

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.

## 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](http://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,

**Choose your Nutcracker** cont. on pg. 7

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps  
mail@floridanewsline.com

For the past nine years, Nels and Connie Frostenson have held a Palm Valley Boat Parade party at their North Roscoe home, inviting 40 to 80 guests to share their festive spirit with the passing boats. Their most popular theme so far has been a “White Out Party,” complete with black lights all over the dock with guests wearing all white. The Frostensons have lived in Palm Valley for more than 18 years.

“We are towards the end of the parade, so boats look for our crazy festivities,” said Connie Frostenson, adding that they also hand out to guests red clown noses to represent Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and glow sticks to make it fun.

"The Palm Valley Boat Parade is a wonderful way to kick off the Christmas season — filled with history and traditions," she said.



Capt. Bob Brindle, who has been driving boat #77 in the lighted boat parade for the past 23 years as the lead boat, said interaction with the docks like the

Frostensons is what makes the parade so special. He is once again looking forward to the parade which will be held this year on Saturday, Dec. 2.

"For me, it is a family event. We have our children, grandkids, and great grandchildren with us. It is one of the few parades where the boaters can interact with the decorated docks. It is a great family event," he said.

The parade will begin at 6 p.m. starting at Marker 3, just south of the Palm Valley Bridge. From there, the procession will continue north and is anticipated to reach Marsh Landing around 8:05 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Live updates on pacing and expected arrival times at various landmarks will be given out as well. Water safety assistance is also provided during the event by the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, St. Johns County Fire Rescue and Florida Fish and Wildlife.

**Lighting** cont. on pg. 9



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Briefs

**Program to provide golf equipment to under-resourced communities**  
THE PLAYERS Championship has introduced a new grant program open to Northeast Florida nonprofit organizations through which THE PLAYERS seeks to expand access and equity to golf programs in under-resourced communities. Complementing THE PLAYERS' continued support of golf in Northeast Florida, THE PLAYERS Championship equipment donation program awards new equipment and resources to local golf programs based on merit and need.

"As a former instructor, I know firsthand how important it is to have prop-

er equipment to successfully compete in this sport. To have the opportunity to provide this resource is very exciting — not only for our population here in Northeast Florida, but for the sport of golf," said Lee Smith, Executive Director of THE PLAYERS Championship.  
To be eligible for the grant, all applicants must meet the following criteria: have 501(c)3 tax exempt status; serve within the five counties in Northeast Florida; fall within THE PLAYERS' charitable pillars (individuals and families are not eligible to apply for the program).

The championship is currently accept-

ing applications for the equipment grant program; to access the complete guidelines and application, visit: <https://www.theplayers.com/equipment>

**Joy Andrews selected as County Administrator**

On Oct. 31, the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners selected Joy Andrews as County Administrator after conducting interviews with the four finalists during a special meeting. A contract is pending county commission approval. This concludes a public engagement process of recruitment and interviews managed by the County's Human Resources Department, which featured public meetings, live video broadcasts of the meetings, and a "Get the Scoop on County Administrator Finalists" ice cream social for the St. Johns County community.

Andrews has served as Interim County Administrator for St. Johns County since July 2023. She has been with the County for the past 17 years, including the previous seven years specifically as the Deputy/Assistant County Administrator. Andrews has led a wide range of departments such as Growth Management, Economic Development, Tourism Development, Health and Human Services, Fire Rescue, Arts and Culture, Grants and Legislative Affairs, Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery, Coastal Management, Public Library System, Parks and Recreation, and Community Redevelopment. Her

education includes a Master of Public Administration (Public Financing) from Kansas State University and an LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws) in International Commerce and Trade Law from Nanjing University, School of Law.

**Santa making his list of phone calls**


St. Johns County Parks and Recreation is hosting phone calls from Santa at the North Pole this holiday season for children eight years old or younger. Santa will make his phone calls from the North Pole between 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. nightly, Dec. 5 – 7. Parents must register children by Dec. 4 by visiting [secure.rec1.com/FL/stjohns-county-fl/catalog](https://secure.rec1.com/FL/stjohns-county-fl/catalog) and selecting a date under the Special Events tab. For more information or registration assistance, call (904) 209-0379 or email [abrown@sjcfl.us](mailto:abrown@sjcfl.us).



