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BFF Best Furry Friend



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Q&A with
Beverly Slough



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Get to Know ...
Jessica Boylan



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Puzzles



Photo courtesy Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run is a 10-week physical activity-based, positive youth development program for girls in third through eighth grades.

Girls on the Run: Fall season registration opens soon

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida's registration for the fall season opens on Thursday, Aug. 17 at 6 a.m. Registration is completed online and is on a first come, first served basis. Girls on the Run (GOTR) is a 10-week physical activity-based, positive youth development program that inspires girls in third through eighth grades to be joyful, healthy, and confident.

In May 2023, the nation's top health official, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, took notice of Girls on the Run's commitment to supporting girls. The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service released a report about the vital connection between physical activity and men-

Girls on the Run cont. on pg. 13

St. Johns County heads back to school

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

School buses, minivans, bikers, and walkers will be back soon — district-wide, students return to the classroom on Thursday, Aug. 10. Drivers should be prepared for an increase in traffic, particularly on the first few days of school as bus schedules are being ironed out.

“With the first day of school right around the corner, we are asking parents to plan ahead even more than previous years due to the increased growth,” St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick said. “Drive your route in advance and learn where the student drop off and pick up locations are. Be mindful of traffic congestion where the school zone lights are flashing and speed limits decrease dramatically. Put down your phones and electronic devices and remain alert.”

Hardwick noted that there will be increased deputy sheriff presence especially the first days and weeks of school to ensure safety for all students and teachers as they return to school.



Photo courtesy Shelley Howard
School buses will soon be back on St. Johns County roads.

“We are excited to welcome back lots of new students and new teachers to our St. Johns County family,” said St. Johns County School Board member for District 1 Beverly Slough. “In fact, some of our new teachers are our own graduates. I had the pleasure of meeting a graduate from Bartram Trail, one from Ponte Vedra, and one from Nease

at a recent orientation.”
According to the St. Johns County School District, the kindergarten through 12th grade student count as of May 2023 was 49,348 students. St. Johns County continues to be one of the fastest growing school districts in

Back to school cont. on pg. 11

Slammers defend state championship title

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The 11u Julington Creek Slammers (Diamond King Elite) successfully defended their 2022 state championship by winning the 2023 Cal Ripken Florida state championship on July 1 at The Villages in Palencia. They lost the first game vs Gainesville and had to win five in a row, including beating Gainesville twice, to win it all. The next stop for the team is the Cal Ripken World Series in Ocala.



Photos courtesy Chris Thompson
The 11u Julington Creek Slammers (Diamond King Elite) are the 2023 Cal Ripken Florida state champions.

This represents team manager Chris Thompson's 10th Cal Ripken State Championship as a manager at Julington Creek Baseball. The team's coaches are Travis Jordan, Nash Butrimas, and

Damian Lyon and players are Mark thompson, Pete Dempsey, Brock Butrimas, Easton Lyon, Parker Kar-

vonon, Bryce Ramsey, Brantlee Mullins, Tyson Jordan, Johnny Degrado, Zach Childers, and James Lesak.

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*Returning
in September!*
**Back to School
Guide**



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advertising opportunities!*
Linda Gay
(904) 607-5062
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**Bartram Trail Newcomers’
and Women’s Club elects
new board members**



Photo courtesy Susan Moger

Bartram Trail Newcomers’ and Women’s Club announces its new board for 2023 – 2024: Donna Holland, president; Linda Beard, first vice president membership; Patrice Hill, co-second vice president programs; Cindy Stewart co-second vice president programs; Laura Hernandez, secretary; and Brenda Jenkins, treasurer. 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 First Vice President Linda Beard at bartramtnc@gmail.com for club information. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC1 to see meeting photos and download a membership form.



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BFF

Best Furry Friend
of the month

Breed:

Red Poodle

Favorite Activity:

Barking and putting her nose in the grass
for treasures

Favorite Treat:

Anything pumpkin

Favorite Friend:

Sadie

How Did Your BFF Get Her Name:

From her fur color



Meet Ginger!

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.



When you advertise, you encourage repeat business, create traffic, and attract new customers!

Don't miss our September issue!
Featuring our Back to School Guide ... Again!
Deadline 8/21/23

Call Linda Gay today to reserve your space!
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Back to
School Guide
in this issue!
Pages 10 - 11

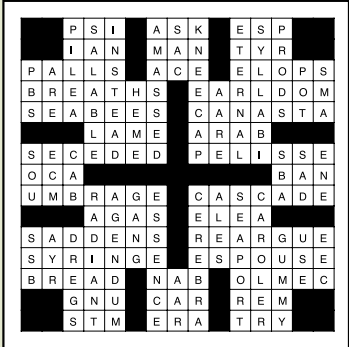
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MYSTERY PHOTO



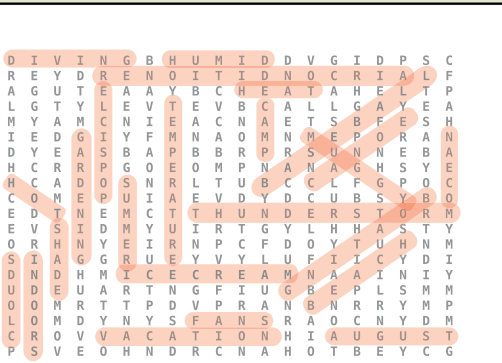
Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to: mail@floridanewslines.com
Last month's Mystery Photo was
the new Ascend Durbin Creek apartments on Race Track Road.



Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 14



A. humid B. steamy C. summer D. sky



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August

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 11:30 a.m. each day. Contact Program Coordinator Myra Fisher at (904) 209-3658 or mfisher@coasjc.org 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 Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road in St. Johns. Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookie2022@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.

1st: Happy Hookers crochet group will meet at the Bartram Trail Branch Library on Aug. 1 and Aug. 15 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.

1st: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, Aug. 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church at the Mandarin Road Campus in the Woody Room at 11844 Mandarin Road. It's the guild's birthday party and members will celebrate with a Hawaiian beach luau and dinner served for \$15 per person.

Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

3rd: Open Card Play at Council on Aging (COA) River House, 179 Marine Street in St. Augustine. Bring your deck of cards and socialize over a friendly card game of your choosing every Thursday beginning Aug. 3 from 12:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Call (904) 209-3655 (Monday – Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org for more information.

7th: ESOL Learn to Read, with partners at Learn to Read St. Johns, will be held on Monday, Aug. 7. The beginner class is from 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. and the intermediate and/or conversation class is from 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Register at www.sjcpls.org. Walkins will be welcome as space allows. Call 904-827-6960 or email Donna at dbraasch@sjcfl.us for more information.

9th: Widow to Widow, support group for widows by widows is held at Council on Aging (COA) River House, 179 Marine Street in St. Augustine on Wednesdays from 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Call (904) 209-3655 (Monday – Thursday) or email tharris@coasjc.org for more information.

11th: Adult Craft – Butterfly String Art will be held at 10 a.m. on Aug. 11 at the Bartram Trail Branch Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd. Create the butterfly of your dreams with pretty gold nails and string. Attendees should bring a small hammer. All supplies are provided by the Bartram Trail Friends of the Library. Register at www.sjcpls.org or call the library at (904) 824-6960. Space is limited.

12th: The Bartram Trail Genealogy Club meets the second Saturday of each month (this month, Aug. 12) from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. This month's meeting will be a field trip to the Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society's Library, 6215 Sauterne Drive in Jacksonville. Attendees will meet there at 2 p.m. Email ginglish@comcast.net for more information. Visit www.facebook.com/groups/BTGenClubGroup to send a request to join the club.

12th: The Friends of Alpine Park meets the second Saturday of each month (this month, Aug. 12) at 11 a.m. at the Harris-Bennett Farmhouse in Alpine Groves Park, 2060 State Road 13. Docents will conduct tours of the historic farmhouse from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. As always, the public is invited. Email friendsofalpinepark@gmail.com for more information.

14th: The Northwest St. Johns County United for Progress Club will meet on Monday, Aug. 14 at 6:30 p.m. Rachel Grage will speak on "Florida 2023 – A Legislative Wrap-up." Visit www.nwstjohnsup.com or email nwsjcp@gmail.com for more information.

16th –19th: Friends of Bartram Trail Library Book Sale will be held Wednesday, Aug. 16 through Saturday, Aug. 19 during regular library hours. The Bartram Trail Branch Library is located at 60 Davis Pond Blvd. Call (904) 827-6960 for more information.

