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Keep storm drains clear to protect water supply

By Ashley Evitt, St. Johns River Water Management District
mail@floridanewslines.com

Did you know Florida is home to nearly 8,000 lakes, 1,700 rivers, streams, springs and spring runs, thousands of miles of man-made canals, and extensive wetlands — not to mention more than 8,000 miles of coastline? And if you live in northeast Florida, chances are you aren't far from one of these water bodies.

As more people continue to call Florida home, it is more important than ever to be mindful of how everyday activities can pollute our waterways. Stormwater runoff (rainwater that flows off lawns, driveways, streets, parking lots, and construction sites) is a large contributor to water pollution and can even cause harmful algal blooms. We can all do something to help prevent water pollution

Residents and businesses can help in the following ways:

- Keep grass clippings and leaves out of storm drains and off roadways. Rake or blow grass clippings and leaves back into your yard or collect and dispose as green waste. (Grass clippings and leaves decay into nitrogen and phosphorus, both nutrients that trigger harmful algal blooms.)
- Wash your car at the car wash rather than in your driveway. Commercial carwashes use less water, and soaps are deactivated and treated appropriately before going to the municipal water treatment facility. Some even reuse their water. (Soaps used to wash cars can destroy the mucus layer that protects fish from bacteria and parasites.)

• Pick up after your pets and dispose of pet waste in household trash. (Pet waste contains harmful pathogens and bacteria that can make people and animals sick.)

- Painting? Clean your brushes in buckets and let the material settle out before disposing of it in your household drain where the municipal waste system can filter out sediments.

Not only will these simple steps help protect our water quality, but they will also help ensure the stormwater system is operating as designed. When debris enters storm drains, it compromises the system. Leaves, grass clippings, and trash can clog the system and increase the risk of flooding to nearby homes and neighborhoods. Do your part to keep our water clean and your neighborhood stormwater system functioning properly!

Learn more by visiting St. Johns River Water Management District's website at www.sjrwmd.com/education/water-pollution.

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Michael & Tari Taylor
Premier Homes Realty

As seen in the
Fortune February/
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BFF

Best Furry Friend
of the month

Meet Maggie!



Breed:

Bluetick Coonhound

Favorite Activity:

Running — around the house or the
backyard and especially when my tiny
humans are running with me!

Favorite Treat:

All of them!

Favorite Friend:

My older puppy brother, Shawn is my
favorite to bark at!

How Your BFF Got Their Name:

Maggie is short for Magnolia. My family
loves magnolia trees so much my dad
bought my mom one for our new house!

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



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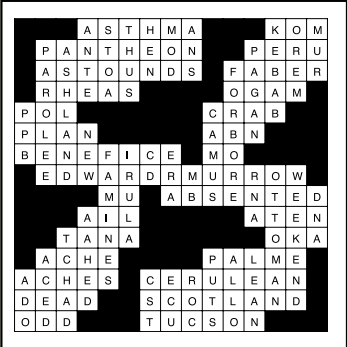
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MYSTERY PHOTO



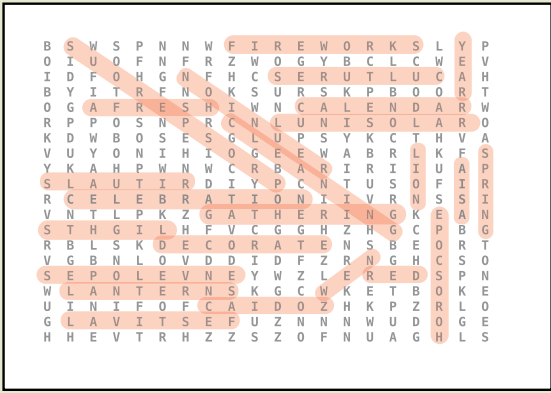
Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to: mail@floridanewslines.com
Last month's Mystery Photo was the entrance to RiverTown.



Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 14



A. lunar B. horoscope C. China D. festival



Jim Register, Agent
12058 San Jose Blvd, Suite 302
Jacksonville, FL 32223
Bus: 904-268-5522 Fax: 904-262-7999
jim@jimregister.com

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neighbors.

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wbu.com/jacksonvillebeach

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(At Murabella)
904.209.5754
wbu.com/staugustine

January

Community Calendar

What's Happening in St. Johns

Trout Creek Senior Center offers activities for seniors on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 6795 Collier Road in Orangedale. Cards, crafts and games start each day at 9 a.m. with trivia, nutrition/exercise, Bunco and Bingo among the additional activities before lunch at 11:45 a.m. each day. Contact Program Coordinator Anne Marie Forsythe at (904) 552-1611 for more information.

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

Jokers Wild, a local card group, plays the game of "Hand, Knee, and Foot" on Wednesdays. If you are interested in joining, please call (904) 230-6962 and leave a message.

Men's afternoon group forming with plans to play public courses within 45 minutes of World Golf Village with tee times after 12 p.m. Golfers must be able to break 110. Email JaxTourGolf@gmail.com if you are interested in joining.

3rd: Happy Hookers crochet group will meet at the Bartram Trail Branch Library on Jan. 3 from 5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. The group crochets or knits blankets for cancer patients at area hospitals. All skill levels are welcome. Visit www.sjcpls.org or call (904) 827-6960.

3rd: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 3 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church in the Loft on the County Dock Road side of the church at 2501 Loretto Road. Dawn Kelly will discuss organizing projects. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

8th: The Bartram Trail Genealogy Club meets the second Saturday of each month (this month, Jan. 8) from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. in the Bartram Trail Library conference room, 60 Davis Pond Blvd. One of the club's members will be presenting "Writing Memoirs." Every level, beginners to experts, are welcome. If interested, come to a meeting or send a request to join the club at www.facebook.com/groups/BTGenClub-Group.

8th: Bartram Trail Friends of the Library Book Sale will be held at the Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd., on Jan. 8 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. This month will also include a Friends of the Library membership drive and bake sale.

9th: The St. Johns County Civic Roundtable will meet on Monday, Jan. 9 at 12 p.m. at St. Augustine Waterworks building, 184 San Marco Ave. in St. Augustine. The meeting will feature guest speaker Dick DeSouza, Chief Engineer, Growth Management Department, St. Johns County with an update on transportation issues and priority funding list. Email info@sjcroundtable.org to register for the meeting or visit www.sjcroundtable.org for more information.

9th: The Northwest St. Johns County United for Progress Club will meet on Monday, Jan. 9. Justin Vogel, chief negotiator for the St. Johns Education Association will be the guest speaker. Contact nwsjcp@gmail.com for reservations if you'd like to attend.

10th: Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club will hold its meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 10 at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club, 205 St. Johns Golf Drive off County Road 210. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. Jacob Williamson and Greg Wells will enlighten attendees on their program of support to wounded veterans. The cost of the luncheon is \$32. Make checks payable to BTNC and mail to Donna

Holland, 512 Candyroot Court, St. Johns, FL 32259. Payment must be received no later than Jan. 5, 2023, no exceptions. Be sure to indicate entrée choice on the check memo line. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for food choices and updated information.

14th: Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Panel, sponsored by the AAUW St. Augustine Branch, will be held on Jan. 14 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at St. Johns County Health and Human Resources Building, 200 San Sebastian View in St. Augustine. The public is encouraged to attend the forum.

14th: Wellness Team of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church will offer "Praying in Color" by Kris Lesak, a creative way to use visual stimuli to focus and enhance prayer. This workshop is open to the public and will be held at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church (1221 State Road 13 in Fruit Cove). The cost to attend will be \$5 per person to cover materials. Call (904) 287-2807 for more information.

