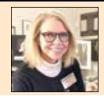
February 2024 Volume 19 Issue 2

**A Florida NewsLine Publication** 



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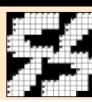




Photo courtesy Mandarin Community Club A Flag Retirement Ceremony will be held on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 3 p.m.

#### Mandarin Community Club hosts Flag Retirement ceremony

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Community Club will once again host a Flag Retirement ceremony with SAR (Sons of the American Revolution) along with members of DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 3 p.m.

The partnership between the organizations began years ago as a way to ensure that American flags were collected and properly retired with respect. Members of SAR present a unique and moving educational program that traces the origin of the American flag from its earliest days to the present. The SAR group takes hundreds of flags that the commu-

Mandarin Community Club cont. on pg. 9



## Support

Advertisers!

#### Girls on the Run SoleMates Lace Up for a Cause

By NewsLine Staff

Girls on the Run SoleMates are channeling their passion for physical activity as they train with the aim of generating essential scholarship funds for girls in their local community. Studies indicate that a girl's self-confidence starts to decline by age nine, coupled with a decrease in physical activity around age 10 that continues to decrease throughout adolescence. SoleMates are dedicated to altering those statistics. Throughout the Girls on the Run program, girls develop and improve competence, feel confidence in who they are, develop strength of character, respond to others and themselves with care and compassion, and create positive connections with peers and adults. When the girls learn these skills, they can ultimately contribute to the community and society. Sole-Mates contribute to the advancement of this impactful mission as they train for physical activities, ensuring access to the



Last year, Girls on the Run SoleMates raised \$45,938, which translates to 306 Girls on the Run scholarships.

transformational program for all girls. Last year, Girls on the Run SoleMates raised \$45,938, which translates to 306 Girls on the Run scholarships.

SoleMates can train for a variety of physical activities, whether it is counting miles on the road, laps in a pool, reps in the weight room, or downward dogs in the studio. SoleMates that choose to train for the 2024 Gate River Run on March 2 will have access to the exclu-

sive SoleMates VIP Experience. The SoleMates VIP Experience is a private party for SoleMates and a guest before and after the race in the air-conditioned WJCT building. The event includes free parking near the finish line, rickshaw rides to the starting line, free food and beverages, indoor restrooms, gear storage, and plenty of post-race pampering. Visit https://www.gotrnefl.org/solemates to register or learn more about becoming a SoleMate.

#### River City Science Academy to host 11th annual STEM and Health Expo

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

River City Science Academy has announced the upcoming annual STEM and Health Expo, scheduled for Feb. 3, at its Innovation campus located at 8160 Baymeadows Way W. The entire community is invited to attend.

This year's Florida STEM and Health Expo promises an exceptional experience, redefining the traditional county science and health fair exposition in Florida. Students from all six River City Science Academy campuses will present their scientific projects in an engaging and unique setting, offering valuable learning opportunities for families.

This cost-free, one-day event will feature science demonstrations, STEM educators, scientists, interactive experiences, robotics, community health advocates, medical experts, fire and police departments, vendor booths, and public servants. Attendees can also look



River City Science Academy's annual Florida STEM & Health Expo will be held on Feb. 3.

forward to food trucks and entertain-

A notable addition to this year's Expo is the inclusion of the Children's Entrepreneur Market, a farmers market entirely managed by kids. This provides young individuals with the chance to showcase and sell their crafts, gaining real-world

entrepreneurial experience.

The Expo will showcase interactive activities and a Kids Fun Zone with bounce houses. And no event would be complete without a delectable array of food trucks.

Visit flstemexpo.com to RSVP and for more information.

#### Scientific Scientific

#### Living with Parkinson's Disease or Essential Tremor?

Join us to learn more about advanced treatment options to help manage your Disease. Family and friends are welcome to attend this educational event. \*FREE meal provided.

**Option 1** 

Date: Tuesday February 13, 2023 • 6:00pm

Location: Aloft Hotel, 4812 Deer Lake Drive West,

Jacksonville, FL 32246

Register to Attend in Person: http://learndbs.com/1567

Option 2

Date: Tuesday March 5, 2023 • 11:30am

Location: 351 Town Plaza Ave, Suite 205, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081

Register to Attend: http://learndbs.com/1566

Hosted by: Alaine Keebaugh, PhD (c) 770-356-6410 | Speaker: Dr. Philip Tipton, MD, Mayo Clinic

#### **Peripheral Neuropathy Breakthrough!**

"My feet feel like they're on fire."
"Each step feels like I'm walking through mud."
"I live in constant fear that I'll fall."

"I can't sleep, my hands and feet tingle all night."

What do all of these people have in common? They suffer from *peripheral neuropathy*. It's estimated that more than 20 million people in the United States have peripheral neuropathy. Unfortunately this figure may be significantly higher as the disease is often misdiagnosed because of its wide array of symptoms.

Dr. Jann Turpin of Riverplace Acupuncture Integrative Health in Jacksonville shares this belief. "I've been treating neuropathy, in all its various forms, for over one decade and so often my patients come to me because of the symptoms, not because of the diagnosis. They saw one of my newspaper ads, or read the testimonial of another patient, or spoke to another patient and said to themselves, 'hey, I feel the same thing'."

Lisa B. testified to this. "Pain doesn't wake me at night anymore and I can walk as much as I want to all day without pain. I'm going to start exercising on the treadmill, for the first time in years. These are things I couldn't do before seeing Dr. Jann and getting acupuncture!"

Those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy often face a very grim reality; Western medicine declares that there is no solution while most alternative therapies carry large price tags and offer little to no resolve. Which is why Dr. Turpin and the staff at Riverplace Acupuncture pride themselves on being 'the last resort with the best results'.

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves and this damage is commonly caused by lack of blood flow in the hands and feet. This shortage results in a lack of nutrients; the nerves then begin to degenerate and die which causes pain ranging from discomfort to debilitating. Because neuropathy is a degenerative condition, once the nerves begin to deteriorate they will continue to do so until they are completely expired, leaving those suffering with severe balance issues. "In this case, the absence of pain is not necessarily a good thing," shares Dr. Turpin. "This usually means that your nerves are hanging by a thread."

So how exactly is Dr. Turpin able to reverse the effects of this degenerative disease? "Acupuncture has been used to increase blood flow for thousands of years which helps to get the necessary nutrients to the affected nerves. But the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance BioTherapy ". This is tech that was originally developed by NASA to expedite recovering and healing."

"I just can't say enough about Dr. Jann," Lisa shared through tears of joy. "My husband and I moved here 3 years ago and he's gone to the beach almost every day. I always stayed home because of the pain and discomfort. Yesterday I walked on the beach with him! And next week we're starting ballroom dancing lessons. I am truly living life these days."

By seamlessly blending the ancient science of acupuncture with modern medical solutions, Dr. Turpin has achieved a 90% success rate in reversing the effects of neuropathy. She starts each patient with an initial consultation during which a sensory exam is performed. "This not only aids in making a proper diagnosis but it helps to define just how much nerve damage has occurred," tells the doctor. "This is important because if a patient has suffered more than 95%, there is little that I can do to help them. I'm familiar with the medical miracle but I know my limits as a practitioner and the limits of my medicine."

When it comes to treating peripheral neuropathy, regardless of its origin, early detection greatly improves your chances of a full recovery.

If you or someone you love is suffering with chronic pain that presents as burning, tingling or 'pins and needles' or you've recently been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy, it's important to know that there are options. There is hope!

Call (904) 720 - 8887 to schedule an initial consultation or visit www.RiverplaceAcupuncture.com to read more incredible success stories.



# The PLAYERS Championship March 12 – 17, 2024

The "go to" fan guide for THE PLAYERS

Official tournament information from the PGA TOUR

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## Best Furry Friend of the month

Breed:

Golden Retriever

Favorite Activity:

Hiking the Florida Trail with mommy Favorite food:

Pepperoni

Favorite Friend:

Grammy

How did my BFF get his name?