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Save the Manatee Club is an international 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Briefs cont. on pg. 8





Dr. Jimmy Glenos

Dr. Craig Hadgis



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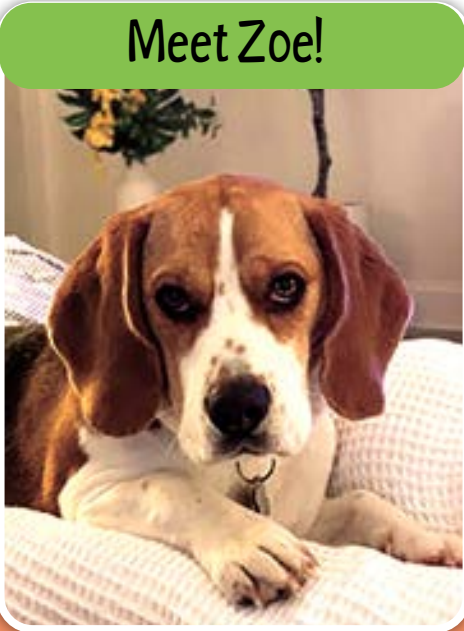
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# BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

**Breed:**  
Beagle  
**Favorite Activity:**  
Laying in warm laundry  
**Favorite Food:**  
All foods, especially peanut butter  
**Favorite Friend:**  
"Bailey" the Beagle  
**How Did Your BFF Get Her Name:**  
We named her Zoe because we were lucky enough to get her during the first COVID season and her name comes from Greek origin, "Eve," which means "life."



Meet Zoe!

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

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**Holiday Gift Guide in this issue!**

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## MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you guess where this is?  
Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.  
Last month's Mystery Photo was the Fraternal Order of Police sign on Marsh Landing Boulevard.

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

Answers  
Puzzles  
PG 10

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# December

## Community Calendar

### What's Happening in Ponte Vedra

**Council on Aging** offers interest groups at the COA Center at Flagler Health+ Village at Nocatee. Meetings are free and self-guided except for the Caregiver's Support Group. Advance registration for clubs and meetings is required; email [pbrunell@Stjohnscoa.com](mailto:pbrunell@Stjohnscoa.com) or call (904) 819-3234. Tuesday clubs include: Caregiver Support Group, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.; and Widows and Widowers social group, second and fourth Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Wednesday groups include: Mah Jongg Meet-up, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

**Palm Valley Market** is held inside the Palm Valley Community Center at 148 Canal Road, every Tuesday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The market offers fresh produce, baked goods, local honey, tea, seasonal treats, soap, jewelry, plants and more. Visit the Palm Valley Market Facebook page for more information.

**2nd: NE Florida Sisters** in Crime will hold a holiday social on Dec. 2 from 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Library. Attendees will be asked for their input for 2024. A hot entree will be provided; attendees are asked to bring a side dish to share: fruits, salads or desserts. Contact [floridasistersin-crime@gmail.com](mailto:floridasistersin-crime@gmail.com) for more information.

**2nd: Wellness events at Saw-grass** Village will be held every Saturday in December from 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Hosted by Mind Body Social, all events are free and open to the community. Events include wellness classes such as yoga and barre, all held on the lawn in front of ABC Liquors. Visit <https://mbs.events/sv/> for more information and to register.

**5th: Vicar's Landing monthly** Boutique Sale will be held Tuesday, Dec. 5 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at 1000 Vicar's Landing Way. The sale includes antiques, household items, home furnishings, framed art, as well as designer and costume jewelry. A "Last Chance" sale of Christmas items will be held at the Parlor. The public is welcome. Checks or cash only please. The Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund receives the proceeds. Call Mary Lane Johnson at (904) 612-9277 or Beverly Webb at (904) 315-2610 for more information.

