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HUGS St. Johns expects to clothe 500+ local kids-in-need this upcoming school year

By Brette Reiman
mail@floridanewslines.com

Local nonprofit HUGS St. Johns expects another busy school year providing emergency food, clothing, school supplies and more to hundreds of St. Johns County children-in-need. Founded in 2009, HUGS (formerly Hugs Across the County) works closely with St. Johns County school counselors, as well as nonprofit partners like the Betty Griffin Center domestic violence shelter to provide children-in-need with basic necessities, from food to shoes to toiletries.

According to Jessica Gamble, child advocate with the Betty Griffin Center safety shelter, "The emergency clothing bags from HUGS help provide a sense of normalcy for the children, and ease the difficult transition into our shelter by meeting some of their most basic needs."

This year, HUGS expects to pack emergency clothing bags for more than 500 local children who face

HUGS cont. on pg. 2

Alpha-Omega Miracle Home fosters hope, prepares for new campus

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewslines.com

Lisa Franklin was praying one night when God placed something special on her heart. It was a vision of helping women facing homelessness from the unborn to seniors. Franklin wanted to create a place where women and children felt loved, wanted, cared for, and valued.



Thanks to the "Memory Maker" fund, moms are able to enjoy a "Mom's Night Out" every month. These moms are enjoying churros.

As a single mother, Franklin was lucky to be "protected and blessed during the crazy years" of her life. She wanted to give back. She shared her idea with her husband and her pastor. The first question she posed to them: "Do you think I am crazy?" Both believed in her and offered their full support.

Franklin created the non-profit Alpha-Omega Miracle Home in 1997 with one mission in mind: to provide a safe clean home where women can rest their heads and start working on goals. Alpha-Omega Miracle Home is a faith-based program that provides shelter, support and hope to single/expectant mothers, their children and senior women who are experiencing economic distress.

Encouragement is a key ingredient to the success of the program.

"We have case managers who discuss goals, help women overcome barriers and review mental health concerns," said Franklin, who was born and raised in St. Augustine.

In addition to young single mothers and their children, Alpha-Omega Miracle Home also serves senior women, who are given the opportuni-

ty to become surrogate grandmothers and mentors. Mental health counselors help to match the young women with senior women on the campus off Collins Avenue in St. Augustine.

"Our seniors have so much wisdom. They are able to share and pour into these young ladies," said Franklin.

Alpha-Omega Miracle Home is now looking forward to serving even more women as they recently became the recipient of a \$3.5 million allocation for a new campus from the Freedom First budget signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis. It was backed by Senator Travis Hudson, Rep. Paul Renner and Rep. Cyndi Stevenson.

The new seven-acre campus will include 20 two-bedroom apartments, 12 efficiency apartments and six dormitory style rooms, housing up to 100 residents. There will also be a community care center which will have

the main administrative offices for Alpha-Omega Miracle Home as well as rooms for therapy, life skills, case management, an auditorium, and a kitchen.

"This funding will have such a huge impact on our expansion. The support from our elected officials was critical and these funds will set the stage for our organization to house, equip and bless so many more of our area's most vulnerable populations," said Franklin.

To stay at Alpha-Omega Miracle Home, anyone interested must apply, attend a preliminary meeting, and meet with a mental health counselor.

Mothers must have no more than two children under the age of seven, and senior women must be 60 years of age or older without a need for medical assistance.

Alpha-Omega Miracle Home Executive Director Bridget Varnedoe said she focuses on helping young women understand that their time at Alpha-Omega Miracle Home is just a stepping stone to a better life. She should know.

"I am a product of the program. Alpha-Omega Miracle Home has always been near and dear to my heart," said Varnedoe, who lived at the home 16 years ago when it was more of a maternity home. "I was so upset with myself that I had an unplanned pregnancy. My upbringing did not match my circumstance. I decided to use the

Alpha-Omega cont. on pg. 2

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Photos courtesy Lisa Franklin

Seniors and moms are able to enjoy outings together helping to build community.

Alpha-Omega cont. from pg. 1

time at Alpha-Omega Miracle Home to really focus on me. I knew that education was going to be the key to my success."

To that end, Varnedoe started a business program at St. Johns River State College while at Alpha-Omega Miracle Home. Once she left the home, she got married, had two more children, and earned her associate's and bachelor's degrees from Armstrong Atlantic University and her master's degree from Valdosta State University. She also secured a job with a consulting firm.

Varnedoe became an Alpha-Omega Miracle Home board member in 2017 while working in South Florida; however, she felt a pull to do more and because she and husband both worked remotely, they made the move back to St. Augustine. Initially, Varnedoe planned to volunteer to mentor young mothers, but Franklin asked her to

accept the executive director position. Varnedoe resigned from her consulting job and accepted the position.

"We come together as women and moms. We are here to help and encourage each other. I always tell the young women here to take advantage of all the programs offered at Alpha-Omega Miracle Home," said Varnedoe. "It is important to trust God and move forward."

[Author's note: Franklin said that while \$3.5 million is incredibly generous, Alpha-Omega Miracle Home will need millions more to complete the new campus project (estimated budget is \$14 million). Many naming opportunities are available, and volunteers are also needed. Alpha-Omega Miracle Home is also looking for car donations for the young women. For more information, call (904) 823-8588 or email Lisa at Lisa@aomb.org. Alpha-Omega Miracle Home also runs a thrift store (located off State Road 16) and has a diaper bank

HUGS cont. from pg. 1

poverty, homelessness or domestic violence. Each bag includes five to seven outfits, new underwear, new shoes, full size toiletries and school supplies so that children can attend school with dignity.

"Each year in the St. Johns County School District, approximately 800 students are identified as homeless per the McKinney-Vento Act. Some of the many priority needs of identified students are clothing and hygiene supplies," said Michael Israel, St. Johns County McKinney-Vento Liaison. "HUGS St. Johns has been a huge support in meeting the needs of hundreds of students each year. Their thoughtfulness is shown in each package they provide, and the sense of pride that our identified students have when they can put on a fresh set of clothing items each day is invaluable."

HUGS clothing program volunteers

help organize its clothing warehouse, pack emergency clothing bags for kids referred by counselors, or deliver clothing bags to local schools. HUGS also appreciates when neighbors, book clubs, and civic groups coordinate clothing, toiletry or food drives for the organization.

"As an all-volunteer organization, we cannot do what we do without the support of the incredibly huge-hearted St. Johns County community," said volunteer clothing program coordinator Karen Burke. "Our tiny team especially needs more volunteers to help us with our very busy and impactful clothing program — even just one to two hours each month is a huge help!"

For more information about volunteering or donating, HUGS can be reached at info@stjohnshugs.org or (904) 580-4847. Visit www.stjohnshugs.org or follow on social media for more information.



Photo courtesy Brette Reiman

HUGS board member Martine Smith, who is with the St. Johns County School District.

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450 State Road 13 North
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(904) 886-4919
www.FloridaNewsLine.com

Publisher

Mark Pettus
Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

Editor

Martie Thompson
Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Bookkeeper

Emily Whitehead
Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

Social Media

SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

Advertising Sales

Rebecca Thomson
Rebecca@FloridaNewsLine.com
(724) 968-7602 cell

Linda Gay

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

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Sally Jean!



Breed:
Cockapoo

Favorite Activities:
Taking naps and chasing her favorite ball.

Favorite Treat:
Blueberry Greenies

Favorite Friends:
The neighbors' dog Benny.

How did your BFF get her name:
We thought the name Sally Jean was just perfect for her.

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



Primary Election Guide in this issue! Pages 10 - 15

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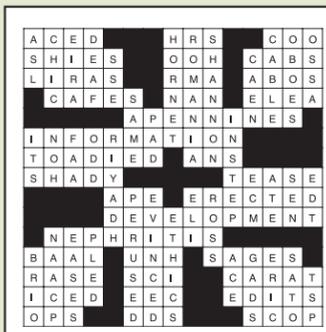
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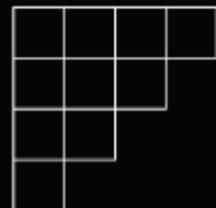
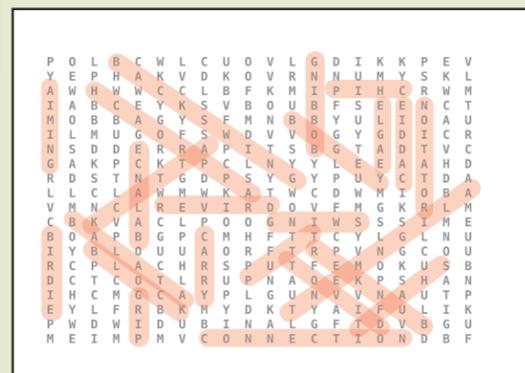
Last month's Mystery Photo was the red fountain at the Columbia Restaurant.



