

# The Chattahoochee News-Herald



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## Judge awards \$34.7 million in civil negligence case stemming from Havana internet café shooting

**Erin Hill**  
Gadsden County News Service

Gadsden County circuit judge has entered a final judgment awarding more than \$34.7 million in damages to Deeanna Owens, the plaintiff in a civil negligence case arising from a November 2023 armed robbery at a Havana internet café.

According to court records, Judge David Frank entered the final judgment on Dec. 23, 2025, ordering Fortune MGT 2023 LLC to pay \$34,712,676.62 to Owens. The judgment followed a jury trial held

Dec. 9, 2025, in which jurors found in favor of Owens and against the defendant. The amount awarded consists entirely of principal damages and will accrue interest at Florida's statutory rate of 8.65 percent, adjusted annually, until fully paid. The court retained jurisdiction to issue further orders related to enforcement and collection.

The civil case stems from a Nov. 14, 2023, incident at an internet café located at 6688 Florida Georgia Highway in Havana. Owens, who

was working at the café at the time, was shot and injured during an armed robbery involving two assailants. Court filings allege the business failed to provide adequate security measures despite knowing the café was located in a high-crime area and that a prior armed robbery had occurred weeks earlier at the same location.

The complaint states that the defendants, Fortune MGT 2023 LLC and Evan's Quality Grocery Meats and Deli, owed a duty of reasonable care to employees and patrons, including

Owens. The lawsuit contended the defendants were negligent by failing to:

- Provide sufficient security to prevent foreseeable violent acts.
- Warn employees or contractors of the risks to their safety.
- Properly utilize security devices or criminal history data to guide safety measures.
- Implement adequate security policies, procedures, and staffing.

The court found that these failures created an unreasonably dangerous environment, directly

resulting in Owens' injuries. Owens was represented by Morgan & Morgan, who filed the complaint on her behalf in Gadsden County Circuit Court.

This civil judgment is separate from a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the widow of the security guard, Lewis Butler, who was killed in the same robbery. That case resulted in a \$779 million jury verdict against the same business entities. Butler's death led to renewed calls for the proposed Lewis Butler Act, aimed at increasing public

safety requirements and regulating internet cafés operating as alleged illegal gambling establishments.

In the criminal case, Ty'rone Washington was convicted of first-degree murder in Butler's death and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. A co-defendant, Kelvin Brown, is expected to face trial at a later date.

With the final judgment in Owens' case, the civil trial phase is complete, though additional proceedings related to collection and enforcement are expected.

## Community rings in the New Year at annual Brunch in the Park



**Erin Hill**  
Gadsden County News Service

Residents of Gadsden County welcomed 2026 with food, music and



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fellowship during the 5th Annual New Year's Day Brunch in the Park, held Thursday, Jan. 1, at St. Hebron Park in Quincy.

From late morning through the afternoon, families, friends and neighbors gathered to celebrate the start of a new year in a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. The event featured a variety of food, games for all ages, prize giveaways and music by DJ Woadie, who kept the crowd

energized throughout the day.

Commissioner Alonsetta Simpkins, who sponsored the event alongside Radiant Life Changers Inc., said the annual brunch is rooted in connection and community spirit.

"This brunch was about more than food—it was about fellowship, unity, and setting the tone for the year ahead," Simpkins said. "I'm truly grateful to everyone who came out to

celebrate the community, and especially to the volunteers who helped make the day possible."

Now in its fifth year, the New Year's Day Brunch in the Park has become a tradition for many families, offering a space to reflect, reconnect and begin the year on a positive note. Attendees could be seen sharing meals, socializing and enjoying the park's open space while children participated in games and

activities.

Simpkins noted that this year's turnout reflected both growth and deeper community engagement.

"Compared to last year, you could really feel the growth and the togetherness," she said. "The goal this year is to keep building unity, creating positive spaces, and bringing our community together in meaningful ways."

As the afternoon continued, the

event underscored the importance of community-centered gatherings that encourage unity across Gadsden County.

"As we continue working to move Gadsden County in a positive direction, I will always push for unity," Simpkins said. "This is what makes Gadsden County who we are—a small town with a big heart."



Community Calendar

January

Great Big Table

- Sunday, Jan. 11
- 3:30 - 5 p.m.
- 306 N. Madison Street, Quincy

To pick up food, please go behind the church and drive through the pick up line.

Great Big Table

- Wednesday, Jan. 14
- 3 p.m.
- 306 N. Madison Street, Quincy

The tradition continues. The Bruner Family Bluegrass Group will be playing Christmas

music on Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 9 a.m. Bell and Bates Home Center! Sing-a-long and enjoy.

Blood Drive at St. Paul's Episcopal Church

- Sunday, Jan. 18
- 10:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
- 10 W. King St., Quincy

Join the congregation of St. Paul's as we have our 1st blood drive of 2026. We welcome you to join as we continue to build on the 53.8 gallons donated all time at our church.

Sign up at oneblood.

org or call 850-877-7181 to make an appointment. Just mention the St. Paul's Quincy drive on January 18th when you make your appointment.

We welcome you to join us for giving the gift of life giving blood, a free shirt, and getting a \$20 gift card for donating!

Stem Kids

- Saturday, Jan. 24
- 11 a.m.
- 732 S. Pat Thomas Parkway, Quincy

Fun science experiments for ages 6 and up.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Holidays						
1st - New Year's Day						
19th - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day						

# Take Sweetness to New Heights In the New Year

(Family Features) Whether you can't quite give up on the holiday treats or the festivities are continuing into 2026, these Easy Lemon Blueberry Bars offer a light, fruity bite. The melted white chocolate drizzle is just what gatherings with loved ones call for. Visit Culinary.net for more delicious desserts to enjoy this year.