**6th: Purely Social Happy** Hour hosted by Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will be held on Dec. 6 at 5:30 p.m. at Saw-grass Marriott in the downstairs lobby. Attendees will order off of the menu for their drinks and food. Visit [www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php](http://www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php) to register to attend.

**6th: Coastal Friends** will host its holiday luncheon on Dec. 6 at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. in Ponte Vedra Beach from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Musical selections from vocalist Maggie Shannon will be featured as well as a Christmas trivia game with special prizes and gift certificates. The cost is \$25 and reservations must be made by contacting [bartshar@comcast.net](mailto:bartshar@comcast.net) as soon as possible.

**7th: Bingo** will be held at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center, 175 Landrum Lane, on Thursdays from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. for four weeks beginning Thursday, Dec. 7. Contact Suzanne Duvall at (904) 209-3659 for more information and to register.

**7th: Free Tech Help** with David will be held on Thursday, Dec. 7 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Drop in for tech assistance with your Android, Apple, and Reader devices; no RSVPs required. Visit [sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/](http://sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/) for more information.

**9th: Holiday Market** at THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center will be held on Saturday, Dec. 9 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Browse crafts, jewelry, quilts, art and more; all proceeds benefit THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center.

**9th – 10th: Holiday Gift** Wrapping service by volunteers from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, North Florida Chapter, will be held Dec. 9 – 10 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in South Beach Regional Mall near the Hallmark store. The gift wrapping will continue Dec. 16 – 24. All donations benefit the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Call (904) 982-6510 or email [Slowride36@gmail.com](mailto:Slowride36@gmail.com) for more information or for special concierge service.

**10th: Christmas Market** will be held on Dec. 10 from 2 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. This event is open to the public.

**12th: Adult Coloring Club** will meet at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library on Dec. 12 from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. No RSVP is required; bring a snack or drink for yourself or to share. Visit [sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/](http://sjcpls.org/branches/ponte-vedra-beach-branch/) for more information.

**13th: Ponte Vedra Woman's Club** will host its general meeting on Dec. 13 at 12 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Pkwy. Visit [www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php](http://www.pontevedrawomansclub.com/eventregistrations.php) to register to attend.

**16th: "That Song," the North Florida** Women's Chorale's free concert of Christmas and seasonal songs, will be held on Dec. 16 at 4 p.m. at Community Presbyterian Church, 150 Sherry Drive in Atlantic Beach. Visit [www.womenschorale.org](http://www.womenschorale.org) for more information.

**16th: The Nocatee Farmers Market** Winterfest will be held on Saturday, Dec. 16 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Nocatee Station Field. The Farmers Market is open to the public.

**16th: Vilano Holiday** Village Christmas Market will be held along Vilano Road in Vilano Beach on Dec. 16. The event will include appearances by Santa and Mrs. Claus and live music by Jeremy Weinglass as well as the opportunity to get unique and local holiday gifts. Visit [vilanobeachfl.com/vilano-holidayvillage](http://vilanobeachfl.com/vilano-holidayvillage) for more information.

**23rd: GTM Research Reserve** will host its monthly Beach Cleanup on Saturday, Dec. 23 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. No registration is required; meet at the Visitor Center, 505 Guana River Road in Ponte Vedra Beach where gloves and trash bags will be provided. Visit [gtmnerr.org](http://gtmnerr.org) for more information.

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with St. Johns County School Board Member  
Kelly Barrera, District 4

**Q: What can you tell us about the district's recruitment efforts for bus drivers?**

A: In October, we held a "Come Drive the Bus with Us" event that was very successful. With our growing county, we are always looking for professional bus operators. We offer a \$1,000 signing bonus and assistance with getting a CDL (commercial driver's license) to those who don't yet have a CDL. School bus operator candidates who are currently licensed operators with Class A or Class B Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL) with Passenger (P) and School Bus (S) endorsements are eligible for a \$3,000 sign on bonus. Anyone interested in joining our district should visit [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/transportation/jobs/](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/transportation/jobs/) for more information.

**Q: Do you have a report from the Nov. 14 School Board meeting?**

A: At this meeting the attendance rezoning was finalized for the three new schools that we will be opening in the next two years. There were no changes in District 4 to the proposals that were advertised 30 days in advance of this meeting.