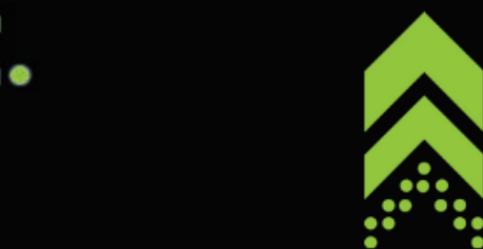
Answers to our Puzzles PG 9

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Answers: A. tee B. clubs C. course D. handicap



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August *Community Calendar* What's Happening in St. Augustine

1st: **20th annual Butterfield Garage** "Garage Sale opens Sunday, Aug. 1 and will continue throughout the month, featuring 31 local artists. Butterfield Gallery will resume its open everyday from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. hours for the month.

3rd: **Teen Cooking, Beyond Ramen** will be held at the Southeast Branch of the St. Johns County Public Library, 6670 US Highway 1 South, will be held on Aug. 3 from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. Registration at sjcpls.org is required for these events.

4th: **Photographer Lenny Foster** will share his artistic journey, including relocation to St. Augustine, at The Waterworks next to the Main Library, 1960 N. US Highway 1 South, from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 4. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Main Library and is free and open to the public.

8th: **Stay and Play** will be held at the Southeast Branch of the St. Johns County Public Library, 6670 US Highway 1 South, on Mondays, Aug. 8, Aug. 15, Aug. 22, and Aug. 29 at 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Taking a break from Storytime, but come to the library for social time with other caregivers and little ones.

8th: **The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable** will meet on Monday, Aug. 8 at 12 p.m. via Zoom. The meeting will feature guest speaker Reuben Franklin, Public Works Director, City of St. Augustine. Email info@sjcroundtable.org to register for the meeting or visit www.sjcroundtable.org for more information about the St. Johns County Civic Roundtable.

10th: **First Day of School** for St. Johns County Schools.

13th - 20th: **Early Voting location** at the Southeast Branch Library, 6670 US Highway 1 South; St. Augustine Beach City Hall, 2200 AIA South; and Supervisor of Elections Office, 4455 Avenue A, Suite 101 from Saturday, Aug. 13 through Saturday, Aug. 13. All sites are open 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily.

18th: **Junior LEGO Robotics** will be held at the Main Branch of the St. Johns County Public Library, 1960 N. Ponce de Leon Blvd., from 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. on Aug. 18. Kids will learn how to build and program robots. Registration is required; contact Andy Calvert at acalvert@sjcfl.us for more information.

27th: **Adult Craft – Beach Bottle Pendant Necklace** will be held at the South-

east Branch of the St. Johns County Public Library, 6670 US Highway 1 South, on Aug. 27 at 2 p.m. All materials will be provided by the Friends of the Library. Space is limited to 14; RSVP at sjcpls.org or contact (904) 827-6900.

27th: **GTM Research Reserve** will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, Aug. 27 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. No registration is required; meet at the Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Visit gtmnerr.org for more information.

Have an event you'd like included in our community calendar? Email the information to editor@floridanewsline.com. Deadline is the 10th of the month for the next month's issue.

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with St. Johns County School Board Member Patrick Canan, District 5

Q: Do you have any information about the construction bid for the new K – 8 School NN?

A: We approved the bid for this school to be built in the Shearwater neighborhood. It's a lot of money; more than we've ever paid before. This school is scheduled to open for the 2024 – 25 school year.

Q: What is the status of K – 8 Schools OO and PP?

A: They are on hold for now. We definitely have a need for these schools and will be revisiting them in the near future.

Q: Can you give any insight into the state statistics released over the summer?

A: St. Johns County was once again the No. 1 school district in the State of Florida, which is something to celebrate. I believe it's the 14th year in a row. I always say that a school's grade or a school district's grade from testing doesn't necessarily signify success, but it certainly an indicator, especially considering the growth we've experienced. This year, we had 29 "A" rated schools, seven "B" rated schools and three "C"

rated schools, with no "D" or "F" rated schools.

A couple of tidbits: in the past 10 years, our school district has grown by 45 percent, or more than 10,000 students. In the coming 10 years, the anticipated growth is another 15,800 students. This equates to approximately eight more schools of students.

Q: What can you tell us about the end of summer happenings and the upcoming school year?

A: Our newest school, Beachside High School, will be opening this school year and there is a lot of excitement about that.

Principals, who we consider to be the "captains of their ships," are very busy

attending leadership conferences, hiring staff, and managing their budget. There is a lot going on at the end of the summer while students enjoy the last few weeks of their break. We are looking forward to everyone returning to school refreshed and ready to go.

I'd like to remind parents about the State of Florida's Back to School Tax Holiday, which runs through Aug. 7 and will provide some financial relief on the purchase of back to school items. Be sure to check with your child's school at orientation or the school's website to determine what supplies are needed.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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



with St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer

Q: What can you tell us about the proposed new exemption for first responders?

A: There is a proposed Constitutional Amendment that will appear on November ballots which seek to provide an additional homestead tax exemption for first responders of \$50,000 on the assessed value of homes between \$100,000 and \$150,000. It would apply to property owned by classroom teachers, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, child welfare service professionals, active duty members of the US Armed Forces and Florida National Guard.

Q: How did this proposal come about?

A: State Sen. Jason Brodeur, R-Lake Mary, and State Rep. Josie Tomkow, R-Polk City, championed the bill in the Legislature, implementing HB 1563, companion bill HJR 1. If passed, it will create Florida Statute 196.077.

Since homestead exemption is in the Florida Constitution, exemptions must be passed by voters as Constitutional Amendments, which require at least 60

percent of the vote.

Q: What are the details of the proposed exemption?

A: It would provide an additional \$50,000 homestead tax exemption on values between \$100,000 – \$150,000. It does not apply to school district levies and it applies only to property owned by individuals working in these certain enumerated professions. Applicants must be employed on Jan. 1 in a full-time position in one of the qualifying professions and annual applications will be mandatory.

Q: When would the exemption be effective?

A: It would be effective as of Jan. 1, 2023 if the amendment is approved by at least 60 percent of the voters at the November 2022 general election.

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

A: Our office is located at 4030 Lewis Speedway Ste. 203, (904) 827-5500. It is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Also, readers can email me at Eddie@sjcpa.us or call me at (904) 827-5500.



An Even Brighter Future

Recent years have taught us that life is fragile, a hug is priceless, and that a virtual visit is good but being together in person is the best. Throughout our 76 years of continuous excellence, we've learned many things. Importantly, that by working together with an unwavering commitment to our mission, we'll ensure an even brighter future for our community's seniors.

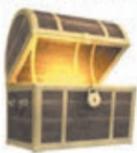


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Ahoy Mateys! I'm Captain Reducio, the newest buccaneer to the crew here at the St. Johns County Solid Waste Division. I've got a treasure chest full of fun facts about recycling, including the three Arrrrghhs, "Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle!"



To schedule a presentation with Captain Reducio, please contact his First Mate, Matthew "Peg Leg" Denny at 904.827.6980 or mdenny@sjcfl.us.

Are you an advocate for recycling and interested in helping your neighbors gain a better understanding of recycling? Please contact us at solidwaste@sjcfl.us to learn more about the Recycling Resource Program. For more information regarding residential curbside services or the Solid Waste Division's outreach programs, please visit www.recyclestjohns.com!





with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: With school starting back this month, can you give us some information about your office's Youth Resource Deputies?

A: First, I'd like to challenge our students and families to meet our Youth Resource Deputies in their area schools. They are very approachable; introduce yourselves and get to know them.