Bodie is his name, but his nickname is Bodie Bear. When he was a puppy he looked like a polar bear cub!



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.



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Don't miss our March issue featuring our Spring Home Improvement Guide! Deadline 2/16/24

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From your friends at **Mandarin** NewsLine!

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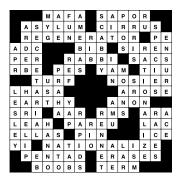
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#### PHOTO



Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.

Last month's Mystery Photo was Elizabeth "Betty" Wolfe Park.



nswers

Puzzles PG 10

A. sweets B. romance C. card D. chocolate





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# February Calendar What's Happening in Mandarin

Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. at Mandarin Park (now known as Hazouri Park). The courts are at the park entrance next to the tennis courts. Try to get there a few minutes early for court assignments. Beginners are welcome. Just show up (a few minutes before playing time), unless it rains.

Toast of Jax Toastmasters meets every Saturday, except on holiday weekends, at 7:30 a.m. at Mandarin Lutheran Church, 11900 San Jose Boulevard. Guests are welcome. The meetings can also be attended online at https://toastofjax.toastmastersclubs.org/.

Acoustic Jam Session is held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Kids' Building of Trinity Mandarin, located at 2955 Orange Picker Road. This jam is open to everyone and all levels of ability are welcome. Come to play with the group or just sit back and enjoy the music. For more information, contact Burt Coulliette at (904) 302-0423.

Playing HOOKie, a group for those who enjoy knitting, crocheting and looming (with all items donated to charity) meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road in St. Johns. Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookie2022@gmail.com for more information.

3rd: Walter Jones Historical Park buildings, including the 1898 St. Joseph's Mission Schoolhouse for African American Children, the 1875 Webb Jones Farmhouse, the 1876 Barn, and the Losco Winery, will be open on Feb. 3 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Historic Mandarin Store & Post Office, located at 12471 Mandarin Road, will also be open. Museum volunteers will be inside each building for guided tours. Admission is free; Donations help support the museum's programming and operations. Visit www. mandarinmuseum.org for more information.

Meet the Maple Leaf Divers at the Mandarin Museum, 11964 Mandarin Road, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 3. This is an informal, conversational-style event; drop in anytime within the two hours to chat with Dr. Keith Holland and his team and view the museum's expanded Maple Leaf exhibit. Admission to Meet the

Maple Leaf Divers and Mandarin Museum is free. Donations help support the museum's programming and operations. For more information, visit www.mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784.

Music Under the Oaks community music jam, hosted by the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society and North Florida Folk Network will resume underneath the beautiful trees in front of Mandarin Museum on Sunday, Feb. 4 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket and relax and listen. Mandarin Museum and the 1898 Schoolhouse will be open to visitors. Visit www.mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

6th: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church at the Loretto Road Campus in the Kids' Space at 2501 Loretto Road. Guild members will make a presentation on Harbor Freight Notions. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

**8th:** "Easy Gardening" will be presented at 10 a.m. on Feb. 8 at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

10th:Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on Feb. 10 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/ for more information.

10th:The Southern Genealogist's
Exchange Society will host a SGES fundraiser and bus tour of the Old Arlington area on Saturday, Feb. 10 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Donut Shoppe, 1535
University Blvd. N., and visit areas of Empire Point, Clifton, and Oak Haven including the Marabanong house. The ticket price is \$50 for SGES current members and \$55 for nonmembers; every ticket directly supports genealogy initiatives. Only 22 seats are available.
Visit www.sgesjax.org or call (904) 778-1000 for more information.

10 th:Southside Multiple Sclerosis group meets on the second Saturday of each month (this month on Feb. 10) at 2 p.m. at the JCA, 8505 San Jose Blvd. Every other month there is a speaker and on

10) at 2 p.m. at the JCA, 8505 San Jose Blvd. Every other month there is a speaker and on alternate months there are group discussions on the current situation with our MS. Call group leader Susan Armstron, (904) 396-1082 for more information.

12th: Parent Support Group with
Licensed Mental Health Counselor
Pattie Pallay will be held the second Monday
of each month (this month, Feb. 12) at 6 p.m.
in the Youth Hut of Lakewood Presbyterian
Church, 2001 University Blvd. This group is
for parents with children of all ages (birth –
adult) who are seeking support with children
who are neurodivergent, have physical
disabilities, are struggling with mental illness
or just daily life. There is no charge to attend;
visit www.lpcjax.org/calendar to register.

15th "Ask the Experts," including a panel of Master Gardeners available for questions, will be presented at 10 a.m. on Feb. 15 at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

featuring a pictorial presentation chronicling the Jaffa family's story of Holocaust survival and immigration to the United States will be held on Feb. 15 from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Community Club, 12447 Mandarin Road. The lecture will be hosted by Mandarin Museum in partnership with The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services and Mandarin Community Club. Admission is free and the event is open to the community.

19th:The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, Feb. 19 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program includes show and tell of Jelly Roll quilts. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www. allstarquilters.org for more information.

20th: "Plant Propagation" will be presented at 10 a.m. on Feb. 20 at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto

Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

22th: Mandarin Women's Club's monthly meeting and luncheon will be held on Feb. 22 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn Mandarin. The luncheon will feature a sing-along with keyboardist/entertainer Steve Fingers. The cost of the lunch is \$25 and reservations and payment must be received by Feb. 15 by calling Jo-Ellen at (904) 635-8722 or emailing her at joshifty@aol.com. Visit www.mandarinwomensclub.com for more information and membership forms.

**22nd: Mandarin Republican Club** will meet on Thursday, Feb. 22 at St. Mary's Seafood, 11290 Old St. Augustine Road. Social time begins at 6 p.m. and the meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. First time visitors are welcome.

22nd:Basic 102 — Landscape Design with Maintenance in Mind will be presented by Extension Agent Tonya Ashworth at 7 p.m. on Feb. 22 at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

23 rd:The Italian American Club of Jacksonville will hold its popular Spaghetti to Go on Friday, Feb. 23 from 5 p.m. until the spaghetti is gone at the club building, 2838 Westberry Road. Take out only; cash, credit and debit cards are accepted. No phone orders. Visit www.iacofjacksonville. com or call (904) 586-2700 for more information.

24th: Exhibit Come to Life: The Untold Story of Black Mandarin hosted by Mandarin Museum, 11964 Mandarin Road, will be held on Saturday, Feb. 24 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. All historic buildings in Walter Jones Historical Park will be open to the public. Greg Estevez, author of "Edisto: The Migration to Florida," will be on hand to speak to guests about Mandarin's link to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and will deliver a formal presentation in the Schoolhouse at 12 p.m. Admission is free. Visit www. mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

## Join us for The Brooke Davis Angel Fund proceeds night at



**Monday, February 26th** From 4 - 9pm





All donations go towards grants awarded to board approved applicants for animals in need of medical veterinary care

> Brooke Davis Angel Fund Helping Hands for Paws in Need BDAF is a 501c3 Organization

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#### TAX TIP

New regulations for 2024 require most small corporations, LLCs (even if sole-proprietor LLCs), and partnerships to report "beneficial ownership" information to FinCEN. Beneficial ownership information is identifying information about the individuals who directly or indirectly own or control at least 25% of the company. Officers or individuals that substantially manage the company are also included in "beneficial ownership". Companies in existence prior to 1/1/2024 must file the initial "BOI" report prior to 1/1/2025. Companies created after 1/1/2024 have 90 days to file for the first year. Companies formed after 1/1/2025 will have 30 days. Companies that are inactive with the state may be required to file.

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#### with Duval County School Board Member Lori Hershey, District 7

#### Q: Can you comment on the upcoming school choice registration?

A: It is time to explore your choice options for next school year. Registration is open now and school visits can be made by contacting your school of interest directly. We are a school district of choice and provide multiple pathways for students. District 7 continues to maintain strong neighborhood schools.