Also at this meeting, we were pleased to recognize Camila Romero, a sixth grade student from Landrum. Her essay for the State of Florida Hispanic Heritage Month student essay contest tied for first place in the middle school category. She received a Florida College Plan scholarship provided

by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation.

**Q: Do you have any legislative updates?**

A: During the current special legislative session, there are proposals to deregulate the massive amount of statutes related to traditional public schools. This deregulation is so needed and I hope substantial progress can be made.

**Q: Do you have any kudos to share?**

A: I'd like to congratulate Tiffany Cantwell, principal of Ocean Palms Elementary, who was recently named Principal of the Year for the St. Johns County School District. She began in our district at PVPV Rawlings and has served in a variety of roles and schools over the years. She is a fierce student advocate and does an amazing job supporting her students, families, teachers and staff. She is very deserving of this honor.

Also, I'd like to congratulate this year's St. Johns County School Related Employee of the Year, Sylvia Bass. She serves as an ESE school bus operator, providing specialized transportation services to students from Landrum, PVPV Rawlings, and Ponte Vedra High School.

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

A: The ESE Parent Advisory Commit-

Q&A with Kelly Barrera cont. on pg.6



with St. Johns County Property Appraiser  
Eddie Creamer

**Q: What is the number one question your office is receiving now that tax bills have been mailed?**

A: The number one question I receive is from people who call and say that their tax bill has increased, sometimes dramatically. Dramatic increases are almost always because the person has bought an existing home in the past year and they are comparing their taxes owed to the taxes owed by the previous homeowner.

**Q: How does this happen?**

A: It has to do with assessment limitation caps, particularly as it relates to residential properties. If you own a home in St. Johns County, you pay property taxes based on the value of your home. In St. Johns County, the last few years the value of the home has likely increased and it will likely continue to increase. As this value increases, so does the property tax, without regard to tax rates.

If your property is homesteaded, the most the assessed value can increase is 3 percent and if the property is not homesteaded, the most the assessed value can increase is 10 percent. The tax rate is then applied to the assessed value. There

is sometimes some confusion on the part of the taxpayer that the cap is the amount of taxes, but it is actually on the assessed value.

**Q: What about the dramatic increases you mentioned earlier?**

A: Each of these assessed value caps accumulate over time. The homestead exemption cap is also known as Save Our Homes and has portability, so it may be taken with you to another homestead with certain limitations. (Non-homesteaded caps may not be taken with you.)

So, if you buy an existing home, the caps accrued are to the seller and will auto-reset on January 1 of the following tax year. When estimating your future taxes, it's very important to look at any accumulated caps that the previous owner may have, because they will be removed when you become the new owner.

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

A: Our office is located at 4030 Lewis Speedway Ste. 203, (904) 827-5500. It is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Also, readers can email me at [Eddie@sjcpa.us](mailto:Eddie@sjcpa.us) or call me at (904) 827-5500.



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**Guest Column**

# Election fun facts

By St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

This December, I would like to take the opportunity to wish the residents of St. Johns County a warm, happy holiday season. I hope you enjoy this time with your loved ones and have a safe New Year. January will bring excitement as the 2024 election cycle speedily approaches. Residents can expect to hear more from the Elections Office regarding the Presidential Preference Primary Election, deadlines, potential polling place changes, and more.

For our trivia lovers, I have included some election fun facts to wow your families with during the holidays:

1. Election Day was established in 1845. Congress passed a federal law designating the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November as Election Day.
2. Did you know Congress chose a date in November for Election Day to accommodate farming? Spring and early summer would interfere with the planting season, and late summer and early fall elections overlapped with the harvest.

November was the perfect time — after the harvest was complete, but before winter.

3. Voting on Tuesday was also chosen to accommodate farming. In the 1800s, most citizens worked as farmers and lived far from their polling place, which meant lawmakers needed to consider a day’s travel. Most attended church on Sundays, so a Tuesday election would give voters all day Monday to travel.

