



Local *Gift Guide*

Shop small this holiday season and show some love to the locals who keep our community thriving.

+

LOCAL HAPPENINGS
& TRAVEL WORTHY
EVENTS

+

GIFTS
FOR THE
BOATER IN
YOUR LIFE

WHEN THE BUS STOPS COMING

Volusia riders brace for change as the county shifts to new on-demand service.

EVENT CALENDAR

What's going on throughout Volusia County during the month.

EXPLORE WEST VOLUSIA

Celebrate the season with festive events, home tours and more.

LIGHTS ON BREVARD ZOO

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01	SAT	OUT ON BAIL	15	SAT	CHEAP THRILLS
03	SUN	NUTHOUSE JAM	16	SUN	NUTHOUSE JAM
06	THU	THE JOHNCATS	20	THU	THE JOHNCATS
07	FRI	INSOMNIA	21	FRI	THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID
08	SAT	POP CULTURE POETS	22	SAT	UNDERCOVER NSB
09	SUN	NUTHOUSE JAM	23	SUN	NUTHOUSE JAM
13	THU	5 TIME SHAG	28	FRI	CHEG
14	FRI	CHEAP THRILLS	29	SAT	POP CULTURE POETS
			30	SUN	NUTHOUSE JAM

MONDAY
NIGHT
LIVE MUSIC
AT 7PM

TUESDAY
NIGHT
COMEDY AUCTION
7:00 PM

WEDNESDAY
NIGHT
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*min. six wings

THURSDAY

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Wings! 5pm - 8pm
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FRIDAY

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26 *Peanut Butter Cheesecake* Stuffed Strawberries

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VOL.11 ISSUE 12

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Editor's Letter

Holiday Vibes, Family Adventures, and a Decade Well Spent

As I'm writing this, it's officially 25 days until Christmas—and we're definitely feeling it in the drop in the weather. You know it's Florida when a chilly morning turns everyone into beanie-wearing, socks-with-sandals enthusiasts. And let's be honest: the second someone mentions the weather before 10 a.m., you immediately know who's a local and who's just visiting.

This issue has all the holiday vibes wrapped up, from where to shop and new traditions to the perfect seasonal adventures. **Cassie** shares fresh ideas for creating new family traditions that are fun and meaningful. **Danielle** dives into this season's fashion trends, perfect whether you're dressing up for a holiday party or hunting for the ultimate gift for the fashionista in your life. **Kelsey** takes us on a nighttime adventure with her family at the Brevard Zoo, where art and wildlife come together in a one-of-a-kind experience. And for all the boaters on your list, **The Boat Coach** rounds up his top gift picks. Plus, we've got tons of local events to keep you busy and festive!

RENOVATION LIFE

On a personal note, we are deep in the thick of renovations here. Half of our interior doors don't have handles, and there are baseboards stacked in my office waiting to be installed—but even with the chaos, seeing the end result is so worth it. I'm lucky to have a mother-in-law who is an incredible interior designer—she's designed our new kitchen, living/dining room, and master bedroom. I'm so thankful for someone to guide me because I am not the type of person who can look at a space and know exactly how to make it beautiful and functional.

We just finished our master bedroom, and while I don't have anything hanging on the walls yet, we do have all new furniture and new floors

installed from Edgewater Floor Store (shout out to Billy—he's the best). The difference they make is unbelievable. The next project kicks off in the second week of December: our kitchen and main living space.

HOLIDAY ADVENTURES & FAMILY TIME

On top of all that, I'm so excited to share a little personal getaway—Scotty and I are setting sail on a cruise with my mom, dad, brother, and sister-in-law! We're leaving the kids behind this time for some one-on-one connection with the adults... and Scotty (wink). We depart from Miami and will be visiting Grand Cayman and Cozumel, Mexico. I can't wait for the adventure and a little recharge before the whirlwind of holiday activities hits full swing.

CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

This month also wraps up a huge milestone for us—our 10th year in business! We couldn't have done it without you, our amazing readers. The holidays can definitely be stressful, but don't let it get to you—take a deep breath, sip the cocoa, and enjoy the lights.

And if you haven't tried socks with sandals yet...just, do it already. Not the ones with the thong toe—stick to the slides, I'm not *that* crazy. Seriously, it's life-changingly comfortable. Here's to being unapologetically you and laughing through life.

XO,

Tiffany Sudakis | Editor in Chief



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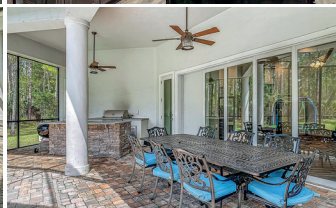


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Local News

Changes to Votran: What Happens When the Bus Stops Coming

Volusia County is preparing to eliminate several long-standing Votran bus routes and shift riders to VoRide, a tech-based, on-demand microtransit system powered by Uber Transit. The change, planned for early 2026, is raising concerns among riders who depend most on traditional public transportation.

Under the proposal, multiple east and west side routes would be replaced by VoRide, which requires riders to book trips through a smartphone app or by calling a dispatch line. Riders and advocates worry the new model may not be accessible for those without reliable devices, technology skills or stable phone access—including seniors, low-income residents, people with disabilities and individuals experiencing homelessness.

Federal law requires public outreach and equity analysis before major service changes. VoRide currently serves parts of West Volusia, including DeLand, Deltona, DeBary and Orange City.

At recent community meetings, many attendees described relying on fixed routes for essential trips to medical appointments, jobs, classes and family obligations. Votran representatives said low ridership on several routes—sometimes with only a few or no riders—drove the decision. They said shifting to on-demand service would reduce costs and reallocate resources to higher-demand areas.

John Davidson, a New Smyrna Beach resident and longtime rider who uses a power wheelchair, said he has depended on Votran for 27 years to travel to work. He has not yet switched to VoRide but is

already experiencing changes in how he books rides. “I used to have a standing order for my pickup and drop-off, but now I have to call each time,” he said. Davidson said early problems with long phone hold times improved after AT&T addressed phone line issues.

The County Council approved the service changes Oct. 7, 2025. According to the Nov. 18 meeting agenda, council members also approved an amendment allowing the transit and maintenance contractor to begin microtransit services in designated areas. Meeting minutes had not been posted at the time of publication.

Davidson, who spoke at the Nov. 18 meeting to raise concerns about phone access, said he is now communicating directly with Transit Services Director Bobbie King. “Speaking with her makes me feel increasingly reassured,” he said. “I get a live person who walks me through the booking when I call for my ride.” He added that the transition will “take some getting used to,” but he is hopeful.

While fares are considered low, some riders said cost could still pose challenges for those on fixed incomes. VoRide fares start at \$2 for trips up to 5 miles and increase by \$1 per additional mile, up to a \$7 maximum. Fares for youth, seniors



Some Votran riders may lose access to fixed bus routes as the county shifts to an app-based, on-demand system.

and people with disabilities are half-price. Children under 7 ride free with a paying adult.

Concerns raised during public meetings included technology barriers, loss of guaranteed routes and stops, the lack of Sunday or holiday service, and uncertainty during the transition. Supporters say the model could offer more flexible and

affordable travel, but its success will depend on riders' comfort with booking tools, access to a phone and ability to walk short distances to pickup points.

For more information on VoRide, visit City.RidewithVia.com/Voride. For Votran service details or feedback opportunities, call (386) 761-7700 or visit: Votran.org.

Images from Votran.com

MIMI MCKEE | 386-576-7722 | @NSBMimi

Mimi McKee is a Realtor with Ocean Properties & Management Inc. and a member of the NSB Board of Realtors. She relocated from Atlanta, GA in 2005 and is “Loving Living at the Beach.”



