

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE

Meet Molly Claire!
Best Furry Friend
of the Month
Page 3



Community
Calendar for
St. Johns County
Page 4



Puzzle Page:
Crossword
& More
Page 9

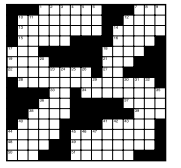


Photo by Haley Harrison, Office of State Attorney R.J. Larizza
A young family member points to the portrait of former State Attorney Stephen Boyles during the dedication ceremony held at the S. James Foxman Justice Center.

State Attorney R.J. Larizza honors legacy of predecessors

NewsLine staff

State Attorney R.J. Larizza recently honored the legacy of the four former State Attorneys who served Florida's Seventh Judicial Circuit by hanging their portraits at the S. James Foxman Justice Center in Daytona Beach on Friday, March 27.

The office welcomed former State Attorneys John Tanner (1989 to 1992 and 1997 to 2008) and Steve Alexander (1993 to 1996), as well as the families of former State Attorneys Dan Warren (1962 to 1968) and Stephen Boyles (1969 to 1988), to the office to unveil the portraits. Also in attendance were several Seventh Judicial Circuit judges along with other local and state leaders.

At the ceremony, Larizza said that he spoke with the circuit court staff about this portrait initiative. Judges have their portraits in the courtrooms, he said, and questioned why past state attorneys should not be honored in the same way.

R.J. Larizza cont. on pg. 6

'Dare to Dream'



Photo courtesy Hickory Creek Elementary
A young performer sings during Hickory Creek Elementary's production of "Dare to Dream" held April 8-10.

By Alice Larson

Hickory Creek Elementary was filled with music, movement, and excitement as students in grades 3-5 brought their production of "Dare to Dream" to life during performances held April 8-10. The show, which featured singing, acting, and dancing, was the result of months of hard work, creativity, and collaboration by students, families, and

the community. "Dare to Dream" was directed by Principal Yvette Gonzalez and musically directed by Jon Woodbine, Hickory Creek's music teacher.

Participation in the production was a special opportunity for students, who were required to audition to earn a role in the show. Once cast, students committed themselves to a demanding

rehearsal schedule, attending a total of 21 rehearsals beginning in January. Throughout that time, young performers sharpened their theatrical skills while learning the importance of teamwork, perseverance, and confidence.

The production showcased the many talents of HCE students, who

'Dare to Dream' cont. on pg. 6

Operation Lifeline restores local hub

By Al Abbatiello

In past issues of the Creekline Newspaper, the William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway Group kept readers informed of our efforts to restore the

Old Switzerland Community Center on State Road 13. This site also served as a St. Johns County volunteer fire station but was eventually abandoned when St. Johns County firefighters became a professional firefighting organization in the 1990s.

I'm very pleased to now share the news that the building restoration has a new and better life now that an organization called Operation Lifeline Inc. will, in fact, restore the building as a Vocational and Community Center.

Operation Lifeline Inc. specifically sees a huge opportunity in restoring the Switzerland Community Center and Fire Station into a Vocational and Community Center. This project would

Lifeline cont. on pg. 6



Advancing health care in a region on the rise.

OPENING EARLY FALL 2026

UF Health is bringing a world-class health care experience to Durbin Park. Our new 42.5-acre campus features a state-of-the-art hospital, six operating rooms and the medical specialties your family needs, delivered with the exceptional, compassionate care that is a UF Health hallmark. And should your medical issue require highly specialized care, you'll have access to the internationally renowned expertise of UF Health, one of the Southeast's most comprehensive academic health centers.

Visit **UFHealth.org/DurbinPark** to learn more.



*Scan to learn more about
construction progress.*



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

Submissions

Community news and photos are due by the 10th of each month to ensure inclusion in the upcoming issue. Thank you for your support of trusted community journalism.

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.



BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Molly Claire!

Breed: Havanoo
Favorite Activity: Napping and Joyriding
Favorite Food: Chicken nuggets
Favorite Friends: Daddy

How did your BFF get their name:
She deserved a bougie name as a fresh start from the animal shelter

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.



Table of Contents

- 4 Community Calendar
- 7 Business Monthly
- 9 Crossword Puzzle
- 10 Classifieds
- 10 Community Marketplace

Answers to our Puzzles PG 9



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

Q: How will your Office recognize public service during the month of May?

A: On May 5, 2026, St. Johns County will formally designate May as Juror Appreciation Month, recognizing local residents who are empowered to uphold justice and protect citizens' rights through fair and impartial trials.

Q: How does jury duty reflect public service?

A: As a critical public service that often goes unnoticed, jurors play a direct role in protecting our rights and maintaining the integrity of our courts. A jury is the voice of justice, ensuring our legal system remains fair, impartial and grounded in the will of the people. I would encourage residents to view

jury selection as an opportunity to serve your community as an effective part of the judicial process.

Q: What is the role of the clerk's office in jury management?

A: Our office manages the summoning and organizing of prospective jurors reporting for jury duty. More than 500 jury summonses are issued each

month to residents using information provided by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Upon receiving the notice, those being summoned are welcome to check in online and may request excusals or deferrals based on their personal situation. The selection process begins with a large pool of names that are qualified and pared down to a panel of six to 12 selected jurors.

After a judge qualifies 50 to 100 prospective jurors, they are sent to the courtroom for a process known as voir

Brandon Patty cont. on pg. 5

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.

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.

Marinela M. Nemetz, D.D.S.

Board Certified Pediatric Dentist

Robert J. Nemetz, D.D.S., M.S.

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

We offer

- Pediatric Dentistry
- Family Dentistry
- Periodontics/ Prosthodontics

We Welcome New Patients

www.nemetzdental.com

May

Community Calendar What's Happening in St. Johns

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email editor@floridanews-line.com.