#### Q: What should parents do if they have questions about school choice?

A: You can register and learn more about the array of opportunities by visiting the school choice website: https:// dcps.duvalschools.org/Page/30851

We recommend reaching out to us by email or by making an appointment to meet with a specialist either in-person or virtually. You can send an email to School\_choice@duvalschools.org. Response time is within 48 hours.

While we encourage you to make an appointment, you are also welcome to walk-in. (The Office of School Choice is located at 4070 Boulevard Center Dr. #200, Jacksonville, FL 32207) Inperson meetings take place at the School Choice Office from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

#### Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 7?

A: Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, who has led on ensuring school safety after Parkland, will be at the Feb. 20 School Board Workshop which will be held in the Cline Auditorium. The focus of this meeting will be school safety.

#### Q: How can our readers contact you?

A: They can email me at HersheyL@ duvalschools.org or call me at (904) 390-2375.

#### **Briefs**

#### "Southern Fried Nuptials" to be staged at **Mandarin Community Club**

Act II Players, Mandarin's Community Theater, will present "Southern Fried Nuptials," a big-hearted comedy about family, Southern-style, with performances Feb. 3 - 4 and Feb. 9 - 11 at the Mandarin Community Club, 12447 Mandarin Road.

This is the sequel to "Southern Fried Funeral." Harlene is ready to settle down and marry Atticus ... or is she? Ozella Meeks ends up as the wedding coordinator, Dorothy is still grieving two years later over her husband's death, Sammy Jo is hiding a secret — and not very well and Dewey, Jr., is as confused as ever. Then Harlene's ex-boyfriend shows up to reveal secrets she wants to stay secret. Will the wedding take place?

Performances are Saturday, Feb. 3 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 4 at 3 p.m.; Friday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 11 at 3 p.m.

Did you know the Mandarin Community Club was once the home of the reputedly longest running amateur theater group in the country known as the Mandarin Players? The Mandarin Players held regular performances at the Community Club for decades on the stage that was added to the historic building in the 1950s. In celebration of the club's 100th Anniversary live theater returned to the Mandarin stage last spring with ACT II Players. Tickets are available at https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/southernfried-nuptials-2900239 or at the door.

#### Community club's membership drive in

The Mandarin Community Club membership drive officially began in January. Part of the Mandarin community since 1923, the Mandarin Community Club invites residents to become a member in this historic community organization. Membership is open to all interested parties, but should be of special interest to those living within Mandarin.

Probably best known for the annual Mandarin Art Festival held every Easter weekend, the Mandarin Community



The Mandarin Community Club membership drive is

Club also hosts various events throughout the year including a tree giveaway in March, a Veterans Day celebration in November, and a tree lighting ceremony and celebration in December. The Mandarin Community Club is located at 12447 Mandarin Road. Visit www. mandarincommunityclub.org for more information.

#### Mandarin Women's Club to host Sing-A-

On Thursday, Feb. 22, the Mandarin Women's Club's luncheon program will feature a sing-a-long with keyboardist/ entertainer Stevie Fingers. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Jacksonville University and has been in the music industry for more than 40 years. His program is more than just playing a keyboard and singing; it is interactive, humorous and nostalgic. Fingers has performed for many organizations and regularly entertained on the American Cruise Lines riverboats.

Doors open for the luncheon at the Ramada Inn Mandarin at 10:30 a.m. and reservations are required. The luncheon

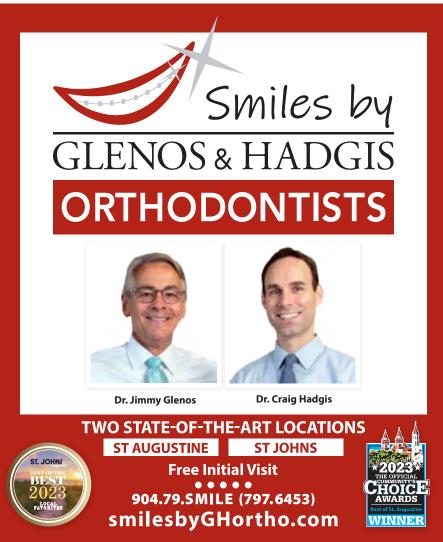
Briefs cont. on pg. 7

## **Dollar Clothing & Jewelry Sale**

Friday, March 1st from 9am to 2pm 🦘 Saturday, March 2nd from 9am to 2pm

2892 Loretto Rd, Jacksonville FL 32223









#### with Jacksonville City Council Member Michael Boylan, District 6

#### Q: What is the final update on the County Dock property?

A: Jeff Edwards, who led the neighborhood committee that worked with the applicant for the rezoning, confirmed on Jan. 6 that the property was indeed sold in December to an individual for personal use and as such, the rezoning application for this property was withdrawn. Edwards has confirmed that the purchasers intend to build only a single family house on the property for a family member and use the balance of the land as an "old Mandarin farm." Apparently, the purchasers have a 50-year history in Mandarin and are interested in being good neighbors. They plan to use the property in a manner consistent with what the community hoped for, including not removing live oaks and improving the drainage of the property with affected neighbors.

#### Q: Is there news on the old K-Mart property on San Jose Boulevard?

A: I spoke with a representative of Ashe Properties in mid-January and learned that Home Depot has signed a lease on this property. That's all I know at this point, but will definitely keep everyone updated as I learn more.

## Q: What is the procedure now for exception requests that pertain to businesses serving alcohol?

A: All exceptions such as this now go

exclusively through City Council and not the Planning Commission. For instance, there are a couple of requests by restaurants in the Mandarin Landing Shopping Center, Enza's and the new Another Broken Egg, to allow serving of alcohol immediately outside their premises. [As of interview date of Jan. 17] I fully expect these to be approved at the City Council meeting on Jan. 24.

#### Q: Do you have any Town Hall meetings scheduled?

A: Yes, we plan to have one on Feb.

1 at 6 p.m. at the Mandarin Senior
Center, 3848 Hartley Road. This one
will concentrate on proceeding with my
effort to develop a Mandarin preservation/beautification initiative in the style
of the San Marco Preservation Society.
I have had positive conversations with
the Mandarin Community Club about
them potentially taking a leadership role
in this new organization. If anyone is
interested in learning more about this or
volunteering with the group, this would
be a good Town Hall to attend.

#### Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 6?

A: A new permanent bathroom structure will be constructed in summer 2024 in the parking area of the Julington - Durbin Creek Preserve. The parking area will soon be narrowed down to

**Q&A with Michael Boylan** cont. on pg. 9

# TRAVISAKERS BOLD VISION. BOLD LEADER. -VETERAN NAVY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER -ONLY CANDIDATE WHO IS A PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT -MASTERS DEGREE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION -SUPPORTED BY TEACHERS -BACKED BY FAMILIES TOTE August 20th travisakers.com

#### **Guest Column**

## An extraordinary leader: Susie Scott

By Emily Lisska

The end of 2023 signaled the conclusion of Susie Scott's remarkable nine consecutive years as president of the Mandarin Community Club. In total, Susie served 14 terms as president; it was fitting in her final year that the organization celebrated a century of service.

Among her last official acts was welcoming Mayor Donna Deegan to the club's fourth annual Christmas Tree Lighting, a project created during her tenure to bring the community together in the midst of a pandemic. Her leadership saw the club emerge from the difficult time financially solvent.

Susie proved masterful working with City Council members — in recent years, Michael Boylan and the late Tommy Hazouri. At the same time, she led a dedicated volunteer board that produced projects including the iconic Mandarin Art Festival and an annual tree give-away for Mandarin residents. For a decade, Susie chaired the club's signature project, the Mandarin Art Festival. A Mandarin tradition, it's also a funding source to support the club's mission.

In the early 2000s, she led development of the club's Billard Park project, a property adjoining the club that stands as a native Florida garden and a site honoring military members. In fact, recently the club's footprint increased significantly under her guidance with the generous 2023 donation of adjacent property from Marilyn Carpenter, securing another magnificent piece of nature for Mandarin.