We have 56 deputies assigned to our Youth Resource Division under Captain Peggy Tennyson. Included in the 56 deputies are Lt. David Tarbert and Lt. Wes Kennedy. Additionally reporting to Capt. Tennyson are our school crossing guards. We have 73 crossing guards who are part time and seasonal and two supervisors, Nick Dekrell and Nancy Heburn.

Our Youth Resource Officers are assigned to 40 public schools; there are a total of 43 schools, but three of them are within the city limits of St. Augustine, so they are covered by deputies with the City of St. Augustine Police Department.

Q: Will you be making any changes this year?

A: Different this year will be that within the 56 deputies, some will be "floaters." All high schools will have one assigned deputy plus one floater. Our goal is to have two Youth Resource Deputies at each high school.

Q: How does your office view its role in protecting our schools?

A: It's all about partnerships. We have a partnership with the St. Johns County School District to work hand-in-hand and provide expertise on the security of each individual school. We want to have a partnership with our families and students, who need to know that we have

safe spaces for learning, but if anyone sees anything suspicious, they need to let us know and let us triage. Call either the non-emergency number, (904) 824-8304 or 911 immediately and provide us with as much information as possible as soon as possible. Our deputy sheriffs have lots of training and are well armed and equipped — but it's still a partnership and this is where getting to know and form a relationship with the Youth Resource Officer is so important.

Q: Do you have any safety tips for Back to School?

A: I encourage all community members to sign up for the Fortify Florida app (www.getfortifyfl.com) where you can report a tip or call 911, which immediately is routed to our emergency communications center.

As the school year approaches, let's not get complacent. I'd like to remind school employees and volunteers to ensure that their school is secured at all times. Parents, please plan your route to school and leave in plenty of time so that you are not rushing or speeding to get there. Plan for how to meet and get in touch with your children after school. Be open, honest and transparent in discussions with your children and advise them to always pay attention to their surroundings.

If you see something (person, place or thing) that is suspicious, call us immediately or tell a school employee.

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.



with St. Johns County Tax Collector Dennis Hollingsworth

Q: With the start of school this month, what can you tell us about your office's driver education offerings?

A: The St. Johns County Tax Collector's Office is one team of 65 – 70 employees working out of four locations. All of our driver education training is handled by our employees and I'm excited that we just came out with the schedule for the next school year. We will be offering driver education at each of our county's high schools.

Q: How did your office begin handling driver education in the county?

A: Several years ago, I noticed we were having a high failure rate for our learners' permits. I went to the School Board and convinced them that we could do the best job educating our future drivers. So, via an intralocal government agreement with the school district, we now offer driver education three times per year at each high school.

Q: What do the classes involve?

A: Phase I is a classroom setting. We offer 24 of these per year, three times at each of our eight high schools. The first set of classes (10 days each) begin in August, with classes scheduled to begin Aug. 11 at Nease, Aug. 12 at Bartram Trail, Aug. 29 at Creekside, Aug. 30 at Ponte Vedra High, Sept. 19 at Beachside, Sept. 20 at Toco Creek, Oct. 7 at Pedro Menendez,

and Oct. 10 at St. Augustine High.

Successful completion and passing of the test will result in the issuance of the student's learner's permit.

Then, a year later, we offer Phase II, which is behind the wheel driver training for a permanent license. Also, on six Saturdays throughout the year, we offer defensive driving at the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office track.

Q: How does one sign up for the classes?

A: Sign up and more information is available on our website, www.sjctax.us under Featured Resources and then select Driver Education. These classes fill up quickly, so register early.

Q: Has the program been successful and resulted in fewer driving test failures at your office?

A: Yes, we have a good record. In fact, the State of Florida recognized St. Johns County as having one of the highest passing rates in the state. Last year, we offered 3,949 road tests, 191 driver education written tests and 145 driver education driving tests.

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

A: A lot of questions can be answered by visiting our website, www.sjctax.us. I may be reached by calling (904) 209-2250 or emailing taxcollector@sjctax.us.



with St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty

Q. You recently launched an electronic newsletter to residents of St. Johns County. What is the purpose of the newsletter? How do people sign up?

A. We launched our monthly informational newsletter in early June. It is distributed just once a month, and our goal is to share information about valuable services we offer and Clerk and Comptroller news that can impact residents. We focus on topics that are actually useful to St. Johns County residents, like our free property fraud alert service, the unclaimed funds being held by our office, and real-life scams happening here in St. Johns County and in counties nearby. We also offer a "service spotlight" each month that shares a service or program that offers real-world benefits to taxpayers and residents. Keeping the newsletter current and genuine is important — we want it to be worthy of the time our subscribers invest in reading it. Subscribe by emailing communications@stjohnsclerk.com or directly from last month's newsletter, <https://conta.cc/3Ihg5MG>.

Q. What can you tell us about Passport Saturday?

A. Passport Saturday is a special event where our St. Johns County courthouse location will be open on Saturday, Aug. 6 from 9 a.m. to

2:30 p.m. to process new passport applications or take passport photos for new and renewed passport applications. We recognize the challenges of getting away from work to do business at the courthouse, particularly for people who work standard Monday through Friday business hours or want to bring in their minor children to get a passport. Holding a special Saturday event is a great way that we can meet the needs of our residents, particularly before school resumes and before the holiday travel season. If you're planning to get a passport, we strongly encourage folks to review our webpages at <https://stjohnsclerk.com/passports/> in advance to gather the required documentation and bring the correct forms of payment (<https://stjohnsclerk.com/passports/passport-fees/>), as the U.S. Department of State only accepts checks or money orders.

Q. How do people get in touch with you or your office?

A. Call the office at (904) 819-3600 for general information or call me directly at (904) 599-8688 if I may ever be of service. The St. Johns County courthouse, the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, is located at 4010 Lewis Speedway, along U.S. 1 just north of the city of St. Augustine.

RETURNING IN SEPTEMBER

Back to School Guide

Contact Linda at
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or Rebecca at
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Life

travel • pantry raiders • gardening
fishing • entertainment • puzzles

Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Bradley and Gili Taylor-Hicks

Bradley Taylor-Hicks was born in Essex, England, in the heart of Epping Forest — a place that inspired a natural love of history. “Growing up in an area surrounded by very early medieval history enabled me to get up close and personal with it,” said Taylor-Hicks, crediting his mom for introducing him to history in a fun and immersive way. He moved to St. Augustine with his family when he was 18 years old and started volunteering at the Spanish Quarter as a blacksmith, something that had always interested him. He arrived in October 1995 and by December of that same year, he had performed in his first reenactment. Several months later, Taylor-Hicks was offered a job.

Gili Taylor-Hicks moved to St. Augustine when she was almost two years old from Ohio with her silversmith parents who found the town to be the perfect place to sell their craft. Gili learned her parents’ trade but discovered that she had a stronger interest in photography. She spent almost 10 years as a staff photographer at the St. Augustine Record. She then worked at a company that converted cookbooks to CD Roms, taking pictures of the food to accompany recipes. Eventually, she found her way to the Spanish Quarter as one of the reenactors.

That’s where the couple met, worked, and became the unofficial supervisors of a new tavern that was opened as

part of the Spanish Quarter. Next, the two wrote a first-person interpretation (the British period) of the De Mesa-Sanchez House (working closely with shared mentor and Spanish Quarter General Manager Clark Wullenweber). In 2011, Gili was diagnosed with breast cancer. This forced both to stop working, so they could focus fully on Gili’s health. She has been cancer free for 10 years. Meantime, Bradley had expanded his interest to include wood-working and carpentry. He started making carved bone and wood jewelry and was selling his pieces at Amiro Art Gallery until it closed. Enter the creation of Albion Grove.

Q: What is Albion Grove?



Photo courtesy Bradley Taylor-Hicks
Bradley and Gili Taylor-Hicks

B: Albion Grove is a manifestation of magical energies brought to life by my hands as both a craftsman and man of “The Craft.” We specialize in custom jewelry, wands, horns, incense, and altar pieces. At its core, Albion Grove is an extension of the mystery of the British Isles.

G: I think of Albion Grove almost as a natural growth from the skills that we learned from our childhood and from the Spanish Quarter that just didn’t translate to the modern world. We were able to take all these weird seemingly unrelated hand-crafts and create things that touch wood and seem to resonate with people.