May 5 Juror Appreciation Month Designation

St. Johns County will formally designate May as Juror Appreciation Month during its meeting. The designation recognizes local residents empowered to uphold justice through fair and impartial trials.

May 6 Coastal Friends Luncheon

Coastal Friends will host its monthly luncheon featuring guest speaker Quang Pham, author of "Underdog Nation," Wednesday, May 6, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach. Cost is \$25. Advance reservations must be made by April 29 by contacting bartshar@comcast.net.

May 9 Bartram Trail Genealogy Club

The Bartram Trail Genealogy Club will meet Saturday, May 9, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Bartram Trail Public Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd., Fruit Cove. The group will discuss Family Tree Maker filters. For more information, contact Gary Inghish via the Bartram Trail Genealogy Club Facebook page.

May 9 Southside MS Support Group

The Southside MS Support Group will meet Saturday, May 9, at 2 p.m. at the Jewish Community Alliance, 8505 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville.

May 11 NNSJ Luncheon Reservation Deadline

Reservations and payments are due for the Newcomers of North St. Johns "Run for the Roses" Derby luncheon. Visit newcomersofnorthstjohns.org for details.

May 12 Bartram Trail Newcomers Club Luncheon

The Bartram Trail Newcomers Club will host its May installation luncheon Tuesday, May 12, at 11 a.m. at St. Johns Golf and Country Club in St. Augustine. Attendees have a choice of fire-roasted chicken, thyme-crusted pork tenderloin or vegetable pasta. Cost is \$32 (cash or check). Visit facebook.com/BTNC.1 for details.

May 19 Newcomers of North St. Johns Luncheon

Newcomers of North St. Johns (NNSJ) will host its May luncheon Tuesday, May 19, beginning at 11

a.m. at St. Johns Golf and Country Club, 205 St. Johns Club Drive, St. Augustine. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. The event features the installation of the Board of Directors and a "Run for the Roses" Derby theme. Visit newcomersofnorthstjohns.org for more information.

May 21 William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway Meeting

The William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway will hold its monthly meeting Thursday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m. at Westminster Woods on Julington Creek, 25 State Road 13, Conference Room LB.

May 21 Democratic Town Hall

U.S. House of Representatives candidates Mark Heggstad and Ronnie Murchinson-Rivera will host a town hall meeting Thursday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m. at The Center for Spiritual Living, 1795 Old Moultrie Road, St. Augustine. Registration is required at act.stjohnsdemocrats.org.

Ongoing Activities

JCE Camp Sigma Registration

Registration is now open for JCE Camp Sigma 2026, "Mastering BOOMER SKILLS in a GEN ALPHA World!" For more information or to

register, call 904-547-7983.

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

Edward Jones

> edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

Feeling like you paid too much in taxes this year?

Learn about investment strategies that could potentially lower next year's tax bill. Contact us today to learn how.



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



FAP-19420-A-AD



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

Q: Florida's legislative session ended March 13. Has any legislation passed effecting elections?

A: Yes. Florida HB 991 (2026) was approved by the governor and signed into law on April 1, 2026. The law takes effect on Jan. 1, 2027.

Q: What is the main purpose of Florida HB 991 (2026)?

A: The bill aims to strengthen election integrity by tightening voter registration and identification requirements, including verifying U.S. citizenship and updating election procedures.

Q: What new ID requirement does HB 991 place on voters?

A: Beginning Jan. 1, 2027, individuals registering to vote must provide documentary proof of U.S. citizenship. Acceptable documents may include a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, birth certificate, U.S. passport, or naturalization or citizenship records.

Q: How does the bill change the voter registration process?

A: Applicants must affirm under oath that they are U.S. citizens, and their citizenship must be verified through state records, such as those maintained by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Q: What happens if a voter's citizenship cannot be verified?

A: The voter will be designated as an "unverified voter" and must vote using a provisional ballot. The ballot will only be counted if citizenship is



Vicky Oakes

confirmed within the required time-frame.

Q: Were there any changes to ID rules at the polls?

A: Yes. The bill narrows the list of acceptable voter IDs at polling places by eliminating student IDs and retirement home or assisted living facility IDs. These changes take effect Jan. 1, 2027, after the 2026 elections.

For a current list of acceptable IDs for the 2026 elections, please visit votesjc.gov.

Q: Some readers have questions about Florida's permitless carry law. Does this allow voters to carry a firearm in the polling place?

A: No. The public carrying of firearms, whether concealed with a

license or under permitless carry, remains prohibited in certain locations under Section 790.06(12)(a)(6), Florida Statutes. This includes early voting sites and Election Day polling places.

Q: Does this include law enforcement?

A: A sworn law enforcement office who has been authorized by their agency to vote while on duty, and who is carrying a firearm in the course of their official duties, may carry a firearm into a polling place while voting or when present on official business at the request of the Elections Office.

