



The CreekLine



Serving the St. Johns County Community

DECEMBER 2020 Volume 20 Issue 12

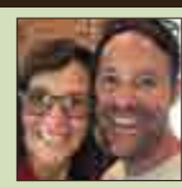
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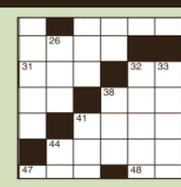
page 3
BFF Best Furry Friend



page 12
Holiday Contest for FREE
Golf Hall of Fame Tickets



page 15
Get to Know ...
Pastor Perri Martin



page 16
Puzzles

Meet new St. Johns County Commissioner Christian Whitehurst

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Recently elected St. Johns County Commissioner for District 1 Christian Whitehurst moved to NW St. Johns County with his parents and brother when he was still in high school from his birthplace of Tallahassee. His father had a new job in Jacksonville, and like many families, they decided to settle in St. Johns County for the superior school system. Whitehurst is a 2000 graduate of Nease High School.

He said he went straight into the working world, actually while still in high school.

"I played football my senior year for Nease, and after football season was over, my dad told me I needed to get an after school job or I wouldn't get to keep my truck," Whitehurst said. "So I drove up US 1 and ended up filling out an application at a kiosk in The Avenues mall for Fast Fix Jewelry and Watch Repair."

He started working there at age 17 — and six years later, bought the business.

"My parents had both gone to college," Whitehurst said. "I would never have seen retail store ownership as my career path, but it's been a blessing."

Whitehurst is a franchisee of the company and now owns two locations: an inline retail storefront in The Avenues

Christian Whitehurst cont. on pg. 7

Julington Creek Light Parade signals start of holiday season



By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Christmas on the Creek will light up Julington Creek on Saturday, Dec. 5 beginning at 7 p.m. The annual event, sponsored by the Julington Creek Prop Club, is celebrating its 32nd year — and Prop Club Commodore Tom

Clay is extending an invitation for St. Johns County and Mandarin neighbors to come out and get in the holiday spirit.

"The event is a lot of fun, not only for the boaters who decorate their boats, but also for the homeowners along the shore from Bulls Bay to the Julington Creek/Durbin Creek split who also decorate their homes and docks," Clay said.

Established in 1988, this annual event features an estimated 35 boats, ranging in size from 15 feet to 35 feet, decked out in all their holiday finery.

the Julington Creek Bridge and around Bulls Bay (where Julington Creek empties into the St. Johns River), then returns under the bridge and continues

second place gets \$200 and third place gets \$100. Prizes are also awarded for "Best Dock" along the parade route.

"The best place for spectators to view the parade is from both sides of the Julington Creek Bridge," Clay said.

"We will have deputies from the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office there for assistance."

There is a great deal of planning and organizational work done in advance of this event. The Prop Club starts in October each year contacting boaters, area merchants and residents gathering donations for the event. Annual dues from Prop Club members provide most of the funds required to stage Christmas on the Creek. Clay said that last year, the Prop Club donated excess funds to the Jacksonville Humane Society.

The Julington Creek Prop Club is a social organization of boaters that meets on the



Photos courtesy Julington Creek Prop Club
"Christmas on the Creek" returns Saturday, Dec. 5 at 7 p.m.

down Julington Creek. Members of the Julington Creek Prop Club are in a



Boats play Christmas music and people on the boats sing and dance. Clay said it is the second largest boat parade in the area, after the downtown Jacksonville event.

The parade route begins at the Marina at Julington Creek, goes underneath



boat in Bulls Bay to judge the decorated boats as they go by, then the judging boat follows the last boat in the parade up the creek to judge the homes and docks.

According to Clay, the best decorated boat is awarded a \$300 cash prize while



second Saturday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Marina at Julington Creek. All interested boaters are invited to join the Prop Club for boating information and fun. View the club's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/jcpropclub/ for more information.

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The CreekLine Community Newspaper is a free monthly publication distributed via mail to all addresses in Zip Codes 32259 and selected routes in 32092 and 32095. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2020.



BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Aaron Purr!



BREED:
American shorthair

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Chasing my own tail

FAVORITE TREAT:
Catnip!

FAVORITE FRIEND:
Luigi and Cleocatra

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:
Because he meows less, purrs more.

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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! Does your business cater to pets? Would you like to sponsor our contest? Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet or sponsor the BFF contest.



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.rec1.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.

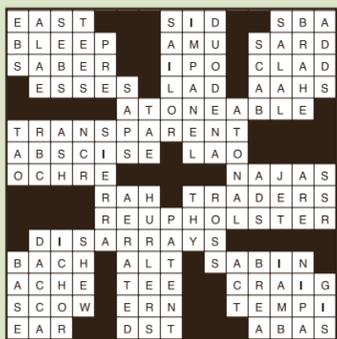
Pages 10-11

Local Holiday Event and Gift Guide



Table of Contents

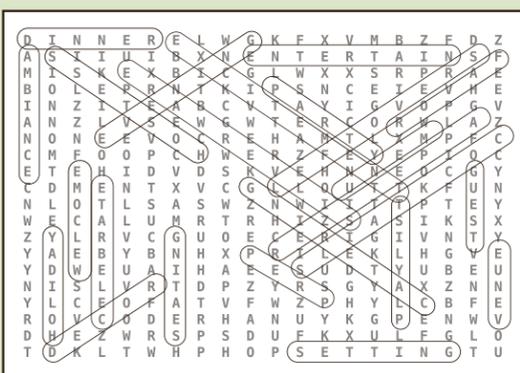
- 4 Q&A with Eddie Creamer
- 4 Q&A with Brandon Patty
- 5 Q&A with Vicky Oakes
- 6 What's Going On in St. Johns?
- 6 Briefs
- 8 Q&A with Beverly Slough
- 9 St. Johns Business Monthly
- 13 Julington Creek Elementary
- 18 Nutrition Check
- 18 Fishing
- 19 Travel



Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 16



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



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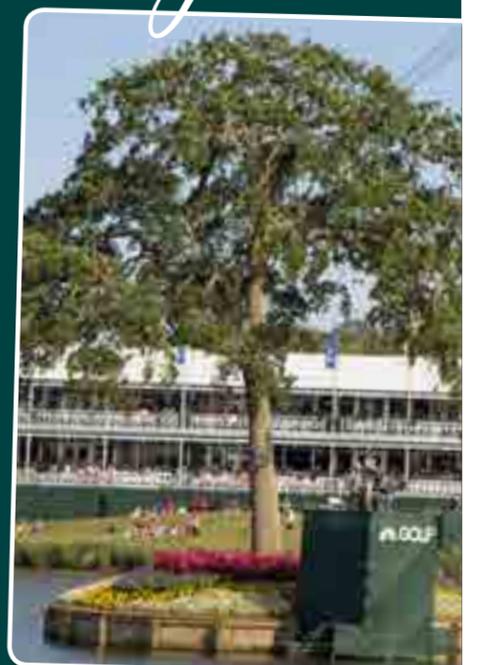
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MYSTERY PHOTO



Can you guess where this is?
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Last month's Mystery Photo was Turtle Lake on the campus of Westminster Woods on Julington Creek. Our winner was Jim Doud. Congratulations!



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

Q: Do you have any new initiatives at your office?

A: Yes, since our office is also the County Recorder and Custodian of Records, we have a number of documents like marriage licenses and military discharge papers going back many years. Our intent is to build exhibits online to be viewed easily by the public and the first one we did honored St. Johns County residents and their service in the military. Dr. Susan Parker, Clerk Historian, was able to locate records within the clerk's records warehouse to create this virtual exhibit of discharge certificates from residents of St. Johns County. The exhibit highlights the various roles of just a few of the hundreds of veterans in war and peace from the days of the Spanish-American War through World War II. It's important to note that we gladly record discharge papers, now DD-214s, for free as a service to our veterans. You can view the exhibit at <https://stjohnsclerk.com/local-veterans-exhibit/>.

Coming up next year, we plan to put together an exhibit honoring the 200th anniversary of Florida becoming a territory.

Q: Can you tell us about the new St. Johns County Inspector General?

A: We appointed Nilsa Arissa to this position on Nov. 5. She previously served as the Assistant Inspector General and brings an extensive finance and audit management background. The work of the inspector general is an important component of our form of

government as it provides checks and balances to ensure good government in our county. The inspector general handles audits, both quantitative and qualitative. An example of a qualitative audit is the DAVID (Drivers and Vehicle Information Database) database, which contains sensitive information like driver history and address. We annually audit this to ensure that only those individuals who have need to view this database can do so. The Inspector General's scope of work also includes public integrity investigations (Fraud, Waste, Abuse), and guardianship accountings.

Q: What can you tell us about your office's new official seal?

A: We just rolled out the new seal for the Clerk's office. It better reflects what we do on behalf of the residents of St. Johns County. The inner and outer circles denote the offices within our larger office and the seal states that we were established in 1821. The compass points due north since we are solely focused on our mission, the spyglass refers to our auditing function, and the pen refers to our recording function. Finally the shield shape is representative of our protecting the public's confidence.

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

A: A lot of questions can be answered by visiting our website, www.stjohnsclerk.com. People can also call our main office at (904) 819-3600.



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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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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December

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

Community Calendar

ElderSource is offering free Medicare counseling for seniors and caregivers during Medicare Open Enrollment, through Dec. 7. In partnership with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program helps seniors understand their Medicare choices and maximize their benefits. Call (888) 242-4464 to schedule an appointment with a SHINE counselor today.

Beacon Lake community will host drive through holiday lights beginning at 6:30 p.m. nightly through Dec. 31. Visitors are invited to drive through the community along Beacon Lake Parkway to Lake House and enjoy a wonderland of lights from the safety and comfort of their cars. Beacon Lake is on the south side of County Road 21 between US Highway 1 and Interstate 95.

Herbal Medicine for Daily Wellness will be offered on Dec. 12 at 10 a.m. Attendees will learn about traditionally used herbs to promote wellness and health as well as how to create their own tinctures, teas, and salves. Included are guides, plant identification, lecture and herbal snacks. Pre registration is required via phone or text: (386) 972-1891.

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.

Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club will host a meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club, off County Road 210W. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. The luncheon's theme is Winter Wonderland with entertainment by Just Friends - a/k/a Harry and Sally. Holiday attire is suggested. The total cost is \$22 per person; make checks payable to BTNC and mail to Mary Ann Kriniske, 156 Worthington Parkway, Saint Johns, FL 32259. Payment must be received by Dec. 9. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for more information.

Owl Prowl, hosted by St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, will be held at Alpine Groves Park, 2060 State Road 13 in Switzerland, on Dec. 17 from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. Learn about these fascinating creatures of the night and explore the park at sunset in search of resident owls. Call (904) 209-0348 or email ahalusky@sjcfl.us for more information.