Any information provided for this news column is based on personal research and analysis and does not reflect the views or opinions of Ocean Properties & Management Inc.

Insurance Insights

Winter Weather in Florida: The Hidden Risk of Freezing Pipes

Florida isn't known for harsh winters, but every year cold fronts sweep through our state and drop temperatures low enough to create real problems for homeowners. One of the most common—and costly—winter-weather losses we see at Trust Public Adjusting Group is damage caused by freezing pipes.

When water freezes, it expands. Inside a pipe, that expansion creates extreme pressure, often enough to crack or burst the line. The real trouble begins when temperatures rise and the ice melts. Water begins pouring through the break, sometimes for hours before anyone notices.

The results can be devastating: water-damaged drywall, ruined flooring and mold growth to name a few.

Because Florida homes aren't built for freezing conditions, they're often more vulnerable than homes in colder states. Pipes are commonly located in uninsulated attics, exterior walls, and outdoor areas—making them more susceptible to cold snaps.

To prevent frozen pipes, let your faucets drip when temperatures approach freezing. Flowing water relieves pressure and reduces the risk of costly damage.

Even a brief cold snap can freeze pipes, and damage may appear quickly once temperatures rise. After freezing weather, check that faucets flow properly, look under sinks for moisture, listen for unusual sounds in walls or ceilings, and inspect the exterior for leaks or pooling water. If you suspect a burst or cracked pipe, you can contact Trust Public Adjusting Group immediately. Early documentation is key to maximizing coverage.

Cold nights may be rare in Florida, but they can cause serious damage when they strike.



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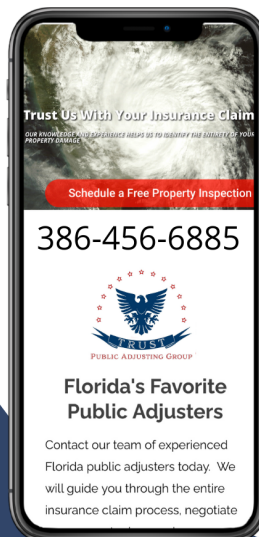
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Local Spotlight

Creating Our Florida Holiday Traditions

I grew up in southeastern Ohio where there were very clear seasons and traditions that align with weather-based activities: apple picking, raking fall leaves, sledding down a snowy hill, cutting down a Christmas tree from the farm. While I will admit the temperature and humidity here in Florida has gone down a bit, it still feels like a tamer version of summer nearly year-round. Due to this, I have had to adjust my expectations of what constitutes holiday traditions and feel like my family is finally in a fun rhythm that I'd love to share!

For the past several years, my girls and I have headed over to De Leon Springs to pick our own veggies for Thanksgiving dinner at VoLaSalle Farms (601 Johnson Lake Rd). The green beans are ready each year, but it has turned into an interesting conversation with my kids about what to do when the squash isn't ready and how we need to find something else to complement our meal. This is not a grocery store where any item is found all year, we can only harvest and eat what is ready!

On our most recent trip, we did pull up carrots along with our usual green beans, Italian sweet peppers, and wildflowers. The Crump family that runs the farm let my girls feed the carrot greens to the goats, also housed on the farm.



In the past, they have hooked up barrels to the tractor to give kids a "train ride" past the cows and orange groves. We end our time bagging up some of their oranges to take home and purchasing orange juice and their famous pumpkin rolls.

Moving into the Christmas season, we love visiting the holiday light displays in both Daytona and Holly Hill. We were able to attend the opening night of the "Magic of Lights" at the Daytona International Speedway (1801 ISB Blvd) on Friday, November 21st. This event allows you to drive under the stands at the speedway with holiday music playing through the car's radio to see holiday stories brought to life through moving lights and cruise through light tunnels with the windows down, and is open until January 3.

In recent years, Magic of Lights has added a "Holiday Village" near the end of the loop to get out of your car for photo ops, snacks, merchandise, and games to play.

In Holly Hill, the Twi-Light II Motel at 1125 Ridgewood Avenue is normally small and unassuming, but after Thanksgiving, the



motel cottages and home of the owners behind it is decked out in light displays, inflatable characters, and visits from Santa himself. While you can drive through this event, my family chooses to take our time to walk around the grounds. There are lots of great photo spots and usually a friendly face handing out candy canes to passersby.

I think my favorite part of these few traditions is that they are not dependent on the weather. Sure, it's fun to walk through light displays when it's cooler so I can hold a cup of hot cocoa, but we don't have to wait for snow to enjoy all three of these activities as they

can be experienced at any Florida temperature.



I love that my family is making and keeping new traditions to enjoy in the place where we live and I hope that you enjoy your Florida holidays, as well!



CASSIE GONYER | CASSIE@ECCTOLDME.COM

Lives in Daytona Beach with her husband, three daughters, two housemates, and a "doug" (dachs-hund- pug mix dog). She loves exploring and promoting the food, shops and events that Daytona has to offer. You can follow her local adventures at [@CassGoAroundDaytona](https://www.instagram.com/CassGoAroundDaytona) on Instagram.

Have a story idea for Cassie? Reach out to her directly at Cassie@ECCToldMe.com — she'd love to hear from you!

Knowing my mom is in a safe, caring environment gives me real peace of mind.

– Dr. Stephen Cortez, son of
a Paradise Pointe resident

Choosing the right community for a loved one can be overwhelming. Families want safety, competent care, dignity, and engagement – and the confidence that someone is always watching over their loved one.

At Paradise Pointe, families like Dr. Cortez's have found exactly that:

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"The care team metrics – safety, competency, caring, dignity, and communication – are all done here with flying colors."

From personalized monitoring systems to engaging activities and a warm, hometown community environment, Paradise Pointe helps residents thrive and gives families the peace of mind they deserve.



This holiday season, let us care for your loved one – and give yourself the gift of confidence and reassurance.

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Local Highlights

1 The Little Theatre of New Smyrna Beach Presents a Magical Holiday Experience

The Little Theatre of New Smyrna Beach is celebrating the holiday season with an enchanting opportunity guaranteed to fill audiences with warmth, wonder, and festive cheer.



MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET, THE PLAY

December 4 – 14, 2025

Tickets: Adults \$22 | Seniors \$21 | Students \$11

We are selling out! Additional performance added DECEMBER 10



The beloved Christmas classic comes to life on stage in a charming and uplifting production perfect for audiences of all ages. When a department store hires a kindly older man named Kris Kringle to play Santa for the Thanksgiving Day parade, he quickly becomes an instant favorite—capturing hearts with his gentle nature and uncanny knowledge of all things Christmas. Hired as the store's official Santa, Kris stuns everyone when he calmly insists that he is, in fact, the real Santa Claus.

His claim sets off a whirlwind of doubt, curiosity, and legal drama as a courtroom is tasked with determining not only Kris's sanity, but the very existence of Santa himself. Filled with humor, heart, and holiday magic, this timeless story reminds us all of the power of belief and the joy that comes from keeping the spirit of Christmas alive.



Tickets are available at NSBplayers.org, by phone at (386) 423-1246, or in person at the box office, open Thursdays and Fridays from 1 to 4 PM and two hours before each performance.

For more information about these shows, to purchase tickets, or to learn more about everything happening at The Little Theatre, simply scan the QR code.

Photo credit: Dan Carriero and Lissa Gibbs

The Little Theatre of New Smyrna Beach
726 E 3rd Ave, New Smyrna Beach 32169
(386) 423-1246 | NSBplayers.org



2 Say YES to the Wedding of your Dreams at the Volusia Bridal Expo

The Brannon Center is proud to present the Volusia Bridal Expo! Hosted on Sunday, January 18th from 12 - 4 PM, grab your friends and family and come out to this beautiful venue for a fun-filled afternoon of wedding planning. Free admission!