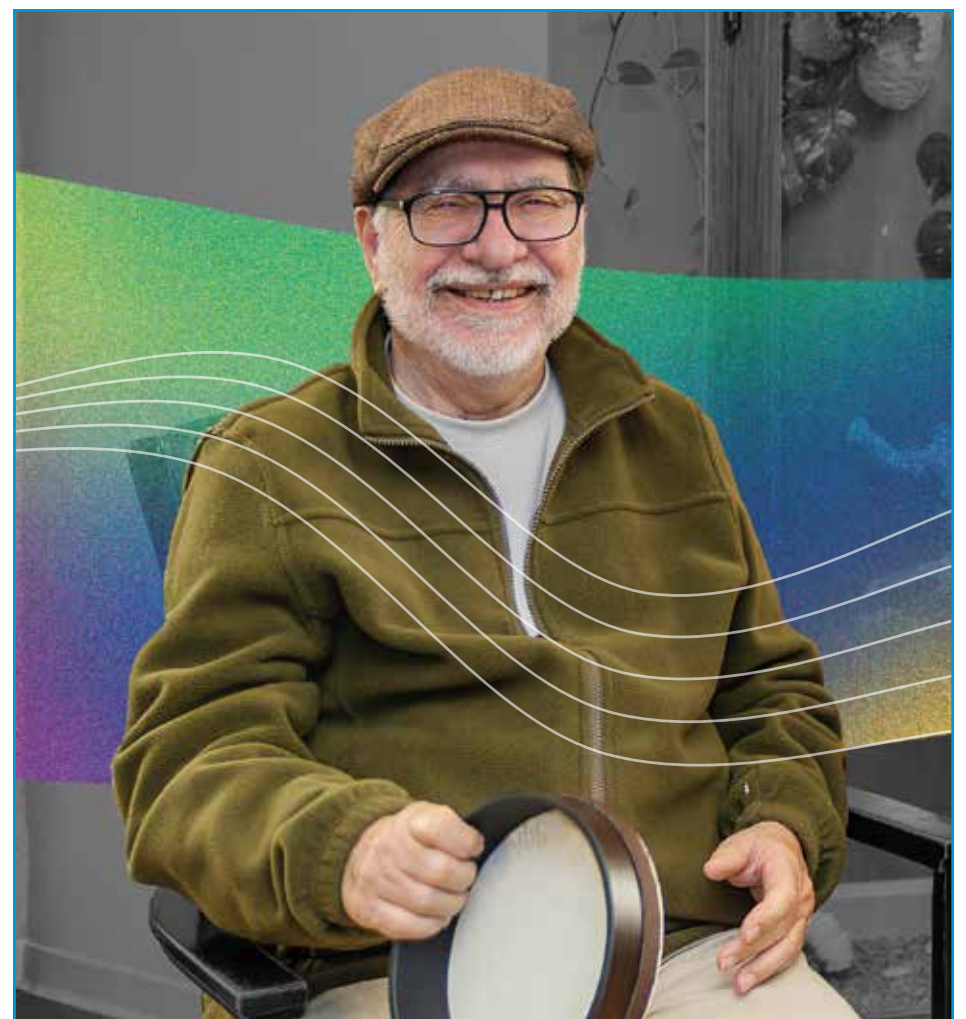
FICTITIOUS NAME REGISTRATION

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned pursuant to the Fictitious Name Statute, Chapter 865.09, Florida Statutes, will register with the Division of Corporations, Department of State, State of Florida upon receipt of this notice, the fictitious name:

Anchored Faith

Under which (I am) (we are) engaged in business at address that the (party) (parties) interested in said business enterprise is as follows:

Anchored Faith
426 Grampian Highlands Dr
St. Johns, FL 32259



Living Forward

Supporting the Rhythms of Senior Independence

River Garden's Adult Day Program strikes the perfect chord for families that are caring for loved ones with dementia at home. Older adults can live forward – enjoying engaging social and recreational activities in a safe, welcoming environment, while giving their families time to work and rest.

Our program is finely tuned to participants' varying needs and offers flexibility to their families with drop-in options and other support services.

Learn how our Adult Day Program can support your family.

904.260.1818 | rivergarden.org



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

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

Brandon Patty cont. from pg. 3

dire, which involves questioning by the judge and lawyers. Throughout the process, our clerks work to ensure jury service is efficient, effective and not unduly burdensome.

Q: Why is the right to a jury trial important, and what responsibility do we have when called to serve as jurors?

A: The right to a jury trial is a fundamental cornerstone of America, enshrined in the U.S. Constitution to ensure that justice is not decided solely by government officials, but by a group of impartial peers. A jury of peers offers a fair and balanced verdict, safeguarding against potential bias or overreach by a single judge. When we're called to serve, we share the responsibility of upholding this right for others. We should approach the role with integrity and fairness, striving to be the kind of juror we'd want to decide our own case if we were involved in a civil or criminal trial.

Q: How can people get in touch with you?



Brandon Patty

A: For questions about jury duty, or 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, and 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.

'Dare to Dream' cont. from pg. 1

impressed audiences with polished performances that highlighted not only their acting ability, but also their vocal and dance skills. Evening performances were offered for families and community members, while daytime shows ensured that fellow Hickory Creek students were able to enjoy and support their peers on stage.

Adding to the uniqueness of the production, the play was student-directed by Douglas Anderson School of the Arts student Emily Gonzalez. This partnership provided HCE performers with the opportunity to work under the guidance of an experienced student artist, giving them a glimpse into advanced theater studies and leadership within the arts.

Behind the scenes, the set design played a key role in bringing the story to life. The set was thoughtfully designed and constructed by the Billings family, whose work helped transform the stage into an engaging theatrical space. The production also incorporated professional-style elements such as lighting and music, elevating the



Students perform a coordinated dance routine during the "Dare to Dream" show at Hickory Creek Elementary. Photo courtesy Hickory Creek Elementary.

overall experience for both performers and audience members.

The performances drew attention from beyond the school community. Representatives from local theaters attended the play, recognizing the caliber of talent and dedication demonstrated by the young cast. School

Board member Bev Slough was also in attendance, showing support for the arts and celebrating the students' achievements.

The show was open to the entire community and welcomed not only families of current students, but also several families who were touring Hickory

Creek Elementary and considering the school for future enrollment. These visitors were able to see firsthand the vibrant arts opportunities available at Hickory Creek Elementary and the strong sense of community that surrounds school events.

Hickory Creek Elementary's production was more than a show—it was a celebration of student creativity, collaboration, and passion for the performing arts, leaving audiences inspired and proud of the school's young stars.