Her other leadership projects included collecting hundreds of worn U.S. flags and flag retirement ceremonies in coordination with the Sons of the American Revolution. Susie emphasized much needed blood drives with OneBlood, Holiday Mail for Heroes, Veterans Day ceremonies, program coordination with Mandarin Museum and Historical Society and return of live theater to the club featuring Act II Players.

Her early work with the Mandarin overlay placed Susie in a unique posi-



Photo courtesy Emily Lisska
Susie Scott leads the Mandarin Community Club's 100th
year celebration

tion to lead the club on area planning concerns. She also served as an outstanding steward of Mandarin's most important historic structure, the 1872 Mandarin School, known today more commonly as the Mandarin Community Club. Dealing with endless building issues, re-establishment of the club's non-profit status, and paperwork, including grants to fund tree purchases, historic fences and an historic site marker for the club's 100th year were all in a day's work for Susie.

As typical of Susie, she hasn't walked away. She continues to serve on the board as Mark Waterman assumes the presidency. She'll chair the Mandarin Art Festival once again and she continues to work with critical grant projects to insure Mandarin's welfare.

Susie, the epitome of unselfish service, provided tireless leadership and exuded deep and an abiding love for the organization and Mandarin at large; she will continue to do so. In fact, she leaves a physical legacy of considerable note — she is personally underwriting construction of a pavilion, nestled in giant oaks and foliage on club property, enhancing the already important work of the club.

Susie Scott is indeed an extraordinary leader.





#### At your library: Tax prep, storytimes, and youth activities

By Jeremy Yates mail@floridanewsline.com

Need help preparing your taxes? Jacksonville Public Library is proud to partner with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) TaxAide during the tax season to provide free tax counseling and preparation services. There is no income or age limit for assistance; however, AARP sites cannot assist rental property owners or small business owners.

Mandarin Library: Thursdays from 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. Call (904) 419-3402 or schedule online: tinyurl.com/TaxMandarinBranchLib

South Mandarin Library: Tuesdays from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m or Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Call (904) 257-6520 or schedule online: tinyurl.com/TaxSouth-MandarinLib

Taxes are prepared by appointment only. For other locations, call (904) 701-3462 or read the blog on jaxpubliclibrary.org.

The Friends of the South Mandarin Library will host a Used Book Sale Thursday and Friday, Feb. 15 and 16 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 17 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library (12125 San Jose Blvd). You can fill a paper grocery bag full of books for just \$10 or a plastic bag for \$5 (the Friends will provide the

Photo courtesy Jacksonville Public Library

AARP TaxAide will provide free tax counseling and preparation services at the

Mandarin and South Mandarin libraries.

bags). Individual items will be \$1 and up with a wide selection of items for every age — children, teens, and adults.

There are three opportunities every week for Little Readers storytimes at South Mandarin Library: Choose between Mondays at 1:30 p.m., Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. or Thursdays at 11 a.m. At the Mandarin Library, pre-K friends and families can pick between the Little Readers storytime on Fridays at 10:15 a.m. or 11 a.m. We also have Sensory Friendly Storytime Wednesdays at 11 a.m.

School-age kids (nine to 12 years old): Help us stop a mad scientist with even greater feats of mad science! Mad Science Lab runs Wednesdays at 4 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library or Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Library.

Spy Lab at South Mandarin Library Fridays at 11 a.m. is an eight-week long Junior Secret Agent "training" program that will immerse your homeschoolers, aged 10 – 14, in a fictional clandestine world where they'll learn problem solving and use all the cryptology tools at their disposal to successfully thwart the diabolical plans of a chaotic enemy organization.

Teens: Batter Royale: A Dessert Deco-

rating Showdown is taking over Teen Advisory
Board on Feb. 23 from
4:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. at
South Mandarin Library.
You'll have 30 minutes
to decorate a pre-baked
dessert and take home
the 2024 championship
title.

Visit www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/events for more information.

**Briefs** cont. from pg. 5 cost is \$25 and your check must be

cost is \$25 and your check must be received by Thursday, Feb. 15. To make reservations and obtain payment instructions, call Jo-Ellen at (904) 635-8722 or email her at joshifty@aol.com. Visit www.mandarinwomensclub.com for more information on events, photos, and membership forms.

#### Mandarin Museum to host Third Thursday Lecture Series: Our Mandarin Neighbors

On Feb. 15 at 6:30 p.m., Mandarin Museum will host the first in a four-part series of Third Thursday Lectures collectively titled "Our Mandarin Neighbors." The series will feature Mandarin residents whose poignant stories highlight the diversity of the community.

Irene Jaffa and her son Andrew will deliver the first pictorial presentation chronicling their family's harrowing tale of Holocaust survival and eventual immigration to the United States. This installment is hosted in partnership with The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services and the Mandarin Community Club.

Admission to Our Mandarin Neighbors

is free thanks to sponsors Endless Summer Roofing Co. and The Ritter Soares Team with One Sotheby's International Realty

The lecture will take place at the Mandarin Community Club located at 12447 Mandarin Road. For more information, contact Mandarin Museum at (904) 268-0784 or visit mandarinmuseum.org.



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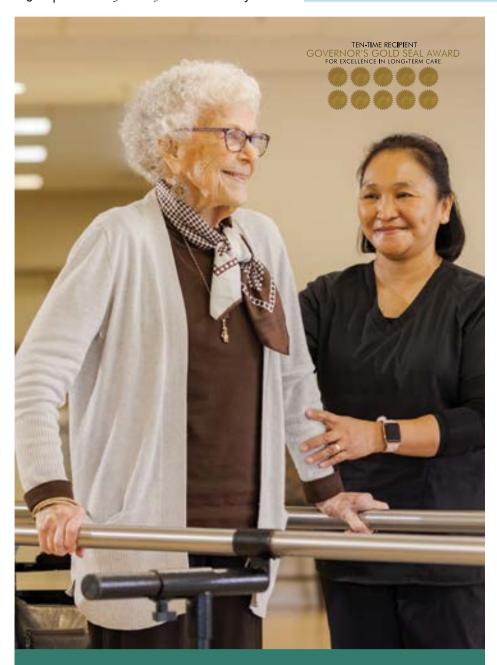
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#### Reading Night at Crown Point



Photos courtesy Mary Eyler

On Thursday, Dec. 14, Crown Point's leadership events team held their third annual "Reading Under the Stars" event. Crown Point families came out to experience the joy of reading holiday books and make handmade crafts to go along with the stories. Families ate from the food trucks that were on site and enjoyed being together with the whole community.

## Greenland Pines celebrates second consecutive "A" school rating, technology upgrades

By Leslie Echt mail@floridanewsline.com

Greenland Pines Elementary School has once again achieved an impressive "A" school rating for the second consecutive year. This accomplishment is a testament to the dedicated efforts of the school's educators, students, and the entire community.

The prestigious "A" rating, awarded by the state's education department, recognizes Greenland Pines Elementary for its commitment to providing top-notch education and fostering an environment that promotes academic success.

Principal Michelle Hinkley said, "This accomplishment is a reflection of the hard work and determination of our incredible staff, supportive parents, and of course, our bright and eager students."

But the good news doesn't end there. Greenland Pines Elementary is not only excelling in academics, but is also embracing cutting-edge technology to enhance the learning experience for students and teachers alike. The school has recently undergone a transformative upgrade, bidding farewell to outdated box TVs and welcoming state-of-the-art digital screens in every

classroom.

The installation of these digital screens marks a significant leap forward in the school's technological infrastructure. The new screens, with vibrant displays and interactive capabilities, are set to revolutionize the way lessons are delivered and absorbed. Students can look forward to a more engaging and immersive learning environment, with educational content brought to life in vivid detail.

It's not just the students who are excited about the upgrade. Teachers at Greenland Pines Elementary are particularly thrilled with the inclusion of microphones that seamlessly connect to speakers in each classroom. This addition ensures that every word uttered by the educators resonates clearly and distinctly, overcoming the challenges of traditional audio systems.