4. In the 1700s and 1800s, votes were often counted by raising hands or speaking out loud. It wasn’t until 1890 that secret ballots were widely used.

5. Rather than receiving an “I Voted” sticker, in the time of the American Revolution, it was tradition that each voter would receive a slice of Election Cake while waiting for results and for those who traveled long distances to vote. The first recipe for American Election Cake appears in 1796 in the first U.S. cookbook, Amelia Simmons’ “American Cookery.” Recipes for the cake are easily found on the internet.

**Q&A with Kelly Barrera** cont. from pg.5

tee will meet on Dec. 5 via Microsoft Teams from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. I’ve sat in on these meetings and even without a student in the district, I found this information so valuable. They share information, resources, and have speakers who are subject matter experts. Visit [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/ese/advisory/](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/ese/advisory/) for more information including how to call in to this meeting.

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

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

# Tax Collectors office receives award

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

The office of Dennis W. Hollingsworth, St. Johns County Tax Collector, was recently awarded the 2023 Excellence Award in Financial Operations by the Florida Tax Collector’s Association, Inc.

“Receiving this award is a true demonstration of the transparency we require within our organization,” said Tax Collector Dennis W. Hollingsworth.

Four areas are considered for the Excellence in Financial Operations Award: innovation and automation, the annual audit report, customer

focus, and budgeting. To be eligible for this award, the tax collector’s office must demonstrate a practice or procedure that utilizes a new concept that increases productivity and decreases costs, the audit report must be clear of any findings, the office must demonstrate internal and external customer satisfaction, and the office must adhere to the original budget.

The Tax Collector’s office is committed to delivering services through innovation, integrity and expertise.

Email [taxcollector@sjctax.us](mailto:taxcollector@sjctax.us) or call (904) 209-2250 with any questions or comments.

# Food for Fines program is back

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

St. Johns County has announced that the Food for Fines program has returned this year to St. Johns County libraries and bookmobiles. An opportunity to eliminate most library fines, Food for Fines will run through Friday, Dec. 22. The food items collected will be used to stock the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Food Pantry, providing food for St. Johns County families in need.

A donation of one non-perishable, unexpired food item will remove \$2 of fines from a pa-

tron’s library record. This fine-reduction program applies only to overdue fines, and patrons may bring in as many items as needed to reduce overdue fines. Fees related to damaged or lost items are not included in the Food for Fines program. Any library user is welcome to make donations, and food may be dropped off at any of the St. Johns County library branches or bookmobiles.

Last year, St. Johns County residents provided more than 3,500 non-perishable items through the “Food for Fines” program. Visit [www.sjcpls.org](http://www.sjcpls.org) for more information.

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# Holiday Guide



**Choose your Nutcracker** cont. from pg. 1

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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

**Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet**

Dec. 27 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.  
Florida Theatre  
[www.nutcracker.com/your-city/get-tickets/jacksonville](http://www.nutcracker.com/your-city/get-tickets/jacksonville)

Nutcracker! Magical Christmas Ballet is a national touring production that features an international cast and prop designers. The production features larger-than-life puppets, breath-taking acrobatics and dazzling costumes. Dancing alongside the full international professional cast are local Jacksonville children from Alius Dance School.

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?

## The origins of "The 12 Days of Christmas"

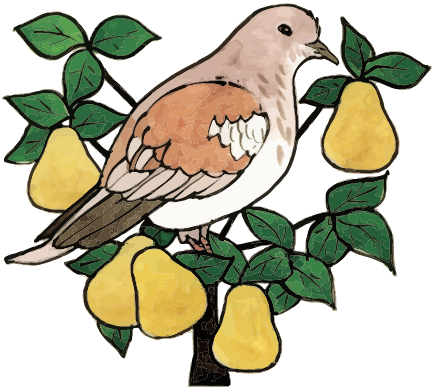
By NewsLine Staff  
[mail@floridanewsline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewsline.com)

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.



