

Ponte Vedra NewsLine



DECEMBER 2020 Volume 7 Issue 12

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

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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Holiday card drive delivers love to soldiers overseas

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

When U.S. Army Capt. Taylor John-Morton receives a care package, card or photo while on deployment in the Middle East, his entire unit benefits.

"I send him dried fruit often because he requests it, and everyone in his unit gets at least a piece," said Kim Morton, Taylor's mother who lives in Ponte Vedra Beach. "Whether it is a photo, an activity or a card, one package goes to everyone."



Photos courtesy Emily Spencer

Five soldiers with card deliveries from Heartillery Group.

That's what makes the Heartillery Group, a Ponte Vedra Beach-based non-profit organization sending holiday cards to military service members all over the world, so special, said Kim and her husband, U.S. Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Richard Morton.

"These cards provide those connections to people at home not only in an uplifting and therapeutic way, but also to show that this is finite and not forever," said Richard. "It also shows the soldiers that people at home care and are with you."

Kim requested that Taylor, 27, and his unit be added to the card list this year, after recently learning about Heartillery via Facebook.

Holiday card drive cont. on pg. 9

Boat parade kicks off Christmas in Palm Valley

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Capt. Bob Brindle remembers when the Palm Valley Boat Parade was known as "The Hoot n' Holler Parade." The name may have changed, but the sentiment remains the same: hoot, holler and honk into the Christmas season.

"To me, the Palm Valley Boat Parade is more fun than other boat parades because of the participation between the boaters and the people on the docks," said Brindle who has been piloting boat No. 77 in the lighted boat parade for the past 20 years.

This year's parade will take place on Dec. 5, beginning at 6 p.m. and starting at Marker 3 just south of the Palm Valley Bridge. From there, the procession will continue north and is anticipated to reach Marsh Landing around 8:05 p.m. – 8:30 pm. Brindle said live updates on pacing and expected arrival times at various landmarks will be given out as well.

Wendy Patton, parade co-chair, said the best places to view the parade are the restaurants along the seven-mile boat route of Palm Valley's Intracoastal Waterway: Palm Valley Outdoors, Barbara Jean's on the Water, Palm Valley Fish Camp, Lulu's Waterfront Grille and Valley Smoke. Also, Mickler's Wharf and under the Palm Valley Bridge are perfect public viewing locations, she said.

Captains and docks should abide by St. Johns County rules regarding COVID-19, said Patton. Cash prizes will be given to boat winners in different size categories and to the best decorated docks.

Brindle, who is the lead boat, won in his category (30 feet and over) last year and on two other occasions showcasing the theme "The Reason for the Season." He features a Nativity Scene on his 41-foot sport fisherman boat.

"I like that particular theme. And my kids, grandkids and entire family join me each year, and they help to decorate the boat too," said Brindle, adding that it takes two days to prep the boat using around 5,000 lights. "We know what we need to do, so we can do it pretty fast now."

Brindle said he enjoys being the lead boat because he knows how to safely "herd boats." Brindle has been the Jacksonville Marine Charities vice-chairman (also known as the Greater Jacksonville Kingfish Tournament)

for the past 35 years.

Water safety assistance is also provided during the event by the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, St. Johns County Fire Rescue and Florida Fish and Wildlife, said Brindle.

"We blow the horn a lot," said Brindle, who also participates in Jacksonville's Light Boat Parade. "To me, the Palm Valley Boat Parade is more fun than any of the other parades around. It is open to anyone — you don't have to have fancy decorations. You just come out and enjoy yourself — boaters and spectators."



Photo courtesy Capt. Bob Brindle
Palm Valley Boat Parade Capt. Bob Brindle's boat #77.

Parade coordinator Beacham Still agreed, pointing out that the parade began with a couple of local families. He said it was always very informal with a simple goal of celebrating the holidays with neighbors, family and friends.

