

Mandarin NewsLine

March 2024 Volume 19 Issue 3

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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BFF Best Furry Friend

Q&A

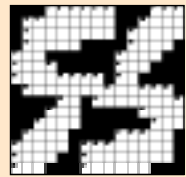
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Puzzles



Photo courtesy Betty Reed
Reverend William Ziegenfuss with flag.

Annual George Washington luncheon held

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Saturday, Feb. 17, Atlantic Beach Country Club was the site of a special celebration in honor of the first president and Father of the Nation, George Washington's birthday. The annual recognition was sponsored by the Regents Council of Northeast Florida, which consists of the eight chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The event highlighted a snippet from "UnMasked," a performance by the newly organized Theatre Troupe of 1776, which is Mandarin-based and directed by Patty Everett. The performers, Christopher Shields, Nicolas Cooke, and Louise Everett were center stage. "UnMasked" is a book trilogy of historical fiction that was recently performed, in whole, at the Mandarin Community Club.

Washington luncheon cont. on pg. 6

Mandarin Art Festival returns – all are welcome!

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Mandarin Art Festival, an Easter weekend family tradition since 1968, reunites more than 100 artists with the warm welcome of the south Jacksonville community. Set for March 30 – 31, 2024 the festival celebrates all that's great about Mandarin — abundant fertile landscape, colorful creativity, and warm hospitality under moss-draped historic oaks.

"Every year, a tapestry of neighbors, friends, and families weave in and out of color-filled booths showcasing an array of artistic talent and expression," said event chair, Susie Scott. "Because it's a juried show, the curated work of both fine art exhibitors and fine crafters is displayed, with booths laid out so that everyone sees the variety, skill and artist's vision to best advantage."

Returning 2023 Best-in-Show winner, John Cheer, emigrated from China to suburban Los Angeles as a 12-year-old. He had to quickly learn English and how to earn a living all while attending high school. Despite his love of all visual arts, it was pottery that found him. He studied ceramics in college,



Photos courtesy Susie Scott

John Cheer winning Best in Show 2023 with Susie Scott.

but supported himself working in an auto-body shop. That familiarity with torch work would eventually influence his ceramic sculpture; his love of scuba diving led him to incorporating glass. Many of his familiar pieces start in a stingray shape. Now living in Allentown, Pennsylvania with immediate family close by, Cheer travels to shows all over the Eastern Seaboard. His strong sense of adventure guides him.

"For me, there is a gratification [in

creating] an echo of something greater than us within ourselves," Cheer said.

Born in Los Angeles is former Community Club board member and successful local Mandarin artist Julie C. Fetzer, who started and managed the Green Market of the Art Festival.

"Everyone was looking to shop local, and I realized we had extraordinary creatives here in our own community," said Fetzer.

Putting the art in artisanal, Fetzer sought local creative producers. This year's Green Market will feature Lizzie's Cheese Straws (despite being picked up by Whole Foods, Lizzie loves Mandarin); Robyn Friedman's luscious tropical botanicals prints and originals; 16 year-old Keegan Mapa, a free-dried candy maker under the banner Sweet Aloha Treats; Magnolia Artisan Soaps; Queen Bee Honey; Guanabana Artisan Ice Pops; and more locally produced and consumable products.

Fetzer, the artist behind the well-known seven bridges t-shirts, will not be on site this year due to a scheduling conflict but she will be missed at the 2024 Mandarin Art Festival. The Green Market thrives; her influence



The Mandarin Art Festival will be held rain or shine, March 30 – 31.

Mandarin Art Festival cont. on pg. 9



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

Youth events aplenty at your Mandarin Libraries!

By Jeremy Yates
mail@floridanewsline.com

Get lost in a world of reading and adventure March 3 – 9. It’s Celebrate Reading Week in Jacksonville! There will be events across the city, including a Family Reading Day downtown on Saturday, March 9. Join us for book and backpack giveaways, appearances by Molly of Denali (and other PBS Kids characters), Mayor Donna Deegan, the Jacksonville Zoo and more! Get the full schedule of events at bit.ly/WildBooksAreHere.

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 Lab at South Mandarin Library on Fridays at 11 a.m. is an eight-week long Junior Secret Agent “training” program that will immerse your home-schoolers (aged 10 – 14) in a fictional clandestine world where they’ll learn and use problem solving skills and real-world cryptology tools to successfully thwart the diabolical plans of a chaotic enemy organization.

Wild Wonders joins us “Live from the Library” on Wednesday, March 20 at 2 p.m. at South Mandarin Library for “Scaly Sensations.” This is an interactive program (for ages five through 12) that includes local and exotic reptiles, story, music and humor. This program is made

Need help preparing your taxes?

Jacksonville Public Library partners with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) TaxAide during the tax season to provide free tax counseling and preparation services. Note: Taxes are prepared by appointment only.

- Mandarin Library: Thursdays from 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. Call (904) 419-3402 or schedule online: tinyurl.com/Tax-MandarinBranchLib
- South Mandarin Library: Tuesdays from 1p.m. – 5 p.m or Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Call (904) 257-6520 or schedule online: tinyurl.com/TaxSouthMandarinLib

For other locations, call (904) 701-3462.

possible by the generous support of the Friends of South Mandarin Library. Registration opens on Wednesday, March 6, at 9 a.m. Space is limited.

Don’t miss Teen Advisory Board (TAB) (for ages 12 – 17) at the South Mandarin Library. On Friday March 8, the theme is “Escaping Nature’s Fury.” On March 22, we’re playing “Minute-to-Win-It Mania” and discussing the book The Avant-Guards Vol. 1 by Carly Usdin. TAB meets twice a month from 4:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Find more at www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/events.