Say YES to the wedding of your dreams! Meet the area's top wedding professionals and gain inspiration for your wedding day. Searching for the perfect venue, gown, deejay, photographer, caterer or flowers? Find everything you need in one place.

Enjoy free food samples, giveaways, demos, henna tattoos, a bridal fashion show, and play Bridal Bingo for prizes. Every bride-to-be will receive a free raffle ticket and a Bridal Bingo card. Door prize giveaways are held every half hour from 1 - 3 PM. The grand prize giveaway will be held at 3:45 PM so don't miss it!

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Volusia
BRIDAL EXPO

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12:00-4:00 pm

- Door Prizes
- Henna Tattoos
- Fashion Show
- Makeup Demos

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Volusia Bridal Expo: Sun, January 18 | 12 - 4 PM

The Brannon Center, 105 S Riverside Drive
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TouchOfMagicEvents.com | [@TouchOfMagicEventsLLC](https://www.instagram.com/TouchOfMagicEventsLLC)



3

Holiday Cocktail Stroll A December to Remember

Step into the magic of the season with our inaugural Holiday Cocktail Stroll, part of "A December to Remember" at the Riverfront Esplanade in Daytona Beach! Your ticket unlocks a festive evening of indulgence on **Friday, December 12** from 6:30–8:30 PM as you make your way through seven exclusive stops, each serving a handcrafted seasonal cocktail to sample and savor. As you stroll beneath the dazzling holiday lights along the riverfront, you'll be swept up in the glow, the cheer, and the spirit of the season.



The night doesn't end there — explore the Holiday Bazaar, where local vendors will be offering one-of-a-kind gifts, treats, and treasures perfect for holiday shopping. This exciting new event is set to bring even more holiday cheer to Downtown Daytona Beach, livening up the heart of our community with lights, libations, and local fun.

Tickets:

- Standard Pricing: \$45 + ticketing fees
- Day-Of Pricing: \$50 + ticketing fees

Gather your friends, toast to the season, and experience a night where cocktails, community, and holiday magic come together.



Keep the celebration going all month long with these other festive events:

- **DEC 5: Mini Jingle Jam** with live music and holiday cheer
- **DEC 17: Howliday Pet Parade** featuring festive furry friends
- **DEC 19: Holiday Movie in the Rose Garden** showing The Santa Clause for a cozy night under the stars.

Holiday Cocktail Stroll - A December to Remember

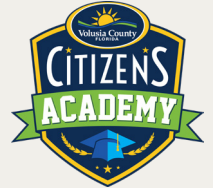
December 12 | 6:30-8:30 PM | Riverfront Esplanade
155 N. Beach Street, Daytona Beach 32114
RiverfrontEsplanade.com/VisitForTheHolidays



4

Volusia County Seeks Citizens Academy Recruits

Ever wonder how your county government really works? Volusia County's Citizens Academy invites residents to take a deeper look behind the scenes at the operations that keep our community thriving — and the best part is, it's completely free.



Applications are now open for the 12-week program, beginning Jan. 22, with engaging virtual sessions held Thursdays from 6 to 8 p.m. But this isn't your average online course. Participants will head out on six immersive field trips to explore many of the county's most vital facilities, including the Marine Science Center, Emergency Operations Center, Fire Rescue Training Center, Tomoka Landfill, the Thomas C. Kelly Administration Center, and the Lifeguard Headquarters Administration Building (pictured below). It's a rare chance to see where the work really happens.



Throughout the program, academy members will hear directly from elected officials and department leaders as they break down the essentials of local government—everything from growth management and community services to public protection, public works, and budgeting. The experience wraps up with special recognition at a Volusia County Council meeting, giving graduates a firsthand look at how decisions are made.

This hands-on academy empowers residents to become informed, confident participants in their community. Whether you're curious about county services, exploring future public service opportunities, or simply hoping to be a more engaged citizen, the Citizens Academy offers insights and access you won't find anywhere else.



To participate, applicants must be at least 21 and reside in Volusia County. Basic computer skills are recommended, as program materials and communication are shared online.

Space is limited. Apply by Monday, Dec. 15, at Volusia.org/CitizensAcademy. For more information, contact CitizensAcademy@Volusia.org or call (386) 736-5951.

Volusia County Citizens Academy

Apply by Monday, Dec. 15 | Volusia.org
CitizensAcademy@Volusia.org | (386) 736-5951
Picture from Volusia.org of Recent Graduates



Parks & Recreation

CHRISTMAS PJ PARTY

5:00pm-7:30pm
13 DEC | SAT

PANCAKES WITH BUDDY THE ELF
DJ GRINCH & SNOWFLAKE DROP
SNOWBALL FIGHT WITH BUDDY
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2nd Annual
Candy Cane Lane

A Calvary Christmas Trunk or Treat Experience!

December 14 5-8pm
1687 W Granada Blvd Ormond Beach, FL

CALVARY

FREE STOCKING TO EACH CHILD!
*WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

OUTDOOR Christmas Music
w/ Calvary Worship Live

Sleigh Ride Express
+ CANDY AT EACH STATION

Live Nativity / Petting Zoo
+ Face Painting

Food Trucks
+ Hot Chocolate

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 2025

The countdown to the holidays has begun! Celebrate the season with these great local gift-giving ideas.

Shop Unique Style at Pepper's Boutique This Holiday Season

Discover a one-of-a-kind shopping experience at Pepper's Boutique, with two convenient Volusia County locations. Founded by Pepper, a 30-year fashion industry veteran, the boutique offers men's and women's clothing, shoes, jewelry, and accessories from over 140 manufacturers worldwide—including Italy, Turkey, India, and the USA. Whether shopping for a holiday ensemble or the perfect gift, you'll find extraordinary style that's more than fashion—it's a lifestyle.

PeppersBoutique.com
New Smyrna Bch: 376 Flagler Ave
Ormond Bch: 264 N Nova Rd

PEPPER'S
 BOUTIQUE



Recharge, Restore and Radiate this Holiday

This holiday season, give the gift of feeling your best. Our IV drips and health solutions help you restore your energy, support anti-aging, and help you reach your fitness goals naturally.



PRIME IV
 HYDRATION & WELLNESS

Prime IV Hydration & Wellness
IV Drips and Health Solutions

New Smyrna Beach
426 Canal Street

Ormond Beach
28 W Granada Blvd



Baked with Love: Fresh Holiday Treats from Dutch Oven Bread Co.

Give the gift of something freshly baked this holiday season from Dutch Oven Bread Co., now open at 120 Canal Street in NSB.



Choose from tempting treats like danishes, scones, savory tarts, croissants, their legendary cruffins, cinnamon rolls, artisan loaves, bagels and more. Perfect for gifting, sharing, or creating the ultimate holiday spread—and don't forget, gift cards make excellent stocking stuffers! Open Wednesday through Saturday from 9 AM - 2 PM.

dutchovenbreads.com



Holiday Special! This season, give the gift of unforgettable sunsets!

Buy 2 Sunset Cruise Gift Certificates and get 1 FREE! (That's a \$49.95 value, on us!)



Perfect for couples, families, or that friend who "has everything." Wrap up memories, laughter, and the magic of the water this holiday season. Limited-time offer – available through December 31st! Call (386) 227-7928 or visit them online at: ToonTikiCharters.com



TIKI RIDE



Glow All the Way: Holiday Beauty Events You Don't Want to Miss

Grab your besties and join us for a GIRLS NIGHT OUT Pop-Up Party on 12/4 from 5-8 PM. We're kicking off the holidays with a sneak-peek preview of our 12 Days of Christmas Sale—officially launching December 9th! Think exclusive savings on your favorite injectables, glowing laser treatments, skin must-haves, and so much more.