19th: Saturday Morning Book Club at the Bartram Trail Branch Library will discuss "The Diamond Eye" by Kate Quinn on Saturday, Aug. 19 at 11 a.m. Register at www.sjcpls.org or call the library at (904) 824-6960.

19th: The Northeast Florida Chapter of Sisters in Crime will meet on Aug. 19 at 10 a.m. in the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library, 101 Library Blvd. (FOL Room). Dr. Fatima Rehman and Judith Erwin will address Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG). Bring your coffee and bring a friend. Visit www.nefloridasistersincrime.org for more information.

19th: Foods and Herbs from the Garden will be offered on Aug. 19 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.

21st: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, Aug. 21 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Members will reveal community service quilts made from mystery bag fabrics. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

24th: The Northwest St. Johns County United for Progress Club will meet for coffee and conversation at 10 a.m. Visit www.nwstjohnsup.com or email nwsjcp@gmail.com for more information.



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

Q: Can you comment on the recently released results of last year’s end-of-year testing?

A: I am very pleased with the results of our district’s end-of-year testing and with how well our students performed. We were first in the state in 16 of 21 elements, up from 15 last year. We are excited about the strides our students are making and we are most grateful for the very hard work of our teachers. We look forward to even more learning taking place this year.

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

A: We are about to turn dirt on the new RiverTown K-8 school and get that vertical construction started. This school is scheduled to open in time for the 2025 – 2026 school year. The other two schools (Shearwater and Beacon Lakes K-8 schools) are on track for opening in time for the 2024 – 25 school year.

Q: Do you have any district updates to share?

A: Beginning this school year, we will have two regional superintendents. Superintendent Forson recognized that St. Johns County is on the cusp of being a large district and that our principals would need more support. These super-

intendents are well known to the Northwest: Cathy Hutchins will be the K-8 and Elementary School Superintendent and Kyle Dresback will be the High School and Special Programs Superintendent. Basically, they will be the first line for principals to voice questions and concerns and have their needs met. It’s very important to note that this comes with no additional cost to the district. Superintendent Forson has consolidated some positions to make this new organizational structure cost neutral.

Q: Is there still time to register children for school?

A: Yes. Our kindergarten numbers are a bit lower than expected, so if you haven’t registered your kindergartener or new student, please do so as soon as possible. Registration may be done at your local school, and most of the paperwork is done online. There is an address locator on our main website (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us) that will let residents know exactly which schools their home is zoned for. Again, we encourage parents to register as soon as they can.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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



with St. Johns County Supervisor of
Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: How many elections are scheduled in St. Johns County in 2024?

A: There are three: the March 19 Presidential Preference Primary Election, Aug. 20 Primary Election, and Nov. 5 General Election.

Q: What is the March 19 Presidential Preference Primary Election?

A: The Presidential Preference Primary Election (PPP) is part of the presidential nominating process for Florida’s two major political parties. Voters registered with those parties express their preference for the presidential candidate they would like to see representing their party on the General Election ballot in November. After the PPP, designated political party delegates from Florida formally nominate the preferred presidential candidate at the respective party’s national convention. These national conventions are typically held in July or August. Based on the party rules governing delegate voting procedures, the party decides at the convention which presidential candidate will represent the party on the General Election ballot.

Q: Where do the names of the presidential candidates come from?

A: Each political party submits to the Secretary of State a list of its presidential candidates to be placed on the presidential primary ballot by Nov. 30 of the year preceding the election.

Q: When will we know the candidates’ names that will appear on the ballot in March?

A: No later than Dec. 19, 2023, the Secretary of State shall certify to the Supervisors of Elections the names of each candidate for political party nomination to be printed on the ballot.

Q: Who can vote in the Presidential Preference Primary?

A: Florida’s Presidential Preference Primary is a closed-primary election. This means that you must be registered with one of Florida’s major political parties in order to be eligible to vote in the PPP.

Q: Can I change my party so I can vote for a specific candidate on the ballot I would like to support?

A: Yes. The deadline to register to vote or change your party is 29 days prior to each election. February 20, 2024 is the deadline to register to vote or change your party for the March 19, 2024 PPP.

Q: What do I need to do to prepare for voting in 2024?

A: Register to vote and make sure your registration is up-to-date, including your address. There are tools available on our website where you can register to vote and verify your information on file with the Elections Office. Visit our website www.votesjc.gov and select My Voter Status to verify your voter information or update if needed.

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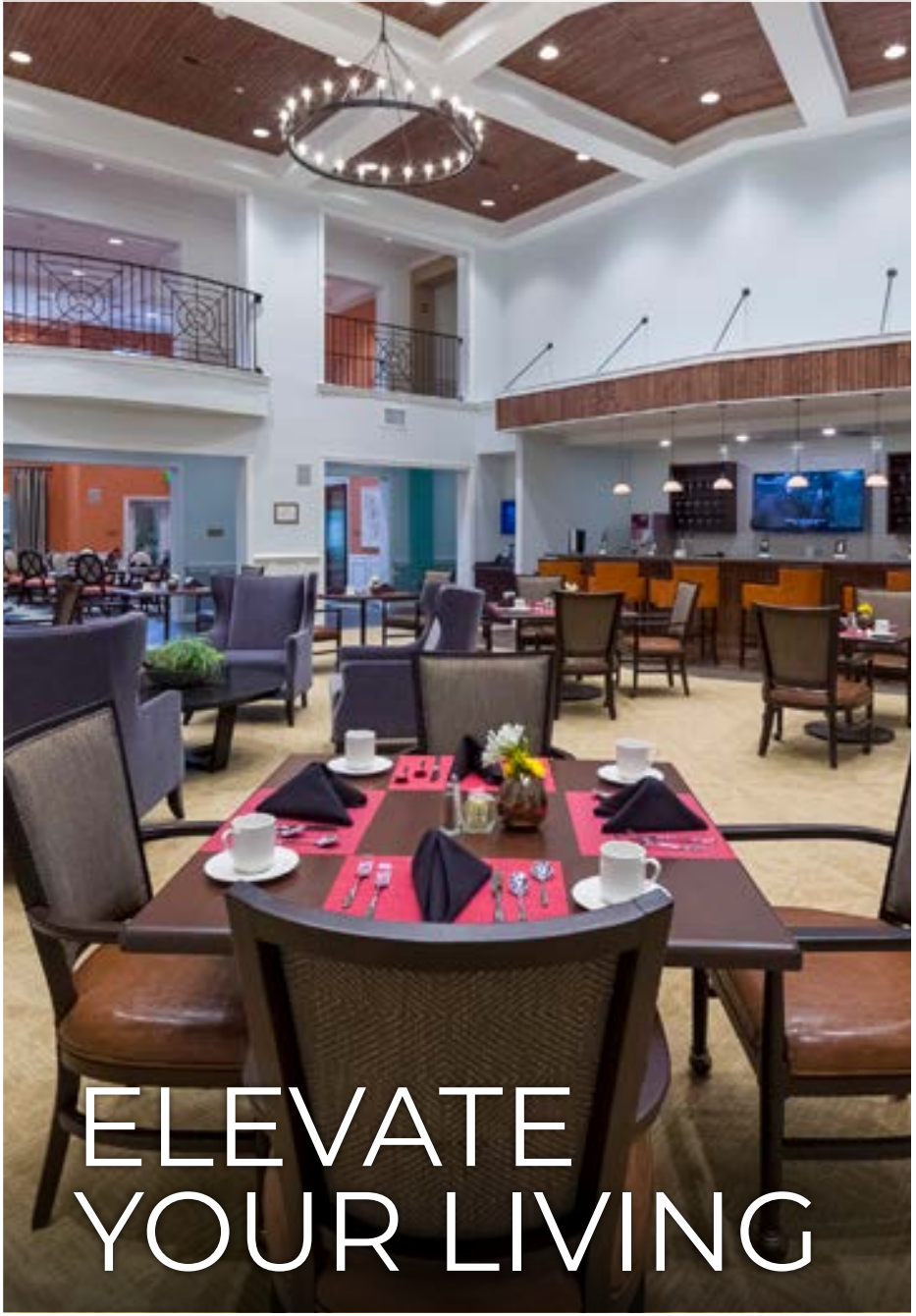
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Q & A

with St. Johns County Sheriff Rob Hardwick

Q: Can you share some general Back to School safety tips?

A: As the first day of school is Aug. 10, I'd like to remind everyone to be alert and prepared as they are getting back to the routine of going to school. Remind your children who walk to wait for a light, look both ways, and cross the street at a crosswalk. Make eye contact with stopped drivers before crossing a street so you know they see you. Obey school crossing guards. Students should wear helmets if biking or skateboarding to school.