Photo courtesy Jacksonville Public Library
Get lost in reading at your public library!

Coming in the April Issue!

Summer Camp Activities Guide

Does your business cater to kids?

This special section is for you!

Call Linda Gay today to learn more
904.607.5062
Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com



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BFF

Best Furry Friend of the month

Breed:
Jack Russell Terrier

Favorite Activity:
Loves to cuddle

Favorite Food:
Pupperoni snacks

Favorite Friend:
His Grandpa

How did your BFF get his name?
He got his name from the town we got him from: Louisville, Georgia.



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.

When you advertise, you encourage repeat business, create traffic, and attract new customers!

Don't miss the April issue featuring our Summer Camp and Activities Guide! Deadline 3/22/24

Call Linda Gay today to reserve your space! 904.607.5062



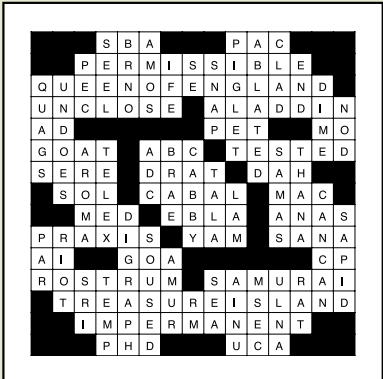
Happy St. Patrick's Day from your friends at Mandarin NewsLine!

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MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.
Last month's Mystery Photo was Skate Station.



Answers to our Puzzles PG 10

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

A. stitch B. yarn C. pattern D. hobby

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March

Community Calendar

What's Happening in Mandarin

Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. at Tommy Hazouri Park (formerly Mandarin 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 8:30 a.m. at Baha'i Community Center, 5034 Greenland Road. 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.

1st –2nd: Clothing and Jewelry Sale will be held at the Mandarin Garden Club on Saturday and Sunday, March 1 and 2 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. each day. The Mandarin Garden Club is located at 2892 Loretto Road. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

2nd: 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 March 2 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.

2nd: Meet the Maple Leaf Divers at the Mandarin Museum, 11964 Mandarin Road, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. on Saturday, March 2. 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.

2nd: Mandarin Frog Paint Party at Mandarin Museum on Saturday, March 2 at 10 a.m. Purchase, paint, and take home your very own Mandarin Frog (or sea turtle or squirrel). The cost is \$22 per person and advanced registration is required. To register, email info@mandarinmuseum.org.

3rd: 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, March 3 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.

5th: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, March 5 at 7 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church at the Loretto Road Campus in the Kids' Space at 2501 Loretto Road. Featured will be a recap of the AQS Daytona Show. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

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

9th: The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society will host speaker Ann Stanley, who will discuss "Using Technology in Genealogy" on Saturday, March 9 beginning at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Visit www.sgesjax.org to register for the meeting or call (904) 778-1000 for more information.

9th: Southside Multiple Sclerosis group meets on the second Saturday of each month (this month on March 9) 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.

11th: Parent Support Group with Licensed Mental Health Counselor Pattie Pallay will be held the second Monday of each month (this month, March 11) 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.

18th: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, March 18 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Susan Ache, quilt book author, will talk and show some of her creations. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

19th: Connie Gladding from the North Florida Daylily Society will speak to the Dogwood Circle at Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road, at 10 a.m. on March 19. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

21st: Third Thursday Lecture featuring "Our Mandarin Neighbors" will be held on March 21 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 Mandarin Community Club. Admission is free and the event is open to the community.

21st: "Flowers or Save the Planet: When Insects Invade" will be presented at 7 p.m. on March 21 at the Live Oak Circle meeting at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

22nd: Mandarin Republican Club will meet on Friday, March 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.

28th: Mandarin Women's Club's monthly meeting and luncheon featuring Bingo will be held on March 28 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn Mandarin. Bingo cards are 10 for \$5, and 10 games will be played. Bring a dauber or pen and get ready to play. The cost of the lunch is \$25 and reservations and payment must be received by March 21 by calling Jo-Ellen at (904) 635-8722 or emailing her at joshifty@aol.com. Visit www.mandarin-womensclub.com for more information and membership forms.

29th: The Italian American Club of Jacksonville will hold its popular Spaghetti to Go on Friday, March 29 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. Dinners cost \$13 and there are small charges for extra meatballs, cannolis and pizza rolls. No phone orders. Visit www.iacofjacksonville.com or call (904) 586-2700 for more information.

29th: "Memphis Wood Revisited" exhibit opening reception will be held in partnership with MOCA Jacksonville from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. on March 29. Refreshments will be served and admission is free. Call (904) 268-0784 or visit www.mandarinmuseum.org for more information.

You are invited to join us!

PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 24TH

9 am – Modern Service – Mandarin

9 am – Traditional Service - Longleaf

11 am – Traditional Service - Mandarin

MAUNDY THURSDAY – MARCH 28TH

7 pm – Mandarin

GOOD FRIDAY – MARCH 29TH

7 pm – River of Life UMC

EASTER EVENTS– MARCH 31ST

7 am – Chapel in the Woods - Mandarin

9 am – Modern Service - Mandarin

9 am – Traditional Service - Longleaf

10 am – Easter Breakfast - Mandarin

11 am – Traditional Service - Mandarin

Mandarin location

11270 San Jose Blvd

Jacksonville, Florida 32223

Longleaf location

1365 Shetland Drive

St Johns, Florida 32259

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with Jacksonville City Council Member
Michael Boylan, District 6

Q: Can you give a recap of your Feb. 1 Town Hall meeting, which focused on the potential development of a preservation/beautification initiative in the Mandarin area?