"This technology is a game-changer," said Hinkley. "Now, we can ensure that every student hears their teacher loud and clear, no matter where they are seated in the classroom. It's a tremendous boost for effective communication and engagement."

Leslie Echt is a Greenland Pines Elementary SAC member.



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Get to Know...

By Martie Thompson editor@floridanewsline.com

Brenda Councill

For the months of December and January, artist Brenda Councill has held an Open Studio at the Historic Mandarin Store and Post Office to allow community members to observe her as she works on her sculpture of Harriet Beecher Stowe, soon to be presented to the Mandarin Museum. It's a homecoming of sorts for Councill, as she lived in Mandarin as a young girl when her father, a CSX executive, was transferred to Jacksonville. She lived here until 1987 when she moved to New York City to open her art gallery and continue her career. She still has family in the area — three sisters and a brother — so she visits Mandarin frequently. She currently lives in Blowing Rock, NC, "on top of a mountain." In Mandarin, she is well known for her series of "Old Mandarin" limited edition lithographs, featuring iconic Mandarin landmarks such as Mandarin Road, the Mandarin Community Club, and the Episcopal Church of our Saviour. Councill hand colored each one with pastels and said she had produced thousands of them before the final one in 1991.

#### Q: Have you always been interested in art?

A: Definitely. I was always drawing and coloring from a young age. My mother actually kept me out of kindergarten because all I wanted to do was paint. When I was seven years old, I painted the World War I winged sculpture

#### Get to Know ...

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at editor@floridanewsline.com



Photo by Martie Thompson
Brenda Councill working on her sculpture.

that is in Jacksonville's Memorial Park ("Life.") I won a competition with this painting and as a result, was able to exhibit my works at the Jacksonville Children's Museum.

#### Q: Who inspired you to be an artist?

A: My parents encouraged me a lot. My mom drove me to many after school art lessons. My second grade teacher at San Jose Elementary was Janet Jones, who started the first initiative to protect the Patriarch Oaks. I credit her with helping me direct my creative efforts to painting and sculpting. And then my seventh grade history teacher at Dupont Middle School, Miss Carol Slosek (now Mrs. Carol Russell), inspired my love of history. I always try to infuse history in my art. Finally, when I went to Florida Junior College (as it was then known), I had Mark Howard as my art teacher. He was formative and taught me printmaking, etching, and

Q: How did the idea for the Harriet Beecher Stowe sculpture come about?

A: About three years ago, I was talking with Sandy Arpen of the Mandarin Museum about how the museum needed a permanent sculpture to

honor Harriet Beecher Stowe.

I made a little scale model
of what I had in mind and
everyone loved it. We
developed the idea for the
sculpture and then started
the fundraising process to
make it a reality. Donors
are vital and we have found
great support from the community. Plus we are asking
for corporate donations. We
have found that people are very
interested in having a permanent
memorial to Harriet Beecher Stowe.

#### Q: Can you describe your vision for this sculpture?

A: I felt like we needed to tell a story. Harriet Beecher Stowe was devoted to education and helping freed slaves after the war. This sculpture is a representation of two young boys who would have worked in her orange grove. Perhaps it is after their shift and she has them sitting on orange crates and is teaching them their letters or numbers. We feel that this helps to tell the story of her educational initiative. She left such a rich legacy.

#### Q: What is the process to make this sculpture?

A: I'm making a life-sized sculpture out of oil-based clay. It will go to the foundry in February, where they will make a mold and then pour hot molten bronze into the mold which will displace the wax. This is known as the "lost wax process" and it's been used for thousands of years. We hope to have a formal unveiling of the sculpture at the Mandarin Museum, between the museum and the 1898 St. Joseph's Mission Schoolhouse for African American Children, in the fall.

Mandarin Community Club cont. from pg. 1

nity club collects throughout the year at a collection box at its site on Mandarin Road that was designed, constructed and installed by Eagle Scout Patrick Setzer. Flags that are worn, tattered or damaged should not be flown and should be properly retired.

The public is invited to attend and witness this solemn ceremony and share in this patriotic duty of the retirement of many US flags.

**Q&A with Michael Boylan** cont. from pg. 6

one lane to accommodate underground utility construction for this facility. This underground work is scheduled to be completed by the end of March. Visitors to this beautiful park are asked to drive slowly, share the road with pedestrians and bicycles, and follow instructions from construction crews onsite.

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

A: Community members can email me at MBoylan@coj.net or call (904) 255-5206.

### Send us your community news!

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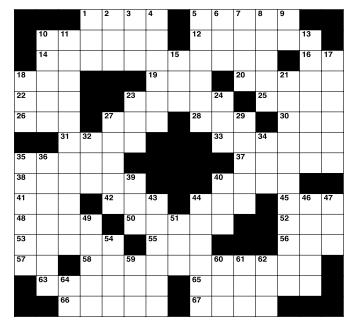


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Mandarin | Fleming Island | Riverside Orange Park | Middleburg



Answers on page 3 Provided by MetroCreative



#### **CLUES ACROSS**

- 5. Persian male given name
- 10. Type of protection 12. Cloud
- 14. One who returns to life
- 16. Gym class 18. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 19. Baby's dining accessory 20. Enchantress
- 22. Prefix denoting "in a'
- 23. Spiritual leader
- 25. Cavities
- 26. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 27. Foot (Latin)
- 28. Sweet potato
- 30. Pharaoh of Lower Egypt 31. Land
- 33. More inquisitive

- 35. Dog breed: \_\_\_Apso
- 37. Stood up
- 38. Direct and uninhibited
- 40. Authorless
- 41. Blocking type of drug (abbr.)
- 42. Retrospective analysis (abbr.) 44. Root mean square (abbr.)
- 45. Macaws
- 48. Actress Remini
- 50. Polynesian wrapped skirt
- 52. City of Angels hoops team (abbr.) 53. Fitzgerald and Baker are two
- 55. Bowling alley must-have
- 56. A way to cool down
- 57. Ethnic group in Asia 58. A way to alter
- 63. Set of five
- 65. Removes from the record
- 66. Dummies
- 67. Set period in office

#### CLUES DOWN

- 1. DC Comics superhero
- 2. Brew
- 4. Single-celled animals
- 5. Rough to the touch
- 6. Small island (British)
- 7. Often noted alongside cons
- 8. Preparation of rootstock 9. Atomic #44
- 10. Egyptian unit of capacity
- 11. About secretary
- 13. Particular groups
- 15. Poke fun at 17. Make certain that
- something occurs
- 18. Financial term 21. Justify
- 23. Arbiter
- 24. 007's creato
- 27. Czech name for Prague

- 32. American time
- 34. No seats available
- \_\_ Stahl, journalist
- 36. Cleft lip 39. Talk incessantly
- 40. Expresses atomic and molecular weights (abbr.)
- 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
- 44. Curdled milk 46. Running competitions
- 47. A team's best pitcher 49. Carthaginian explorer
- 51. World-renowned city
- 54. Most common Japanese surname
- 59. The bill in a restaurant
- 60. They
- 61. City of Angels football
- team (abbr.)
- 62. Distinctive practice 64. One quintillion bytes

В В Ι Ι Ι В Т D D W В N Α 0 Q М Ν В М R Ε 0 N 0 D Α В Q 0 R Ε L Ι G Ε Ε 0 Ι ٧ J Ρ L Р S Ε 0 М В N L Ι R G В U ν 0 0 U Ε Т

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

#### **WORDS**

BOUQUET BOYFRIEND CARDS CELEBRATE **CHOCOLATES** DINNER ENAMORED FEBRUARY **GESTURE** GIFTS GIRLFRIEND HEART **JEWELRY** LOVE LOVING PROPOSAL

RELATIONSHIP ROMANTIC R0SES **SPOUSE** 

## A B C D E F G H i J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Determine the code to reveal the answer! Solve the code to discover words related to Valentine's Day. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 11 = C)

16 13 13 20

Clue: Candy

11 13 5 6 3 7

Clue: Excitement about love

3 14 9 Clue: Offers a greeting

D. 15 5 11 5 18 3 20 13

Clue: Rich and creamy treat

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#### **Accounts vary on Valentine's Day origins**

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By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Valentine's Day is a bright light in the middle of the winter. Come Feb. 14, sweethearts celebrate their love and affection for one another on this day devoted to happy couples.