Q: You travel together all around the southeastern United States to Celtic festivals, medieval faires and craft shows. What did you need to get started four years ago?

B: We got set up with a good tent and handmade tables from friends. Our first event was at the Northeast Florida Highland Games in Green Cove Springs. We were pleasantly surprised and encouraged that we sold anything.

G: To be completely fair, some of the pieces at our first event were sold to friends of ours.

Q: What are some of the challenges you face when attending outdoor events?

B: Our biggest challenge is the weather. When you have a brick-and-mortar store, you might have a bad day when it rains. When it rains and you have a tent, you have a really bad day.

G: The wind blows product away and destroys the tent. We always have found that when these things occur, we really grow from it. We went from a 10 by 12 Viking Tent (destroyed in Myrtle Beach) to a 10 by 14 Viking Tent to a 16 by 20 marquee style tent.

Q: What types of materials do you favor and how do you divide the work?

B: I enjoy working with bone, antler, and wood, and I do all the carving. Part of the joy is sourcing odd materials to use.

G: It is a good way to make sure that no two pieces are the same. I do all the beading. We consult with each other constantly and work on everything collaboratively.

Q: What is it like to work together?

B: We have been together for 20 years. This is a story about love. We are happy in each other’s company. We are both on the same page, and I could not ask for a better partner.

G: It may sound sappy, but we found an enduring joy in each other’s company that we hadn’t known before.

[Author’s note: The Taylor-Hickses will have a booth at the Jacksonville Tattoo Convention at the World Golf Village Aug. 19 – 21. For more information about Albion Cove, see @albiongrove on Instagram.

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Pantry Raiders

A simple, flavorful salad to whip up in a snap

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

When preparing meals at home, cooks know that it helps to have a few simple, easily prepared dishes in their culinary repertoire. These are dishes that don't require too much planning and utilize certain staples that are present in everyone's pantry. Such is the case with this recipe for "Crunchy Cucumber Salad with Crushed Peanuts" from Ruta Kahate's "5 Spices, 50 Dishes" (Chronicle Books). Most of the ingredients for this flavorful salad are likely already in your kitchen, and it won't be long after you begin preparing the recipe that you'll be sitting down and enjoying a meal with family and friends.



Place the diced cucumbers in a medium bowl along with the chile. Using a coffee grinder or food processor, pulse the peanuts until they are reduced to a coarse powder. (You don't want big chunks of peanuts, nor do you want a fine powder; stop grinding somewhere in between!) Add the peanuts to the cucumbers along with the lemon juice, salt and sugar, and mix well. Taste and adjust the salt, sugar and lemon juice as needed. The salad should be slightly tart.

Make the tadka: Place the cayenne in a little pile on top of the salad. Do not stir it in yet. Heat the oil in a small skillet or butter warmer over high heat. When it begins to smoke, add the mustard seeds, covering the pan with a lid or spatter screen. As soon as the seeds stop sputtering, pour the oil over the cayenne. Stir the dressing in and serve at room temperature or cold.

Crunchy Cucumber Salad with Crushed Peanuts

Serves 4

2 English or other unwaxed cucumbers, chopped into 1/4-inch dice (about 3 cups)

1 medium green serrano chile, minced (seed first if you prefer)

1/2 cup peanuts, preferably raw (but toasted, unsalted ones will do)

2 tbsp. lemon juice, or more if needed

1 tsp. salt

1/2 to 3/4 tsp. sugar

1/8 tsp. cayenne

1 tbsp. canola oil

1/4 tsp. mustard seeds

Nutrition Check:

Children's Eye Health/Safety Month

By Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RDN & Caroline Jury BS
mail@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Carrots contain Vitamin A, which supports healthy eyes and vision.

When someone mentions eye health, what vegetables come to mind? For me, I always think of carrots; my mother would always say to eat carrots for better eyesight. Did you know that this is actually an old wives' tale that dates back to World War II? To cover for their technology, the British intelligence started spreading rumors that the key to the Royal Air Force's extraordinary night vision was due to eating lots of carrots. Learn more about the history: <https://tinyurl.com/485hkscn>.

In today's world, we have a different dilemma with eye health; with the rapid growth of smartphones, computers, and iPads, there is also an increase in eye discomfort, blurred vision, eye strain, eye pain, and visual fatigue. In celebration of this month's theme, Children's Eye Health/Safety Month, let's dig deeper into nutrients we can get from fruits and vegetables to support healthy eyes and vision.

1. Vitamin A: This nutrient is responsible for our eyes' ability to see in low light level conditions. Food sources: carrots, tomatoes, leafy greens, red bell pepper, sweet potato, liver, and tuna.

2. Lutein and Zeaxanthin: These carotenoids help with anti-inflammatory and prevention of age-related macular disease. Food sources: leafy greens, pistachios, corn, peas, and eggs.

3. Quercetin: This flavonoid is an antioxidant that is a protective barrier for the external portion of the ocular surface. Food sources: citrus fruits, tea (black/green), berries, red onion, and red wine.

4. Vitamin C: This nutrient helps protect lenses from harmful UV light. Food sources: strawberries, kiwi, oranges, broccoli, Brussel sprouts and red bell peppers.

A quick recipe I would like to share with the nutrients listed above is the Eye-Health Smoothie: 2/3 cup spinach or kale, 1 cup water/low-fat dairy, 1 frozen sliced banana, 3 red bell pepper slices, and 5 frozen strawberries. Blend and enjoy!

Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RDN, LDN, CLC, FAND is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida.

A refresher course in school bus safety

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The dawn of a new school year is a time marked by change and fresh opportunities. For many children, school marks the first time they are away from their parents for an extended period of time. It also may be the first time they ride in a vehicle other than their parents' cars.

Each school day, 25 million children ride a bus to school in the United States. A school bus is among the safest modes of transport and one of the most regulated vehicles on the road, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Riding a school bus can be a novel experience no matter a student's age or grade. Kindergarteners may be introduced to the school bus on their first day of school, while older students are

no doubt familiar with life inside a school bus. But all students and families can benefit from a refresher course on school bus procedures to ensure this school year begins on safe footing.

- Be a smart pedestrian. Riding the school bus is very safe, but injuries can occur walking to and from the bus stop. Watch for cars backing out of driveways and always look both ways multiple times before crossing streets.

- Remember school bus laws. Most areas of the country, including Florida, have specific school bus laws that include stopping when red lights are flashing on the school bus. Cars must stop whether they're behind the school bus, next to it or on the opposite side of the street facing the bus. Stopping allows passengers to enter or exit the bus safely.

- Stand away from the curb. The National Safety Council advises keeping six feet, or three giant steps, away from the curb while waiting for the bus. Young children should be carefully supervised.

- Be visible. Always cross in front of the bus, making eye contact with the driver so that he or she knows your intentions before crossing. If you drop something, do not bend down to pick it up. Tell the driver instead.

- Remain seated. Find a seat promptly and remain seated for the duration of the ride. Do not stand up and proceed down the center aisle until the bus has stopped.

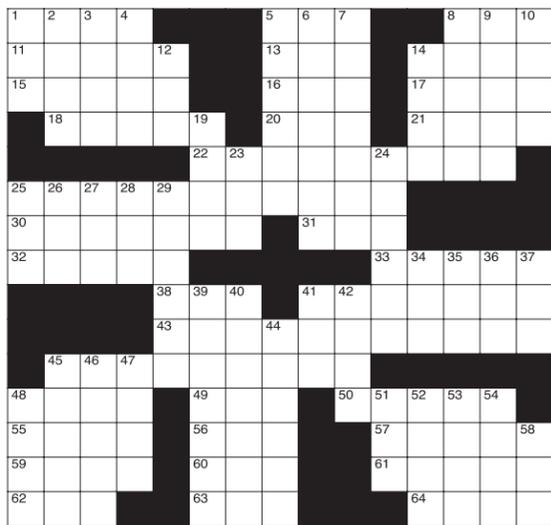
- Minimize distractions. Always speak softly and behave so that you do not distract the driver.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
All students can benefit from a refresher course on school bus procedures to ensure this school year begins on safe footing.

Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Breezed through
5. Time units (abbr.)
8. Pigeon's murmur
11. Moves aside in fright
13. Partner to "ahh"
14. Taxis
15. Monetary units of Turkey
16. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
17. Prolific Italian opera composer
18. Restaurants
20. One's grandmother
21. Ancient Greek City
22. Italian mountain ranges
25. Data
30. Acted in an obedient way
31. Autonomic nervous system
32. Not on the up-and-up
33. Mock lightly
38. Mimic
41. Built
43. A neighborhood
45. Inflammation of the kidneys
48. Semitic fertility god
49. Temporary name of Seaborgium
50. Wise people
55. Tear down
56. ___-fi (slang)
57. Diamond weight
59. Frosted
60. Predecessor to EU
61. Makes changes to
62. Some are secret
63. Tooth caregiver
64. Old English poet

CLUES DOWN

1. Sign language
2. In style
3. Norwegian river
4. People with impaired hearing
5. Large stinging paper wasp
6. Bucharest is its capital
7. River in Ireland
8. Type of TV
9. Double-reed instruments
10. Spanish motorcycle manufacturer
12. Midway between south and southeast
14. French commune
19. Alike
23. A bachelor's apartment
24. Foot part between the ball and ankle
25. Belonging to a thing
26. Japanese classical theater
27. Supervises flying
28. Not even
29. Capital of Saudi Arabia
34. Electronic countermeasure
35. Consumed
36. American politician (abbr.)
37. Sun up in New York
39. Casually looked through
40. Revealed the presence of
41. Peyton's little brother
42. Diana ___, singer
44. Study of moral values and rules
45. Civil Rights group
46. Makes less severe
47. Made an emotional appeal
48. Vivacity of style
51. One who is highly skilled
52. Gets around in pursuit of pleasure
53. Famed guitarist Clapton
54. Most common Japanese surname
58. Recipe abbreviation

TEE OFF WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- AIMING
- ALIGNMENT
- APPROACH
- ATTACK
- BACKSWING
- BALANCE
- BALATA
- BIRDIE
- BLOCK
- BOBBING
- BOGEY
- BUNKER
- CADDIE
- CARRY
- CHIP
- CONNECTION
- DIVOT
- DRIVER
- EAGLE
- GRIP
- PUTT
- ROTATION
- SHAFT
- SWING

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to golf.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 5 = C)

- A. 4 18 18**
Clue: Cleared area on golf course
- B. 5 23 20 22 10**
Clue: Used in golf play
- C. 5 1 20 2 10 18**
Clue: Where to play golf
- D. 26 25 21 17 16 5 25 3**
Clue: Average number of strokes over par

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Primary Election Guide

Meet your local candidates

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

In advance of the Primary Election to be held on Tuesday, Aug. 23, St. Augustine NewsLine invited each of the candidates that will appear on St. Augustine voters' ballots for State Senate District 7, County Commission Districts 2 and 4, School Board District 3 and City of St. Augustine Commission, Seat 3 Mayor to submit a statement for this Primary Election section.

St. Augustine NewsLine offered this opportunity to all candidates for these Primary Election races as a community service; no purchase of advertising was required. The content of the statements was left up to each candidate; the only stipulation was that the statement could not exceed 200 words. No editing of the statements took place. Each statement is printed in its entirety, as submitted by the candidate.

State Senate, District 7
Travis Hutson (R)

Senator Travis Hutson is honored to serve our 7th district in the Florida Senate. Governor Ron DeSantis endorsed Travis Hutson for his proven leadership.

In Tallahassee, he has been focused on the economy, education and public safety. He helped craft enhancements to Florida's Career and Professional Education Act, responding to Florida's critical workforce needs. He closed loopholes in the release of sexual violent predators making northeast Florida's most vulnerable citizens safer. In addition, Travis fought for improved water quality in Florida, as he successfully championed water policy reform and hurricane recovery.

Travis Hutson is A-rated by the NRA, and has earned the endorsements of Congressman Mike Waltz, Right to Life PAC, Florida Fraternal Order of Police, American Conservative Union Foundation, Associated Industries of Florida,

Florida Chamber of Commerce, NFIB, and many others.

Gerry James (R)

I am running for office because my opponent, the incumbent, is using his office to destroy our quality of life in this district. He uses his political access to essentially force mega-developments to be approved for his family business, and with that comes traffic and increased crime. Our schools cannot handle the uncontrolled rate of growth, and our children are suffering — that is unacceptable!

My opponent uses his elected office to write bills that benefit his family's land development business. I am not anti-development, but I am anti-overdevelopment and cronyism.

In other areas, my views are aligned with Governor DeSantis. I believe in medical freedom, free speech, and smaller government with lower taxes. I am the most conservative grassroots candidate running for Senate.

My opponent publicly stated that he was against an audit. If I am elected, I will push for real election reform, not the watered-down reform the incumbents have passed. There should be no mail-in ballots besides verified absentees, and no Dominion voting technology or any other machines.

Many of our elected officials are not following the wishes of their constituents and so they need to be replaced. I hope I can count on your vote.

County Commission, District 2
Sarah Arnold (R)

My name is Sarah Arnold, and I proudly represent District 2 on the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners following my appointment by Governor Ron DeSantis. As a wife and mother of four children, my faith and family are most important to me. I'm a lifelong

Republican, a defender of the Second Amendment, and am invested in the future of St. Johns County.

On the Commission, I have been a champion of smart growth practices and will always hold the line on overdevelopment. I support our first responders, our Sheriff's office, and our firefighters, and I believe it is our duty to provide critical support and care to our veterans, who have ensured our freedom and safety.

Additionally, as a fiscal conservative, I have been a leader for managing and balancing our county budget to ensure all resources are spent responsibly, and I will continue fighting through the bureaucratic red tape and wasteful spending to ensure our tax dollars work for us, and not the government. Let's keep St. Johns County on the Right Path. I kindly ask for your vote on Aug. 23.

Nelson David Cline (R)

Did not submit a statement.

Johnny Coe Counts (R)

I am a seventh generation Floridian, married 31 years to my wife Gina. We have two sons, two daughters, and two granddaughters, all part of a pioneer family ranch operation. I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I am also a small business owner of 34 years.

I propose a moratorium on large development projects to redress the \$500 million deficit of "infrastructure" in one of the most prosperous counties in Florida.

"We the People" should vote "no" on 1 cent added sales tax. I believe government needs to reduce to what is necessary as we all do in tough times. This "power" to tax is what needs to be carefully guarded. We cannot succeed as a free society without personal and public solvency.

Let's look at procurement, spending, and the budgeting process by first getting an accurate audit of the public purse that is the authority we have given to the Clerk of Courts.

An Enterprise Financial System that the

County Administrator has been requesting is needed to allow the free flow of information between departments that can be accessed and reported more accurately and efficiently. Make your vote4counts.com on Aug. 23.

Charles (Chuck) Labanowski (R)

I'm a Marine Corps combat veteran. I have lived in the county for 15 years with my wife Carol.

Now my goal is to protect the quality of life that we cherish here in St. Johns County, as we watch development exploding countywide. We need to make the infrastructure (schools, roads, parks) before the development. The infrastructure credits that developers are receiving are just one of the reasons that our infrastructure is deficient.

I am not in favor of the new proposed sales tax increase. We do not need to burden families anymore that are facing the ever-rising cost of living like gas and food costs. Our commissioners are now asking us to pay what developers should have paid when their projects were approved.

Law enforcement runs deep in the Labanowski family. I'm a proud father of a deputy sheriff. I was also honored to attend the St. Johns County Citizen Law Enforcement Academy.

We need to support and help our local farmers sustain their business for the betterment of St. Johns County and the state of Florida. I fought for my country and now will fight for you and St. Johns County.

LaShawnda L. Pinkney (R)

I was born and raised in St. Augustine, attended local schools. I'm the proud mother of five wonderful adult children and seven beautiful grandchildren.