If you are driving your children to school, put down your electronic device and remain alert, especially for small children.

As for when to stop for a school bus: if you are on a four-lane road with a raised median, you are not required to stop if going the opposite direction of the bus. If you are going the same direction as the bus, you must stop. You also must stop in both directions if the four-lane road has just paint on the pavement (no raised median), or on all two-lane roads.

Q: What can you tell us about the schools' Youth Resource Deputies?

A: As background, the St. Johns County School District has a \$5.1 million contract with SJSO to provide deputy sheriffs, known as Youth Resource Deputies, in schools. This covers 69 percent of the salaries and benefits of the 59 Youth Resource Deputies, since when school is not in session, we reassign these deputies to general activities. The 59 Youth Resource Deputies cover 40 public schools as well as Capt. Peggy Tennyson and her two lieutenants. We

also have a permanent juvenile civil citation deputy to handle youths who commit misdemeanor-type crimes. This year we added two threat assessment deputies to respond to an increasing number of threats to schools, such as bomb threats.

This year, I challenge students and parents to get to know their school's Youth Resource Deputy. Feel comfortable with them so that you can address issues in your school and build a relationship.

Q: What is new this year for the school deputies?


A: This year, we will begin implementation of the wearing of body cameras for our Youth Resource Deputies. During an educational period, students, school staff and parents will learn more about the body cameras and then the Youth Resource Deputies will begin wearing the cameras later in the school year.

Q: Can you explain more about Fortify Florida?

A: Fortify Florida is an app created in the wake of the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. It allows users to easily report suspicious activity instantly to law enforcement and school officials. Users may remain anonymous and we encourage all residents, not just parents, to download and use the app if they see something suspicious to report. If you see something, say something!

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@sjsso.org or call me at (904) 824-8304.



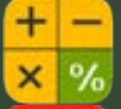
ST JOHNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF ROBERT A. HARDWICK


EIGHTEEN APPS PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT




LIVE.ME IS A LIVE-STREAMING VIDEO APP THAT USES GEOLOCATION TO SHARE VIDEOS SO USERS CAN FIND OUT A BROADCASTER'S EXACT LOCATION. USERS CAN EARN "COINS" AS A WAY TO "PAY" MINORS FOR PHOTOS.




CALCULATOR% IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL SECRET APPS USED TO HIDE PHOTOS, VIDEOS, FILES, AND BROWSER HISTORY.




HOLLA IS A SELF PROCLAIMED "ADDICTING" VIDEO CHAT APP THAT ALLOWS USERS TO MEET PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD IN JUST SECONDS. REVIEWERS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH RACIAL SLURS, EXPLICIT CONTENT, AND MORE.




DISCORD IS AN APP THAT ALLOWS USERS TO TALK TO FRIENDS AND STRANGERS IN REAL-TIME VIA VOICE, TEXT, OR VIDEO CHAT WHILE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES. REVIEWERS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH RACIAL SLURS, EXPLICIT CONTENT, AND MORE.




ASK.FM IS KNOWN FOR CYBER BULLYING. THE APP ENCOURAGES USERS TO ALLOW ANONYMOUS PEOPLE TO ASK THEM QUESTIONS.




ROBLOX IS AN ONLINE GAMING PLATFORM WITH A CHAT FUNCTION. UNDERAGE USERS HAVE HAD ISSUES WITH SOLICITATION FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS.




WHATSAPP IS A POPULAR MESSAGING APP THAT ALLOWS USERS TO SEND TEXTS, PHOTOS, VOICEMAIL, MAKE CALLS, AND VIDEO CHATS WORLDWIDE. WHATSAPP USES AN INTERNET CONNECTION ON SMARTPHONES AND COMPUTERS.




KIK ALLOWS ANYONE TO CONTACT AND DIRECT MESSAGE YOUR CHILD. KIDS CAN BYPASS TRADITIONAL TEXT MESSAGING FEATURES. KIK GIVES USERS UNLIMITED ACCESS TO ANYONE, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.




WHISPER IS AN ANONYMOUS SOCIAL NETWORK THAT PROMOTES SHARING SECRETS WITH STRANGERS. IT ALSO REVEALS A USER'S LOCATION SO PEOPLE CAN MEET UP.




BUMBLE IS SIMILAR TO THE POPULAR DATING APP "TINDER," HOWEVER, IT REQUIRES WOMEN TO MAKE THE FIRST CONTACT. KIDS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO USE BUMBLE TO CREATE FAKE ACCOUNTS AND FALSIFY THEIR AGE.




BADOO IS A DATING AND SOCIAL NETWORKING APP WHERE USERS CAN CHAT, SHARE PHOTOS, AND VIDEOS AND CONNECT BASED ON LOCATION. WHILE THE APP IS INTENDED FOR ADULTS ONLY, TEENS ARE KNOWN TO CREATE PROFILES.




GRINDR IS A DATING APP GEARED TOWARDS LGBTQ+ PEOPLE. THE APP GIVES USERS OPTIONS TO CHAT, SHARE PHOTOS, AND MEET UP BASED ON A SMART PHONE'S GPS LOCATION.




SKOUT IS A LOCATION-BASED DATING APP AND WEBSITE. WHILE USERS UNDER 17 YEARS OLD ARE UNABLE TO SHARE PRIVATE PHOTOS, KIDS CAN EASILY CREATE AN ACCOUNT USING A DIFFERENT AGE.




SNAPCHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR APPS IN RECENT YEARS. WHILE THE APP PROMISES USERS CAN TAKE A PHOTO/VIDEO AND IT WILL DISAPPEAR, NEW FEATURES INCLUDING "STORIES" ALLOWS USERS TO VIEW CONTENT FOR UP TO 24 HOURS. SNAPCHAT ALSO ALLOWS USERS TO SEE YOUR LOCATION.




HOT OR NOT ENCOURAGES USERS TO RATE YOUR PROFILE, CHECK OUT PEOPLE IN THEIR AREA, AND CHAT WITH STRANGERS. THE GOAL OF THIS APP IS TO HOOK UP.



OMEGLE IS AN ONLINE CHAT SITE WHERE REGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED. USERS ARE ABLE TO CHAT ANONYMOUSLY VIA VIDEO, PRIVATE CHATS, OR GROUP CHATS. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY HAS BEEN AN ISSUE ON THIS SITE.






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Q & A

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

Q. Why is jury duty important?

A. The sixth and seventh amendments of the U.S. Constitution ensure all American citizens have the right to a jury trial, where their legal disputes will be decided by fellow Americans. This right cannot be exercised without fellow citizens willing to step forward and serve on a jury. One of our judges says it best: "Be the type of juror you would want if you yourself ended up needing a jury." It is a critical responsibility we must uphold if called upon to serve.

Q. What role does the clerk's office play in jury management?

A. Our office plays a key role by summoning and checking-in prospective jurors. We send out 300 – 500 notices monthly with the names and addresses randomly pulled from information provided by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Q. What is the process for a resident summoned for jury duty?

A. Upon receiving the notice, those being summoned are welcome to check-in online and submit any excusal or deferral requests. After all of these are processed, we usually end up with 50 – 100 qualified jurors, some of whom are selected for voir dire, where they head up to the courtroom for questioning by the parties' lawyers. The process essentially starts with a larger pool before whittling down to a panel consisting of potentially six to 12 selected jurors.

Q. How does your office assist residents with the jury duty process?

A. Our Jury Coordinator prepares, and issues summons for jury duty, provides juror reporting information, and assists jurors with excusal, exemptions, registration, and compensation.

Our team works hard to ensure your jury experience is as comfortable and efficient as possible. We strive, along with the judges, to shepherd prospective jurors through the process as

Q&A with Brandon Patty cont. on pg. 12

Guest Column

State Road 13 — New commercial development coming

By Al Abbatiello, Chairman, William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway Group

The former Fruit Cove Nursery property at State Road 13 and Otoes Place is planned to become a new Neighborhood Commercial development. The site does permit Neighborhood Commercial development.

First Coast Energy has recently submitted plans to St. Johns County for a Neighborhood Commercial development at this location. The proposed plan is under review by St. Johns County Growth Management and now awaiting response to a series of questions and comments that were sent to the developer.

In 2019, First Coast Energy planned to build a Daily's gas station at this location, but were turned down by St. Johns County. Rejection by the county was based on environmental concerns including contamination of neighborhood wells, retention ponds, and the St. Johns River. These concerns were brought to light by a former, experienced, professional appraiser who lives in Fruit Cove Estates.