The success of the production reflects Hickory Creek Elementary's strong commitment to the arts and to providing meaningful, enriching experiences for students. Hickory Creek Elementary is currently registering students in grades K-5. Families who would like to learn more about the school, its programs, and upcoming events are encouraged to visit the school website at www-hce.stjohns.k12.fl.us for additional information.

Alice Larson is the assistant principal at Hickory Creek Elementary.

R.J. Larizza cont. from pg. 1

"I don't know of any job that is more demanding and more taxing on people, but you can't appreciate it unless and until you are in those shoes... Our job as state attorneys and as prosecutors is to make justice happen, and that isn't always easy. Sometimes we try, and we fail. Sometimes we try, and we succeed... But we tried, and that

is the important thing," Larizza said. "I'm real proud of the folks that I work with. I'm proud to be a part of this fraternity of state attorneys, and I'm proud today to be able to recognize the folks that have served in this capacity before I did."

Those honored represent decades of service to the citizens of Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns and Volusia counties.



Portraits of four former State Attorneys who served Florida's Seventh Judicial Circuit now hang at the S. James Foxman Justice Center in Daytona Beach. Photo by Haley Harrison, Office of State Attorney R.J. Larizza



Lifeline cont. from pg. 1

not only honor the building's history as the Switzerland Community Center but also create a much-needed space for workforce training, vocational education, and community engagement.

The restored building will play a key role in expanding Operation Lifeline's SkillBridge program which provides transitioning service members with hands-on training in construction and general contracting, creating a direct pathway to civilian careers; it would also enhance their ability to support Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) rehab projects, helping meet critical housing needs in St. Johns County.

Operation Lifeline is under the direction of Executive Director Erick Saks,

a retired Air Force Lt. Col. Erick is a Florida Certified Contractor and Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist and is moving forward with this project in cooperation with St. Johns County Parks and Recreation. Erick and Operation Lifeline is in the process of seeking funding to complete this project.

We sincerely welcome Erick's efforts on behalf of veterans and our Northwest St. Johns County area. Operation Lifeline has the skills, energy, and will likely receive the funding to create this wonderful asset for our community. Thank you Erick and Operation Lifeline for breathing new life into our community and resident future activities.

Al Abbatiello is the chairman emeritus of the Wm. Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway Management Group.

PARISH BINGO
Bingo Night at St Joseph
LOTS OF GAMES, 50/50'S & DOOR PRIZES

CASH BINGO

PLENTY OF LIGHTED PARKING AND SECURITY ON THE PREMISES. GREAT FOOD, DRINKS, & SNACKS.

DOORS OPEN AT 6:15PM
GAMES START AT 7:00PM
 Cody Center - Tally Room
 4152 Loretto Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32223

NO CHILDREN ALLOWED PER STATE LAWS.
 849.0931(10)(A)

GAME DATES: May 16th, June 13th, July 11th

For more information, contact Vinny Terlizzi at 904.742.8777 or vaterlizzi@gmail.com

Visit us online
FloridaNewsLine.com

ST. JOHNS Business Monthly

Quang Pham to speak at Coastal Friends luncheon

By Brooke Freeman

On May 6, Coastal Friends is pleased to announce that Quang Pham will be the guest speaker at its monthly luncheon at Marsh Landing Country Club. Quang Pham is a refugee from South Vietnam, a decorated U.S. Marine Corps helicopter pilot, author of two books and the president and CEO of Cadrenal Therapeutics, a Ponte Vedra-based biopharmaceutical company. His second book, "Underdog Nation," has already hit No. 1 in six categories on Amazon.

The luncheon will take place at Marsh Landing Country Club, 25655 Marsh Landing Parkway, Ponte Vedra Beach, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The menu will consist of classic house salad with balsamic vinaigrette dressing, Margarita

chicken with roasted fingerling potatoes, zucchini medley and chocolate cake. The cost to attend is \$25, and the lunch is open to Coastal Friends members, guests and the community. Reservations must be made in advance by contacting the luncheon chairman at bartshar@comcast.net. Checks must be received by Wednesday morning, April 29, at the latest to reserve your seat.

Coastal Friends is a women's social club established in 1998. Formerly called Newcomers Alumnae, it is comprised of women who live in Ponte Vedra Beach, Nocatee, Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach, St. Augustine, Jacksonville and the surrounding area. Members include women who have had a change in circumstances, are new to the area, recently retired or just want to

meet new people.

Activities include: adventures and outings, book club, bunco, canasta, happy hour, mah jongg, samba, lunch out, lunch in and wine socials. The club also highlights a specific charity each month. For May, it will be We Can Be Heroes, a proud partner of the Clara White Mission supporting Transitional Housing and Veterans In Need Programs.

Luncheons are held on the first Wednesday of every month at Marsh Landing Country Club, except for July and August. New members are welcome throughout the year. For more information, contact the membership chair at brookemeister@msn.com.

Brooke Freeman is the membership chair for Coastal Friends.

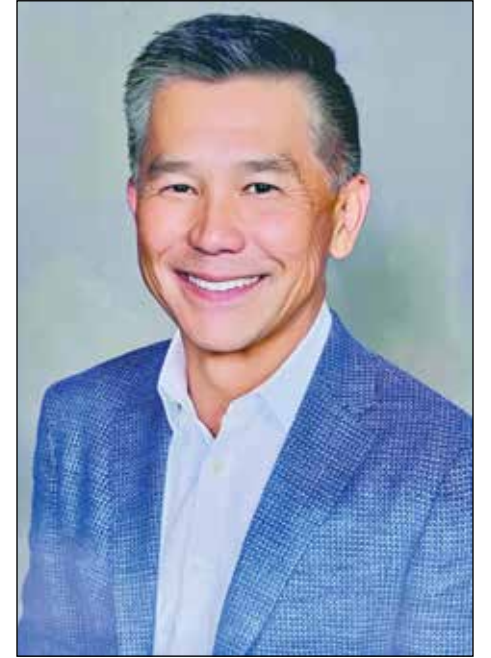


Photo courtesy Coastal Friends. Quang Pham, author of "Underdog Nation," will be the guest speaker at the May 6 Coastal Friends luncheon.

