Holiday travel can be both exciting and stressful. Whether you plan to fly or drive, there are some excellent tips to make it less stressful. Firstly, plan for something to go wrong. Make sure you have the money and time available in case of weather or other delays. Always leave a day or two before you need to be home at the end of the trip. Delays happen. You will be more prepared if you need to spend time in limbo. Pay attention to the weather, where you are, and where you are going.

Next, be flexible with your travel days and times. Consider traveling on off-peak days to avoid crowds and higher prices. Flying or driving during non-peak hours can make your journey more enjoyable and less crowded. Arrive at the airport early to account for potential...
Shelly recently accomplished the following activities:

• Shelly spoke at the Lower Keys Rotary Club on Big Pine Key to a mix of local media celebrities and avid Morning Magazine fans! She spoke about the Monroe County Extension Service team and taught them about this summer’s marine heatwave and coral bleaching. They are a terrific group and it was great to meet so many of our local talents in person.

• Shelly spoke on Morning Magazine about Fishstory. This is a South Atlantic Fishery Management citizen science project to collect fisheries data from old black and white photos from charter boat fishing trips pre-1970s. Fishstory was piloted in Daytona Beach and now they want to collect historic Keys fishing photos! Shelly is working with Julia Byrd, SAFMC citizen science program manager, and Dr. Corey Malcom, lead historian in the Florida Keys History Center, to strategize how to involve the community to scan and record Florida Keys fishing history. Save the Date: SAFMC will be scanning historic fishing photos at the Florida Keys Seafood Festival at Bayview Park, Key West on January 13-14, 2024.

• Shelly was invited to be a panelist at the College of the Florida Keys Tourism and Hospitality Professionals to speak to students about careers in ecotourism and how to become a certified Florida Master Naturalist. Shelly is also an invited member of the CFK Marine Science Advisory Committee and helped recommend curriculum updates to the BS in Marine Resource Management.

Maria recently accomplished the following activities:

• Maria Quirico participated in Academy Session B from September 14th to the 16th in Gainesville, Florida. This session served as a training program for new University of Florida extension agents, providing valuable advice to enhance their work and reporting for the upcoming evaluation period.

• Maria organized two impactful group learning events, benefitting a total of 45 participants. The first event, titled “Exploring Florida Keys Biodiversity Through Arts: A Creative Workshop for Kids,” commenced last month and has now concluded. During the final session, 11 kids and three teachers actively participated, delving into educational topics such as butterflies and wildflowers native to the Florida Keys. On November 28th, the finger lime workshop took place, featuring Manjul Dutt, a professor from the University of Florida, who shared insights and experiences about this fascinating crop.

• Maria Quirico assumed the role of Environmental Horticulture Agent at UF/IFAS Monroe County Extension, actively engaging in various channels to provide horticultural guidance. These efforts included offering advice through five phone consultations and responding to 25 email inquiries.

• Maria conducted two office consultations, fostering discussions with community members on gardening and related topics. Her commitment to personalized assistance extended to 26 one-on-one consultations.
Alicia recently accomplished the following activities:

- Alicia met with EPA representatives providing technical assistance to the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. She is on the planning team for the Southeast Florida Climate Compact. She attended several sessions on different sectors including the agriculture and working lands sector. She took the technical assistance back to the local planning group in weekly meetings.

- Alicia is helping to complete the regional greenhouse gas inventory and to develop guidance to meet emission reduction targets.

- Alicia worked with 41 grade school participants to show them how to grow micro-greens. She discussed nutrition, the importance of different nutrients that we get from our food, and how climate change impacts the food system. Each participant received a pot and seeds to take home.

- Alicia completed the 7-week Climate Smart Floridians program and sent attendees the program evaluation. One participant remarked, “There is so much in these sessions that can lead toward the road to becoming sustainable”.

- Alicia spoke on the radio and wrote three blogs on the topics of food waste, the impact of managed mooring fields, and eco-friendly and ethical holiday shopping. Check out our blogs here: https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/monroeco/

Continued from page 1

delays, long lines, and security checks. Use travel apps that can help you. Waze is great for driving, and each airline has an app to stay on top of flights. Most travel tips say to book in advance. While that is good advice for popular locations and especially for rental cars, you can save money booking last minute, sometimes up to 25%. Either way, be sure to have a budget and stick to it. Be mindful of holiday-related price increases in some destinations. And I would strongly recommend travel insurance. Travel insurance is much easier to get reimbursement for if you get a weather delay than the airlines, which typically won’t reimburse for the weather. Finally, pack light. Then, edit your bag and pack less. Bringing only carry-on luggage ensures that your bag will get to your destination with you. Even if you are driving, empty your car and only carry the essentials, including jumper cables, a spare tire, and a safety kit. I always download books, movies, and podcasts at home to listen to while traveling. Here are some things that you should bring every time:

- Water bottles: most airports now have fillers past security
- Snacks
- Power bank/ chargers
- Copy of your travel documents
- Medications
- Raincoat
- Laundry bag

With preparation, your holiday travel should be a breeze, but if you encounter a delay, at least you are prepared. Let friends or family know your travel plans, including your itinerary. The best advice is to remember to be adaptable and keep a sense of humor. Unexpected challenges can arise, but you can navigate them smoothly with good planning and a positive mindset.

Safe travels!

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https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/ufifas-diversity-and-legaleeostatements/

UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

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