Sip. Shop. Glow. Repeat.

It's the perfect night to treat yourself and snag some early holiday cheer!

The Med Spa NSB
115 N Orange Street
New Smyrna Beach 32168



Inspire Creativity at the Artists' Workshop

Buy art, shop local, and spark creativity with a workshop from Artists' Workshop! This holiday season, treat yourself or a friend and save \$45 during the **Winter Workshop Sale**. Learn watercolors with Tom Jones or explore abstraction with Donne Bitner. With several workshops still available, there's something for everyone. Sale ends Jan. 15, 2026. Sign up online at ArtistsWorkshopInc.com or call (386) 424-9254.



Artists' Workshop
540 Barracuda Blvd | NSB 32169

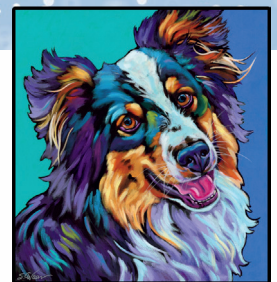
Holiday Pampering Made Easy at Angie's Serenity Day Spa

Treat yourself—or someone special—to a little holiday indulgence! November and December specials valid through 12/31/25—because you deserve to shine this season!

- Regular Manicures \$15
- Spa Pedicures \$35
- Combo \$50
- Gel manicures \$25 (+\$5 soak off)
- Massages \$95 / 60 min
- Facials \$125
- Microblading \$250
- Touch up \$75
- Lip Wax \$5
- Eyebrow Wax \$10
- Spray Tan \$30



Angie's Serenity Day Spa
386-410-6131
101 S Ridgewood Ave.
Edgewater 32132



Painting by: Sally Evans





Bobby G *on Vacation*

A Four-Day Reset in Birmingham, Alabama



We took off from Orlando for a quick four-day getaway to Birmingham, Alabama — Tiffany, Porter and Bailey seeing it all for the first time. The flight was smooth, barely an hour and a half, and just long enough for Tiffany and me to squeeze in a Christmas rom-com. I insisted I didn't cry... I did. I blamed it on the altitude and refused further comment.

When we got to my parents' place in Bluff Park, we settled right in — unpacked, let the kids explore the property, and eased back into that comfortable rhythm you only get when you're home. Most of the first day was just reconnecting: talking, catching up, sitting around the kitchen and remembering exactly why these trips matter.

My parents rescued a Great Pyrenees named Ryder who, for reasons known only to him, didn't fall for my charm. Porter, of course, became his best friend almost immediately, playing catch in their picturesque backyard.

Then we headed out for a scenic drive and lunch at The Summit — great food, plenty of shops and the kind of place where you suddenly realize you've been "just looking" for an hour. We enjoyed a delicious meal at Culinary Dropout, watched some football and laughed together.

Tiffany made a special trip to my parents' local Piggly Wiggly just to score some merch to bring home. She spent 20 minutes picking out "the perfect shirt," only to mysteriously lose it once she got home.

The next day we took the kids to Urban Air, where they jumped, jousted, climbed and did every activity designed to drain them of all remaining energy. Tiffany and I made the wise decision to get 30-minute chair massages — a solid reminder that sometimes the grown-ups deserve the fun too.

Getting the chance to see my good friend Roe and meet his girlfriend, Natalie, was definitely a bonus to our trip. We caught up on the front porch by the fire and even snuck away for a couple hours to a local dive bar that was right up our alley — a well-deserved getaway for a bit.

Later we wandered through downtown Homewood, a great little strip with shops and restaurants on both sides. It gave off a bit of a Flagler Avenue vibe — walkable, easy and full of spots you want to duck into "just for a second." Bailey got to do her favorite thing in the world, shop, and decided to drop all her dough on a vintage porcelain doll and Pokémon figurine.

The trip wasn't long, but it hit exactly the way it needed to — time with family, good food and the kind of small moments you actually remember later. And if anyone has clues about the sudden disappearance of Tiffany's Piggly Wiggly shirt, our investigation remains wide open.

Bobby G, out!



SCOTTY SUDAKIS | AKA BOBBY G

Freelance writer and frontman in 5 Time Shag. If you have something you would like to see Bobby G cover in a future article please email the editor directly at: Tiffany@ECCtoldme.com

Photos by Tiffany Sudakis

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January
2026**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sports/Races/
Activities

Arts/
Performances

Music

Food & Drink

Community

RECURRING MONTHLY EVENTS

- **Art Walk** @ Granada, Ormond
Dec 6 / Jan 3
- **Sip and Stroll** @ Canal St, NSB
Dec 6 / Jan 3
- **Art Stroll** @ Canal St, NSB
Dec 6 / Jan 3
- **Downtown Nights** @ Beach St
Dec 5 / Jan 2
- **Art Walk** @ Beach St, Daytona
Dec 5 / Jan 2
- **Cars on Canal** @ Canal St, NSB
Dec 13 / Jan 10
- **DeLand Cruise-In** @ Indiana Ave.
Dec 20 / Jan 17
- **Wine Walk** @ Flagler Ave, NSB
Dec 27

1-26 DEC 1 - 26 (+)

Daily

Flagler Avenue, NSB

NSB Holiday Cocktail Tour

Sip your way through the Holiday Cocktail Tour on Flagler Avenue! Enjoy festive full-sized cocktails at 10 participating stops, collect stamps on your Tour Map, and drop it off for a chance at giveaways and swag. Runs all month long. Ages 21+.



1-31 DEC 1 - 31 (+)

Daily

DeLand Locations

CoolCraft Christmas Trail

Pick up a CoolCraft Christmas card at the Athens Theatre, one of the CoolCraft locations or at the West Volusia Visitor Center and bring the card to any of the participating CoolCrafters. Collect signatures when you purchase holiday drinks. Bring your card to the West Volusia Welcome Center or the Athens Theatre for a free Christmas ornament!



1-31 DEC 1 - JAN 3 (+)

Nightly from 6 - 10 PM

Daytona Int. Speedway

Magic of Lights

Enjoy an amazing holiday light display from the comfort of your own vehicle! One carload - one great price at MagicOfLights.com!



5-20 DEC 5 - 20 (+)

Weekends

Flagler Avenue, NSB

Merry Hits-mas Music Fest

The music festival celebrates all aspects of holiday music and classics and includes over 30 free shows at various locations along Flagler Avenue. Food and drink specials. Some locations are age 21 and up. All shows are free admission.



5-23 DEC 5 - 23 (+)

SAT-SUN @ 6 - 9 PM

321 Pleasant St., Lake Helen

Butler Express Holiday Train

The Butler Express will take you on a tour of Lake Helen to view all of the Christmas lights as you sing along to Christmas music. Each train ride typically lasts 20-25 min. There are two trains running each night. Ages 4 & up: \$5/per ticket - cash only. Ticket booth opens at 5:30 PM.



6 SAT DEC 6

12 - 9 PM

Wickham Park, Melbourne

Holiday Food Fest & Craft Fair

Celebrate the season! Enjoy \$1-\$5 holiday-themed bites, festive drinks, live entertainment, crafts from 75+ vendors, axe throwing, a kid zone, and visits from Santa and The Grinch—all supporting The Children's Hunger Project. Fun for all ages! More details on pg. 12. Tickets at SpaceCoastHolidayFoodFest.com



6 SAT DEC 6

6 - 8 PM

Port Orange City Center

Christmas in the Park

Live Christmas concert, official lighting of City Center, Santa and free horse-drawn carriage and hayrides!