A: I was very pleased with the turnout; it was very nearly standing room only. I appreciated the cooperation of the directors of the other local preservation societies, who spoke of the advantage of having such an organization to coalesce with the city on planning matters. Members of the Mandarin Community Club board were also in attendance and I'd like to thank them for their active interest in potentially spearheading this work. I am working on securing the funding from the city; it will probably be available by late 2024.

Q: What can you share about the proposed widening of Hartley Road?

A: This project is in the very early stages; we are just nearing the end of the planning stage. The proposal is to have two 11-foot lanes with an 11-foot lane in the middle for the majority of the length of Hartley Road from San Jose almost to Old St. Augustine Road. There are proposed to be pedestrian walkways on both sides as well as curbs and gutters and a bike lane. The focus of our next Town Hall meeting, on April 17 at 6 p.m. at the Mandarin Senior Center, will be on introducing the community to the plans and timeline for the project.

Q: Do you have an update on the lane addition to San Jose Boulevard where the southbound traffic merges onto Interstate 295?

A: The good news is I confirmed that funding is in place and by late summer the construction should begin.

Q: What is the latest on the Cissel property on Loretto Road?

A: The property was purchased by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is presently a construction fence around the perimeter of the property. There are efforts to salvage parts of the home that is on the property, but it won't be saved in its entirety. A number of outlets looked at relocating the house, but it was in a state of disrepair to make this not feasible.

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

A: For the first time that I can remember, we have no rezoning applications in District 6 at this time. I'm sure there will be some soon, as Mandarin is a desirable place to live and do business. But for now, I think we should enjoy the respite.

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.



with Duval County School Board Member
Lori Hershey, District 7

Q: What is the update on the search for a new superintendent of Duval County Public Schools?

A: The superintendent search opens March 1 and applications will be accepted through March 30. The goal is to select a superintendent prior to the end of May. The start date for the new superintendent will be July 1, 2024.

Q: Are there new members of the school district's focus group committee?

A: Wendy Northfleet and Regan Copeland will represent District 7 on the focus group committee. This committee consists of two community representatives from each district. Copeland and Northfleet both have students who attend schools in Mandarin; in fact, both have children who have attended elementary, middle, and high school within Mandarin. They are engaged within our community and our schools. I am thrilled they are able to participate in this process.

Q: What are some of the topics the school board has been working on?

A: The school board has begun conversation around school boundary lines, enrollment trends, and the master facilities plan. The board will participate in an all-day retreat in

March to shape and finalize future plans for the district. School boundary lines have not been reviewed in a comprehensive manner in decades and the goal is to build feeder patterns for communities that make sense.

Q: Do you have any kudos to share?

A: Atlantic Coast High School's girls' basketball team has made it to the state playoff games [as of interview date of Feb. 15]. There are multiple rounds prior to the state championship game. This is the first time Atlantic Coast has had a girls' basketball team make it to postseason playoffs. I wish them much success.

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

A: The Jacksonville City Council recognized the Mandarin High School football team through a resolution at the joint meeting between the City Council and School Board on Feb. 26. A special thanks to Councilman Michael Boylan for leading on this special recognition to acknowledge the success of their season.

Also, Twin Lakes Academy Middle School has a new partnership with CSX that will provide students with the opportunity to participate in ca-

Q&A with Lori Hershey cont. on pg. 9

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.





SAR color guard with the Theatre Troupe of 1776.

Washington luncheon cont. from pg. 1
Next, an American History teacher with outstanding contributions to American History education was selected. Jacksonville Chapter NSDAR submitted Mandarin High School teacher, James Schmitt, who spoke at the group’s Constitution Lunch in September as their choice. Schmitt received accolades with the Jacksonville Chapter and received its award. He was then honored with the prestigious award, certificate, and check from the Regents Council for Northeast Florida. Schmitt’s nomination will now

be sent to the state for consideration of the DAR Florida State award. Schmitt continues to capture attention due to his exemplary dedication to educating students.

Sons of the American Revolution took part as Color Guard for the event with president of the SAR Jacksonville Chapter, Paul Tucker, presenting a tribute to President George Washington. Mandarin resident Betty Reed, president of the Regents Council of Northeast Florida, was host of the event.

African violet show and sale announced

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society will host its 31st annual Show and Sale on Friday, April 5 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Saturday, April 6 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. The show themed “Violets Light the Way” will be held at the San Jose Church of Christ, 6233 San Jose Blvd. This event is free and open to the public.

On display will be a colorful variety of African violets and other Gesneriads. This is an opportunity to see unusual varieties and colors: reds, bi-colors, and spotted or streaked called fantasy. Plants will be on sale, from show plants to mature blooming plants. Growers wanting to begin or expand their collection will find young plants, babies, and leaves. Available also will be hard-to-find supplies such as pots in various sizes, pre-mixed soil suitable for wick watering, and fertilizers.

Because they bloom year-round and are easy to grow, African violets have become the most popular houseplant. The society’s member experts will be on hand to answer questions. Is

your treasured plant growing fewer or infrequent blooms? Is wick watering the best way to water a violet? How often should you fertilize? What type of fertilizer and how much? How much light should they get? Are LED lights beneficial? How often should you report?

And what are gesneriads? They are cousins to the African violet and like the same growing conditions. Explore the episcias, streptocarpus, primulinas, alsobias, aeschynanthus, and many more. In recent years, Gesneriads have gained popularity among avid indoor gardeners.

The Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society was founded in the fall of 1992 for the purpose of creating and stimulating interest in African violets. It is committed to providing education on cultivation and propagation techniques. All club members share the joy of growing and sharing plants.

