe character
24. Buffer solution
27. Muslim physician using traditional remedies
29. Fantastical planet
32. S. American plant
34. Domesticated animal
35. The tops of mountains
36. Expression of disapproval
39. Skeletal muscle
40. Game show host Sajak
43. One's interests
44. Identify the existence of
46. Partner to "oohed"
47. Does not accept medical help (abbr.)
49. Hammerin' Hank
51. Lowest point of a ridge between two peaks
54. Elaborately draped garment
59. Check
60. Car mechanics group
61. One point east (clockwise) of due north
62. Austrian river
64. A command to list files

WILDERNESS WORD SEARCH

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

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

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- BACKCOUNTRY
- BACKPACK
- BIVOUAC
- BOOTS
- CAMPSITE
- CARABINER
- CORD
- FIELD
- FOOTPRINT
- GEAR
- GIARDIA
- GROUND SHEET
- HYPOTHERMIA
- LANDSCAPE
- LANTERN
- LAYERING
- NAVIGATION
- ORIENTEERING
- PEAK
- RIVER
- RUCKSACK
- SKI
- TRACKS

⊙ ✱ ☼ ☽ ☿ ♁ ♃ ♅ ♇ ♉ ♋ ♍ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓ ♔ ♕ ♖ ♗ ♘ ♙ ♚ ♛ ♜ ♝ ♞ ♟ ♠ ♡ ♢ ♣ ♤ ♥ ♦ ♧ ♨ ♩ ♪ ♫ ♬ ♭ ♮ ♯ ♮ ♯

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to the wilderness.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 14 = E)

- A. 5 19 11 25 5 7 15**
Clue: Outdoor creatures
- B. 8 2 9 14 15 1**
Clue: Woods
- C. 19 5 1 23 9 14**
Clue: Plants, animals and landscape
- D. 14 24 20 7 2 9 14**
Clue: Look around

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Briefs cont. from pg. 1
singers through choral music education.

As founding artistic director of the Boston Children's Chorus, Dailey was able to begin and grow their participation to nearly 300 in just three years. After being recruited

to Jacksonville, he was inspired by Jacksonville's arts community and its potential.

"Jacksonville's arts community is incredibly collaborative and this drew me to lead the Jacksonville Children's Chorus several years ago," says Dailey. Upon entering an audition room, children are first asked, "Do you love

to sing?" Having children of his own, Dailey understands how important music education is for their development, and that the skills they take away from The Chorus, along with their love of singing, last a lifetime.

Through Dailey's leadership, the Jacksonville Children's Chorus programs have expanded, serving thousands of

children across Northeast Florida and reaching families internationally with virtual outreach programs. He has introduced opportunities for young singers to perform with guest artists such as Amy Grant, Kristen Chenoweth and Audra McDonald, and even the chance to perform internationally across Europe.

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First day of school for St. Johns County



Photo courtesy Heidi Karl

Deputy Mincey, Julington Creek Elementary's youth resource officer, was on hand for the first day of school, and will be at the school every day.



Photo courtesy Heidi Karl

This student is ready to learn at Julington Creek Elementary.



Photo courtesy Katelyn Ostopick

Tocoi Creek's SJSO resource officer, Joelf Alvarez, unveils his vehicle with its school spirit wrap at the pep rally.

Fishing

Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka
mail@floridanewline.com

It's recovery time in the St. Johns River as it continues to drain all the additional freshwater from heavy summer rains received in the past weeks. Hopefully, we will finish the summer with a little less rain and our fishing season will finish where it started — with a bang.

Shrimping continues to be slow, but has steadily been improving. Good-sized shrimp are now being caught easily enough for bait, but five gallon buckets are happening with a little bit of searching. Doctor's Lake and Mandarin Point seem to be the best locations at this time. Don't be afraid to try various depths, shallow and deep, when trying to find them.

The croaker bite has also continued to be on the up, after a little bit of a slow down following some of our heavy rainfall. Good size croakers have been seemingly biting more on the shallow side of sandbars and points, rather than the deeper drop offs. Most likely they are just following the shrimp, and that is where the shrimp happen to be.

Redfish are bothered less by the abundance of the extra freshwater than some other species of saltwater fish. Docks and pilings should still be holding slot-sized reds, while schooling reds have been running the channels; unfortunately most are under slot. Whether fishing docks on a jig head or float rig, or the deeper holes with a bottom rig, fresh caught, live, river shrimp should be your bait of choice.

The recent slow down of the bite has made

catching the bite at the right time a bigger factor. Fishing through the tide changes and waiting for the bite can sometimes be more productive than changing spots. Having to fish through the catfish and stingrays to wait for the right bite is usually a painful and boring process, but often worth the wait. When you finally find the bite at a certain tidal stage, more than likely that same bite will be back at that same spot, at the same stage of the tide when you return the next trip.

