

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

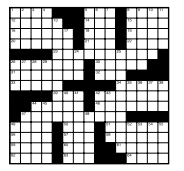
Meet Ziggy!
Best Furry Friend
of the Month
Page 3



Community
Calendar for
St. Johns County
Page 4



Puzzle Page:
Crossword
& More
Page 9



Field of Dreams



Photo courtesy Veterans Council of St. Johns County
WE CAN DO IT!: The Veterans Council is searching for local women who served in defense industries during WWII.

Local Search for 'Rosie the Riveters'

NewsLine staff

The Veterans Council of St. Johns County is joining a nationwide effort to locate and honor the women who served on the home front during World War II. Known collectively as "Rosie the Riveters," these women worked in defense industries, shipyards, and factories, filling critical roles while millions of men were serving overseas.

The Spirit of '45 organization is currently seeking to identify surviving "Rosies" in the Northeast Florida area to ensure their contributions to the war effort are formally recognized and recorded for historical preservation.

If you or someone you know served as a Rosie the Riveter during WWII, please contact the Veterans Council of St. Johns County or the Spirit of '45 organization. Local organizers hope to honor these trailblazing women at upcoming patriotic events throughout the spring.



Photo courtesy St. Johns County Public Affairs
Aerial view of the Field of Dreams baseball facility.

Local baseball facility completes \$1.5M expansion

By Tracy McCormick-Dishman

Families and athletes in St. Johns County are now enjoying significant upgrades to the Field of Dreams baseball facility at Aberdeen Park following the completion of a \$1,513,800 expansion project.

The disability-friendly complex, located at 1401 Shetland Drive, recently debuted its new amenities, which include a sprawling concession building featuring ADA-accessible restrooms and a significantly expanded parking lot. The project, awarded to Saboungi Construction Inc., represents the culmination of a journey that began when the construction contract was approved by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners in April 2025, followed by a groundbreaking in May.

The facility serves as the headquarters for the Field of Dreams (FOD) Baseball League, a sustainable voluntary organization dedicated to providing a safe, ADA-certified environment for children of all ages with mental or physical disabilities. Through the league, partici-



Photo courtesy St. Johns County Public Affairs
St. Johns County Sheriff Robert Hardwick speaks with athletes at the Field of Dreams.

pants play baseball at no cost, allowing them to experience the hallmarks of the sport: wearing an official uniform, having their names announced over the loudspeaker, participating in the singing of the national anthem before each game and being a valued member of an athletic team.

Co-founders George Vancore and Chuck Forcier established the league to ensure

every child has the opportunity to be a player. The recent investment by the county underscores a commitment to all-inclusive recreation, ensuring the facility remains a thriving hub for the association's growing membership.

The completion of the project was recently marked by a gathering of local

Support our Advertisers!

Friends of the library to offer ACT and SAT prep classes

NewsLine staff

The Friends of the Bartram Trail Public Library will offer ACT and SAT prep classes this spring to help students prepare for college entrance exams. Classes are scheduled for March 26, April 2, 9, 23 and 30. Registration began Feb. 1.

The SAT and ACT are standardized exams used by most colleges to evaluate a student's readiness for higher education. The SAT is now fully digital and adaptive, focusing on literacy, numeracy and writing skills. The ACT covers English, mathematics, reading and science, though the science portion is becoming optional in 2025. These tests provide a common data point for admissions departments to compare applicants from different high schools.

Prep classes are one hour and 15 minutes each. Students may sign up for either or both series. ACT classes will be held from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., and SAT

classes will run from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. The sessions will include two English/Reading and two math sessions. Following a practice test completed at home, the fifth and final session will be a review from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. for English/Reading and from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. for math.

Attendees should bring calculators. Each series of five sessions costs \$50, or \$100 to attend both series. These proceeds are a donation and, along with other donations, are used to fund all library programs at the Bartram Trail Public Library. Purchase of a specific review/prep book is also required.

There is a cap of 30 students per series. The last day to register is March 23 unless the cap is reached prior to that date. Register by visiting <https://www.bartramtrailfol.org/satact-classes>. For questions about the courses, email Phyllis Macy directly at macy17@yahoo.com.



A local student prepares for upcoming college entrance exams at the Bartram Trail Public Library. The Friends of the Bartram Trail Public Library will host ACT and SAT prep classes starting March 26. Photo courtesy Bartram Trail Public Library

Field of Dreams cont. from pg. 1

officials and community leaders, including St. Johns County Commissioners Clay Murphy and Christian Whitehurst, Sheriff Robert Hardwick and Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Jamie Baccari. Marithza Ross, executive director of the St. Johns County Parks Foundation, also highlighted the project

as a milestone for the region's accessible infrastructure.

In addition to the baseball facility, Aberdeen Park offers an all-inclusive, ADA-accessible playground, making it a premier destination for inclusive play in North Florida.



Youth practice their baseball skills at St. Johns County's Field of Dreams disability-friendly field at Aberdeen Park. Photo provided by Field of Dreams Baseball St. Johns County

Local Advertising for Local Businesses



When it comes to marketing your business to local customers, nobody does it better than your community newspaper!

Get started with a Free Marketing Consultation

The CreekLine

(904) 886-4919
www.floridanewline.com

Visit us online
FloridaNewsLine.com

Our team at Nemetz Dental Associates is ready to help you with all of your dental needs and we look forward to providing you with personalized service and unparalleled treatment.



NemetzDentalAssociates
SPECIALTY DENTAL CARE FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY
Pediatric • De/Invisive • Adult Dentistry • Periodontics • Prosthodontics

Your New Smile Awaits!

Mandarin South Business Center 12421 San Jose Blvd.
Suite 310/320 • Jacksonville, FL 32223

Pediatric Dentistry: (904) 292-2210
Adult Dentistry: (904) 886-4867

Marinela M. Nemetz, D.D.S.
Board Certified Pediatric Dentist

Robert J. Nemetz, D.D.S., M.S.
Adult Dentistry | Periodontics | Prosthodontics

We offer

- Pediatric Dentistry
- Family Dentistry
- Periodontics/ Prosthodontics



We Welcome New Patients



www.nemetzdental.com

450 State Road 13 North
Suite 106 PMB 101
St. Johns, FL 32259
(904) 886-4919
www.FloridaNewsLine.com

Publisher

Mark Pettus

Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

Editor

Tracy Dishman

Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

Bookkeeper

Emily Whitehead

Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

Social Media

SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

Advertising Sales

Haley Cook

haley.cook@newslinedigital.com

The CreekLine is a free monthly publication delivered to all addresses in Zip Code 32259 and selected routes in 32092. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication October be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2025.



BFFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Ziggy!

Breed:
Domestic Shorthair

Favorite Activity:
Being interactive with people

Favorite Food:
Lickable treats

Favorite Friends:
Ralph and Moose

How did your BFF get their name:
The zig and zag pattern of her fur.

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in Mandarin NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Mandarin NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.



