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Rowing teams medal at national championships



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Puzzles

Native Sons and Daughters provides opportunity for quality time

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

As local students head back to school, it is also time to consider extracurricular activities for the new school year. According to Native Sons and Daughters Florida State Chief Brian Quirk, one of the best ways to spend quality time with your son or daughter, away from the competitiveness of team sports, is by joining or forming a Native Sons or Native Daughters tribe.



Photo courtesy Brian Quirk.

Some tribes participating in Alex's Lemondade Stand

"When I first joined when my children were young, one of the other fathers told me that you only have 18 summers to make a difference in your child's life," Quirk said. "That really hit home for me and I think it's the most important part of what our organization provides — quality time."

Native Sons and Daughters was formerly Y-Guides and associated with the YMCA. Formed in the early 20th century by Harold Keltner and Joe Friday, the organization rose to

Native Sons and Daughters cont. on pg. 20

New book provides opportunity for community to reminisce about Project Alaska Turf

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

On June 25, former St. Johns County resident Cathy Parker hosted a walk down memory lane as she celebrated the publication of her book, "Northern Lights," with a book signing at Bono's in Fruit Cove. Hundreds of people attended over the course of the day to share stories about a special time in the community that took place more than a decade ago.

"The first day the book was available, I wanted to celebrate with St. Johns County," Parker said. "The great thing is there are so many stories from so many different people involved. It was a great time to reminisce."

"Northern Lights" tells Parker's story of the community's efforts to build an artificial turf field in Barrow, Alaska, the northernmost town in the United States. Dubbed "Project Alaska Turf" and led by Parker, the initiative resulted in a new football field for a fledgling high school football team that definitely had its share of obstacles.

"We were going to church one Sunday, and our kids asked us to watch a show on ESPN about this new football team in Barrow," Parker said. "We were amazed at what we saw: they were playing on a frozen field with gravel."

Parker said by the time the family left church that Sunday, she felt compelled to act — despite the controversy of cost (not only of the field, but also travel expenses the team would incur to travel to opponents), and her understanding that educators thought the money could be spent in better ways.

"But I told my husband, I believe football would change the lives of these young men," Parker said.

Parker had first hand knowledge of the benefits of an organized youth activity like football; her husband, Carl Parker, was an assistant coach at Bartram Trail High School under head coach Darrell

Sutherland and both of her sons played the game. At the time in 2006, NW St. Johns County was undergoing one of its many growth spurts and field space for youth athletics was at a premium.

Carl Parker was familiar with turf fields from his work with the county's Parks and Rec Department as they investigated such a field for this growing area.

"I thought, if we need a turf field here, how much more do they need one in Alaska?" Cathy Parker said.

And so the project began.

"We had a press conference in February 2007 at the Bartram Trail High School football field," Parker said. "The news hit the AP wire and went national overnight."



Photos courtesy Kelly White, KWhite Communications

Cathy Parker hosts a book signing at Bono's on June 25.

about Korngold intrigued her though, and the more Parker learned about the independent film industry, the more the momentum built to bring the story to film.

"It was at this time that I felt even more inclined to write a book so I could tell the entire story," Parker said. "A movie is great, but it is only 90 minutes — and I wanted to make sure to honor everyone who helped with the project and entrusted me to tell the story."

In March 2018, Parker signed a publishing contract with Harper Collins and hired co-author David Thomas. In addition to the book signing at Bono's, Parker has signed books available at local bookstores and will be doing another book signing in conjunction with Coach Sutherland at the Winn Dixie on County Road 210 on Saturday, Aug. 17 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Parker noted that the Barrow football team won the Alaska state football championship in 2017 and also earned the award for the highest grade point average of football programs in the state. There has also been a significant impact on the graduation rates for the Barrow high school students. Since the program was added, the State of Alaska reports the graduation rate went from 46.8 percent in the 2005 – 2006 school year to 83.6 percent in the 2008 – 2009 school year, one year after the new field was delivered.

"Northern Lights" is available for purchase at www.northernlightsbook.com.



Cathy Parker at the new Barrow, Alaska football field.

With help from many different parties, including other local football parents, Coach Sutherland, the turf field company, Rotary clubs and local

merchants, Project Alaska Turf was a success and six short months later, the Barrow Alaska Whalers played their first game on their new field. Parker and a delegation of 13 representing St. Johns County attended. Sutherland also instigated a type of exchange program between the two teams, with members of the Barrow Whalers visiting the Bartram Trail Bears and vice versa.

Fast forward to 2014, when Parker had the opportunity to meet Honnie Korngold, an independent film producer. Over the years, Parker had been approached by numerous filmmakers to tell her story, but she had always declined. Something

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- Constipation
- Feeling full and bloated
- Heartburn
- Pain when lifting or coughing

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Zoey!

BREED:
Winter White Dwarf Hamster

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Running around her wheel and playing in box forts

FAVORITE TREAT:
Veggie Treats

FAVORITE FRIEND:
Zoey's favorite person in the world-wide world is Ashley. She takes care of her and plays with her everyday!

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:
Zoey's name came from the game "Fortnite". Ashley has always loved that name, so she named her hamster after a character.



This month's sponsor:
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159 Palencia Village Dr #101
www.palenciapetclinic.com

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answers to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and you could win a Gift Certificate!
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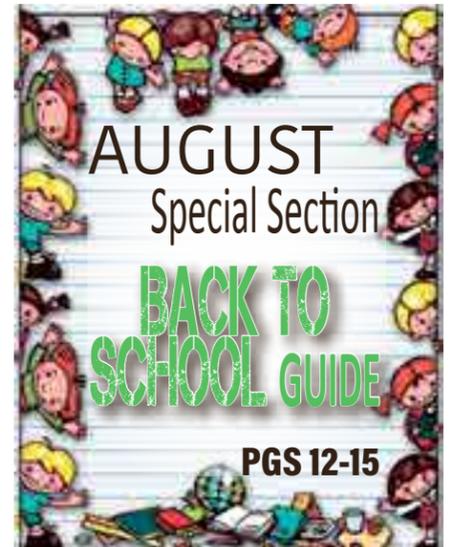


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MYSTERY PHOTO



Win two free day passes to Adventure Landing's Shipwreck Island (value \$65) by correctly guessing our Mystery Photo this month. We will hold a random drawing of all correct answers. Email your guess to mail@floridanewslines.com. Good luck!

Last month's Mystery Photo was the outdoor dining area of Wakame in Bartram Walk. Our winner was Amy Bolick. Congratulations!



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around town

Aug.

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Aug. 1
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7
 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.
 St. Augustine Yacht Club near the St. Augustine Lighthouse
 pa@mysafeboating.com

Aug. 2
Bartram Friday Book Club: "Educated," by Tara Westover
 10 a.m.
 Julington Creek Service Center, 725 Flora Branch Blvd.
 (904) 827-6960

Aug. 2 - 3
Fall \$1 Clothing Sale
 Friday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road
 www.mandaringardenclub.org

Aug. 3
Bingo Night at St. Joseph's
 Doors open 6:15 p.m.; Games start 7 p.m.
 Cody Center, 4152 Loretto Road
 Open to the community; (904) 742-8777

Aug. 4
Jewish Genealogy Film
 10:30 a.m.
 River Garden, 11401 Old St. Augustine Road
 RSVP: (904) 886-8429

Aug. 4
Fundraiser for Katelyn Loftus
 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
 River House at RiverTown, 90 Lanier St.
 Music, barbecue and silent auction;
 RSVP: glo.alford@gmail.com

Aug. 5
Current Events Discussion Group
 10 a.m. (repeating event on Mondays)
 Amenities Annex, 625 Market St., Palencia
 adsilby@yahoo.com

Aug. 6
World Golf Village Toastmasters
 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
 First Florida Credit Union, 1950 County Rd. 210W
 Worldgolfvillage.toastmastersclubs.org

Aug. 7
Jacksonville Camera Club
 6:45 p.m.
 Shepherd of the Woods Church, 6595 Columbia Park Ct.
 www.jax.jaxcameraclub.com (repeating event, first and third Wednesdays)

Aug. 8
St. Johns County Chamber Women with Vision Council
 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
 The Palencia Club, 600 Palencia Club Dr.
 RSVP: Sjcchamber.com

Aug. 8
Rotary Club of Bartram Trail
 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)
 Westminster Woods, 25 State Road 13
 lancedmalcolm@gmail.com

Aug. 8
Shorebird Walk at Matanzas Inlet with St. Johns County Audubon Society
 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
 Matanzas Inlet West Parking Lot, 8655 A1A S., St. Augustine
 www.stjohnsaudubon.com

Aug. 9
Rotary Club of St. Johns meeting
 7:30 a.m. (repeating event on Fridays)
 St. Johns Golf and Country Club Clubhouse
 www.rotarystjohns.org

Aug. 10
Family seining
 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
 Guana Dam, 505 Guana River Road
 (904) 823-4500

Aug. 12 🍎
First Day of School St. Johns County Schools

Aug. 12
Northwest United for Progress Club featuring Jennifer Mitchell, St. Johns River Water Management District
 Social 6:30 p.m./Meeting 7 p.m.
 2777 Race Track Road
 nwsjcp@gmail.com

Aug. 12
Living with Lung Cancer Support Network
 6 p.m.
 Ackerman Cancer Center, 10881 San Jose Blvd.
 RSVP: (904) 880-5522

Aug. 13
First Coast Card Club - adult card players
 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
 St. Augustine Main Library, 1960 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
 (904) 829-0643

Aug. 13
Bartram Tuesday Book Discussion: "Lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake" by Anna Quindlen
 6 p.m.
 Twisted Compass, 585 State Road 13
 (904) 827-6960

Aug. 13
Age-Smart Home Technology
 11:30 a.m.
 River Garden, 11401 Old St. Augustine Road
 RSVP: (904) 288-7855

Aug. 14
Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Support
 3:30 p.m.
 River Garden, 11401 Old St. Augustine Road
 Repeating event on the second Wednesday of each month

Aug. 15
Palencia Bridge Club plays Party Bridge
 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (repeating event on Thursdays)
 Donovan's Irish Pub, 7440 US Highway 1
 Diane Tamplin, (904) 808-7326

Aug. 17
Fruit Cove Cruise In sponsored by Sunshine State Chevelles
 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
 PDQ parking lot, 194 State Road 13
 Repeating event on third Saturday of each month

Aug. 17
Ancient City Chapter of Florida Writers Association meeting
 10 a.m.
 Main Library, 1960 N. Ponce de Leon Blvd., St. Augustine
 Open to the public; fwastaug@gmail.com

Aug. 17
Traditional Healing with Nature's Plants
 10 a.m.