As long as we still have shrimp in the river, there is going to be a quality bite to be found somewhere. With autumn quickly approaching, we just need a little less rain to finish this year's fishing season with the bang it started with. Let's hope for the best.

Fishing Report: Shrimp are the best right now, as we are at what would be normally the peak of the season. Reds around docks and pilings, and croakers on sandbars or just off them. Sheepshead are a good possibility this time of year around docks and pilings.

Whether you catch one, some, or none, the family time spent fishing will last a lifetime.

Email your Catch of the Month photo to catchofthemonthpictures@gmail.com. Be sure to include the name of the person(s) in the photo, the name of the person who took the photo, the type of fish and date and location of the catch. We will select a photo each month for publication.



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Healthy soup offers many different benefits

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Food is a critical component of healthy living, helping people to reduce their risk for illnesses and even helping them to overcome colds and other ailments. The properties of soup, for example, can chase away chills and offer other benefits. Soup is hydrating, and the ingredients included in the recipe may be able to do everything from tame coughs to reduce mucus to boost the immune system.

This recipe for "Navy Bean and Collard Greens Soup" courtesy of John La Puma, M.D., ChefMD, includes collard greens.

When one chops or chews collard greens, he or she gets the powerful, helpful chemicals isothiocyanates and indole-3-carbinol. They can help the liver produce enzymes that detoxify cancer-causing toxins in the body. In addition, the soup includes tofu, which will adopt the flavor of other ingredients and add a form of lean protein along with the beans.

Navy Bean and Collard Greens Soup

Serves 4

- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 4 cups coarsely chopped stemmed collard greens, preferably organic (1 bunch 10 to 12 ounces)
- 1 ½ cup packaged julienned (matchstick) carrots

1 ½ tsp. chili garlic puree or chili paste with garlic

1 (12 oz.) package extra firm tofu, cubed in bite size pieces

1 (16 oz.) can unsalted navy beans, drained

¼ cup grated Romano cheese

Combine broth, collard greens, car-



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Navy Bean and Collard Greens Soup

rots, and chili garlic puree in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 10 to 12 minutes or until greens are nearly tender. Stir in tofu and beans; cover and simmer 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Ladle into shallow bowls; top with cheese.

Tips: Great northern or cannellini beans may replace the navy beans and Swiss chard may replace the collard greens if desired. Also, look for chili garlic puree or chili paste with garlic in the ethnic section of the supermarket. Because the beans are unsalted, there is no need to rinse them before adding to the soup.

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Gardening

A summer hiatus and forward planning

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

I feel as if I've taken a break from gardening now that my main activity is tending the new native plant bed — our insect haven or insectary — in our front yard. A gentle amble around to check for any wayward weeds, testing the soil moisture around the plants when we've had too little rain ... it's really not arduous, even in the heat of summer.

Of course, that's not the whole story. The okra plants are dropping leaves, but two of them are branching out from low down, so I'll cut off the main stems and hope those new shoots will fill out and keep producing. There are aphids on some of the buds and leaves, but there's also a ladybug or two around, and I'm hoping they will keep the aphids in check, along with some squishing and hard sprays of water.

I've disposed of our tomato plants, which were no longer looking promising. (There were some green fruits left on the vines, so my husband made some green tomato chutney.) The chili plants are still doing well, and while the sweet pepper plants aren't producing right now, having been shaded out by the tomatoes, they do have some tiny flower buds. I find it hard to decide when to discard plants that are past their best, and unless they really decline after some TLC, I will probably let them hang on until I need to prepare the beds for our cool season crops.

The rest of the yard is still burgeoning — busting at the seams with green growth — with shrubs and vines threatening to overtake paths and spaces they don't deserve. This is a problem currently, as the city is struggling to collect yard waste regularly, and our street is often lined with containers and plastic sacks full of debris. Yards hereabouts are modest in size and it's not always practical to compost every last bit of plant material, so the city service is invaluable.

Happily, we are not in drought, and NOAA doesn't predict drought conditions in the months up to October; however, we can expect higher than average summer temperatures, which

sadly seems to be the norm nowadays. If you would like more details, check out the NOAA Climate Prediction Center, at <https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>.

Being aware of longer-range forecasts can help in planning when to plant cool season vegetables. Lettuces, for example, are notorious for bolting quickly in the heat so an early direct sowing would be pointless; however, sowing in more controlled conditions can overcome this problem, but it means setting up an indoor growing area for seedlings, either on a very sunny windowsill or under a grow light. Germinating seeds can be easily monitored until they sprout, and then moved to the light right away. They may need potting into larger containers, depending on how you start them, to be planted out when the weather is just right. (See the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide, <https://tinyurl.com/86m742yb>.)