"The Palm Valley Boat Parade had very humble beginnings and has grown from there and has been embraced by the Palm Valley Community Association and the local community," he said. "It is a unique community event with neighbors and friends, and while it has grown, it still maintains the culture of Palm Valley."

Beacham underscored the importance of social distancing and following COVID safety guidelines. He also recognized that this community driven parade brings joy to a lot of people — from a safe distance.

Typically, 20 to 30 boats participate in the parade, he said.

"A good number of folks look forward to this every year, and, now more than ever, joy and connection is needed," he said.

Beacham added that the parade is funded by businesses and neighbors, and it benefits the Palm Valley Charities via the Palm Valley Community Association board.

"We like to give back to our local communities," said Beacham, who has lived in Palm Valley for 25 years.

For more information, visit palmvalleyboatparade.com or look for parade updates on their Facebook group page www.facebook.com/groups/Palmvalleyboatparade.

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Sadie Mae!



BREED:
Beagle Mix

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Playing with squeak toys, belly rubs, walks in the park & golf cart rides.

FAVORITE TREAT:
Sweet Potato

FAVORITE FRIEND:
She's a daddy's girl! And loves all kids!

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:
Sadie was named from a cross country road trip (before being rescued) and a stop at the best New Mexican restaurant - Sadie's

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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Are you interested in promoting your business in St. Johns Business Monthly, a feature section included in both The CreekLine and Ponte Vedra NewsLine? **Call Linda 904-607-5062**

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Local Holiday Event and Gift Guide



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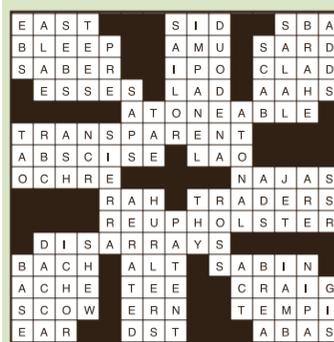
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MYSTERY PHOTO



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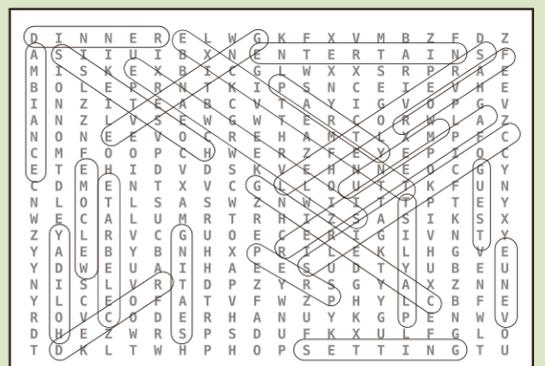
Last month's Mystery Photo was the St. Johns County Fire Station #1 on Canal Boulevard. Our winner was Vic Wallace. Congratulations!



Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 10

CRYPTO FUN

Answers: A. snacks B. beverage C. friends D. champagne



FYI Contact Numbers

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

Sheriff's Office: Sheriff David B. Shoar, dshoar@sjso.org, (904) 824-8304
Ponte Vedra Field Office: (904) 209-2215

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: Brandon Patty, (904) 819-3600

St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

District 1: Jimmy Johns, bcc1johns@sjcf.us, (904) 209-0301
District 2: Jeb Smith, bcc2jsmith@sjcf.us, (904) 209-0302
District 3: Paul Waldron, bcc3pwaldron@sjcf.us, (904) 209-0303
District 4: Jeremiah Blocker,

bcc4jblocker@sjcf.us, (904) 209-0304
District 5: Henry Dean, bcc5hdean@sjcf.us, (904) 209-0305

St. Johns County School Board (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)
District 4: Kelly Barrera, kelly.barrera@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
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**with St. Johns County School Board Member,
Kelly Barrera, District 4**

Q: Can you give an update on the new K-8 School MM?