Garden of Eatin, Lake Beluthahatchee
 Pre registration required: (386) 972-1891

Aug. 19
All Star Quilt Guild breakfast
 8:30 a.m.
 First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd.
 www.orgsites.com/fl/allstarquiltguild or (904) 735-0506

Aug. 20
North Business Council of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce
 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.
 Westminster Woods on Julington Creek, 25 State Road 13
 Register at www.sjcchamber.com or call (904) 829-5681

Aug. 20
St. Johns CARES planning meeting
 6:30 p.m.
 Celebration Lutheran Church, 810 Roberts Road
 www.stjohnscares.org

Aug. 20 - Sept. 24
Free Quit Smoking Now Class
 Tuesdays, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 Flagler Hospital Wellness Center
 Call Florida AHEC to register (904) 482-0189

Aug. 21
First Coast Newcomers Club Dinner/Trivia evening
 6 p.m.
 County Road 210 restaurant
 Limited number; RSVP (904) 829-0643

Aug. 26
Men Helping Men Prostate Cancer Support Group
 6 p.m.
 Ackerman Cancer Center, 10881 San Jose Blvd.
 RSVP: (904) 880-5522

Aug. 27
From Hospital to Home
 11:30 a.m.
 River Garden, 11401 Old St. Augustine Road
 RSVP for lunch: (904) 288-7855

Aug. 28
Stop the Stigma St. Augustine to highlight the importance of addiction treatment
 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
 St. Augustine City Hall, 75 King St., St. Augustine

Aug. 30
Helping Hands of St. Johns County
 10 a.m.
 Faith Community Church, 3450 County Rd. 210W
 jacqphil@aol.com

Aug. 30
Crafty Women
 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 Julington Creek Service Center, 725 Flora Branch Blvd.
 (904) 827-6960

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take 5

Library's Crafty Women take on mystery craft

The Crafty Women group of the Bartram Trail Branch Library will make a special mystery craft with a local artisan on Friday, Aug. 30 at 10:30 a.m. at the Julington Creek Service Center, 725 Flora Branch Blvd. Space is limited and registration is required. A \$5 donation to the Bartram Trail Friends of the Library for craft supplies is encouraged. Registration is now open; call (904) 827-6950 to sign up.

All Star Quilt Guild to host special morning meeting

The All Star Quilt Guild will meet Aug. 19 for breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Pancakes or eggs will be served for a cost of \$7. Call 735-0506 for a reservation. For more information visit



Photo By MetroCreative

www.orgsites.com/fl/allstarquiltguild or www.facebook.com/allstarquilters or call (904) 735-0506.

Volunteers needed at Council on Aging

St. Johns County residents are invited to use their talents and resources to benefit seniors in St. Johns County through (Council on Aging) COA. Volunteering at COA allows the opportunity to make new friends while making a difference. Volunteers are needed to assist with the Integrative Memory Enhancement Program (IMEP) at the Riverview Club in the Shores on Tuesdays. Tasks include helping with program assistance, coffee, greeting participants, and more. Volunteers are also needed to assist staff with a variety of activities, meal serving and clean up, in the Sunshine Center on Wednesdays and Fridays. Finally, volunteers are needed to assist as substitute Meals on Wheels drivers on weekdays. There are a variety of routes and volunteers pick the day they can help. Call Sandy Hollett, volunteer coordinator, at (904) 209-3686, or email shollett@stjohnscoa.com for more information or to sign up.

GTM Research Reserve hosts Beach Exploration

Docents from GTM Research Reserve will lead a beach walk on Saturday, Aug. 17 from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. beginning at the GTM Research Reserve Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road. Attendees will learn about the animals that call the beach home, and collect seashells and shark teeth. This is a "Beaches 101" experience the whole family will enjoy. The event is free, but there is a \$3 per vehicle parking fee. Visit www.gtm-nerr.org for more information and for instructions on how to reserve a spot.

Fine arts group hosts social

The Jacksonville Fine Arts Forum will host a social to learn about its organization on Wednesday, Aug. 21 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. at the Residence at World Golf Village Clubhouse, 330 North Shore Circle (Gate code: 3931). New and enriching programs will soon be of-



Photo courtesy GTM Research Reserve

fered by the forum for all who love and value art, including artists, musicians, writers, vocalists and collectors. Light refreshments will be served and attendees will learn about the forum's art presentations, scholarships, art themed excursions, activities and events. Contact Marty Cawley at (904) 814-8516 or cnmcawley@gmail.com for more information.

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with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: What is keeping your office busy at this time?

A: We are in the process of finalizing the polling places for the 2020 elections. March 2020, the time of the Presidential Preference Election, will be here before you know it.

Q: What are the polling place changes for the northern St. Johns County?

A: All of the changes are due in some way to the population growth we are experiencing. In the Northwest, Precinct 109 has been at Bartram Trail High School for a long time, but with the school's growth, we needed to move the precinct's voting location to the Shearwater Amenity Center. Precinct 102 has been at Creekside Christian Church along with Precinct 105. We have found it necessary to give each precinct its own voting location and so Precinct 102, with 3,300 voters, will be moving to Unity Church while Precinct 105 will remain at Creekside Christian Church.

In the Northeast, Nocatee's very large Precinct 406 has voted at St. Francis in the Field Church and has grown to 11,000 voters. We split the precinct; some will stay at St. Francis in the Field and new Precinct 410 will vote at Nocatee's Crosswater Hall.

Q: How will voters be notified of these changes?

A: Affected voters will be receiving their new voter cards in the mail very soon. Also, the Supervisor of Elections' website will be updated with new maps and precinct information by mid-August.

Q: Can you share the dates of the 2020 elections?

A: The election dates are now firm. The Presidential Preference Election will be held on March 17, 2020. The Primary Election will be held on Aug. 18, 2020. This will give us 10 weeks between the

Primary and General elections. Finally, the General Election, which is always the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, will be held on Nov. 3, 2020.

Q: Has your office had to do any work with petitions for proposed Constitutional Amendments?

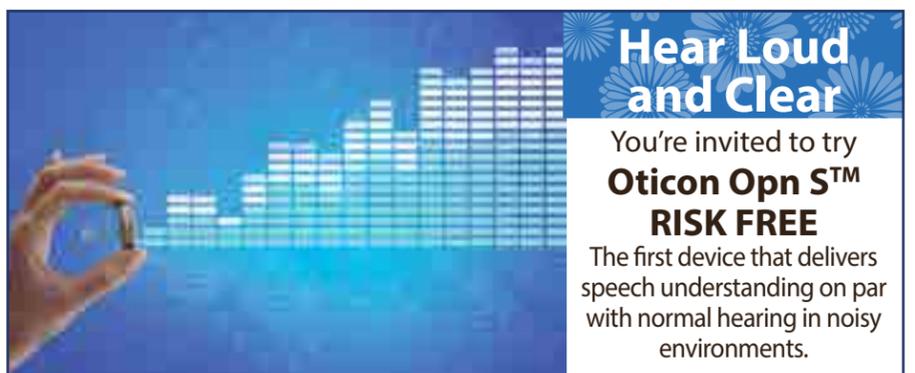
A: Yes, we have had a tremendous amount of petitions come to our office from groups trying to get amendments on the ballot in November 2020. Only registered voters can sign a Constitutional Amendment petition. Staff from my office must check each one and then validate the petition to the state. We only have 30 days to verify and validate, so we actually needed to bring in some part time workers recently to get a large amount of petitions done. The deadline for petitions to come to our office is Feb. 1, 2020 to potentially get on the November ballot.

Q: How many petitions are needed to put a Constitutional Amendment on the ballot and what is the most common petition you have seen so far?

A: Statewide, 766,200 valid petitions are needed to get a Constitutional Amendment on the ballot. The most popular petition we've seen so far is a Constitutional Amendment calling for a citizenship requirement to vote in Florida elections. The proposed amendment seeks to firm up language in this regard that is already in the Florida constitution.

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

Q: Can you give us any construction updates for NW St. Johns County schools?

A: The Mill Creek Academy expansion is nearing completion and we are looking forward to opening as a K-7 school this August.

In the fall, we will begin construction on a new 20 classroom building on the campus of Liberty Pines Academy. This will increase the school's capacity to 1,544. The construction costs will be funded by our half-cent sales tax, and we are grateful to voters for approving this back in 2015. We expect the building to open to students in fall 2020 and it will reduce the overcrowding at this school. The school board decided to expand the school since there is really nowhere logically to move students at this time.

Finally, by the time readers see this column, we will have executed the contract to purchase the land adjacent to Mill Creek Academy for the new high school. We will immediately begin moving forward with design work in anticipation of breaking ground. The tentative opening date of High School HHH is fall of 2021.

Q: Speaking of growth, do you have an estimation of the number of students expected to enroll in the St. Johns County School District this year?

A: We anticipate 42,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Things are not slowing down.

Q: What can you tell us about the recent state requirement that all students in grades six through 12 receive five hours of mental health instruction this school year?

A: We are trying to navigate this requirement at this time. We have several options to consider and it does have to be in place this school year, so we will have to move quickly.

Q: What is the latest on the school safety officers program?

A: We are entering into a partnership with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, the St. Augustine Police Department and the St. Augustine Beach Police Department to hire off duty officers to fill any gaps until we can hire permanent armed guards. All schools will be covered when school starts.

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

A: This year is the 150th anniversary of the St. Johns County School District. I find it interesting that when it was founded in 1869, the construction of schools was funded by taxes in the amount of 25 cents per \$100 of taxable value. We will have a celebration of this anniversary later in the year.

Q: The first day of school is Aug. 12. What would you like people to know about this upcoming year?

A: First, we are very pleased to be the number one school district in the state

Beverly Slough cont. on pg. 8



with St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer

Q: What is coming up on the calendar of the Property Appraiser's Office?

A: It is almost time for TRIM (Truth in Millage Notices) to be sent out to property owners. It's important to keep in mind that over the past two years, property values in St. Johns County have increased approximately 20 percent, which translates to higher taxes even without a tax increase.

Q: What can you tell us about TRIM notices?

