



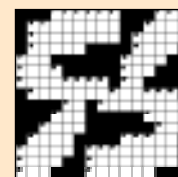
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Photo courtesy Mandarin Museum & Historical Society  
Mandarin Museum will host its annual Winter Celebration on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 11a.m. – 4 p.m.

## Winter Celebration continues 22 year tradition

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Mandarin Museum will host its annual Winter Celebration on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 11a.m. – 4 p.m. throughout the museum and Walter Jones Historical Park located at 11964 Mandarin Road. This free community event includes fun for the entire family.

As in years past, all historic buildings in Walter Jones Historical Park will be open to visitors, and guests will notice festive décor adorning the 1875 Farmhouse courtesy of the Mandarin Garden Club. The day also promises a visit and photo opportunity with Santa and Mrs.

Winter Celebration cont. on pg. 6

## Boat Parade of Lights kicks off holiday season

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewslines.com

Since 1988, the Julington Creek Prop Club has presented the Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights for everyone to come out and enjoy. This year's event will take place on Saturday, Dec. 2 beginning at 7 p.m. The highly anticipated night is for all families to gather and enjoy the beauty of color, lights, and sounds of the season along Julington Creek.

This festive annual event has an estimated 40 boats of all shapes, sizes, and themes participating in the event. Boats decked out in all their holiday finery navigate the parade route, which begins at the Julington Creek Marina, goes underneath the Julington Creek Bridge and motors around Bulls Bay, then returns under the bridge and continues down Durbin Creek. Spectators can view it from the Julington Creek Bridge walkways.

Homeowners with docks located on the parade route are invited to join in the fun too. Decorated docks can vie for a variety of prizes. Tradition holds that the boaters judge the docks. The best holiday decorated boat gets a \$300 cash prize, while second place gets \$200 and third place \$100. All boaters participat-



Photos courtesy Julington Creek Prop Club

ing will also receive a Captain's Gift Bag. Prizes are also awarded for "Best Dock" along the parade route.

"The people along the shores of the creek put on quite a show for us every year," said Julington Creek Prop Club Commodore Rob Ponik.

According to Ponik, there is a great deal of planning and organizational prep work done before the boat parade. In October each year, the Prop Club starts contacting boaters, area merchants and residents gathering donations for the event. Some of the boats participating in the parade are Prop Club members and others come from all over the area. Boats range in size from 17 to 40 feet in length.

"Annual dues provide some of the funds for the Julington Creek Boat Parade of Lights, but we depend and appreciate many local business' and waterfront owners contributions as well," said Ponik. "We look forward to seeing everyone at the boat parade."

The Prop Club is a social organization of boaters that meets on the second Saturday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Julington Creek Marina dock. All interested boaters are invited to join for boating information and fun at the creek. Visit [www.jcpropclub.com](http://www.jcpropclub.com) for more information.



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Library offers plethora of activities

By Jeremy Yates  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Looking for things to do this winter break? Join us at Mandarin Branch Library on Saturday, Dec. 2 at 10 a.m. for a morning of winter and holiday crafts (for children aged five to 12). Then, on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 11 a.m., bring the whole family and decorate a gingerbread house. We provide the supplies (one house per family); you provide the imagination!

Looking for more family fun? The Friends of the South Mandarin Branch Library donated a massive 6167-piece Lord of the Rings-inspired LEGO set and we need your help building it. Drop in for a community build Saturdays from 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. starting Dec. 23 (through Jan. 6). Open to adults, teens and children.

Got a cozy holiday story you want to share with the world? Join us for a Writer's Lab workshop with Mike Messier at Mandarin Branch Library on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. He'll walk you through publishing fiction and nonfiction on Kindle Vella and Amazon KDP.

Make handcrafted greeting cards, post-

cards and more in our new Snail Mail Lab (for ages nine to 12) Wednesdays at 4 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library or Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Library.

Pre-K friends and families: Join us for holiday stories and a special holiday drink at Mandarin Branch Library on Thursday, Dec. 21 at 10:30 a.m. The older kids (ages five to 12) are invited to trivia, dancing, crafts and more Saturday, Dec. 30 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. for an early New Year's Eve Party.

Want more? For homeschoolers aged 10 – 14, we have Engineer Your Adventure Lab at South Mandarin Library Fridays at 11 a.m. (starting Dec. 8). It combines the fun of a fantasy roleplaying game with the problem-solving skills of an engineer.

Read to a Therapy Dog at South Mandarin Library Wednesdays from 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Join Sammy, the Golden Retriever, on Dec. 6 and 20. Yona, the Newfoundland Dog, returns Dec. 13 and 27. You can also catch Yona Saturday, Dec. 23, at 2:30 p.m. at Mandarin Library.

Visit [www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/events](http://www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/events) for more information.



Photo courtesy Jacksonville Public Library  
There's plenty to do over the winter break at your Mandarin Libraries!

Bolles launches Empower Hour Program



Photo courtesy Bolles

This fall, the Bartram Learning Resource Center on the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus launched Empower Hour — a program that provides students with dedicated time to improve their executive functioning skills. Led by middle school learning specialist Janice Rausch, each monthly Empower Hour session is an energetic, interactive time of learning, giving all who attend the opportunity to develop independence, share resources, make new friends and experience growth. The first two Empower Hours held this school year covered organization and notetaking, and those who attended received custom-created Doodle Notes pages with information reinforcing the lessons. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions and get clarification before putting their newly fortified skills into practice.



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# BFF

## Best Furry Friend of the month

### Meet Goose!



**Breed:**  
Labrador Retriever

**Favorite Activity:**  
Boat rides on Julington Creek and hunting with dad

**Favorite Food:**  
Fresh Market's rotisserie chicken

**Favorite Friend:**  
Tasha

**How Did Your BFF Get Her Name?:**  
We thought it was a cute and funny name for a bird dog!

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 Mandarin NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Mandarin NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.



### Holiday Gift Guide in this issue!

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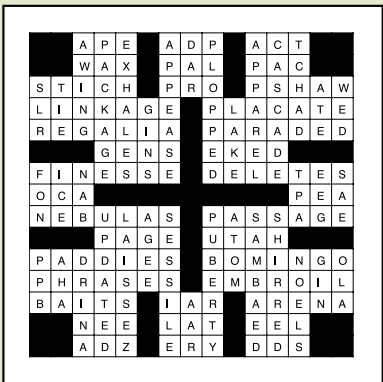
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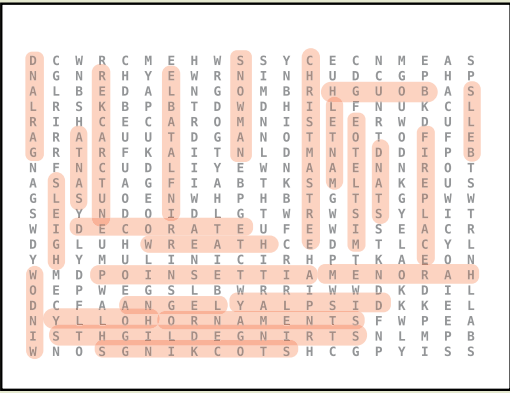
Can you guess where this is?  
Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.  
Last month's Mystery Photo was the gazebo at Billard Park.