A: We had the topping out ceremony today [Nov. 17], which we have when the last girder is put on the building. We are excited about the recent announcement of Amanda Riedl as principal of the school. She was the 2018 – 19 Outstanding Principal of the Year for St. Johns County. She will locate at Palm Valley Academy after Thanksgiving to begin her new duties. I think she is a wonderful addition to District 4. I'd also like to congratulate Brian Morgan, assistant principal at Ocean Palms Elementary, who has been named principal of Picolata Crossing Elementary as part of the principal shifting due to Amanda Riedl's departure from her previous school.

Q: What is the process for the naming and mascot selection of K-8 School MM?

A: It will be very similar to what we have seen recently with High School HHH. There will start to be more activity as Amanda Riedl starts meeting students, teachers and staff at Palm Valley Academy. We will be starting to hire new staff and teachers for this new school although we will also incorporate existing employees. I'd expect to see virtual meetings scheduled soon so she can hear about the community's priorities for K-8 School MM and begin to develop the new school's culture. It always seems that once a principal is named, it goes from being just a building to being a school and a place of educational excellence.

Q: Do you have an update for the future of school-based distance learning?

A: We are waiting to see what the governor and commissioner of education put before us for next semester options. I'd expect that we will be hearing something soon.

Q: Are there any important upcoming dates for families to be aware of?

A: Yes, I'd like to talk about academies and deadlines. Starting Jan. 5, 2021, Middle School Blitzes will be held at each middle school. On Jan. 8, online applications will open on the school district website. We will host a virtual High School Showcase on Jan. 12 from 3:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. Finally, the deadline for all applications will be 5 p.m. on Feb. 5. All programs of choice, including academies, IB, AICE, and JROTC programs are included.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 4?

A: I'd like to congratulate the National Merit Semifinalists from our district. From Nease High School — Laura Harrington, Sreenivas Kuntamukkala, Dylan Lukacs, Colby Millis, Zachary Plevin, Carson Sobolewski, and Sreeniketh Vogoti. From Ponte Vedra High School — Sophia Chigounis, Finnur Christianson, Christina D'Aquila, Reese Jett, Ashton Monk, Matthew Shen, and Shuangyi Shi.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

Nocatee
celebrates
fall at
Farmers
Market



Photo courtesy Nocatee

There was no shortage of family fun activities at the Fall Festival Farmers Market on Saturday, Oct. 17. There was live music from the Ramona Band, horse drawn hayrides, a petting zoo and shopping from more than 60 local vendors. Plus, there was a pumpkin carving station for Nocatee residents.



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with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: Can you give us a wrap up of some of the interesting statistics from the recent 2020 election?

A: I'm really pleased with how smoothly things went here in St. Johns County. We had record Vote by Mail and Early Voting ballots; we actually went into Election Day, Nov. 3, at 71 percent voter turnout. When all was said and done, we had a voter turnout of 84.63 percent.

All year we had been planning for turnout of 85 – 90 percent and had staff and procedures in place for this. So we were prepared.

Q: Which precincts had the highest turnout?

A: Even with the high turnout from Vote by Mail and Early Voting, we still had eight precincts that saw more than 1,000 voters on Election Day. As for overall turnout, the two precincts that had the highest were Crosswater Hall in Nocatee (93.5 percent) and Shearwater (91.9 percent.)

Q: It seemed that the state of Florida counted and reported results very quickly.

A: I am very thankful that the governor's Executive Order gave us the flexibility to begin counting Vote by Mail ballots even earlier than we normally do. Due to COVID, we had unprecedented interest in Vote by Mail. In St. Johns County, we mailed out 75,000 ballots by voter request and 57,661 were returned.

Q: What were some major events after Election Day for the Supervisor of Elections' office [as of interview date of Nov. 16]?

A: We certified the results on Nov. 13. This allowed for the 10 days for overseas ballots (that had to be postmarked by Election Day, Nov. 3) to be received and counted.