11-14 DEC 11 - 14 (+)

THU - SUN @ 6 - 8 PM

Daytona Drive In Church

Drive Through Bethlehem

Load up the car and come experience the sights and sounds of the village of Bethlehem in a unique way! Witness the nativity, see live animals and make sure you visit the baker in the marketplace for a sweet treat! This event is FREE.



13 SAT DEC 13

9 AM - 4 PM

Barberville Pioneer Settlement

A FL Christmas Remembered

Experience a festive day at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement with Santa, art vendors, Christmas crafts, and live music from folk artists, in A Florida Christmas Remembered. Adults: \$10; Seniors and Veterans: \$9; Children 12 and under FREE.



13 SAT DEC 13

1 - 5 PM

Beach Street, Daytona Beach

Holiday Cookie & Wine Walk

Get ready to indulge in a delightful stroll through Downtown Daytona Beach, visiting participating merchants and tasting a delectable assortment of holiday cookies perfectly paired with a selection of fine red and white wines. \$27 advance passports @ DowntownDaytonaBeachEvents.com.



14 SUN DEC 14

5 - 8 PM

392 N Causeway, NSB

Rogue Wave's 1-Year Anniversary

Celebrate Rogue Wave Wine Bar's first anniversary with live music by Jeff White, a free wine tasting at 5 PM, and \$10 off all bottles! Enjoy featured wines from House of Far Niente and a can't-miss evening of great wine, music, and community!



26-31 DEC 26 - 31 (+)

Daily - schedule online

Flagler Avenue, NSB

Flagler Avenue Countdown Jam

Countdown to 2025 with FREE LIVE MUSIC on Flagler Avenue! Check out the schedule below and plan to watch great local musicians! Schedule of bands with times and locations will be posted December 20th @ FlaglerAve.com.



28 SUN DEC 28

4 - 8 PM

Flagler Avenue, NSB

Grilled Cheese Challenge

Participants will be able to eat tasty samples at host locations and vote for their favorite creations and the winning creators will receive the "Best at the Beach" awards. Passports cost \$20 @ EventBrite.com.



31 WED DEC 31

6 PM - 2 AM

Main Street, Daytona Beach

New Year's Eve on Main Street

There is no admission charge and the celebration will feature 6 stages of entertainment, street performers, drink specials and lots of tasty food choices. A spectacular live New Year's Eve Ball Drop Ceremony at midnight tops off the celebration.



18 SUN JAN 18

12 - 4 PM

The Brannon Center, NSB

Volusia Bridal Expo

Calling all brides and grooms! Meet the area's top wedding professionals for the perfect venue, gown, deejay, photographer, caterer and flowers at the Volusia Bridal Expo. Admission is FREE - RSVP at let us know you're attending at VolusiaBridalExpo.Eventbrite.com. For more info, email info@TouchOfMagicEvents.com.



1-31 DEC 1 - JAN 18 

Daily by reservation 

Stetson Mansion, DeLand


Christmas Mansion Holiday Home Tour

All new elaborate, reverent designer decorations in 10 themed rooms that express the meaning of Christmas. 14th annual Guided or Self Guided Tours at Florida's most historic 1886 Gilded Age mansion. Cafe and Gift Shop. Named #1 by TripAdvisor and USA Today. Through Jan 18th. Reservations required at StetsonMansion.com.



THE CHRISTMAS MANSION HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

NOVEMBER 1 — JANUARY 18


5-14 DEC 5-6, 12-14 

FRI - SUN @ 5:30 - 8:30 PM

1851 S Clyde Morris, Daytona

Walk Through Bethlehem

Experience the sights and sounds of the night Jesus was born with a stroll through a newly redesigned Bethlehem, featuring immersive interactions with characters and stories of Christmas—perfect for first-timers and returning visitors alike! Presented by CrossRoads Church



FREE OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS DRAMA

CrossRoads

YOU ARE INVITED TO

Walk Through BETHLEHEM

7-21 DEC 7 - 21 

Every SUN @ 3 - 6 PM


ONE DAYTONA

Wonderland @ ONE DAYTONA 

Join in this beloved holiday celebration. Enjoy snow slides, festive holiday characters, and live music that will fill Victory Circle with cheer. This free, family-friendly event is the perfect way to celebrate the holidays and make unforgettable memories with loved ones!



SNOW SLIDES, HOLIDAY CHARACTERS, & LIVE MUSIC


7-25 DEC 7 - 25 

Daily @ 6 - 8 PM

Gateway Park, DeBary

Winter Walk of Lights

Grab the family and enjoy a night out walking through Gateway Park all decked out in Christmas Lights! Motion light displays, thousands of lights, holiday decorations and more! Free to enter, space is limited.



19-20 DEC 19 - 20 

FRI-SAT @ 5 - 7 PM

DeBary Hall Historic Site

Holiday Candlelight Tours 

Explore DeBary Hall Historic Site during holiday evenings when candlelight will fill the 19th century mansion with a warm glow, accentuating its historic treasures and Christmas decorations. Refreshments will be served. Advance tickets must be purchased; admission is \$10. Tickets are non-refundable. Call 386-668-3840 or email lperez@volusia.org to reserve your tickets.



20-23 DEC 20 - 23 

Daily @ 6 - 9 PM

NSB Sports Complex

Winter Wonderland 

Experience a Winter Wonderland at the NSB Sports Complex with festive lights, music, Santa, carolers, and more! Enjoy special themed nights for youth and seniors, all for just \$2 cash entry. A magical holiday outing for all ages!




SAVE THE DATE!
Holiday Parades

Orange City Dec 5 @ 5 PM	Edgewater Dec 13 @ 10 AM
Holly Hill Dec 6 @ 10 AM	Daytona Beach Dec 13 @ 6 PM
Ponce Inlet Dec 6 @ 2 PM	Ormond Beach Dec 13 @ 6 PM
NSB Dec 6 @ 3 PM	Deltona Dec 13 @ 6:30 PM
DeLand Dec 6 @ 6 PM	DeBary Dec 14 @ 3 PM
Port Orange Dec 7 @ 2 PM	Daytona - Boat Dec 20 @ 6 PM

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SCAN FOR MORE




HOLIDAY EVENTS



Holiday SALE

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SUPPORT NON-PROFITS

GIVE THE GIFT OF NATURE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON
SHOP SANDI'S SEA SHOP AT MARINE DISCOVERY CENTER
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WE WILL BE CLOSED ON DECEMBER 24, 25, 31 AND JANUARY 1



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FROM 5PM-8PM

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FOOD DONATION - NO CANNED FOOD

LIVE MUSIC

COMPLIMENTARY DRINKS & FOOD

DECEMBER LIVE MUSIC

SHOWTIMES ARE AT 8PM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

12-03 - BIT O'SAM
12-04 - 5 TIME SHAG
12-05 - MADAM
12-06 - PAPA WHEELIE
12-09 - JEFF WHITE
12-10 - BIT O'SAM
12-11 - YACHT ROCK WITH THE CLICK
12-12 - TBA
12-13 - THE SUPERVILLAINS
12-17 - OAK HILL DRIFTERS
12-18 - TBA
12-19 - STEREO FM
12-20 - CRASHROCKET
12-26 - THE CLICK
12-27 - STEREO FM
12-31 - NYE PARTY WITH TRAE PIERCE

For Table Reservations Go To Bitly.BeachsideShows

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AND THE T'STONES

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31ST AT 8PM

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

\$10 IN ADV.
\$25 DAY OF
RESERVE A
TABLE



On Sale

eventbrite



The Supervillains



SAT. DEC. 13TH AT 8PM

\$5 IN ADV. | \$10 DAY OF

eventbrite

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Latte Layers

From Caramel to Espresso:
Brown Is Your New Go-To

Brown is having its moment and honestly it is about time. This season is all about warm, creamy tones that make everything feel rich without even trying. Think latte, caramel, mocha, espresso, every shade in the coffee menu coming to life in fashion.