Easy Lemon Blueberry Bars

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 box lemon cake mix
- 2 eggs

- 1/3 cup fresh blueberries
- 2/3 cup white chocolate chips, divided
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350 F.

In bowl, combine butter, cake mix, eggs, blueberries, 1/3 cup white chocolate chips and pecans.

Butter 7-by-11-inch pan and spread mixture evenly into pan. Bake 30-35 minutes.

Let cool then melt remaining white chocolate chips and drizzle over bars.

**Tip:** If melted white chocolate chips are too thick, add a little oil before drizzling.



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# Hunt ends with 52 bears killed

**Jim Turner**  
News Service of Florida

Florida’s first black bear hunt in a decade resulted in 52 bears killed, less than one-third of the potential number.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on Tuesday released details about the hunt, which was held from Dec. 6 through Sunday in four parts of the state. Through a lottery-style system, the state issued 172 permits for the hunt, with each permit-holder able to kill one bear.

In a news release, the commission said a “highly regulated” approach provided a “hunter success rate” close to “other states with similar hunt parameters.” Commission Executive Director Roger

Young called the hunt “a success.”

“We’re proud to have joined the more than 30 states that manage black bears with regulated hunting,” Young said in a prepared statement. “The limited number of permits issued in areas with the largest bear populations and other components of the hunt prioritized a conservative approach that ensures the long-term health of bear populations in Florida, while providing opportunity for hunters.”

Opponents of the hunt sought permits to effectively prevent them from going to hunters who would kill bears.

Opponents said they got about 40 permits and offered up to \$2,000 to some hunters to not use their permits, which cost

\$100 for Florida residents and \$300 for non-residents.

Bear hunting has long been controversial in Florida, with the previous hunt held in 2015.

Hunt opponents expressed concerns about details of what the commission approved this year — allowing baiting at feeding stations and allowing dogs to chase down bears in future years.

“Seeing the photos of trophy hunters gloating over their slaughtered bears has been deeply upsetting for all Floridians who love Florida’s bears and want them protected,” Kate MacFall, Florida state director for the Humane World for Animals, said.

“This bloody spectacle has been a heartbreaking way for Floridians to enter the holiday season. To say the

FWC Commission missed the mark on this might be the understatement of the year, and like the 2015 hunt, it will surely haunt our state for years to come.”

Critics have been undeterred by warnings from commission officials that falling far short of the 172-bear quota this year could result in higher numbers of permits being issued in the future.

The conservation group Bear Warriors United filed a lawsuit in September to try to stop the hunt, arguing the commission approved it in August with obsolete data and without “sound” science and research. The case remains pending in Leon County circuit court.

Opponents have said they want the state to use non-lethal measures such as bear-proofing garbage cans

to reduce conflicts between people and bears foraging for food.

Commission attorneys have disputed arguments that the wildlife panel did not follow scientific data in approving the hunt.

Florida is estimated to have more than 4,000 black bears. The hunt was held in the Apalachicola region west of Tallahassee; in areas west of Jacksonville; in an area north of Orlando; and in the Big Cypress region southwest of Lake Okeechobee.

The commission said Tuesday that every bear killed this month was “physically checked by FWC staff and bear response contractors,” with a more complete report on the hunt still “months” off.

Commission officials have previously pointed

to lessons learned from the 2015 hunt, which was planned for seven days, with a target of 320 bears, but was halted after two days with 304 bears killed.

“Our officers maintained a strong, engaged presence throughout the hunt to help ensure it was conducted safely and legally,” Col. Alberto Maza, director of the commission’s Division of Law Enforcement, said in a statement Tuesday.

«While our officers were there to uphold the rules, the primary focus was education. I’m proud of our officers for protecting this important resource and supporting the goals of the agency’s bear management plan.”

## Here are 10 Florida legal issues to watch for in 2026

**Jim Turner**  
News Service of Florida

**«Alligator Alcatraz»:** The immigrant detention center in the Everglades dubbed “Alligator Alcatraz” has spawned a series of court battles since Florida opened the facility this summer. For example, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is scheduled to hear arguments in April in a case that alleges violations of a federal environmental law. Other cases involve issues such as detainees’ access to attorneys and whether the state has withheld public records.

**Book fights:** Publishing companies, authors and parents are challenging state and local education officials in federal lawsuits after books were removed from school libraries because of alleged improper content. For instance, a case at the

11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals challenges a 2023 state law that led to books being removed. Two other pending lawsuits target Escambia County School Board decisions to remove or restrict access to books.

**Guns:** Nearly eight years after the measure passed following the mass shooting at Parkland’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the U.S. Supreme Court is deciding whether to take up the National Rifle Association’s challenge to a law that prevents people under age 21 from buying rifles and other long guns. Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier has taken the unusual step of refusing to defend the law.

**Immigration:** A panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in October about a law that created state crimes for undocumented immigrants

who enter or reenter Florida. The state appealed after a U.S. district judge issued a preliminary injunction, ruling the 2025 law was likely preempted by federal immigration authority. It remains unclear when the appellate panel will issue a decision.

**Marijuana:** After falling short in 2024 of passing a constitutional amendment to allow recreational marijuana, the political committee Smart & Safe Florida wants to take the issue back to voters in 2026. But first, it needs to submit enough signatures and get Florida Supreme Court approval of the proposed ballot wording. The court review could turn into a fight, as Gov. Ron DeSantis and Uthmeier oppose allowing recreational marijuana.