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# Nease athletics' strong finish to fall sports



Photo courtesy Kathy Wachala

Fall sports are concluded at Nease and student athletes posted a strong finish: Football – District Champions; Cross Country Boys – District Champions; Cross Country Girls – Seventh in District on their way to Regionals; Boys' Golf: District Champions, Regional Champions, going to State; Girls' Golf: Finished in Regionals; Boys' Swim and Dive (pictured) – District Champions, Regional Champions, going to State; Girls' Swim and Dive – Runner-up District, Runner-up Regional, going to State; Girls' Volleyball – Finished in Districts. Additionally, the National Letter of Intent Signing was Wednesday, Nov. 8. Nease athletes who signed were Matt Ryan, Cross Country/Track, Duke University; Hanna Virts, Girls' Volleyball, Chowan University; and Conner Kuncie, Boys' Lacrosse, University of Detroit Mercy.

# Blessings in a Backpack coordinator recognized by state

By Lisa Farese  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Ocean Palms Elementary School recently celebrated Sharon Kehoe — a crusader against childhood hunger and a local hero to those who know her and the 195 students in area schools who receive meals because of her kindness and dedication.

Honored this past spring as the Senior Volunteer of the Year at Ocean Palms, Kehoe went on to win the district award for the category, and, recently, learned she was honored with a third-

place award at the state level for her endeavors.

For the past 13 years, Kehoe has worked to fight childhood hunger as the coordinator of the local Blessings in a Backpack program. Here she plans meals, organizes volunteer teams and work locations, fundraises for purchases, and delivers food backpacks to students in need in local schools. Believing that, “Kids don’t choose to be hungry,” she is an inspiration to volunteers everywhere.



Photo courtesy Lisa Farese

Sharon Kehoe celebrates her award with her friends and family.

*“Before moving here, I had to weather several storms. I was alone and I was afraid. But here, I was not afraid. Feeling safe and secure made all the difference during the storm.”*



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**Briefs** cont. from pg. 2

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 compre-

hensive 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 heart-warming stories about these aquatic mammals.

Adoptions start at just \$25 per year. Visit [savethemanatee.org](http://savethemanatee.org) for more information.



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## Get to Know ...

By Tiffany Merlo Phelps  
mail@floridanewsline.com

*Tiffany Mason*

Unhappy at her job three years ago, Tiffany Mason listened to a podcast called “Don’t Keep Your Day Job.” After she finished it, she decided to start her own podcast, fell in love with editing, and then started her own podcast editing business, “Virtually You!” While building up her podcast editing business, Mason discovered another interesting business venture along the way. It began when she told her husband, Shawn Mason, who she refers to as “Mr. Entrepreneur” that she wanted to make a little extra money in the interim. He, in turn, pitched a coffee bicycle cart idea to her. Tiffany Mason, a self-described extrovert, said yes, and Florida Coffee Peddler, a business name she pitched, was born in June 2021. The cart, which is a functional bicycle, allows Mason to have a social outlet and a strong connection to the community. “I remember a lot of people’s orders, and I remember a lot of things going on in their life. I know them from our community. So, there is very much a relationship to it,” she said. The Masons, who have three children, first introduced Florida Coffee Peddler in Nocatee’s Greenleaf Park. While she has a few fixed locations around town, Mason is often hired for events such as graduation parties, weddings, festivals,



Photo courtesy Tiffany Mason  
Tiffany Mason

has a trailer for the bicycle cart now (for two months she pedaled to every event), she finds a way to ride into every event for a special entrance. “We wanted it to feel like a peddler on the street peddling their items as well as a bike with pedals that you ride. So, it kind of has a dual meaning,” she said. “It has a suitcase on there and a toolbox, so it has kind of a clunky vintage feel to it that we love.”

### Q: Where are you from originally?

A: I was born and raised in Iowa, but I spent most of my married life in Minnesota. We moved a lot because my husband is in the restaurant business, living in Wisconsin, Chicago, and New York. We moved to Nocatee six-and-a-half years ago for my husband’s job (at that time) in Jacksonville at a new Morton’s Steakhouse. We loved it here in Nocatee right from the start, and our kids have thrived here. Shawn now works for Shark Coatings and owns Farmhand Kehn & Coffee in St. Augustine.