On Nov. 20, we will perform a public manual audit. This is something we do, as required by Florida law, after every election. We draw a random race and a random precinct then count all ballots to compare that total to the tabulated results. For every election in the past 15 years, we have been 100 percent accurate.

Q: Do you have anything else to share?

A: I am grateful for all the poll workers, both new ones and more experienced ones, especially during this time of COVID. We had a lot of people step up to help. Also, I'm thankful for my staff, including the part time seasonal workers. It takes many hands, lots of preparation and many long days to roll out a successful election.

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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PVI



Santa making his list of phone calls

St. Johns County Parks and Recreation is hosting phone calls from Santa this holiday season for children eight years old or younger. Santa will make his phone calls between 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. nightly, Dec. 8 – 10. Parents must register children by Dec. 4 by visiting secure.recl.com/FL/stjohns-county-fl/ catalog and selecting a date under the Special Events tab. For more information or registration assistance, call (904) 209-0379 or email abrown@sjcfl.us.



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How to support small businesses this holiday season

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The holiday season is an important one for small businesses every year, and it figures to take on heightened importance in 2020. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in early 2020 hit small businesses especially hard. Estimates regarding the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on small businesses varied, but many small business owners were forced to let go employees as they confronted steep declines in revenue. As small businesses face difficult challenges, it's no surprise that many consumers want to support locally owned small businesses this holiday season. Such support not only can help small businesses, but also can help to revitalize local communities.

- Shop online. Online shopping has traditionally been dominated by big box retailers; however, many small businesses increased their e-commerce capabilities to generate revenue. Shoppers concerned about shopping in person

this holiday season should explore the delivery and curbside pickup options available at locally owned small businesses.

- Purchase gift cards. Gift cards take the guesswork out of holiday shopping, and such cards are easily shipped or even emailed to loved ones.

- Share your experience. Word-of-mouth is vital to small businesses at any time, and can be especially valuable as these companies try to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Holiday shoppers can share their experiences with local businesses via social media. Share information about the lengths local small businesses have gone to in regard to safety measures, order fulfillment and their delivery and pickup efforts. Such sharing may compel neighbors and friends to follow your lead and provide vital support to local businesses in need this holiday season.



Library hosts Giving Trees

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns County Public Library will host St. Johns CARES, Inc. Giving Trees at four branch library locations through Dec. 9. Each Giving Tree contains wish ornaments that are submitted by local nonprofit organizations serving veterans, senior citizens, children, the homeless, and animals. Collection boxes and Giving Trees are located at the Bartram Trail Branch, Ponte Vedra Beach Branch, Anastasia Island Branch, and Southeast Branch libraries. Do-

nations will be collected, sorted, and boxed for the nonprofit organizations by St. Johns CARES, Inc. Monetary donations are accepted and will be used to purchase unfulfilled wishes and needs.

St. Johns CARES, Inc. is a nonprofit organization established in 2007 that is committed to assisting local charities in St. Johns County. Visit www.stjohns-cares.org to learn more about St. Johns CARES, Inc., or to make a monetary donation.



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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

MarketInsight



The Queen's Gambit

By Scott Grant
ScottGrant@StJohnsBusinessMonthly.com

The Netflix show, "The Queen's Gambit," has everyone talking. If you have not seen it yet, I highly recommend you do. It is a delightful story. Also, if you have not seen it and plan to, there are no spoilers in this article.

Watching the show has brought back a flood of memories for me. When I was four years old, a friend of my father's named David Manion came to our house to play chess with my dad. They had gone to seminary together. I watched. My dad was the better player. After my father's friend left, I said I wanted to play. My dad said, "You don't know how," and I responded "Yes, I do." I still remember the look on my father's face when I sat down and began to move the pieces correctly and logically. My father won. But I set a goal that day that I would beat him by the age of 10.

For the rest of his life, my dad and I played chess. For six years, I lost every single game. And at age 10, I finally won. My dad responded to the loss the way he always would, he set up the pieces for another game. Every time I beat my dad, he wanted to play again. He hated to lose.