What makes these tones so good is how easy they are to wear. Light browns look soft and clean, deeper browns feel bold and expensive, and when you mix them together it gives that effortless quiet luxury vibe everyone is chasing. It works on leather, knits, flowy fabrics, whatever you throw at it.

Brown just hits different right now. It photographs beautifully, it warms up your whole look, and it gives that grounded, put-together energy even when you are doing the bare minimum. You can go full monochrome or add one statement piece and still be on trend.

Latte layers are the mood this season. Cozy, chic, and impossible to ignore. Brown is not just a color right now. It is the entire aesthetic.

GET THE LOOK

Skirt: J. McLaughlin Leather Maxi Skirt | @jmclaughlin

Knit Top: Gianni Bini | @giannibini

Vintage Leather Trench: HERRERO y RODERO

Belt: BCBG | @bcbg



Model: Scarlett Napolitano | @Scarlett_realtor

Blog & Photo: Danielle Napolitano | @DanielleNapolitano

Location: DeLand, FL



DANIELLE NAPOLITANO | @DREAMWASTELAND

A Miami Beach-based hairstylist, fashion stylist, and product developer at ALFA MFG. Known for her creativity and trend expertise, she brings a unique blend of artistry and innovation to the fashion and beauty industry. Contact: Danielle@Alfamfg.com

Florida *or Bust*

Lights On at Brevard Zoo: A Nighttime Art & Wildlife Experience

If you're looking for something memorable to enjoy this season—whether you're hosting family, planning a date night, or simply wanting to experience the wild in a new way—the Brevard Zoo's all-new Lights On: A Nighttime Art Exhibit offers a beautifully unique adventure. This after-dark experience blends art, conservation, and nocturnal animal encounters into one glowing, immersive evening.

Asian lantern festivals at zoos have been popping up everywhere lately, but Brevard Zoo said, "Let's do something that no one else is doing." Instead of simply walking past light displays shaped like pandas and poinsettias, you're invited to experience the zoo itself at night—while the nocturnal animals are awake, alert—giving guests an after-hours peek into a world we'd otherwise never see.

Upon arrival, you're handed a small but absolutely necessary tool: an infrared flashlight. Since most nocturnal animals don't perceive red light the way humans do, it allows you to see the zoo's nighttime residents clearly without disturbing them. It also comes in handy because portions of the zoo remain dim to protect the animals' natural rhythms.

That flashlight earned its keep immediately. As soon as we got out of the car all the way in the parking lot, we heard the lions roaring from across the park—a deep, echoing sound that vibrates right through you. Naturally, we followed the sound like moths to a flame and found them in the Africa loop, casually lounging in a cozy little cuddle pile. The big male monitored us with the kind of judgment only cats are capable of.

Throughout the night, we encountered some animals far more active than during a typical daytime visit. The alligators along the Wild Florida trail glided silently through their dark lagoon. The snakes in the venom house were twisting and weaving through each other and branches overhead. On the Rainforest loop, Avery shared a moment with the jaguar, who gave a rumbling roar before strolling up to the glass to inspect her with slow, deliberate curiosity.

Interwoven with these wildlife encounters is a full art exhibition unlike anything we've seen at a zoo. Project Holocene, created by South African artist Russell Ronat, features more than 30 illuminated works highlighting endangered species. Many of the paintings reveal themselves gradually, glowing into view as you approach and fading out again with a timing that reflects each species'

The Expedition Africa loop comes alive with vibrant, glow-in-the-dark murals by artist German Lemus. These neon creations are bold and intricate, transforming the pathways into luminous art corridors that feel almost otherworldly.



level of endangerment. It's beautiful, emotional, and deeply thoughtful—an experience designed to both captivate and educate.

The Expedition Africa loop comes alive with vibrant, glow-in-the-dark murals by artist German Lemus. These neon creations are bold and intricate, transforming the pathways into luminous art corridors that feel almost otherworldly.

Another element our family loved is the immersive virtual reality experience, created in partnership with Wildlife Protection Solutions. Donning the headset transports you into the natural environments of elephants, manatees, eagles, sea turtles, and more. At one stop, you're standing in an eagle's nest; the next, you're splashing in a watering hole beneath towering elephants. These experiences are playful, eye-opening, and surprisingly moving.

Of course, no nighttime adventure is complete without late night snacks! The refreshment stand offers light snacks, drinks, and festive glow beverages—both alcoholic and non-alcoholic—complete with light-up “ice” cubes that both kids and adults will enjoy. Glow merchandise is also available, adding an extra touch

of holiday whimsy as you wander through illuminated trails.

Lights On offers something rare: a chance to explore the zoo at night while engaging with art, wildlife, and conservation in an entirely new way. Whether you're a longtime zoo member or it's your first visit, this nighttime experience is an inspiring and genuinely magical way to rediscover the natural world.

Lights On: A Nighttime Art Experience

Now through Jan 18, 2026: Thur - Sun and some select nights from 6 - 9 PM

Thu and Sun: \$45/person; Fri and Sat: \$55/person (Save 25% when you combine daytime Zoo admission with your Lights On ticket!)

Lights On: A Nighttime Art Experience

Brevard Zoo 8225 N Wickham Rd
Melbourne, FL 32940
(321) 254-9453 | BrevardZoo.org



The Walters Family

The Walters Family loves adventure and exploring Florida together. Kelsey Walters, CFO and co-owner of East Coast Current, is a professional photojournalist specializing in travel and documentary photography. Her husband, Scott, originally from Connecticut, has lived in Florida since age 11. Their 7-year-old daughter, Avery, enjoys joining their monthly adventures and playing with the family's dogs, Kodi, Bluey, and BamBam.

Photos by Kelsey Walters





Honoring Excellence

Celebrating the 2025 NSBBOR® Award Recipients



The New Smyrna Beach Board of Realtors® recently celebrated the accomplishments and service of members who exemplify the best of the Realtor® profession. This year's awards recognized individuals whose dedication, advocacy, and community spirit uplift both the Board and the Southeast Volusia community.

The **Good Neighbor Award** went to Chris Botting, honoring his commitment to youth programs. As founder of the Table 2 Committee, Chris has helped raise over \$60,000 to support local sports programs and served three years as president of the New Smyrna Beach High School boys' soccer booster club. The Board also donated \$250 to the Table 2 Committee in his honor.

The Board's **Honorary Life Award** was given to Eva Fifer for 20 years of exceptional service across multiple committees, including RPAC, Government Affairs, Professional Standards, and Special Events. Her leadership and advocacy have left a lasting impact on both the Board and the community.

The **Realtor® of the Year Award** recognized Tracey Barlow, a dedicated leader who advanced RPAC initiatives, strengthened the Board's government affairs presence, and expanded commercial real estate opportunities while actively supporting local civic and charitable efforts.

The **Rising Star Award** celebrated Susan Stowe for her early career achievements, including impressive sales volume, active participation in Board meetings, committees, and events, and community involvement with Second Harvest Food Bank.

The **Business Partner of the Year Award** was presented to Robin Winkler for her unwavering support of Realtor® members. Through sponsorships, committee involvement, and consistent engagement, Robin has strengthened member relationships and contributed to the success of Board programs and initiatives.