A: TRIM is the most important document a property owner will get in St. Johns County. They will be mailed by our office on Aug. 16 and are also available online (www.sjcpa.us) as of that date. Within the mailing, property owners will receive a copy of the State of Florida Taxpayer's Bill of Rights and a list of exemptions in addition to the TRIM notice.

Q: What will the TRIM notice contain?

A: The TRIM notice shows the market value, the assessed value and the taxable value of your property for 2018 and proposed for 2019. It will also show any exemptions for the property. Make sure you check your TRIM notice for accuracy as to values and exemptions. The taxes are listed by taxable authority and will show what the taxes would be if the county made no changes to the budget. This is called the "rollback rate," essentially what your taxes would be this year to allow the county to collect the same amount of money as last

year. TRIM will also show the proposed taxes if the proposed budget is passed; this is what would be on the tax bill.

Beginning on Aug. 12, if you go to our website (www.sjcpa.us) or Facebook page, you can view a video with a detailed explanation of TRIM and the appeals process.

Q: What if people would like more information about the individual taxing authorities?

A: The TRIM notice also contains the date and time of the budget hearing for each of the taxing authorities, so property owners can attend to learn more.

Q: What should property owners do if they disagree with the value assessed by your office?

A: When the TRIM notice is mailed, a 25-day clock starts. If the taxpayer has any discrepancy with the Property Appraiser's Office, they should contact us to discuss. If we can't come to agreement, the taxpayer can file an appeal with the Value Adjustment Board. It is very important to do this within the 25-day window, because if not, a taxpayer will lose his or her right to appeal.

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.

FYI Contact Numbers

St. Johns County Local Government (www.sjcfl.us)
Sheriff's Office: Sheriff David B. Shoar, dshoar@sjso.org, (904) 824-8304
 Julington Creek Field Office: (904) 209-2150
Property Appraiser: Eddie Creamer, sjcpa@sjcpa.us; (904) 827-5500
Supervisor of Elections: Vicky Oakes, voakes@votesjc.com, (904) 823-2238
Tax Collector: Dennis Hollingworth, taxcollector@sjctax.us, (904) 209-2250
Clerk of Court: Hunter S. Conrad, (904) 819-3600

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners
 District 1: Jimmy Johns, bcc1johns@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0301
 District 2: Jeb Smith, bcc2smith@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0302
 District 3: Paul Waldron, bcc3pwaldron@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0303
 District 4: Jeremiah Blocker, bcc4jblocker@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0304
 District 5: Henry Dean, bcc5hdean@sjcfl.us, (904) 209-0305

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

State of Florida Elected Officials
 Governor Ron DeSantis, (850) 488-7146
 State House District 17: Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Cyndi.Stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov, (904) 823-2300
 State Senate District 7: Senator Travis Hutson, (386) 446-7610

Federal Elected Officials
 U.S. Congress District 4: Representative John Rutherford, (202) 225-2501
 U.S. Senate:
 Senator Marco Rubio, (202) 224-3041
 Senator Rick Scott, (202) 224-5274

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

Q: Can you give us any information about the proposed development at the corner of Race Track Road and St. Johns Parkway?

A: This proposed development, which is slated to include retail, townhomes and apartments, has already come before the Board of County Commissioners due to the rezoning request. We approved the PUD and transmitted it to the state of Florida for their review. The proposed development is in compliance with what would be along a major arterial roadway, which Race Track Road is now.

Q: Are you aware of some of the concerns that community members have to this proposed development?

A: Yes. The ones I have heard are it will include too much traffic, there is not enough school capacity and it would be detrimental to area home values.

County staff has determined that the roads in front of the property have capacity. The part of Race Track Road to the east (the two-laned part) is already deficient, but will be addressed when the state widens Race Track Road and the overpass when it widens Interstate 95. As for the schools, the developer will be paying the St. Johns County School District an amount of money that the school district has determined is sufficient to meet the demands of the increase in students. Finally, it's a delicate balance as to property values.

We as a county need to provide affordable housing, but don't want to have any negative impacts. This development will not be subsidized but will be at market rates. A diversified housing market is just as important as diversified employment for the economic health of the county. Experts have told me that this is a good blend/transition from the residential developments to the west of the property and the retail (Durbin Park) to the east.

Q: Do you know when the state will be widening Interstate 95/Race Track Road to provide traffic relief in that area?

A: This project has been funded, which is very important and signals that it should be happening "soon," but we don't know exactly when. Just a guess from me, based on today's information, would be in the two to five year time frame.

Q: What's the next step for this proposed development?

A: The request will come back to the Board of County Commissioners for final review. I believe it will be on our early August meeting agenda. I'll be watching closely for any changes made since our previous review that might impact the community in any way.

Q: Moving on to another proposed development, can you comment on the proposed gas station for the property on

State Road 13 near Otoes Place?

A: I have not been provided with any details yet on this proposal. I've always supported commercial development that is an enhancement to the community and is welcomed by neighbors. This particular project was proposed a few years ago and the proposal was withdrawn. So my first question would be, what is different this time that we should consider it?

I would encourage readers to monitor the Development Tracker on the St. Johns County website (www.sjcf.us/DevelopmentReview/DevTracker.aspx) to stay up to date on the very latest proposed developments.

Q: Can you give us any insight as to the budget process that is ongoing?

A: For the first time in several years, we will have a \$15.5 million budget surplus (even after contributing to the reserve fund) and I would like to applaud our

staff for guiding us through challenging times while still meeting our core responsibilities of health, safety and welfare of the community. Also, I'd like to thank the department heads that still reduced their budgets from last year in a sign of fiscal responsibility. The board has not yet decided what to do with the surplus and we are still soliciting ideas from community members. One possibility is to catch up on some deferred maintenance and so I have asked staff to provide a list of all deferred maintenance projects and costs so we can try to determine where we will get the biggest return on any investment. The final budget hearing will be in September, where we will fix the budget and set the ad valorem rate, but not necessarily decide exactly what to do with the surplus.

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

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

Beverly Slough cont. from pg. 7

again this year, and the gap between us and the number two district is widening. I attribute this to the careful attention we pay to each child and whatever his or her needs are to take the student to the next level in excellence in learning. We are excited to welcome the stu-

dents back to school and look forward to great success in the coming year.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

MarketInsight



Florida icons

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

In 1937, a Russian immigrant had a novel idea. He wanted to build a new kind of aquarium just south of St. Augustine. His name was Count Ilya Tolstoy and he had a couple of things going for him. First, he was a count. Americans have always been enamored of nobility. Second, he was the grandson of Leonid Tolstoy, author of “War and Peace,” one of the most famous novels of all time. We are equally enamored of famous writers. Tolstoy attracted the attention and support of a man named Pratt and another named Whitney. Both were descended from a long line of wealthy industrialists. Together they planned to open the “World’s First Oceanarium.” It would be more than just an aquarium. The facility would also serve as a film studio.

Marine Studios opened for business in June of 1938 and was an immediate success. Thirty thousand people showed up the very first day, snarling traffic on A1A for miles in both directions. Prior to the imposition of beachfront black-outs, Marine Studios was one of the most brightly lit properties on the Florida coast. So bright were the lights, that a famous German U-boat commander used the lights as a landmark as he hunted for prey off our shores. For the next several decades, barring a three-year shutdown during World War II, Marine Studios was the most popular tourist attraction in the state. Visitors came from all over the world. They came to see the dolphin show. So many people came to see the dolphin show that in 1948 the Times Union called the man who starred in the show, Mitch Lightsey, “the most photographed man in America.” He may well have been!

People also came to see celebrities. A number of famous writers hung out at

Marine Studios. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, our area’s most famous author, who wrote “The Yearling” was there regularly. Her husband, Norton Baskin, operated the Moby Dick Bar and Grille on the property. Other authors like John Dos Passos and especially Ernest Hemingway liked to drink at the Moby Dick. The bar was shaped like the bow of ship and was fitted with a revolutionary hydraulic system that made it rock as if it were at sea. They say that when the crowd got too rowdy, Norton would speed up the hydraulics to make his inebriated guests seasick.

In 1961, Marine Studios changed its name to Marineland. By then, it had already lived up admirably to its original name and purpose. A number of movies and TV shows were shot there, most notably “The Creature from the Black Lagoon” and its sequels. “Return of the Creature” was shot largely at Marine Studios and in Palatka. Clint Eastwood made his first credited movie appearance in that film, in a scene shot just outside St. Augustine. Many episodes of the TV series “Sea Hunt,” starring Lloyd Bridges were also filmed at Marine Studios. When it was built, Marine Studios was a modern wonder-of-the-world as iconic in its time and place as the Great Sphinx or the Washington Monument.

Today, another group of visionaries is seeking to build a new, state-of-the-art aquarium on the banks of the St. Johns River in downtown Jacksonville. When it is built it will be with a tip-of-the-hat to Ilya Tolstoy and the others who blazed the trail.

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

Spotlight on North Business Council

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Meet Stephen Hudson of Digital Mark Company, LLC

In addition to being the chairman of the North Business Council of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, Stephen Hudson is the co-founder and president of Digital Mark Company, a digital marketing agency. Hudson said his company builds websites, performs search engine optimization (SEO) and manages online business listings — basically anything that deals with a company’s online presence. Hudson started Digital Mark in 2016 after a varied career including serving in the military as a data analyst for 20 years, a stint in the corporate world in sales and marketing, and a four-year career teaching sixth grade. He said all of these experiences involved data-driven decisions and led him to forming his own company.



Photo courtesy Stephen Hudson
Stephen Hudson

Q: What is your long term goal?

A: We want to establish ourselves as leaders in the industry and become known as advocates for small businesses and nonprofits. We are actively seeking nonprofits to work with, since they have to get the most cost efficient service due to their limited dollars. We are a Christian-based company and proud of that. We want to work with businesses that are trying to make a difference in the world.

Q: What do you think the benefits are of doing business in St. Johns County in general and being a member of the North Business Council in particular?

A: I absolutely would not have been able to grow my company and meet other businesspeople like I have without being a member of the St. Johns County Chamber. It’s given me a way to be involved with the community. I’m probably one of the biggest advocates for the Chamber. The connections I’ve made, both professional and personally, are invaluable. Membership in the North Business Council gives me the ability to build personal relationships that can lead to successful business opportunities.

Q: What is your company’s “edge?”