### Answers to our Puzzles PG 10



A. tinsel B. candles C. lights D. wreath



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Community Calendar

What's Happening in Mandarin

**Shuffleboard is played** on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. at Mandarin Park (now known as Hazouri Park). The courts are at the park entrance next to the tennis courts. Try to get there a few minutes early for court assignments. Beginners are welcome. Just show up (a few minutes before playing time), unless it rains.

**Toast of Jax Toastmasters** meets every Saturday, except on holiday weekends, at 7:30 a.m. at Mandarin Lutheran Church, 11900 San Jose Boulevard. Guests are welcome. The meetings can also be attended online at <https://toastofjax.toastmastersclubs.org/>.

**Acoustic Jam Session** is held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Kids' Building of Trinity Mandarin, located at 2955 Orange Picker Road. This jam is open to everyone and all levels of ability are welcome. Come to play with the group or just sit back and enjoy the music. For more information, contact Burt Coulliette at (904) 302-0423.

**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](mailto:playinghookie2022@gmail.com) for more information.

**1st: Annual Christmas Tree Lighting** with special guest Mayor Donna Deegan will be held on Dec. 1 beginning at 5 p.m. at the Mandarin Community Club, 12447 Mandarin Road. Visit [www.mandarincommunityclub.org](http://www.mandarincommunityclub.org) for more information.

**2nd: Winter Celebration** will be held from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2 at Mandarin Museum and Walter Jones Historical Park, 11964 Mandarin Road. This free event will feature Santa and Mrs. Claus, children's crafts, historic building tours, local nonprofits, live music, pony rides, and more. Visit [www.mandarinmuseum.org](http://www.mandarinmuseum.org) for more information.

**3rd: Christmas Concert** with Hanging of the Greens will be held at Mandarin United Methodist Church, 11270 San Jose Blvd. on Dec. 3 at 4 p.m. Enjoy music of the season and decorating the two 12-foot Christmas trees in the church. Visit [www.mumc.net](http://www.mumc.net) for more information.

**3rd: Music Under the Oaks** community music jam, hosted by the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society and North Florida Folk Network will resume underneath the beautiful trees in front of Mandarin Museum on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket and relax and listen. Mandarin Museum and the 1898 Schoolhouse will be open to visitors. Visit [www.mandarinmuseum.org](http://www.mandarinmuseum.org) or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

**5th: Honeybee Quilters Guild** will meet on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church at the Mandarin Road Campus in the Woody Room (left-side far door) at 11844 Mandarin Rd. Join us for our Holiday Party, \$15 for the catered meal. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit [honeybeequilters.org](http://honeybeequilters.org) for more information.

**7th: 33rd annual Tree of Life** and Candlelight Services of Remembrance, hosted by Community Hospice & Palliative Care, will be held at the Earl B. Hadlow Center for Caring, 4266 Sunbeam Road, on Dec. 7 from 5:45 p.m. – 7 p.m. This service will honor the memory of loved ones lost in a beautiful, inspiring program of music and reflection. Attendees are invited to bring a photo of their loved one to display on the memory table. Regardless of whether they received care from Community Hospice, anyone in the community who has experienced a loss can honor their loved one. Visit [tol.communityhospice.com](http://tol.communityhospice.com) for more information

**9th: Second Saturday Arts** and Farmers Market at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on Dec. 9 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Visit [www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/](https://www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/) for more information.

**9th: Journey Through Bethlehem**, will be held from 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 9 at Mandarin United Methodist Church, 11270 San Jose Blvd., in Wesley Hall. Take a journey through the town of Bethlehem around the church campus and see sights and places in the town that Jesus was born. Refreshments served at the end of your journey. Visit [www.mumc.net](http://www.mumc.net) for more information.

**9th: The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society** will meet Saturday, Dec. 9 at 10 a.m. for a Holiday Social, election of board members, and "Ancestor Road Show" at Mandarin Branch Library, 3330 Kori Road. Email Georgia at [gpmurano@bellsouth.net](mailto:gpmurano@bellsouth.net) or SGES at [sgesjax@att.net](mailto:sgesjax@att.net) if you wish to share your ancestor story. This event is free and open to the public. Visit [www.sgesjax.org](http://www.sgesjax.org) or call (904) 778-1000 for more information.

**9th: Southside Multiple Sclerosis group** meets on the second Saturday of each month (this month on Dec. 9) at 2 p.m. at the JCA, 8505 San Jose Blvd. Every other month there is a speaker and on alternate months there are group discussions on the current situation with our MS. Call group leader Susan Armstron, (904) 396-1082 for more information.

**10th - 11th: "He Is," a spiritual Christmas concert** benefiting American Civility Association, Kairos Outside, Netsanet Ministries, North Florida School of Special Education, and Young Lives, will be presented at 7 p.m. on Dec. 10 and Dec. 11 at San Jose Church of Christ, 6233 San Jose Blvd. Visit [www.northfloridaschool.org](http://www.northfloridaschool.org) to reserve a seat.

**11th: Parent Support Group** with Licensed Mental Health Counselor Pattie Pallay will be held the second Monday of each month (this month, Dec. 11) at 6 p.m. in the Youth Hut of Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 2001 University Blvd. This group is for parents with children of all ages (birth – adult) who are seeking support with children who are neurodivergent, have physical disabilities, are struggling with mental illness or just daily life. There is no charge to attend; visit [www.lpcjax.org/calendar](http://www.lpcjax.org/calendar) to register.


**14th: Mandarin Women's Club's Members Only Holiday Luncheon** will be held on Dec. 14 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn Mandarin. The luncheon will feature festive holiday items donated by club members and available to win with the purchase of tickets, which will be sold at the luncheon and will cost \$10 for a strip of 25 tickets. Attendees will have a chance to win homemade goodies, wine, holiday decorations, jewelry, scarves, and many other great items. The cost of the lunch is \$25 and reservations and payment must be received by Dec. 7 by calling Jo-Ellen at (904) 635-8722 or emailing her at [joshifty@aol.com](mailto:joshifty@aol.com). Visit [www.mandarinwomensclub.com](http://www.mandarinwomensclub.com) for more information and membership forms.