Around the same time as that first victory, we went to the mall and the Indiana State Chess Champion was there playing 40 people at once. After some begging on my part, my dad agreed to let me play. The champ circled from board to board opening with his King's

Pawn. When he got me, he looked at me quizzically, and for some reason played the Queen's Gambit. The family went shopping and came back. My parents were surprised it was still going on. My mother was impatient. She wanted me to leave. I insisted I was winning.

I remember all the other players losing and a small crowd gathering behind me. Six moves later, I mated him. They wrote it up in the local paper, how the guy had beaten 39 adults and lost to a kid. I saw an ad for a chess tournament. I wanted to play. My dad gave me the \$10 to enter and drove me downtown and dropped me off. When we were leaving, my mother laughed and said it would be "a bunch of pasty-faced kids in glasses."

A couple of years after my mom made the "pasty faced kids in glasses" comment, a comment that would attain almost legendary status in our family lore, I took an opportunity to lash back. I said to her one day, "If we lived in Russia, they would take me away from you and send me to a special school for chess." She looked at me with a "Be careful what you wish for" sort of look that implied that shipping me off to Russia was not an entirely objectionable thought at that moment and said, "You're right."

Scott A. Grant is a local author, historian, columnist, and speaker. He is president of Standfast Asset Management in Ponte Vedra Beach. He welcomes your comments or questions at scottg@standfastic.com.



with St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer

Q: What can you tell us about your recent efforts to use technology to operate the Property Appraiser's Office more efficiently?

A: We have partnered with Cyclomedia to provide high resolution and street level imagery of all business and residential areas in St. Johns County. Comparable to Google Street View, the main difference is that this will be specific to our county and very high resolution, offering a 360 by 180 degree view. Even with purchasing this new technology, our office will be spending less this year than it did five years ago.

Q: Will residents see Cyclomedia vehicles in their neighborhoods?

A: Yes, over the next three months, county residents will see the Cyclomedia vehicles. The company has hired veterans to drive two of the three vehicles that will be driving every mile of every road in our county. Each vehicle is clearly marked and equipped with sophisticated and precise GPS locationing and positioning equipment, which will tell the vehicle and the camera where they are within one inch. When the photos are uploaded to our system, they will precisely match parcel IDs and addresses.

Q: What other technology will the cameras utilize?

A: In addition to the high resolution photos, the vehicles are equipped with Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR), which captures elevations. It starts at sea level and will be able to tell the elevation of foundations and streets. We will have a base elevation of every street in St. Johns County, which will be very important in places like downtown St. Augustine. We can use predictive tides and storm surges and then determine

when water recedes, where it will still stand.

Q: What are the benefits to your office?

A: We will use the imagery for assessments, which will enhance our ability to have fewer vehicles in the field. This will be less intrusive to property owners. Also, we will be able to tell the condition of a property and whether it is vacant or occupied. Our plan is to update the imagery annually.

Q: Will the imagery be available to the public?

A: Yes, late next quarter, in 2021, it will be available on our website. Additionally, we plan to make the imagery available to all municipalities within our county as well as the SJSO and the school district. The images will be able to put together an inventory of public assets, such as fire hydrants, manhole covers, traffic lights and light poles. It is so sophisticated that potholes can be identified in streets. And I believe another benefit will be to sheriff deputies and first responders, who will be able to pull up an image of the front of a house on their way to a 911 call for easy identification.

Of course, since the imagery will be available to the public, after all the footage is shot, it will undergo a detailed screening review to blur out vehicle tag numbers and people's faces.

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.

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Ponte Vedra NewsLine's
Holiday Contest



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December

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

Replenish the Pantries drive through/drop off food drive will be held rain or shine on Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Ponte Vedra United Methodist Church parking lot, 76 S. Roscoe Blvd. Donations of non-perishable food items, dry pet food, baby supplies, paper goods, and grocery gift cards are all needed to help replenish more than 20 local food pantries in St. Johns County. The event is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ponte Vedra Beach Sunset, the United Way of St Johns County, and the Ponte Vedra United Methodist Church.