**Social media platforms:** A U.S. district judge in

2026 is expected to rule on the constitutionality of a 2021 Florida law that placed restrictions on social media platforms, such as preventing the sites from banning political candidates. Tech industry groups challenged the law, which passed after Facebook and X, blocked President Donald Trump from their platforms after Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

**Social media restrictions:** Saying social media was harming children’s mental health, Florida lawmakers in 2024 passed a measure to prevent children younger than 14 from opening accounts on certain platforms. Parents would have to give consent for 14- and 15-year-olds to have accounts on the platforms. Industry groups filed a First Amendment challenge and

were backed by a district judge. The issue is pending at the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

**Transgender issues:** The DeSantis administration and lawmakers in recent years have approved a series of measures aimed at transgender people, sparking legal battles. For example, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is weighing the constitutionality of a state law and regulations that restrict treatments for people diagnosed with gender dysphoria. It also is considering a challenge to a ban on Medicaid coverage for hormone therapy and puberty blockers.

**Utility rates:** The state’s Office of Public Counsel and two consumer groups have gone to the Florida Supreme Court to challenge a decision by utility regulators to approve Tampa Electric Co. base-rate

increases that began to take effect in 2025. Meanwhile, the Office of Public Counsel and consumer groups have indicated they likely will also challenge a November decision by regulators to approve a Florida Power & Light base-rate settlement.

**Wetlands:** In a case closely watched by conservation and business groups, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia is considering whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2020 improperly shifted permitting authority to Florida for projects that affect wetlands. A U.S. district judge sided with conservation groups that challenged the shift. Florida and business groups have defended giving authority to the state.

## Fact Check: Test What You Know About Heart Health

(Family Features) As you age, your doctor’s interest in your cholesterol level is likely to increase. That’s no coincidence. High cholesterol and age are two significant risk factors for heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the United States.

You may not be able to slow the hands of time, but elevated low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, also known as “bad” cholesterol, is one of the most significant addressable risk factors for the development of cardiovascular disease. Uncontrolled high LDL-C can lead to death, heart attack, stroke or the need for a coronary revascularization.

While statins are considered first-line treatment for people with high LDL cholesterol, an estimated 29% of patients stop taking their statin within the first year, based on findings published in the “American Journal of Cardiology.” Up to 30% of people have some degree of statin intolerance, according to research published in

the “Journal of Clinical Lipidology.”

Test your heart health knowledge and learn more about managing your risk factors, including high cholesterol, with this quick quiz:

- 1. Do cardiovascular diseases, including heart disease and stroke, claim more lives in the U.S. than all forms of cancer and accidental deaths (the Nos. 2 and 3 causes of death, respectively) combined?**  
Yes. Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of men and women in America and worldwide, killing more people than both cancer and accidents each year.
- 2. According to the American Heart Association, which of the following are true?**
  - Men are more likely to have heart attacks at a younger age than women.
  - Women experience different symptoms indicating potential heart disease.
  - Women have a higher risk of fatality because their symptoms are

frequently misunderstood or misdiagnosed, leading to delayed treatment.

**All are True.** While many factors are at play, one major underlying issue is historically, women simply haven’t been well represented in clinical trials of heart-related conditions. However, Harvard Health reports that culture is slowly changing and some of the gaps are starting to close.

- 3. Does statin intolerance mean statins are not effective?**  
No. On the contrary, statins are the standard of care to lower LDL cholesterol. However, some people cannot take statins at any dose because of statin intolerance symptoms such as muscle pain, while others may have their LDL cholesterol remain uncontrolled because they are not able to take higher doses.
- 4. Are women more likely to be statin intolerant than men?**  
Yes. According to the National Institutes of Health, being female is a risk factor for statin intolerance.
- 5. If a person is statin intolerant, are there other treatments available to help lower their uncontrolled LDL-C?**  
Yes. Alternative treatments are available for people with statin intolerance. A health care provider can help explain what options are available if you experience potential statin-associated side effects.
- 6. Are muscle-related symptoms typically the most common side effect of statins?**  
Yes. Muscle pains or cramps (myalgias) are the most common symptoms people experience. Your health care provider may run tests or change your medication to address these symptoms.

Cholesterol

LDL cholesterol, commonly referred to as “bad” cholesterol, leads to plaque in your arteries, reducing blood flow and potentially damaging your cardiovascular system.

If your bloodwork shows elevated LDL cholesterol levels, you can take steps to reduce it.

1. Eat a healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats

and high in fiber, with an emphasis on fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

2. Get at least 30 minutes of exercise daily, and if you carry extra weight, work to lose it.
3. Talk to your health care provider about cholesterol-lowering medications, which can help lower bad cholesterol and reduce the risks associated with heart disease.

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*Judge awards \$34.7 million on page A1*

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EQUAL HOUSING





It was Herb who first saw Janice Thomas, the art teacher, come in.

«She’s putting something up on the bulletin board,» Herb said.

«Wonder what it says,» said Doc.

«Might be something from school,» Herb said.

Steve is of a more practical way of thinking. «You ever thought about going over there and seeing what it is?»

Steve got up and walked over and read the poster. He came back.

«It’s an art show,» Steve said. «For anyone who wants to enter.»

«Haven’t had an art show here in a long time.»

«Those city guys who moved in the Johnson place, remember?»

«That was an art show?»

«Maybe.»

«You know,» Dud said, «there’s more than one way to do art. You take Jim Kennedy now. The way he can pick up a little stick with his backhoe. How many people can do that? I think that’s a kind of art.»

«You’re right, Dud,» said Herb. «You ever watch Grant when he’s fly fishing?»