Visit JacksonvilleViolets.org for more information on club activities, and “How To” educational resources in print and video.



Photo courtesy Linda McQueen
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Briefs



Photo courtesy Mandarin Women's Club
Mandarin Women's Club members who play Mexican Train one evening every month.

Mandarin Women's Club hosts bingo

On March 28, the Mandarin Women's Club will hold its annual Bingo game and buffet luncheon at the Ramada Inn, 3130 Hartley Road in Mandarin. Bingo is a highly anticipated event every year. Bingo cards are 10 for \$5, and 10 games will be played. Bring a dauber or pen and get ready to play.

Doors open at 10:30 a.m. and reservations for the luncheon are required. The luncheon cost is \$25 and must be received by Thursday, March 21. 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 Garden Club starts new youth program

The Mandarin Garden Club started a new program in 2024 to serve local home-schooled children. Kate O'Brien, Duval Extension Junior Master Gardener Coordinator, shared curriculum material for the classes and the actual program was created by Christine Morrow, master gardener volunteer and member of the Cherokee Rose circle. The mission is to promote an awareness of and involvement in the preservation of the natural beauty of the community.

The groups are limited in number; the first group met on Jan. 8 and the second group met on Jan. 22. The groups had fun with a scavenger hunt, identification of their findings, and experiments. Email Sherry.mansfield10@gmail.com with any questions about this program or if you are interested in your children taking the class.

The Garden Club Circles usually meet once a month. The public is always invited to attend. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

formed, offering an outlet for pickleball players seeking new friends, new challenges, and a great time. Organized and headed by Matt Bacon, co-founder and commissioner, the new league commenced play on Feb. 19.

"Everybody has a lot of fun playing pickleball," Bacon said. "This league will offer more opportunities to play, socialize and meet new players from all around North Florida."

Invented in 1965 by three Washington State fathers whose children were bored, pickleball has caught the public's attention. Named for the dog of one of the fathers, players are known as Picklers and use a paddle larger than one used in ping pong but smaller than a tennis racquet.

The league will play four flights: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. Each flight will have playoffs, winners, and recognition for players. Visit Firstcoastpickle.com for more information.

Increase in housing inventory is a good sign for buyers

After several years of upheaval in the Northeast Florida Housing Market, January 2024's market statistics seem to indicate a return to normalcy. The median sales price for the six-county region dropped 2.2 percent to \$375,000, while the median days on the market rose 24.4 percent to 56 days. Active inventory also increased, climbing 22.1 percent to 5,638 homes, a 5.2-month supply, and new listings skyrocketed 53.6 percent to 2,853 homes. These are all good indicators of a return to a balanced market and are a very good sign for buyers.

"During a typically sluggish January we have seen the market stabilization continue with significant increase in new listings and inventory since December," said 2024 NEFAR President Rory Dubin. "We've also seen days on market increase with a slight reduction in median sales price and decline in pending sales," he said, noting that both closed sales and pending sales dropped significantly from the month before. Closed sales weighed in at 1,081, a 30.6 percent drop, while pending sales registered 1,284, a 7.3 percent decline.

Other good news had to do with the January Home Affordability Index, which rose 3.7% to 70, indicating that it is slightly more affordable to live in the Northeast Florida region.

In Duval County, the January 2024 median price of single-family housing was \$324,945, a 2.5 percent decline from December 2023. The median days on the market in December increased to 50, a 35.1 percent elevation from the month before. Month-to-month closed sales fell 21.4 percent to 574, pending sales dropped 11.9 percent to 632, and new listings skyrocketed 42.8 percent to 1,415. Active inventory for the county climbed 24.1 percent to 2,627 homes, a 4.6-month supply. In December, the Home Affordability Index climbed 4.5 percent, registering 81.

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Project LAUNCH provides free, in-home mental health services to Duval children

The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services (JFCS) recently established a new mental health care initiative aimed at promoting the holistic well-being of children in Jacksonville. Project LAUNCH, made possible through a five-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, marks a significant step toward addressing the mental health needs of children from birth to eight years old.

JFCS's pioneering program is designed to enhance the social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and behavioral aspects of a child's development. The program's multifaceted approach includes comprehensive mental health services for parents and families, fostering a nurturing environment crucial for a child's early years, said Project LAUNCH Program Director Chris Atkins.

Certified mental health therapists will provide in-home mental health assessments and counseling tailored to the unique needs of each family. Additionally, wraparound services will be offered to expand access to developmental, educational, and mental health resources. Certified parent education specialists will also conduct parenting training and education programs, offering insights into positive discipline, developmental milestones, and strategies for building resilience in children. Anyone can sign up for the program.

Contact Chris Atkins at (904) 487-5802 or via email at projectlaunch@jfcsjax.org for more information.

Pickleball players have new play options

Pickleball in North Florida now has a new outlet for the enthusiastic players of the fastest growing sport in the country. First Coast Pickle has

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Life

Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Christine Knize

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Local artist Christine Knize was born in New York City and said she was always painting. “I sold my first piece at age 10,” she said. She earned her bachelor’s in fine arts at Tyler School of Art at Temple University, where she had the opportunity to spend two years in Rome, immersed in Italian culture. “I was so lucky to have parents who understood the importance of education,” she said. She went on to earn her master’s degree at Rhode Island School of Design. In 1986 she moved to Miami for a new job in the fledgling photo retouching industry and then started her own faux finishing business, working in South Beach. In 1992, after Hurricane Andrew, she met her future husband, Joey, who was in the construction business and came down from Alabama to help with reconstruction of the area. Together, they forged a successful construction/design/real estate business until Joey’s untimely passing four years ago. “He was my wonderful partner of 28 years,” Christine said. Now she lives in Mandarin on property they bought to retire in and be closer to Joey’s children.