Briefs

New children's clothing store opens

Jet & Ivey, a children's clothing store, has opened at The Forum at Greenbriar, off County Road 210W. The store features a wide range of modern and trendy apparel reflecting the Florida lifestyle of fast and growing kids. A comfortable Jet & Ivy private label line blends with a mix-and-match assortment of upscale brands like Tractor Jeans, Bella Dahl, Johnnie-O, Nectar Bath Treats, and more, hand-picked by co-founders Teri-Ann Wigfield and her husband David Perez.

The large yet cozy store features calming French blue accents within an ultra-modern and bright interior. A giant LED-screen TV complements swanky kid-sized furniture. Shelves are stocked with selections of girly purses, key chains for gift giving, high-quality cashmere for kids, cool shoes and accessories, carefully selected young men's slacks, shirts, and plush — which Wigfield says are all displayed in an atmosphere conducive for kids to shop and moms and dads to chat.

As residents of the St. Johns community, the family understands the importance of giving back. As part of this commitment, \$1 from every item sold at Jet & Ivy is donated to St. Johns Cares, their nonprofit of choice.

Library Food for Fines program returns

St. Johns County Library System Director Debra Rhodes Gibson has announced that the popular Food for Fines program will return this year in St. Johns County libraries and bookmobiles.

An opportunity to eliminate most library

fines, Food for Fines will run through Monday, Dec. 21. The food items collected will be used to stock the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Food Pantry, providing food for St. Johns County families in need.

Library patrons may bring one unexpired, non-perishable food item to the library to waive \$1 of library fines. The more items donated, the more the library will reduce a patron's fines. This fine-reduction program applies only to overdue fines. Fees related to damaged or lost items are not included in the Food for Fines program.

The library also welcomes any donations made in the spirit of the holiday season. Food donations may be dropped off at any St. Johns County Library branch or with one of the Bookmobiles. Visit sjcpls.org for more information.

INK! receives grant funding to encourage STEM education

The St. Johns County Education Foundation, Inc. which operates as INK! (Investing in Kids), has an ongoing mission to provide innovative programs and classroom resources to promote the academic success of students in the St. Johns County School District. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit was recently honored with funding from Northrop Grumman to encourage public school education and to further science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) initiatives, along with promoting good citizenry and involvement in the community through the school year ending in 2021.

The grant will support STEM opportunities for local students in elementary, middle and high schools to enhance a variety of initiatives including the Career Academy High School Showcase which markets STEM Career Academies, and for

Briefs cont. on pg. 15

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Christian Whitehurst cont. from pg.1

mall and a store in the St. Johns Town Center that he opened in 2017. He said he is proud that his business grew in terms of revenue even during the recession; jewelry repair is a niche market that really can't be outsourced.

Whitehurst has been married to Courtney since 2011;

they met via a Christian dating site while she was in college in Tennessee. They have two daughters, Olivia, almost five years old and Hannah, age two. In his spare time, Whitehurst said he enjoys traveling, but

also likes to spend time with his family. They particularly like to spend time outdoors, exploring the county's many nature trails, parks and beaches.

Whitehurst said that as a graduate of the St. Johns County school system and a beneficiary of the lifestyle the county offers, he felt compelled to run for the county commission as a way of giving back and also to help ensure that St. Johns County remains a good place to live, raise a family and even retire. His parents still live in the same house they bought when the family first moved to the area.

"If I could write a script, it would include having my girls continue to live and raise their children in St. Johns County too," he said.

To that end, Whitehurst said he had four priorities as county commissioner. First, and above all things, is safety.

"All the things we love about St. Johns County would not be possible without this being a safe place to live," he said.

"We need to continue to support our sheriff's office and first responders."

Secondly, he doesn't want the county to rest on its laurels when it comes to being the best place in the state to raise a family. He said the county commission needs

to stand with the school board and make sure they have adequate funding. Also, he believes that parks and recreation like sufficient ballfield space is important so children can make productive use of their time.

Infrastructure needs, such as roadways and sidewalks, to support the county's growth are also important to Whitehurst. Finally, Whitehurst said he wants to make sure that the county's growth is smart and consistent with the already established culture of St. Johns County. He said we need to find opportunities for conservation and ways to protect wetlands and waterways.

"As we grow, We need to make sure to now destroy what is beautiful about St. Johns County," Whitehurst said.



Photo courtesy Christian Whitehurst



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

Q: What is the update on the new schools under construction?

A: On Nov. 10, we had the topping off ceremony for High School HHH. We hold these events when they are placing the last girder on the building under construction. Tomorrow (Nov. 17), we will hold the same ceremony for K-8 School MM.

We have named the principal for K-8 School MM: Amanda Riedl, who previously served as principal at Mill Creek Academy. To fill her position, we have named Ken Goodwin, moving from being principal at Picolata Crossing Elementary School. Finally, to fill his position, we have named Brian Morgan, assistant principal at Ocean Palms Elementary. They will all assume their new positions after Thanksgiving.

Q: Has High School HHH been named yet?

A: No. Principal Jay Willets has been very busy meeting with his community committees to narrow down school names and mascots as suggested by the school survey they sent out. He will send these narrowed down lists to the school board for consideration either at our December or January meeting.

Q: What's happening with High School III?

A: The bid for the construction of this school was just awarded to the same company that is building High School HHH. They are doing a good job and it will be seamless for them to build basically the same school again, just on a different site. We expect to break ground soon in Beachwalk for this new school. I would expect that we will name the principal next spring and then go through basically the same procedures for naming and mascots as we have for High School HHH, just one year later.

Q: What is the latest information on school-based distance learning?