Answers to our Puzzles PG 9

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

Table of Contents

- 4 Community Calendar
- 6 Gardening
- 7 Business Monthly
- 9 Puzzles
- 10 Classifieds
- 11 Travel

Rotary's annual pub crawl to benefit local charities

By Al Kalter

It's fun, it's for a good cause and it's been going on since 2009. On Saturday, April 18, the annual Bartram Trail Rotary Pub Crawl will take place in the Shops of Bartram Walk, where Race Track Road meets State Road 13. Participants will crawl – that is, walk – around the shopping center, visiting five participating establishments and enjoying a beverage at each.

This event is the major annual fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Bartram Trail-Julington Creek, drawing a crowd of

150 fun-loving friends and neighbors. In sequence, the group will make the following stops: Moon Dog Pie House, 2nd Bay Brewing, Bono's Bar-B-Q, La Nopalera and Iggy's Grill & Bar. The festivities get underway at 2:30 p.m. and should wrap up around 6:30 p.m.

Proceeds from the pub crawl help Rotary support area organizations such as the Betty Griffin Center, the Homeless Coalition of St. Johns, the local chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, Tom Coughlin's Jay Fund, the Creekside High School Interact Club and more.

Tickets are \$50 each. Ticketholders will receive a commemorative pub crawl cup to use at each of the stops (one beer per stop is included), as well as raffle tickets for prizes from local businesses. Additional raffle tickets will be available for purchase. Sponsorships are also available.

This is an event that has sold out in recent years, so it's a good idea to get tickets early. Tickets may be purchased online through the club's website at www.bartramtrailrotary.org. For more information, including sponsorship opportunities, contact any member of the Bartram Trail

Rotary Club or email rotary.bartramtrail@gmail.com.

Please join Bartram Trail Rotarians for an afternoon of fun and fundraising on April 18. A good time is guaranteed for all.

The Rotary Club of Bartram Trail-Julington Creek meets Thursday mornings, from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., at Westminster Woods on Julington Creek. Guests and prospective members are always welcome. More information about our local club can be found at www.bartramtrailrotary.org.

GARAGE SALE COMMUNITY-WIDE

Saturday, April 18th
8AM until 2PM
Rain Date Saturday, April 25th

Julington Creek Plantation

www.jcppoa.com

LET US SIMPLIFY YOUR ACCOUNTING NEEDS

46 years of serving clients!

- Tax Planning and Prep for Business/Individual
- QuickBooks Consulting/Training
- Church Accounting - Clergy Taxation
- Pension Plans - IRAs

TAX TIP
A new deduction is now available for individuals that are 65 or older. Individuals that qualify may claim an additional deduction of \$6,000 added to the standard deduction. If married, and both qualify, the deduction added to the standard deduction is \$12,000. The deduction phases out for individuals with modified adjusted income in excess of \$75,000 for singles and \$150,000 for those filing jointly. This is available for those that itemize and those that do not. To qualify, the individual must be 65 on or before the last day of the tax year, (For this year, that would be 12/31/25) Also, if married, they must file a joint return to claim the deduction.

Call today for your no cost consultation
No cost consultation limited to 1/2 hour.

904-880-3200 | www.dkbrierycpa.com
Located in the Julington Creek Business Park • 12627 San Jose Blvd, Suite 601 • Jacksonville, Florida 32223

March

Community Calendar What's Happening in St. Johns

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email editor@floridanewline.com.

March 3 Vicar's Landing Boutique and Cottage Sale

Vicar's Landing will host its monthly boutique and cottage sale Tuesday, March 3, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the main Vicar's Landing-Sawgrass Community Building. The sale features jewelry, knick-knacks, and framed and unframed art. The Art Gallery will also feature a show by Ellen Diamond and her students. The Cottage sale includes antiques and home furnishings. Proceeds benefit the Vicar's Employee scholarship fund. Cash or checks only. For more information, call Nancy Martin at 941-830-2141 or Diane Cannon at 904-392-6900.

March 3 Northwest St. Johns County United for Progress

The Northwest St. Johns County United for Progress will meet Tuesday, March 3, at 6:30 p.m. The program features guest speaker Joe McAnarney, who will discuss the Bartram Trail Scenic Highway. Additionally, members of the Creekside High School Young Democrats will be introduced, and Mark Heggstad, Democratic candidate for the 5th Congressional District, will attend. For more information, email nwsjcp@gmail.com.

March 10 Bartram Trail Newcomers Club Luncheon

The Bartram Trail Newcomers Club will host its March luncheon on Tuesday, March 10, at 11 a.m. at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club in St. Augustine. The event includes lunch

and entertainment. Cost is \$32 (cash or check). The club is open to all women seeking community and fellowship. Visit www.facebook.com/BTNC.1 for details.

March 12 Community Side-by-Side

The Jacksonville Symphony will host its annual "Community Side-by-Side" performance Thursday, March 12, at 7:30 p.m. at Jacoby Symphony Hall. This unique event allows musicians from across the community to perform onstage alongside professional Jacksonville Symphony musicians. For more information, visit jaxsymphony.org.

March 14 Bartram Trail Genealogy Club

The Bartram Trail Genealogy Club will meet Saturday, March 14, at 2 p.m. at Geneva Presbyterian Church in the Fellowship Hall, 1755 State Road 13, St. Johns. This temporary location is being used while the Bartram Trail Library is closed. The meeting will feature a group discussion reviewing members' experiences at the RootsTech 2026 virtual conference. For questions, contact Peggy Preusler at PJPgenealogy@gmail.com or 904-710-9149.

March 14-15 "Opulent Orchids" Show and Sale

The Jacksonville Orchid Society will present "Opulent Orchids" Saturday, March 14, and Sunday, March 15, at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road, Jacksonville. Doors open at 10 a.m. both days, closing at 6 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. The free event features orchid displays, supplies for sale, and daily lectures on orchid culture. For more information, visit jaxorchidsociety.org.

March 19 William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway Meeting

The William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway will hold its monthly meeting Thursday, March 19, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will take place in Conference Room LB at Westminster Woods on Julington Creek, 25 State Road 13.

March 22 River Garden Anniversary Day

River Garden will celebrate its 80th anniversary of serving older adults Sunday, March 22, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the River Garden campus, 11401 Old St. Augustine Road, Jacksonville. The community is invited to enjoy complimentary barbecue and family-friendly activities.

March 26 ACT and SAT Prep Classes

The Friends of the Bartram Trail Public Library will offer ACT and SAT prep classes starting Thursday, March 26. Additional sessions follow on April 2, 9, 23, and 30. ACT classes run from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., and SAT classes run from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. The cost is \$50 per series; proceeds benefit library programming. Registration is required by March 23. Visit bartramtrailfol.org/satact-classes to register or email macy17@yahoo.com.

March 28 Battle of Thomas Creek Recognition

The Jacksonville Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) will present its annual recognition of the Battle of Thomas Creek on Saturday, March 28, beginning at 10 a.m. The event, held at the Seaton Creek Historic Preserve in northeast Jacksonville, commemorates the 249th anniversary of the Revolutionary War battle.