Q: What do you like best about living in Mandarin?

A: We fell in love with this property on the river. It’s two acres and had



Photo courtesy Christine Knize
Christine Knize and one of her extra large orchid paintings.

an existing home, which we lived in while we built our new home. It has a five car garage that I use as my studio. I really like the view and the fact that within minutes, I can be near all the conveniences, like the grocery store and the gym.

Q: When did you begin painting?

A: I was too busy running my businesses to do my own work until Joey died in early 2020. It was the beginning of COVID and I was alone. The only solace I had was to go into my studio, turn on terrific music and paint. I set a goal of 30 orchid paintings and now have done 40. So I set a new goal of 100.

Q: Why do you paint orchids?

A: I’m infatuated with this plant. It is

sensual, feminine and to me they’re the queen of the flowers. I went to orchid shows in Miami and took photos of them — and then thought, I should paint them.

Q: What size paintings are your specialty and how long does it take to paint one?

A: I paint extra large canvases ... usually five feet by six feet, although the one I just finished is six feet by six feet. I’d like to paint bigger ones, but transportation becomes an issue. It takes about two months to paint each one, because I paint in oils and it requires a lot of drying time. I usually have four paintings going at one time.

Q: What’s next for your art?

A: I had a showing in January at the Tamiami Orchid Show where people come from all over the world to buy and sell orchids. I didn’t sell any, but got a lot of good responses. Locally, I’m now showing at The Lark in downtown Jacksonville for three months, through April. My paintings are also part of the Art Walk on the first Wednesday of the month in March and April. Nine of my paintings are on display. I’m looking for other local opportunities as I think this is the next stage in my new chapter.

Q: What do you like to do in your free time?

A: I love to travel and usually by myself. I’ve been to Africa five times and I love it. I enjoy good food and I go to the gym daily. I also take care of my two-acre property by myself — so that keeps me busy!

Mandarin Art Festival cont. from pg. 1

continues.

The Children’s Art Show tradition inside the historic clubhouse features more than a dozen local elementary and middle schools who showcase their budding artistic talents. The Festival offers a wide variety of food choices in the food court, an old-fashioned home-made Bake Sale, live music and entertainment.

“These amazing artists and vendors travel far to share their talent, time and their Easter weekend so come for your one-of-a-kind selection or just for the fun,” said Scott.

The Mandarin Art Festival is a rain or shine outdoor event on March 30 and 31, 2024. Hours are Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. A donation of \$2 is suggested at the gates. Parking will be handled off-site with free shuttle service and ride share service is encouraged. All are welcome but no pets are allowed.

Visit mandarinartfestival.org or mandarincommunityclub.org for more information.

Q&A with Lori Hershey cont. from pg. 5

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Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

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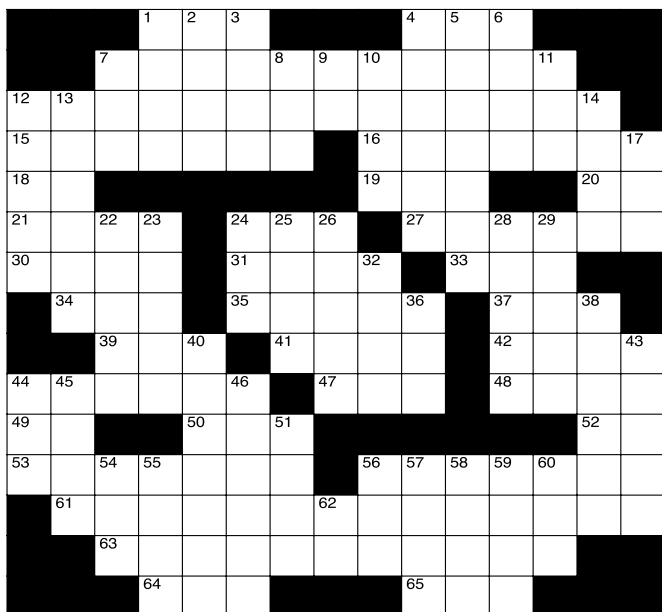
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Answers on page 3
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Helps little firms
4. Political action committee
7. Allowed
12. Olivia Colman played one
15. Open
16. He had a notable lamp
18. Promotional material
19. Domesticated animal
20. Larry and Curly's buddy
21. The best ever
24. TV network
27. Checked for
30. Dry or withered
31. Expression of annoyance
33. Dash
34. Fifth note of a major scale
35. A secret clique

37. Partner to cheese
39. ___ school: where to learn healing
41. City in ancient Syria
42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
44. Established practice
47. Thanksgiving side dish
48. District in Peru
49. It's becoming more prevalent
50. State in India
52. Measure of illumination
53. Raised platform
56. Japanese warrior
61. R.L. Stevenson novel
63. Transitory
64. Advanced degree
65. Fiddler crabs

CLUES DOWN

1. Prevent from seeing
2. Czech city
3. ___ and Andy, TV show
4. A young pig
5. Removed surgically
6. Covered with
7. Chest muscle (slang)
8. Nigerian City
9. Midway between south and east
10. A way to shut
11. Stop playing
12. Marshy places
13. Takes apart
14. Ten cents
17. A gesture of assent
22. Scent
23. Teletypewriter
24. General's assistant (abbr.)
25. Hillside
26. Taxi driver
28. Semitic Sun god
29. Town in India
32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
36. Fugitives are on the ___
38. Type of dance
40. Two letters, one sound
43. Having a strong, pleasant taste
44. Golf score
45. Mayhem
46. Drenched
51. River in northeastern Asia
54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)
55. Part-time employee
56. A very large body of water
57. Aboriginal people of Japan
58. Millisecond
59. Forearm bone
60. Subway dweller
62. Royal Mail