A: We are in our second nine-weeks of this school year. We had families reassess their situations and many students came back to brick and mortar schools at the beginning of this nine-week period. Presently, we only have about 5,300 students doing the school-based distance learning.

We feel a bit in limbo as to what will happen after this nine-week period, which ends Jan. 29, 2021. The Florida Association of District School Superintendents has requested the Commissioner of Education and Gov. DeSantis to extend school-based district learning with funding into the second semester, but we have not heard anything back yet.

Q: What can you tell us about controlled open enrollment for next school year?

A: Annually, we have to determine our guidelines for controlled open enrollment. For the 2021-22 school year, we have a few more schools available than in the past; we have five elementary schools with availability in the county, one middle school and no high schools. None of these schools are located in NW St. Johns County. The window for the lottery opens in March and we will have complete details on our website.

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

A: We will have our organizational meeting and seat our new board tomorrow, Nov. 17. Since we rotate our leadership positions, we know that Patrick Canan will be the board chair and Bill Mignon will be the vice chair for the upcoming year. We will welcome new board member Tony Coleman at this meeting as well.

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

Market Insight



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.

How small businesses can prepare for a unique holiday season

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

When the famous ball dropped in Times Square on New Year's Eve and 2020 officially began, few people might have anticipated what awaited the world in the months ahead. By the end of March, a global pandemic had changed the way people across the globe lived their lives as governments scrambled to prevent a potentially deadly virus from spreading.

No aspect of life has been left untouched by the COVID-19 outbreak, including how people shop. Stay-at-home measures and government-mandated closures proved a formidable challenge for small business owners. Another challenge awaits such businesses this holiday season, when consumers are expected to do much of their shopping online.

Many small businesses thrive on welcoming customers into their facilities. While no one can predict how long social distancing measures will remain in place, it's reasonable to assume that consumers may be hesitant to visit stores en masse this holiday season. But the spirit of the holiday season will return, and that spirit will still compel consumers to look for gifts for their loved ones. Small business owners looking to capitalize on the holiday shopping season can try these strategies as they prepare for what promises to be a unique final month of 2020.

- Start early. Holiday promotions typically feature discounted items, and small business owners can hit the ground running by announcing sales well in advance of the holiday season. Consumers have adapted to lengthy delivery times during the outbreak, and retail analysts predict many will begin shopping earlier than ever before to account for potential delivery problems. By discounting items early, small business owners can put themselves in posi-

tion to capitalize on early bird shoppers.

- Keep sales going. The Bureau of Economic Analysis noted that economic growth in the United States declined by 5 percent in the first quarter of 2020, and in June the Congressional Budget Office predicted that growth would ultimately decline by 38 percent. Such figures suggest that money will be tight this holiday season, and small business owners can expect to compete for every dollar. By starting sales early and keeping those sales going throughout the holiday season, small business owners can put themselves in the best position possible to capitalize on consumer spending, however limited that spending may be.

- Apply past experiences. Small businesses have had more than a few litmus tests to gauge consumer behavior during the outbreak. Easter marked the first major holiday to occur while stay-at-home restrictions were in place, and since then retail holidays like Mother's Day and Father's Day have come and gone. Small business owners can examine consumer behavior during past retail holidays to inform their approaches to the coming holiday season. If consumers expressed a desire for gift packages that reduced their need to make multiple shopping trips, small business owners can design and promote gift baskets filled with an assortment of products available in their stores. Creativity figures to be a necessity to attract customers this holiday season, and past retail holidays can inspire a new approach.

Small businesses can confront the challenge of the coming holiday season by embracing a handful of strategies to attract consumers during what promises to be a season unlike any other in recent memory.

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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.



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Library hosts Giving Trees

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.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. Donations 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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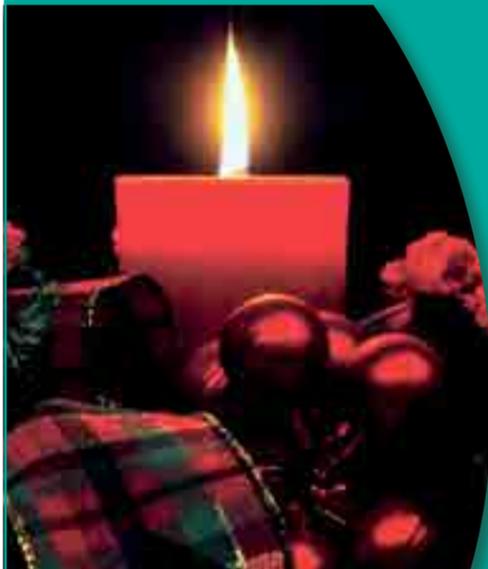
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Photo courtesy Jim Bagnardi

Creekside golfers compete at state tournament

Creekside High School seniors Andrew Riley and Patrick Farson completed their high school golf careers by competing in the FHSAA State Championship tournament in Howie-in-the-Hills at the El Campeon Golf Course at Mission Inn Resort & Club on Oct. 30 – 31. Riley came in fifth place with a two-day total of one over par 145. Farson shot an 81 both days. Leading up to the state tournament, Riley won the district tournament with a seven under par 65 at Eagle Landing Golf Club while Farson won the regional tournament with a four under par 67 at The Golf Club at Fleming Island. Pictured are Coach David Hudson, Patrick Farson, Andrew Riley and Coach Jim Bagnardi.