Finally, Marisa Gillman-Denton received the **Global Impact Award**, and Susan Hounsom was honored with the **President's Choice Award**, recognizing transformative leadership and decades of dedication to the NSBBOR® family.

These award recipients exemplify the professionalism, service, and heart that define the Realtor® community. Congratulations to all for their remarkable achievements.



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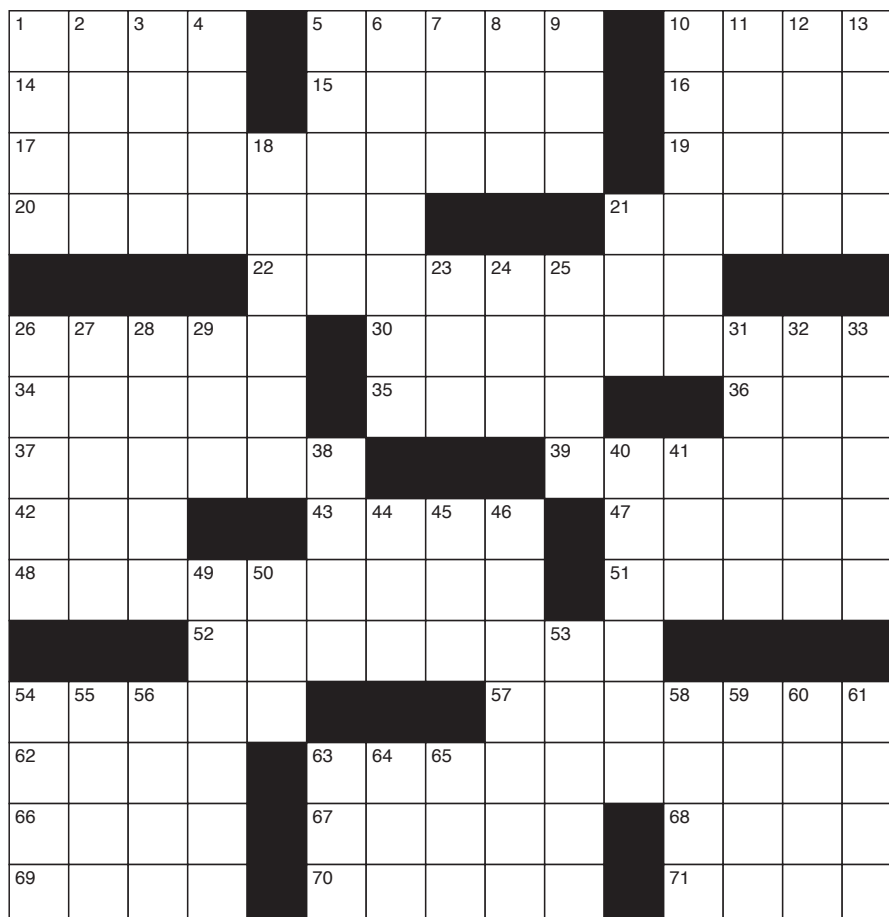
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Across

1. Bed size
5. Tatter
10. Work-living space
14. Tabula description
15. French equivalent of the Oscar
16. "The Time Machine" leisure class
17. Anomie
19. Watch over
20. Samurai's code of honor
21. Rotgut, e.g.
22. Unwanted visitor from the East
26. Birth-related
30. One way to get one's way
34. Passive
35. Counting-out rhyme start
36. Sought office
37. Corporal, e.g.
39. Shrimp entree
42. John's Yoko
43. Estimator's words
47. "You're ____ and didn't even know it!"
48. Not any
51. Hair ringlets
52. Stale
54. "Selmasongs" singer
57. Instructions start
62. Pisan yesterday
63. First-ever 10-time Best Actress nominee
66. Biz network
67. Watchful
68. Branch of religion
69. Cumberbund
70. Be apprehensive
71. Clock or cat lead-in



Down

1. Chi-Town paper
2. 2008 bank failure, for short
3. Dogmas
4. Sodium hydroxide, in chem class
5. Gazillions
6. Big name in household hints
7. "Blackberry thumb," for one (abbr.)
8. Have a bite
9. Use a towel
10. Freed
11. Vegatable oil product
12. Henry Winkler role
13. Edit anagram
18. Area of Venice
21. Lunch order, briefly
23. Wow
24. Former All-Star pitcher Robb
25. Tina of "SNL," et al.
26. Sheer, smooth fabric
27. "That's ____" ("Don't!")
28. Carpentry insertion
29. Curved line
31. Knight wear
32. Collar flap
33. Furrows, as brows
38. Rock's ____ the Hoople
40. Hidden
41. "Simpsons" character
44. Brit. bombers
45. Camera variety, briefly
46. It's in the chips at L.A. store
49. Add vitamins and minerals to
50. Perfect, informally
53. Pegasus or Bucephalus
54. Inexpensive pens
55. Actress Malone
56. Eyes, poetically
58. ____ doble (ballroom dance)
59. Heat source
60. Enjoyable
61. Spanish 101 word
63. Rotten
64. NJ airport code
65. Menlo Park monogram

NOVEMBER 2025 ANSWERS



Find the answers to this crossword puzzle in next month's issue.

West Volusia

Winter Wonders & Festive Lights: Embracing the Holiday Season in West Volusia

The holiday season is one of the most enchanting times to visit West Volusia. From historic downtown streets decked in lights to festive performances, craft fairs, and family traditions, December brings out the very best of this vibrant community.

Holiday entertainment takes center stage throughout December, beginning with Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn* at the historic Athens Theatre now through December 14. This heartwarming production dazzles with classic songs, festive dance numbers, and timeless charm. The theatre continues its holiday lineup with *Christmas Swing* featuring the Great American Big Band (December 17) and *Stars of Broadway, Voices of Tomorrow* (December 19). On December 21, the always-captivating Phantasmagoria troupe returns with *A Very Dickens Christmas*, bringing Charles Dickens' spirited tales to life.

Seasonal traditions also shine throughout West Volusia's historic sites. CoolCraft Christmas (now–December 31) invites visitors on a festive tasting tour of breweries, coffee shops, wineries, and cocktail lounges—each offering a holiday-themed drink. The Mistletoe March (December 1–January 2) turns Downtown DeLand into a playful scavenger hunt for toy soldiers, while *Jingle and Mingle at Artisan Alley* (December 11) offers an evening of shopping, sales, and live excitement. For a glimpse into Christmases past, guests can enjoy DeLand House Candlelight Tours (December 12–13) or explore the beautifully illuminated halls of DeBary Hall during its Holiday Candlelight Tours (December 19–20).

December brings a full slate of family favorites as well. A Florida Christmas Remembered at Barberville Pioneer Settlement (December 13) features living history demonstrations, music, vendors, and Santa. Families can enjoy multiple "Breakfast with Santa" events, crafts and photos at "Selfies with Santa," and the always-popular DeLand Christmas Boat Parade on the St. Johns River (December 13). The Lake Helen Christmas Home Tour, holiday craft fairs, and Grinch Fest add even more small-town charm.

Outdoor enthusiasts can lace up for festive fitness events including the Deltona Jingle Jog 5K (December 21) and the Holiday Stress Buster 5K in Lake Helen (December 24). Visitors can also enjoy special teas, markets, and holiday workshops throughout the season.

The festivities culminate on New Year's Eve with parties at The Center at Deltona and Café DaVinci—both offering dinner, music, and plenty of celebration as West Volusia rings in 2026.

For a complete list of events, check the VisitWestVolusia.com Calendar of Events and make your holiday getaway one to remember.