ST. PATRICK'S DAY WORD SEARCH

T	A	K	C	T	O	L	I	V	J	L	K	L	J	A	G	G	L	O	N
O	D	A	R	E	B	K	K	S	I	U	E	A	N	J	I	U	E	D	N
E	A	B	J	B	B	E	D	M	F	O	R	T	U	N	E	G	P	K	U
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B	J	H	T	R	J	I	E	G	F	E	C	I	C	H	I	C	R	M	I
I	J	P	I	P	V	O	H	T	V	C	E	A	C	A	U	H	A	H	C
D	N	F	C	P	L	C	T	K	F	A	L	D	G	C	V	A	S	I	H
S	R	V	K	V	C	H	D	L	E	C	T	A	N	L	G	N	R	C	S
M	H	T	M	O	N	L	E	T	S	P	I	U	F	T	R	M	J	S	I
O	S	S	C	V	A	B	N	J	D	M	C	P	J	B	R	A	S	I	M
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J	U	R	E	T	A	G	L	E	G	S	V	H	R	I	D	E	S	R	M
R	E	I	F	S	P	F	O	L	T	N	A	B	B	N	U	H	V	T	J
A	O	H	C	M	A	L	D	E	B	R	O	V	J	K	F	V	T	G	L
A	R	D	H	R	I	M	R	I	P	J	F	J	E	E	L	U	L	E	R

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

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HARP
IRELAND
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JIG
LEGEND
LEPRECHAUN
LUCK
MAGIC
MARCH
MISCHIEF
PARADES
PATRICK
SAINT
SHAMROCK
TRADITION



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Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 1 = T)

- A. 19 1 12 1 24 17**
Clue: Loop of thread around hook

- B. 25 3 6 9**
Clue: Spun thread

- C. 18 3 1 1 4 6 9**
Clue: Model or form

- D. 17 16 7 7 25**
Clue: Enjoyable pursuit

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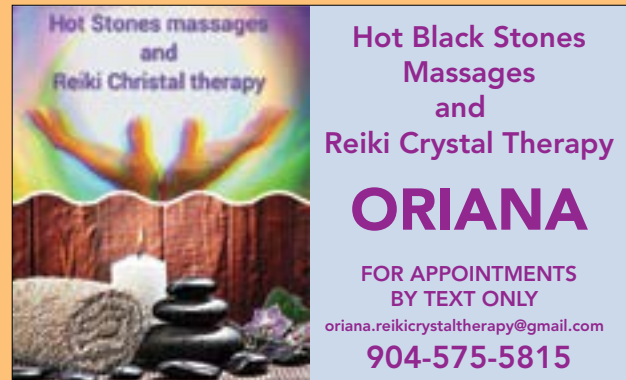
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Toastmasters hold annual speech contest



Photo courtesy Mandarin Toastmasters
Mandarin Toastmasters celebrate speech contest with food, laughter, and engaging discussions

Mandarin Toastmasters, a subsector of Toastmasters International, provides a supportive and positive learning experience to promote self-confidence and personal growth. The club recently held its annual speech contest, where members compete in various contests, including humorous, evaluation, Tall Tales, Table Topics, and international speech contests. Competition begins with club contests, and afterward, the winners advance to various levels, with the highest level being the World Championship of Public Speaking®, where Toastmasters across the globe participate in its most significant competition. One of the club's more experienced members, Derek Lott,

gave a humorous speech on a DIY project with vivid depictions, showing his prodigious career as an orator. New members also participated in the contest, such as Ronnie Rios, who had his ice-breaker speech to introduce himself to the club. Mandarin Toastmasters is 17 years old and meets the first and third Saturday of each month from 10:15 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library, 12125 San Jose Blvd. Visitors are encouraged to attend in person or via Zoom, and the club is open to anyone interested. Email toastmastersmandarin@gmail.com or visit the club's website at https://838510.toastmastersclubs.org for more information.

100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events from March 1924

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The month of March has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in March 1924.

- For the first time since 1636, public vehicles, such as taxi cabs, were allowed into Hyde Park in London beginning March 1. For nearly 300 years, the park had been reserved for private carriages.
- On March 3, the Turkish National Assembly formally ended the Ottoman Caliphate, which had operated for more than 400 years. In a corresponding move, Abdulmejid II, who was elected Caliph in November 1923, was formally deposed at 2 a.m. on March 4.
- The University of North Carolina men's basketball team ended its season with a 26 – 18 victory over the Alabama Crimson Tide on March 4. The 'Tar Heels' victory secured a perfect 26 – 0 record for the season.
- The site of Tutankamun's tomb was formally opened by Egyptian Prime

Minister Saad Zaghloul on March 6. The opening attracted a large crowd and ultimately turned into an anti-British demonstration upon the arrival of the British High Commissioner, Field Marshal Allenby.

- Nikola Tesla announced he had perfected a system of transmitting power without wires on March 8.
- The United States Supreme court issued a ruling on March 10 that upholds a New York state statute banning late-night working for women.
- On March 11, cabaret singer Belva Gaertner was arrested for the murder of her lover, Walter Law, in Chicago. Law was found dead from a bullet wound in Gaertner's car, though Gaertner is later acquitted of the murder. The incident inspired both the 1926 Broadway play "Chicago" and the 1975 musical of the same name.
- Winston Churchill lost the Westminster Abbey by-election by 43 votes to Otho Nicholson on March 19. The results came when Churchill requested a recount after initially losing by just 33 votes.