If you have tender perennials or shrubs you are fond of, now could be a good time to take cuttings to root in case they are lost over winter. This isn't as hard as it may seem, and I encourage you to check out this publication: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/MG108>. If you have a desire for native perennials that are sometimes hard to come by, autumn is the most natural time to start some seeds. The Florida Wildflower Cooperative has some useful information about timing (<https://tinyurl.com/s27ajryj>), as well as seeds for sale (<https://tinyurl.com/4bkfrukx>).

For more information on what to do this month in your yard and garden, check out the "North Florida Gardening Calendar" (<https://tinyurl.com/efxfczr>) and "A New Leaf – Yard and Garden" newsletter (<https://tinyurl.com/4zpx4c5x>), both of which are particularly useful locally. I also highly recommend the "Neighborhood Gardener" (<https://tinyurl.com/4jcn8ryy>), which includes a calendar of events from around the state, many of which are presented online. That should be enough to get you through for a while. Stay cool!



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Travel

Escape to the Mountains: Blue Ridge, Georgia

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

The railroad's arrival in 1886 brought the sleepy little town of Blue Ridge, Ga., to life. Located about 90 minutes north of Atlanta, Blue Ridge continued to grow and today, the gem offers refined yet rustic appeal. It's a welcoming place for a getaway to a cabin in the woods or a luxury downtown condo.

Over the years, railroad traffic decreased, so the city decided to save the train. Blue Ridge's own Scenic Railway makes just one run a day. The hour-long trip takes passengers to the developing river-town of McCaysville. Adults love riding in vintage cars, but kids prefer the open-air ones. The tracks run through the Chatahoochee National Forest and alongside the Toccoa River, where you'll likely see fishermen and people tubing along.

Before the train returns, passengers enjoy lunch and shopping in McCaysville and the adjacent town, Copperhill, Tenn. Be sure to take a quirky photo straddling the Georgia/Tennessee state line.

Fly fishing reigns big in Blue Ridge, the Trout Capital of the state. Coldwater streams provide ideal conditions for the fish. The catch and release rules help sustain the environment. If you need equipment or a fly fishing lesson, stop by Cohutta Outfitters. I did and signed up for a guided session that even included waders. My pro soon had me casting a line in an idyllic mountain stream.

In 1930, Blue Ridge acquired a lake when the dam was built for hydropower. You'll find a mix of log cabins and luxury homes overlooking the 11-mile long crystal clear beauty. Many make popular vacation rentals while the marina offers pontoon boat rentals, ideal for cruising with family and friends. For a more energetic outing, rent a kayak or canoe.

Hikers and bikers take to the mountains on more than 300 miles of trails. The



Open air cars on the Blue Ridge Scenic Railroad.



The author goes fly fishing.

North Georgia area features 16 photoworthy waterfalls.

For the visitor desiring some pampering, look no further than the Serenity Spa. The owners designed the complex to incorporate the log cabin look — but they offer the latest treatments and products. You can even reserve a massage in one of their treehouse rooms.

An actual vacation means dining out, and Blue Ridge presents plenty of options. Pick from casual, down-home eateries to white tablecloth gourmet meals. Try the Fightingtown Tavern or Maseria Kitchen and Bar for casual dining. A gala evening might start with cocktails overlooking downtown from the new Hampton Inn rooftop bar. Then walk to indulge in a luscious repast at Black



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Mountain view from Mercier Orchards.



The river town of McCaysville.

Sheep and perhaps an after dinner drink at Whiskey and Water.

Fun afternoons and evenings call for a stop into Grumpy Old Men, an authentic local brewery and hangout. Those who prefer wine can check out the lovely grounds of Bear Claw or Serenberry Vineyards. Shopping on Main Street brings surprises you don't find in chain stores. Look for country furniture and accessories, outdoor attire, boutique clothing, art galleries, antiques, and specialty gift shops.

Entertainment beyond the ordinary includes a pinball arcade, the nearby Bigfoot Museum (seriously), or a chance to drive a tank at Tank Town. (I went

on my first visit to Blue Ridge, and it remains an often talked about memory.) You might consider visiting recused research chimps in their retirement village at Project Chimps or pick apples at Mercier Orchards.

Seriously, if all that isn't enough, just grab a cup of coffee or glass of wine, and sit on a porch and rock. Blue Ridge lets you escape but won't let you be bored.

Get a free trip app at Visit Blue Ridge, GA. The drive from Jacksonville to Blue Ridge is about seven hours.

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

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