Palencia PTO eyes new digital marquee

By Sara Seifert

Palencia Elementary PTO

Over the years, Palencia Elementary School's PTO has funded many important programs and improvements, including technology, classroom resources, playground equipment, field turf and sunshades. These are just a few of the enhancements that have made a meaningful impact on students and teachers.

In addition to purchasing much-needed supplies and structures, the PTO also organizes events that bring our community together, as well as fundraisers that support future investments in the school.

One such investment, long discussed and highly desired by the PTO, is a digital marquee. Our current marquee, which sits prominently on the school's front lawn, is outdated. It requires

manually selecting and placing letters for each message—a time-consuming process. A digital marquee would be far more efficient, allowing for more frequent school-related updates, as well as sponsored messages such as paid birthday shoutouts and advertisements for school partners. Many schools in St. Johns County already have digital marquees, and they are eye-catching and visually appealing to passersby. If all goes well, the new marquee will be installed and ready by the start of the school year in August. While there is still more work to be done with other projects, this accomplishment was a long time coming and the PTO is excited for its installation!

Speaking of fundraising, the PTO is committed to continuing programs that are engaging, fun and beneficial for students, families and faculty. For the 2026 to 2027 school year, we would love

feedback from our community about which fundraisers are most appealing, and which events your children enjoy most.

Annual events such as Boosterthon, the Daddy/Daughter Dance, Mom/Son Night and Bingo Nights remain staples on the calendar. However, we have recently faced challenges generating interest in parent-focused events, such as the in-person auction at the Palencia Club—which was canceled due to low ticket sales—and the Fore! The Kids Golf Tournament.

Our goal is to create a balanced calendar that includes both PTO-funded events and ticketed events that cover their own costs. Maintaining this balance is essential to ensure we can continue providing valuable resources to the school.

The PTO aims to make fundraising

opportunities both affordable and compelling, encouraging families to support Palencia Elementary generously. While several new, student-centered fundraising ideas are being considered, we first want to hear from you. If you've moved to PES from another district or state, we'd especially love to know what worked well at your previous school. Please consider attending PTO meetings and sharing your ideas. We are all working toward a common goal, but we cannot succeed without the support of our school families.

We understand that families are busy and have many priorities, but your feedback is invaluable as we strive to create meaningful programs and make Palencia Elementary School a place where lasting memories are made.

Sara Seifert is with the Palencia Elementary PTO.

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.

Funeral • Crematory Memorial Park

Call for a no cost consultation
WWW.CRAIGFUNERALHOME.COM
 (904) 824-1672

"I only want cremation."
CALL FOR PRICING

Flagler Memorial
Cremation Society

(904) 797-4990

Personalized financial advice to help achieve your goals

Chris Thompson
 CFP®, CMFA®, CRPC®
 Private Wealth Advisor

Todd Perkins
 Financial Advisor

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. Not 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.

Visit us online

FloridaNewsLine.com

St. Johns County School District releases latest facts and figures

NewsLine staff

The St. Johns County School District (SJCSD) has released its latest "Fast Facts" resource, providing a comprehensive look at the growth, performance and operations of the county's largest employer and its 54 schools.

According to the district, total student enrollment reached 52,662 as of April 2026. The district currently operates 18 elementary schools, 12 academies, seven middle schools and nine high schools, along with technical, alternative, virtual and charter options. Growth remains a primary focus, with Magnolia Oaks Academy and Sabal Crest Academy scheduled to open in August 2026.

The district continues to be recognized as one of Florida's highest-performing public school systems. Students rank first in the state for performance in reading, mathematics, science and End-of-Course (EOC) exams. Additionally, the district boasts a 97.1% graduation rate, significantly higher than the Florida state average of 92.2%.

Beyond academics, the district is the largest employer in St. Johns County, supporting 6,776 full- and part-time employees. This includes 3,625 instructional staff and 2,894 support staff members.

"We hope you'll find this resource helpful in supporting your conversations and sharing accurate, up-to-date

54 TOTAL SCHOOLS
 18 Elementary Schools (K-5)
 12* Academies (K-8)
 7 Middle Schools (6-8)
 9 High Schools (9-12)
 1 Technical College
 2 Alternative Schools (K-12)
 1 Virtual School
 4 Charter Schools
 *K-8 Schools Magnolia Oaks Academy and Sabal Crest Academy opening August 2026

OUR STUDENTS
Total Enrollment:
 52,662
 As of April 2026

OUR STAFF
 Our school district is the largest employer in the county with **6,776** full and part-time employees.
3,625 Instructional Staff
2,894 Support Staff
164 School-Based Administrators
93 District Administrators

WHY FAMILIES CHOOSE US

- Recognized as one of Florida's highest-performing public school districts
- Top academic performance statewide, across all grade levels
- Award-winning character education programs
- College and career readiness focus
- Strong partnership with the St. Johns Sheriff's Office
- A supportive, future-focused learning community for all students

PROVEN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & HIGH GRADUATION RATES

- 97.1% graduation rate, compared to Florida's state average of 92.2%
- 37 "A" schools and 7 "B" schools for the 2024-25 school year
- Above state and national averages on AP exams, ACT, and SAT scores

Our students' performance on the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), End-of-Course (EOC) exams, and the Statewide Science Assessment ranks SJCSD **first** in Florida when it comes to reading, mathematics, science, and EOC performance.