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Julington Creek Elementary honors employees

By Heidi Karl
mail@floridanewsline.com

Each year, the schools within the St. Johns County School District select employees for honors in various categories. Julington Creek Elementary announces the selection of the following teachers and staff member for the listed annual awards:



Photos courtesy Heidi Karl

Jackie Clarke, Teacher of the Year and Lexie Messick, Rookie Teacher of the Year at Julington Creek Elementary.

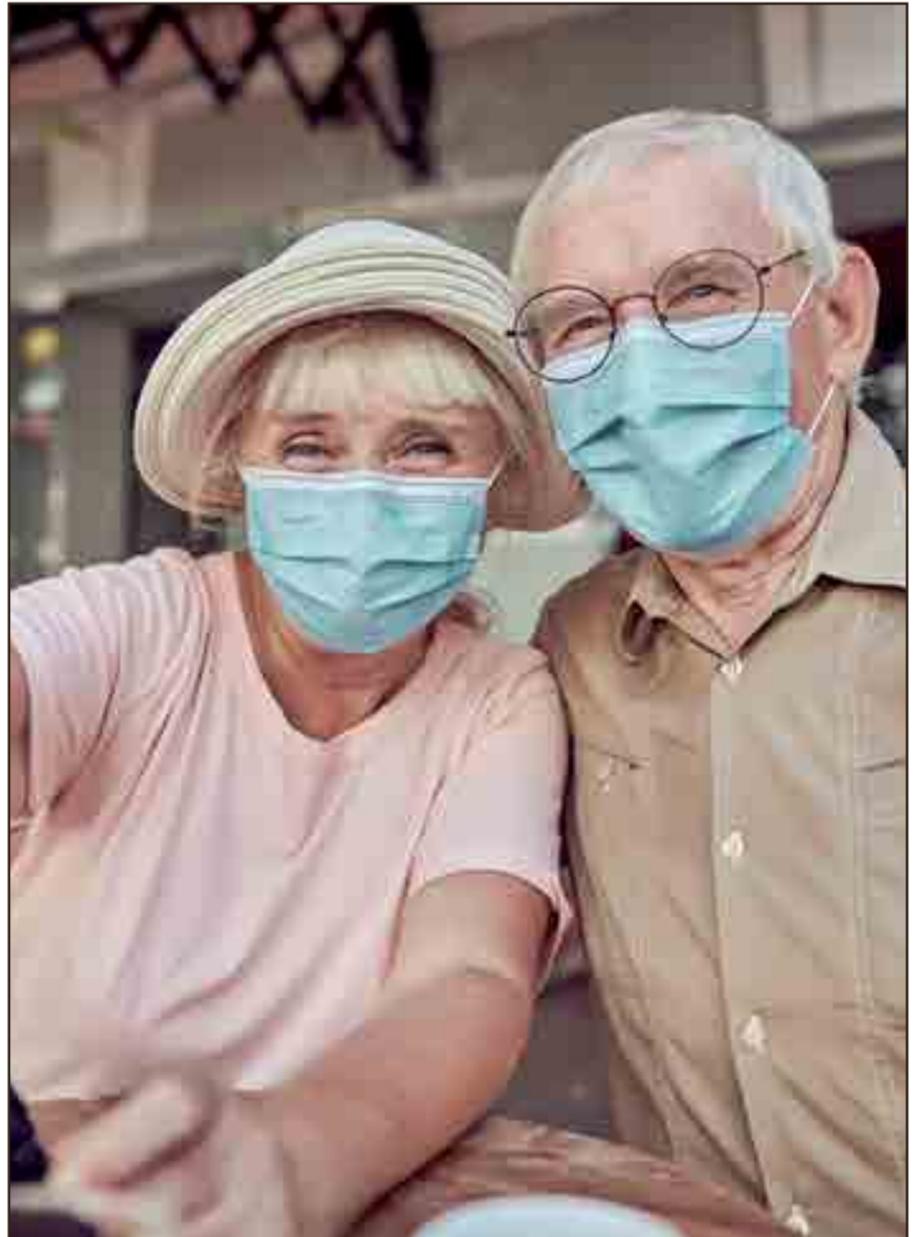
Jackie Clarke, Media Center teacher, has been selected as the Julington Creek Elementary Teacher of the Year. Clarke is always willing to help and has been invaluable during the transition to online teaching. Her love for books and learning is contagious.

Lexie Messick, third grade teacher, has been selected as the Julington Creek Elementary Rookie Teacher of the Year. Messick's energy and enthusiasm for teaching are an inspiration to all who get to work with her.

Abra Murrell, guidance clerk, has been selected as the School-Related Employee of the Year. Murrell is constantly looking for ways to celebrate the school's teachers and staff, as well as ways to improve the environment at the school.



Abra Murrell, School Related Employee of the Year for Julington Creek Elementary.



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Bayside raises money for Tim Tebow Foundation



Photo courtesy Adria Edenfield

The Bayside neighborhood, which contains 60 homes located on the St. Johns River in Switzerland, held the Bayside Spooktacular Fun Run to raise money for the Tim Tebow Foundation to help combat human trafficking. More than 100 runners, ranging in age from one year to 78 years old, participated and the event raised \$3,650. Resident Seth Parise said, "This event was a great way for neighbors to come together for fellowship, while also benefiting a great cause." Scott Davis won the over 16 year old class and Will Evans won the under 16 class. Bayside has a history of community service, routinely holding food drives, coat drives, and hosting 50 Wounded Warrior families for a family fun day for the past 10 years.