Coming in April: Lip Sync Battle: Totally '80s

Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida will host its first-ever "Lip Sync Battle: Totally '80s" Thursday, April 9, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the WJCT Building. The adults-only (21+) event features performances emceed by Eden Kendall and Rance Adams of River City Live. Tickets include food, drinks, and parking. For tickets, visit gotrnefl.org/lip-sync-battle.

Ongoing Activities

Open Game Play

Join the Council on Aging (COA) River House, 179 Marine St., St. Augustine, for open game play on Thursdays from 12:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. Bring your own cards or board games. Email tharris@coasjc.org for more information.

Trout Creek Senior Center Activities

The Trout Creek Senior Center, 6795 Collier Road, Orangedale, offers activities for seniors on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Cards, crafts, and games begin at 9 a.m., followed by trivia, Bunco, or bingo before lunch at 11:30 a.m. Contact Jessica Curry at 904-209-3658 for details.

Playing HOOKie

This charity-focused knitting and crochet group meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to noon at Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road, St. Johns. For more information, email playinghookiecares@gmail.com.

Widow to Widow Support Group

A support group for widows is held at the COA River House, 179 Marine St., St. Augustine, on Wednesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Call 904-209-3655 for more information.

Give your brain what it needs so you can hear better

Introducing **Oticon INTENT™** a life-changing hearing device with **BrainHearing™** technology.

Oticon INTENT™ helps your brain decipher intricate details of relevant sounds for **better speech understanding** with **less effort** and the ability to **remember more**.



You're invited to try **Oticon INTENT™ RISK FREE**

Dr. Leslie A. Staverman
Audiologist/Owner

- **FREE** Consultation
 - **Risk-Free 60-Day Free Trial**
- Try it at home, work and play!

300+ Five Star Reviews

Call 904-262-5550 Today! **Your Community Resource for Better Hearing**

www.StavermanHearingCenters.com 12276 San Jose Blvd., Suite #710

**Visit us
online
FloridaNewsLine.com**

**Wearing Of The Green Bingo
SATURDAY, MARCH 14**
DOORS OPEN 6:15pm GAMES START 7:00pm
Everyone is Irish the month of March so wear your Irish best and get entered into a drawing for a special prize.
**A Special To-Go dinner of Corned Beef and Cabbage Will Be Available for Purchase.
Next Games **APRIL 11th** **MAY 16th**
At The Cody Center. On the Corner of Old St. Augustine and Loretto Roads
PLENTY OF LIGHTED PARKING AND SECURITY ON PREMISES GREAT FOOD, DRINKS AND SNACKS. DOORS OPEN 6:15; NO CHILDREN ALLOWED PER STATE LAW.
For More Information call Vianey Terlizzi at 904-742-8777

Join us for the 30th Annual
Flower & Garden EXPO!
The Expo delights gardeners of all ages with growers, nurseries, and artisans from around the state, offering shoppers every item to make their garden all it can be!

Dates	Admission	Location	Information
Saturday, March 27 th 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	\$5.00 per person Kids 12 and under Children 2 and under are free!	1905 Riverside Rd., Ocala	(904) 829-3295 epgdb.org

Free Parking

Thank you Sponsor! All proceeds from the Expo benefit EPIC Behavioral Healthcare.

Sponsors: State Farm, JANEY TILLMAN, WSO5, Florida HealthCare, TRAVELERS, FLORIDA COASTAL TRAIL

**St. Joseph's
EASTER FLOWERS**
11730 Old Saint Augustine Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32258
**Friday March 27th-April 5th
OPENS AT 11AM**
For more Information
call or text 904-742-8777 Vincent



Q&A with St. Johns County Property Appraiser Eddie Creamer

Q: How are homestead exemption totals and assessment caps determined each year?

A: Every January, the Florida Department of Revenue notifies our office of the tax year's homestead exemption total, assessment limitation cap and income limitations for other personal exemptions. These totals are adjusted annually based on the change in the consumer price index (CPI) for homestead exemption or the cost-of-living index (COLI) for other personal exemptions.

Q: What are the current benefit totals for homesteaded properties in 2026?

A: Homestead exemption reduces the taxable value of a primary residence and limits the annual increase of a property's

assessed value to no more than 3% or the change in the CPI, whichever is less. This year, the full homestead exemption total is \$51,411, and the assessment limitation cap is 2.7%. These updated figures are now reflected on property record cards at www.sjcpa.gov.

Q: What are the requirements for the senior and disability exemptions this year?

A: The senior exemption can reduce taxable value by up to an additional \$50,000 for homesteaded owners 65 or older with a total household adjusted income below \$38,686. Residents who have lived in their home for 25-plus years with a market value under \$250,000 may qualify for additional benefits. For the total and permanent civilian disability exemption,

which totally exempts the owner from property taxes, the household income limit is \$37,712.

Q: How and when should residents apply for these exemptions?

A: The deadline to apply for 2026 exemptions is March 2. Property owners can apply online at www.sjcpa.gov/exemptions or visit our office at 4030 Lewis Speedway, Suite 203, in St. Augustine. We are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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

A: Our office is located at 4030 Lewis Speedway, Suite 203, and the phone number is 904-827-5500. We are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5



Eddie Creamer

p.m. Readers can also email me directly at Eddie@sjcpa.us or call the office for assistance.



Q&A with St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: We have heard a great deal about Florida's initiative petitions over the past year. Are there any updates?

A: Feb. 1 marked the submission deadline for proposed initiative petitions seeking placement on the 2026 general election ballot. To qualify for the ballot, each initiative petition was required to obtain at least 880,062 verified voter signatures, in addition to meeting other statutory requirements.

Between January 2025 and the submission deadline, front office staff at the St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Office processed more than 26,000 petition signatures. Following the deadline, the Florida Department of State announced that all 22 active proposed constitutional amendments submitted through the initiative petition process failed to meet the requirements of Florida law and, as a result, will not appear on the 2026 general election ballot.

Q: Aside from processing petitions, what other activities has the Elections Office been undertaking?

A: The Poll Worker Department, under the direction of Poll Worker Coordinator Amanda Sims, has been working diligently to update the Poll Worker Manual and develop a new, comprehensive training program in preparation for the 2026 elections. A recent poll worker newsletter was distributed to active poll workers and included an election availability survey to assist with recruitment, training and scheduling efforts.

This year, poll workers will be introduced to the office's new fleet of DS300 tabulator scanners. Technical departments have been engaged in onboarding, initial testing, system integration and staff training to ensure all personnel are well prepared to support poll workers, election technicians and voters throughout St. Johns County.

Q: Will the St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections Office conduct voter outreach during the 2026 election cycle?