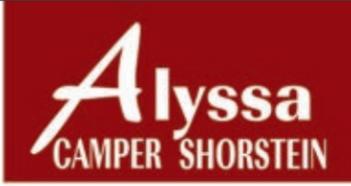
After receiving my MS in Criminal Justice, I became a Child Protective Investigator for the State of Florida. I was also a District Resident Services Supervisor, serving Urban Development-subsidized

Meet the Candidates cont. on pg. 11

Vote on August 23rd



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Education

- ★ St. Augustine High School
- ★ Flagler College
- ★ University of Florida Law School

Legal Experience

- ★ 40+ areas of law
- ★ 12+ years
- ★ 1000+ legal matters

- Will Follow the Law As It Is Written
- Common Sense
- Honesty, Integrity & Character
- Small Business Owner
- Community Servant

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Primary Election Guide

Meet the Candidates cont. from pg. 10

apartment complexes in seven counties. Currently, I'm a Human Resources Generalist for the City of St Augustine, responsible for employee records, administering benefits and payroll, recruitment, pre employment screenings and new hire orientation.

Board member of several other organizations in West Augustine: West Augustine CRA Steering Committee, served as Cultural and Quality of Life Chair, West Augustine Community Development Cooperation, West Augustine Improvement Association, American Legion Auxiliary, Post #194 and founder of Off Limitz Ladyz Riders motorcycle organization. I play a key role in the annual West Keep Calm and Walk for Cancer, annual Domestic Violence Awareness Brunch, Site Coordinator for the annual Toys for Tots giveaway and Christmas in the Park.

My priorities if elected would include Voting No! for the sales tax increase, stop overdevelopment, jobs, jobs, jobs, support for our veterans, first responders and youth. Faith, Family, and Community is who I am!

**County Commission District 4
Jeremiah P. Blocker (R)**

My name is Jeremiah Blocker and I am running for re-election as your St. Johns County Commissioner representing District 4. I am a combat veteran, father, business owner, and former prosecutor. My wife and I live in Nocatee with our two children and God has blessed us with a third child on the way!

I am committed to the best interests of St. Johns County and its residents. During the last four years, I have consistently put St. Johns County first by improving our public safety through increased funding for law enforcement and first responders. Additionally, the Commission has ensured that thousands of acres in the county are forever preserved and protected as well as nourishing our beaches. We have improved infrastructure and fostered a business climate to create jobs while still lowering taxes and fees. Finally, I carefully review development projects

on a case-by-case basis, only supporting smart and controlled growth; consistently voting against overdevelopment.

You can find more information on our website at jeremiahblocker.com. Please consider voting for me on Aug. 23 in the Republican primary!

Krista Keating-Joseph (R)

1. Slow down growth. My opponent approved 71 out of 73 proposals to develop undeveloped land in his first three years. This unacceptable rate of growth is compromising our quality of life.

2. Save our children from learning in unsafe, unsecure portable classrooms (according to FDLE) and being bused to schools out of their areas. We have more developments being approved than our school system can handle.

3. No to a 15 percent sales tax increase. The last thing we need is to raise the sales tax on our hard-working families, especially as we face high gas and food prices and inflation. Our budget surplus does not justify burdening residents with a sales tax.

4. Developers must cover the costs of infrastructure so that St. Johns County taxpayers are not stuck paying for their roads and recreational areas. We also need a new tree code to discourage clear-cutting.

5. Put our First Responders first. They should not have to leave the county to get a pay raise.

I'm a mom of five including two Navy SEALs, a Marine and a teen. I can say "no" to unbridled development and take St. Johns County back for the people who live here now.

**School Board District 3
Lauren Abell (N/P)**

I believe that great schools are the heart of strong communities. Our district has so much to be proud of yet also faces challenges that require strong leadership, experience, and sound decision-making. With a Master's Degree in Education and over 20 years of experience in public education,

I will work hard to support our district's continued pursuit of excellence while searching for solutions to help us recruit and retain top-notch teachers and staff, ensure our schools are safe and secure, and that our schools meet the needs of all students even as we continue to grow.

I am so proud of the high-quality public education that my two children received in our District 3 schools and I am committed to ensuring that all students have those same opportunities so that they leave high school with the necessary skills to succeed in the workforce, college, or the military. I know that one of the keys to our district's success is the parental and business support and involvement that we have in our schools and I look forward to celebrating those partnerships. District 3 voters can trust my leadership and my commitment to our families, teachers, staff, and schools.

Rita Baldwin (N/P)

I am a married homeschool mother of two boys, Florida native, and ardent supporter of the Constitution. I am honored to be endorsed by Moms for Liberty. I'm not a politician. I've never dreamed of being "someone in government." I've never wanted a political career...I'm just a normal, American Mom who loves Liberty and the founding principles of this country.

During the chaos of 2020, I became more closely involved with local government to do my part to ensure that the people of Florida kept their freedoms and liberty during the periods of school closures, lockdowns, and general disarray. As my participation in the local political scene deepened, I realized the dire need for more involvement and leadership in the local school system, and decided to take action.

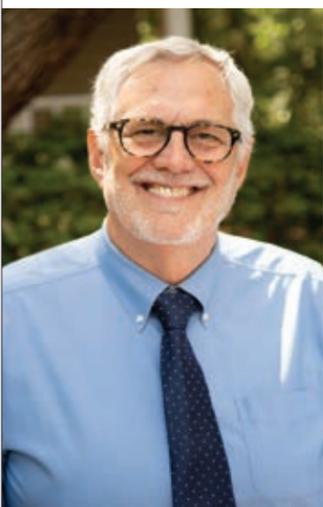
St. Johns County needs change, and I believe that change can only come from someone outside of the 'The System' who can step in and implement better policies. I support Governor DeSantis' education agenda and will work to remove explicit content from school libraries, bolster security for students and ensure parental rights in education. A vote for me is a vote for academic integrity, transparency and putting student success first.

Jennifer Collins (N/P)

My name is Jennifer Collins, and I am proud to be running for election to the St. Johns County School Board for District 3. I'm a parent — not a politician — and I will be a champion for Governor DeSantis's education policies in St. Johns County.

As a parent to five children who attend

Meet the Candidates cont. on pg. 12



Elect Jim Springfield

St. Augustine City Commission Seat 5

www.VoteJimSpringfield.com · Jim4staug@gmail.com

READY TO SERVE

PAID FOR BY JIM SPRINGFIELD, CANDIDATE FOR ST. AUGUSTINE CITY COMMISSION SEAT 5

SARAH ARNOLD

COUNTY COMMISSION



APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR DESANTIS

MEET SARAH

THE RIGHT PATH FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Paid for by Sarah Arnold, Republican, for St. Johns County Commission, District 2.

Primary Election Guide

Meet the Candidates cont. from pg. 11

St. Johns County public schools, who has worked with kids all her life, and has great concern for them and their parents in our community, I will always be a champion for students, first and foremost.

I am committed to increasing school safety measures to protect the wellbeing of our children; working with parents to advocate best practices for our children; retaining our top teachers to ensure our students thrive; preventing over-testing; and alleviating the effects of overcrowding.

Additionally, I am committed to defending parents' rights, their role in the education of their children, and keeping them wholly involved and informed of their students' time in school. Along similar lines, I also believe in age-appropriate instruction to ensure our children have every opportunity to just be a kid.

I look forward to representing you on the School Board and ask for your vote on Aug. 23.

Douglas Anthony Russo (N/P)

Did not submit a statement.

City of St. Augustine – Seat 3/Mayor
Noah Douglas Kowieski (N/P)

I am a candidate for the residents of St. Augustine. I want to improve our city services, roads and codes to be able to create a sustainable and enjoyable envi-

ronment for our community to thrive in. My focus as Mayor will be to address the vagrancy problems, road and infrastructure improvements, expand city services, and combat unsustainable development. As Mayor, I will lead the commission to commit to being more fiscally responsible and create policies that support our local community and small business owners. We are a close-knit community and the small businesses here are the backbone of our local economy.

I am committed and pledge to not serve more than eight years as Mayor. During my tenure, I know I will be able to work with the other Commissioners to usher in meaningful change that can help grow and support our municipality.

My motto and ideas for the city will center on Preservation, Renovation, and Innovation. Our rich history, culture and community needs to be protected, our buildings and infrastructure needs to be brought to exceed current standards and we as a city have the capability to foster sustainable growth and development through innovative policies and partnerships.

Tim Miscovich (N/P)

Did not submit a statement.

Nancy Sikes-Klein (N/P)

For the last 13 years I have been your

Meet the Candidates cont. on pg. 13

Senator/developer Hutson has only one interest: self-interest.