**15th: The Italian American Club** of Jacksonville will hold its popular Spaghetti to Go on Friday, Dec. 15 from 5 p.m. until the spaghetti is gone at the club building, 2838 Westberry Road. Take out only; cash, credit and debit cards are accepted. No phone orders. Visit [www.iacofjacksonville.com](http://www.iacofjacksonville.com) or call (904) 586-2700 for more information.



**17th: A Service of Hope** and Remembrance, for those going through a difficult time during the Christmas season, will be held at 6 p.m. on Dec. 17 at Mandarin United Methodist Church, 11270 San Jose Blvd., in Wesley Hall. Visit [www.mumc.net](http://www.mumc.net) for more information.

**18th: The All Star Quilters Guild** will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, Dec. 18 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program will be a holiday festival called "Florida Follies." Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit [www.allstarquilters.org](http://www.allstarquilters.org) for more information.

**21st: After the Party's Over** (the Fate of your Holiday Plants) will be presented at 10 a.m. on Dec. 21 at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit [www.mandaringardenclub.org](http://www.mandaringardenclub.org) for more information.



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with Duval County School Board Member  
Lori Hershey, District 7

**Q: Can you share any insight on the joint meeting of the Duval County School Board and the Jacksonville City Council held on Nov. 13?**

A: The major focus of this meeting was school safety and security as well as how the city supports students' after school programs, especially via the Kids' Hope Alliance and the Boys and Girls Club. There was also a conversation about literacy, which is a focus of both the school board and the mayor's office. The school district also provided an update on the superintendent search, which has been postponed until spring.

**Q: How often do these joint meetings occur?**

A: We try to meet annually, but this year, this is actually the second joint meeting. I understand there is a desire by the city council leadership to continue to have these meetings with the school board to continue to foster partnerships

**Q: Were there students represented at the meeting?**

A: At the beginning of the meeting, we were pleased to listen to a musical interlude by orchestra students from Douglas Anderson

School of the Arts. Then, at the conclusion of the meeting, Sandalwood's Culinary Arts program students provided lunch for the attendees. Both of these help showcase the CTE (Career and Technical Education) provided by Duval County Schools.

**Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 7?**

A: Greenscape will be planting 20 trees at Crown Point Elementary School on Saturday, Dec. 9 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Students, faculty and community volunteers will plant trees to provide much needed shade for the playground and surrounding area. Greenscape will also provide books for students that will detail the benefits of trees. We hope you can join us!

Congratulations to the Mandarin High School Mustangs — with their win over Lake Mary, they earned a place in the third round of the state football playoffs.

I'd like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy holiday season!

**Q: How can our readers contact you?**

A: They can email me at HersheyL@duvalschools.org or call me at (904) 390-2375.



with Jacksonville City Council Member  
Michael Boylan, District 6

**Q: What is the latest on the County Dock property?**

A: As I understand it, conversations between the applicant and neighbors are ongoing and there hasn't yet been a revised application submitted. If one is submitted soon, it would go before the Planning Commission on Dec. 5.

**Q: Can you share any insight on the new Marine Fire Station?**

A: Marine Fire Station No. 68 will be located at 10562 Scott Mill Road. About two months ago, the City Council and the Mayor's Office approved the purchase of this land, so the city now owns it. Jacksonville Fire and Rescue has needed a marine station in this part of the city for a long time, especially near the Buckman Bridge. This property proved to be the most cost effective, as it already has a dock to accommodate the unit's boat and the existing home on the property can be used. The property is presently undergoing the rezoning process and the only proposed changes to the existing home will be to accommodate the wishes of the immediate neighbors. There will be no emergency vehicles at the property and no more than five or six JFRD personnel onsite during their shift.

**Q: Are there any updates on the Orange Picker Road realignment/Alberts Field parking/dog park project?**

A: With much effort and encouragement from our office, all plans and permits for this project have been approved. I recently learned from Coxwell Contracting that beginning on Nov. 20, crews will start Phase I as they begin to move water systems and complete drainage and the pond. This should last until approximately March 4, 2024, when Phase II will begin. This will involve the full detour of Orange Picker Road to allow for construction of the new intersection and will take until approximately May 6, 2024. Finally, Phase III, which includes the construction of the Alberts Field parking lot, is projected to take place in May and June 2024. I will follow up with Parks and Recreation to confirm that this phase also includes the dog park. It's important to keep in mind that all dates are projected at this time.

**Q: Do you have anything else to share with Mandarin readers?**

A: IQ Fiber has completed approximately half of their installation in the Mandarin area. This is ongoing and will continue into next year.

Also, I'd like to wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season!

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

A: Community members can email me at MBoylan@coj.net or call (904) 255-5206.



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**SUNDAY, January 14th** – Gran Fondo Race: Push your limits in this world-class Gran Fondo competition. Experience the thrill of racing like a pro!

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### SIGN UP TODAY!

To join us on the ride sign up by using the QR code or at [GiroRideLikeAPro-USA.com](https://GiroRideLikeAPro-USA.com)  
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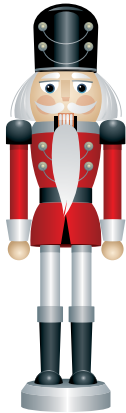
# Holiday Guide



## Choose your Nutcracker

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com

“The Nutcracker” is believed by many to be a time-honored holiday tradition. In Northeast Florida, the tradition continues with five productions of the ballet this December. Since each performance is unique, following is a guide highlighting the dates, times and locations of each to help you choose “your” Nutcracker.



Graphic courtesy MetroCreative

### Community Nutcracker

Dec. 8 at 7:30 p.m.  
Dec. 9 at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.  
Florida Theatre  
www.jaxnutcracker.org

Artistic Directors Dulce Anaya, Debra Rankin and Mark Spivak continue this holiday tradition which began in 1992. Community Nutcracker is the only nonprofit, volunteer-run organization that offers a portion of its proceeds to local charitable agencies with each performance — and has donated more

than \$800,000 in the past 32 years. The performing company is made up of local talent with more than 200 dancers ranging in age from nine to adult from Northeast Florida auditioning and performing in the production. In an effort to promote the arts in schools, Community Nutcracker also offers matinee performances for school groups as well as a

Community Service Night (invitation only).!

### Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet

Dec. 9 at 6 p.m.  
Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Department  
www.missfeliciasdance.com

This year marks the 28th performance of the Christ Church Nutcracker Ballet, directed by Felicia Rhoden of the Christ Church Dance Ministry as well as owner of Miss Felicia’s Dance. Nearly 300 performers, aged two to 90 years old, will take the stage.