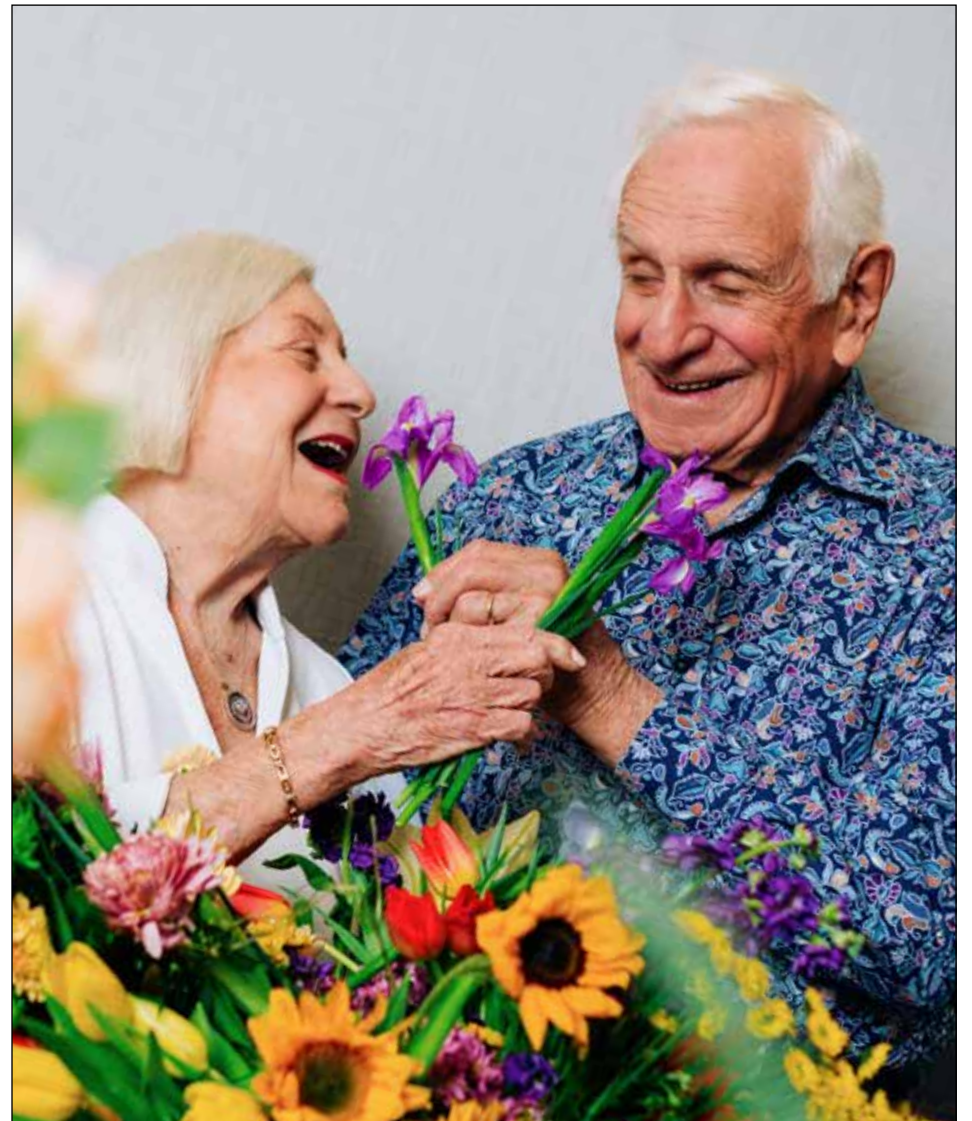
Vicky Oakes

A: Yes. The Voter Outreach Team is working alongside the Council on Aging to schedule visits to their community centers. We are also excited to participate in voter outreach on Saturday, April 25, at the Hastings Cabbage, Potato and Bacon Festival.

Voter education efforts are scheduled throughout the 2025-2026 school year. Outreach activities began in February with visits to St. Augustine High School, Pedro Menendez High School and Beachside High School. In March, the team will visit Creekside High School, Allen D. Nease High School, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind and Toco Creek High School.

April outreach will include visits to St. Gerard House and Bartram Trail High School, as well as conducting the spring election at St. Augustine High School. In May, outreach will conclude with a visit to Ponte Vedra High School before the end of the school year and prior to the office's scheduled suspension of outreach and public events in preparation for the Aug. 18, 2026, primary election.

For additional information regarding voter outreach and education, please visit the "Voter Education" section of our website at www.votesjc.gov.



Where Caring is In Bloom.

Throughout our 80 years of providing excellent service, we've learned that collaboration, dedication and an unwavering commitment to our mission ensure a bright future for our community's seniors.

Celebrate at Our Anniversary Day Enjoy Food and Family Fun!

March 22 | 3:00PM - 6:00PM
11401 Old St. Augustine Road, Jacksonville, 32258



rivergarden.org | 904.260.1818

Long-Term Nursing & Memory Care | Rehab & Therapy | Senior Living | Adult Day

A not-for-profit agency sponsored by the organized Jacksonville Jewish community.

Gardening

The Good Earth: Planting for Pollinators

By Connie Doyle, Master Gardener UF/IFAS

March is a pivotal month in Northeast Florida gardens. The days are warming, plants are waking up and pollinators are emerging from winter in search of food. Bees, butterflies, moths and other beneficial insects depend on early-season blooms to regain strength, reproduce and continue the vital work of pollination that supports both our landscapes and our food supply.

Many people think of pollinator gardening as a summer activity, but March is when the foundation is laid. Early blooms provide nectar and pollen at a time when natural food sources are still limited. By choosing the right plants now, home gardeners can turn even small spaces into important refueling stations.

Native plants are especially valuable because they evolved alongside local pollinators. In our area, plants such as coreopsis, blanket flower, native salvias and milkweed are excellent choices. Milkweed deserves special mention, as it is the only host plant for monarch butterfly caterpillars. Planting it early



Connie Doyle, Master Gardener UF/IFAS

gives monarchs a place to lay eggs as they move through Florida during spring migration. Herbs like dill, fennel and parsley also play a dual role, feeding both people and swallowtail butterfly larvae.

Non-native plants can still be helpful when chosen carefully. Pentas, lantana and verbena are reliable nectar sources and perform well in our climate

when planted in March. The key is diversity. A mix of flower shapes, colors and bloom times supports a wider range of pollinators and keeps them visiting your garden throughout the season.

Equally important is how we garden, not just what we plant. Avoiding pesticides is critical, especially in spring when pollinators are most vulnerable. Many insect problems resolve themselves naturally once beneficial insects arrive.

Pollinator gardening does not require acres of land or perfectly designed beds. Containers on a patio, a corner of the yard or even a few flowering shrubs can provide real benefits. In Ponte Vedra's sandy soils, adding organic matter at planting time helps plants establish



Photo courtesy Connie Doyle
A monarch butterfly feeds on nectar, highlighting the importance of providing early-season blooms for pollinators in the March garden.

quickly and begin blooming sooner, which means pollinators benefit faster.