The origin of Valentine's Day has generated much speculation over the years. Most early accounts do not point to heart-shaped boxes filled with chocolates. Rather, a few distinctive tales may paint the picture of early Valentine's Day, and they have nothing to do with stuffed animals or romantic dinners.

Roman festival: One of the earliest records of the term Valentine's Day is traced to the Roman festival of Lupercalia, which was a fertility festival. This annual event held on Feb. 15 included animal sacrifices and priests called the Luperci who would take pieces of animal hide and touch it to the foreheads of women in the hopes it would make them more fertile. Fortunately for the squeamish (and the sacrificial animals), Pope Gelasius I ended Lupercalia and replaced it with St. Valentine's Day by the end of the fifth century.

Two or three St. Valentines? Most people attribute the origins of Valentine's Day to the holiday's namesake, St. Valentine. But it seems that Valentine was the surname of a few different individuals. According to History.com, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus. One Valentine was a priest during the reign of Emperor Claudius II, who decided that single men made better soldiers than those with families or wives. Claudius outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine disagreed with the decree and would perform marriages in secret. Others believe it was St. Valentine of Terni, a bishop beheaded by Claudius II outside of Rome, who was the true namesake.

Yet another Valentine may have been jailed and fell in love with a jailer's daughter while in prison. He purportedly wrote to her, beginning the first Valentine card or letter tradition. Other stories say the imprisoned Valentine actually was writing to a blind woman he purportedly healed, and signed the note "from your Valentine."

It is hard to know who is who in regard to the name Valentine, as the stories and the people behind them are used interchangeably. Some historians believe they actually are the same person rather than several Valentines, while others insist there were multiple martyred individuals.

However you slice it, the defiant actions of one or more people named "Valentine" set the course for centuries of romance to follow.

#### 6 Valentine's Day traditions

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Sweethearts use Valentine's Day as an opportunity to show the people they care about just how deep those feelings run. A 2023 survey from the National Retail Federation found consumers expected to spend \$25.9 billion on Valentine's Day, up from \$23.9 billion in 2022. Forecasters suspect spending is likely to increase this year as well.

Valentine's Day is awash in many different customs. Here's a deep look at some of those enduring traditions and others that some may feel should be brought back into favor or adopted entirely.

Handwritten cards: It's a common scene each year in card retailers and pharmacies: people three-deep in the aisle trying to pick out Valentine's Day cards in the eleventh hour. People can save themselves the hassle of fighting the crowds if they make their own handmade cards. In the 18th and 19th centuries, sweethearts created unique cards from scratch, according to Country Living. And prior to products produced by Hallmark and other greeting card companies, people used to send one another cards customized with personalized messages.

Pampering gentlemen: It is common in North America for Valentine's Day celebrations to lean significantly toward favoring women, who are often on the receiving end of flowers and chocolates; however, in South Korea and Japan, it is the men who are pampered with such gifts. Women purchase chocolates for their male partners, family members and coworkers as tokens of appreciation and affection. Never fear, a month later on White Day (March 14) men reciprocate with candy, cake and flowers.



Bouquets: These days a dozen long-stemmed red roses might be the norm for Valentine's Day gifting; however, roses weren't always the preferred flower for the holiday. History.com reports that, in the 19th century, bouquets might contain all sorts of flowers, each chosen to convey certain messages. Individuals can research the meanings behind certain flowers and put together a Valentine's Day gift this year that expresses exactly what they are feeling.

Puzzle purses: Sweethearts in Victorian England created "puzzle purses," which were a series of love letters that could be read separately, but also fit together to create a design and message. These intricately folded sheets of paper had parts of messages or verses written on different corners and were meant to be read in a specific order.

Heart-shaped chocolate boxes: British chocolatier Richard Cadbury is credited with creating the first heart-shaped box for Valentine's Day. The boxes were intended to be so beautiful they would be kept to hold trinkets or love letters. Ornate chocolate boxes are not quite as common today, although the gifting of chocolate for the holiday is still strong.

Celebrating in June? Many Brazilians skip Valentine's Day in February and choose to celebrate Saint Anthony, the patron saint of marriage and matchmaking, on June 12. Celebrating both is fine for those who prefer to shower affection on loved ones multiple times a year.

## Free trees! Annual tree giveaway at Mandarin Community Club

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Hundreds of free trees will be available to Mandarin homeowners on Saturday, March 9 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. This year there will be seven different species to select from: Fringe, Redbud, Dahoon Holly, Riverbirch, Sparkleberry, Yellow Poplar and Shumard Oak. One tree per household will be strictly enforced. Master gardeners will be on hand to answer questions about location, planting, spacing, disease, and watering.

The Mandarin Community Club launched this event after Hurricanes Matthew and Irma devastated the tree canopy in subsequent years, resulting in the loss of thousands of trees from the landscape of Mandarin. The community club hosted its first giveaway in 2017 and since that initial giveaway, an estimated 3000 trees have been returned to yards and homes throughout Mandarin.

First formed as the Liberty League then reorganized as the Mandarin Community Club in 1923, the club celebrated 100 years of service to the community in 2023. The Mandarin Community Club is located on historic Mandarin Road in the 1872 Mandarin Freedom School building founded originally by Harriett Beecher Stowe.



Photo courtesy Susie Scott Volunteers and community members at a prior tree giveaway event.

#### **Rotary builds 66th wheelchair ramp!**



Photo courtesy Steve Gallagher

On Oct. 21, 2023, nine members of the Mandarin Rotary Club built a wheel-chair ramp at the home of Jonnell McRae. Club members provided all of the labor, and Hart Felt Ministries provided all of the materials.

The ramps are built free of charge to assist mobility-impaired local homeowners, making it much easier for them to enter and leave their homes, when they otherwise would be essentially homebound. Pictured are Jonnell McRae with Rotary members Ken McCauley, Robert Meek, Jock Hart, Leo Gurman, project supervisor Louis Dunbar, and his wife, Jill Dunbar. Also participating in the project but not pictured are Ray Wolford, Mac Coble, and Jeff Edwards.

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## Artists flock to Mandarin to share their work

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Mandarin Art Festival continues the Easter family tradition on March 30 – 31, 2024 with locally and nationally renowned artists. Snowbirds are expected from the Northeast, as well as artists from Minnesota, Indiana, and even from as far afield as Montana! Many favorite artists are returning along with more than 25 percent of the signups being new artists. From Tennessee comes a young emerging artist, Lauchlan Davis, whose vivid oil paintings celebrate diversity and community in exciting flourish.

"She's playing with style and color in a unique way," says Susie Scott, Festival chair.

Davis has pursued painting professionally for the last six years, once she graduated from the University of Virginia. Having studied and written about art, once she started painting on her own, she says she found herself already fluent in the language she was just learning to speak.

"I was suddenly at that magic intersection of passion and curiosity that makes practice feel like play. I realized that my surroundings could be broken down into color and shape and that I could piece these fragments back into something new and lovely," she says.

When asked how she developed her

artistic process, Davis replies, "One of the most significant lessons I've learned as an artist is to trust the process. The finished artwork isn't formed in my head before I paint it on the canvas, but I've determined what path I'll follow. Perhaps some glimmer of an idea sparks the first step, but then you are following that idea to its destination without quite knowing where you'll end up. Each brushstroke is a decision that leads us to the next one, and the magic of the painting is responding honestly to the artwork as it evolves. The challenge of painting is staying in the present moment, refusing to take shortcuts, and embracing the uncertainty. So much of learning to paint has also taught me about living a life."