A: Our advantage is we are a small team of highly skilled professionals. Each person has more than a decade of experience and advanced degrees in his or her field. Since all of our team members work on a contract basis, we are able to keep overhead low by only bringing in the expertise that is needed for each client. We have all the abilities of larger agencies without the cost, because we can tailor our experience to each client’s needs.

Q: What was your best business decision?

A: Definitely when I invited my wife, Trudy, to quit the corporate world and join me in this business, because she’s brilliant.

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Briefs

New children's emergency center coming to Baptist Medical Center South

Families in the fast-growing area of south Jacksonville that includes northern St. Johns County will soon have convenient access to specialized pediatric emergency care from Wolfson Children's Hospital. Integrated into the state-of-the-art Baptist Medical Center South campus, the full-service Wolfson Children's ER will bring the expertise of the top-ranked children's hospital close to home for area families with children from birth to age 17.

The 8,100-square-foot Wolfson Children's ER will be a separate facility, with its own parking area, entrance, check in and triage area, family restrooms and 12-room unit dedicated entirely to children and families. Construction is expected to be completed in the fall of this year.

"Everything about our new Wolfson Children's Emergency Center at Baptist South will be designed to provide world-class pediatric emergency care close to home," said Michael D. Aubin, FACHE, president of Wolfson Children's Hospital.

Wolfson Children's Emergency Center at Baptist South will be staffed by a team comprised of double-board-certified pediatric emergency physicians, emergency nurses, respiratory therapists and radiologic technologists, all connected with the larger team of pediatric specialists at the downtown Wolfson Children's Hospital, 24/7. The ER will be outfitted with equipment specially designed for children.

The parking lot on the south side of Baptist South will be closed for the duration of construction. Patients and visitors

to the Baptist South Emergency Center should continue to park in Lot A, directly in front of the ER entrance. The visitor garage is also available for patients and visitors.

Eligible homeowners encouraged to register for assistance through St. Johns County Hurricane Matthew Housing Recovery Program

St. Johns County homeowners who experienced home damage from Hurricane Matthew and have unmet recovery needs still have time to register for assistance through Restore St. Johns: St. Johns County Hurricane Housing Recovery Program. At least \$21 million in funds are available to help eligible St. Johns County homeowners finish the recovery process.

To be eligible for assistance, homeowners must:

- Own a single-family home (up to four units) in St. Johns County that was occupied during and sustained damage from Hurricane Matthew.
- Still own and occupy this home and have unmet hurricane recovery needs.

Registering for assistance through Restore St. Johns is quick and easy. Homeowners can register at www.sjcfcl.us/restore or pick up a registration form at the Restore St. Johns Office located on the second floor of the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Center, 200 San Sebastian View. The Restore St. Johns Office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding county holidays).

Homeowners with questions regarding registering can call the Restore St. Johns

hotline at (904) 209-1280 or email questions to cdbgdr@sjcfcl.us.

St. Augustine Humane Society offers free spay and neuter services

The St. Augustine Humane Society is offering free spay and neuter surgeries for dogs and cats until mid-August with funding through Florida Animal Friend Inc. To qualify for the reduced fee or potentially free services, pet owners must meet specific income guidelines.

According to Carolyn Smith, St. Augustine Humane Society's executive director, the assistance program started in 2018 through a grant and is designed to reduce the number of unwanted pets by controlling overpopulation, to help people keep their pets in the family, and to help feed and care for family pets.

The Humane Society's spay, neuter and surgery clinic is open every Tuesday from 8 a.m. – to 4 p.m. The wellness clinic is open every Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Pet owners must pre-register for spay and neuter surgery. The Humane Society's resource center includes a wellness and preventative care clinic, low-cost spay and neuter clinic, grooming facility, dog training, and a pet food pantry. These and other services enable local pets to live happily and healthily in their homes for life. Business hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Saturday by appointment. The Humane Society is located at 1665 Old Moultrie Road in St. Augustine.

For more information and program criteria, contact resource coordinator, Chantelle Bessett at (904) 829-2737, ext. 100 or email cbessett@staughumane.org or visit <http://staughumane.org>.

New preschool to open in St. Johns

Chappell Schools announces the grand opening of its newest school in St. Johns County, on Longleaf Pine Parkway. The school will open on Monday, Aug. 5, an open house will be held on Saturday, Aug. 3. The open house is open to the public from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. and will feature family friendly activities and food.

Chappell Longleaf is an ecological learning center certified as Eco-Healthy®.

"The center will be conscious of Early Childhood nutrition and serve only organic milk, purified water, and fresh fruits and vegetables," said Nancy Dreicer, Chappell CEO. "We will have gardens with each child eating something they grew during the school year, and we will visit with local hydroponic farms."

Chappell Schools has a 60-year history in Jacksonville. Chappell's strong curriculum is supported by trained teachers who use Hatch Technology® and the Sunform Alphabet System® to prepare the children and measure their progress individually. The schools use both the FrogStreet® and ELLM Plus® curriculums.

Chappell Longleaf will be supported by Chappell's physical education, music, resource and reading specialist staff and will "make learning fun" for the children daily. The preschool will adhere strictly to DCF standards and have a state-of-the-art security system designed by Bates Security. Chappell Longleaf will serve children from six weeks through VPK and will service six local elementary schools with before and after care, as well as a robust summer and holiday camp program.



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The Sheriff Reports

By St. Johns County Sheriff David B. Shoar

Hurricane awareness

With the extreme effects our area received during hurricanes Matthew and Irma over the past few years, this is an excellent time to remind our citizens and visitors to develop a hurricane plan. Hurricane season began at the beginning of June and lasts until the end of November and meteorologists are calling for a near normal amount of storms this year. According to the NOAA, they predict a total of nine to 15 named tropical storms, of which will be four to eight hurricanes with winds greater than 74 mph, and two to four major hurricanes with winds greater than 115 mph.

You should be familiar with the terms Hurricane Watch and Hurricane Warning. A Watch is issued when conditions are favorable that a hurricane could strike in 36 hours. A Warning is issued when hurricane force winds are expected to strike in 24 hours. By this time you should already have an emergency plan for yourself and family and begin implementation of that plan.

Some things to consider in your preliminary plans are:

- Take photos of your property from all angles; it may not look the same once the storm passes.
- Plan for elderly/handicapped/invalid care at a shelter or at home.
- Learn which routes will be safe during a storm.
- Learn where official shelters are located.
- Trim any dead wood from trees prior to the storm.
- Check for, fix or take note of loose items on your structures (shutters, screens, eaves, gutters, antennas, satellites).
- Get and use a hurricane tracking chart

Plan what you and your family will do if you have to evacuate.

- Get necessary supplies and secure them in safe area.
- Plan for pet care.
- Review your insurance coverage.
- Protect your important documents.
- Show others in the family how to turn off/on gas, electricity, and water.
- Make outside repairs.

When a Hurricane Watch for your area is issued:

- Listen to official bulletins on radio, TV, or NOAA Weather Radio, and internet for updates.
- Check all supplies you already have to see if they are in satisfactory condition, including batteries.
- Fill gas tank of vehicles, check oil and tire pressure.
- Inspect mobile home tie-downs.
- Board, tape, cover windows and doors or skylights.
- Secure boat.
- Secure any objects and furniture that are outside.
- Plan to evacuate if necessary.

When a Hurricane Warning is issued:

- Stay tuned to TV, radio, Internet or NOAA Weather Radio.
- Move valuables to higher location
- Move furniture away from windows and cover.
- Fill containers (bathtub, plastic jugs) with drinking water.
- Use phones only in an emergency.
- Bring in/secure pets (food and water).
- Shut off water and electricity at main breaker switch.
- Leave mobile homes.
- Leave low areas. If evacuating, leave early.

Sometimes a hurricane path may not be predictable and evacuation orders could come at any time. If you are asked to evacuate, please do so early and know the route you will be taking. Remember there will be many folks taking the same route from a very large area so be sure to give yourself plenty of time to leave safely.

Finally, if you refuse to leave following an evacuation order, here are some safety tips for riding out the storm:

- Make sure your building is well-constructed.
- Turn the refrigerator to maximum cold.
- Freeze water in plastic containers; if the electricity goes off you can use the ice to keep food cold in the refrigerator.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by the authorities.
- Unplug small appliances.
- Fill bathtub and containers with water.
- Stay indoors.
- Prepare for storm surge and possible flooding.
- Stay away from windows and doors, even if covered.
- Stay in a small interior room, hallway, or closet.
- Close all inside doors, brace exterior doors.
- If you have a two-story house, stay on the first floor.
- Lie on the floor or under a table or other sturdy object.

If you have not made any emergency plans, you should do them now. Visit www.nhc.noaa.gov/ and www.sjcemergencymanagement.org/ for more information. Feel free to drop me a line at dshoar@sjsj.org.

Rep. Stevenson hosts mobile office hours

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

For the convenience of residents of District 17, State Representative Cyndi Stevenson will be hosting five sessions of Mobile Office Hours throughout House District 17 during the month of August:

Aug. 6, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.: Anastasia Public Library Branch, 124 Seagrove Main Street in St. Augustine Beach.

Aug. 8, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.: Main Branch Library, 1960 N. Ponce De Leon Blvd. in St. Augustine.

Aug. 20, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.: Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Aug. 21, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.: St. Johns County Service Center Julington Creek Branch Multipurpose Room, 725 Flora Branch Blvd. in St. Johns.

Aug. 27, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.: St. Johns County Convention Center at World Golf Village, 500 South Legacy Trail.

This service is free and open to the public. Rep. Stevenson is preparing for the 2019 – 2020 Legislative Session; Committee weeks begin in September 2019.

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BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE



Editorial

Tips for sending your child to preschool

By Holly Caplan

School is around the corner for many of us and many parents struggle with the decision of preschool. Preschool is a great foundation for children and families. First time parents may struggle with the challenge of finding the “right fit” for their family while having an ideal schedule.

As a director of a local preschool, I encourage families to not necessarily

put all of their focus on what friends are doing or what they think will look good. This is an important time to make lifelong learning choices for your child. You have to find a school that you, as a parent, feel is a good fit for your family. Logistics of travel time, drop off/pick up times, parent participation are all important as well as knowing you will be excited about the new routine.

Your child will feel your sense of anxiety or excitement and will portray that as school time approaches. Encourage your child to find a backpack or snack bag. Let them carry it around the house as they get excited about the idea of school. Older preschoolers can help you plan their snacks as you discuss healthy snack choices.