Photo courtesy Jack Murray

Local Rotary Clubs donate face masks to area schools

The Rotary Clubs of Bartram Trail, Saint Johns, Ponte Vedra in Nocatee, St. Augustine Sunrise and St. Augustine Beach joined together to donate 2,700 PPE COVID-19 facemasks, to 25 local schools for use by teachers and staff. Earlier this fall Rotary District 6970 Area Governor Jack Murray learned that local teachers would need assistance with PPE supplies, so he enlisted local Rotary Clubs to help. "We were able to start small with what looked like maybe a few hundred masks to a school or two and turn it into 2,700 PPE masks to help 25 local schools throughout St. John County," Murray said.

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By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Pastor Perri Martin grew up in Jacksonville and attended local schools (Twin Lakes Academy Middle School and Mandarin High School) before graduating from Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky — but she said never in her wildest dreams did she think she would come back to the area to River of Life UMC, where she now serves as pastor. Although she was familiar with River of Life, since her parents and grandmother lived in Julington Creek Plantation, she said she attended Crossroad UMC when she was growing up. Her husband, Gil, now serves as youth director at Crossroad in addition to helping to lead services at River of Life two times per month. The couple has four children under the age of seven, and Martin said it was important to them to not worship at separate churches each Sunday.

Q: What was the first thing you did when you found out you'd been appointed to River of Life?

A: After I graduated from seminary, I was appointed to a church in Englewood, in southwest Florida. I served there as associate pastor of family ministries for four years. When I learned in 2019 that I'd been appointed back to northeast Florida, to River of Life, I was amazed. The first thing Gil and I did was drive up here for a day to tour preschools!

Q: What is your vision for River of Life?

A: The church's vision is to be a source of living water of God's grace flowing into our community. My prayer has been to send us people who need grace in their lives. We have many activities and ministries for all ages. One of our coolest ones

is "Mid-Chill" for middle schoolers. This is held on Wednesday afternoons, which are early release days for St. Johns County public schools, from noon until 2:30 p.m. Middle school students can ride their bikes from Fruit Cove Middle School to the church, where our college interns oversee activities and devotions. We also recently started a Fresh Expression called "Preschool Playground Playdates," where one time per month, preschool families from our church invite their friends with preschoolers to meet and play at a local playground or park.

I also love that our church is so giving. We recently hosted "Trick or Treat for Nonperishables" and collected more than 6,000 pounds of food for St. Francis House as well as for some families at our two local schools that were identified as needing some help.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: I like being with people and building relationships. I started taking karate in September with my five-year-old. I was on the golf team at Mandarin High School and now we are introducing our family to golf. On Saturdays my parents let our kids spend the night and then bring them to church with them on Sunday morning. Gil and I play a round of golf and then go out for dinner afterwards.

Q: What is a little known fact about you?

A: Some people might not know that I got my second tattoo in the oldest tattoo parlor in the world: Razzouk Tattoo in Jerusalem. They have been tattooing as a family since the 1300s.



Photo courtesy Perri Martin
Perri and Gil Martin

Briefs cont. from pg. 6

support of the Youth Character Awards which recognizes students with outstanding character. Additionally, the grant will cover costs associated with local, state and international science fair initiatives.

"We are honored to be awarded the grant which concurs with INK!'s educational programs and services to promote STEM initiatives and exemplary student activities plus performance," said Donna Lueders, INK! Executive Director. "Approximately 2,255 female and male students from seven to 18 years of age will benefit from the grant."

INK! provides innovative resources to support academic success for all St. Johns County public schools. Visit www.ink-stjohns.org for more information.

River Garden Foundation chief development officer announces retirement

Kathy Osterer, a 22-year veteran of River Garden, has announced her plans to retire at the end of 2020.

"River Garden will always be so important to me and I am very proud of all that we have accomplished together. I could not have asked for finer people to have worked with," Osterer said in a letter to past Gala Chairs. "This will give me the opportunity to work on my mental health, improve on my physical health, and to take time to count the many blessings that I have in my life."

Osterer has been involved with the River Garden Foundation since 1993, when she joined the first Gala committee. In 1995, Osterer chaired the Foundation Gala that brought the late comedian Alan King to town. In 1998, she formally accepted the position as foundation director, and later advanced to chief development officer. The Foundation has raised millions of dollars and thousands of friends in support of River Garden and its mission to the community during Osterer's tenure as chief development officer.

"It has been a privilege working with Kathy over these last 22 years," said River Garden CEO Martin Goetz. "Kathy is a passionate advocate for River Garden's mission, vision and values and we are now a better and more financially secure care community because of her."

River Garden has begun a search for Osterer's successor.

Q: What is your favorite Christmas tradition?

A: We have a lot of traditions involving my family growing up and my grandmother. But for my immediate family I think my favorite is ringing the bell at Publix for Christmas for the Salvation Army with my kids. We have done this now for a few years and we bring the whole show — instruments and off-key voices (except my Gil) singing our favorite Christmas carols. My older kids each also picked a child from under the Julington Creek Elementary tree to provide Christmas for.