14th: St. Johns Reads: Author Event with Chef Edward Lee, author of "Buttermilk Graffiti" will be held on Saturday, Jan. 14 at 2 p.m. at First Coast Technical College Character County Conference Center, Bldg. C, 2982 Collins Ave. in St. Augustine. This event is free and registration is not required. Visit <https://sjcpls.org/st-johns-reads-2023/> for more information.

14th: Herbs and Foods for Seasonal Health class will be offered on Jan. 14 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 at (386) 972-1891.

16th: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for social-

izing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, Jan. 16 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Following the general meeting club members will celebrate "Happy Birthday, All Stars," the annual lunch to celebrate everyone's birthday. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

17th: The Newcomers of North St. Johns will host a holiday luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 17 beginning at 11 a.m. at St. Johns Golf & Country Club, 205 St. Johns Golf Drive. The event features a delicious lunch and line dancing instruction by expert dance instructors Phyllis and Jerry Casper. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$32 for members. All reservations must be received by Jan. 6, 2023. Visit <https://newcomersofnorthstjohns.org> for more information.

19th: William Bartram Scenic Highway Group will meet on Thursday, Jan. 19 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the St. Johns County Annex, 725 Flora Branch Blvd. Join the discussion to keep NW St. Johns County Scenic and Historic and preserve the State Road 13 Scenic Highway. Virtual meeting access is available; contact alabbat@comcast.net or call (904) 699-8475.

27th: Gentle yoga will be held at 10 a.m. on Jan. 27 at the Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd. Register at www.sjcpls.org or call the library at (904) 824-6960. Space is limited to the first 24 patrons.

28th: St. Johns Reads: Art with Kasha will be held on Jan. 28 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd. Registration for this event opens on Jan. 2. Space is limited. Call the library at (904) 824-6960 to reserve your spot.

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January 23rd "Explore Rail Journeys with Rocky Mountaineer and Alaska with Princess Cruises" at 6:30pm at the Mandarin Garden Club. Join us for an informative and entertaining presentation as we review exciting Alaska Cruise and Cruise tour itinerary options, as well as amazing Rail trips through the Canadian Rockies and Western US. Please RSVP by 1/20/23 space is limited.

February 6th "Discover Ireland, Scotland, Britain and Iceland featuring guided and independent land vacations with CIE Tours Tours at 7pm at the Mandarin Garden Club. We hope you can join us and learn about the variety of travel options with CIE Tours! Please RSVP by 2/3/2023 space is limited.

February 20th "River Cruising with AmaWaterways" at 7pm at the Mandarin Garden Club. Our AmaWaterways rep will share with you the many great itineraries and benefits of sailing with Ama in Europe, Egypt, Africa and Vietnam/Cambodia. RSVP by 2/17/22 space is limited

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Guest Column

New Year at Supervisor of Elections office

By St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Happy New Year, St. Johns County voters! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends. We are excited about what 2023 has in store for the Supervisor of Elections Office. While there are no elections scheduled this year, we are still going to be very busy changing our processes to comply with new laws which just took effect, updating voter rolls, and providing voter education.

We will also spend a significant amount of time this year recruiting new poll workers in preparation for the 2024

elections. We currently have about 475 poll workers on the roster, but as with any workforce, there is constant change as some workers retire and new faces join our team. The continual growth in the county also necessitates more workers as we expect between 240,000 and 250,000 registered voters to participate in the Nov. 5, 2024 Presidential General Election in St. Johns County.

Our goal in 2023 is to increase our workforce and communication with poll workers to ensure they have the information they need to be prepared when training begins in January 2024. Want to join the elections team? Visit www.votesjc.com

and fill out a poll worker application to be considered for poll worker and election technician positions.

This year will also be a good time for vote-by-mail voters to request their ballots for the 2024 elections. Due to a change in the law, all vote-by-mail ballot requests on file this year expired following the November 2022 election. If you vote by mail, please visit www.votesjc.gov to check your voter status and make your request for 2024 if you wish to continue to vote-by-mail. Vote-by-mail remained one of our most popular voting methods in 2022 and we want to ensure it remains available for any voter who wants to use this convenient option to cast their vote.

We have also resumed Elections Office tours this year. If you are inter-

ested in learning the facts about how elections are conducted locally and in Florida, visit the Office Tours page on our website, www.votesjc.gov/office-tours, to see scheduled dates and times and book your tour. If you have a small group who would like to schedule a tour, please contact our office and we will be happy to make arrangements.

We will also spend a significant amount of time next year preparing for a busy 2024 when we will hold three elections, including a Presidential Preference Primary on March 19, a Primary on Aug. 20, and a General Election on Nov. 5. Generally speaking, it takes about four months of planning, communication, and execution to hold an election. So, we're preparing to be in election mode for the entirety of 2024!



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

Q: What is the latest on the construction of the three new schools?

A: The school board approved the contract for the second K-8 school, this one to be located in Beacon Lakes. It's a horrible price — \$65 million, up from \$57 million for the same school plans for the Shearwater K-8 that we received the bid on within the last two months. Also for context, two years ago, we accepted a bid to build the same plans for Pine Island Academy, and that bid was \$37 million.

We also approved the plans for the third school, to be located in RiverTown. This school will have different plans, as it is a K-8 school which will transition to a middle school once we build an elementary school in RiverTown. This school will have 1,100 student stations and use the Patriot Oaks Academy prototype. (The other two proposed schools will have 1,500 student stations.) This school will go out to bid in early January.

We will begin construction on the Beacon Lakes school as soon as possible and we still expect to open all three schools in fall 2024. Each of these areas is critically overcrowded and all need relief.

Q: It's school choice time. Do you have the deadlines?

A: We held our High School Showcase, which gave students and their families the opportunity to learn about the high school Programs of Choice and meet representatives from each high school, on Dec. 14. Eligible students may apply online (<https://cte.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>) during the application window: Jan. 5 through Jan. 31 at 5 p.m. Academy nights at the high schools will also be

held during this time; visit <https://cte.stjohns.k12.fl.us/timeline/> for a schedule.

Q: What can you share about Controlled Open Enrollment at this time?

A: We are entering the second window for application for Controlled Open Enrollment, Jan. 31 – Feb. 24, 2023. As usual, we have very little capacity. The Webster School, Crookshank Elementary and Murray Middle School remain the only schools with availability. Selection is based on a lottery system, with first priority going to in-county students. Visit www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/coe for more information.

Q: What is the school district's legislative priority for next year?

A: We are heading into the new legislative session and have submitted our priorities. The first one is to support funding to address salary compression created by the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation and minimum wage increase in order to better support and retain veteran teachers and personnel. I've already had the opportunity to address this support for our veteran teachers with incoming Speaker of the House Renner.

Q: Is the school district still hiring?

A: Yes, we continue to look for people to fill staff vacancies including teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers and cafeteria workers. If you are interested, please apply on our website, www.stjohns.k12.fl.us under "Careers."

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.



William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway

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Questions? Please call Al Abbatiello at 904-699-8475 or email alabbat@comcast.net



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**with St. Johns County Commission
Chairman Christian Whitehurst, District 1**

Q: Do you have an update on the proposed apartment development by RISE Construction in Fruit Cove?

A: I received formal notice in mid-December from RISE via email that they are not moving forward with any applications for this property.

Q: Can you share the latest information on County Road 210 and related road construction?

A: Road widening is underway from Cimarrone west to Greenbriar Road. It should be completed in less than two years.