Crown Point celebrates Literacy Week

By Mary Eyler
mail@floridanewsline.com

To promote reading, Crown Point celebrated Literacy Week throughout the week of Jan. 22 through Jan. 26. Students and teachers participated in various reading activities.

On Monday, Crown Point students decorated their classroom doors with different reading themes. On Tuesday, homeroom classes met with their Leadership Buddies to read. On Wednesday, the students spent the day being authors, writing their own stories. Thursday, Crown Point opened the doors for community readers, including business partners, such as Mandarin United Methodist Church, DCPS executives, DCPS Police Department, JSO, school volunteers, and the friends and family of school staff.

Crown Point wrapped up the week with a book character parade led by Principal Brett Hartley.



Photo courtesy Mary Eyler
Principal Brett Hartley and first grade teacher Ginger Manning leading the book character parade.



School Board member Lori Hershey reading to a group of second graders.

Scalar Waves: Beneficial frequencies to help the body heal itself

By Lilly Castro, LMT
mail@floridanewsline.com

According to scientists and physicists, Scalar Energy comes from a field of energy beyond the universe. It is also referred to as the “Zero-Point Energy Field.” The discovery of scalar waves goes back to the 19th century, by mathematical genius James Clark Maxwell who developed quantum physics. After this, Nikola Tesla was able to demonstrate the existence of this energy — scalar waves. He believed if harnessed correctly it could offer endless possibilities.

Since the discovery of scalar waves, the medical field has seen remarkable relief for conditions such as arthritis, depression, PTSD, muscular and joint pain mitigation of seizures and overall improved body function.

Quantum biologist Dr. Glen Rein, Stanford University Medical Center, observed that scalar waves had a positive influence on the immune and nervous system regardless of the belief system of the individual. Our cells, when functioning at their maximum health potential, range between 70 – 90 millivolts. Disease and aging occur when the cellular energy depreciates to levels below this range.

From a scientific view point, scalar fields produce the following effects: neutralize harmful effects of electric and magnetic fields, increase covalent levels

of hydrogen atoms that hold DNA together, maximize nutrient uptake and cellular detoxification, balance both hemispheres of the brain, improve sleep, rapid post-surgical healing, better response to stress greater emotional clarity, and relief of pain.

“Scalar fields have a potential for increasing energy and reversing aging. They increase the connection between that universal energy which is limitless, without time and space, and your awareness of it, to use it in order to manifest whatever you want to manifest, whether it’s health, or happiness,” said Dr. Victor A. Marcial-Vega M.D., John Hopkins Research Physician, Oncology.

Scalar waves move at super luminal velocity, which means beyond the speed of light. The scalar vortex creates coherence which is a very important principle. Where there is coherence in the body, along with super luminal velocity of movement/cell signaling, it’s enhancing an entire environment within us and around us.

Lilly Castro, LMT is co-owner of Life Force Energy Wellness Center in Mandarin. Visit lifeforceenergywellnesscenter.com or call (904) 323-4411 to learn more about their offerings, including the EESystem (Energy Enhancement System) and two hour complimentary sessions each Wednesday for active military members and veterans.

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Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida receives \$25,000 grant

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida recently announced that they are the recipient of a \$25,000 grant from Kohl's National Giveback Initiative.

"The Kohl's grant is making it possible for 143 girls throughout northeast Florida to participate in Girls on the Run programming during the 2024 Spring or Fall seasons," said executive director of Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida, Laura Lasko. "Girls will be able to improve physical activity levels and learn healthy living behaviors. They'll also develop and improve competence, feel confidence in who they are, and build strength of character. Additionally, they'll learn to respond to others and themselves with care, create positive connections with peers and adults, and make a meaningful contribution to their community through community impact projects. After completing the Girls on the Run program, girls gain valuable life skills that empower them to make positive choices not only during the program but also in various aspects of their lives — be it at school, at home, or among their friends. The lessons learned through Girls on the Run last a lifetime, contributing to developing kind and productive future citizens."

Kohl's grant to Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida was made through the company's National Giveback Initiative, which provides associates with the opportunity to nominate a nonprofit they're passionate about for a \$25,000 grant. Through the initiative, Kohl's donates grants to selected nonprofits nationwide, demonstrating the company's ongoing commitment to family health and wellness. Donations are



Photo courtesy Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida.

made possible through the Kohl's Cares Goods for Good merchandise program, which sells children's books and toys and donates 100 percent of the net profit to charitable organizations across the country.

Since 2004, Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida has served more than 27,000 girls. This spring season, the program will serve girls in Alachua, Bradford, Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Union, and Volusia counties. Girls on the Run has research-based lessons that use dynamic discussions and fun running games to teach critical life skills. The season culminates with a celebratory 5K event that brings together family, friends, and community members to celebrate the girls' growth throughout the season.

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Fishing

Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewslines.com

Just like that, we're entering the third month of the year and spring is well underway. February held some warm days like last year and fishing has responded well. March is like the October of spring as we start to transition back into our summer pattern. Trees will be brandishing vibrant green leaves and even the fish will somehow absorb the colors to look more picturesque. It's hard not to get excited about fishing in March.

Specks responded to the warm weather last month, and lots of big fish moved into area creeks. This month most of the bigger fish should still be in the shallower water. They can seem very scattered when they do this so be patient and fish thoroughly. Minnows may not be the best for this since they are a slower presentation. Small jigs or beetle spins work well when you need to cover water searching for fish. I don't find them to be too picky when they're in the shallows either. I like bright colors so they can see it. By the end of this month lots of them will be done spawning and they'll start moving back to deeper water and back out to the river. If you're look-

ing to keep any, remember to only take what you need. These fish are sowing the seeds of our fishery for the coming years.