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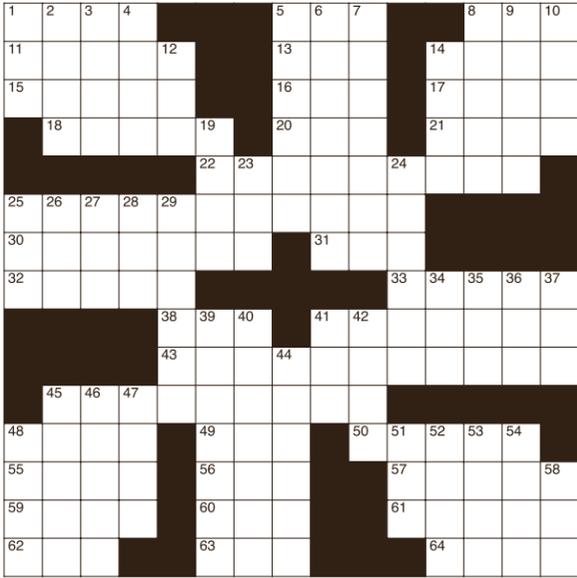
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Puzzles

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

34. Commercials
35. NY footballer
36. They ___
37. Soviet Socialist Republic
39. Poked holes in the ground
40. Pitchers
41. Your
42. Diana __, singer
44. Important document for inventors
45. Bangladesh capital
46. Fluid that flows in the veins of Greek gods
47. Famed daguerreotype photographer
48. Where military personnel work
51. Play a role
52. La __ Tar Pits, Hollywood
53. Unstressed-stressed
54. Type of palm tree
58. Judo garments

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

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 | N | 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 | T | D | P | Z | Y | R | S | G | Y | A | X | Z | N | N | |
| Y | L | C | E | O | F | A | T | V | F | 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
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2020 - 2021 St. Johns County School Calendar

Total 179 Days

| December 2020 | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| M | T | W | T | F |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | |

Fishing

Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka
mail@floridanewslines.com

We are now reaching the months of fishing uncertainty. Fortunately, this is a relatively short season in comparison to the many months of great fishing that exist throughout the year.

With heavy recent rains up and down the St. Johns River, and cooler temperature upon us, many of our favorite saltwater species have retreated to warmer, saltier waters for the winter. This doesn't mean the river is now fishless; plenty of fish will still be around docks and pilings. Anglers should be able to go out and find reds, drum, and even a few stripers when conditions are right.

If freshwater species happen to be your specialty, then the next couple of months just might be your favorite time of year to hit the water. Winter months usually offer some of the best pan fishing of the year, especially if the panfish happens to be the speckled perch, also known as the black crappie.

Arguably the best table fare of Florida's freshwater fish, speckled perch will begin to congregate from shorelines to channels and points for pre-spawn preparation. Heavy feeding is needed prior to the spawn to provide the energy needed for the spawn to take place. Limiting-out on "specks" in the one- to three-pound range during this time is very common. Area creeks starting at Durbin and following the river south, and nearby lakes from Palatka to Gainesville, all offer some of the finest speck fishing in the state.

We have also reached the "restocking" time of year on our seasonal fishing calendar. While fishing time on the water may have slowed, time in the stores or



Photo courtesy David Vaughn
Dawson Vaughn of Julington Creek Plantation and Creekside High School caught this slot sized red along with approximately 10 others late this summer in Sisters Creek.

online will most likely be on the increase. Actually, it works out pretty well. Putting together a holiday list of tackle needs or finding tackle gifts for friends and family is time well spent when fishing is a little on the slow side.

Regardless of your fishing knowledge, shopping for the angler in your life should not be hard to do. Fishing has come a long way from being just a rods and reels, and hooks and sinkers activity. Entire clothing lines are dedicated to fishing, along with shoes, sunglasses, electronics, and hats and caps. Any of these ideas should be great additions to the anglers in your life, and if nothing else, there is the never-failing gift certificate.

Fishing Report: Speckled perch should be the best bite happening in coming weeks. Remember to check for new fishing regulations that should be coming out (once again) the first of the year.

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

Nutrition Check

Managing holiday stress with food

By Kristen Hicks-Roof, Ph.D., RDN, LDN; Marissa Schwam, B.S.
mail@floridanewslines.com

If there is something that we can all agree on, it would be that 2020 may not have gone the way we had expected. The good news is, it's that time of the year again where we can start thinking about what's coming next, such as the holiday season and a New Year. Forward thinking can be exciting, but it can also bring on some other feelings such as uncertainty and stress. Did you know that eating certain types of foods can boost your mood and ultimately help reduce stress?

Diets rich in fiber, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fatty fish, nuts and seeds and fermented foods have shown promise in boosting your mood. Why is this? There is a connection between the brain and your digestive system. In fact, about 90 percent of the serotonin receptors in the body are in the stomach. This means that food you eat can stimulate the serotonin receptors, which affect your mood. This can also mean that our mood may dictate the type of food we choose or "crave."

It has been found that when individuals craved salty snacks, it was out of boredom; crunchy snacks indicated anger or frustration, spicy foods were for excitement or intensity, and sweet foods were craved during joy or contentment. Interesting enough, researchers also found that physical hunger and emotional hunger present in different ways. Have you ever recognized the difference between your physical hunger and emotional hunger?

- Physical hunger: Gradually increases, can be satisfied with intake of any food.

- Emotional hunger: Sudden and causes specific cravings for a particular food

It is important to understand all the different ways emotional hunger can manifest, especially during such stressful times like the holidays and COVID-19. This holiday season take a hold of your hunger and beat the holiday blues with wholesome nutritious mood boosting foods. Here are some quick tips on how to balance your mood with food:

- Don't skip. Skipping meals or long duration fasting can increase both physical and emotional hunger. Instead, try to have a healthy snack (fruit, nuts, cheese and crackers) when you feel hungry between meals.

- Rethink hunger. Next time you go to grab something from your pantry or fridge, ask yourself, "Am I hungry or am I bored?" If the latter, try to go for a quick walk or do a chore around the house to reset your mind.