The members of the Mule Barn truck stop’s philosophy counter and world-dilemma think tank nodded in agreement.

«Poetry, that is,» said Doc.

«Dang near magic, to my mind,» said Steve.

«How about the cream gravy here at the Mule Barn?» said Dud. «I don’t know what they put in it, but you could eat a cardboard box if it had that gravy on it.»

«I’ve never had better.»

«Then there’s Steve,» said Doc.

«Me?» said the cowboy.

«You boys ever see anyone put a better rein on a horse than Steve?»

Steve blushed. «Now come on!»

«It’s true, Steve.»

«That,» said Doc, «is art, too. Maybe art, maybe something like ballet almost, the way a horse moves when Steve’s trained him.»

«I guess there’s more than one kind of art in the world,» said Herb, «and I guess I personally know some artists.»

Brought to you by “Ol’ Max Evans, the First Thousand Years” now available in a new edition from [www.unmpress.com](http://www.unmpress.com).



## NURSE JUDY’S NOOK

# Baby, it’s cold outside

Here it is—the brand new year of 2026, and it is freezing outdoors. Everyone knows I hate cold weather. Moving from near Buffalo, New York to sunny Florida was a no brainer for me. I was happy with north Florida because it had seasons – even a little winter but never too cold and very short, but last year and this year it seems to get colder and stay longer. I am upset by this and want to complain, but my resolve for this year is to no longer be a whiner. Why has the new year put me in this dilemma right from January 1? I can’t complain about it, yet I sit here at my computer shivering.

I come to the decision that I must find good things about cold weather and think about them. What is good about cold weather? I can’t think of anything. I put on another sweater and meet that pesky alter ego of mine, Nurse Judy. I explain my problem to her

making sure that I’m not using a whiny or complaining voice. I am merely doing research to help scientifically solve a problem I have. She immediately, as usual, uses this to argue with me.

“There is a lot about cold weather that is good,” she says.

“Like what?”

“You don’t have to mow your grass as much.”

“I don’t mow my lawn. The gardener does.”

“Well, you don’t have to pay him as often,” she says.

“I still pay him as frequently for other things he does,” I say in a lilting voice and sporting a big smile so I can’t be mistaken for being negative. “Is there anything else.?”

“Oh yes,” she continues without taking a breath., “you don’t have to run the air conditioner.”

“But you have to turn on the heat.” The smile is having a hard time staying on my face.

“What else?”

“You get to watch more television.”

“Is it good to be a couch potato?” I ask as if this is a scientific question.

She ignores that and continues on. “There’s no danger from bears. They’re hibernating.”

“When have we ever seen a bear near us?” I ask still trying to be a scientific questioner.

“There are no mosquitos, or ticks, or chiggers” she says triumphantly, and they cause disease and certainly are around here.”

I think about that. She’s right. I don’t have bites all over me every time I go out. I don’t have to check my skin every night before going to bed. Back when I still was able to complain, I complained about this all spring, summer and fall. Maybe cold wasn’t all bad.” I pasted a phony smile upon my face. “Perhaps you’re right,” I say, adding “for once” under my breath.

“Of course, I am”, she says. “I love cold weather.”

“Why do you love it? I ask, thinking it’s something to be tolerated, not loved.

“Because you always must take me shopping to get embroidered sweaters, furry coats and capes, fluffy earmuffs and lacey fringed scarves. Sometimes you even buy me pretty boots.”

I suddenly remember. This was always one of my best complaining sessions. All this shopping for a card-carrying, selfish diva I could go on for hours. This resolution was going to be the end of me.

All I could do was bite my tongue and say, “Get in the car.”

This is going to be a long hard year. (Just saying, not complaining.)

More later,  
Judy  
[www.nursejudyinfo.com](http://www.nursejudyinfo.com)

## From the Editor’s Des

# Keeping our local paper alive with your help

Erin Hill

I grew up in a house where Wednesday nights were special. That was the night we made the short trip to the store to pick up our local weekly newspaper. I still remember flipping through the pages as soon as we got home. The first page I turned to? School news—stories about classmates, sports, and the little victories that made our town feel alive.

As I got older, my focus shifted. The classifieds became my favorite section. I was a teenager looking for an after-

school job, and those small ads weren’t just print. That newspaper was more than paper and ink. It was a thread that tied all of us together.

Times have changed. High-speed internet, social media, tablets, and smartphones mean news travels instantly, and often, it bypasses our local stories. But while the world has sped up, the heart of our community hasn’t. Families are still celebrating first birthdays, milestone anniversaries, engagements, and weddings. Graduates are still walking across stages. Neighborhoods

are still organizing events, fundraisers, and gatherings. But now these momentous milestones are just posted on Facebook. How can you put that in a scrapbook for your grandchildren?

That’s where you come in. Local news doesn’t write itself. It thrives on your stories, your photos, your milestones. When you submit a piece of news, be it a new baby, a wedding, or a school honor, you’re keeping our community connected. You’re helping preserve a local tradition that matters, one that no social

media feed can fully replace.

We don’t sell newspapers. We sell news, news about the people, the families, the schools, and the businesses that make this community home. And while the medium may have changed, the message remains the same: our stories matter.

So, share your news with us. Let’s make sure the next generation of readers grows up picking up their local paper, not just scrolling past their community. Together, we can keep our local paper alive and thriving—one story at a time.



Grace Notes

The Word for 2026 is: ‘Begin’

Nancy Kennedy

A few weeks ago, my pastor announced that we are going to read the Bible together as a church.

He gave two options: the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, or just the New Testament.

I signed up for the New Testament only — because of Leviticus.