The first days and weeks can be trying on any parent. Some children will cry uncontrollably at being left for the first time or with someone new. This is okay. Preschool staff are equipped and prepared for these first few challenging days. Teachers must gain the trust and confidence of students in order to make it feel like a safe environment.

I encourage families to visit the new school site often in the days leading up to the first day. Discuss with your child how school works and the fun things they will get to do — playdough, playground, paint, glue, color, build with blocks.

I encourage families to send a note to the teacher if there is something their child is particularly afraid of and what their favorite subject may be. This helps with students who may not talk much the first few days. Teachers will know

not to turn out the lights to get the attention of the class if your child is afraid of the dark. They will also know to go ahead and pull out some dinosaurs (if that is your child’s favorite subject) to help ease that transition.

In my past 15 years, I have found that a quick goodbye is more effective than a long and drawn out one. Teachers and staff are able to redirect and engage your child in a new activity once you are out of sight. For many students out of sight, out of mind is a great motto.

If your child is one that has a hard time adjusting to this new routine, it helps to make sure they know you have not forgotten them. Be on time, if not a bit early, the first few days. When students are picked up, having to watch your peers leave while you are left looking for your parent is hard on little ones. Reassure your child you will return and then be there when it is dismissal time. As you head home, discuss the fun things they did that day at school.

Remember it all begins with you! You set the tone for your student. Be excited and allow that happiness to overflow to your child!

Holly Caplan lives in St. Johns and is a local preschool director.



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BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE



Sales tax holiday returns in time for back to school shopping

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

The 2019 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday was passed by the Florida Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Ron DeSantis. This sales tax holiday begins Friday, Aug. 2, 2019, and runs through Tuesday, Aug. 6, 2019.

During this sales tax holiday period, qualifying items will be exempt from tax including certain school supplies selling for \$15 or less per item; clothing, footwear, and certain accessories selling for \$60 or less per item; and computers and certain accessories selling for \$1,000 or less per item, when purchased for noncommercial or personal use.

The 2019 Back to School Sales Tax Holiday is Aug. 2 – Aug. 6, 2019.

This sales tax holiday does not apply to:

Any item of clothing selling for more than \$60; any school supply item selling for more than \$15; books that are not otherwise exempt; computers and computer-related accessories purchased for commercial purposes; rentals or leases of any eligible items; repairs or alterations of any eligible items; or sales of any eligible items in a theme park, entertainment complex, public lodging establishment, or airport.

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BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE



Promote healthy weight starting with school lunch

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Although there are a variety of theories behind the growing obesity problem plaguing North American adults and children, the most consistent findings point to caloric intake as the culprit. Here's a simple equation to get to the root of the problem:

Calories eaten > calories spent = weight gain.

According to National Health Examination Surveys, adult obesity trends in

the United States between 1976 and 2014 indicate the percentage of the adult population classified as obese has roughly doubled to more than 38 percent in the last three decades. Children may be learning eating habits from their parents, potentially contributing to rising obesity rates in children as well. Recent findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate one in five school-aged children and young people in the United States is obese.

Teaching children healthy eating habits starts at home and can extend to what students are given to eat while at school. The Center for Science in the Public Interest says schools across the country are working hard to improve school nutrition. Here's how parents and school districts can help make school lunches more nutritious and delicious and lower in calories.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Healthy eating habits begin in childhood and can be initiated with school lunch.

- **Control snack intake.** The U.S. Department of Agriculture says that more than one-fourth of kids' daily caloric intake comes from snacking. Choosing smarter snacks may help reduce overeating. Good snacks can include grain products that contain 50 percent or more whole grains by weight; snacks in which the primary ingredient is a fruit, a vegetable, dairy product, or lean protein; snacks that are a combination food that contain at least a 1/4 cup of fruits or vegetables; and foods that contain no more than 200 calories.

- **Read nutritional information.** When selecting foods for school lunches, parents should read the nutritional information to make sure they know exactly what they are feeding their children. Select foods that are low in saturated fats and cholesterol and high in fiber and nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes.

- **Go with water.** Rethinking beverage choices can help control kids' caloric intake. Many people don't realize just how many calories beverages add to their daily

intake. Even a six-ounce, 100-percent apple juice can include as many as 96 calories. Sodas and other soft drinks pack a hefty caloric punch. Water, seltzer and unsweetened iced tea are healthy beverage options. If milk is the go-to beverage, choose a reduced-fat version.

- **Introduce new foods.** Children can be notoriously picky eaters, but with patience and perseverance, parents can introduce new, healthy foods at lunchtime. Yogurt, hummus and salsa are healthy and can add flavor to vegetables and fruit. When making sandwiches, exchange refined breads for whole-grain varieties. Choose lean protein sources, and go heavy on vegetables and fruits for natural fiber, which will create feelings of satiety.

- **Read the school menu.** Let children indulge in ordering from the school menu when healthy options are featured. Urge them to try something unexpected, rather than sticking to chicken nuggets or pizza days.

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BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE

Girls on the Run fall registration opens Aug. 19

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida's registration for the 2019 fall season opens Aug. 19 at 6 a.m. online at www.gotrnefl.org. Registration continues through Sept. 6 and is on a first come, first served basis. Interested parties are encouraged to register early.

Girls on the Run is a nonprofit organization that uses an activity-based curriculum to promote social, emotional and physical health, creating a foundation of self-worth for girls in third through eighth grades. Running is used as a platform to inspire and motivate girls, encourage lifelong health and fitness, and build confidence through accomplishment. At the conclusion of the 10-week program, girls complete a celebratory 5k event, giving them a tangible sense of achievement as well as a framework for setting and achieving life goals.

"Studies show that by adolescence, girls' confidence drops about twice as much as boys'. Girls face social pressures and conflicting messages about how they should act and who they should be," said Girls on the Run executive director Laura Lasko. "Girls on the Run aims to

change this by teaching girls strategies to remain strong during adolescence in a supportive environment."

The program is designed for eight to 13-year-old girls because children of this age are still receptive to what adults have to say, yet they are beginning to feel the pull of peer pressure. These formative years are the perfect time to address important issues and develop skills. An emphasis is placed on intentional decision-making, the importance of making healthy choices, conflict resolution and how to make a meaningful contribution to society. The curriculum stresses peer support and doing one's best and rejects defeating others or exerting power over others.

Over the last 15 years, Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida has impacted the lives of more than 18,000 girls. This



Photos courtesy photos by H Ryan Photography



season, Girls on the Run will be offered at locations throughout Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. Most teams will meet two times a week for 75 – 90 minutes after school, with the exception of a handful of Saturday sites that meet once a week in the morning. The season will culminate in a 5k event on Dec. 7 at UNF that brings together family, friends and community members to celebrate the girls' growth throughout the season.

Visit www.gotrnefl.org for more information about the program, site locations and registration.

2019 - 2020 St. Johns County School Calendar

August 2019				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

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- 2 Teacher Inservice (non-student day)
- Classes Resume
- Student/Teacher Holiday
- End of Quarter
- Days in question



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Get to Know . . .

Tom Verri

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Tom Verri
Tom Verri

Tom Verri has been a St. Johns County resident since 2012. Originally from the Bronx, NY, he is part of a large Italian family and the youngest of seven children, as well as a product of New York City public schools. At an early age, he knew he wanted to be a police officer and became a reserve officer in the 45th Precinct in the Bronx at age 18 and a full time officer at age 21. His childhood career ambition was a good one — he became a shooting instructor at an early age and served in the motorcycle unit, undercover in the vice unit, as a member of the detective unit, and many years in his personal favorite, the patrol division. After 23 years of service in New York City, which included Sept. 11, 2001, Verri retired from the NYPD. He then worked overseas in Iraq as the bureau chief of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement under the US Department of State, as a law enforcement officer in Washington DC, and now has a private investigation firm to keep him busy. Verri and wife Patty have three daughters, all of whom graduated from Creekside High School and are now in college at the University of North Florida and Florida State College at Jacksonville.

Q: How did you know you wanted to become a police officer?

A: We lived in a building with the Pelham Parkway Block Association offices on the first floor. These volunteers would patrol the neighborhood in teams of two and acted as liaisons with the NYPD. I was always fascinated by what they did and when I was 13 years

old, after catching me trying to overhear what they were doing in the office, the president of the association offered to let me volunteer with them. I started out answering the phone, but by age 14 I was allowed to go out on neighborhood patrol with a coveted CB radio. My sense of law enforcement came from a real understanding of what community service was.

Q: How did you get to be a police officer?

A: One night, a lady had her purse stolen. I took off after the guy and was able to get close enough to get a very accurate description of him. Within a few seconds, the police arrived and I gave them this description. They apprehended him and I gave a positive identification. The sergeant asked me how I was able to see all the details so quickly and then said with eyes and a memory like that, I should become a police officer.

Q: How did you meet your wife?

A: Patty and I met in 1991 through mutual friends, but we were just friends. I was a police officer in New York when we bonded over the passing of a mutual friend. One thing led to another and we started dating in 1994. We were married in 1998.

Q: How did you come to live in St. Johns County?

A: My mom eventually lived in Hernando County, north of Tampa. I knew

I always wanted to come to Florida when I retired, but I didn't want to go somewhere extremely hot or extremely populated. North Florida fit the bill. We first moved to Amelia Island, but one day we found St. Johns County by accident. We drove over the Julington Creek Bridge and we were intrigued and started to explore the area. We moved here in 2012. St. Johns County is like heaven on earth to me.

Q: What hobbies do you enjoy?

A: I love riding my Harley. I've dabbled in acting and have done a couple of spots on "Days of our Lives" and "Law and Order." I also made a pitch for a reality show where we would travel around the nation on motorcycles and visit bakeries. I called it "Biker Bakery Tour" and we have actually shot one episode. I'm still trying to pitch it!

Get to Know . . .

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

Night under the Stars announced

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns County Parks and Recreation Department has partnered with the Ancient City Astronomy Club to host Night under the Stars on Thursday, Aug. 1 and Friday, Aug. 2 at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds, 5840 State Road 207. The event begins at 8 p.m. each night. This educational evening will allow attendees to learn about constellations and star names. Telescopes and binoculars will be available to view the moon, planets and other objects in space.