A general update on County Road 210, to include west to Greenbriar and east by Beachwalk was presented to the Board of County Commissioners at our Nov. 1 meeting. I was Agenda Item 10 and I would encourage everyone to watch that item for background information as to how County Road 210 is what it is today. It's very educational and can be viewed on the county's GTV link.

Q: Do you have any Board of County Commissioners updates?

A: I'd like to recognize County Commissioner Sarah Arnold, who was awarded the Firefighters Safety, Health, and Wellness Award of Excellence at a statewide convention in Orlando in early December. She was nominated for this award by Fire Chief Stephanie

Whaley. Commissioner Arnold made a nomination to the board to allocate \$500,000 to fund a full time employee and provide other mental health services for our entire firefighting department, which passed unanimously. I believe Commissioner Arnold should be commended.

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

A: I was present for the ribbon cutting at the new Winn Dixie near US Highway 1 and Race Track Road in December. Those who have been around for a while likely remember the old racetrack and then Best Bet, which eventually was vacated and turned into a state of disrepair. The property was unkempt and a place for illegal activity. To turn that now into a place where people can live and shop is incredible. Additionally, this project was done in the right order — we had the commercial opening before the apartment complex/residential. When those people move in, they will have a nice grocery store very conveniently located for their needs.

Finally, I'd like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year!

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

A: Readers can email me at bcc1c-whitehurst@sjcfl.us or call me at (904) 584-5348.



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

Q. Many St. Johns County residents recently received a mailer that looks like an official government letter saying a recent property transfer has occurred and they could get an official copy of their recorded deed for \$89. Is this a scam?

A. It's a scam in that it is deceptive, alarming and preys on people's fears. Your readers should ignore any letters received from Tampa-based company called "County Records, LLC." If they have any questions about their property, they can visit our website, stjohnsclerk.com, to look at the official records for free. In addition, we maintain a "Reported Scams in St. Johns County" webpage (<https://stjohnsclerk.com/alerts>) where they can see what's going on and how to stay protected.

Q. How much does an official copy of a deed cost at the Clerk's office?

A. For a non-certified copy, you can visit the records section of our website to access your deed and print it at home for free. For certified copies, which are often needed to prove authenticity, the cost varies depending on whether you use our E-Certify technology or if you obtain it in person at the courthouse.

To access your deed online 24 hours a day via E-Certify, a two-page certified deed would cost \$10 plus a 3.5 percent credit card fee. Visiting the courthouse

in-person is less expensive — a two-page certified deed costs \$4.

Q. How many deeds and other records are processed each year by the Clerk's office?

A. The number is generally increasing every year. St. Johns County is growing at a considerable pace, and the Clerk team has worked hard and continued to meet the needs of our residents. Some statistics:

- January — November 2022, our office recorded more than 109,000 documents (doubled from five years ago) and processed more than 2,100 marriage licenses and 9,600 passport applications.

- We nearly doubled the number of people we served in our 2022 Operation Green Light driver license reinstatement event, with 337 people eligible to have their licenses reinstated.

- And in fiscal year 2022 (Oct. 1 – Sept. 30), our team processed more than 317,000 criminal and 260,000 civil filings.

Q. How do people get in touch with you?

A. Our office number is (904) 819-3600 or call my cell phone at (904) 599-8688 if I may ever be of service. Our main offices are in the St. Johns County courthouse, 4010 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine.



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with St. Johns County Tax Collector Dennis Hollingsworth

Q: Can you clarify how to sell your vehicle to an individual (known as a casual sale)?

A: Florida Statutes, Section 319.22 provides for the transfer of certificates of title. You must have the title to transfer ownership of the vehicle. Once you have found a purchaser, the transfer of title section on the face of the Florida certificate of title must be completed in full. If your title is electronic, you have two options. The buyer and seller can agree to meet at the Tax Collector’s Office and complete the transfer of ownership. The seller can also have the title printed and then complete the transfer of title section on the face of the Florida certificate of title.

We recommend that the seller meet the buyer at the Tax Collector’s Office at the time of transfer. This ensures that transfer of ownership is completed. If you are unable to meet the buyer for

the transfer of ownership, be sure and fill out a notice of sale. Form 82050 can be found on our website, www.sjctax.us, and brought into an office, mailed or emailed to our office. Note that ownership status is not changed until the buyer transfers the title into their name. The seller can still be held liable until this is complete.

Q: Do you have anything else to share?

A: Remember a 2 percent discount is applied to property tax payments in the month of January.

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

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



with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: Can you give a run down of current crime trends in St. Johns County?

A: I think it’s important for our citizens to know that this is not a crime-free area. Most of our largest increases are in the non-violent categories, including some, like burglary from a motor vehicle, which are mostly preventable (lock your car doors!)

A caveat to the numbers I’m going to share is that about two years ago, we changed reporting systems that we use to report to the federal government from UCR (Uniform Crime Report) to NIBRS (National Incident Based Reporting System), which is more incident-based. This year will be our first full year using this new reporting system and everyone, including the FBI, expected an increase in crime reporting data due to the change.

Q: What categories saw the largest increases?

A: The significant increases were not in violent crime, but in property crime. Shoplifting, for example, increased by 86 percent (from 209 cases last year to 390 year to date this year). A big reason for that is that we nearly doubled our retail property with the addition of the Durbin Pavilion center as well as Costco, Home Depot and Buc-ee’s. The St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office is working with these businesses to combat shoplifting by utilizing undercover operations as well as bike and foot patrols. Also, we are working with the State Attorney’s Office to ensure proper charges are applied, especially in the case of repeat offenders. Additionally, our Real Time Intelligence Center is using the latest technology to assist in solving these crimes.

Other categories with increases were General Theft (a catchall category of theft that doesn’t include shoplifting or construction theft) with an increase of 35 percent. Construction site theft also increased 35 percent, from 20 cases in

2021 to 27 cases in 2022. Commercial burglary increased from 25 cases in 2021 to 44 cases in 2022.

Q: What were the statistics for violent crimes?

A: Fortunately our numbers are low here, but we still unfortunately had increases. Aggravated assault, which is the intention of doing bodily harm with a weapon, but not actually doing it, was up from 44 cases in 2021 to 64 cases in 2022 (45 percent). Sex crimes, which include lewd and lascivious and sexual assault, was up from 28 cases last year to 40 cases this year. And, tracking with the national average, battery on a law enforcement officer was up 40 percent, from 22 cases in 2021 to 31 cases in 2022.

Q: What about the “mostly preventable” crimes that you mentioned?

A: With the new NIBRS reporting, we now call this burglary of a motor vehicle, and it’s up 14 percent, from 223 cases in 2021 to 256 cases in 2022. We’ve discussed this before — more than 90 percent of these cases are items stolen from unlocked cars. Many of these cases can be prevented by locking your car door at night.

Q: What else do you have to share?

A: We want you to call us to report crime. If you see something, say something! If it’s an emergency, call 911. You can call our non-emergency number at (904) 824-8304 if that’s appropriate. We want to work together to live in one of the safest communities in the state and in the nation.

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

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



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Those of you that are on Social Security recently received your letter from the SSA with the details of your 2023 payments. If the Medicare payments appear to be substantially more than prior years, AND you had a larger than normal adjusted gross income on your 2020 or 2021 return due to a one-time event (such as a sale of property), you may want to appeal their calculation of the premiums. You have 60 days from the date of the letter to file an appeal with the SSA administration to request that the premiums be reduced because the increased income was due to a one-time event.

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Briefs

College entrance exam prep courses scheduled
The Friends of the Bartram Trail Branch Library are sponsoring a series of ACT and SAT prep classes to be held at the Bartram Trail Public Library. The dates of these classes are Jan. 19, 26 and Feb. 2, 9, and 16. Classes are one hour and 15 minutes each. Students may sign up for either or both series.