I’ve never been able to read through that Old Testament book with all its detailed instructions for proper sacrifices, regulations about clean and unclean foods, and what to do about boils and mildew, among a thousand other things that have no relevance to 21st-century life.

I imagine there’s something in Leviticus that’s beneficial to my soul, but I haven’t been able to stay awake long enough to find out.

Here’s the truth: In the past 45-plus years I’ve read the Bible (minus Leviticus) many times — but not consistently. Not daily.

Years ago, a woman called me about speaking at her church’s women’s event and asked rather brusquely, “How much time do you spend in the Word every day?”

My face got hot and my heart pounded. I gulped and said, as lightheartedly as I could, “Oh, probably not as much as I should.”

The conversation went downhill from there. She didn’t call back, and I didn’t get the gig.

Sometimes when people post pictures of their open Bible and a cup of coffee on social media, with a pithy caption like Can’t start my day without either of these!, I feel that same familiar shame.

I don’t want to feel that way about Bible reading. I want to love it so much that I can’t start my day without it.

But I’m just not there. Yet.

A Christianity Today article once asked, “If Leviticus or Jude suddenly disappeared from Scripture, would we notice?”

The author, Ted Olsen, wrote: “When the early church fathers spoke or wrote, they breathed the language of Scripture. They could not greet each other without quoting Jesus or Paul. They used Scripture not just to refer to God, but to describe their interpersonal relationships, daily tasks — their entire world.

“To ask them to speak without reference to Scripture would be like asking us to speak without using words with the letter e.”

If Leviticus fell out of my Bible, I might notice it missing, but it wouldn’t make much difference. But I would miss the tiny book of Jude, especially its rich benediction at the end:

“To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy....”

Able to keep me from falling. He presents me before His glorious presence.

Without fault — blameless and unblemished.

And with great joy. Triumphant joy and unspeakable delight. (Jude 24, Amplified Bible)

“To our one God, our only Savior, through Jesus Christ our Master be all glory and majesty... now and to the end of all time. Yes.” (Jude 25, The Message)

I really do love the Word of God when I take time to digest it. I just haven’t taken the time — at least not regularly.

But I’ve signed up to read the Bible every day in 2026 with others in my church, so I’m going to begin.

Who knows? I might just be surprised to find that I can’t start my day without it.

Contact Nancy Kennedy at 352-564-2927 (leave a message) or email at [nkennedy@chronicleonline.com](mailto:nkennedy@chronicleonline.com).

Looking Back

20 YEARS AGO

Long-time Havana pastor and community leader William Maxwell, 86, died January 8 at Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare. A native of Bradfordville, he was pastor and member of Pilgrim Rest M.B. Church in Havana. “He was one of the greatest men to live and serve the community and county, said Havana Town Councilman Vernell Ross. “He did it in many ways: religious, political, social, economic.”

Florida’s senior senator, Bill Nelson, met with community leaders in Quincy to answer questions about U.S. policies during a multi-city sweep of North Florida. Big from the first was the question of America’s new immigration barriers. Nelson called immigration one of the thorniest issues facing the country, one with two sides: first, the issue of securing our borders, and second, the importance of illegal immigrants to our workforce.

30 YEARS AGO

A circuit court ruled that Midway police officers did have jurisdiction on I-10 to make arrests. The court ruled a police officer had the right to arrest a driver for DUI on I-10 inside the Midway city limits.

Susan Butler, daughter of Mrs. Dot McAleenan of Quincy, earned a 1995 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching — an honor which also brought her school, Bay County’s Rutherford High School, a \$7,500 National Science Foundation grant.

40 YEARS AGO

A group of concerned citizens vocally opposed a school-based health clinic at Shanks High School in Quincy, claiming the clinic condoned teenage sex by providing contraceptives, gynecological examinations, counseling about sexuality, sex education, pregnancy testing and prenatal care, pediatric care for infants and adolescents, and possibly a free day care for children of students.

The Town of Havana’s placement of its Christmas decorations drew criticism and charges of racial discrimination for the second year in a row at the Town Council meeting. Town Manager Cecil Trippe defended the placement, explaining there was inadequate clearance on the shorter utility poles along that section of U.S. 27.

50 YEARS AGO

Circuit Court Judge Hugh M. Taylor turned down a request that the results of September’s jai-alai referendum in Gadsden County be set aside. The suit claimed the wording of the referendum on the ballot did not properly inform voters that allowing jai-alai would also allow legalized gambling.

Petrolane Incorporated announced the appointment of James R. Stevenson as manager of the Havana district of the company’s LP-gas division. Stevenson was also manager of the Dothan and Enterprise, AL, and Colquitt and Camilla, GA districts.

60 YEARS AGO

A \$100,000 suit attacking Florida prison segregation laws and charging Gadsden County officials with “conspiracy” to deny equal protection and treatment was filed in U.S. District Court by CORE attorney John D. Due, Jr. on behalf of James Fortson and “all others similarly situated.” Fortson was the son of Rev. W.H. Fortson, president of the Havana chapter of the NAACP.


Bill T. Rogers, assistant coach and teacher at Quincy High School, was selected to fill the head coach and teacher vacancy in the school that was created by the transfer of Carlos E. Deason to the position of director of the Adult Education Program.

70 YEARS AGO

A total of 265 high quality cattle were slated to be shown by FFA and 4-H Club members and commercial cattlemen at the upcoming West Florida Fat Cattle Show and Sale in Quincy, making it the biggest in the twelve-year history of the event.


Friends of Ruth “Sug” Staggers missed her efficient service and happy disposition when they visited the Havana Post Office, as she resigned her position and moved with her daughter, Pat, to Tampa.