WE OFFER INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

- Advanced Coursework:** Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Honors courses.
- Career & Technical Education (CTE):** 29 CTE Academies offering hands-on, real-world learning aligned with high-demand careers.
- Well-Rounded Student Experiences:** Fine arts, athletics, clubs, leadership programs, and extracurricular activities.

LEARN MORE! Scan the QR code or visit www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/about/

Photo courtesy St. Johns County School District.

The St. Johns County School District's latest "Fast Facts" provides a snapshot of enrollment, staffing and academic achievements across the county's 54 schools.



Your Carefree Oasis of Luxury

Did you know that Starling operates four luxury senior living communities in the Jacksonville area? Our communities offer maintenance-free living with exquisite amenities, including gourmet dining, a state-of-the-art fitness center, and a serene heated pool. With meals and transportation included in your rent, you can focus on living your best life while we handle the rest. Call us today to learn more and set up your personalized 1-on-1 tour!



<p>STARLING AT PONTE VEDRA ASSISTED LIVING and MEMORY CARE 904-686-3700 ALF#12734</p>	<p>STARLING AT NOCATEE ASSISTED LIVING and MEMORY CARE 904-834-4199 ALF#13109</p>	<p>STARLING AT NOCATEE INDEPENDENT LIVING 904-834-4511</p>	<p>STARLING AT SAN JOSE ASSISTED LIVING and MEMORY CARE 904-337-6350 ALF#12887</p>
---	---	---	--

WELLNESS • ENGAGEMENT • CULINARY • SERVICE

Call today to learn about current specials!

information with our community," said Administrative Assistant Jill Sumner.

The district's innovative programs include 29 Career and Technical Education (CTE) academies that offer hands-on learning aligned with high-demand careers. The district also maintains a strong partnership with the St. Johns County Sheriff's

Office to ensure a safe learning environment.

Residents can access the full district facts page and regular updates by visiting the school district website at stjohns.k12.fl.us/about.

Submitted by Jill Sumner, Administrative Assistant for St. Johns County School District

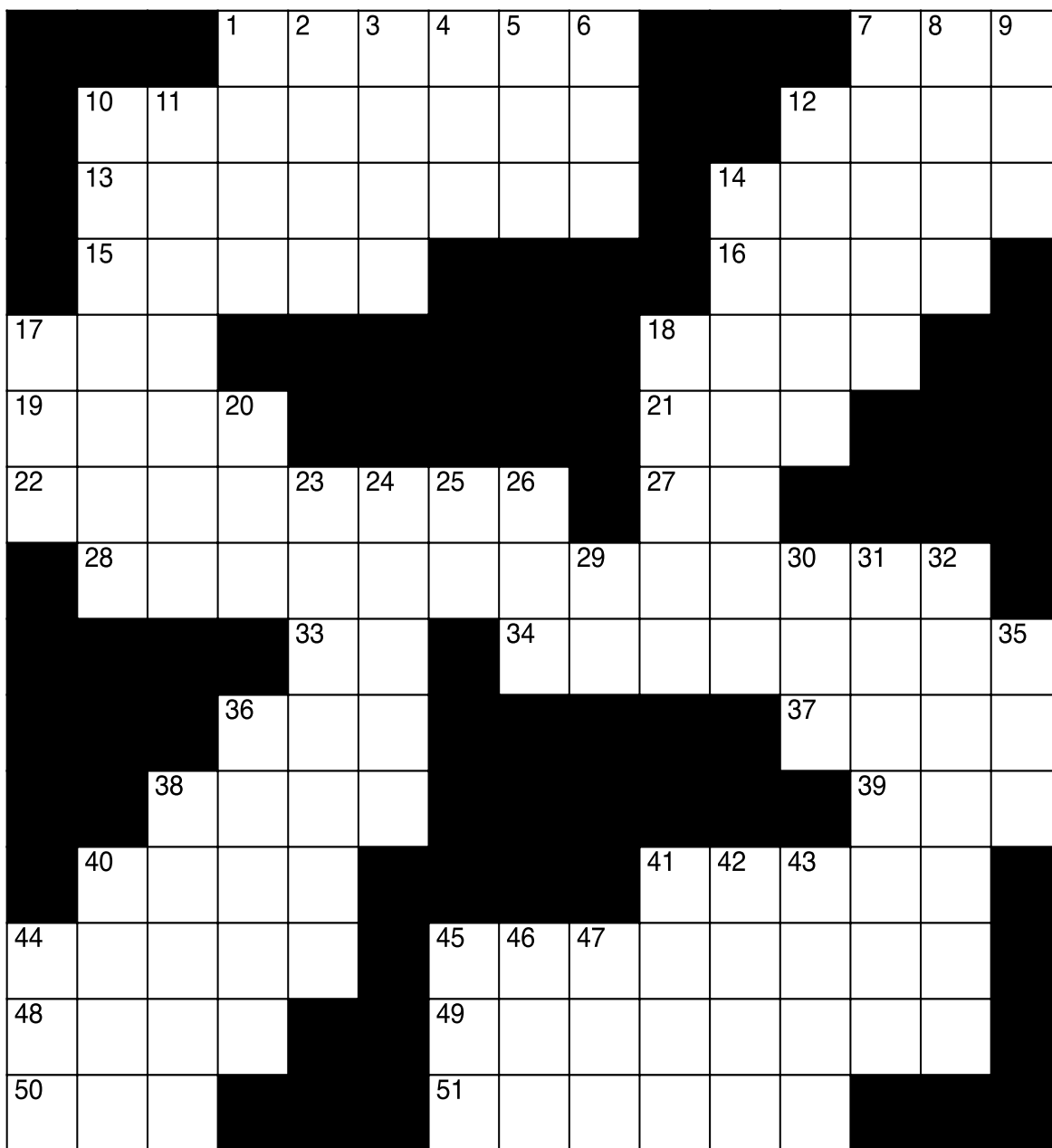
Visit us online
FloridaNewsLine.com

Coming in August!
 Our annual
ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DIRECTORY
49,000 copies
 printed and distributed through all St. Johns County Schools