The SAT classes will be from 5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. and ACT classes will be from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. The sessions will include two English/Reading and two Math. Following a practice test completed at home, the fifth and final session will be a review session from 5 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. for English/Reading and from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. for Math. Students should bring their calculators.

Each series of five sessions costs \$45, or \$90 to attend both. The last day to register is Jan. 14, 2023. Registration information can be obtained at the Bartram Trail Branch Library or by contacting Phyllis Macy at macy17@yahoo.com.

Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club to host January luncheon
The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club will hold its January meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 10 at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club, located at 205 St. Johns Golf Drive. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m.

Jacob Williamson and Greg Wells will enlighten attendees on their program of support for wounded vets. Their mission is the rescuing and training of shelter dogs to be paired as service dogs for veterans experiencing service-connected trauma. Their goal is to reduce veteran suicide and return warriors to a life of dignity and independence.

The cost of the luncheon will be \$32. Make checks payable to BTNC and mail to Donna Holland, 512 Candyroot Ct., St. Johns, FL 32259. Payment must be received no later than Jan. 5, 2023, no exceptions. Be sure to indicate your entrée choice on the check memo line. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 for food choices and updated information.

The Bartram Trail Newcomers' and Women's Club meets the second Tuesday of every month from September to May for lunch. In addition to the monthly meetings, the club has a wide variety of interest groups, including Bridge, Continental Rummy, Pennies Canasta, Mexican Chicken Train dominoes, Bunko, Mah Jongg, golf, recipe exchange, monthly special events, book club, lunch and matinee, Lunch Divas, Ladies Night Out, a nature walk group and community projects. Email bartramtnc@gmail.com for more information or visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 to see pictures and download a membership form.

Newcomers of North St. Johns announces January Luncheon
The Newcomers of North St. Johns will celebrate January with line dancing at their monthly luncheon on Tuesday,

Jan. 17, beginning at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf & Country Club, 205 St. Johns Golf Drive. The event features lunch and special line dancing instruction by expert dance instructors Phyllis and Jerry Casper. With more than 30 years' experience in dancing and teaching, the Caspers have taught lessons all down the East Coast, from New Jersey to Florida. In addition to line dance instruction, they are experts in Couple's Dance (Waltz, Cha Cha, East Coast Swing, Rumba and Shag) and Pattern Partner Dance as well as have conducted numerous workshops for dancing and dance marathons.

Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. As always, raffles for gift baskets and a fun 50/50 drawing will be part of the luncheon. The cost for the luncheon and program is \$32 for members and \$37 for guests. All reservations must be received by Jan. 6, 2023. Visit <https://newcomersofnorthstjohns.org> for more information about the luncheon and membership.

The Newcomers of North St. Johns offers a wide variety of activities including smaller lunch groups, Canasta, wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, holiday parties, day trips and cultural events.

U.S. Small Business Administration to offer disaster loans with no interest and no payments for first year
The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has announced the agency will waive the interest rate for the first year on new disaster loans and extend the initial payment deferment period automatically to 12 months.

New disaster loan borrowers will now have up to one year from the date of the note to begin making payments, instead of the standard five months. Interest on the loan will not begin to accrue until 12 months from the date of the initial loan disbursement. Previously, interest began to accrue on all disbursed loan funds including during the initial payment deferment period. This will benefit disaster survivors and help them to decrease the overall cost of recovery by setting the interest rate to 0 percent for the first 12 months and reducing the overall amount of accrued interest they must repay. SBA disaster loans offer individuals and businesses direct access to affordable financial assistance to help fully repair or replace disaster-damaged property. By offering affordable loans with no interest and no payments for the first year, and low fixed-interest rates for the remaining 30-year term, SBA is maximizing disaster survivors' likelihood of a successful recovery and minimizing further financial hardship.

Applicants may apply online prior to Jan. 12, 2023 by using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/ela/s/>. Disaster loan information and application forms may also be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or by sending an email to DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov. Loan applications can be downloaded from the SBA's website at sba.gov/disaster. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov

ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Resolve to take control of your finances in the New Year

By Chris Thompson, CFP®, CRPC®

Many of us take advantage of the New Year to turn over a new leaf. This can include everything from starting a new exercise regimen to committing to cooking more at home. It's also a prime time to assess your current financial situation and take concrete steps to improve it. Here are a variety of steps to take as the New Year begins to enhance your financial life. Some may be more appropriate than others for your circumstances.

Review where you stand: Start by taking a comprehensive look at your current financial position. Are you generating enough income to meet expenses? Where could you cut back

on living costs? Are there loans or debt you can pay off quicker? Are you saving enough for your key goals? Ask the tough questions to get a good sense of where you stand. Then consider any of these following steps that seem appropriate.

Deal with debt: Make a plan to pay down debts as quickly as you can. A priority should be to repay high interest borrowing like credit card debt as quickly as possible. To the extent loans are manageable, you can continue to make monthly payments, but the more you pay off, the easier it will be on your monthly budget.

Build your savings: Financial security is closely related to the amount

of money you have available to you. Commit to building up an "emergency fund" equal to six months of your income to help deal with unexpected short-term needs. Then commit to boosting your retirement savings contributions per month if you can.

Resolve to get a better job: Many employers are having a hard time finding the right kind of people to fill roles. This may be the best opportunity in a long time to find a job that offers better compensation and that you may actually find more enjoyable.

Invest more effectively: Do you think you might be able to get more out of your portfolio? Take a closer look at what's working and what isn't. It may be time to "cut your losses" on investments that have proven to be disappointing while putting some of that money to work in assets that offer greater potential.

Make 2023 different: If you feel like there's more you could be doing to shore up your financial position, make a pledge to get that process started now. It may be beneficial to consult

with a financial advisor to help you find a path to a more prosperous future.

Chris Thompson, CFP®, CRPC® is an Associate Manager and Financial Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. in Jacksonville. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 29 years. To contact him, visit www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson or email chris.thompson@ampf.com.

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Health & Wellness Guide

7 fitness resolutions that are easy to keep

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Resolutions to get in shape, exercise more and eat healthier foods are popular each January. Optimism reigns when making resolutions, but

for many, the difficulty lies in keeping them. Individuals looking to get healthier in the year ahead can try these strategies to stay the course.

- Wake up earlier. Waking up a half hour earlier each day can have a sub-

stantial impact. That small amount of extra time can be devoted to meditation, deep breathing exercises or even some yoga stretches.

- Move around more frequently. Many people with office jobs spend hours sitting in front of computers. A sedentary lifestyle can have an adverse effect on overall health. Set a timer or use a reminder on a fitness tracker to remind you to get up and move around for a little bit every hour.
- Eat more vegetables. Vague goals like “eating better” are difficult to maintain because there is no specific goal to achieve. Rather, a resolution like eating a fruit or vegetable each day at every meal is something measurable. Vegetables can be hidden in favorite foods, such as desserts. Swap pasta noodles for spiralized zucchini as another easy fix.
- Stand straighter. Posture tends to decline with age, advises AARP. This can cause the spine to lose flexibility.

Stretches to maintain posture can help anyone stand straighter and improve long-term health.