### Jacksonville Symphony’s First Coast Nutcracker

Dec. 15 at 8 p.m.  
Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.  
Dec. 17 at 2 p.m.  
Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts  
www.jaxsymphony.org/first-coast-nutcracker/

Jacksonville Symphony’s First Coast Nutcracker has been a tradition in North Florida for more than 50 years. Under the direction of choreographer and artistic director Rhonda Stampalia, the First Coast Nutcracker showcases internationally renowned principal dancers, the area’s finest young dancers, and Tchaikovsky’s best-loved melodies performed by the Jacksonville Symphony with conductor Kevin Fitzgerald.

### The Nutcracker 2022 by the Florida Ballet

Dec. 15 at 7:30 p.m.  
Dec. 16 at 4:30 p.m. Dec. 17 at 2 p.m.  
Lazzara Theater, UNF Fine Arts Center  
floridaballet.org

The Florida Ballet’s Nutcracker features swirling snowflakes, waltzing flowers, and dancing bonbons. From the captivating dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy to the iconic snow scene, this enchanting classical ballet is set to the beloved music of Tchaikovsky and features more than 100 local dancers.

### St. Augustine Ballet Nutcracker

Dec. 15 at 7 p.m.  
Dec. 16 at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.  
Dec. 17 at 2 p.m.  
Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College  
www.saintaugustineballet.com



This year’s production of “The Nutcracker” marks the 15th annual performance by the St. Augustine Ballet and features professional ballet dancers as well as dance students from St. Augustine and surrounding areas. The St. Augustine Ballet, under the artistic direction of Luis Abella, is a non-profit organization with a mission to involve community members of all ages in meaningful dance experiences.

### Christmas FANTASTIQUE

Dec. 20 at 7 p.m.  
Dec. 21 at 7 p.m.  
Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College  
www.zoikasdance.com

This original production by Zoika’s Dance tells the classic holiday story of “The Nutcracker” through the language of dance, featuring classical ballet, as well as tap, hip hop, acro, and contemporary dance. Professional dancers join young, local dancers on stage for the holiday extravaganza.

All of these performances are designed to enchant, enthrall, and bring families and community members together for the holiday season. Which one is right for you?



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904-268-9457 ♦ www.OurSaviourJax.org

Winter Celebration cont. from pg. 1

Claus, crafts and goodies for children, “reindeer” rides, historical re-enactors, local nonprofits, live music, “Ask a Master Gardener,” Meet the Maple Leaf Divers, and more.

The perfect Christmas gift — Mandarin Frogs — will be available for purchase in the museum’s shop. Mandarin’s own Frogman will be on hand with paintable

concrete miniatures.

The day is part of a weekend of festivities beginning with Mandarin Community Club’s annual Christmas tree lighting on Friday, Dec 1. The historic Mandarin Store and Post Office, located at 12471 Mandarin Road, will be open for tours during the tree-lighting event from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.



## Merry & Bright



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# Holiday Guide



## Tasty tidbits about eggnog

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Eggnog is a rich and delicious beverage that has become synonymous with the most festive time of year. This milk- and egg-based concoction is tasty on its own, or it can be dressed up with other flavors and spiked with a favorite spirit when celebrating the holiday season with other adult partygoers.

December is National Eggnog Month, and Dec. 24 is National Eggnog Day. There is no more perfect time of year to learn everything you can about eggnog — all the while sipping a cup of this creamy concoction. Indulge in these festive facts about the beverage, courtesy of Mental Floss, The Fact Site and Tastemade.

- Eggnog likely originated in the medieval period and was known as "posset," a hot, milk-based drink made of spices and wine. Even though posset could be a cocktail, it also was used as a remedy for colds and flu for its soothing properties.
- Milk, eggs, and sherry used in the early recipes were difficult to come by, so when eggnog first appeared it was a drink only the wealthy could enjoy. That changed when eggnog was

popularized in the American colonies, where dairy products and liquor were more readily available.

- Etymologists believe "eggnog" stems from the word "noggin," which refers to small wooden mugs often used to serve strong ale, known by the slang word "nog."
- In the Medieval period, it was risky to drink milk straight because it wasn't pasteurized. Eggnog contained alcohol so that it would kill off any harmful bacteria in the milk.
- A typical homemade version of eggnog has roughly one egg per serving; however, commercial eggnog is regulated by the FDA and can only contain 1 percent of the product's final weight in egg yolk solids. That stems from fear of raw egg and salmonella.
- President George Washington apparently enjoyed serving eggnog at Christmas, and even had his own special recipe, according to the Old Farmer's Almanac.
- There is no right or wrong alcohol to use when preparing eggnog. Distilled spirits like rum, sherry, cognac, and whiskey all have produced suitable eggnogs.

- Puerto Rican coquito is a traditional drink that is very similar to eggnog.
- Individuals concerned about eggs or milk in eggnog can enjoy a vegan recipe made from nut milk instead. Commercially produced vegan eggnog offerings are now more widely available.
- One of the more notable flavors in eggnog comes from the use of nutmeg. Nutmeg is a fragrant spice made from grinding the seed of the nutmeg tree.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative  
Indulge in these festive facts about eggnog.

## Lesser known Chanukah traditions

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Chanukah is a relatively modern holiday in regard to the Hebrew calendar. Unlike Yom Kippur or Passover, which are steeped in rich traditions, there are few Chanukah customs.

Chanukah celebrants still participate in various customs each year, some of which are customized according to family preferences. While some traditions, such as the lighting of the Chanukah menorah, are familiar, others may not be as widely known — especially to those outside of the faith. Here's a look at a select few.

- Saying the Shehecheyanu blessing: Traditionally, there are two blessings that some people say each night while lighting the candles. The first is recited while holding the lit shamash, and the second is said while lighting the candles. Another blessing, known as the "Shehecheyanu," is said the first night. According to 18Doors, a resource on the Jewish faith, it's the same blessing traditionally said on the first night of all Jewish holidays and other special occasions.
- Display or use of the shofar: A shofar is a type of instrument made from a ram's horn. It is a symbol of the ram that Abraham offered as a sacrifice in place of his son Isaac, exemplifying heroic faith of the fathers of the Jewish people. The shofar also serves as a reminder of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and calls people to strive for Israel's renewal and fellowship with God.
- Singing "Ma'oz Tzur": Chanukah

songs may not be as numerous or as widely sung as Christmas carols during the holiday season, but there are a select few that are part of the festivities. "Oh Chanukah Oh Chanukah" and "The Dreidl Song" are some of the most widely known songs, but some people also follow the custom of singing "Ma'oz Tzur (Rock of Ages)" around the menorah. The words were composed in the 13th century, and the song summarizes historical challenges faced by the Jewish people that were overcome with God's help.

- Use of oil in Chanukah feasts: It's well known that latkes, or fried potato pancakes, are served around Chanukah. The reason is due to the oil used to fry them, which traditionally is olive oil. Fried foods call to mind a specific Chanukah miracle. After the Greeks destroyed the sanctuary and defiled what was thought to be all of the oil, one jug sealed with the imprint of the High Priest was found. That one jug managed to keep the Temple's menorah lit for eight days, despite it being insufficient to handle this task. This was considered a miracle and celebrated in subsequent years.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative  
While some traditions, such as the lighting of the Chanukah menorah, are familiar, others may not be as widely known — especially to those outside of the faith.