This is a free program, but space is limited and registration is required. Contact Kelly Ussia at kussia@sjcfl.us or (904) 209-0335 for more information or to sign up.

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Teens tackle challenging hobbies with tenacity and technology

By Heidi Brososky-Weaver
mail@floridanewslines.com

Playing video games and watching YouTube channels are popular pastimes for Creekside High School teens, but these technology-based activities can be catalysts for other hobbies, too.

For example, sophomore Daniela Sanchez learned to sew thanks to her favorite video game character, McCree.

"I really wanted McCree's cape, but they don't sell it anywhere," said Sanchez. So, she purchased a sewing machine, and after learning the basics from her mom, she created a McCree costume without a pattern. "I have always been interested in the world of design and costume creation, and I loved the end results."

Ethan Muhl also had an end goal in mind when he teamed with his dad to build a computer. After watching instructional videos, the 10th grader designed a powerful, upscale PC.

"It was interesting. We had to figure things out as we went along," Muhl said.



Photo courtesy Katherine Weaver
Ryan Clark, a senior in the Cybersecurity Academy, worked full-time with a tech company.



Photo courtesy Lynda Kelly
Grace Campbell by the Lion King backdrop.

"It's important to have that time with parents," added Muhl, whose family enjoys neighborhood walks to catch up and de-stress, as well.

Although stress-relief was not a primary goal for Cecilia Griffin, creating an acrylic portrait of poet/playwright Oscar Wilde was a "therapeutic experience." Using wikiHow, the sophomore taught herself to paint in layers and used a time-lapse feature on her phone to capture the process.

"It was rewarding to find something in the canvas that wasn't there before and to create it with my own two hands," Griffin said.

For photographer Jenna Russom, the world is her canvas. "I can capture the

beauty around me and share it with others," said the senior, whose digital picture, "Floral Contrast," was displayed at the 2019 St. Johns All-County High School Art Show. Although flowers are a top focus, Russom's favorite subjects are people because "I enjoy capturing their personalities and seeing their reactions to portraits of themselves."

Other students, like Maggie Diaz, find that art is best expressed through music. Already skilled at playing the oboe, trumpet, and ukulele, the sophomore decided to learn the alto sax with some assistance from her sister and online instructional videos. Diaz's main advice is not to give up. "If you can't do it the first time, just keep going with it because you can learn it," she said.



Photo courtesy Brandon Ruckh
Brandon Ruckh with LEGOs



Photo courtesy Heidi Weaver
Jenna Russom by her digital picture, "Floral Contrast."

Persistence is crucial, agreed Adriana LaVopa, who joined a competitive climbing team with her sister several years ago.

"Climbing is a dangerous sport," she stressed, so it's important to "know your limits" but also be "competent and confident." Practicing nine hours a week, LaVopa has developed tenacity to work through failure. Additionally, the junior discovered climbing utilizes her math skills. "Like math problems, routes are puzzles to solve, and each one presents a unique challenge to overcome," she said.

Brandon Ruckh concurred that hobbies "keep your brain going and give you something to do that's not work."



Photo courtesy Adriana LaVopa
Adriana LaVopa rock climbing.

Ruckh, a sophomore in the Creekside High School Engineering Academy, designs digital LEGO creations and then builds 3-D versions. His latest creation is a vintage Cadillac, and he hopes that the experience he is gaining will help him land a job as a set designer for The LEGO Group one day.

Many other St. Johns County Schools Career Academy students were able to gain real-life experience this summer through internships. Ryan Clark, a senior in the Cybersecurity Academy, worked full-time with a tech company and applied his classroom knowledge in a corporate environment.

"I was able to see tangibly how it interacts in the real world," Clark commented. "An internship is a great way to explore your field of interest."

Another member of the Cybersecurity Academy, Molly Wannamaker, joined a learning team at Citi, and one of her tasks was creating an interactive map for the company's intranet site.

"This opportunity further solidified my interest in the field of technology," the senior said.

Meanwhile, senior Grace Campbell from the Digital Media Academy interned in Citi's public relations department creating attention-grabbing graphics. Her pride was designing a life-sized backdrop for the company's "Lion King" movie event.

"It was very rewarding to take on a large project and consider it my own," said Campbell.

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Rowing teams medal at national championships

By Faith Behrens
mail@floridanewline.com

Thirteen local rowers recently went to Camden, NJ, to compete in the US Rowing U15/U17 National Championships. Representing the Evans Rowing Club, the girls competed in three different events: Women's U15 8+, Women's U15 4+, and Women's U15 4x, and not one of these boats came back empty-handed.



Photo courtesy Faith Behrens
Evans Rowing Club members attended the National Championships in Camden, NJ.

The girls' eight boat, from stroke seat to bow seat, contained Addison Frisbee (coxswain), Sarah Whitin, Carolyn Nickerson, Alexandra DiMauro, Lyric Hall, Elizabeth Dixon, Ashlyn Anderson, Carly Reed, and Emily Haynes. The eight boat participated in a 1000 meter race and narrowly beat Triad United Rowing Association by two seconds. They came in first place and became the national champions for their Women's U15 8+ event, finishing with a time of 3 minutes and 45 seconds. Meanwhile, the girls' four boat featured Addison Frisbee, Eva Daniel, Claire Calabrese, Grace Behrens, and Emma Miller. Their performance earned them a bronze, in the Women's U15 4+ event, with a time of 4 minutes and 45 seconds. Finally, the quad (a boat rowed by four girls, with two oars instead of one) featured rowers Sarah Whitin, Ashlyn Anderson, Emily Haynes, and Carolyn Nickerson. The girls were neck and neck with another boat for most of the race, with the other boat inching ahead. At the last moment, the Evans boat pulled

ahead and beat the Greenwich Crew by a second. They made their boat the third place national champions for the Women's U15 4x event, with a time of 4 minutes and 6 seconds.

The girls conquered many challenges to become national champions. One particular difficulty they faced was having to change practice locations during the last two months of the rowing season. They were forced to leave their old rowing location because the city withdrew the club's use permit.

Elizabeth Dixon, first place medalist in the girls' eight boat, said, "It took enormous amounts of perseverance to make it through [the race]. But we kept on [rowing] and eventually won."

The season starts back up on Sept. 4 for high school and Sept. 6 for middle school. Visit www.evansrowingclub.com for more information or to sign up.

St. Johns County Schools tops in the state again

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

School grades released by the Florida Department of Education show that the St. Johns County School District continues to be a top performing district in the state and is one of only two that has consistently remained an "A" rated district. St. Johns County had 31 "A" schools, seven "B" schools, one "C" school and one "D" school.

Fourteen elementary schools, four middle schools, all six of the district's K-8 academies, five high schools, St. Johns Virtual Franchise and St. Johns Virtual Instructional Program all received a grade of "A" this year.

"Our students have benefitted from the hard work and dedication of our teachers, and I am extremely proud of their efforts," said Superintendent Tim Forson. "Our school grades reaffirm that our focus and resources are applied to help our students succeed. They also provide the opportunity for us to hone in on areas and schools that may need additional support in the coming year."

The elementary schools receiving an "A" are Cunningham Creek Elementary, Durbin Creek Elementary, W.D. Hartley Elementary, Hickory Creek Elementary, R.B. Hunt Elementary, Julington Creek Elementary, Ketterlinus Elementary, Ocean Palms Elementary,

Osceola Elementary, Palencia Elementary, Picolata Crossing Elementary, PVPV/Rawlings Elementary, Timberlin Creek Elementary and Wards Creek Elementary.

The middle schools with an "A" are Fruit Cove, Alice B. Landrum, Pacetti Bay and Switzerland Point. Freedom Crossing, Mill Creek, Liberty Pines, Patriot Oaks, Valley Ridge, Mill Creek, Freedom Crossing and Palm Valley academies received an "A" as did Bartram Trail, Creekside, Allen D. Nease, Ponte Vedra and St. Augustine high schools. St. Johns Virtual School also received an "A".

Otis A. Mason Elementary, R.J. Murray Middle, St. Augustine Public Montessori, Gamble Rogers Middle, Sebastian Middle, Pedro Menendez High and South Woods Elementary schools received a "B" this year. John A. Crookshank Elementary School received a "C", and St. Johns Technical High School received a Maintaining rating this year. The Webster School received a "D".

Visit <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org> for more information.

Softball registration now open

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Registration for the Creeks Softball fall 2019 season is completely online. Visit www.creekssoftball.com for more information and register before Aug. 22 to avoid a late fee of \$20. The cost per division is \$125 for 6U; \$160 for 8U; and \$175 for 10U/12U/14U. Games are played at Aberdeen Park, 1401 Shetland Drive.

Key dates include the mandatory coaches' meeting on Aug. 21 and evaluations on Saturday, Aug. 24. Team camp will be held Saturday, Aug. 31. Practices start the first week of September in anticipation of Opening Day on Saturday, Sept. 28.

Contact Chris Januchowski at (407) 443-3030 or Chris@roundtablerealty.com for more information.



Photo courtesy Nease High School

Nease students earn first place in software competition

Juniors Alan Michael and Daniel Fedchenko represented Allen D. Nease High School in the National TSA competition (Technology Student Association) in Washington DC the week of July 1. The two students took first place and the National Championship in the Software Development category. The boys gave a special thanks to Bergman Arias, engineering teacher, for all of his help, guidance, and motivation.



Photo courtesy St. Patrick's Episcopal Church

Church helps clothe neighbors

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church and Dress a Girl Around the World recently teamed up to provide clothing to those in need in Interlachen, Putnam County. Pictured is Annie DeBauche of St. Patrick's at a table of clothes that were collected, sewed and delivered to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Interlachen during their Fourth Friday Outreach Day.

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Volunteers sought to convert books to braille; classes begin Sept. 5

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

For more than 60 years, the Temple Sisterhood at Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville has sponsored a program to teach volunteers to convert printed books into braille, a form of written language designed for the blind and visually impaired. These books are then 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.

The 2019 – 2020 braille class for volunteers will start on Sept. 5, 2019. This is a nine-month program on transcribing text into braille, or converting illustrations into tactile graphics. Classes will be held every Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., September through June. Course graduates can go on to be certified as braille transcribers by the US Library of Congress. The program is open to both men and women of all faiths.

An orientation meeting will be held on Thursday, Aug. 29 at 10 a.m. at Con-



Photo courtesy Temple Sisterhood at Congregation Ahavath Chesed

gregation Ahavath Chesed, 8727 San Jose Blvd.