- Add “bursts” to your walk. Researchers at the Mayo Clinic tout the benefits of interval training. While high-impact workouts may not be appropriate for everyone, adding little speed bursts to a daily walk can provide significant health benefits. Aim for 30 to 60 seconds of rapid walking at regular intervals to shake up the workout.
- Drink more water. Increasing water intake can help you feel fuller, thus reducing the likelihood that you will overeat. Gradually increase your water intake by adding a few ounces each day until drinking water becomes rote.
- Take a workout outside. Switch up your normal routine by making use of the great outdoors to exercise. Instead of three miles on the treadmill or elliptical machine at the gym, opt for three miles on a local hiking trail.

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Health & Wellness Guide

Make fitness more fun and engaging

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Resolutions to get in shape are popular at the dawn of a new year. Despite the best and most detailed intentions, many resolutions fall by the wayside shortly after January 1 has come and gone.

Many people stop heading to the gym or working out at home because their exercise routines become stale. By making fitness more engaging and fun, individuals may be more likely to stick with a new regimen.

Exercise with a friend: It can be tough to get motivated to exercise; however, when you have a buddy invested in the same activities, you can inspire one another to stick with the routine. A little healthy competition also can keep both of you focused.

Head outdoors: Exercising outdoors means there will always be something new to experience. Rather than seeing

the same four walls of a gym or a home fitness area, venture outside and embrace fresh air and sunshine, allowing the great outdoors to provide all the motivation you need.

Try something new: Change your routine every so often. This will force your brain and body to adapt and work a little harder and provide new inspiration for doing the workout. While you don't have to engage in a trendy workout if you don't want to, settle for trying one new class or machine a week to figure out what you may enjoy.

Vary your schedule: Think about scheduling different types of activities for particular days of the week. For example, Monday may be for walking, Tuesday for swimming and Friday for a recreational sports activity. This can make exercise more engaging.

Use an exercise playlist: Download several upbeat songs that can get you energized for exercise. There are even specially curated playlists that match the songs' beats per minute with exercise cadence, to help you run or workout at a desired pace.

Find ways to exercise when engaging in daily activities: Exercise can come in all shapes and forms. Even when you're pushing a vacuum cleaner or weeding the garden, you're engaging in physical activity. If these types of things are more enjoyable for you than traditional exercises, do more of them.



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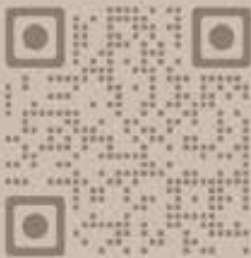
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Nutrition Check

Have a fiber-full day

By Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RD and Rayonna Hills BS
mail@floridanewsline.com

Did you need help finding a healthy New Year’s resolution? Start this year with a nutrition-related goal that is beneficial for your whole body, from your heart to your gastrointestinal tract. Consuming at least 25g of fiber each day can be a great start for you. Fiber is the carbohydrate or starch that our bodies cannot digest. It acts as the broom to sweep out the digestive tract.

There are two different types of dietary fiber: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels. It is found in oats, carrots, apples, beans, peas, and citrus fruits. Insoluble fiber promotes the movement of material through your digestive system and increases stool bulk, which can help those who struggle with irregular stools or constipation. (CDC) This is found in wheat bran, nuts, beans, and vegetables such as potatoes and cauliflower.

Daily recommendations for adults (Mayo Clinic):

- Women: 21g to 25g
- Men: 30g to 38g

Health benefits of fiber: (Anderson et al., Nutr Rev. 2009)

- Normalizes bowel movements and supports optimal colon health

- Reduces risk of developing heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and certain gastrointestinal diseases
- Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol levels to support a healthy heart
- Helps control blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity
- Supports achieving a healthy weight

It is important to gradually increase fiber in your diet, in order to avoid intestinal gas, bloating, or cramping. There are many ways you can incorporate fiber into your diet. For example, choosing a high-fiber cereal, this would be cereal that has five or more grains of fiber per serving. Another way to ensure you’re consuming your needed fiber is to eat fresh fruits and vegetables.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/high-fiber-foods/art-20050948>

Start making just one small change each week by adding in more fiber. You don’t need to hit the 25g per day right at the start!

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

Fiber content of foods:

Food	Serving Size	Total fiber grams
Black beans, lentils, or split peas	1 cup	15.0-16.0
Green peas	1 cup	9.0
Berries	1 cup	8.0
Quinoa, oat bran, oatmeal	1 cup	5.0
Broccoli/turnip greens	1 cup	5.0
Apple/Pear	1 medium	4.5 - 5.5
Pistachios, almonds, or sunflower seeds	1 ounce	3.0 - 3.5

Simple ways to make meals healthier

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Cooking foods at home is one of the simplest ways to gain greater control over personal health. Cooking at home is the easiest way to know precisely what you’re putting into your body each day. Cooking your own meals also enables you to customize recipes so they align with any dietary restrictions or personal preferences you may have.

When cooking at home, cooks can consider various tips to make meals that much healthier.

- Increase fiber intake. Fiber improves bowel regularity and helps a person feel full between meals. High fiber foods also help stabilize blood sugar levels. Two servings of fibrous foods at each meal and an additional fiber-rich snack each day can ensure your body is getting the fiber it needs.
- Slow down eating. The pace at which a person eats a meal can affect

this or her overall health. Healthline reports that fast eaters are more likely to eat more and have higher body mass indexes than slow eaters.

- Choose whole grains. Choosing whole grain breads or cereals over refined grains can make for a more nutritious diet. Whole grains are linked to a reduced risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- Swap Greek yogurt for other varieties. Greek yogurt contains up to twice as much protein as regular yogurt, providing roughly 10 grams per 3.5 ounces. Protein along with fiber helps a person feel fuller longer, which can manage appetite and reduce overeating. Greek yogurt also can replace mayonnaise or sour cream in certain recipes.
- Add a vegetable to every meal. Vegetables are loaded with essential vitamins and minerals. Plus, they tend to be high in antioxidants that strengthen the immune system. Increase vegetable intake by eating vegetables with every meal.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Increasing the amount of vegetables in one's diet is a simple and healthy modification.

- Choose healthy fats. While a person should minimize the amount of oils and other fats used during the cooking process, when it's necessary for a recipe, select the best fat possible. Olive oil is a monounsaturated fat that is packed with antioxidant polyphenols. It is considered a heart-healthy oil, and it may promote a healthy brain and memory function.
- Cut out sweetened beverages. Sodas and other sweetened drinks are leading sources of added sugar in diets. Opting for water or naturally sweetened fruit juices can improve overall health.



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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Kristen Dean

Kristen Dean has lived in Fruit Cove her whole life, and said there is really no other place she'd rather be. She attended Julington Creek School back when it was an elementary school as well as a junior high school, and for senior high school, students had to go to Wolfson or St. Augustine High School. By the time she was ready for junior high school, though, Nease was built, so she graduated from there. She obtained her cosmetology license and worked for her parents in their barber shop in downtown Jacksonville. Today, she lives with husband Bryan and their children, Ryan and Wyatt, in a home they built on property in Fruit Cove they were gifted by her parents. They are the owners of 2nd Bay Brewing Company, newly opened in the Bartram Walk center in Fruit Cove.

Q: How did you meet your husband?

A: Through a friend of mine who used to date him. He came over to her place one night to fix her computer and we met. We started dating then. We are very different and he's unlike anyone I had previously dated.

Q: How did the interest in beer come about?

A: Bryan comes from a long line of



Photo courtesy Kristen Dean
Kristen Dean

take an inheritance he had gotten from his father and build a five bay garage on our property. We enclosed three of the bays: the first one was mine, the second was for his brewery and the third was for storage. So that's how we got the name for our brewery: 2nd Bay. Bryan built all his equipment himself and at the time, Ryan was playing softball, so we would fill up growlers with his beer and share it with the softball parents to get their feedback.