J.H. Hyatt, principal of Havana High School, was installed as president of the Kiwanis Club. Billy Miller was installed as vice-president and W.L. Williams as secretary.



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Gadsden County Lieutenant Receives “Everyday Heroes Award”

Staff Report  
Gadsden County News Service

Lt. Christopher Daniels of the Gadsden County Sheriff’s Office was recognized at the 7th Annual Restoring Hope Training Summit in Orlando, receiving the “Everyday Heroes Award” from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

The award honors law enforcement

officers for bravery, service, and contributions to local communities and youth. Lieutenant Daniels was one of 21 officers in Florida selected for the distinction.

Sheriff Morris Young congratulated Daniels on the recognition, noting his selection as part of the statewide group of honorees.





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# LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, GENE OPHEIM, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>CERTIFICATE NO: 577 YEAR OF ISSUANCE: 2020</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: PER OR 793 P 191 PRCL 3 NEW FOR 2014 COMMENCE MARKING THE NWC OF SECT 14 AND NEC OF SECT 5 3N-4W AND RUN THENCE N 89°12'27» E ALONG NORTH BOUNDARY OF SECR 14 169.75 FT THENCE LEAVING NORTH BOUNDARY RUN S 00°03'14» W 673.97 FT TO POB. FROM POB CONTINUE S 00°03'14» W 751.85 FT TO A PT ON THE NORTHERLY ROW BOUNDARY OF CTY RD 272 SAID PT LYING ON A CURVE CONCAVE TO THE NORTHERLY WITH A RADIUS OF 3784.83 FT, THROUGH A CENTRAL ANGLE OF 02°31'23» FOR AN ARC LENGTH OF 166.67 FT (CHORD OF ARC BEING N 85°05'41» W 166.65 FT); THENCE LEAVING ROW BOUNDARY RUN N 00°08'20» E 756.10 FT TO A PT ON THE NORTH BOUNDARY OF SECT 15-3N-4W; THENCE N 88°41'11» E 166.02 FT TO POB CONTAINING 2.9 AC MORE OR LESS,;</p> <p>PARCEL ID NUMBER: 2-14-3N-4W-0000-00230-0200</p> <p>NAME IN WHICH ASSESSED: HEIRS OF DAVID BROWN</p> <p>Said Property being in the County of Gadsden, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the courthouse door on the 4TH Day of FEBRUARY 2026 at 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Dated this 25TH Day of SEPTEMBER 2025. NICHOLAS THOMAS Clerk of the Circuit Court Gadsden County, Florida BY: _____ Ann Marie Johns, Deputy Clerk</p> <p>4t: 1/1, 1/8 1/15, 1/22</p>	<p>DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: LOT 40 BLK A HILLSIDE FARMS OR 764 P 543 OR 503 P 1950 OR 349 P 493</p> <p>PARCEL ID NUMBER: 5-0L-0R-0S-1400-0000A-0400</p> <p>NAME IN WHICH ASSESSED: HEATHER COMBS FULTZ</p> <p>Said Property being in the County of Gadsden, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the courthouse door on the 4TH Day of FEBRUARY 2026 at 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Dated this 14TH Day of NOVEMBER 2025.</p> <p>NICHOLAS THOMAS Clerk of the Circuit Court Gadsden County, Florida BY: _____ Ann Marie Johns, Deputy Clerk</p> <p>4t: 1/1, 1/8 1/15, 1/22</p>	<p>Gadsden County, Florida BY: _____ Ann Marie Johns, Deputy Clerk</p> <p>4t: 1/1, 1/8 1/15, 1/22</p>
<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, GENE OPHEIM, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>CERTIFICATE NO: 956 YEAR OF ISSUANCE: 2021</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: OR 453 P 838. OR 87, P. 303- THE W1/2 OF THE FOLLOWING: COMM. AT NEC OF SW1/4., RUN W. 1320 FT., N. 701 FT. TO BEGIN, RUN W. 622 FT. S 350 FT. E 622 FT. N 350 FT. TO THE POB IN SECTION 4-2N-3W.</p> <p>PARCEL ID NUMBER: 3-04-2N-3W-0000-00234-0200</p> <p>NAME IN WHICH ASSESSED: JAMES OLAN ALLEN JR C/O WILLIAM B ALLEN</p> <p>Said Property being in the County of Gadsden, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the courthouse door on the 4TH Day of FEBRUARY 2026 at 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Dated this 25TH Day of SEPTEMBER 2025. NICHOLAS THOMAS Clerk of the Circuit Court Gadsden County, Florida BY: _____ Ann Marie Johns, Deputy Clerk</p> <p>4t: 1/1, 1/8 1/15, 1/22</p>	<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, GENE OPHEIM, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>CERTIFICATE NO: 878 YEAR OF ISSUANCE: 2021</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: LOT 40 OCHLOCKONEE ESTATES RECORDED OR 816 P 1086 OR 810 P 22 OR 740 P 1315 OR 648 P 185 OR 291 P 1127</p> <p>PARCEL ID NUMBER: 3-12-2N-2W-0572-00000-0400</p> <p>NAME IN WHICH ASSESSED: BEATRIZ LAMAR BUSTAMANTE</p> <p>Said Property being in the County of Gadsden, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the courthouse door on the 4TH Day of FEBRUARY 2026 at 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Dated this 14TH Day of NOVEMBER 2025.</p> <p>NICHOLAS THOMAS Clerk of the Circuit Court Gadsden County, Florida BY: _____ Ann Marie Johns, Deputy Clerk</p> <p>4t: 1/1, 1/8 1/15, 1/22</p>	<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, GENE OPHEIM, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>CERTIFICATE NO: 565 YEAR OF ISSUANCE: 2023</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: LOTS 9 &amp; 10, BLOCK F, SAINT JOHN'S SUBDV. OR 175 P 307</p> <p>PARCEL ID NUMBER: 2-23-3N-4W-0410-0000F-0090</p> <p>NAME IN WHICH ASSESSED: IDA L CARR (ET AL)</p> <p>Said Property being in the County of Gadsden, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the courthouse door on the 4TH Day of FEBRUARY 2026 at 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Dated this 14TH Day of NOVEMBER 2025.</p> <p>NICHOLAS THOMAS Clerk of the Circuit Court Gadsden County, Florida BY: _____ Ann Marie Johns, Deputy Clerk</p> <p>4t: 1/1, 1/8 1/15, 1/22</p>
<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, IDE TECHNOLOGIES, INC, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>CERTIFICATE NO: 1945 YEAR OF ISSUANCE: 2023</p>	<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, GENE OPHEIM, the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>CERTIFICATE NO: 1903 YEAR OF ISSUANCE: 2020</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: OR 646 P 1890. COMM AT THE NEC OF THE NW 1/4 OF THE SE 1/4 AND RUN W 115 FT THEN S 00 DEG 06' E 127 FT TO BEGIN; THENCE S 00 DEG 06' E 30 FT., W 202.01 FT., S 00 DEG 06' E 163.65 FT., W 193.65 FT, N 00 DEG 06' W 193.65 FT., E 395.66 FT TO THE P.O.B. OR 323 P 1844 IN SECTION 23-2N-4W.</p> <p>PARCEL ID NUMBER: 3-23-2N-4W-0000-00421-1000</p> <p>NAME IN WHICH ASSESSED: DONZELLAR WOODWARD HARLEY</p> <p>Said Property being in the County of Gadsden, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law, the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the courthouse door on the 4TH Day of FEBRUARY 2026 at 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Dated this 14TH Day of NOVEMBER 2025.</p> <p>NICHOLAS THOMAS Clerk of the Circuit Court</p>	