By planting with pollinators in mind this March, gardeners are doing more than creating beauty. They are participating in a larger ecosystem that supports birds, food crops and the health of our local environment. A garden that hums with life is not just enjoyable to watch—it is a sign that nature is working exactly as it should.

Plant it, and they will come!

Connie Doyle writes The Good Earth, a gardening column inspired by a lifelong passion for plants, nature, and the peaceful rhythm of the garden. With more time in retirement, she has been inspired to take that passion to the next level — learning, growing, and sharing with others in our community by way of earning her Master Gardener Certification. Connie can be reached by email to mail@floridanewslines.com.

Palencia Elementary honors Teacher and Rookie Teacher of the Year

NewsLine staff

Each year the St. Johns County School District highlights two educators from local elementary, middle, and high schools who have gone above and beyond in their roles. This year, the Teacher of the Year and Rookie of the Year at Palencia Elementary School are first-grade teacher Angela Adams and school counselor Lindsey Taylor, according to a recent release.



Photo courtesy Palencia Elementary
From left: PES Teacher of the Year Angela Adams, PES Rookie of the Year Lindsey Taylor, and PES Principal Catherine Goodrich.

Both Adams and Taylor dedicate much of their lives to the children at the school and work to create a nurturing and safe environment for students. Adams, the Teacher of the Year, has taught for 25 years, spending the last four years at Palencia Elementary School. When asked what propels her in education, Adams said she is inspired by the natural curiosity of young minds, said a recent release.

"I am blessed to help shape and encourage their growing confidence as they explore new skills, face challenges, and support others," Adams said. "The opportunity to develop children into compassionate leaders who learn and uplift those around them is rewarding to me as a teacher," said the release.

Palencia Elementary School maintains a strong reputation for its rankings and staff satisfaction, which helps the

school hire and retain highly qualified staff. While the school's PTO works to support the faculty, Adams noted that collaboration with her peers brings her great joy. She stated she is grateful to be part of the community and enjoys working alongside dedicated teachers who regularly spend personal time to help students shine, according to a recent release.

Rookie of the Year Lindsey Taylor is completing her second year at Palencia Elementary School and her third year as a school counselor. She chose a career in education because she believes schools support more than just academics. She noted that as a counselor, she can support students in their personal and social growth, said a recent release.

"I've always loved working with kids, and I am passionate about helping them build confidence, resilience, and the ability to advocate for themselves," Taylor said. "Watching students grow in all areas of their lives is what inspires me every day. Being part of their journey, even in small ways, is a privilege as they discover their strengths and believe in their own potential," according to the release.

Taylor also expressed appreciation for the PES community and her fellow educators. She noted that the school is blessed with caring partners, parents, and staff who work together to provide resources that make a real difference. She stated that the collaboration and compassion of the staff create the supportive environment that makes the school a special place, said a recent release.

The Palencia Elementary School family noted they are very lucky to have both Adams and Taylor and thanked them for their dedication to local children, according to a recent release.

2026 MANDARIN ART FESTIVAL

PRESENTED & HOSTED BY THE MANDARIN COMMUNITY CLUB SINCE 1968!

**100+ Juried Artists • Green Market • Food Court
Live Entertainment • Children's Art Show • Bake Sale
Activities & More!**

Outdoor Event • NO PETS • \$2 Suggested Donation at the gate
Free Parking & Shuttle • Use of Ride Sharing Apps Encouraged

Artist Image Best of Show 2025 Michael Nelson

APRIL 4
SATURDAY • 10AM - 5PM

APRIL 5
SUNDAY • 10AM - 4PM

RENEWAL WANDERSEN

Quality Craftsmen
Custom Renovations
(404) 483-7446

Leaf Filter
GUTTER PROTECTION

PATIO ENCLOSURES
Patio Enclosures is a Great Day Improvements brand

Great Day Improvements

MANDARIN SOUTH MANDARIN

EMILY AND LAWRENCE LISSKA

IQ FIBER

12447 MANDARIN RD. JACKSONVILLE, FL 32223 | WWW.MANDARINARTFESTIVAL.ORG

ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Clerk's office, Flagler College launch internship program

The St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller's Office has partnered with Flagler College to launch "Saints in Public Service," a semester-long internship program for students interested in public service, law and criminology.

For the inaugural semester running through April, three interns have been

placed within the clerk's criminal, civil and public affairs divisions. The program connects classroom learning with local government operations through mentorship and project-based experience.

"We're helping prepare St. Johns County's next generation of public-sector leaders," said Clerk and Comptroller Brandon J. Patty. Beth Sweeny,

director of external and government relations at Flagler College and mayor of St. Augustine Beach, added that the partnership strengthens the connection between education and civic engagement.

For more information, visit stjohn-sclerk.com/outreach or call (904) 819-3600.



Brandon Patty

Mandarin Art Festival returns April 4-5

The historic Mandarin Art Festival returns for its 58th year on Saturday, April 4, and Sunday, April 5, at the Mandarin Community Club, 12447 Mandarin Road. As the region's longest-running juried fine art event, the festival will feature more than 100 local and national artists, a Green Market, live music and a Children's Art Show featuring local students.

Newly appointed show manager Noel Michael will oversee the 2026 season. Proceeds from the event support the preservation and beautification efforts of the nonprofit Mandarin Community Club. Hours are 10 a.m. — 5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. — 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free; a \$2 donation is suggested. Free off-site parking and shuttles will be provided. Visit www.mandarin-artfestival.org for details.



Thompson achieves Ameriprise Circle of Success status

Chris Thompson, a private wealth advisor with Upper Deck Wealth Management in Ponte Vedra Beach, has achieved the Ameriprise Circle of Success status for 2025. Membership recognizes a consistent and dedicated level of service to clients.

The practice, which includes advisors Todd Perkins and Sarah Blackley, was also recently named a 2024 Ameriprise Client Experience Award recipient for its commitment to exceptional service and helping clients reach financial goals. Additionally, Thompson provides specialized services for professional athletes through his work with the NFLPA.



Photo courtesy Upper Deck Wealth Management
From left, Todd Perkins, Sarah Blackley and Chris Thompson of Upper Deck Wealth Management.

Upper Deck Wealth Management is located at 818 A1A N., Suite 301, Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, call 904-380-2290 or visit <https://www.ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson/lp/request-contact/1/>

Prudential Financial Planning



Andrew E. Laino
CLU®, CFP®, CLTC®
Financial Planner
CA Insurance License #0E93910
844-954-8700
andrew.laino@prudential.com
Comprehensive Financial Planning

Andrew Laino is a financial planner with, and offers securities and investment advisory services through LPL Enterprise (LPLE), a Registered Investment Advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC, and an affiliate of LPL Financial. Financial professionals are licensed insurance agents of Prudential. These financial professionals are permitted to brand under "Prudential". LPLE and LPL Financial are not affiliated with Prudential.

Personalized financial advice to help achieve your goals



Chris Thompson
CFP® ; CMFA® ; CRPC®
PRIVATE WEALTH ADVISOR
Managing Director
904.380.2290
Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC
818 A1A North, Suite 301
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
chris.thompson@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson
St Johns County resident since 1993

Not FDIC or NCUA Insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value
Certified Financial Planner® Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC. © 2022 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.