More than 100 artists participate in this juried art festival, set each year under the live oaks at Mandarin Community Club. A donation of \$2 is suggested at the gates. Parking will be handled offsite with free shuttle service. Food trucks and entertainers are marking their calendars for this rain or shine outdoor event on March 30 and 31, 2024, on Saturday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and on Sunday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. The Children's Art Show continues inside the historic clubhouse with local elementary and middle schools participating. There will also be a Green Market offering locally produced, unique products.

Visit mandarinartfestival.com for more information.



Lauchlan Davis with some of her work.





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# The Pantry Raiders

## Start off Valentine's Day with breakfast RV Newsline Staff

By NewsLine Stat mail@floridanewsline.com

Valentine's Day is about expressing love for special people in your life. One way to do so is to pamper that person as much as possible. That can mean starting the day off with delicious breakfast in bed. "Blackberry Crunch Muffins" marry coffee cake and muffin elements and tart berries for something that is equal parts breakfast and dessert. Try this recipe, courtesy of "Lord Honey Traditional Southern Recipes with a Country Bling Twist" (Pelican Publishing) by

#### **Blackberry Crunch Muffins**

Serves 12

2 1/4 cups self-rising flour

1 cup white sugar

Chef Jason Smith.

1/4 cup brown sugar

½ cup canola oil

2 eggs

2 tsp. vanilla

3/4 cup full-fat buttermilk

1 ½ cups fresh or frozen blackberries

Zest of 1 lime

#### **Crunch topping**

½ cup white sugar

1/4 cup brown sugar, packed

½ cup self-rising flour

½ cup quick-cook oats

1/4 cup sweetened shredded coconut

½ cup chopped walnuts

5 tbsp. butter, at room temperature

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground ginger

Glaze

2 cups powdered sugar

½ tsp. salt

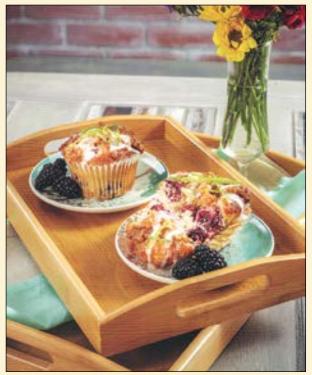
1 tsp. vanilla

Juice of 1 lime

Preheat oven to 375 F. Grease or line a 12-hole muffin tin. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the flour and sugars. Add the oil, eggs, vanilla, and buttermilk, and stir to combine.

In a small bowl, toss the blackberries with 1 tablespoon flour, then add the berries and zest to the batter and lightly fold them in. Place the crunch topping ingredients in a bowl and mix with a fork until large crumbles form.

Divide the batter evenly into the muffin tin, and sprinkle tops with crunch mixture. Bake for 22 to 28 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Remove from oven and place on a cooling rack. Place the glaze ingredients in a bowl and whisk until combined. Drizzle over cooled muffins.



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Photo courtesy MetroCreative Blackberry Crunch Muffins





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#### **Jimmy's Fishing Report**

By Jimmy Tomazinis mail@floridanewsline.com

While February can be one of the coldest months we have, it can also hold a surprise warm up or two. It's on the cusp of spring and with the activities that accompany that season, it can be beneficial to look out for those warmer days. The activities I'm referring to are fish spawning and their preparations to do so. Many fish that spawn in the spring are triggered by thermal cues when the water warms to a certain point. Not that February is peak spawning for most, but I would say that the fish are at least changing their habits and becoming pre-spawn as we say. If we get multiple days in the 80s and the water goes from the high 50s to the mid to high 60s then I'd venture to say there's



Photo courtesy Jimmy Tomazinis Look for specks moving into the creeks this month.

going to be some spawning going on. This is turning into a pretty good rant, but I apparently have a lot of thoughts on fish behavior. One last thing is that just because they start spawning doesn't mean they can't stop when the temperatures drop. They usually do.

Two species locally that I'll be looking for in this transitional month are specks and bass. Speck fishing has been up and down with fish being caught in the river and creeks, but up until this point most of the larger fish have been in the river or near the creek mouths. I'd expect more of those large fish to move into the creeks preparing to spawn. You'll also notice them being a lot plumper as the females become full of eggs. The fish will also start holding at more variable depths. This is when I like using jigs since you can cover the entire water column. When you find where most of the fish are staged you can stick with the jig or switch over to minnows.

Bass will be moving closer to the shoreline and you may even notice a few beds being prepared in places with decent water clarity. Females tend to be late to the party, but will hang in the vicinity of the beds until it's their time to shine. The best way to entice a big smart bass is a wild shiner. If you're inclined to throw artificials, then a swim bait or large rubber worm might be the ticket. Keep an eye out for warmer weather and tight lines.

## **Bolles Upper School students build kitchen for community center in Jamaica**

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Six Bolles upper school students traveled to Jamaica on a mission trip with St. Mark's Episcopal Church's youth group during Winter Break to help those living in the small mountain town of Mandeville.

Hallie Nelson '25, Ellie Stewart '26, William Barakat '26, H Burkett '26, James McCranie '26 and Harrison Spencer '26 spent Jan. 1 – 6 building a kitchen for a community center and digging a seven-footdeep septic tank hole. Bolles alumnus Dan Dearing '95 also joined the students to assist them on their trip.



Photo courtesy Bolles

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# Gardening

**Spring is on the horizon** 

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale mail@floridanewsline.com

In early February it can occasionally feel like spring. As we know, Florida weather has a habit of swinging from one extreme to another, so the weather forecast is part of a gardener's arsenal.

Spring vegetables can be started indoors from seed, but don't delay. By getting vegetable seedlings into the garden early in the season, we can get a jump start over insects that can explode in numbers once temperatures start to climb. For advice on what to plant in February, check out http://tinyurl.com/bdzasdzw.

If you garden regularly in the same beds, take care to rotate crops, preferably according to plant families. Refer to this simple table which lists the scientific families and the common vegetables within each family: http://tinyurl. com/47d2j4u6. Crop rotation helps to discourage an overgrowth of pests and diseases that favor similar crops, and to balance soil nutrients, to a degree, as some crops are heavier feeders than others; however, Florida's soils are typically sandy, so a balanced fertilizer is recommended, according to the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide (http:// tinyurl.com/32z8eckr). It bears repeating that this is a great resource even for experienced gardeners.

If you have previously had problems with nematode damage, check out this publication: http://tinyurl. com/5n8br6wb. Common root-knot nematodes reproduce in plant roots, damaging the vascular system and preventing water and nutrients moving up into the plant. Plants just do not thrive and we are deprived of our crop. Soil rich in organic matter will be better able to support plant growth in the presence of nematodes, compared with sandy soil, so adding compost can help. Soil solarization can reduce nematode populations, as well as other pests and diseases, and is another simple practice for homeowners.

Hand weeding allows us a close look at what is going on in the yard. Like me, you are probably finding seedlings of plants that could be used to expand your flowerbeds or fill in gaps that might become apparent when spring growth is underway. I pot up seedlings and grow them in six-packs or small pots, rather

than move them to where I ultimately want them to grow. This gives me control over potential insect problems, the young plants are easily protected in a cold snap, and I can encourage strong growth with weekly use of a dilute fertilizer. In January I potted Indian blanket (Gaillardia sp.) and dotted horsemint (Monarda punctata). I also have other volunteers, like Virginia spiderwort (Tradescantia ohiensis) and lance leaf coreopsis (Coreopsis lanceolata), which will be useful. Spiderwort is particularly welcome early in the year for foraging honeybees. Some of my plants were blooming in mid-January, as were the dainty flowers of native yellow wood sorrel (Oxalis corniculata). If you find it in your yard, be prepared to keep it in check as it spreads by both seed and stolons, or runners.