During 2018, the program's volunteers have contributed more than 18,000 hours, producing 377 books and other projects totaling more than 77,000 pages in braille. Based on the Points of Light Foundation economic impact calculator, that volunteer time equates to \$433,944 in donated value.

For more information, contact Lynnette Taylor at (904) 466-2129 or dandltaylor@att.net; Holly Cleveland at (904) 463-0357 or holly.cleveland@att.net; Nancy Cohen at (248) 250-2406 or r4cohen@gmail.com; or Candace Richardson at (904)607-7619 or candacerichardson@att.net.

Native Sons and Daughters cont. from pg. 1

great popularity in the 1950s and 1960s with its theme of Native American tradition and culture. By the turn of the new century, however, the YMCA felt the need to disassociate themselves from anything that could be seen as politically incorrect and began mandating the elimination of the program's name and Indian theme.

Some participants, though, were disappointed that the program they enjoyed would no longer be available. So, according to Quirk, a group of dads in Ohio met with the descendants of founders Keltner and Friday and received their permission to use the new name, Native Sons and Daughters.

"We have always tried to be very respectful to all native people," Quirk said.

The local longhouse, named after the local Timucua tribe, was originally in existence as a Y-Guide tribe and continued to operate through the transition period to Native Sons and Daughters. Quirk said the Timucuan longhouse was the first group in Florida to convert to Native Sons and Daughters in 2011 and presently has about 500 total members. There are now six chapters in Florida.

The local groups within the Timucuan longhouse are called tribes and they are made up of seven to 12 fathers and children. There are separate tribes

for boys and girls, and the tribes can be formed either by a group of members joining at the same time or fathers and children can be put on a tribe that needs members. Quirk said many tribes stay together for the full five years of the program.

Once formed, each tribe is assigned a sponsor from the longhouse who will attend the first few meetings and help with organization and guidance.

"The thing I like is each tribe can do what they want; they can be as active or inactive as they like," Quirk said. "Of course, the more active they are, the more fun they will have."

The longhouse hosts one activity per month that tribes may attend in addition to the tribe's own meetings. These activities include costume bowling in October, campouts in the fall and spring and a pinewood derby in the winter. Tribes may also attend Jacksonville Icemen games, support Toys for Tots with a skating event and participate in a family campout. Coming up first is the Citywide Pow Wow. Children receive a patch for their vest for each activity they participate in. The Statewide Pow Wow will be hosted by the Timucuan longhouse in March 2020.

Quirk said information nights will be held soon at schools and churches, with dates and locations available at www.nsdjax.com.

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Answers to puzzles on page 24

Answers

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Answers: A. angler B. rod C. river D. lure

Keep yourself safe from lightning

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

It's summertime, which in Northeast Florida means hot temperatures, afternoon thunderstorms, and lightning. Florida is considered the "lightning capital" of the country, with more than 2,000 lightning injuries over the past 50 years; in 2018, Florida and Tennessee had the most lightning deaths.

Although the odds of being struck by lightning in a given year are less than one in one million, some factors can put you at greater risk. Lightning most often strikes people who work outside or engage in outdoor recreational activities, both common in our area. The consequences of lightning strikes are serious — according to the Centers for Disease Control, lightning is one of the leading causes of weather-related fatalities. There is no safe place outside when thunderstorms are in the area. If you hear thunder, you are likely within striking distance of the storm. The National Weather Service issues this reminder: "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors." Too many people wait far too long to get to a safe place when thunderstorms approach. Learn and follow these safety rules provided by the Centers for Disease Control to keep yourself safe from lightning.

- Don't forget the 30 – 30 rule. After you see lightning, start counting to 30. If you hear thunder before you reach 30, go indoors. Suspend activities for at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.
- If no shelter is available, crouch low, with as little of your body touching the ground as possible. Lightning causes electric currents along the top of the ground that can be deadly more than 100 feet away.

- Stay away from concrete floors or walls. Lightning can travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring. Although you should move into a non-concrete structure if possible, being indoors does not automatically protect you from lightning. In fact, about one-third of lightning-strike injuries occur indoors.
- Indoors, avoid water during a thunderstorm. Lightning can travel through plumbing.
- Avoid electronic equipment of all types. Lightning can travel through electrical systems and radio and television reception systems.
- Avoid corded phones; however, cordless or cellular phones are safe to use during a storm.
- Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls

The National Weather Service provides these additional tips that may reduce your risk if you are caught outside with no safe shelter:

- Immediately get off elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges or peaks
- Never lie flat on the ground
- Never shelter under an isolated tree
- Immediately get out and away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity (barbed wire fences, power lines, etc.)

Lightning strikes may be rare, but they still happen and the risk of serious injury or death is severe. So take thunderstorms seriously.

Visit www.weather.gov and www.cdc.gov for more information.

Golf Tips from T Shot Ranch

Love on the Links ... or NOT?

By Janie C. Farina
mail@floridanewslines.com

*"...I love you like a golf course
You are beautiful, yet green
You have some rough patches
And can come off sort of mean
You will frustrate me forever
Because I can't make even par
But I know you'll always be there
And I love you as you are
I know you have some hazards,
And you always want your way
I'll probably never win the game
But it is awful fun to play."*

~ Haley Akin

Does golf bring couples closer or does golf "slice" a good relationship apart?

Growing up at Nick Stoner Golf Course, in the heart of the Adirondacks, was a unique experience by any standards. When my sister and I both dated golfers, it became even more interesting. Eventually, we both married golfers that turned professional (we won't elaborate on how our relationships ended up), but golf continues to provide the fun and competition in those relationships to this day.

Taking a date on a golf outing sometimes doesn't promote all "birdies and pars." When couples that are different levels of skill play golf together, a day of golf can turn into a "hazard."

Heads up; here are a few "stroke savers" when taking your partner to play:

1. Resist the urge to instruct on the playing field. Most of my novice golfers have better results in their first lesson than their counterpart that has been playing golf without proper fundamentals for years.

2. Encourage your partner with advice that will actually educate, not contaminate, a golf day. Prioritize etiquette suggestions such as "not driving the golf cart onto the putting surface" and yelling "Fore" before the ball clobbers players in harm's way.

3. Never assume your partner knows what to wear to play golf. Check the local rules for attire. Leaving the bikini top and the strappy sandals at home will keep your date from being thrown "out of bounds" by management.

4. Keep it fun. One "golfer date" and I would bring a roll of dimes to the course and play Bingo Bango Bongo: First on the green, closest to the pin, first in the hole for a dime each. Careful of this one though, as my "golfer date" became highly agitated and stopped playing with me, then dating me, when he kept losing dimes to my chip ins.

Follow these rules and playing golf can be the hook that keeps a couple in pars and birdies ... on and off the playing field.

Janie C. Farina is a 28-year teaching professional.



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The Pantry Raiders

Easy appetizer for entertaining

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Impromptu entertaining can be a fun way to get together with friends or family without the pressures of hosting more formal affairs. But hosts will still need to provide some refreshments for their guests, and having some easy recipes at the ready can make it easy to pull together a few bites in a hurry.

An arsenal of appetizers and small plates at the ready can feed a few or a crowd. By sticking with simple fare of readily sourced ingredients — including staples kept in the refrigerator and pantry — it's a snap to entertain. This recipe for "Flaky Tomato and Mozzarella Tart" from "Real Simple: Easy, Delicious Home Cooking" (Time Home Entertainment) by the editors of Real Simple, is a recipe that can be pulled out time and again for anytime entertaining.

Flaky Tomato and Mozzarella Tart

(Serves 4)

- All-purpose flour, for the work surface
- ½ sheet frozen puff pastry (one-quarter of a 17.3-ounce package) thawed
- 1 cup grape or cherry tomatoes, halved if large
- ¼ lb. mozzarella, grated (1 cup)
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Flaky Tomato and Mozzarella Tart

Heat oven to 425 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment. On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry into a 9-by-6-inch rectangle. Place on the prepared baking sheet and refrigerate until firm, at least 30 minutes.

Prick the pastry all over with a fork, then top with the tomatoes and mozzarella. Drizzle with oil; season with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Bake the tart until golden brown and cooked through, 20 to 25 minutes. Cut into pieces before serving.

Tip: Be sure to use commercially packaged mozzarella in this recipe. Fresh mozzarella loses its water during baking and will leave the pastry soggy.

Gardening

It's a long hot summer!

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewline.com

After a very mild winter, summer came early — and with a vengeance. The seasons roll around with the usual regularity, but it seems increasingly clear to me that our climate is changing, whether it's agreed or not that we are responsible. Levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere have been increasing rapidly since pre-industrial times, which should be very concerning as this affects all life on earth (<https://tinyurl.com/yy4p4w34>). For example, in late June, Europe was sweltering in an unprecedented heatwave, with terrible repercussions (<https://tinyurl.com/yywuu26k>) and Alaska snow melt has been causing alarm: <https://tinyurl.com/y3ymk6ar>.

Gardeners can help in small, but cumulative, ways. Where possible, we can reduce our use of gas-powered equipment in favor of cleaner electric or battery-powered options. Our local air quality will be improved and our neighborhoods more peaceful. There is also a movement to reduce digging, as carbon is kept in the ground when the soil is undisturbed. Instead of digging all weeds out by the roots, use a sharp garden knife to cut round larger tap roots and pull them out while leaving small roots to rot in the ground (unless you know those pieces of root will produce new plants, like Florida betony does!). Do your best to pull the weeds through your fingers, keeping as much of the soil in place as possible. Annual weeds can be cut off at the roots. The soil won't be completely turned over so many weed seeds can be kept underground and fewer tiny beneficial organisms will be destroyed. In addition, more of the fungal threads that develop in the soil which often help in nutrient transfer to plants will be left intact. Consider adding a thin layer of compost to introduce more beneficial organisms to your soil.

With plenty of native passion vines (*Pasiflora incarnata*) around my yard, I've been enjoying seeing many gulf fritillary and zebra longwing butterflies, and hoping for some young caterpillars to carry on their line. Unfortunately nature has added

some large predatory wasps into the mix, and although I don't fear for myself — they aren't yellow jackets — I've found very few caterpillars recently and suspect they've been eaten. I haven't identified the culprits, but I did see one huge wasp chowing down on a sizeable monarch caterpillar, after discovering that at least a dozen other small ones had mysteriously disappeared. As we know, the milkweeds that the monarch caterpillars eat contain a toxin that accumulates in the caterpillars. Birds cannot stomach the toxin, but clearly wasps aren't similarly affected.