### Q: What is your favorite coffee to make and what are some of your

### signature “provisions?”

A: When anybody says, “surprise me with a drink,” I always make them a mocha hazelnut latte, hot with half and half. That is really the cat’s meow. We are really known for our pop tarts and our blueberry muffins. We make everything from scratch, and our coffee is roasted in Jacksonville by Martin Coffee Co.

### Q: Share more about your podcast, “Memories with a Beat.”

A: Memories with a Beat explores people’s favorite songs and how they connect with it. What has come out in a lot of my interviews on my podcast is that a lot of times music says what one cannot say for themselves. And it evokes emotion in you, and it just brings it out, and that is what I love about music. I love that story, and I love sharing it.

### Q: What is your focus during your free time?

A: Fun. I want my legacy to be that I was fun. I was fun to be around, and I had fun ideas. I make it a priority to schedule enough fun. That really can be anything, but I really love music, and I really love the beach. When you are at the beach, I just feel like you remember how small you are and how everything is not really a big deal.

### Q: Do you have a favorite quote that guides your life?

A: I rely heavily on a quote by Maya Angelou: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Lighting cont. from pg. 1

Parade coordinator Beacham Still said the best places to view the parade are the restaurants along the seven-mile boat route of Palm Valley’s Intracoastal Waterway: Palm Valley Outdoors, Barbara Jean’s On the Water, Palm Valley Fish Camp and Valley Smoke. Also, Mickler’s Wharf and under the Palm Valley Bridge are other possible public viewing locations, he said.

Cash prizes will be given to boat winners in different size categories and to the best decorated docks. Still said typically 20 to 30 boats participate in the parade, and this year is looking strong.

“We are always looking to expand the event in such a way that it allows for continuity and growth,” said Still. “The parade’s real mission is to support the community by creating scholarships for local high school students at Ponte Vedra and Nease.”

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

“We like to give back to our local communities,” said Still.

For more information, visit palmvalleyboatparade.com or look for parade updates on their Facebook group page [www.facebook.com/groups/Palmvalleyboatparade](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Palmvalleyboatparade). Still can be reached at [bstill@syncworks.com](mailto:bstill@syncworks.com).

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

### Q: What is the Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) and where can residents review the latest one?

A: The PAFR summarizes the 400-page Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and uses terms that allow residents to understand the county’s financial position. It features highlights from the comprehensive report and is designed to be straightforward and user-friendly for taxpayers without a background in public finance. To read the PAFR, visit our website ([www.stjohnsclerk.com](http://www.stjohnsclerk.com)). We published a PAFR this fall for Fiscal

Year 2022 to show how tax dollars are collected and spent, as well as recent trends on demographics, housing, taxes, and more.

### Q: Why is the PAFR important for residents?

A: Annual financial reports issued in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) are essential if governments are to meet their obligation to be accountable to their citizens. Unfortunately, the comprehensive level of detail found in many GAAP reports may confuse or discour-

age those unfamiliar with accounting and financial reporting. A PAFR is a way to communicate selected financial data to a broad audience.

### Q: What is the Clerk and Comptroller’s role in handling county government’s finances?

A: Our office serves as the county’s accountant, internal auditor, and custodian of funds. We manage its investments, handle payroll, pay its bills, internal auditing, and prepare the ACFR and PAFR.

### Q: How does your office help protect taxpayers and ensure accountability?

A: The clerk’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) performs internal audits and conducts fraud, waste, and abuse investigations of the operations and

financial records of local government agencies, departments, employees, and others under the authority of the Board of County Commissioners. The OIG also performs audits and enforcement activities of the county Tourist Development Tax and conducts enhanced audits of guardianship inventories and accountings.