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## PARISH BINGO

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## Christmas at Mandarin United Methodist Church

**Christmas Concert with Hanging of the Greens**  
**December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4pm Sanctuary**

This year's event features our choirs and an orchestra accompaniment. During this event the church is decorated. Join us as we celebrate all the sounds and exuberant joy of the season.

**Journey through Bethlehem**  
**December 9<sup>th</sup> 4pm – 6:30pm**

This event features a walk through Bethlehem during Bible times. Featuring an interactive journey through the marketplace with tradesmen. Then visit the shepherds, wise men, stable with live animals and finally the Manger. Join us at the end of your journey for refreshments and enjoy Christmas music performed by our choirs.

**Christmas Eve Services**  
**December 24<sup>th</sup>**

**4pm Family Service – Worship Center**  
**6pm Candlelight – Sanctuary**  
**8pm Communion & Candlelight – Sanctuary**

**Mandarin United Methodist Church**  
**11270 San Jose Blvd. | Jacksonville, FL 32223 | 904-268-5549**



**Briefs**

**Knights of Columbus Council 10850 presents \$2,000 to Divine Mercy House**  
On Oct. 3, the Knights of Columbus St. Johns River Council 10850 at St.

Joseph's Catholic Church presented a \$2,000 check to Amy Woodward, Director of the Mandarin Divine Mercy House. The proceeds came from Knights of Columbus Spaghetti Dinner hosted by the St. Johns River Council 10850.

Divine Mercy House is a Christian maternity home for women aged 18 to 28 facing a crisis pregnancy, with little to no help available to them, and who courageously choose life for their unborn babies. Open to women of all faiths, Divine Mercy House provides a

loving and nurturing environment to meet the physical, spiritual, emotional, and educational needs of each mother and her child. Since its inception in 1996, Divine Mercy House has served more than 100 women, averaging six to 10 per year. Whether a woman decides to parent or place the baby for adoption, all expectant mothers in the residential program receive holistic care and support throughout pregnancy and beyond.

Council 10850 in Jacksonville, Florida is one of 17,000 Knights of Columbus Councils that make up the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. Founded in 1882 to assist working-class and immigrant Catholics in the United States, today the approximately

2 million members of the Knights put their faith into action through a broad range of charitable causes locally, nationally and internationally with financial contributions and hands-on service. Catholic gentlemen can join the Knights of Columbus now by visiting [kofc.org/join](http://kofc.org/join)



Photo courtesy James Griffith  
Grand Knight Steve Roadruck, Harry Kimball, Paul Belkot, and Bill Napolitano presented the check to DMH Director Amy Woodward.

**Mandarin Women's Club celebrates the season**

Members of the Mandarin Women's Club will start off the holiday season with a tour of St. Augustine on Dec. 1, followed by two special dining experiences on Dec. 8 and 16 at HarborChase.

Due to Christmas, the December members only Holiday Luncheon will be on the third Thursday of the month, Dec. 14, at the Ramada Inn in Mandarin, 3030 Hartley Road. The luncheon will feature festive holiday items donated by Club members and available to win with the purchase of tickets. The tickets will be sold at the luncheon and will cost \$10 for a strip of 25 tickets. Attendees will have a chance to win homemade goodies, wine, holiday decorations, jewelry, scarves, and many other items.

Doors open at 10:30 a.m. and reservations for the luncheon are required.

The luncheon cost is \$25 and your check must be received by Thursday, Dec. 7. To make reservations and obtain payment instructions, members should contact Jo-Ellen Baxley. Visit [www.mandarinwomensclub.com](http://www.mandarinwomensclub.com) for more information on events, photos, and membership forms.

**Share a moving moment with a manatee adoption**

Searching for the perfect gift that not only moves the heart, but also contributes to a great cause? Look no further

than Save the Manatee Club's Adopt-A-Manatee® program. Adoptions offer a unique opportunity for individuals to symbolically adopt a real manatee and support the protection and well-being of these aquatic mammals.

Save the Manatee Club is an international 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting imperiled manatees and their aquatic habitat. For more than four decades, the club has been at the forefront of manatee conservation efforts, working tirelessly to ensure the survival and well-being of these gentle giants.

Each adoption package includes a personalized certificate of adoption, a touching biography that shares the manatee's unique story, and a comprehensive membership packet. One of the many perks of adopting a manatee through Save the Manatee Club is a subscription to "The Manatee Zone." This quarterly newsletter provides adoptive parents and gift givers with the latest manatee news, updates on each adoptable manatee, and heartwarming stories about these aquatic mammals.

Adoptions start at just \$25 per year. For a limited time, a free educational 2024 manatee wall calendar can be included at any adoption level, making the experience even more memorable. Visit [savethemanatee.org](http://savethemanatee.org) for more information.

**St. Andrews Society of Jacksonville to hold garage sale in Fruit Cove**

The St. Andrews Society of Jacksonville will hold a special garage sale on Saturday, Dec. 9. Sale proceeds will go to benefit the Society's scholarship program, which provides financial assistance to dancers, musicians and students or researchers of Scottish history and culture. The garage sale will be held at 1392 Fruit Cove Forest Road, North in Fruit Cove from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

"We'll have a variety of items from household goods to books and collectables along with some Scottish-themed items," said Ann Taylor, president of the local society. "A bit of something for everyone!"

Taylor said anyone interested in Scottish heritage or culture is welcomed to join the St. Andrews Society. Visit <https://jaxsaintandrews.org/> for more information.

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# Life

travel • pantry raiders • gardening  
fishing • entertainment • puzzles

## Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com

### Jeremiah Stanley

Jeremiah Stanley was born and raised in the Ozark Mountains area of southwest Missouri and he said he never envisioned that he would leave this area where his family had lived for generations — until he met a “young lady from Fernandina Beach, Florida, named Jenny” when he was attending a small, faith-based college in Oklahoma City. They started dating and were married in 2001. Jenny wanted to return to northeast Florida, and so after graduation they did. Jeremiah had his undergraduate degree in ministry, but worked at CitiBank in Jacksonville as a way to pay his way through seminary. He earned a Master of Divinity from Liberty University and then a doctoral degree in Pastoral Leadership from Southern Seminary several years later. Today, he is the new pastor of Trinity Mandarin on Orange Picker Road. He and Jenny have three teenage sons.

**Q: Did you always know you wanted to be a pastor?**

A: Growing up, I was always connected to a church environment. As a teen, I felt a stirring in my heart to help people, so when I went to college I pursued a degree in ministry. I thought perhaps I'd go overseas and help people.