"The unseen leak in your home has powerful allies in Tallahassee" - Orlando Sentinel

Feb. 4, 2022

"A law that makes it difficult to sue builders over construction flaws is about to get worse, The legislator behind this monumentally bad bill (SB 736) works in a family construction company, with 20,000 home sites in northeast Florida and plans for [12,000] more."

"The law will become more tilted in favor of shoddy builders and against homeowners... the bill cuts the 10-year latent defect deadline to five years for single-family homes..."

"It's about as anti-consumer as you can possibly get."

"Who's behind it? The Sponsor of this fast-moving bill is Travis Hutson, R - St. Augustine, a vice president of the Hutson Companies, whose website claims some 20,000 Jacksonville area homesites..."

"Specifically in north Florida where Hutson is located... the houses are built over wood frames and they apply stucco. If they don't do it properly, water will penetrate - but it doesn't show up until six, seven or eight years until after the home is built."

"The legislature does not require members to avoid conflicts of interest unless the issue in question would benefit a specific legislator and no one else."



This article says it all. Travis Hutson is using his senate seat to benefit his business, and make us pay the price.

Fortunately, this bill died. But it's one of many self-serving bills that he has tried to push through. And some of them succeed.

We need a senator who will work for us, not for the Hutson Companies.

Gerry James will write legislation to strengthen laws limiting conflicts of interest. He's a constitutional conservative with a fierce commitment to fighting for the people of Florida. A true patriot, Gerry will work to preserve our God-given rights.



We need a senator who will work for us. Gerry4Senate.com

Paid political advertisement paid for by We The People Elect Patriots PAC, 1317 Edgewater Dr. #6177 Orlando, FL 32804 independently of any candidate.

Primary Election Guide

Meet the Candidates cont. from pg. 12

City Commissioner, listening to you, caring about the issues you care about and making decisions knowing that your life and livelihood is affected. I love this city, its history and people, and am prepared to step up and serve as your Mayor.

Recently we have seen many changes — the economic downturn of 2009, the

450th Commemorations, two major hurricanes, a worldwide pandemic and explosive growth in areas surrounding the city. Navigating these times has given me a deep understanding of our challenges, the grit to see our problems as they are and a proven track record of taking action to create positive outcomes.

Speaking of positive outcomes — city capital reserves are strong, credit rating is high, crime rate has dropped, 89

acres of undeveloped city land has been placed into conservation and the feasibility of building affordable housing on city owned property is being assessed. In the next five years we will be spending \$56 million in investments to improve mobility, equipment, harden infrastructure, and reduce flooding impacts for a more resilient city! Please vote to keep me working for you with energy, passion and dedication moving forward!

Voters' Rights and Responsibilities

Voter Bill of Rights

- Vote and have his or her vote accurately counted.
- Cast a vote if he or she is in line at the official closing of the polls in that county.
- Ask for and receive assistance in voting.
- Receive up to two replacement ballots if he or she makes a mistake prior to the ballot being cast.
- An explanation if his or her registration, or identity, is in question.
- If his or her registration, or identity, is in question, cast a provisional ballot.
- Written instructions to use when voting, and, upon request, oral instructions

in voting from elections officers.

- Vote free from coercion or intimidation by elections officers or any other person.
- Vote on a voting system that is in working condition and that will allow votes to be accurately cast.

Voter Responsibilities

- Familiarize himself or herself with the candidates and issues.
- Maintain with the office of supervisor of elections a current address.
- Know the location of his or her polling place and its hours of operation.
- Bring proper identification to the polling station.

- Familiarize himself or herself with the operation of the voting equipment in his or her precinct.

- Treat precinct workers with courtesy.

- Respect the privacy of other voters.

- Report any problems or violations of election laws to the supervisor of elections.

- Ask questions in needed.

- Make sure that his or her completed ballot is correct before leaving the polling station.

NOTE: Failure to perform any of these responsibilities does not prohibit a voter from voting.

JENNIFER COLLINS
FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
DISTRICT 3

JENNIFER COLLINS WILL CHAMPION THE
**GOVERNOR DESANTIS
EDUCATION POLICY**
ON THE ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

A Champion for our Children

**TRUSTED CONSERVATIVE.
DEDICATED PARENT.
NOT A POLITICIAN.**

Meet Jennifer

Paid for by Jennifer Collins for St. Johns County School Board, District 3

KRISTA
Keating-Joseph ElectKrista.com

CHUCK
Labanowski ChuckForCommissioner.com

Had enough?

Aug. 23rd, vote twice to stop overdevelopment that is destroying our county.

Had enough clear-cutting? Had enough traffic? Had enough portable classrooms? Had enough of kids being bused out of neighborhood schools? Have you had enough developer-driven government?

Krista believes Commissioner Blocker's 71 out of 73 approvals of new development (in his first three years alone) is excessive and harmful to our quality of life. Learn more about this mom of two U.S. Navy SEALs, her experience and qualifications, and why she's so committed to taking back St. Johns County. ElectKrista.com

Chuck will NOT continue Commissioner Arnold's uncontrolled approvals. In her first 5 months, she voted for more acreage to go under the bulldozer than any other commissioner. That's 2960 acres! Chuck has 8 years county experience. And as a former Marine and combat vet, he's ready to fight for our county. ChuckForCommissioner.com

Primary Election Guide

Faith & Allegiance to the Constitution

Raised in a military family, Casey Woolsey knows what it means to protect the Constitution and do one's duty to Country. As County Judge, Casey Woolsey will bring those same values to the bench.



Meet Casey



**PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY
VETERANS & PROSECUTORS**

**CASEY
WOOLSEY**
FOR COUNTY
COURT JUDGE

Paid by Casey Woolsey for St. Johns County Court Judge Group 2

Guest Column

What you need to know about voting in St. Johns County

By Vicky Oakes

It's Election Time! Are you ready to vote? Visit our website at www.votesjc.gov and use My Voter Status to access your voter record and view your sample ballot. Sample ballots are currently available online and will be mailed to every registered voter on Aug. 2, so look for yours to arrive in your mailbox soon. There are three ways to vote: By mail, during early voting, or at your precinct on Election Day.

Vote-by-Mail: The deadline for requesting a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed is 5 p.m. on Aug. 13. The law has changed for vote-by-mail drop boxes. Now called Secure Ballot Intake Stations, they are monitored by an Elections Office staff member at all times and are available at early voting locations only during voting hours. The secure ballot intake station in front of the Elections Office is no longer available. If you wish to return your ballot to the Elections Office, it may only be returned during the regular business hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. In order to be counted, vote-by-mail ballots must be in the Elections Office no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day, Aug. 23.

Early Voting: There are eight days of early voting between Aug. 13 and Aug. 20, including two Saturdays and a Sunday. All six locations are open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best thing about early voting is there is no wrong place to vote as long as you

vote within your county. Pick the location and time which is most convenient for you.

Election Day: Many changes have occurred since the last election. The 2020 Census and the 2021 redistricting process brought us new voting districts, new precinct lines, and some new polling locations. If you plan to vote on Election Day, please verify your voting location before going to vote as your polling location may have changed since the last election.

Are you a prepared voter? Ensure a smooth voting experience by making sure your address is current on your voter record. You can update it prior to voting with a quick call to the Elections Office before heading out to vote. This is especially important for voters who choose to vote on Election Day. Staff can process your address change on the phone and route you to your correct polling location the first time. This can be a real time saver. View and mark your sample ballot before going to vote so you are ready to vote when you arrive. Be sure to have a photo and signature ID ready to hand workers when entering the polling room.

For more information on the August 23 Primary Election, please see our ad in this paper, visit our website at www.votesjc.gov, or call the office at (904) 823-2238 for assistance with any questions. Looking forward to seeing you at the polls!



Nancy Sikes-Kline

FOR
MAYOR / SEAT 3

- ✓ A city focused on fiscal responsibility, core municipal functions & public safety
- ✓ A city focused on building resilient infrastructure
- ✓ A city focused on preserving authentic history & unique character

Thank you for your vote on August 23rd! ★

Political advertisement paid for and approved by Nancy Sikes-Kline, candidate for Mayor / Seat 3 City of St. Augustine.

PRIMARY ELECTION ★ August 23, 2022

OPEN TO ALL REGISTERED VOTERS IN ST JOHNS COUNTY



4455 Avenue A, Suite 101
 St. Augustine, FL 32095
 (904) 823-2238
 www.votesjc.gov

We are here to serve you. Please visit our office, call or use our online forms and resources to help you prepare for Election Day.