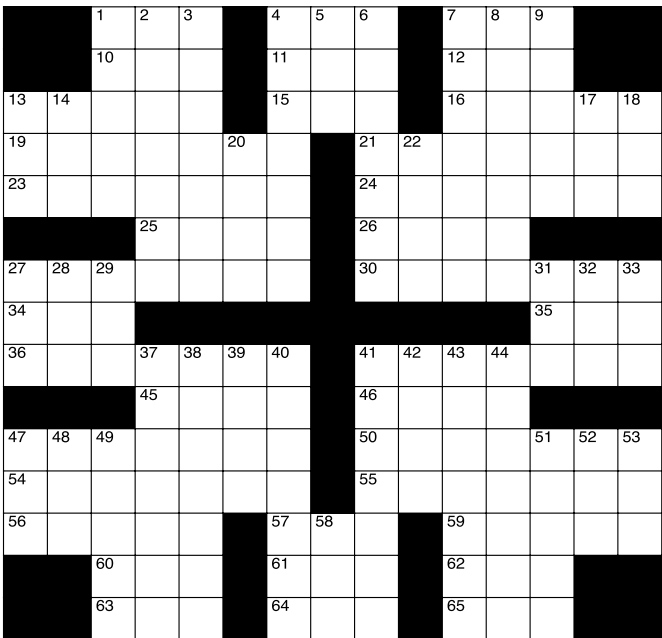
### Q: What is the best way for residents to contact you?

A: Residents can call my office at (904) 819-3601 or my cell at (904) 599-8688. My email address is [BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com](mailto:BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com). Many of your questions can be answered and many services are provided, such as paying traffic citations or searching records, by visiting our website, [www.stjohnsclerk.com](http://www.stjohnsclerk.com).



Puzzles

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

DECK THE HALLS WORD SEARCH

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

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

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

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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PopHistory

By Scott A. Grant  
[mail@floridanewsline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewsline.com)

Elvis the Pelvis comes to Jacksonville

Elvis Presley's concert at the Florida Theater in Jacksonville in August 1956 was embroiled in controversy before it even began. Elvis, whose hip-gyrations and pelvic thrusts earned him the nickname "Elvis the Pelvis," was under attack nationally for corrupting the morals of America's youth.

Judge Marion Gooding, under pressure from civic groups, was determined that the young people of Jacksonville would not be corrupted. Gooding summoned Elvis and Colonel Tom Parker to his chambers and informed them he was placing an injunction on Elvis' hips. There would be no salacious displays at the Florida Theater. Gooding also told the emerging superstar that he would be in attendance at the show to make sure Elvis complied and if he didn't, he was going to throw the singer in jail.

This was Elvis Presley's third performance in Jacksonville in 18 months.

At the end of his show at Wolfson Baseball Park on May 13, 1955, Elvis announced "Girls, I'll see you backstage!" Hundreds took him seriously and poured out of the stands chasing the King and ripping off his shirt. The event is sometimes remembered as the first riot at a rock & roll show.

The night of the performance, Judge Gooding was in attendance with his two teenage daughters. Some say that he was just looking for free tickets. Elvis hid behind a piano for most of the show and did not wiggle his hips. The judge and his daughters enjoyed the show immensely and even laughed when Elvis dedicated the song "Hound Dog," to Judge Gooding. By many accounts, Elvis and the judge remained friends for the rest of their lives.

At the Florida Theater show, Presley also performed the song "Heart-break Hotel." That song was written by Jacksonville native, Mae Boren

Axton. Elvis was backed that night by the Blue Moon Boys, a trio featuring stand-up bass player Bill Black. The Bill Black Trio would return to Jacksonville on Sept. 11, 1964, as an opening act for The Beatles. Bill Black passed away a year later. Paul McCartney still owns Black's stand-up bass.

Elvis would not return to Jacksonville again until 1972. He did two shows at the Coliseum and stayed at what is now the Hilton Hotel downtown. He stayed in Room 1010, which was exclusively reserved for his use and was known as the "Elvis Suite." He stayed there all four times he performed in Jacksonville. The room had a big brass bed, blackout curtains, and was remembered as being "somewhat gaudy."

Scott A. Grant is a local historian and author. By day he is a wealth manager at Standfast Asset Management. He welcomes your comments at [scottg@standfastic.com](mailto:scottg@standfastic.com)

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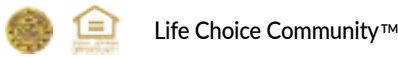
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