### Get to Know ...

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



Photo courtesy Jeremiah Stanley  
Jeremiah Stanley and his family.

this is my first foray into leading a church.

**Q: What is the mission and vision of the revitalized Trinity Mandarin?**

A: We want to help everyday people discover an extraordinary life with God. We are focusing on growing our family, student, and youth ministries. Our average

Sunday attendance has grown to more than 100 on Sundays and 22 percent of that is under the age of 18, so we are very excited about that.

**Q: What is the most satisfying part of your job and what is the most challenging?**

A: The most satisfying thing is engaging the community. We have a great team that is putting together successful family events like Trick or Trunk and our recent Block Party. The biggest challenge is that since the church is in the midst of a revitalization, many people in the community don't know us yet. So we're focusing on new and different things as well as events for the younger demographic.

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

A: In a flashback to my midwest roots, I enjoy hobby farming on the weekends. We have 40 head of cattle on a farm near Baldwin. In general I just love to be outside. I also keep busy with our children and their sports and activities.

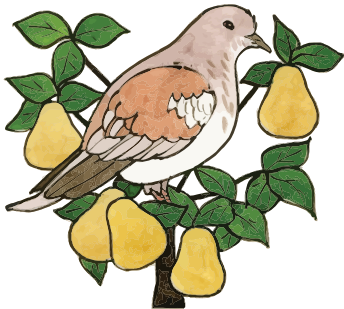
## The origins of “The 12 Days of Christmas”

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Christmas carols can be heard far and wide from Thanksgiving weekend through Christmas Day. “The 12 Days of Christmas” is one of the most recognizable carols, and for good reason, as the popular song can trace its history back several centuries. Researchers have traced the earliest printed version of the poem on which the song is based all the way back to 1780. That's three years before the signing of the Treaty of Paris, which officially ended the American Revolutionary War.

The song has long been suspected to have been a way for Catholics in Britain to teach their children the catechism, as the 1700s was a controversial period for Catholicism in the country; however, no documentary evidence exists in support of that theory, and many historians feel it is inaccurate. Others indicate that, while 1780 is likely the first time the poem was printed, the poem is likely much older than that, with origins potentially in France or Scotland.

What is known is that the version many people recognize today, namely in song form, can be traced to the early 20th century, when English singer and composer Frederic Austin first popularized the melody for the song. Austin performed that version of the song beginning in 1905, and it was first published in 1909.





**Clay Eye**  
Physicians & Surgeons

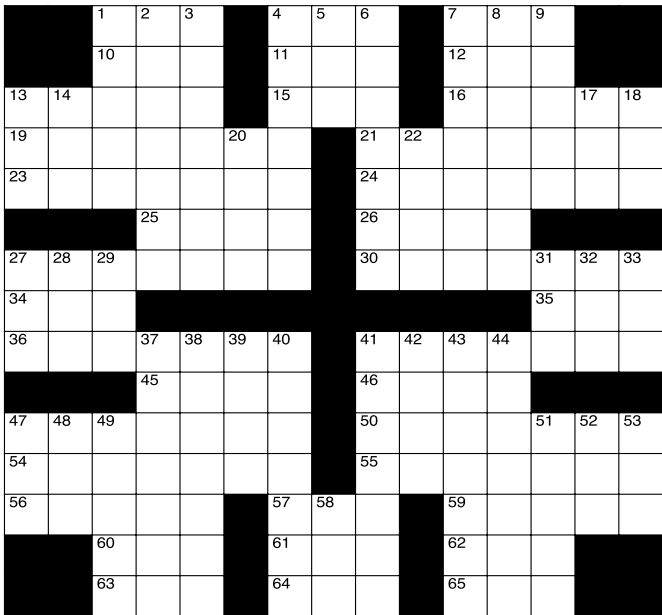
# Happy Holidays

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Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Mimic
4. Payroll firm
7. Perform in a play
10. Opine: \_\_ philosophical
11. Crony
12. Political action committee
13. 1991 Wimbledon winner
15. Affirmative
16. Exclamation of disgust
19. Action of connecting
21. A way to calm
23. Especially fine or decorative clothing
24. Walked proudly
25. Group of people related through male heir
26. Supplemented with difficulty
27. Soft touch
30. Erases
34. Spanish river
35. A princess can detect it
36. Clouds of gas
41. A way to get through
45. Part of a book
46. Southwestern US state
47. Fields where rice is grown
50. Area in Ghana
54. Sayings
55. Involve deeply
56. Compels to act
57. "Ignore all rules"
59. Indoor entertainment space
60. Born of
61. Back muscle
62. Sea dweller
63. Tools that resemble an axe
64. Prefix denoting class or kind
65. Tooth caregiver

### CLUES DOWN

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Inspiring                      | 32. Records brain activity (abbr.) |
| 2. Put into a box                 | 33. Car mechanics group            |
| 3. Breathes out                   | 37. Brought up to snuff            |
| 4. Pacify                         | 38. ___ faire: Economic approach   |
| 5. Patriotic society for women    | 39. Phil ___, former CIA           |
| 6. Fell down                      | 40. Affixed                        |
| 7. Clothing                       | 41. Period of adolescence          |
| 8. Dishwasher detergent brand     | 42. Substance                      |
| 9. Former French republic         | 43. Danced                         |
| 13. Single lens reflex            | 44. Baked without its shell        |
| 14. Men's fashion accessory       | 47. Parts per billion (abbr.)      |
| 17. Consumed                      | 48. Satisfaction                   |
| 18. Marry                         | 49. Balkans river                  |
| 20. ___ up: intensifies           | 51. Christmas carols               |
| 22. Body of water                 | 52. Partner to tonic               |
| 27. People of southern Benin      | 53. "The Godfather" character      |
| 28. Decorate a cake with frosting | Johnny                             |
| 29. Snag                          | 58. Swiss river                    |
| 31. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)        |                                    |

## DECK THE HALLS WORD SEARCH

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

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

## WORDS

ANGEL  
BELLS  
BOUGH  
CHRISTMAS TREE  
DECORATE  
DISPLAY  
FIREPLACE  
GARLAND  
HOLLY  
INFLATABLE  
MANTEL  
MENORAH  
MISTLETOE  
NUTCRACKER  
ORNAMENTS  
POINSETTIA  
SANTA  
SLEIGH  
SNOWMAN  
STAND  
STOCKINGS  
STRINGED LIGHTS  
WINDOW  
WREATH



Solve the code to discover words related to holiday decorating.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 18 = I)

- A. 16 18 25 23 26 4**  
*Clue: Metallic strips*
- B. 8 24 25 7 4 26 23**  
*Clue: Wax illumination*
- C. 4 18 14 17 16 23**  
*Clue: Strings of bulbs*
- D. 1 11 26 24 16 17**  
*Clue: Evergreen door or wall hanging*

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Entertaining for the holidays frequently involves welcoming overnight guests. In these instances, having breakfast and brunch foods on hand can ensure that those spending the night will have something tasty to eat when they rise in the morning. Make-ahead foods, such as scones, can be ideal because they are delicious at room temperature, which means they can accommodate guests who are early risers as well as those who prefer to sleep in. This recipe for "Lemon-Ginger Scones" from "Simply Scratch" (Avery) by Laurie McNamara produces refreshing flavor in a buttery scone. Serve with tea or coffee and guests will be in heaven.