- Eat the rainbow. Aim to add a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables into your diet during the holiday season — each color can add an array of nutrients to help boost your mood and immune system.

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

The Pantry Raiders

A keeper for holiday dessert trays



By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The holiday season is a time when families across the globe look forward to the traditions they've passed down from generation to generation. Holiday baking is one such tradition in many families. From cookies and pies to brittles and fudge, there's no shortage of sweet treats come the holiday season. But whose recipe collection couldn't benefit from another delicious addition? That's just what can be found in "Toffee Cheesecake Bars" from "Taste of Home Healthy Cooking Cookbook" (RDA Enthusiast Brands) by the Taste of Home/Reader's Digest Kitchens.

Toffee Cheesecake Bars

(Makes 2 1/2 dozen)

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/3 cup baking cocoa
- 1/2 cup cold butter
- 1 8 oz. package reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 1/4 cups milk chocolate English toffee bits, divided



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Toffee Cheesecake Bars

1. In a small bowl, combine the flour, confectioners' sugar, cocoa and baking soda. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Press in the bottom of an ungreased 13-inch x 9-inch baking dish. Bake at 350 F for 12 to 15 minutes or until set.
2. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Add the milk, eggs and vanilla; beat until smooth. Stir in 3/4 cup toffee bits. Pour over crust. Bake 18 to 22 minutes longer or until center is almost set.
3. Cool on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining toffee bits; cool completely. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours overnight.



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Travel

Stuttgart Germany's Christmas Markets

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewline.com

Travel to Europe isn't happening this holiday season, but you might want to contemplate plans for future years. The outdoor Christmas Markets in Germany enticed me in 2019, and I am so glad I went.

The winter markets harken back to the 13th century and bring all the delights associated with Christmas: Old World aromas of roasting chestnuts, the taste of sweet and spicy gingerbread, the sounds of Yuletide carols, the sight of colorful lights, and the interaction of people in good cheer. The little shops feature old-fashioned wooden toys, nutcracker characters, seasonal decorations, and tree ornaments. Many of them are exquisitely hand-carved while the less expensive varieties are machine manufactured. Traditional German food and drink await in abundant supply.

I began exploring Stuttgart's downtown market bustling with nearly 300 wooden booths. Their roofs were covered with 3-D figures and designs, often animated characters, and festooned with lots of fresh greenery (no artificial garland). Each booth is filled with goodies, often strung from beam to beam and hanging from the ceiling.

Of course, a massive Christmas tree shimmered with hundreds of lights, but I was attracted to the life-size Nativity

figures in a large rotating pyramid. Unlike Egyptian pyramids, German Christmas pyramids are circular, descending wooden tiered platforms that rotate by burning candles. Smaller versions of these become cherished annual centerpieces in German homes. They showcase the nativity family and animals and other figures (shepherds, wise men) associated with the manger. The big one in the center of the city mesmerized me.



Esslingen Market

Marketgoers stop to drink Glühwein (hot mulled wine, served in a mug) along with sausages, pretzels, nuts, or sweets. It felt like eating at a fair, but some people dine in the downtown

A holiday light show included typical Yuletide music and dancing designs and floodlit models of a Mercedes and Porsche; after all, Stuttgart is home to those automakers.

After sunset, I rode a commuter train about 10 miles to reach Ludwigsburg, a smaller town with around 100,000 residents. Ludwigsburg presents a Baroque Christmas Market. A walk through the modern downtown, illuminated by an angel theme, soon brought me to the holiday market. A glittery angel hovered above the stalls bustling with local families and shoppers.

I heard singing, the sweet sound of chil-

dren's voices, and followed it until I came to an outdoor stage. I listened to elementary-aged students perform a medley of holiday songs, mostly in German, except Jingle Bells in English. Equally heart-warming was the delighted faces of parents and grandparents beaming with pride and love. As I stood there, I felt the spirit of Christmas rekindled, spreading like a warm glow. I smiled and thought, "This is what it's all about."

The next evening, I took the train a bit farther to historic Esslingen. Picturesque is an understatement; Esslingen lies on the Neckar River, and nearly every building remains a half-timbered architectural gem. I immediately fell under the spell of this colorful town, looking as if it were frozen in time.

Esslingen hosts an extraordinary Medieval Christmas Market. The theme is fully embraced by merchants dressed in historic-looking costumes demonstrating and selling their



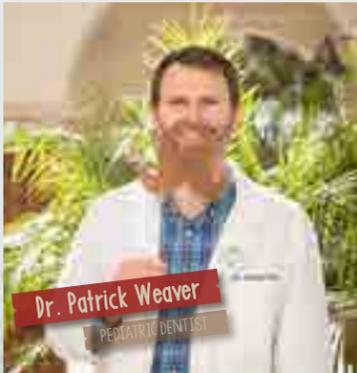
Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Stuttgart Shop

classic crafts. Blacksmiths, glass blowers, woodcarvers, and minstrels engage the crowds. A midway of traditional fair games called for participation. I kept running into jugglers, fire eaters, and crowd performers. A special children's area even fits in a small ferris wheel and kid-sized games. A whole pig was roasting on a spit. The Medieval Market was alive and oh so much fun, by far the favorite market of my trip.



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

The Stuttgart Christmas markets were all I hoped for and imagined, and I sure wish I were going again this year.




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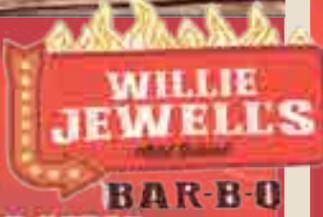
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