Q: What was the breakthrough that encouraged you to open your location?

A: Bryan started entering competitions through CASC and he won some medals for his beers. He was really excited. Then, Strings (owned by the Adeeb family) allowed him to collaborate on a brew: Coconut Porter. It was his first commercial success. After that, he started investigating SBA loans and I started looking for a spot to lease. It took us 14 months from signing the lease in Bartram Walk to opening our doors. It seemed everything reared its ugly head in our way, but we finally opened in July 2022.

Q: What is the most challenging part and your favorite part of owning 2nd Bay Brewing Company?

A: I'd say the most challenging is time management and making it all work — family, business, chores. But by far the best part is that we can bring the community together at 2nd Bay. This is so important to me. Sometimes we hear people who get together and realize they just live down the street from each other.

beer drinkers in his family, including his German grandmother. About 12 or so years ago, the craft industry was just taking off and he wanted to explore different flavors of beer. He learned a lot by watching YouTube and reading books and then we joined a group of homebrewers called CASC (Cowford Ale Sharing Club). Bryan got a home brewing kit and made his first batch. He really liked all the science behind it.

Q: How was the early brewing experience?

A: He started by brewing in our house and it stunk. He over-carbonated some batches and they exploded and made a mess. So we decided to

St. Johns Reads cont. from pg. 1

window onto an entirely unique culture. A beignet from Café du Monde in New Orleans, as potent as Proust's madeleine, inspires a narrative that tunnels through time, back to the first Creole cooks, then forward to a Korean rice-flour hoedduck and a beignet dusted with matcha. Sixteen adventures, sixteen vibrant new chapters in the great evolving story of American cuisine. And forty recipes, created by Lee, that bring these new dishes into our own kitchens."

In its 18th year, St. Johns Reads is the St. Johns County Public Library System's annual "One book, One community" event focused on creating a shared conversation of a selected novel. Funding for this program was provided through a grant from Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of Florida Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities. St. Johns Reads is also generously sponsored by the SJCPLS Friends of the Library groups.

"Buttermilk Graffiti" is available for check-out in a variety of formats including print, digital audiobook, and e-book. To view a full schedule of St. Johns Reads 2023 events, visit www.sjcpls.org/st-johns-reads-2023 or call your local branch library.

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Spectators Guide
Championship

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



1. Respiratory disorder
7. Bulgarian mountain peak
10. Group of important people
12. South American nation
13. Amazes
14. ___-Castell, makers of pens
15. Perlman and Seehorn are two
16. Early medieval alphabet
17. Legislator (slang)
18. Tasty crustacean
19. Course of action
21. Airborne (abbr.)
22. Permanent church
appointment
27. Larry and Curly's pal
28. Famed American journalist
33. 12th letter of Greek alphabet
34. In a way, vanished
36. Afflict in mind or body
37. Egyptian Sun god
38. Source of the Blue Nile
39. Egyptian unit of weight
40. Be the source of pain
41. Esteemed award ___ d'Or
44. Partner to pains
45. Deep blue
48. No longer living
49. Country in the UK
50. Not even
51. Arizona city

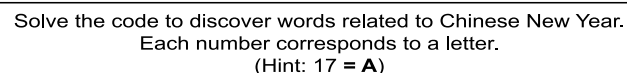
1. Wager
2. Classical portico
3. As a result
4. Bird
5. A type of “Squad”
6. Autonomic nervous system
7. Dish with food on a stick
8. City northwest of Provo
9. C. European river
10. One out of jail
11. Henry Clay estate
12. Heathen
14. Refrained
17. Parts per billion (abbr.)
18. “The Stranger” author
20. Not old
23. Periods of starvation
24. Language of tribe in India

25. Savings account
26. Pitching stat
29. Megabyte
30. Ribonucleic acid
31. A place to put your feet
32. The fun part of a week
35. We all have our own
36. Partner to "ooohed"
38. African nation
40. Breezed through
41. Sets out
42. Other
43. Not fattening
44. "Much __ about nothing"
45. Central Time
46. Former EU monetary unit
47. Charles S. Dutton sitcom

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

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

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RED
REUNION
RITUALS
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ZODIAC



- A. 7 14 24 17 13**
Clue: Relating to the moon
- B. 3 19 13 19 23 6 19 5 26**
Clue: Prediction based on stars or symbols
- C. 6 3 11 24 17**
Clue: Asian country
- D. 10 26 23 22 11 12 17 7**
Clue: Large celebration

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Amanda Atlas LLC
450-106 SR 13N, #106
St Johns, Florida 32259
St Johns County

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Terrell Swanson
3735 Longleaf Pine Parkway, Unit 205
St Johns, Florida 32259
St Johns County

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Neighborhood youth build global friendships via international program

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

More than 50 Jacksonville-area youth represented the USA at international CISV (cisvjax.org) programs in 2022. CISV (cisv.org) is a global, nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and inspiring action for a more just and peaceful world. It helps its young participants develop to their full potential as future leaders and active citizens, to make a difference in their communities and the world. CISV (formerly known as Children's International Summer Villages) also gives them the opportunity to build global friendships and networks that last a lifetime.

Currently, CISV seeks mature, friendly kids aged nine to 18 to represent the USA at its international summer programs.

CISV's flagship program is called "Village." It brings together 10 and 11 year olds from 10 to 12 countries around the world for a month to learn to live cooperatively, share cultures and build global friendships.

For 12 or 13 year olds, CISV offers eight or 15 day international youth

meetings that bring together youth from eight countries to explore issues that affect us all.

Another CISV program called "Interchange" offers Jacksonville families the chance to host a child from another country for two weeks and then their child goes to live with the family of the child the Jacksonville hosted for two weeks. Children have the chance to experience family life in another country and share their own community and home. In summer 2022, CISV Jacksonville held an Interchange with Graz, Austria for 14 – 15 year olds, which included seven Jacksonville families. St. Johns resident Chloe Geoghegan, age 15, said "My time as an Interchange Delegate was both other worldly and grounding. Traveling to another country without my parents, staying with a family I had only met over Zoom conferencing, and immersing myself in an unfamiliar culture, taught me to be resilient and open-minded. I feel like I have matured in such a short period of time. Most importantly, I made friendships that would've never happened if it wasn't for CISV."

Youth aged 16 and 17 can apply for a 21-day international "Seminar" camp being held at locations around the world, a two week domestic "Fortnight" program, or to serve as a junior counselor at a free two week overnight camp for Jacksonville youth aged nine to 11.

Children aged nine to 12 are invited to the following "play dates" to see what CISV activities are like: Saturday, Jan. 7 and Saturday, Jan. 21, 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., 7860 Southside Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32256.

Parents and youth may learn more about CISV and its 2023 international leadership opportunities at upcoming CISV "101" informational sessions:

- Saturday, Jan. 7 or Saturday, Jan. 21, 9:15 a.m. at 7860 Southside Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32256
- Sunday, Jan. 8, 5 p.m. at 1674 Osceola Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204
- Saturday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m. via Zoom

- Tuesday, Jan. 17, 8 p.m. via Zoom
- Friday, Jan. 27, 7:15 p.m. at 860 Oak Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204

Visit <https://jacksonville.cisvusa.org/news-events/events-calendar/attend-a-cisv-101/> to register for a CISV 101 meeting. More information about CISV is available at <https://jacksonville.cisvusa.org> or by email to cisvjax@gmail.com.