Lemon-Ginger Scones  
Makes 8 scones

- ½ cup cold heavy cream
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp. lemon extract
- ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 2 ¼ cups unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 3 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) ice-cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- ¼ cup finely diced candied ginger
- 2 tbsp. grated lemon zest

Treat overnight guests  
to a morning treat

By NewsLine Staff  
[mail@floridanewslines.com](mailto:mail@floridanewslines.com)

¼ cup powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 400 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper.

In a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, use a fork to beat together the heavy cream, eggs, lemon extract, and vanilla until combined. Chill until ready to use.

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Drop in the ice-cold butter and use a pastry cutter to cut the butter into the flour mixture until it resembles coarse wet sand.

Pour in the chilled cream mixture, ginger and lemon zest and use a rubber spatula to stir until just combined.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead it a few times before forming it into a ball. With floured fingers, flatten it out into a 1 ½ -inch-thick round. Cut the round into 8 equal-sized wedges and transfer them to the prepared baking sheet.

Bake for 15 to 18 minutes, rotating the baking sheet halfway through baking. Transfer the baked scones to a wire rack to cool. Once the scones have cooled, dust generously with powdered sugar before serving.

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## Center for Innovation coming soon to Bolles

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Dr. Dana Fender and his wife Hope signed a commitment on Oct. 30 to match a \$5 million gift from Frank Sanchez to build the Center for Innovation on the Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus. The 47,000-square-foot, three-story building marks the most expansive construction undertaking on the San Jose Campus property since the building now known as Bolles Hall was constructed as the San Jose Hotel in 1925.

Groundbreaking on the \$26 million building began in June 2022 with construction expected to finish by spring 2024.

The \$5 million donations from the Fenders and Sanchez are the largest single gifts to The Bolles School in its history. The state-of-the-art structure will now be called the “Frank R. Sanchez & Hope and Dana E. Fender Center for Innovation” in honor of their generosity.

“The Center for Innovation is an exciting work of both art and engineering, but like all campus structures, it exists to support the learning that happens within its footprint,” said Bolles Presi-

dent and Head of School Tyler Hodges. “In this case, this means collaborative hands-on learning, academic exploration with inspirational faculty and the ability for students to experiment and gain practical experience as they work toward their highest potential to serve our community and the world.”

The state-of-the-art structure is being constructed on the San Jose Campus’ last prime development site adjacent to Bolles Hall on a bluff overlooking the St. Johns River. The building will house Bolles’ science, math and technology programs, as well as expansive areas for advanced courses in robotics, computer programming, information technology, engineering and design. Designs for the facility accommodate opportunities for new offerings and provide space for collaboration and dialogue across disciplines. The new academic areas will deepen Bolles’ curriculum and cultivate the country’s next generation of innovators, according to department leaders.

The Frank R. Sanchez & Hope and Dana E. Fender Center for Innovation is expected to be completed this spring with students beginning classes upon their return from spring break this school year.

## Crown Point celebrates Red Ribbon Week

By Mary Eyster  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Crown Point Elementary School celebrated Red Ribbon Week during the

week of Oct. 23 through Oct. 30. Students participated in different activities to help facilitate learning throughout the week. On Monday, students




dressed up as superheroes to show that they have the power to be drug free. On Tuesday, the students teamed up against drugs and wore their favorite sports team shirts. On Wednesday, students left the drugs in the past and celebrated by dressing up in their favorite decades outfit. Thursday was Neon Day, when students wore their brightest colored clothing to show that they are “too bright for drugs.” On Friday, pajama day, students woke up drug-free and arrived at school in their pajamas.

Photo courtesy Mary Eyster

Super Heros from Ginger Manning's first grade class during Red Ribbon Week.

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# Mandarin Garden Club benefits from Eagle Scout project



Photo courtesy Joann Butler

Boy Scout Alex Brodie of Troop #321 completed his Eagle Scout project at the Mandarin Garden Club in October. His project, which included the assistance of fellow scouts, included installation of a new bulkhead, and painting and repairing the Mandarin Garden Club sign. Also, a raised box planter was installed around the sign. The Mandarin Garden Club is extremely happy and grateful with the final product and all the efforts of the scouts.

# Crown Point has Mad Scientists!

Photo courtesy Mary Elyer

On Oct. 31, Crown Point Elementary held its annual Mad Scientist Day, where students arrived at school dressed up as mad scientists. The students participated in performing and observing educational and exciting science activities throughout the entire day. Pam Adams and Debbie Bickles led many of the activities, including the hovering beach ball and toilet paper experiments, air cannons, and mentos and coke explosions. Parents were able to join their children in the outside area during the day and each family received a science activity book and a goody bag for participating. Pictured are Principal Bret Hartley with a group of Mad Scientists from first grade.



# Former landfill to be converted to recreation area

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewslines.com

JTC Running, the founder and host club of the Gate River Run, has announced an \$85,000 donation to the Jacksonville chapter of the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association (SORBA Jax) for the construction of a 3.1-mile (5K) running trail at Aterro Park at 4520 Sunbeam Road, the site of a former landfill that operated from 1972 – 1986.

Now, nearly four decades later, the Sunbeam Road Landfill is getting a new life as a multi-use recreation destination. SORBA Jax has signed a lease with property owners Jeremy Hill and John Thornton for approximately 100 acres that will be converted into biking and running trails with elevations rising to 65 feet. One three-mile mountain bike trail is complete, and another is planned. Aterro Park plans other recreational amenities at the site including a dog park, market, pickleball courts, and Airsoft facility.

The JTC Running Trail will be six feet wide and made from compacted crushed lime rock. The trail will include both open and shaded areas as well as three bridges. Trail planning has begun, and clearing is expected to take approximately six months to complete.

JTC Running created the Jacksonville River Run in 1978, since 1993 named the Gate River Run; all proceeds stay locally to fund running programs and community initiatives including the 30-mile Emerald Trail, and Marathon High, a program that challenges at-risk teens to run a 13.1-mile half-marathon. Visit [jtcrunning.com](http://jtcrunning.com) for more information.