Nocatee announces the following events, open to the public: Nocatee-A-Glow, Dec. 4 – 5 from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

at Splash Waterpark and the Winterfest Farmers Market on Saturday, Dec. 19 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Town Center Field.

First Coast Florida Lifestyles Newcomers Recreation Card Club will host a Christmas party luncheon at Cinco De Mayo Mexican restaurant and card games at Coffee Cafe in St. Augustine on Dec. 15. Arrival is at 1:15 p.m and card games will be played from 2:30 p.m. – 5 p.m. Masks must be worn while playing cards. Call the club organizer at (904) 829-0643 (no texts) to RSVP or for information about the club. The club is open to both men and women and is a smoke- and drug-free club.

Off to the races with Ocean Palms' fundraising run

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The last week of October marked Ocean Palms Elementary School's annual Otter Run. In previous years, classes from each grade raced against one another, but this year the run was conducted one class at a time where a trail of obstacles, exercises and fun awaited the students — and even with social distancing, the event brought the school community together to raise more than \$50,000, surpassing this year's goal by more than \$10,000.

School-wide incentives were created so students could work collectively to reach certain fundraising milestones. Each goal was met, so the principal got to cut the assistant principal's favorite

tie off, there was silly string and a day for students to throw pie in the face of administrators, and, finally, both the principal and assistant principal had to dress as clowns for a day.



Photo courtesy Lisa Farese
Principal Tiffany Cantwell and assistant principal, Brian Morgan, were panned in the face because Ocean Palms students reached school-wide Otter Run goals.

The funds raised as part of the school's Otter Run will be used to help maintain a sustainable learning environment for students

through the purchase of technology, the support of teachers, and the funding of other school needs. C: Students race off during Ocean Palms Elementary school's annual Otter Run, clad in class-themed costumes, to raise money for their school.

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club hosts rummage sale



Photos courtesy Alanah Bushfield

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club's "Treasures from Our Trunks" rummage sale event held in late October was a success thanks to the overwhelming support from club members, as well as the hard work of the committee, the Boy Scouts, and assorted husbands and friends. The club raised more than \$2,000 thanks to their efforts. Remaining items will be sold at the Betty Griffin House Thrift Store. Upcoming event, a virtual wine tasting, will be held on Jan. 23, 2021. A vintner from California will host the event, offering wine tastings and food pairings provided by the Sawgrass Country Club. The cost for the evening is \$150 a couple. The start time is still to be determined; check www.pontevedrawomansclub.com for more details.

Life

travel • pantry raiders • gardening
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Get to Know . . .

Andrew Shlosser

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Evelyn Shlosser
Andrew Shlosser

Andrew Shlosser's career path has come full circle, beginning with a career in the film and television industry in California and, now some 20 years later, back again using videography to preserve the history of St. Johns County. What happened in the middle — becoming an emergency medical technician (EMT), a California Highway Patrol officer, a sheriff's office deputy and a security guard — is what gave him a great sense of purpose and passion now being channeled into "Finding Saint Johns." Shlosser's YouTube channel, started nine months ago, has 280 subscribers and 20 videos to date. Most importantly to Shlosser, he is documenting the oral history of St. Johns County in hopes of it not being lost forever. Shlosser, his wife, Jacqueline Rodman, and 11-year-old daughter Evelyn have lived in St. Johns County for seven years. They randomly picked St. Johns County, looking to be near the ocean, first moving to Fruit Cove and then to Twenty Mile in Nocatee — a place where his very first video was shot.

Q: How did "Finding Saint Johns" get started?