WEST VOLUSIA COUNTY VISITOR CENTER
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VisitWestVolusia.com | (386) 734-0162



Photo courtesy of: Phantasmagoria



Crumby Kitchen

Peanut Butter Cheesecake Stuffed Strawberries

These quick and easy Peanut Butter Cheesecake Stuffed Strawberries will be a hit at any shindig! Fresh strawberries stuffed with a peanut butter cream cheese filling, then dressed up for the party with some crushed peanuts and fun sprinkles.

Total Time: 1 Hour | Servings: 30

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut the top (leaves) off of each strawberry. Use a small sharp knife (or melon baller) to carefully hull the center of the berries.
2. Place the crushed peanuts in a small bowl and set aside. Place the chocolate in a separate small bowl and melt in the microwave for 30 seconds. Continue melting in 10 second increments if necessary.
3. Slice off a bit of the tip of each strawberry so it can stand up; stand to dry on a paper towel. Dip the bottom of each strawberry into chocolate, then roll in the crushed peanuts. Place on a parchment lined pan and refrigerate while you make the filling.
4. Place the cream cheese in a large bowl and beat until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add peanut butter, vanilla, and powdered sugar and beat until combined and smooth, adding more powdered sugar and/or peanut butter to taste.
5. Spoon the mixture into a piping bag fitted with a 2D Wilton star tip (a zipper bag with a corner cut off will work in a pinch!) Fill each strawberry with the peanut butter cheesecake mixture, then sprinkle with festive sprinkles or more crushed peanuts. Place finished strawberries on a serving tray and refrigerate until ready to serve.



Note: Prepared stuffed berries can be made and refrigerated up to 4 hours in advance.

INGREDIENTS

- 30 medium to large fresh strawberries washed & dried
- 8 ounces dark chocolate chopped
- peanuts crushed; for garnish
- 1 package 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup peanut butter creamy
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Decorative sprinkles for garnish



ERICA & ABE ACEVEDO

Millennial foodies Erica and Abe are the creative duo behind The Crumby Kitchen. Known for their easy, unique, and delicious recipe ideas, they love sharing their culinary adventures with fellow food enthusiasts. Find more recipes and inspiration at thecrumbykitchen.com.

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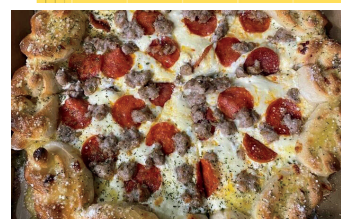
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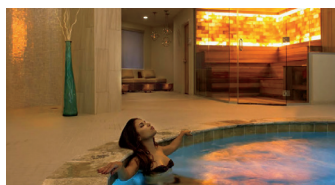
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Finding the right gift for a boater can be anything from budget-friendly to seriously high-end — but there's no shortage of useful gear that'll make anyone's time on the water better.

Handheld VHF Radio

A handheld VHF radio is one of the smartest gifts you can give. While many boaters rely on cellphones to contact marinas, friends, or even the U.S. Coast Guard in an emergency, true mariners know phones can break, can't get wet, and only reach 5 to 10 miles offshore. A VHF radio broadcasts over Channel 16 — the Coast Guard's hailing channel — so anyone listening can respond or relay a call for help.

A solid option is the Uniden Atlantis 275 Marine Handheld VHF. It floats, is IPX8 waterproof, has 6 watts of power, and receives all U.S./international/Canadian marine channels plus NOAA weather alerts. It lists at \$149.99 and was available on Amazon for \$115.12 at the time of writing. Similar radios range from about \$39.99 to more than \$350.

Dry Bags

Waterproof storage bags — better known as dry bags — are always appreciated for their versatility. They protect clothing, provisions, phones, first-aid items, and other water-sensitive gear. West Marine carries them in multiple sizes and styles. At press time, options ranged from small waterproof hip bags to 10-liter dry bags priced between \$20.99 and \$99.99. A three-bag set (3L, 5L, 8L) was available in stores for \$64.99.

Fish Finder/Chartplotter Combos

A fish finder/chartplotter is a great gift for boaters who love to fish. Bass Pro Shops offers units starting at \$179.98 and reaching \$3,000 depending on capability. A standout mid-range choice is the Garmin ECHOMAP UHD2 53cv with GT20-TM transducer and Navionics+ U.S. Inland Mapping for \$399.99 — a savings of \$50.01.

Boarding Mats

For boaters who like to keep things clean, boarding mats help keep dirt off the deck. Basic versions can run under \$30 on Amazon. For something more personal, The Custom Captain offers mats customized with the boat's name: \$60 for an 18-by-24-inch mat, \$85 for 24-by-36, and \$149 for 36-by-60.

For anglers who want to level up their time on the water, a fish finder/chartplotter combo is hard to beat. From essential entry-level units to high-end tech, there's a model for every budget — and standout options like Garmin's ECHOMAP UHD2 bring clarity, mapping, and serious value to any fishing trip.

Monogrammed Towels

For the yachtsman, a monogrammed towel set is both useful and upscale. The Cape Marin sells a six-piece luxury embroidered set for \$139.99, with turnaround in as little as five days.

Boat Hooks and Multi-Tools

No boat is complete without a reliable boat hook for docking and fending off. Prices range from under \$20 to more than \$70 on Amazon. For a premium pick, Revolve offers a 3-in-1 boating tool that combines a boat hook, stiff deck brush, and soft cleaning brush in a compact rollable kit. Regularly \$174.95, it was offered at \$119.99 at press time.

Offshore Beanbag Chairs (pictured below)

For offshore anglers, nothing beats a marine beanbag chair for stability and comfort in rough seas. Ocean-Tamer carries three sizes — small (\$109.95), medium (\$119.95), and large (\$129.95) — all double-stitched with two handles for those “oh-sh*t” moments.



Image from Ocean-Tamer Marine Bean Bags

Crew Shirts

Crew shirts make a great year-round gift and are perfect for holiday gatherings on board. East Coast Customs has served Volusia County for two decades and holds a 4.9 Google rating with nearly 500 reviews. Prices vary based on shirt quality, design, and quantity, and quotes can be requested online at eastcoastcustoms3.godaddysites.com.

DISCLAIMER: Prices and availability were accurate at the time of writing and are intended as general guidance.



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Born with the water gene, Captain Mark Kellum found his passions early: swimming, surfing and sailing. A naval electronics engineer and U.S. Coast Guard Master Mariner, he's spent 30 years helping others improve their boating experiences in NSB.

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Backwater *Fishing* Report

Best Days to Fish:
December: 4-6, 10-11, 16-22, 26-28

Winter is closing in with a handful of cold days mixed with mostly warm ones, and the fishing has been top-notch.

As the colder weather creeps in, expect much clearer water, tighter schools of fish, and bigger bait pods pushing through the backwaters.

This is my favorite time of year, as visibility is at its best and artificial bait fishing really kicks up a notch.

Recently, my fishing buddies Rusty Roberts, Dave McKinnon and Roddy Rupp all scored some epic catches.

Roddy landed a solid black drum on live shrimp. Dave hooked a few nice redfish using Henn Lures' Shrinnow, and Rusty sight-casted a beautiful redfish with the Henn Shrimp. As for me, I've been on a snook rampage with both the Henn Shrimp and the Shrinnow.

As the water cools, look for groups of trout, redfish and snook stacking up. Keep things quiet and stay as stealthy as possible, and with a little luck, you'll hook into some solid fish.

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PATRICK "TUPAT" EICHSTAEDT | @THEREALTUPAT

A seasoned fishing guide with an unparalleled knowledge of the area's backwaters. Beyond the boat, he's a talented photographer, capturing the natural beauty of Florida's coast. Patrick is also the creator of Tupat's Hawaiian Poke Sauce, a culinary favorite featured on menus throughout the United States.





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