"Matilda the Musical" coming to Bartram Trail High School

The Bartram Trail High School Theatre Department will present "Matilda the Musical" on Thursday, Feb. 23, Friday, Feb. 24, and Saturday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. each evening. A matinee on Sunday, Feb. 26 at 2 p.m. is also scheduled. Inspired by Roald Dahl's beloved book, Matilda is a captivating masterpiece that revels in childhood innocence, imagination, and friendship. The musical will be staged in the Auditorium at Bartram Trail High School, 7399 Longleaf Pine Pkwy. Tickets cost \$15 for adults and \$10 for students with a valid school ID. Visit <https://bit.ly/3b9Vi1f> for show times and ticket information.

Delegates to 2022 Italy Step Up return home.

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Coast Guard Auxiliary presents Certificate of Appreciation



Photo courtesy Henry Seiden

In November, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 14-7 presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Chris Doland, manager of WestMarine Store #547 in St. Augustine for his outstanding cooperation in 2022 and previous years in promoting boating safety and for his numerous invitations to the flotilla to provide boating information to visitors inside the store. Doland has provided space and extended other courtesies to the flotilla in support of its boating programs. A challenge coin was also presented to Doland as a thanks for his years of service to the community and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Volunteers build deck and wheelchair ramp in NW St. Johns County

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The St. Johns Housing Partnership, Bartram Trail Rotary, Creekside High Engineering Club, and Builders Care came together in NW St. Johns County on Saturday, Dec. 3 to build a much-needed deck and wheelchair ramp for a disabled veteran.

“Everyone pulled together to make this happen,” said Bartram Trail Rotary Club President Jose Gavarrette. “Giving back to the community is a big part of what we do in Rotary. Thanks to Andy Chambers of MasterCraft Builder Group, the St. Johns Housing Partnership along with Builders Care and the Creekside High Engineering Club as well as all the many other dedicated volunteers.”

Creekside students under the guidance of teacher Kevin Davenport are regular volunteers for these kinds of projects.



Photos courtesy Mike Bonts PR

Creekside High Engineering Club's Samba Tumbi (left), Kylan Elliott, Audrey O'Hara and teacher Kevin Davenport.

“Working on St. Johns Housing Partnership volunteer projects is more than learning skills, they create an impactful, real-world experience for my students,” added Davenport.

Visit www.sjhp.org for more information or to donate to the St. Johns Housing Partnership.

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Transportation personnel join with students for holiday cheer

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Members of St. Johns County School District's Transportation Department usually end their morning drop-off shift and head off to take a break or support class/school field trips; however, on this magical day, they decided to do a different type of overtime — they came to Freedom Crossing Academy to help make holiday crafts with first grade students. Their visit was a surprise for the children. As the children were setting up to make their craft the volunteers entered the area and children began cheering.

“When I saw Mr. Lou I couldn’t

believe he came to see me at school!” said first grader Anthony Cornell. “I can’t wait to tell my family that he came to see me.”

This activity was put together by Rob Moss, lead operator of transportation and Neeti Gregg, first grade teacher.

“I was looking for volunteers,” said Gregg. “I wanted help with this fun craft and asked Rob Moss if he was able to assist. He replied offering not only his help, but found members of his team within a few hours who were eager to join in.” The joint venture was planned in less than two days. There were 36 students from

two classes (Gregg’s class and Kim Denny’s class.) Everyone made snowmen out of socks. The excitement filled the halls of the school.

“Our team enjoys supporting the community and the children we serve,” said Irene Bouranis. “However, the true gift was for us. Having this time to have fun with some of our students filled our hearts with joy.”



Photos courtesy Neeti Gregg
Ellie Wheaton and Christina Jackson.

Beachside swimmers have successful inaugural year

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

St. Johns County has experienced record-breaking growth over the past couple of years and with that growth, opened a new high school on the east side of Interstate 95, Beachside High School, on Aug. 15, 2022. Despite being brand new, the Beachside Barracudas’ swim team, the swimmers, the coaches, and the parents jumped right in to assist and help build the success of the program.

The 2022 – 23 inaugural swim and dive team is made up of swimmers at all different skill levels, aged 14 – 17. There are no seniors this year as the first graduating class will be in 2024. The swim team consists of 28 swimmers — 21 female swimmers and seven male swimmers.

This small but mighty swim team performed above and beyond throughout the season at a local 2A level. The Beachside Barracudas went on to compete at the 2A Districts competition in Gainesville with all seven male swimmers competing, along with 12 female swimmers and one diver. Beachside walked away with the girls’ 200 Medley Relay championship and the 200 Free Relay championship with Haylee Hite, Gina Faunce, Kyra Lagatoris, and freshman Reese Boswell leading the way to an overall second place girls’ finish. Other notable finishes include: Boys’ 400 Free Relay – third place; Boys’ 200 Medley Relay – second place; Nico Garvey – third place,

50 Free; Peter Manelis – Champion, 100 Breaststroke; Reese Boswell – third place, 100 Back; Gina Faunce – second place, 100 Back; Haylee Hite – Champion, 100 Back and Champion, 200 IM; Olivia Riegler – Champion, Diving.

The next stop was the Regionals 2A in Pensacola at the University of West Florida campus. The Barracudas swimmers competed with 17 swimmers and one diver and finished with:

Hite, second place, 200 IM

Hite, champion, 100 Back

Riegler, third place, diving

As the season concluded, the Barracudas attended the 2A State competition in Stuart with the team bringing an impressive nine swimmers and one diver that included two relay teams and four individual event contenders. The Beachside Barracudas came home with medal-placing finishes:

Manelis, second place, 100 Breaststroke and second place, 100 Butterfly

Hite, fifth place, 100 Back and sixth place, 200 IM

Riegler, second place, diving

The Beachside Barracuda swim team is under the supervision of Coach Lauren Huss and Cyro Tavares. These gifted athletes have made the school proud while adding to the trophy collection now featured at the school.



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Photos courtesy Glory Faunce
Haylee Hite and Gina Faunce with the District trophy

Gardening

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
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New Year, New Approach?



Ruth Ann (Heritage) Davis

formerly Mrs. Perez, passed away unexpectedly on November 19, 2022, surrounded by her family. Ruth was born to the late Charles and Thelma Berger Heritage and grew up in Glassboro, New Jersey. Ruth went on to raise her family in Jacksonville, Florida.

As a high school math teacher, Ruth made a career of educating others. She continued her education by returning to school to earn her Master's from the University of North Florida. She taught at Bartram Trail High School for several years before retiring. After retirement, she volunteered within her community with the sick, tutoring, and as a guardian ad litem. She was a uniquely adventurous and determined soul. She was happiest when running, painting, swimming, traveling, crocheting, attending concerts and the theatre, or searching for shark teeth at the beach. Ruth was able to complete her life by gifting numerous organs to those in need of transplants.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband, Leopoldo "Leo" Perez. Ruth leaves behind her children; daughters Virginia DeRoma (husband Christopher), Alexis Perez, Sara Murray (husband Patrick), and son Manuel Perez. Ruth is also survived by her two grandsons, Leonardo DeRoma and William Murray, and her husband, Greg Davis. She was loved and adored by family and friends who are grateful to have met her.

Donations in Ruth's honor can be made to the Children's Home Society; Flowers are welcome at her Celebration of Life, 1/21/23, at the San Marco Preservation Hall in Jacksonville, Florida. Doors will be open from 9 AM to noon.

I'm writing in early December and have been observing the insects — again. I'm amazed that there are still some butterflies around, despite the few flowers in my yard. It illustrates how important it is for their survival to have a food source available while the weather is still warm. Small pollinators and the occasional bumble bee are attracted to the large-flowered wild rosemary (*Conradia grandiflora*), as well as the yellow daisies of lanceleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*). There are even a few blooms on some of the dotted horsemint (*Monarda punctata*), which many pollinators adore. Those flowers are on a secondary growth flush, their main bloom period being September through October.

The beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) fruits are just about finished but the remaining berries still attract some birds. Firebush (*Hamelia patens*) berries are still ripening and the catbirds are enjoying those. Early in December, I was really gratified to see a small flock of finches descend upon the seed-bearing stems of native grasses, goldenrods (*Solidago* sp.), ironweeds (*Vernonia* sp.), and gayfeathers (*Liatriis* sp.). While I know that finches eat seeds, I rarely see them doing so in the flower garden.

Unfortunately, the warm weather caused my romaine lettuce to begin to bolt. They might have been slower to start flowering if I had them in light shade; a temporary cover of shade cloth could have helped. I enjoyed lettuce braised with green peas, but it was not the salad greens I had been hoping for. The bok choy, a type of Chinese cabbage, look like they'll bolt soon, unless cooler weather slows them down, but the flowers are edible and the flavor stays mild.

Some of the other brassicas, like the green and red heading cabbages, are looking good, but the rutabagas and cauliflowers have a disease which is possibly soil borne. I've been picking off the affected leaves as they start to turn brown, but I might just have to pull out whole plants. I'll try a soil drench of neem oil, which is considered a nontoxic systemic treatment for diseases. It is also used as a spray for insect pests, which I suspect is a better use for it. So far, the collards and broccoli, as well as the cabbages, look promising. With a small growing area, it is hard to rotate crops. I should clearly expand my plant palette in the vegetable garden as well as in the flower beds.

Once the holiday season is over, don't throw out those poinsettias if you have a sheltered spot in the flower garden. Planted out and tended till the next festive season, they will flower and look lovely in the garden. See <https://tinyurl.com/mwdkrxa8> for how to do it. And amaryllis also do well in the garden. Planted in the new year, they should bloom the following spring.

So, what could be your new approach

in 2023? What have you learned while you make and tend your gardens? My main issues have always been to control invasive vines and prevent golden rain trees and Carolina cherry laurels (*Prunus caroliniana*, a wild-life friendly native, but sadly a rampant grower and prolific self-seeder) overtaking my yard. This publication gives details of 297 plants assessed for their potential to be environmentally damaging in Florida: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9yku7u>. It is well worth checking it out. I've just discovered, for instance, that the classic Indian shot canna (*Canna indica*) is "predicted to be invasive and not recommended."

Equally important to me is to add habitat — shelter, food, and water — to offer our backyard birds, pollinators, and other beneficial insects a haven. Even a small urban yard can play a part in sharing the planet with our wild neighbors. With every gardener who chooses to do something similar on any scale, even planting a few pots or a window box, we can contribute to the wider world.

Resources that may be helpful include

- The Xerces Society: <https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation>
- The Florida Wildflower Foundation: <https://www.flawildflowers.org/learn-to-grow/>
- The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/>
- For 82 plants that specifically attract bees: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/bees/Plants>

Happy gardening and here's to saving the planet in 2023.

Fishing

Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewslines.com

Happy New Year! I can't believe we're here already. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and are excited for the possibilities that a new year holds. I feel very fortunate to be able to talk about fishing with all of you in 2023. I've never been one for New Year's resolutions, but I do like to set plans and goals for what I hope to accomplish that year.

This year, my goal is to catch one if not a few tarpon in our area of the river. I caught my first tarpon in the river more than 15 years ago and I've been chasing them ever since. I've chased them to the ocean, Central Florida, the Keys and back, but catching one close to home

again has always eluded me. I've already confessed this goal to a friend of mine so he can hold me accountable throughout the year. You can hold me to it as well and I'll try to keep you updated on any successes or failures along the way.

I'd also like to put this back to you and ask — what are you going to catch this year? What new area will you learn to fish? Is there a new technique you're going to try? We all want to go out and catch fish, but challenging ourselves to learn new things is how we grow as anglers.

If your goal is to get better at fishing

through the winter, be patient because the fishing has been tough. The specks seem to have vacated to local creeks and are sticking it out in the main river. They're way less apt to be in large schools out there, so it's work just to get a few fish. The ones I do catch in the river tend to be quality fish though. There's still a few shrimp in the river — which a bass would just love to find this time of year. Smaller redfish are around looking for the shrimp or small bait fish too. A short drive to the saltier waters of the Intracoastal Waterway might yield better results. A live shrimp on a jig head will catch just about anything. Fish them in deeper holes of the creeks or around oyster bars for easier fishing this time of year. Artificial lures can produce in the same areas, but try downsizing and slow retrieves for best results. Tight lines.





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Travel

Take to the Air at Georgia's Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and Flying Museum

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

While in Hampton, Georgia, just outside Atlanta, I had the opportunity to ride in a UH-1 “Huey” helicopter. The Huey was the chopper frequently used to bring and evacuate soldiers from hot spots in Vietnam.

Bruce Meyer, who served in the Army’s Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, said, “I’ve had the opportunity to fly in a number of helicopters in the fifty-plus years since I served in Vietnam — all good flights, but nothing like the experience of riding in a Huey with the doors off.”

The Huey, along with an AH-1 Cobra, OH-6 Cayuse, OH-58 Kiowa, and the O-1/L-19 Cessna (Bird Dog), belong to the Georgia chapter of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation and Flying Museum (AAHF). The purpose of the 25-year-old nonprofit organization is to “obtain, restore and maintain in flyable condition, examples of historic aircraft representing Army Aviation from Vietnam to present.” You’ll find other local chapters in Mesa, Arizona, and St. Louis, Missouri.

Local volunteers at each chapter, many of whom served in the Korean and Vietnam wars, are involved in the program. Some work on maintenance and others fly the aircraft. The appropriately military-dressed team offers educational programs, flyovers, and demonstrations, as well as free hangar tours.

My Flight in a Huey Helicopter

I met Fred Edwards and Ed Clark in the hangar at the Atlanta Speedway Airport. (The Speedway is another great attraction in Henry County.) Edwards is a retired Army lieutenant colonel, and Clark, who served 10 years in the Army after graduating from West Point, earned the rank of captain. They would pilot my ride in the open-door Huey helicopter.

Their pre-flight briefing was so passionate and convincing that I wasn’t hesitant to ride. I jumped onto the gunner’s bench for the best view (ahead and straight down) during the flight.

As the grass began to sway during lift-off, I tried to imagine flying over rice paddies in ‘Nam. While I sat securely belted in,



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Atlanta Speedway from the helicopter.

many vets would climb in and out of the Huey without doing so.

Meyer said, “Riding in the Hueys was both thrilling and scary; with no doors, you were sitting on the floorboard with your legs dangling out of the chopper. You prayed that you didn’t slide out when the pilot took a steep curve.”

Knowing I was securely seat-belted in place, I found the ride exceptionally thrilling, hair whipping around my face, noise pounding in my ears, and adrenaline pumping through my veins. Clark banked us to the right and left and took some sudden dips — eliciting a few screams from the riders. Those dips let me see the ground directly below. Even though my seat shook from the reverberation of the rotors, I enjoyed an actual bird’s eye view of the surroundings. We were safely returned to the landing strip a bit too soon for my liking.

Huey rides, accommodating six to seven guests, last about 10 minutes and cost \$100 pre-paid or \$110 onsite.

Prices may vary at airshows. If you’d like an up-close view of a military helicopter and other aircraft housed at AAHF, visit their website for further information: armyav.org.

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



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
The Huey gets inspected before liftoff



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Sitting in the open-door Huey.

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