Redbud trees (*Cercis canadensis*) are beginning to show a dusting of pink against their gray bark. These flowers are also a boon to insects at a time of year when flowers aren't abundant. Red maple (*Acer rubrum*) is an attractive winter-flowering tree, and another food source; however, its wide-spreading surface roots can be a nuisance in a yard and are more suited to moist woodland edges.

I'm looking forward to my native Darrow's blueberries (*Vaccinium darrowii*) flowering; they already have tiny buds in the leaf axils where the dainty pink bell-like flowers will appear. Last year there were plenty of berries which I had hoped would be devoured by mocking birds and other fruit lovers, but they weren't as popular as I'd expected. So I cooked them down with some cinnamon and dark brown sugar, which made a tasty topping for vanilla ice cream. Waste not, want not, as my grandmother used to say.

And before I sign off, remember that "weed and feed" products are not recommended for our north Florida lawns. Annual weeds should be dealt with before the spring green-up, with an application of a pre-emergent product when day temperatures reach 65°F to 70°F for four or five consecutive days. Lawns need their first application of fertilizer when they are actively growing.

# underway. I pot up seedlings and grow them in six-packs or small pots, rather Lawns need their first application of fertilizer when they are actively growing. Mandarin NewsLine reaches your target market! Get your business in front of our readers! Affordable Rates - Multi Issue Discounts - Complimentary Graphic Design We make advertising easy ... Call today! (904) 866-4919

## Mandarin Garden Club announces semi-annual sale

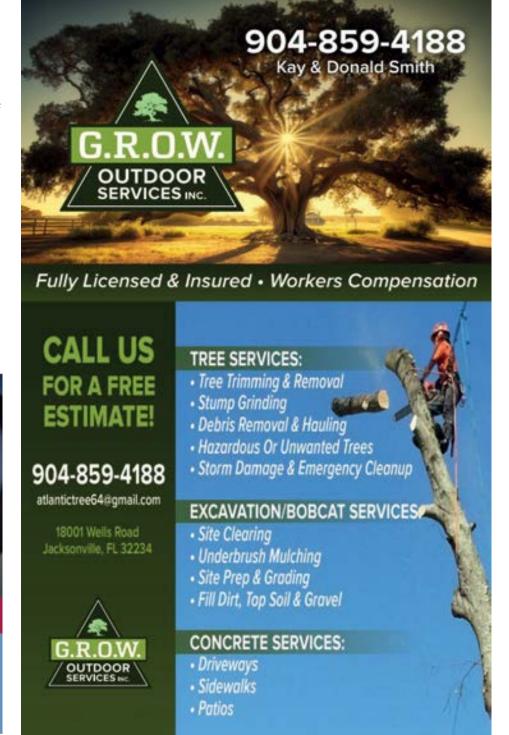
By Joann Butler mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road, will be holding its semiannual clothing, jewelry and plant sale on Friday and Saturday, March 1 and 2 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. each day. Gently used clothing for men, women and children will be on sale for \$1; items from the Boutique and jewelry section will be priced separately. In addition, a pop-up plant sale outside in the gardens will offer additional bargains on green plants for local gardeners. The Mandarin Garden Club is a nonprofit organization that relies on fundraising to support the club and its gardens. The gardens have been designated a Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife federation. The gardens are open to the public to enjoy and learn about the beauty of nature from dawn to dusk, except during special rental dates.

Visit www.mandaringardenclub. org to take a virtual tour or to learn more



Photo courtesy Joann Butler
The Mandarin Garden Club semi-annual sale offers something for everyone.



## Travel

#### **Berlin: The Wall and Beyond**

By Debi Lander mail@floridanewsline.com

I'd visited Munich, the Black Forest, and Neuschwanstein Castle on previous European trips, but never Berlin, the capital of Germany. The city becomes especially attractive for Baby Boomers like myself, who recall the days when it was sadly divided. We want to journey through time, better understand the history, and see the city's remarkable transformation.

The story of the Berlin Wall remains confusing. Back in 1961, the East German authorities started building a barrier through Berlin. A 100-mile fortified concrete structure encircled and isolated West Berlin from East Germany, acting as the dividing line between capitalism



Standing by a section of the Berlin Wall.

and communism. The perimeter was under the constant surveillance of armed East German border guards who were authorized to shoot anyone attempting to escape into the democratic West. Many died. Finally, the political climate warmed and the world witnessed the start of the Wall's demolition on Nov. 9, 1989. Eleven months later, East and West Germany were reunited.

The city keeps remnants of the barrier as vivid reminders of the divided past. I started my tour at Checkpoint Charlie, the tense border crossing during the Cold War. I stood at the epicenter, the same ground where East and West faced each other. I toured the Wall Mu-

seum, filled with memorabilia, newspaper articles, photos, and videos of both incredible escapes pulled off with heroic efforts and heartbreaking, tragic tales. I later walked through the Brandenburg Gate, the icon of the city that's seen many changes in government since construction in 1788.

Today, the energetic city of Berlin is alive and thriving with much more than Cold War history. Downtown's Museum Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site, offers visitors five world-famous museums. The impressive buildings house fantastic collections of ancient artifacts and modern art. (One could spend days here.) In the Neues Museum, I especially enjoyed viewing the beautiful



Photos courtesy Debi Lande
Palace Interior — Sanssouci

bust of Nefertiti, which is more than 3,000 years old. FYI: the famous Pergamon Museum recently closed for major renovations.

I visited the ruins of the former King's Church, Kaiser-Wilhelm Kirche, whose damaged tower roof is one of the best-known symbols of Berlin. Attached is a new blue-glass octagonal church. Nearby rests the modern statue simply named Berlin, a "broken chain" meant to symbolize the severed connections between West and East Berlin, their closeness yet isolation on each side. (It also reminds me of German pretzels!)

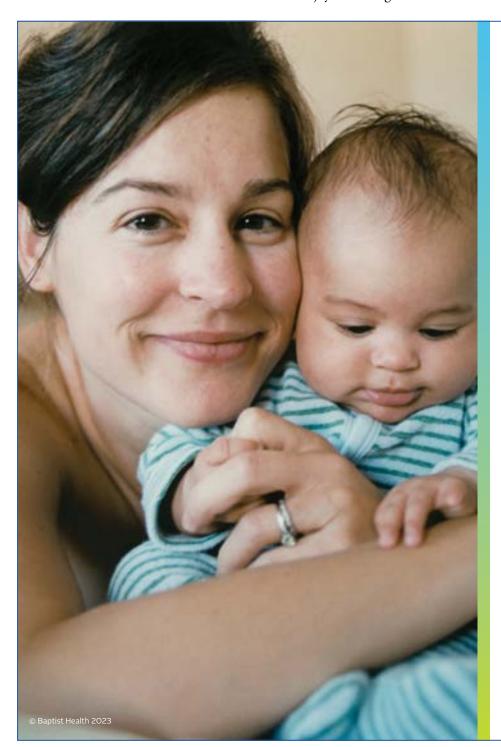
Berlin's culinary scene bursts with a vast array of international flavors and traditional German cuisine. The luxury department store KaDeWe, similar to Harrods in London, showcased a gourmet food hall and restaurants covering more than 7,500 square feet on the top floor. My late fall visit did not include a local beer garden, but I enjoyed classic German dishes such as schnitzel, red cabbage,

and strudel in a typical Gast Haus or pub.

Public transportation by bus and train proved easy and affordable. I hopped on a train for a day trip to Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam, about half an hour away. Touring the complex is like visiting Versailles near Paris, so be prepared for lots of walking and gobsmacking gold. The grounds include multiple opulent royal palaces, meticulously landscaped gardens, and a fascinating glimpse into Prussian history.

Berlin is more than just a contemporary city for Boomers. It's full of younger people engaging in a vibrant workplace on lively streets filled with pop art, culture, and diverse activities. It's a blend of history and modernity that provides an unforgettable experience and leaves a lasting imprint on those who visit.

Visit www.bylandersea.com to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.



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