SORBA Jax is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, one of 47 chapters of the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association, and the local partner to the International Mountain Bicycling Association. Visit [sorbajax.org](http://sorbajax.org) for more information.



Photo courtesy JTC Running

Councilman Michael Boylan; Doug Alred, board member JTC Running; Doug Tillett, president JTC Running; Todd Addicott, president SORBA Jax; Councilman Joe Carlucci

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# Gardening

## Winter Wonderland

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale

I can't help thinking of warm sweaters, gloves, and wooly hats once temperatures start to moderate, but we really don't have much of a winter here in northeast Florida. Maybe that's just as well!

What we do have is the opportunity to grow a variety of healthy vegetables, largely free from the plagues of summer insects and diseases, and hardy flowering plants to mark the seasonal changes. Last year my neighbor had two large pots of crimson cyclamen flanking her front door and their stunning flowers lasted for months. For inspiration, check out <https://tinyurl.com/2f5p6pky>.

My backyard is in flux. What has become overgrown is slowly evolving into a more manageable and wildlife welcoming yard — but being almost surrounded by golden rain trees and cat's claw vines means that I find their offspring in every square foot of soil. Small seedlings come up easily, but vines that embed themselves close to other plants are notoriously difficult to pull. Consequently, I've resorted to very careful, but minimal, use of triclopyr, a chemical brush and stump killer, but it's far from my ideal. The lesson: weed diligently and regularly and use mulch to deter seedlings from getting established.

The Florida Gardening Calendar is a good resource for advice on topical gardening activities: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/ep451>. This year, I will dress up my front yard a little to divert attention from the standing seedheads and native perennials that are dying back for the winter. These are farther up, toward the house, so that's a plus. Although the habitat they provide for wildlife is indisputably valuable, not everyone appreciates that. I'll choose less flamboyant plants like violas which are understated enough; not many native plants are particularly flamboyant and combining them with exotic plants takes skill.

"A New Leaf – Yard and Garden," the Extension newsletter for Duval County, also offers timely advice. Current and



Photo courtesy Lesley Arrandale  
Yaupon holly (Ilex vomitoria).

past issues can be found here <https://tinyurl.com/2ycs3yp5>.

Although it's a good time to plant woody shrubs and trees, we should pay careful attention to watering, since the weather seems to change from very dry to wetter periods. This is a useful "how to": <https://tinyurl.com/2defmueb>.

We can divide clumping perennials, as long as our milder weather continues. It's a way to both revitalize aging plants and to get more plants for free, which is always a good thing! Strictly speaking this is a task for early fall, but since our climate is generally mild until later in the season it should be worth the effort (<https://tinyurl.com/437c9a6h>). As with woody plants, make sure to water divided perennials as needed, until they are properly established.

With the winter holidays fast approaching, I find myself thinking about the traditional greenery my family used to decorate our home. Sprays of holly full of berries above the mantelpiece, sprigs of mistletoe hung in doorways, and the modest freshly cut Christmas tree that came home — on a bicycle! — often covered with a dusting of snow. Whatever your family beliefs and traditions, in a time of such uncertainty, hold your nearest and dearest close and cherish your wider community too. We all need peace, tolerance, and to know we belong.

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Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Happy holidays to you and yours. December seems to roll around sooner than it used to. While it signals the peak of the frantic holiday season, I hope we all can find some time to retreat to our local waters to relax and spend time with friends and family. Some of my favorite fishing memories have taken place around the holidays. The fishing may not have been the greatest, but the company was.

Shrimp should still be around, but you will probably have to work for them. Just remember that each one can equate to a quality fish. There's a lot less bait

stealers around this time of year, so you shouldn't lose too many baits.

Stripers, redfish, and catfish will be happy to have any shrimp you put out. Yes, I said catfish — but I think they are greatly unappreciated in the river. They are one of the most consistent fish we have. Two of the most common are white catfish and channel catfish. White catfish are a smaller species maxing around three to five pounds. Channel catfish are larger and can be very athletic reaching weights of more than 20 lbs. I've had multiple channel cats convince me they were redfish before I laid eyes

on them. I've even seen them jump out of the water when hooked. On some of the toughest of fishing days my brother and I would say, "Catfish better than no fish." I still stand by that.

Now it's not a sure thing, but if you can find them you will have some of the most fun you can have in the river this time of year — the schooling largemouth bass. I find a lot of them around creek mouths, but they can also be on a particular dock or shore-line. Just think of where you've caught

bass before and keep checking until you find them. They'll be mixed sizes from 12 inches to six pounds, so you never know what you're going to get. A rubber worm or my favorite — a live shrimp — will entice most. The best part about the shrimp is that it comes to the surface trying to evade the bass, so you get to watch a top water show unfold as the bass tries to chase down the shrimp. The kind of stuff you live for as an angler. Like I said, not a sure thing, but worth the effort if you find them. Tight lines.

Food safety expert gives the scoop on holiday leftovers

By Kirsten Romaguera, UF/IFAS  
mail@floridanewslines.com

When it comes to holiday planning, the last thing on anyone's list is a bout with food poisoning.

"Most people are lulled into a false sense of security because foodborne illnesses are rare," said Keith Schneider, a University of Florida food safety expert in the UF/IFAS food science and human nutrition department. "You think, 'I've never gotten sick. Why should I do anything differently?' Well, you don't want this year to be the one time you lapse in your food safety practices and Grandma gets sick."

Below, Schneider shares his top tips for holiday leftovers.

- Keep cooked foods out of the "danger zone."

shorter the time it should be out. Here in Florida, we can have some warm, humid holidays — be aware when you're eating dinner on the back porch and shorten that time out of the fridge.

- Most items can go into either the refrigerator or the freezer.

If you think you might not eat something within three to four days, which is the general limit in the refrigerator, freezing would be a better choice.

- The "smell test" isn't good enough.

Pathogens typically don't grow to a density where they're going to have an odor. The odor typically occurs from spoilage. So, if it smells bad, of course, don't eat it. But if it's been a few days and still smells fine, it still may not be safe.

- Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

What you want to do is take out the portion that you're going to eat, as opposed to the entire dish. Whatever you plan to consume, you want to get to that temperature to kill any pathogens that may have germinated. For turkey, as an example, the organism of concern post-cooking is clostridium, which will die at 165 degrees.

- Minimize heat-thaw cycles.

Foods served cold don't have that kill step option. You want to be sure that you're preventing cross-contamination for these foods. Ensure that they're in sealed containers and be aware that every time you remove from the refrigerator, each thawing cycle adds heat energy that allows pathogens to grow.

The mission of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) is to develop knowledge relevant to agricultural, human and natural resources and to make that knowledge available to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. Visit ifas.ufl.edu for more information.



### Happy holidays, neighbors.

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