Edward Jones > edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

Financial goals aren't achieved overnight

At Edward Jones, we're in it for the long haul. We'll be with you every step of the way as you celebrate life's biggest milestones. Let us help you work toward them.

Contact us today to start creating a financial strategy tailored to your specific needs.




Mitch Wright
Heather L. Wright
Financial Advisors
605 Sr 13n, Suite 101
Fruit Cove, FL 32259
904-230-3385

MKD-8652E-A 2435025

Always a call or click away

Call, click or stop by today



Jim Register
Agent

12058 San Jose Blvd Ste 302
Jacksonville, FL 32223-8669
Bus: 904-268-5522
jim@jimregister.com
www.jimregister.com



State Farm
Bloomington, IL

Newcomers of North St. Johns announce March 17 luncheon



Linda Fazio, store manager for Chico's clothing store location in Sawgrass Village, left, and NNSJ Co-Vice President Suzy Catania, right, are pictured at the Newcomers January luncheon meeting's member model fashion show.

By Michele Oliver

Newcomers of North Saint Johns (NNSJ) invites members and their guests to join the fun at our March luncheon on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, beginning at 11 a.m. at Al Dente's Restaurant Italiano, 90 Shops Blvd., Unit 60, St. Johns, Florida. The event features a delicious lunch and "Luck of the Irish" Bingo. Make sure you wear green to celebrate St. Patrick's Day!

Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. Cost for the luncheon and program is \$35 for members and \$40 for guests. All reservations must be received by March 7, 2026. For further information about the luncheon and membership, please go to the NNSJ website at <https://newcomersofnorthstjohns.org>. As always, raffles for gift baskets, fun 50/50 drawing and table centerpieces spice up our NNSJ luncheons.

Entrée choices include: Baked Salmon with Creamy Lobster Dill Sauce served over Lobster Ravioli and Mixed Vegetables; Chicken Tuscany with mushrooms and spinach topped with a White Wine Sauce and served over linguini; or

classic Eggplant Parmesan served with pasta. All entrées are served with a Caesar Salad accompanied with Fresh Bread and an Olive Oil Dipping Sauce.

Beverages include water and iced tea. Dessert is Limoncello Cake. A cash bar is also available.

"Our entertainment will be 'Luck of the Irish Bingo.' With fun prizes, this promises to be a wonderful luncheon thanks to our talented co-vice president team of Dawn Coston and Suzy Catania who plan our monthly luncheon entertainment," said Michele Oliver, co-president. "Please remember to wear green as everyone is (at least a little bit) Irish on St. Pat's Day!"

"NNSJ offers a variety of activities for our members to connect and have fun including wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, Bingo, Bunco, card games and special day trips," added Co-President Charlene Lim. "We continue to welcome new members from St. Johns, Duval and the surrounding areas, so we encourage those interested to visit our website and learn more about Newcomers of North St. Johns."

Funeral • Crematory Memorial Park	<i>"I only want cremation."</i> CALL FOR PRICING
 Call for a no cost consultation WWW.CRAIGFUNERALHOME.COM (904) 824-1672	Flagler Memorial Cremation Society (904) 797-4990

Q&A with St. Johns County Clerk of the Circuit Court and County Comptroller Brandon J. Patty

Q. Can you provide information about your special extended business hours in March?

A. Our main courthouse location in St. Augustine will be open for extended business hours until 6:30 p.m. every Friday during the month of March. These extended hours will allow residents and families greater access to essential services.

Q. What services are available during the extended hours?

A. To better serve residents, we will offer the following services during our extended hours:

- **Customer Care:** General information and payments on court cases and tickets.
- **Document Recording Services:** Submit deeds, mortgages and other important records.
- **Passport Services:** Apply for a new passport and have your passport photos taken on-site.
- **Marriage Licenses and Ceremonies:** One of our most joyful duties.
- **Notary Services:** Get official documents notarized with ease.

Q. Can I make an appointment?

A. Yes. Our office will accept appointments during extended hours at our main location at the Richard O. Watson Judicial Center, 4010 Lewis Speedway



Brandon Patty

in St. Augustine. Appointments can be scheduled online by visiting our website at <https://stjohnsclerk.com> or calling (904) 819-3600.

Q. How can people get in touch with you with questions?

A. For questions about our extended hours, or any of the services we provide at the Clerk's office, our Customer Care Call Center is available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at (904) 819-3600, or by email at clerk@stjohnsclerk.com. I can also be reached directly on my cell at (904) 599-8688 or by email at BPatty@stjohnsclerk.com.



Your carefree oasis of luxury awaits!

Feel right at home at one of our Starling communities. Live in unparalleled environments that feature resort-style amenities and comfortable residences. Select from luxurious independent living, assisted living or memory care lifestyles.

Whether you're sampling the delectable dining options, enjoying the full-service salon or pursuing a new hobby, Starling is all about embracing life with friends, family, and community.

Learn more at www.StarlingLiving.com.



 STARLING AT PONTE VEDRA ASSISTED LIVING and MEMORY CARE 904-686-3700 ALF#12887	 STARLING AT NOCATEE ASSISTED LIVING and MEMORY CARE 904-834-4199 ALF#13109	 STARLING AT NOCATEE INDEPENDENT LIVING 904-834-4511	 STARLING AT SAN JOSE ASSISTED LIVING and MEMORY CARE 904-337-6350 ALF#12887
--	--	--	---

WELLNESS • ENGAGEMENT • CULINARY • SERVICE

Call today to learn about current specials!

Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative

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			

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Unit of dry measure
- 5. One who defies authority
- 8. Social media giant
- 12. Render holy
- 14. "Much ___ about nothing"
- 15. Computer manufacturer
- 16. Creed
- 18. Immoral act
- 19. Mountain pass
- 20. Winged nut
- 21. Don't know when yet
- 22. Elected officials
- 23. Corrupt tendencies
- 26. Popular adult beverage
- 30. Made a mistake
- 31. Morally correct
- 32. Type of whale
- 33. Portable conical tent
- 34. Native people of the Congo
- 39. More (Spanish)
- 42. Classroom implements
- 44. Cognizant of
- 46. One who tells
- 47. Free from bondage
- 49. Thick piece of something
- 50. Containing two adjacent nitrogen atoms
- 51. Removed from the record
- 56. Legendary singer Turner
- 57. Broke up the earth
- 58. Hunting expedition
- 59. Contributes
- 60. Unit of work or energy
- 61. Wreckage on the sea bed
- 62. Affirmative! (slang)
- 63. Witness
- 64. Scrape (Archaic)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. "___ and flows"
- 2. Humble request for help
- 3. A position of leadership
- 4. Continent
- 5. Adherent of a particular religion
- 6. Things that can be eaten
- 7. Self-governing Netherlands territory
- 8. Long-tailed crow
- 9. Repeated
- 10. Bluish greens
- 11. Humanities
- 13. Someone who serves in the armed forces
- 17. Labor (Spanish)
- 24. Zero
- 25. Shared by involving three parties
- 26. Queens ballplayer
- 27. Consumed
- 28. Rest here please
- 29. Men's fashion accessory
- 35. American time
- 36. Sound unit
- 37. They ___
- 38. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 40. Places to play video games
- 41. A sudden attack of illness
- 42. When you hope to arrive
- 43. Charges
- 44. Actress Seyfried
- 45. A tributary of the Ohio River
- 47. Omit when speaking
- 48. Armored fish
- 49. Remain
- 52. From a distance
- 53. Adventure story
- 54. Geological times
- 55. Eat dinner

SUMMER ADVENTURE CLUB

Now Enrolling!