Reach your target market!
 This publication sells out quickly!
 Reserve your space today!
Call (904) 886-4919

Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Large dung beetle
- 7. Gambling game ___-lo
- 10. Further along
- 12. Type of tobacco
- 13. Looked for
- 14. Silk fabric
- 15. Computer method to solve equations
- 16. As fast as can be done (abbr.)
- 17. Tear
- 18. Brews
- 19. "Famous" cookie baker
- 21. Women's Army Corps
- 22. Front parts of an animal
- 27. It's causing quite a stir
- 28. Beloved March holiday
- 33. 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 34. More impudent
- 36. Indicates center
- 37. Young woman (French)
- 38. A cause of distress
- 39. Santa's helper
- 40. Hillside
- 41. Many wombs
- 44. Is afraid of
- 45. Popular baked goods ingredient
- 48. Popular computers
- 49. Conceiving of
- 50. Google certification (abbr.)
- 51. Sturdy

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Peruse quickly
- 2. Automobiles
- 3. Razorbill genus
- 4. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 5. Consumed
- 6. A place to sleep
- 7. Small seeds
- 8. Legendary law man Wyatt
- 9. Female sheep
- 10. Indigenous peoples of eastern Siberia
- 11. A place ships dock
- 12. Reciprocal of sine
- 14. Discomfort
- 17. British Air Aces
- 18. Exit sleep
- 20. Solar energetic particle
- 23. Plagues characterized by starvation
- 24. Short musical composition
- 25. Trauma center
- 26. Habitual twitching
- 29. A place where checks are exchanged (abbr.)
- 30. Decimeter
- 31. Hinged surface in a wing
- 32. Shouting
- 35. Sports official
- 36. Volcanic craters
- 38. Supportive device
- 40. It's part of a rosary
- 41. Two-toed sloth
- 42. Body art
- 43. Let out
- 44. Foreign medical graduate
- 45. Nonprofit journalism organization (abbr.)
- 46. Couples say it
- 47. Bird's beak

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](https://www.primrosesummer.com)



Primrose School of Julington Creek
904.230.2828 | [PrimroseJulingtonCreek.com](https://www.primrosejulingtoncreek.com)
Primrose School at St. Johns Forest
904.824.1100 | [PrimroseStJohnsForest.com](https://www.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

Real Estate

Own land. YourCheapLand.com. TX NM AZ OK CO. Homestead, tiny home, RV, camp, hunt, invest. ON26 for \$100 Off. YourCheapLand.com

Miscellaneous

TOP DOLLAR PAID for old vintage guitars! Gibson, Fender, Martin, Greesch, Rick-enbacker, 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 condition. 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 & distri-

Job Finder May:

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.

bution. Free author's guide 877-729-4998 or dorranceinfo.com/ads

No more cleaning gutters. Guaranteed! LeafFilter 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 install military, health & 1st respond-

ers. 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, cus-

tom bath or shower in as little as 1-day. Limited time, waving all installation 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



Splash into Summer with a New Pool!

Free robotic cleaner with pool purchase.
Expires 5/31/2026

We also specialize in resurfacing, remodeling, equipment upgrades, and more.

(904)838-0553
AllAmericanPoolCo.com

CPC1458039



PRESSURE WASHING SERVICE

PROOF IS IN THE WORK

SERVICES

♦ EXTERIOR CLEANING	♦ ROOF CLEANING
♦ EXTERIOR PAINTING & RESTORATION	♦ POOL ENCLOSURES
♦ HOT WASH & SOFT WASH	♦ DOCKS & WALKWAY

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

We offer Fictitious Name Advertisement

Call for more info! (904) 886-4919

Bartram Trail Newcomers to hold May installation luncheon

By Dawn Garrity

The Bartram Trail Newcomers Club, BTNC, May luncheon will be held on Tuesday, May 12, at St. Johns Golf and Country Club in St. Augustine. The luncheon will be preceded by an installation ceremony for the club officers for the upcoming year. This will be the last luncheon until September. Meal choices include fire-roasted chicken, thyme-crusted pork tenderloin or vegetable pasta. The luncheon starts at 11 a.m. and the cost is \$32 if paying by cash or check.

The April luncheon was held at St. Johns Golf and Country Club and featured a program of various games.

BTNC is an organization that provides



Members of the Bartram Trail Newcomers Club recently visited the historic Rose Villa Restaurant and Rockefeller Summer Mansion during a club trip to Ormond Beach. Photo courtesy Bartram Trail Newcomers Club

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 offers a wide variety of special interest groups including bridge, Continental Rummy, Pennies Canasta, Mexican Chicken Train, bunco, mahjong, golf, book club, nature walk,

Lunch Divas, Girls' Night Out and special events.

More information can be found on the club's Facebook page at facebook.com/BTNC.1.

Newcomers of North St. Johns to host May luncheon

By Michele Oliver

Newcomers of North Saint Johns (NNSJ) invites members and their guests to join the fun at our May luncheon on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, beginning at 11 a.m. at St. Johns Golf and Country Club, 205 St. Johns Club Drive, St. Augustine. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Along with the installation of our NNSJ Board of Directors we will be celebrating Derby Days with a "Run for the Roses" theme.

Cost for the luncheon and program is \$35 for members and \$40 for guests. All reservations and payments must be received by May 11, 2026. For further information about the luncheon and membership, please go to the NNSJ website at newcomersofnorthstjohns.org.