The major concern of Fruit Cove Estates residents and the Wil-

liam Bartram Scenic Highway organization is that the submitted plan shows Otoes Place (presently a quiet street into the 44-home residential community) as a major entry point into the commercial development.

The plan shows three separate driveway cuts on Otoes Place that will require major changes to the only street into the residential area. This includes cutting down existing very old oak trees. Clearing the property for development also means cutting down numerous other old growth oak trees that now exist.

St. Johns County Growth Management comments to the developer anticipate daily traffic generation from the proposed development will be more than 500 daily trips. This number of additional daily trips for the area presents serious safety issues for the residents of Fruit Cove Estates and area travelers.

Concerned residents of St. Johns County can express their concerns to the Board of County Commissioners and the Director of Growth Management.

Joy Andrews appointed Interim County Administrator

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners accepted the written resignation from former County Administrator Hunter Conrad and a separation agreement effective June 29, and appointed Deputy County Administrator Joy Andrews as the interim county administrator. The board will begin a national search for a new county administrator.



Photo courtesy St. Johns County
Interim County Administrator Joy Andrews

County Commission Chairman Christian Whitehurst said, "The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners has full faith and confidence in Joy Andrews to lead us forward as we continue to maintain a continuity of operations with services and programs for the citizens and visitors of St. Johns County. We appreciate the extraordinary work of county staff as we continue to make progress on numerous capital improvement projects totaling nearly \$280 million, including road improvements and beach nourishment efforts, as well as plans for the 2024 Fiscal Year budget that begins Oct. 1. We will be prudent and purposeful on a national search as we work together to identify a permanent county administrator."

The Board of County Commissioners will draft an employment agreement with Andrews to serve as interim county administrator and conduct a national search for a permanent county administrator with the aid of an executive firm. It also will assemble a selection committee to review applications and develop a list of finalists for interviews with the entire Board of County

Commissioners. The selection committee will be comprised of St. Johns County Commissioner Henry Dean, St. Johns County Director of Human Resources Lilian Hutchinson, St. Johns County Clerk of Court Brandon Patty, St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer, and former Coca-Cola senior vice president, Jerry Wilson.

Andrews graduated from Nanjing University School of Law in 2002, where she concentrated on International Commerce and Trade Law. During that time, she served at the university's Legal Aid Center. In 2005, Andrews moved to the United States to attend the Kansas State University School of Public Administration, where she received a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Public Finance. Andrews joined St. Johns County in 2006 as a budget analyst for the Office of Management and Budget, and she also held the position of Director of Health and Human Services before accepting the role of Deputy County Administrator in 2015.



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Briefs

Book sale announced

The Friends of the Bartram Trail Library will host a book sale open to the public during library hours Wednesday, Aug. 16 through Saturday, Aug. 19. The sale will also be open on Tuesday, Aug. 15 from 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. for current members of Friends of the Library. Members can also take advantage of special \$5 per paper bag pricing on Saturday.

To become a member of the Friends of the Bartram Trail Library, pick up an application in the branch or download one from the St. Johns County Public Library website. Annual membership is \$20 per person or \$30 per family. All memberships and donations provide programming, supplies, books and

equipment to the library. Email info@bartramtrailfol.org with any questions.

Screening of “My Ascension” to spotlight suicide prevention efforts for youth

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare will host a documentary screening of “My Ascension” on Saturday, Aug. 5 at 5:30 p.m. in the Toco Creek High School Auditorium, 11200 St. Johns Pkwy.

Recent research released by the CDC shows a staggering increase in mental health struggles for teens, especially girls. Additionally, the rate of teen suicides is rising; suicide is the second leading cause of death of people aged 15 – 24 in the US. To help reduce stigma around mental health and suicide, EPIC Behavioral

Healthcare and other local organizations are advocating for the importance of talking about suicide awareness and prevention by screening the film “My Ascension.”

“My Ascension” chronicles the story of 16-year-old high school varsity cheerleader Emma Benoit, who was paralyzed by a suicide attempt, which propelled her on a mission to use her painful experience to help others find hope and stay alive. The documentary highlights Emma’s inspiring journey. The film also shares the stories of two remarkable young people who tragically did not survive their attempts, and viewers learn first-hand from their families, friends, school officials, and suicide prevention experts about the devastating effects of suicide and what can be done to prevent it.

The screening will be followed by an engaging discussion on youth suicide prevention and mental wellness with Emma Benoit and local mental health and suicide prevention experts. Additionally, there will be resource tables sharing important information on mental health and suicide prevention.

EPIC Behavioral Healthcare has partnered with the St Johns County School District, United Way of St. Johns County, Big Brothers Big Sister of St. Johns County, LSF Health Services, Betty Griffin Center, and St. Augustine Youth Services to bring “My Ascension” to St. Johns County.

For more information, call (904) 829-3295.

New name and branding for local salon

Kelly Weary, owner of Frangipani salon, has announced a new name and branding: Belle Ciel Salon. Meaning “Beautiful Sky” in French, Belle Ciel Salon is a tribute to Weary’s daughters, Bella and Skylar, and her New Orleans roots. Under this new banner, Weary and her skilled team create transformative experiences, leaving a lasting legacy for her children and the community they serve.

Weary graduated from the Aveda Institute in her hometown of New Orleans in 2005 and relocated to Jacksonville after Hurricane Katrina. She managed Frangipani for 10 years. In 2022, she acquired Panache Salon, initially opening it under the Frangipani name. Now, after a year, she is rebranding the salon to Belle Ciel Salon.

With certifications in Fused and Weft Extensions and Ouidad techniques, Weary stays ahead of trends through continuous education. A natural mentor, she takes joy in coaching fellow stylists to reach their full potential.

US Coast Guard Auxiliary celebrates membership milestone

On June 25, US Coast Guard District 7 Auxiliary Commodore John W. Holmes announced in an email to all flotilla’s officers reflecting upon the auxiliary’s membership goals, “We did it. At this very moment D7 Membership (per official records), our accredited membership is now 4010 members!”

The commodore went on, “The work to achieve this return to pre-Covid levels is

one remarkable accomplishment and one that many believed would not happen. My sincere and humble thanks to all of the D7 team.”

The US Coast Guard 7th District is responsible for maritime activities throughout a 1.7 million square mile area including Puerto Rico, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and 34 foreign nations and territories with active duty, Reserve and Auxiliary members.

QuiltFest returns to Jacksonville

One of the largest quilt shows in the Southeast returns to Jacksonville’s Prime Osborn Convention Center Sept. 14 – 16, 2023 for its annual event. The Jacksonville Quiltfest is an all-volunteer organization and show, whose purpose is to showcase quilts, and to encourage and inspire quilters, both new and experienced. Quiltfest is a 501c3 nonprofit with significant charitable giving.


Show hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free parking is provided and entrance tickets are \$15 daily. Advance tickets are now on sale and may be purchased at Cinnamon’s Quilt Shoppe, Bee’s Quilt Shop and the Tilted Quilters or via Ticketmaster. Visit www.quiltfestjax.com for more information.

The role of DNA in contemporary crime solving

Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime will host two speakers who will address Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) at a meeting on Aug. 19 at 10 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library. Dr. Fatima Rehman is a faculty member at the University of North Florida, Biology Department. She received a Ph.D. in Genetics and Molecular Biology at Emory University in 2006. Her analytical work is enhancing scientific knowledge in areas like acceptance of organ transplants and cancer research. Judith Erwin obtained a law degree from the University of Florida at the age of 55 and released her first novel, “Shadow of Silence,” on her 75 th birthday. Now she is retired from her legal practice, and is a former freelance writer/photographer who specialized in theater and dance. She is an award-winning author of eight novels, with book nine in the works who is now studying FGG to incorporate it into a future book.

Hundreds of cold cases are hot again thanks to advancements in DNA forensic technology. Forensic Genetic Genealogy, which first emerged in 2018, is now a well-recognized scientific tool. Submitting your DNA to a lab is more than just learning your family history. Connections to your Uncle Harry can and is being used in criminal investigations. Writers of contemporary crime solving novels need to stay current with these advancements to be authentic. Readers can benefit from learning how it works since it has become the major tool in collection of direct evidence. Can investigators use a coffee cup from your garbage to test your or your guests’ DNA? Privacy issues are becoming legal challenges.

The Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime group welcomes misters and sisters to learn more about writing, promoting,




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ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

You can fund your children's college education and retirement simultaneously - Here's how

By Chris Thompson, CFP®, CRPC®

Many parents face the challenge of saving for their children's college education while also building a nest egg for retirement. Funding both priorities simultaneously can feel like a juggling act — and the stress can intensify as high school graduation and retirement dates draw nearer, particularly if you're coming up short on your savings goals.

As your time horizon narrows, which should come first — funding your kid's tuition or your own retirement? The answer depends on your situation, but here are some factors to keep in mind:

In most cases, saving for retirement should take priority over saving for your child's higher education. To understand why, consider the following:

- You may not get to choose your retirement date. Becoming injured or disabled, needing to care for an aging parent or being laid off from your job are just a few scenarios that could unexpectedly accelerate your retirement date, leaving you with less time to save than you were counting on.
- You don't want to run out of money in retirement. As a college student, your child may have access to scholarships, grants, loans or other financial aid to help pay the bills. The same isn't true for your retirement. If your nest egg comes up short, you may need to work longer, reduce your living expenses (or perhaps both) to make ends meet.

While it's imperative to focus on your own financial security in retirement, funding higher education is still an im-

portant goal for many parents. The key is striking the right balance between saving for both goals. Consider the following tips as a starting point:

1. Paying for college doesn't have to be all-or-nothing. Many parents choose to pay a percentage of the total bill, cover certain expenses (e.g., tuition, technology fees or room and board), pay for a set number of years, or contribute as much as they are able to save by the first day of school instead of funding the full cost. Revising your college savings goal in one of these ways could allow you to direct more money to retirement.
2. If your child has sights on graduate school, decide whether you will contribute to those bills, too. This decision is particularly important if your child needs a graduate degree before entering their field of choice. If you intend to provide financial support, calculate how much the total cost will be so you have a clear savings target in mind.
3. Discuss your intentions with your child. No matter how much you plan to contribute (or not), talk to your child about your financial commitment so they know what to expect. Discuss what your contribution will look like at their preferred colleges. For example, if you agree to pay a set amount, perhaps this money will fully cover community college or a substantial amount at a state school, but it may leave a larger portion of the bill outstanding at a private college.

No matter your financial situation, know that it is possible to make meaningful progress toward both goals,

particularly if you are intentional about how to allocate your savings. Consult a financial advisor and tax professional if you want help setting specific savings goals and understanding the various investing options available to you.

Chris Thompson, CFP®, CRPC® is a Managing Director and Associate Manager with Ameriprise Financial Services,

LLC. in Jacksonville. To contact him, visit www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson or email chris.thompson@ampf.com.

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SCORE Jacksonville to host workshops

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

SCORE is a national service organization that supports small businesses nationwide. SCORE has a network of more than 11,000 volunteers operating in more than 340 local chapters around the country. The organization is supported by the US Small Business Administration (SBA).

In August, the following workshop is scheduled:

Achieve Your Business Dream, Aug. 1, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.: A four part series perfect for aspiring and emerging business owners. This series is taught by a team of experienced entrepreneurs and business professionals, whose goal is to provide you with the knowledge and understanding needed to be a successful entrepreneur. By the end of the course, you should have what you need to build your own business plan and begin your journey to financial independence.

This workshop consists of:

- Session 1: Business Foundations – What Will Your Business Be?
- Session 2: Marketing Basics and Social Media
- Session 3: Financial Basics, Business Naming and Market Analysis
- Session 4: The Business Plan, Financial Projections and Funding

Events will be held each Tuesday in August 2023. Participants have the option to attend in person at the JAX Chamber, 3 Independent Drive in Downtown Jacksonville, or via Zoom. Advanced registration (www.score.org/jacksonville/local-workshops/achieve-your-business-dreams) is required. The cost of the workshop is \$99, which covers all four sessions and two admissions. Co-Sponsors are SCORE, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, and Jacksonville Women's Business Center.

Visit www.jacksonville.score.org for more information.

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Back to School Guide

How to prepare children for kindergarten

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The first day of kindergarten is a milestone moment for children that their parents will remember forever. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that around five million children attend an organized preschool or daycare facility in the United States. Children who attend preschool or daycare may make a relatively seamless transition to kindergarten; however, it's still a good idea for parents to take steps to prepare youngsters for kindergarten in advance of the first day of school.

- Attend orientation or related events. Elementary schools typically are housed in much larger buildings than preschools or daycares, and that size can be intimidating for children. Attending kindergarten orientation or related events as a family can help children see their classrooms, meet their teacher and potentially their classmates.
- Meet other kids in the neighborhood. Some children attend preschools or daycares close to home, while others may go to facilities near a parent's office. Regardless of where kids go to daycare or preschool, they're likely to meet new youngsters in kindergarten. Introducing them to other kids in the neighborhood who will be going to kindergarten as well can calm children's nerves. Seeing a familiar face on the bus and/or in class can put youngsters at ease.
- Avoid lengthy goodbyes. Parents may get a little teary-eyed on their children's first day of kindergarten, but drawing out goodbyes as kids get on the bus or walk into school will ultimately make it harder on children. Limit your goodbye to a hug and kiss and some words of encouragement. Keep the emphasis on the positive and the fun that's to be had so kids arrive at school in a good frame of mind.

- Remind youngsters you'll be there to pick them up at the end of the day. Let children know that, just like daycare and preschool, mom or dad will be there to pick them up at school or the bus stop at the end of the day. This sense of the familiar can calm kids' nerves and reassure them that a smiling face will be there at the end of the school day.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

The first day of kindergarten is a big moment for young children. Parents can take steps to calm first-day jitters and ensure children have a memorable day.




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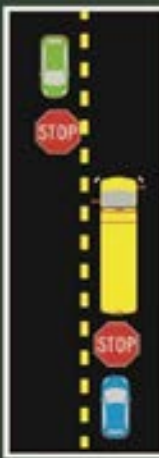
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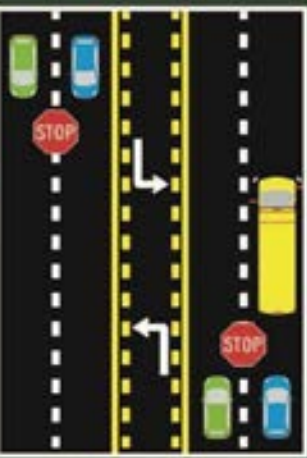
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Back to School Guide

A refresher course in school bus safety

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

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

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

Riding a school bus can be a novel experience no matter a student's age or grade. Kindergarteners may be introduced to the school bus on their first day of school, while older students are no doubt familiar with life inside a school bus. But all students and families can benefit from a refresher course on school bus procedures to ensure this school year begins on safe footing.

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

- Remember school bus laws. Most areas of the country have specific school bus laws that include stopping when red lights are flashing on the school bus. Cars must stop whether they're behind the school bus, next to it or on

the opposite side of the street facing the bus. Stopping allows passengers to enter or exit the bus safely.

- Stand away from the curb. The National Safety Council advises keeping six feet, or three giant steps, away from the curb while waiting for the bus. Young children should be carefully supervised.
- Be visible. Always cross in front of the bus, making eye contact with the driver so that he or she knows your intentions before crossing. If you drop something, do not bend down to pick it up. Tell the driver instead.
- Remain seated. Find a seat promptly and remain seated for the duration of the ride. Do not stand up and proceed down the center aisle until the bus has stopped.
- Minimize distractions. Always speak softly and behave so that you do not distract the driver.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
School buses are very safe vehicles, but passengers need to do their part to avoid injury.

Back to school cont. from pg. 1
the state.


Even with this continued growth, there will not be a new school opening this school year. Three schools are currently under construction, however, with two slated for completion at the beginning of the 2024 – 2025 school year. These are K-8 School “NN,” located in the Shearwater neighborhood and K-8 School “OO,” located within the Beacon Lakes portion of the Twin Creeks development. The third new school, K-8 School “PP,” located in the RiverTown development, is slated to open for the 2025 – 2026 school year.



This year's district-wide Orientation Day is Aug. 9. Each school will set its own schedule, which might even be on a different day. Parents are advised

to check with their student's school for its specific activities.

Also of note is the Florida Back to School state sales tax holiday, which continues through Aug. 6. Consumers can purchase qualifying back-to-school supplies exempt from tax during this time. Visit <https://floridarevenue.com/backtoschool> for more information, including a list of items that may be purchased with no Florida sales tax.

The St. Johns County School District's first day of school is Thursday, Aug. 10.