The largest wasps in Florida are the cicada killers, which thankfully do not sting us unless we grab or otherwise harass them. Even then, the insect has to be female as the males are defenseless. (Their lifecycle is fascinating — the female controls the sex of her eggs. You can read about it here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxvpe3hv>.) It makes me wonder how the newly-emerged cicada I saw recently is faring.

I was also surprised to see a ruby-throated hummingbird feeding on the passion flowers. They like my native fire bushes (*Hamelia patens*), with their clusters of orange-red long trumpet-shaped flowers, but the complex purple passion flowers are very different structurally. Other vines to support hummingbirds include natives like trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), cross-vine (*Bignonia capreolata*), and trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*). You can find comprehensive information on these and other vines, including how they might best be used, here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6r6n97b>.

For timely advice, the University of Florida website has a gardening calendar with information specifically for north Florida: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep451>, as well as the invaluable Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>. Chris Kerr has published his first New Leaf newsletter for July/August, so please check that out at <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/duval/lawns-gardens-and-trees/new-leaf-newsletter/>.

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Fishing

Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka
mail@floridanewslines.com

So far this summer, fishing on the St. Johns River has gone right according to schedule, and continues to stay on

schedule. From winter, to spring, and now to midsummer, the weather has done its part to help the St. Johns maintain some pretty decent fishing waters. Barring any dramatic change in the rest of this summer's weather, fishing should remain good and only get better.

Right now, the best news is that this year's shrimp run is right on schedule. Good numbers of bait shrimp are already in the river, with eating-size shrimp catches steadily on the increase. Using live shrimp for bait anywhere in the river is a really big plus. Tail hooking live shrimp and bottom-fishing them in holes or in river channels should greatly increase an already good croaker bite taking place with an additional bite of reds, weakfish, and flounder. Doing the same on a jig head, casting around docks and bridge pilings, is also a great way to find and catch reds, trout, sheepshead, and flounder. As the shrimp run improves, these and other bites are all going to get bigger and better.

When shrimping, many people like to cull their shrimp, keeping just the larger ones for eating, and tossing the smaller ones back; however, with today's bait shrimp prices often being the same or even exceeding the price of eating shrimp, packaging smaller shrimp in a plastic container and saving them for

bait may be worth considering. Freezing them solid in water can easily keep them fresh till the next year's shrimp run leaving you with free bait for an entire year till the next year's run.



Photo courtesy Ty Woodard
Ty Woodard with a largemouth bass he caught on June 22 in Durbin Crossing.

As the summer season progresses, salinity levels in the river can help determine the best areas to fish and shrimp. Try to stay as up to date as much as possible with current fishing and shrimping reports. Checking online, with friends, or various bait stores to see what particular areas of the river seem to be catching the most fish or shrimp. Above all, be ready to catch anything, as reports of tarpon have been steadily on the increase and should continue to do so as summer progresses.

Fishing Report: St. Johns croakers for quantity and reds for your quality are a good bet. A little bit of everything everywhere up and down the river. Reports of flounder, trout, weakfish, croaker, sheepshead, even mangrove snapper. Try catching your bait from the river (shrimp, finger mullet, juvenile croaker). Using fresh bait from local waters is almost always best.

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.

Faith-Worship-Praise Section

New mission church forms

St. Therese Catholic Mission holds mass at 11 a.m. on Sundays at Patriot Oaks Academy, 475 Longleaf Pine Pkwy. in St. Johns. The mission is affiliated with San Juan Del Rio Catholic Church, Switzerland. All are welcome.

Pumpkins will arrive soon

River of Life UMC is already hard at work preparing for its annual Pumpkin Patch, coming to the church at 2600 Race Track Road at the end of September. The first pumpkins to arrive will be on site on Wednesday Sept. 25 at 4 p.m. Truck unloadings are a fun and easy way to earn community service hours for school, so if you know a student who needs some for school, bring them by during their first unloading. Participants should be prepared to get a little messy.

The church is located next to Mavis Tire and Dollar Tree Plaza. The Pumpkin Patch will be open from Sept. 26 all the way to Halloween during the hours of 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. The Patch features lawn games, photo ops, and, on special occasions, pumpkin bread.

School and other groups can schedule a field trip; visit at www.rolumc.com or email office@rolumc.com for more information.

Back to school event scheduled

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church will hold a special back to school blessing for all students, teachers and school administrators at the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Aug. 11. The church is located at 1221 State Road 13 in St. Johns. Visit www.stpatricksepiscopal.org for more information.

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Travel

Escape the heat in Door County, Wisconsin

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewline.com

Most days, I find the soaring temperatures in Florida push me toward air-conditioned activities. If you still feel the need to get outside, especially with children, I found a gorgeous, cool escape you may never have considered. Best of all, it's affordable. Door County, Wisconsin, occupies the top two-thirds of the 70-mile long Door Peninsula, the part of the Wisconsin map that looks like a left-handed thumb in Lake Michigan. This location gives Door County about 300 miles of breezy ragged, rocky shoreline, dotted with lighthouses and little villages.

To get there, you'll likely need to fly to Chicago, Milwaukee or even Green Bay. Then, rent a car and make a Wisconsin road trip; feel the stress and tensions fade as you cruise two-lane highways. One of the most enjoyable aspects is the lack of chain stores; most of the villages have strict ordinances that don't work for giant retailers. Hence, small locally owned restaurants, shops and art galleries flourish.

During my trip, I ate breakfast at Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant. (Many

Door County residents trace their ancestry to Scandinavia.) The Swedish pancakes come with lingonberries and dollops of whipped cream. I highly recommend you add their famous Swedish meatballs. The big draw, besides the fantastic tasting fare, is the architecture. The sod roof acts as home to a herd of goats. Yes, goats on the roof!

For lunch, I suggest a step back in time to a hamburger joint/ ice cream par-



Barns on the water.



Rocky Schoolhouse Beach on Washington Island.

lor called Wilson's. Play a tune on the jukebox and enjoy a homemade root beer float with your meal.

A Door County traditional dinner means a fish boil, whitefish (the local catch), onions and red potatoes boiled in an enormous black kettle over an open fire. The excitement starts when the cooks' splash kerosene over the flame, creating a fireball that boils over the pot and removes the fishy oils. This event is staged all year-round at many of the

restaurants. The fish tastes moist and flavorful.

Summer outdoor activities include exploring the many beaches, hiking in the state parks and boating excursions. Kayaking remains popular, as does sailing, power boating or riding a ferry to Washington or Rock Island. A boat trip across Death's Door, the Portes des Morts Passage, moves above many legendary shipwrecks. Stop near tiny Pilot Island, a spot that looks like the set of Alfred Hitchcock's movie, "The Birds." Approximately 2,000 pelicans and cormorants nest there, their waste killing all plant life. See the dilapidated lighthouse, ruins of the Keeper's House, and the spindly limbs of dead trees. It's very eerie, especially in the fog.

If the arts are of interest, you'll find dozens of galleries or you can drop into Hands On Art where you can create your own. Choose from potter's wheels for throwing clay, metal and glass craft, mosaic and painting projects. I was amazed at the variety and number of people engaged. All ages, even ornery teens, find something interesting to make.

Theater options include performances under the stars at the Northern Sky



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Eerie Pilot Island in Door County.

Theater or the Peninsular Players Theater going 80 years strong. The indoor Fish Creek facility rests on the lakeshore, making it an ideal spot for sunset viewing.

Cherries are a Door County specialty. Almost all the cherries grown in Wisconsin come from Seaquist Orchards — 10 million pounds last year. Naturally, they've created a plethora of cherry products like Bubba Gump did with shrimp. The Cherry Bomb is a jam made with jalapeno peppers and served on crackers. The best cherry pie I found came from Sweetie Pies.

Door County is what summer vacation used to be: family time, slow down time, simple pleasures and friendly atmosphere. This Floridian loved it.

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

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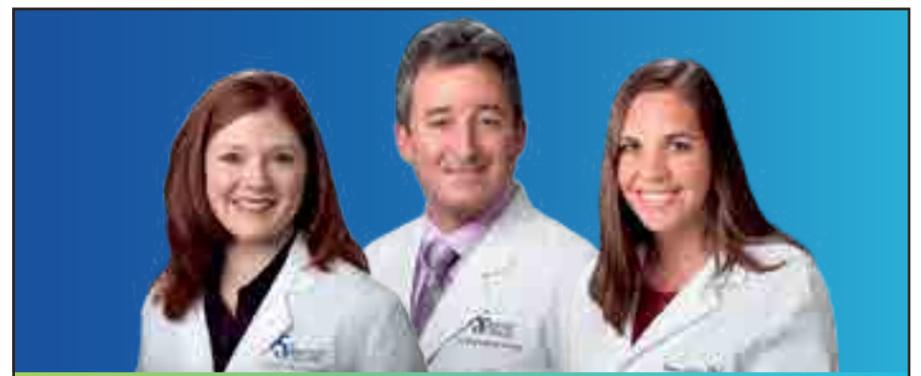
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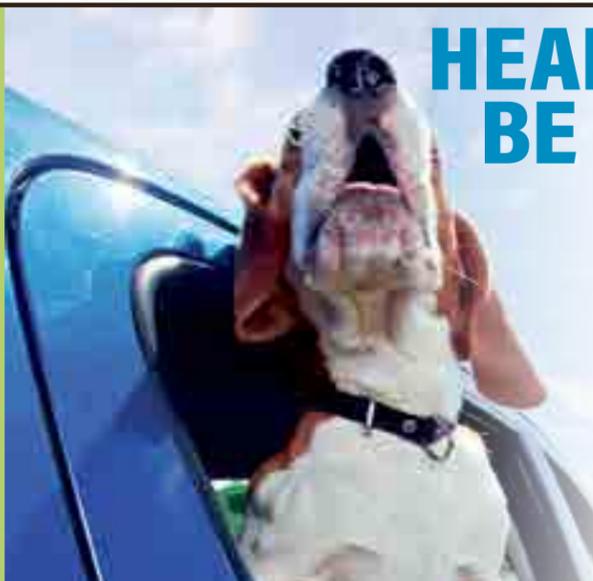
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