Due to the 2020 Census and Redistricting process, voting districts, precinct lines, and some Election Day polling locations have changed. Visit **VOTESJC.GOV** for more information.

ON OUR WEBSITE www.votesjc.gov

- Register to vote
- Check your voter status
- Change your address before you vote
- Verify your polling place
- Track the mailing and receipt of your vote by mail ballot
- View and print your sample ballot

ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF ID WHEN VOTING IN PERSON

Voter information cards are not a valid form of identification when voting. Be sure to bring a current and valid photo ID when voting in person. If the photo ID does not contain your signature, an additional ID that includes your signature shall be required. Example: Photo on Student ID and signature on a library card are acceptable. If you do not bring any ID, you will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot.

- Florida Driver License
- Florida ID Card issued by DMV
- United States Passport
- Debit or Credit Card
- Military ID
- Student ID
- Retirement Center ID
- Neighborhood Association ID
- Public Assistance ID
- Veteran Health ID
- Concealed Weapon ID or Firearm License ID
- Government Employee ID

FLORIDA IS A CLOSED PRIMARY STATE

- Democrats receive a Democratic ballot
- Republicans receive a Republican ballot
- Voters registered with no party affiliation or a minor party receive a nonpartisan ballot
- Universal Primary Contests are the exception. There are two on the Primary ballot, both Republican races. Representative in Congress, Dist. 5 and State Representative, Dist. 20. If you live in these districts, regardless of your party affiliation these Republican races will appear on your ballot.

Vote: It's Your Choice!

Call 904-823-2238 for your vote by mail ballot today! You can also use the online request form on our website www.votesjc.gov. Deadline to request a ballot to be mailed is 5 PM August 13th.

Make sure your vote counts!

Has your signature changed? If your signature on your voter record and signature on the vote by mail ballot certificate envelope do not match, your vote by mail ballot may not count. Update your signature using a Florida voter registration application.

Drop your mail ballot in a secure ballot intake station at any early voting site during the hours of voting. Your voted mail ballot is due in the Elections Office no later than 7 PM on Election Day. If it is late, it will not count.

EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS

★ DATES & TIMES ~ August 13th – 20th ★ Hours: 9 AM – 6 PM Daily At All Locations

Julington Creek Annex
 725 Flora Branch Blvd.
 St. Johns, FL 32259

Supervisor of Elections Office
 4455 Avenue A, Suite 101
 St. Augustine, FL 32095

Southeast Branch Library
 6670 US 1 South
 St. Augustine, FL 32086

Ponte Vedra Branch Library
 101 Library Blvd.
 Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

St. Augustine Beach City Hall
 2200 A1A South
 St. Augustine, FL 32080

Hastings Branch Library
 6195 S. Main St.
 Hastings, FL 32145

ELECTION DAY

- ★ Tuesday, August 23, 2022
- ★ Polls are open 7 AM – 7 PM
- ★ When voting on Election Day you **MUST** vote at the precinct of your legal residence.

KNOW WHERE TO VOTE BEFORE YOU GO

To locate your polling place visit www.votesjc.gov or call the Elections Office at 904-823-2238.

Travel

Make Memories in Mid-Maine

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

Visit Maine in the summer, and you'll wish to spend June through August in the New England state. Cool temperatures and low humidity create an ideal environment, not to mention the scenic beauty.

Maine's landscape runs from evergreen pine forests to tall craggy mountains and rocky coasts studded by lighthouses. The Atlantic provides pristine breeding grounds for lobsters, mussels, clams, and scallops. Wild blueberries thrive, especially in northern Maine.

The state's crowning jewel, Acadia National Park, ranks among the most beloved and visited of our 63 natural

treasures. Hike from a sand beach to outcroppings on boulders battered by the sea and climb (or drive) to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, the tallest peak on the east coast. Kayak on serene Jordan Pond and bicycle along the historic carriage roads. I suggest two to three days, depending on your desired activities.

Acadia sits on Mount Desert Island in mid-Maine, along with Bar Harbor, a small town that's unfortunately been overrun with souvenir and tacky t-shirt shops. Stay there for quick access to the park, or consider quieter respites in Southwest Harbor.

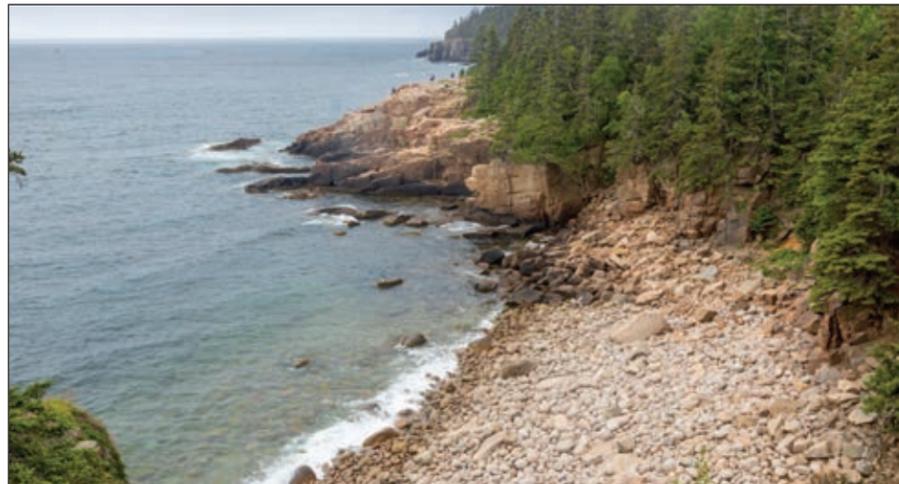
Drive fewer than two hours and arrive in a quintessential Maine village, Camden. White steepled churches, non-chain restaurants and shops, and art galleries dot the two-block main street overlooking Penobscot Bay. There, pleasure boats and windjammer schooners fill the docks.

I boarded the Lewis R French, a sailboat, for a three-night cruise. The French, the oldest known two-masted schooner in the United States, remains one of the few in active service. She operates much as she would have when she was built in 1871.

She carries 20 passengers in single, double, and bunk bed cabins. Each cabin included a sink, a window, reading lights, and a USB charger, but no toilet. Two heads (bathrooms) were located on the main deck. The cabins



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
The Lewis R French.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Maine coastline — Acadia National Park.

felt cramped, but I reminded myself I was aboard a historic sailing ship. I spent most of my daylight hours on deck. The sound of the waves and creaking of the wooden boat made it easy to imagine stepping back in time on a similar journey.

Once we set out into Penobscot Bay, the wind, weather, and tide dictated the destination. Captain Becky let Mother Nature determine the path as the French is pure sail and carries no inboard engine. A small boat in the rear uses a motor to help guide the schooner in and out of the busy Camden harbor.

The passengers help raise and lower the sail and anchor, but the rest of the time is spent watching the coastline, relaxing, and dining. Chef prepares fine meals on a wood-burning stove. One evening, we anchored near an uninhabited island and devoured a lobster bake prepared by the crew.

Camden's neighbor, Rockland, a mere 10 minutes away, features a lighthouse that rests almost a mile offshore. It's

accessed by a massive granite breakwater path. When you walk out, you understand why this project took 18 years and a billion and a half pounds of granite to complete.

Rockland's other highlight sits downtown — the fabulous Farnsworth Art Museum, home to hundreds of artworks by Andrew, N.C., and Jamie Wyeth, among others. The Wyeth family summered in the area, and numerous paintings reflect the New England coast.

I flew in and out of Bangor, an ideal small airport with excellent access to Acadia — but I can't recommend much to see or do in Bangor. Other gateway options are Boston or Portland, Maine.

I'm not ready for a sailor's life, but I cherish the memories of my unforgettable windjammer adventure, hikes in Acadia National Park, and eating lots of lobster and blueberry pie.

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

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Your Community Newspaper! St. Augustine NewsLine

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Rebecca Thomson:
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RETURNING IN SEPTEMBER

Back to School Guide

Contact Linda at
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(904) 607-5062

or Rebecca at
Rebecca@FloridaNewsLine.com
(724) 968-7602