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Obituary: Mary Cornwell, first chairwoman of Bartram Trail Scenic and Historic Highway Group

Mary Louise Grieco Cornwell passed away Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at the age of 94, of natural causes. She was living in Brevard, NC, with her daughter and son in law, Nancy and Jack Grogan. Mrs. Cornwell was predeceased by her loving husband of 45 years, Irving Emanuel Cornwell, and a sister, Mrs. Diane McCoy. She is survived by a sister, Mrs. Patricia Andriola of Monmouth Beach, NJ. Her surviving children are Nancy Grogan (Jack) and Lou Gebb (David) of Brevard, NC; Allison Tison (Larry) of Bakersville, NC; Wes Cornwell of Mayport, Fla.; Bob Mazza (Lori) of Switzerland, Fla.; Patricia Kirkland (Larry) and Charlene Isenberg (Steve) of Newberry, Fla.; and Irving Cornwell, Jr. (Brenda) of Jacksonville. She had fifteen grandchildren.



Photo courtesy Nancy Grogan
Mary Cornwell

She was born in Tampa, Fla. to Daniel and Mary Grieco. The family moved to Jacksonville and located in the Springfield area. She was a graduate of Andrew Jackson High School. Mary loved Jacksonville and loved telling stories of living there in the '30s and '40s.

Irving and Mary and children lived in Atlantic Beach, Fla. until moving to Switzerland, Fla. They loved the St. Johns River, the giant cathedral oaks, the orange groves, and the friends they met. Mary was a lover of plants and passed that to her children. She also enjoyed cooking and could bake up to eight loaves of yeast bread at a time. Mary was secretary for her husband's

business, Quality Water. Mary started the first garden club in Switzerland, The Orange Tree Circle. She gradually became interested in protecting the beautiful area from the rampant development edging closer to Switzerland. The giant cathedral oaks were being torn down further north and development on the river threatened the ecosystems of the river. Mary gathered a group of residents in the Switzerland area who were also concerned and wanted to explore a way to protect the area.

She became the first chairman of the group working toward designating State Road 13 as a Florida Scenic Highway. After four years of research, evidence gathering and working with St. Johns County, the State of Florida granted the Corridor Advocacy Group approval for State Road 13 to be designated the William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway.

Temple Sisterhood Braille Group hosts tactile workshop

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Temple Sisterhood Braille Group will host tactile graphics classes on four Wednesdays in September at The Temple (Congregation Ahavath Chesed), located at 8727 San Jose Blvd. in Mandarin. This class is free of charge and is open to anyone interested in learning to create graphics for the blind. Mark your calendars for Sept. 6, 13, 20, and 27 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. to teach your fingertips to see.

Early children's books are filled with pictures as an introduction to reading. With blind children, the learning process is a bit different. The Temple Sisterhood Braille Group provides them with tactile graphics to better understand what they read.

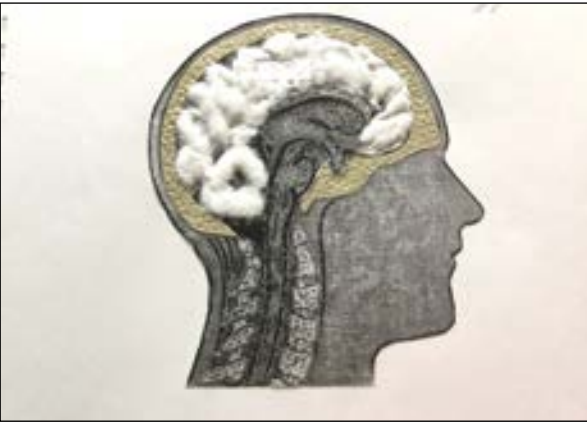
"You can give them a ball, and they can feel the ball," said braille group member Susan Foster. "But if you are



Photos courtesy Susan Foster
Linda McQueen showing a graphic from The Temple Sisterhood Braille Group's online library.

"Creating tactile graphics is a labor of love. It not only benefits the blind student but is very gratifying for the graphic artist," said Foster. "When you look at a picture, you must put yourself in the shoes of the blind students. What do they need to learn? What parts of the original image do you leave in and what parts do you leave out?"

According to Chancey Fleet, MIT Technology Review, June 15, 2023: "Tactile graphic design is an art of transformation: what appeals to the eye may be cluttered and chaotic to the fingertips. You learn to simplify to communicate. And you want that student to say, 'I get it.'"



Tactile representation of a brain.

talking about a honeybee, you will have to give them a tactile graphic. Their fingertips will feel the image so they can imagine what a honey bee looks like."

For more information about the Temple Sisterhood Braille Group Tactile Graphics classes on Sept. 6, 13, 20, and 27, contact Susie Coleman at (904) 725-2427.

What are tactile graphics? Basically, it is a raised image of a two -dimensional interpretation of an object. The method used most frequently is collage. A variety of materials with different textures are used to represent things like land or water. The image is constructed in different levels to represent height or depth. Another common method for creating tactile graphics is foil, where the image is etched in foil. In both collage and foil, a thermoform machine is used to duplicate the finished graphic onto durable plastic for use by the blind reader.



Graphic artist Charon Dyer at work.

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Q&A with Brandon Patty cont. from pg. 6

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Q. What is the best way for residents to contact you?

A. Residents can call my office at (904) 819-3601 or my cell at (904) 599-8688. My email address is BPatty@st-johnsclerk.com. A lot of questions can be answered by visiting our website, www.stjohnsclerk.com , which is most commonly used to pay traffic citations or search court records.

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Life

Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps
mail@floridanewsline.com

Jessica Boylan

It took just one semester studying Spanish in Seville, Spain, during college for Jessica Boylan to discover her love of languages. It was something that she suspected was tucked away in her brain, courtesy of her Colombian mother. The trip confirmed her suspicions. This would also be the first of several key turning points in her life. The next would happen on a trip back from Colombia when Boylan decided to go home early and got delayed in the Fort Lauderdale airport, causing her to meet her now husband, Gerardo Montanez. He is from Colombia and was also visiting family. After talking in the airport (there is some disagreement about who was more interested), the two discovered that they were not booked on the same flight back to Jacksonville; however, they were able to change the flight and fly home together, talking the whole way back. When they arrived in Jacksonville, they found that their rides (her parents and his sister) had parked very close to each other. So, they got to meet each other's families right away. Four years later, the couple got married and now have two daughters, Lanna, 9, and Lily, 8, living off County Road 210 West. Montanez, who was a doctor in Colombia, is a healthcare provider in Georgia. Boylan, who has taught English in China, Mexico, and at the University of North Florida (her alma mater), has been a teacher at The Bolles School for 15 years. She earned



Photo courtesy Jessica Boylan

her undergraduate degree in graphic design and Spanish and her graduate degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. In her free time, she enjoys baking French meringue cookies, so much so that she started Jessica B. Special Sweets, selling at the Palm Valley Market during the summer months and taking online orders year-round.

Q: Explain your position at The Bolles School.

A: I teach academic English to our international students, and I teach Spanish as well. I am also the International Student Academic Advisor for grades nine through 11. I love teaching and advising, and every class is special because I meet students from different countries every year.

Q: Why is the number 19 significant to you?

A: I met my husband on the 19th, my father-in-law's birthday is on the

19th, we had our first kiss on the 19th, we were married on the 19th and our daughter Lanna was born on the 19th.

Q: You were a professional improviser for 13 years. What attracted you to improv?

A: I saw an ad in a newspaper for an improv workshop, so I gave it a try. I ended up loving it and did shows throughout Jacksonville. Improv is such a great outlet. I was rather shy and reserved throughout high school and college. I found improv in my 20s. It was a life changer. This helped me professionally, and I also use this type of humor in the classroom. I call it "mental yoga." It is great to be silly and to not be judged. It is nice to see that take place while the students are learning.

Q: How do you approach life?

A: Accepting what comes your way and always finding a way to move forward with support. This is something that I always tell my students. Don't take on life on your own, just reach out.

Q: How did you get interested in baking?

A: During the holidays, I wanted to make something special for my daughters' teachers. I started out with chocolate dipped apples and pretzels, but fell in love with meringues this year. I love seeing everyone's reactions when they try one. They may have a preconceived notion of what they might taste like, but it is the "yum" reaction that is the best.

[Author's note: Visit www.jessicabspecialsweets.com or facebook.com/jessicabspecialsweets to find out more about Jessica B. Special Sweets.]

Girls on the Run cont. from pg. 1

tal health. In the report, Dr. Murthy highlighted Girls on the Run as an example of a program for girls to learn life skills through engaging activities and lessons.