A: I noticed the historical marker in Twenty Mile Village about the Twenty Mile House, and I found the history to be so interesting. I thought to myself I bet people pass by this every day and never read it. So, I did one little video on it, and I ended up receiving a lot of positive feedback. I think I really hit my stride when I did a segment on the Palm Valley Bridge. There was very little documentation on the bridge, but, when my video came out, I re-

ceived so many photos and stories from locals who wanted to share their memories of the bridge. One gentleman named Bill was really excited about seeing the video, and he started to send me pictures of the old bridge being taken down and the beginning construction of the new one. No one else had pictures like this online. It was great. There were also original pictures I posted of the first bridge that came from a man who used to live in Ponte Vedra and moved to California. He was a photographer and that's why those pics look so grainy — real film. When I received all those photos, it gave me the idea to do a follow-up to the first story.

Q: What is the most interesting aspect of St. Johns County to you?

A: For me, "The Age of Sail," the 17th and 18th centuries that ties to St. Augustine and St. Johns County is particularly interesting. I love that the original settlers still have a presence here. It is very rare to have that established culture still here. With St. Johns County changing so quickly, it is easy to leave our history in the dust of the buildings. It is my desire to hopefully help with the preservation of history.

Q: Where did you attend college?

A: I attended Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. I was also accepted into the University of Southern California, but that seemed like too much pressure to become the next George Lucas. Loyola Marymount University, where I earned a film and television degree, seemed like a nice happy medium. I worked on a lot of TV shows in production, as a camera assistant and in lighting.

Q: How did you get interested in emergency management and law enforcement?

A: I didn't feel like I was making a difference, so I became an EMT on an ambulance in 1993. I fell in love with it. I frequently met law enforcement personnel, and the California Highway Patrol guys convinced me that I should be a peace officer and said the California Highway Patrol was the best. At the time, they were only accepting one out of 1,000 applicants. So, it was one of the most difficult agencies to be accepted into due to the high number of applications. It was in 1997 that I received the letter saying I was accepted into the first California Highway Patrol class of January 1998, also known as CTC I-98. I later became a Sheriff's Deputy in San Jose, Calif. In my 11 1/2 years in law enforcement, I never had one complaint filed against me.

Q: How do you shoot the videos and do you have help?

A: I really don't have help on location. It's just me. Sometimes I bring a tripod, other times I set up the camera attached to a rock or branch, like when I placed the camera under my truck as I drove over it on the "Old Brick Road" video. Or I'll use a gimbal and hold it with a wide-angle lens. On the bridge, I held the camera in the first person, kind of like a selfie.

Author's note: To reach Shlosser, e-mail Findingsaintjohns@gmail.com or check out "Finding Saint Johns" on YouTube.

Holiday card drive cont. from pg. 1

Heartillery's eighth annual Mission Holiday Cards campaign is in need of cards and monetary donations to be able to mail the cards, said Emily Spencer, Heartillery founder and executive director.

The goal is to send 500,000 cards and to raise \$80,000 to cover the shipping costs of such a huge delivery. Last year, Heartillery exceeded its card goal and sent 820,000 cards, and Spencer said they are on track to send well over 500,000 this year. While Spencer does not like to ask for monetary donations, the reality is that shipping such a high volume of cards costs a lot of money. It will cost \$56,000 to send 1.5 million cards with 350 cards per box.

Spencer and the Mortons both said that COVID has made this project more meaningful than ever — for the soldiers and for card senders.

"Deployment itself is a stressful time away from family all on its own. Now in a pandemic, the situation is more complex. They are in a constant state of quarantine. There is no break, no time to leave. It is a totally new level of isolation and challenges," said Richard. "These cards give them a little bit of home."

In light of the pandemic, Heartillery has launched its first ever virtual team program for anyone who wants to do a remote team card project.

Here's how to do it: First go to heartillerygroup.org and click on "Learn More" next to Mission Holiday Cards. Next, click on "Get Started" under Start Your Own Team Fundraiser. Then, either sign up with your Facebook account or email. Finally, pick a team name and a donation goal.