Enhanced Health & Safety Protocols

Balancing Safety, Fun & Learning All Summer Long



Summer is almost here and Primrose® has the space for your child to use their imagination as they explore, build and create something new every day. By putting updated health and safety protocols in place, you can enjoy some well-deserved peace of mind that your child is having a safe, active and adventurous summer that will lead to fewer questions of "what are you watching?" and more conversations about what they learned.

Learn more at PrimroseSummer.com



Primrose School of Julington Creek
904.230.2828 | PrimroseJulingtonCreek.com
Primrose School at St. Johns Forest
904.824.1100 | PrimroseStJohnsForest.com

Autos/Misc

Donate Your Car to Veterans Today! Help and Support our Veterans. Fast — FREE pick up. 100% tax deductible. Call 800-245-0398

Miscellaneous

TOP DOLLAR PAID for old vintage guitars! Gibson, Fender, Martin, Greesch, Rickenbacker, Epiphone, Etc. 1930's to 1980's. Call 866-433-8277

Reach millions of homes nationwide with one easy, affordable buy in the ADS Network! For more information www.communitypublishers.com/category/all-products

Peace of mind & early detection — Now more than ever, it's important to get screened for Stroke & Cardiovascular Disease risk. Life Line Screening is simple & painless. 833-970-4172

Need cash quickly? We buy houses in any con-

dition. Get a fair cash offer within 24 hours! Call today. Liz Buys Houses: 833-359-4707

Portable oxygen concentrator may be covered by Medicare! Reclaim independence & mobility w/the compact design & long-lasting battery. Inogen One free info kit! 877-305-1535

Consumer Cellular — same reliable, nationwide coverage as large carriers. No long-term contract or hidden fees, free activation. All plans unlimited talk & text starting at just \$20/mo. 877-751-0866

Become a published author. We want to read your book! Dorrance Publishing trusted since 1920. Consultation, production, promotion & distribution. Free author's guide 877-729-4998 or dorranceinfo.com/ads

No more cleaning gutters. Guaranteed! Leaf-

Job Finder March:

Starling is the owner and operator of several luxury senior living communities throughout the state of Florida. We're always looking for talented and motivated folks to join our team. To see our current open career opportunities, visit www.StarlingLiving.com/careers.

Filter backed by no-clog guarantee & lifetime warranty. Call 1-833-610-1936 to schedule FREE inspection/estimate. Get 15% off your entire order. Military & Seniors get additional 10% off. Limited time. Restrictions apply, see rep for details.

Replace your roof w/the best looking & longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! 3 styles/multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited time offer up to 50% off install + additional 10% off military, health & 1st responders. 833-370-1234

Inflation at 40-year highs. Interest rates are up. Credit cards, medical bills, car loans.

Have \$10k+ in debt? Call National Debt Relief to find out how to pay off your debt for much less than you owe! Free quote: 844-955-4930

Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. AmeriGlide 833-399-3595

Home break-ins take less than 60 seconds. Don't wait! Protect your family, home, assets now for as little as 70¢/day! 833-890-1262

Jacuzzi Bath Remodel can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as 1-day. Limited time, waving all instal-

lation costs! Additional terms apply. Subject to change & vary by dealer. Ends soon. 844-501-3208

Pest control: Protect your home from pests safely. Roaches, Bed Bugs, Rodent, Termite, Spiders & more. Locally owned & affordable. For service or inspection today! 833-860-0657 Have zip code ready!

MobileHelp America's premier mobile medical alert system. Home or away. For safety & peace of mind. No long term contracts, free brochure! 888-489-3936

Aging roof? New homeowner? Storm damage? You need a local expert provider that proudly stands behind their work. Fast, free estimate. Financing available. 833-640-4753 Have zip code ready when calling!

Water damage cleanup & restoration: A small amount of water can

lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do repairs to protect your family & home value! 833-887-0117. Have zip code ready!

Professional lawn service: Fertilization, weed control, seeding, aeration & mosquito control. Free quote. Ask about first application special! 833-860-0811

DIRECTV Stream — Carries the most local MLB games! Choice Pkg \$89.99/mo for 12 mos Stream on 20 devices. HBO Max included for 3 mos w/Choice Package or higher. No contract or hidden fees! Restrictions apply. IVS 866-859-0405

Dental insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. 400+ procedures. Real dental insurance — not a discount plan. Free info kit! 855-526-1060 [#6258](http://www.dental50plus.com/ads)

Community Marketplace

Call (904) 886-4919 for advertising rates



The Tankless Bros
Doing Your Tankless Job!

TANKLESS WATER HEATER FLUSHES

904-792-3487
TANKLESSBROS.COM

Snip's TREE & STUMP SERVICE



Paul Oklevitch
ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST
Over 35 Years Exp.
FL-5456A



• Tree Preservation • Plant Health Care • Insect & Disease Treatments

LICENSED **(904) 268-1017** INSURED
www.snipstree.com

PRESSURE WASHING SERVICE

PROOF IS IN THE WORK

SERVICES

- ♦ EXTERIOR CLEANING
- ♦ EXTERIOR PAINTING & RESTORATION
- ♦ HOT WASH & SOFT WASH

- ♦ ROOF CLEANING
- ♦ POOL ENCLOSURES
- ♦ DOCKS & WALKWAY

 CALL US TODAY: **904-622-3000**
www.powwashjax.com

CALL FOR CRAFTERS

Mandarin United Methodist Women is seeking crafters for our 36th annual craft festival.

If you make handmade items and are interested, please contact Darlene at mumcraftfestival@gmail.com.

Crafters say this show is one of the best!

October 3, 2026
AT 11270 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville FL 32223

We offer Fictitious Name Advertisement

Call for more info! (904) 886-4919

Travel

Travel: Walking St. Augustine's Minorcan Past

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewline.com

Long before Florida became American and waves of settlers arrived, a small Mediterranean community reshaped the cultural soul of St. Augustine. Their story is one of hardship, endurance and quiet influence. These were the Minorcans, along with Greeks and Italians, whose descendants still shape the city today.