Since 2004, Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida has inspired more than 27,000 girls. This season, the program will serve girls in Alachua, Bradford, Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Union, and Volusia counties. Girls on the Run has research-based lessons that use dynamic discussions and fun running games to teach critical life skills. The season will culminate with a celebratory 5K event that brings together family, friends, and community members to celebrate the girls' growth throughout the season.

The program fee for the fall season ranges from \$50 – \$130 and is based on household income. Scholarship funding is available to those who qualify. The program fee includes all lesson materials, registration for the celebratory 5K event, a finisher medal, a GOTR t-shirt, and GOTR water bottle.

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

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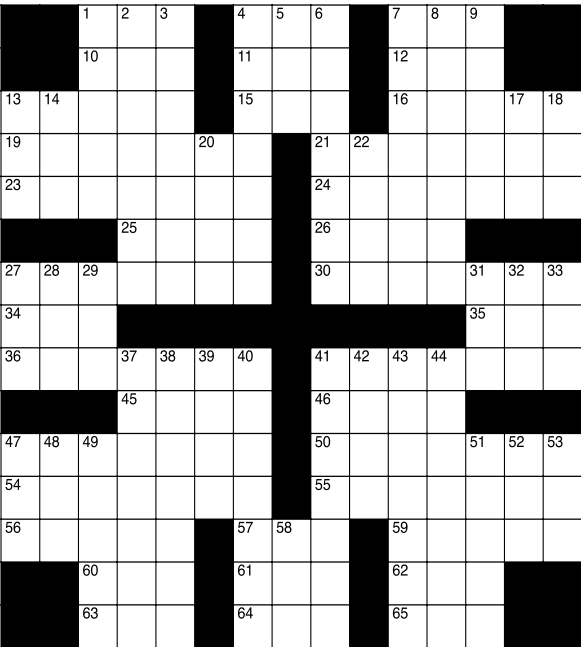
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Indicates tire pressure
4. Request
7. Clairvoyance
10. 007's creator
11. Adult male
12. Scandinavian god of battle
13. Cloths spread on a coffin
15. Breeze through
16. Ladyfish genus
19. It's good to take them
21. Noble-governed territory
23. Members of U.S. Navy
24. Card game resembling rummy
25. Affected by injury
26. Member of a Semitic people
27. Left
30. Woman's cloak
34. S. American plant
35. Prohibit
36. Offense
41. Dish soap brand
45. Ottoman military commanders
46. Ancient Greek City
47. Makes unhappy
50. Discuss again
54. Medical instrument
55. Promote
56. A beloved carb
57. Tag the base runner to get him out
59. Prehistoric people
60. Large African antelope
61. Vehicle
62. Georgia rockers
63. Scientific instrument (abbr.)
64. A major division of geological time
65. Attempt

CLUES DOWN

1. Plant of the nettle family
2. Fit to be sold
3. Rather
4. Collected
5. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
6. Patella
7. Ageless
8. Lists of course requirements
9. Pokes at
13. TV network
14. They __
17. Cooking hardware
18. U.S. Army title
20. Iron-containing compound
22. Swiss river (alt. spelling)
27. Former French coin
28. Electronic countermeasures
29. Taxi
31. Helps little firms
32. Woeful
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. Glowing
38. Tasks which should be done
39. An informal body of friends
40. Intrinsic nature
41. Neural structures
42. Brews
43. Where ships unload cargo
44. Singer
47. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
48. Southwest Scotland town
49. Most worthless parts
51. Viscous
52. Put to work
53. Old world, new
58. Swiss river

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C O M E P U I A E V D Y D C U B S Y B O
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O R H N Y E I R N P C F D O Y T U H N M
S I A G G R U E Y V Y L U F I I C Y D I
D N D H M I C E C R E A M N A A I N I Y
U D E U A R T N G F I U G B E P L S M M
O O M R T T P D V P R A N B N R R Y M P
L O M D Y N Y S F A N S R A O C N Y D M
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(Hint: 11 = M)

A. 12 8 11 15 10
Clue: Water vapor in the air

B. 3 13 22 6 11 9
Clue: Warm and moist

C. 3 8 11 11 22 5
Clue: Hot season

D. 3 4 9
Clue: Atmosphere seen from earth

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Briefs cont. from pg. 8

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Rising prices make it pricy to live in Northeast Florida

In June, it became more expensive to live in Northeast Florida. The Home Affordability Index for single-family homes in the six-county region fell 4.3 percent to 66, which is the lowest it has ever registered in the region. The Housing Affordability Index measures housing affordability for the region; it measures whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income, and median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability. An index value of 100 means that the average family has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage.

In June, Northeast Florida's median sales price on single-family homes settled in at \$394,900, a rise of 1.8 percent from the previous month. New listings — 3,212 homes — jumped 16.6 percent and active inventory rose to 4,891 homes, a 15.1 percent increase. Also in June, homes remained on the market a little longer — 33 days, which is a 3.1 percent increase from May.

"More homes were introduced to the market and buyers are taking a little extra time to shop with increased days on market to just over a month," said NEFAR President Diana Galavis. "In June, the summer heat made its way to the housing market. It is a sellers' market with the buyers in control. The median sales price and closed sales were up from May.

Sellers received over 98 percent of the list price. Sellers are pricing their homes in line with the market. This brought the median price down slightly and settled it at a median price of \$206 per square foot."

Pending sales dropped 10.2 percent, falling to 1,901 in June from a May high of 2,116. Meanwhile the housing supply continues to hover at a low of 2.3 months' supply.

In Duval County, the June 2023 median price of single-family housing was \$335,000, a 1.5 percent climb from May 2023 when it registered \$330,000. The median days on the market in June remained at 30. Month-to-month, closed sales dropped half a point to 1,043, pending sales fell 8.4 percent to 974, and new listings increased 23.8 percent to 1,662. Active inventory for the county rose 20.3 percent to 2,195 homes, a 2.1-month supply. In June, the home affordability index showed housing was becoming less affordable by registering at 78, a 3.7 percent drop from the month before.

In St. Johns County, June 2023 median prices decreased slightly to \$555,000 for single-family homes. The median days on the market were 34, a 2.9 percent drop from the month before. Month-to-month, closed sales rose 4.7 percent to 560, pending sales dropped 11.2 percent to 478, and new listings jumped 11.5 percent to 865. Active inventory rose to 1,544 homes, an increase of 14 percent from May 2023, and 2.8-month supply. The affordability index slid to 47, demonstrating that St. Johns County continues to be the most expensive area to live in the region.

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Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewslines.com

To be completely honest I haven't fished the river much lately, so I don't have too much firsthand information for you this month. I've been fishing — it's just been a little farther from home than usual and you know, that's not a bad thing. Not that fishing in the river is bad right now, but it's nice to have some new water to explore.

Fishing familiar water is great, but you can easily fall into routines and fish the same spots over and over because you've caught fish there before, and you keep catching fish there now, but what happens when that stops? I think it can really hamper your development as an angler. I'd rather find a spot and then go find a similar spot and see if you can work out a pattern. Gain some understanding into what makes that dock or that shoreline the spot that it is. Once you do that you have something you can take with you, wherever you fish next. All I'm saying is don't be afraid to leave fish to find fish. You're never going to find them if you don't go looking.

This is what I'd be looking for in the river this month: the shrimp will be

bigger and I'd expect some eating-size shrimp to start being mixed in so you can cull a few for yourself. Those smaller shrimp will be great for the stripers and drum on the bridges and the reds, flounder, and sheepshead on the docks. I'd also see if I could locate some croakers or yellowmouth trout on the ledges and shell beds that I mentioned a while back. A trip into the fresher water with a few bigger live shrimp could be a great way to catch some nice bass and see why they're my favorite fish to catch with shrimp.

I've also got to mention the surf right now because tarpon will be very active in the bait pods this month and a few mullet might even be showing up already — so grab a cast net and some heavy gear. Fish near the bait and you could find out why you really need that much line on your reel. It's not a numbers game. Jumping one makes your day and landing one makes your month.

Maybe I'll have some better intel for you next month but until then: Tight lines.

Local student achieves top ACT score

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Brooks Chandler, a St. Johns / Switzerland area high school junior homeschooled through Wilson Hill Academy, earned the highest possible ACT composite score of 36. Chandler is currently a rising senior.

About one-quarter of 1 percent of students who take the ACT earn a top score. In the U.S. high school graduating class of 2022, only 3,376 out of 1.34 million students who took the ACT earned a top composite score of 36.

The ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science, each

scored on a scale of 1–36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. The score for ACT's optional writing test is reported separately and is not included within the ACT composite score.

"Earning a top score on the ACT is a remarkable achievement," said ACT CEO Janet Godwin. "A student's exceptional score of 36 will provide any college or university with ample evidence of their readiness for the academic rigors that lie ahead."

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement exam that measures what students have learned in school. Students who earn a 36 composite score have likely mastered all of the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in first-year college courses in the core subject areas.

ACT scores are accepted by major four-year colleges and universities across the U.S.

Brooks Chandler is the son of Matt and Nicki Chandler of St. Johns. He would like to study engineering at the University of Florida, but remains open to other opportunities. He also is a very active competitor in tournament chess in the community and region.



Photo courtesy Nicki Chandler
Brooks Chandler



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The Pantry Raiders

Transform bananas into a moist dessert

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Bananas are a versatile fruit that can be eaten right off the bunch or utilized in a bevy of recipes. Despite being characterized as the first "superfood" endorsed by the American Medical Association in the early 20th century, bananas are avoided by some people. Some claim that bananas make people gain weight or develop constipation, but many medical organizations point to the nutritional benefits of bananas, which contain potassium, magnesium, vitamin B6, fiber, and manganese.

A banana's flavor starts out as mildly sweet and gains more sweetness as it ripens. Very ripe bananas, or those that have brown speckled skins, don't need to be discarded. They make perfect additions to baked goods, notably banana bread. Before tossing out brown bananas, consider this recipe for "Chocolate Chip Banana Bread" courtesy of Jenna Barnard and the Butternut Bakery Blog.

Chocolate Chip Banana Bread

- 1 loaf
- 1 ½ cups ripe and mashed banana (3 to 4 medium bananas), measured
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup 2 percent Greek yogurt (sour cream also works)
- 1 ⅓ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¾ cup mini chocolate chips, plus a



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Chocolate Chip Banana Bread

handful more for sprinkling on top

Preheat your oven to 325 F and grease and line a 9x5 loaf pan with parchment paper. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt. Set aside. In a separate bowl, mix together the melted butter and sugars until you reach a paste-like consistency. This may take some vigorous whisking for a minute or two. You can either use a whisk or an electric mixer with the paddle attachment.

Add in your mashed bananas followed by the eggs, yogurt and vanilla. Once all of your wet ingredients are mixed together, fold in the dry ingredients. Then, fold in the chocolate chips.

Pour the batter into your prepared loaf pan and spread it evenly. Sprinkle extra chocolate chips on top if you like. Bake for 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out with a few moist crumbs. Let it cool completely before removing from the pan. Store at room temperature in an airtight container.

Gardening

And the heat goes on ...

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
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During the first week of July the monsoon rains settled in. Hotter than normal temperatures led to stormy conditions in the afternoons and evenings, and sometimes overnight. If you have sandy well-draining soil, then you can appreciate taking a break from watering.

If you garden in a location over a high water table or hard pan, then you may find some of your plants or lawn areas are really suffering from poor drainage. This article explains how to recognize plant problems and how to help your plants recover from too much rain: <https://tinyurl.com/4cd9u29r>.

If the problem is ongoing, though, a rain garden could be a good solution. Since some plants are well adapted to intermittent wet conditions, you don't necessarily need to do anything elaborate to make such a garden. For more information check out <https://tinyurl.com/2s3p3ddv>. However, if run-off from your roof via a downspout is exacerbating your drainage issues, you may want to manage the water more efficiently. If so, this article by Tonya Ashworth, our Duval County Horticulture Extension Agent, gives an in-depth account of how to construct a rain garden. She also supplies a great list of suitable plants: <https://tinyurl.com/mu8k5k2h>.

A major issue with run-off is the transport of excess nutrients and chemicals onto our streets into the storm drains, and subsequently into our rivers and aquifers. The ability of a rain garden to filter and clean rainwater as it's retained in the garden is very important.

The summer heat can make us all crave an easier gardening experience. While "low maintenance" means different things to different people — mowing a lawn in high summer is not my idea of low maintenance — this is an aspect of

design that appeals to many a gardener. For inspiration check out "Twenty-two Ideas for a Low-care, Low-cost Landscape" (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP442>). Some of the plant suggestions are more familiar in a traditional front yard, but native, wildlife-welcoming plants could be utilized in a similar way. If you're a fan of free phone apps, UF has one for the gardener looking for Florida friendly plants while on the go: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/apps/plant-guide/>. It should prove a useful aid at the nursery. For more gardening-related apps, check out <https://gardening-solutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mobile/>.

As the year has progressed, some of my plants have been growing faster and blooming earlier than usual. Although the dry weather should have slowed them down, once the rains arrived, coupled with higher temperatures, established perennials like ironweed have been flowering for several weeks. Although seeds would be useful food for our backyard birds, cutting back spent flowers as soon as they fade will encourage branching and more flowers. Since summer is a time of plenty for our wildlife, it makes more sense to leave seedheads for the birds at the end of the season. Firespike (*Odontonema cuspidatum*) is also beginning to bloom and is attracting hummingbirds. It will flower until cut down by a freeze.

While the summer heat is on, we should all take care to avoid over strenuous outdoor activities. If you can, avoid being out during the hottest hours of the day, take plenty of water, cover up, and use sunscreen. You know the recommendations make sense. If you need more information, see <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/extremeheat/index.html>. Take care, especially if you work outside, and have a safe summer.



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Travel

Legendary Music in Muscle Shoals

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

Small towns often bring big surprises, which was the case with Muscle Shoals in northwest Alabama. Muscle Shoals was and continues to be a city where high-profile musicians come to record music in the local sound studios. It earned the title "Hit Recording Capital of the World."

Baby Boomers especially recall musical memories when touring FAME Studios. It all started in the 1960s by a group of local musicians and producers. The establishment quickly gained a reputation for its high-quality recordings and unique sound, which blended elements of soul, R&B, and rock. One of the most famous producers to work at FAME was Rick Hall, who helped launch the careers of artists like Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding. Another notable producer was Jerry Wexler, who brought Aretha Franklin to Muscle Shoals to record her classic album "I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You."

In addition to FAME Studios, you can connect with nostalgia at Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, founded by a group of former FAME musicians in the 1970s. They typically worked as the backup rhythm band for the artists and were known as the Swampers. Their studio recorded albums by the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Willie Nelson, and many more.

"The magic must be in the water," said the former Swampers when asked why the hits happened there. Native American legends called the Tennessee River the Singing River and claimed it sang songs to protect them. Myth or not, the town's small size and tight-knit community allowed musicians and producers to work closely together, giving us some of the most iconic songs in music history, from "Respect" by Aretha Franklin to "Sweet Home Alabama" by Lynyrd Skynyrd.

You'll also find the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in the Shoals. This fantastic museum highlights Alabama's musical icons with portraits and memorabilia from 82 inductees.

Some are giants like country music's Hank Williams and jazz/R&B crooner Nat "King" Cole and the ever-popular Lionel Richie.

WC Handy, known as the "Father of the Blues," was a prominent musician and composer born in Florence, Alabama, just a few miles from Muscle Shoals. In the early 1900s, Handy moved to Memphis, where he became a key figure in the development of the blues genre. His birthplace, a small log cabin, is now a music-centric museum, still owned and operated by his family.

If music is not your passion, the Shoals area offers diverse reasons to visit. A rock star of a different type is the Wichahpi Commemorative Wall, better known as Tom's Wall. Tom Hendrix spent 33 years hauling rocks and constructing a memorial wall for his great-great-grandmother. She was forced to leave her home and walk the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma. A member of the Yuchi Indian tribe, she eventually walked 700 miles to return to the Singing River. Each stone represents one step of her journey. Meandering along the wall becomes a moving experience like nothing I've seen before.

More notable attractions include the Coon Dog Cemetery with graves and decorative tombstones for coon dogs, the 1939-designed Frank Lloyd Wright "Rosenbaum" House with original furnishings open to the public, and the Florence Indian Mound and Museum. Another must-see in nearby Tuscumbia is Ivy Green, the house where Helen Keller connected the spilling water at the pump with the letters in the word w-a-t-e-r traced in her hand. Anglers like to come to the "Smallmouth Bass Capital of the World" for excellent freshwater fishing. I'm sure something in Muscle Shoals will hit the right chord for you.

For more information: <http://colbert-countytourism.org> or alabama.travel

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



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Muscle Shoals studio artists.

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