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COMICS AND PUZZLES

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“But the good thing about Sims is he’s least likely to be hurt on the job and file a disability claim.”

Schwadron 2-28

**JUMBLE**  
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PMILE  
ONAPI  
CAROTF  
GIOIRN

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Print your answer here: “ ”

Yesterday’s Jumbles: OUTDO LIGHT HOLLER SPRUCE  
Answer: When their new air conditioning unit broke down so quickly, they — LOST THEIR COOL

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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME  
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Once we have the milk, we send it to all the people who use it. Even for chocolate milk.

Do you make chocolate milk here? Can you say, “Hi?”

TO THE COW, HOW HER MILK WOULD END UP BEING USED WAS A ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

**JUMBLE FOR KIDS**  
THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME!®  
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

The letters of these crazy words are all mixed up. To play the game, put them back into the right order so that they make real words you can find in your dictionary. Write the letters of each real word under each crazy word, but only one letter to a square.

BYO  
CTNE  
IWKN  
RPID

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Now you’re ready to solve today’s Jumble For Kids. Study the picture for a hint. Play around with the letters in the circles. You’ll find you can put them in order so that they make your funny answer.

Print your answer here: “ ”

Jumbles: BOY CENT WINK DRIP  
Answer: Being a good magician isn’t easy and can sometimes be — TRICKY

How many more times do I need to practice this?

BEING A GOOD MAGICIAN ISN’T EASY AND CAN SOMETIMES BE ---

Color me

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THERE’S SOCIAL DISTANCING, AND THEN THERE’S THE SURVIVAL DISTANCING.

OSBURN 2-3

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IF ALL THE CRANKY PEOPLE DISAPPEARED, THIS WOULD BE A PERFECT WORLD!

BUT THEN YOU’D DISAPPEAR, TOO!

WE’D MISS YOU, BUT WE’D BE SO HAPPY IN A PERFECT WORLD!

YEAH...

I COULDN’T ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN, SO I’M STAYING!

SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE CRANKY!

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Have you got any questions about what to do tomorrow, Mr. Wallet?

At my age, I don’t plan that far in advance!

I only plan for right now!

SCANCARELLI

**SCRABBLE** G R A M S

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PAR SCORE 150-160  
BEST SCORE 231

FOUR RACK TOTAL  
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. “Blanks” used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition. SOLUTION TOMORROW

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgrams@gmail.com

11-25

EDITORS: Here is the solution to today’s SCRABBLEGRAM. You can print the solution on the same day elsewhere in your paper, or beneath the following day’s puzzle. If you choose to run the solution elsewhere in the same day’s newspaper, insert the appropriate type (below) over the SOLUTION TOMORROW line in the puzzle.

				6	8		
	2	8		1			9
4	6			7			
	7	6					1
		3	1		5	7	
	5					2	3
				9			4
6						3	2
		7	4				

Puzzle solutions on page A6

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16		
17			18							19		
20			21						22			
23		24			25			26	27			
28				29	30			31				
32				33		34	35			36		
		37	38					39				
40	41	42	43					44	45	46	47	
48		49				50		51				
52				53	54			55				
56				57		58	59			60		
61			62	63				64				
65			66					67				
68			69					70				

- Across**
- 1 Pool or polo  
5 Groups of troops  
11 Understood, as a joke  
14 Persian Gulf country that borders Armenia  
15 Noggin  
16 NPR host Shapiro  
17 Vegetable patch pest  
19 «Mm-hmm»
- 20 Lawyer’s org.  
21 Unwilling (to)  
22 Band bookings  
23 Native Costa Ricans, informally  
25 Feline who lives indoors  
28 Anthem heard in Nova Scotia  
31 Olympic gymnast Biles