Luncheon includes entree choices of: Wood-Fired Roasted Chicken Galantine served with Parsley Potatoes and Roasted Red Pepper Sauce; Thyme-Crusted Pork Tenderloin served with Maple Glazed Sweet Potatoes or Vegetable Pasta Primavera topped with Sundried Tomato Sauce. Dessert is Chef's Choice. Beverages include iced tea, coffee and water. A cash bar is also available.



Photo courtesy Newcomers of North St. Johns
Members of Newcomers of North St. Johns enjoy the St. Patrick's Day celebration at Al Dente's in March. The group's May luncheon will feature a "Run for the Roses" Derby theme.

"Staying true to our theme of Derby Days, we ask that everyone wear their best Derby bonnet and be prepared to show off!" says Co-Vice President Dawn Coston. "We will be providing a photo booth for all to have pictures taken and we'll be voting and awarding a prize for 'Best Hat'. Should be a fun day!"

The luncheon event also features the installation of our NNSJ Board of Directors for 2026-2028. "Our members who volunteer to serve on the Board and as Committee directors are really the engines that drive NNSJ to be one of the best social organizations in St. Johns County," says Co-President Michele Oliver, who is completing her last term as Co-President.

"We're looking forward to continuing to serve our members and bringing them fun and educational programs through our luncheon meetings and other activities," adds Charlene Lim who will continue to serve on the Executive Board in her leadership role as Co-President.

As always, raffles for gift baskets and a fun 50-50 drawing spice up our NNSJ luncheons. And, perhaps you will win one of our beautiful centerpieces!

NNSJ offers a wide variety of activities for our members to stay connected and have fun including smaller lunch groups, Bunco, Canasta, wine socials, golf, Mah Jongg, a walking group, day trips and cultural events. Learn more about NNSJ by going to our website and meet your next new best friend!

Michele Oliver, Co-President Newcomers of North St. Johns

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

AFFORDABLE WATER
CONDITIONING • SOFTENING • PURIFICATION

Residential Commercial

Family Owned and Operated since 1989

CLEAN WATER FOR YOUR HOME

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.

License #W-32

3760 Kori Road • www.affordablewaterjax.com

Travel

Zion National Park: Big rock wonders and riverside trails

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

I recently flew to Las Vegas, then drove to two of America's standout national parks: Zion and Bryce Canyon. Both had been on my wish list for years. This month, I'll start with Zion, one of Utah's most dramatic landscapes.



Debi Lander

you are fortunate enough to stay at the Zion Lodge, the only in-park lodging, you can drive partway into this area. This saves time and makes it easier to access the other main road without re-entering through the busy entrance gate.

Zion's towering sandstone cliffs glow in layered shades of rust and cream, while the Virgin River winds through a deep canyon. Despite its popularity and crowds, Zion still offers moments of quiet beauty, especially in the early morning or late afternoon light.

Getting there is straightforward. Most visitors fly into Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas, Nevada, then drive nearly three hours northeast, briefly passing through Arizona before reaching the park's main entrance in Springdale, Utah. The scenic drive itself sets the tone, shifting from desert plains to sculpted red rock formations as you approach.

Once inside the park, private vehicles are restricted along the main canyon road for most of the year. Instead, a free and efficient shuttle system transports visitors to trailheads and viewpoints. It is easy to use, but expect lines during peak times.

The shuttle delivers you to Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, where massive canyon walls rise thousands of feet overhead. If

For an easy start, the Lower Emerald Pool Trail offers a gentle stroll to small waterfalls and shaded alcoves, although water flow can be limited depending on the season. Another favorite is the Riverside Walk at the end of the shuttle route. This paved path follows the Virgin River, offering cool shade and beautiful reflections. At the trail's end, more adventurous hikers can continue into The Narrows, where the river becomes the trail itself. Walking between towering canyon walls with water swirling around your legs creates a uniquely immersive experience, but you'll need proper gear.

More ambitious visitors set their sights on Angels Landing, one of the park's most famous hikes. The final section climbs a narrow ridge with steep drop-offs on both sides, aided by chains bolted into the rock. Permits are required, and this hike is best suited for those who are very fit and comfortable with heights.

Photographers appreciate the Canyon Overlook Trail near the east entrance. I



Photo by Debi Lander

The Virgin River winds through the canyon floor, offering cool shade and beautiful reflections for hikers.

began this mile-long hike before sunrise and found it unnerving in the dark, but the return trip in daylight felt far easier. The view at sunrise, if you get one, is worth the effort, as the cliffs glow with warm color and dramatic contrast.

After dark, Zion's low light pollution makes it an excellent place for stargazing.

Beyond hiking, visitors enjoy e-bikes, horseback rides or simply slowing down. An open-air tram tour offers historical background. Whether you watch climbers scale sheer cliffs or sit and listen to the breeze move through cottonwood trees, Zion encourages you to absorb the landscape.

In addition to lodging inside the park, Springdale offers numerous hotels and restaurants just outside the entrance. Be prepared for crowds, however. Even early in the morning, lines for the shuttle

form quickly. And do not expect good cell service in the region.

Whether you visit for a day or stay longer, Zion's soaring cliffs, winding river and ever-changing light leave a lasting impression. Some come for the challenge of its most demanding hikes, others for the scenery. Either way, nature takes center stage, and visitors enjoy the ride.

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 Newslines, 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@floridanewslines.com.



No more pain, a lot more freedom.

Get relief from back or neck pain.



Don't let pain keep you from what matters. The trusted specialists at Baptist Health and Lyerly Neurosurgery have decades of experience and offer treatments that are innovative, personalized and minimally invasive – so you can live fully again.

Call the spine experts at 904.202.BACK or visit BaptistJax.com/Back