Debi Lander

Building a New Life

The Minorcans settled primarily in the northern section of the walled city. They worked as fishermen, artisans, masons, carpenters and merchants, skills they brought from the Mediterranean. Over time, they became an essential part of the city's economic and cultural life.

When Florida returned to Spanish rule in 1783, many British residents left. The Minorcans stayed. Because they were Catholic and spoke a Mediterranean language, they bridged the gap between the departing British and the return-



Photo by Debi Lander
Ximenez-Fatio House.

A Failed Colony

In 1768, British physician Andrew Turnbull founded a plantation colony at New Smyrna, south of St. Augustine. To populate it, he recruited more than 1,400 laborers from the Mediterranean, primarily from the island of Minorca, along with settlers from Greece and Italy. Promised land and opportunity, they instead endured brutal conditions, disease, forced labor and harsh punishment.

After nine years of suffering, the surviving colonists—about 600 men, women and children—made a bold decision. In 1777, they abandoned New Smyrna and walked north to St. Augustine, then under British control. There, they sought protection from the governor, who granted them asylum and freedom.

That moment changed St. Augustine forever.



Photo by Debi Lander
St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine.

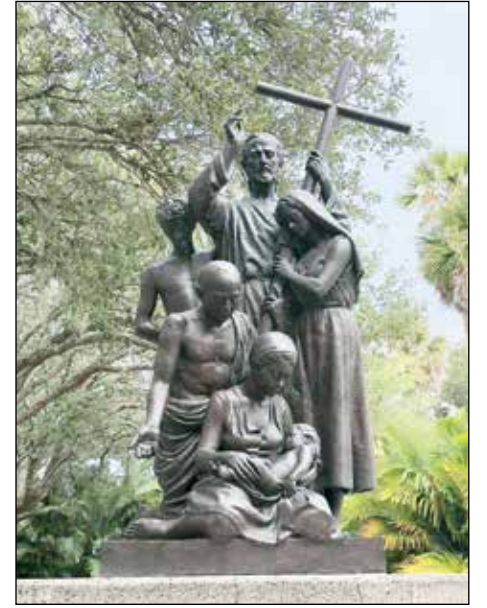


Photo by Debi Lander
Minorcan Statue outside the Basilica.

ing Spanish, ensuring the city's survival through turbulent political shifts.

Traces of the Past

Today, the Minorcan legacy is everywhere. One of the most significant sites is the Father Pedro Camps statue in the west courtyard of the Cathedral Basilica. Father Camps was the spiritual leader of the group and helped lead the survivors to St. Augustine. The statue symbolizes moral courage and faith.

In a surprising discovery, that monument has a twin across the Atlantic. While visiting the island of Minorca, I found a replica of the Father Pedro Camps statue in the historic city of Ciutadella de Menorca. Cast in bronze on two continents, the statues link the Old World to the New and serve as bookends to the Minorcan journey.

Along St. George Street, the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine stands on the site where Greek members of the colony found refuge. Its Byzantine-style murals and icons mark one of the earliest expressions of Orthodox Christianity in what would become the United States.

Other Minorcan-related sites include the Llambias House, the Gonzalez-Alvarez House and the Ximenez-Fatio House. At Tolomato Cemetery, familiar Minor-

can surnames are carved into coquina headstones.

Minorcan cuisine remains one of the most visible survivals of the community. Datil pepper dishes, especially Minorcan clam chowder, reflect a blend of Mediterranean tradition and local ingredients still honored today.

A Quiet Legacy

The Minorcans did not arrive as conquerors or colonists by choice. They came as laborers, suffered deeply and rebuilt their lives through resilience and faith. Their legacy is marked not by grand monuments, but by homes, churches, cemeteries and family names woven into the fabric of America's oldest city.

Debi Lander is an award-winning travel writer and photographer who blends her passion for history, culture, food, and personal discovery into captivating stories. Through her website Bylandersea.com and her long-running travel column for Florida Newline, she explores destinations from small U.S. towns to iconic global landmarks. She hopes her storytelling and practical insights inspire readers to experience the world with curiosity, appreciation, and a sense of adventure. Debi can be reached by email to mail@floridanewline.com.

Thrive Coffee

FarmHand Foundation

Lippman Farms

HARVESTING RICH REWARDS

Unearthing Mother Nature brings gifts of abundance. At HarborChase, a bounty of locally grown produce, dairy and seafood artfully moves from land and sea to the well-appointed table.

Senior living inspired by new heights of excellence.

WATCH OUR FARM TO TABLE JOURNEY



Mandarin | (904) 584-9817

27th Annual Anniversary Sale

March 20th & 21st 10am- 5pm
March 22nd 12pm-5pm

Refreshments Served

Drawings!
For Sugar Bear Gift Certificates!
Bring this ad to be eligible.

SALES!
Find one of a kind items throughout the store.

Sugar Bear Antiques Mall

3047 Julington Creek Road | Jacksonville, FL 32223 | (904) 886-0393

CONDITIONING • SOFTENING • PURIFICATION

Residential Commercial

Family Owned and Operated since 1989

CLEAN WATER FOR YOUR HOME

30 YEARS

Affordable Water solutions for your home with the best customer service in the industry.

- Water Softeners & Filtration Systems
- Service on most makes and models
- Delivery of Salt & Potassium for your system

Call today **904-262-0197** for your Complimentary Water Test & Analysis.

3760 Kori Road • www.affordablewaterjax.com

License #W-32

Bartram Trail Newcomers Club to meet March 10

By Dawn Garrity

The Bartram Trail Newcomers Club (BTNC) March luncheon will be held Tuesday, March 10, at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club in St. Augustine.

The luncheon begins at 11 a.m. and includes both entertainment and a meal at a cost of \$32 if paying by cash or check. Entree choices include beef burgundy, cornmeal and rosemary crusted chicken breast or vegetable wellington.

The club's January and February luncheons were also held at the St. Johns Golf and Country Club. In January, Bingo was played and prizes were awarded, while February featured a rousing line dancing program.

BTNC is an organization that provides an opportunity for women to learn about the community and find fellowship through monthly meetings and social and special interest activities. Membership is open to everyone.

In addition to monthly meetings, BTNC has a wide variety of special interest groups including Bridge, Continental Rummy, Pennies Canasta, Mexican Chicken Train, Bunco, Mah Jongg, golf, book club, nature walk, Lunch Divas, Girls Night Out and special events.

For more information, visit the club at www.facebook.com/BTNC.1.



Members of the Bartram Trail Newcomers Club gather for the January Lunch Divas meeting held at the Columbia Restaurant in St. Augustine. Photo courtesy Bartram Trail Newcomers Club

HAPPY *St. Patrick's* DAY

Located at Baptist South

kid expERTs (and grown-ups, too.)

Why take chances? When there's a medical emergency, you never really know how serious it might be. That's why it's important to know where to go **before** an emergency.

Our Baptist & Wolfson Children's ER at Baptist South is open 24/7. Your child can always be seen by pediatric experts — vital in an emergency. And, with two ERs under one roof, we can treat mom and dad, too!