The deadline to send cards is Dec. 15.

"This project brings us all back to those innate feelings of being blessed," she said. "This is an easy and affordable way to show gratitude and to say thank you to our troops, some of whom never get any mail."

Rest-assured, said Spencer, the blessings will go both ways.

For sponsorship opportunities email love@heartillerygroup.org. Holiday cards should be sent to Heartillery Group, P.O. Box 2649, Ponte Vedra, FL 32004. For more information, call (904) 466-7864.

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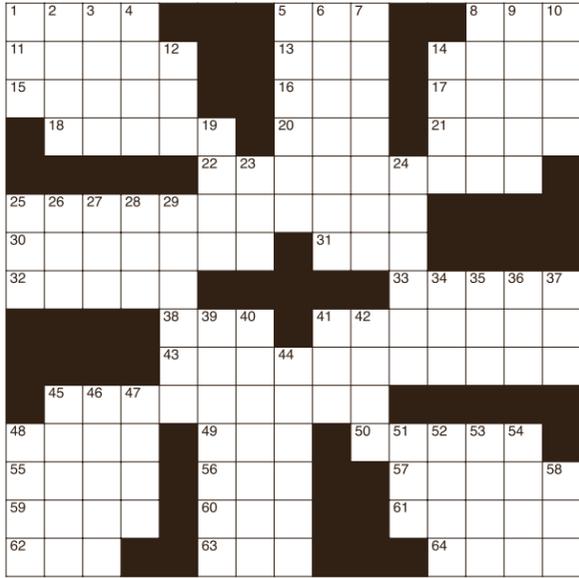
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Opposite of west
- 5. ___ Caesar, comedian
- 8. Helps little firms
- 11. A way to censor
- 13. Expresses atomic and molecular weights
- 14. Chalcedony
- 15. Type of sword
- 16. A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public
- 17. Attired
- 18. A sequence of winding turns
- 20. Pal
- 21. Expresses pleasure
- 22. Amendable
- 25. Clear
- 30. A way to cut off
- 31. Indigenous Thai person
- 32. Pale brownish yellow color

CLUES DOWN

- 1. One point south of due east
- 2. Wings
- 3. One point south of southeast
- 4. The shirts on our backs
- 5. One who works on the seas
- 6. Select jury
- 7. Small intestines parts
- 8. Plant of the heath family
- 9. Extrasolar planet
- 10. Creates more of
- 12. Before
- 14. Forms over a cut
- 19. Runs down
- 23. Exercise regimen ___-bo
- 24. Unkeyed
- 25. Principle underlying the universe
- 26. Corpuscle count (abbr.)
- 27. Residue
- 28. Company that rings receipts
- 29. Rugged mountain range

- 33. Aquatic plants genus
- 38. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 41. Merchants
- 43. Fix a chair
- 45. Throws into disorganization
- 48. Famed German composer
- 49. Keyboard key
- 50. Oral polio vaccine developer
- 55. Partner to pain
- 56. Where golfers start
- 57. Jenny ___: weight loss program
- 59. Sailing dinghy
- 60. Suffix that forms adjectives
- 61. Speeds at which music is played
- 62. Body part
- 63. Fall back
- 64. Ancient Greek sophist



Solve the code to discover words related to a party.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 22 = E)

A. 9 16 3 25 2 9
Clue: Small meals

B. 26 22 14 22 4 3 23 22
Clue: Drink

C. 18 4 6 22 16 15 9
Clue: Close companions

D. 25 12 3 5 13 3 23 16 22
Clue: Bubbly beverage

ENTERTAINING WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

AMBIANCE
APPETIZER
CATERING
CELEBRATE
COCKTAILS
DECOR
DINNER
ENTERTAIN
EVENING
EXCITEMENT
FAVOR
GUEST
HOLIDAY
HOSTESS
LEFTOVERS
MENU
PARTY
PLAYLIST
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