- 32 Vanity Fair publisher Condé —  
33 Tooth’s outer layer  
36 Neither’s partner  
37 Workplace companion  
40 Cable network with many reruns  
43 «Good enough»  
44 Job inspection org.  
48 Baltimore ballplayer  
50 Walked stealthily  
52 New York City rodent that went viral in 2015  
55 Mixes  
56 School support orgs.  
57 Coral producer  
60 Combat sport, briefly  
61 Ad-\_\_: improvise  
62 Really fun person, or an apt descriptor of 17-, 25-, 37-, and 52-Across?  
65 Subj. for some new immigrants  
66 Zoo section with birds  
67 Actress Russo  
68 \_\_/her pronouns
- 69 Prime-time soap opera set in Texas  
70 Commotions
- Down**
- 1 Unit of explosive force  
2 Coffee bean variety  
3 Seed-filled percussion pair  
4 Stop  
5 \_\_ Domini  
6 Civil rights activist  
Parks  
7 Calendar viewing option  
8 Washington neighbor  
9 Former quarterback Manning  
10 Salt, in French  
11 Judy Garland or Cher  
12 Herb in Italian seasoning  
13 Bettor’s adviser  
18 Anna’s sister in «Frozen»  
22 Precious stone  
24 Not fooled by  
26 Applied to  
27 Storage tower

- 29 More adroit  
30 Deep blue dye  
34 Oft-torn knee pt.  
35 Rx items  
38 Seoul-based athleisure brand  
39 Billy —  
40 Brings down  
41 «The Great — Baking Show»  
42 Quite large  
45 Read quickly  
46 Spanish brother  
47 Revenue source for
- magazines  
49 Parts of lbs.  
51 «SportsCenter» network  
53 Earth Day time  
54 Add up to  
58 Harp-shaped constellation  
59 Celebratory shouts  
62 Cushion  
63 Filmmaker DuVernay  
64 Nest egg letters

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1/13  
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Thanks to Bill Radvansky New Kensington, Pennsylvania

A pluggie orders a small ice cream cone so he won’t feel bad when he orders a second one.



# Finding Your Rhythm Again: Reestablishing Routines in the New Year



(Family Features) The holiday season is special, fun and often a bit chaotic, filled with family gatherings and joyful celebrations. Once the decorations come down and chaos subsides in the new year, many families face a familiar challenge: getting children back into their regular routines. After weeks of excitement, travel and inconsistent schedules,

the transition back to structure can feel daunting. However, with a thoughtful approach, parents can help their children ease back into their daily rhythms, and in the process, restore calm for the entire family. Dr. Lauren Loquasto, senior vice president and chief academic officer at The Goddard School, provides this insight and guidance for parents.

## Understand Why Routines Matter

Children thrive on predictability. Routines provide a sense of security, reduce stress and support emotional regulation. Children feel safe, even proud, when they know what comes next. Routines also help them develop independence and self-control. After the holidays, reestablishing these patterns is essential for a smooth return to school and everyday life.

## Start with Sleep

For young children, sleep is the foundation of a successful routine. Consistent sleep supports focus, tolerance and cooperation. For optimal brain repair and growth, preschoolers typically need 10-13 hours of sleep per night, but seasonal festivities can disrupt sleep schedules, frequently leaving children overly tired. Begin by gradually adjusting bedtime by moving it earlier in 15-minute increments each night until you resume your regular schedule. Pair this with calming pre-bedtime rituals like reading or quiet play to signal it's time to wind down. The morning routine is equally important. Strive for consistent wake-up times,

even on the weekends.

If your child is resistant, teach them how their sleep routine helps their body and mind. For example: "Your body relaxes and grows stronger when you get enough sleep, so you feel good afterward."

## Reintroduce Standard Meal-times

Holiday snacking and large meals at family gatherings can disrupt normal eating habits. Reinstate regular meal and snack times to help your child feel grounded. Offer balanced options and involve them in planning or preparing meals, as they're more likely to embrace healthy choices when they have a role in the process.

## Prioritize Physical Activity

After extended periods of lounging indoors – and likely an overdose of screen time – children need movement to burn energy and boost their moods. Coordinate outdoor play and family walks. If the weather isn't cooperative, move around indoors with hide-and-seek and dance sessions. Physical activity not only supports health but also helps regulate sleep and behavior.

## Strategically Provide Choices

When children have a voice, they are more likely to stay engaged and stick to their routines. As your child settles back into familiar patterns, this is an ideal moment to assess where you can ease your grip just enough to support their growing

autonomy. This doesn't mean relinquishing full decision-making power; rather, it's about offering structured, intentional choices that help them feel a sense of control over their day.

You know your child best, so you can determine when to be flexible. For example, it may not matter if they change into their pajamas right after dinner or just before bed but shifting when they go to the bathroom could completely disrupt their routine and, in turn, your day.

## Model Behavior

Children learn by example and they are always watching their parents. If you reestablish and consistently maintain your own routines – healthy meals, quality sleep and physical activity among them – your child is more likely to follow suit. Make it a family effort rather than a set of rules imposed on them, and make it fun. To help routines stick, consider sticker charts to track progress and incentivize independence and accountability.

Resetting routines isn't about perfection; it's about creating a supportive environment where children feel secure and prepared for what's ahead. With patience, consistency and a positive attitude, you can help your child start the new year on the right foot.

For more parenting guidance and insights, including a blog and webinar series, visit the Parent Resource Center at [GoddardSchool.com](http://GoddardSchool.com).

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