Bass will be doing very similar things to the specks this month. Unfortunately, they just don't seem as numerous. We don't have the best sight fishing opportunities, so looking for beds can be tough. If you slowly and methodically work shorelines, you should eventually come across some fish. I spend most of my time with shiners this time of year since it's the most consistent way to catch larger fish.

It's also not too soon to be thinking about chasing some saltwater species in the river. Redfish will be moving in hungry and one of the best bait this early in the year is blue crab. Before we get the flush of bait fish, crab is just about the only thing on the menu, but they don't seem to mind. Another crab eater to be on the lookout for would be sheepshead. Use a smaller piece of crab or clam if you're trying to fool one. Get out there and enjoy it. Tight lines.

Bolles sixth graders navigate UNF's Osprey Challenge course



Photo courtesy Bolles

Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus Grade 6 students took a class field trip to the University of North Florida's Osprey Challenge Course on Jan. 26. Grade 6 advisors joined the sixth graders as the group climbed and ziplined their way through the course, working together to problem-solve along the way.

The Pantry Raiders

Enjoy a taste of tradition easily

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Tamales are a traditional Mesoamerican dish made of a masa dough and fillings, and then steamed in a corn husk or banana leaves. While tamales certainly are delicious, the time-consuming nature of making them may compel some to avoid preparing them at home. This recipe for "Chicken Tamale Pie" offers the flavors of tamales in a single-pan dish. Try it, courtesy of "30-Minute Meal Prep" (Sourcebooks) by Robin Miller.

Chicken Tamale Pie

Serves 4

- 1 (8.5 -ounce) box corn muffin mix (such as Jiffy)
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp. taco seasoning
- 1/2 cup corn, canned, fresh or frozen (thawed if frozen)

2 cups shredded, cooked chicken

1 cup red enchilada sauce, divided

1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese, or a blend of cheddar and Jack, or Mexican cheese blend

Fresh cilantro leaves (whole or chopped) for serving

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Coat a 9-inch pie plate or oven-safe skillet (such as cast

iron) with cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together the corn muffin mix, milk, butter, egg, and taco seasoning. Fold in the corn. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan, and smooth the surface. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean or with moist bits clinging to it.

3. Meanwhile, in a large skillet or saucepan, combine the chicken and 3/4 cup of the enchilada sauce. Set the pan over medium heat and warm the mixture through.

4. Using the end of a wooden spoon or spatula, poke holes all over the cornbread in the pan. Pour the remaining enchilada sauce into the holes. Top the cornbread with the chicken mixture. Top with the cheese.

5. Bake for 5 minutes, until the cheese melts.

6. Top with fresh cilantro, and serve.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Chicken Tamale Pie.

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APPOINTMENTS

Gardening

Crape murder? And new trees

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

In early February, I noticed some neighbors out pruning their crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*). While they aren't my favorite group of plants, there is no doubt that they can find a place in many southern landscapes. From their beautiful flowers in colors from white through pink and pale mauve, to deep cherry red, and their varied sizes from small shrubs to mid-size trees, it can be argued that there is a crape myrtle for any yard. Do your research and you could find a crape myrtle the exact color and size to suit your landscape.

I was spurred to write about them when I saw one gardener taking great care in pruning his mid-size crape myrtles. If you need to prune a crape myrtle please take the advice in this article: <http://tinyurl.com/2ej5jvdm>. It shouldn't be a quick cut over with electric shears, but a considered trim with suitable pruning tools like clippers and loppers. Minimize pruning to correct structural problems like rubbing branches, but if you have a plant that was badly pruned in the past, you can prune it more aggressively to encourage a more attractive growth pattern, although it might take a few years to show the results.

There are some lovely flowering trees around town. Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) are standouts. Our native plums, chickasaw

plum (*Prunus angustifolia*) and flatwoods plum (*Prunus umbellata*), which doesn't tend to sucker, cover themselves with many delicate small white flowers. All these trees attract early bees and enable honeybees to begin replenishing their hives and solitary bees to build up their strength after emerging as adults. A little later, fringe trees (*Chionanthus virginicus*) bloom copiously before they leaf out, with bright white "tassels" of flowers. Female trees can produce many small black fruits (drupes) that are attractive to birds. It's still a good time of year to plant shrubs and trees, so why not consider some of our native trees and shrubs (<http://tinyurl.com/5n76mzz6>).

Although dogwoods (*Cornus florida*) are beloved in the panhandle and north central Florida, climate and soil conditions are not ideal here in northeast Florida. Dogwoods easily fall prey to problems like powdery mildew and twig borers, which makes them a poor choice. Much of Duval County along the St. Johns River and east to the ocean is now in Zone 9b because of rising temperatures, so if you have an ailing dogwood tree it is probably time to remove it.

Larry Figart, our Extension Urban Forestry Agent, confirmed that the following advice would be useful to homeowners who are contemplating replacing a tree. And the city tree planting program

is still available.

- Choose a tree that isn't susceptible to the disease that may have killed the tree. This is especially important for mushroom root rot (*armillaria*). If your tree turned brown almost overnight, examine the trunk behind the bark, just above the soil line. A fine white lacy mycelium is indicative of this fungus.

- Don't plant directly on top of a ground stump but choose a place two or three yards away from the root flare.

- Remove as many old roots as possible as well as any sawdust. The sawdust or stump grindings can be composted but only if the heap is managed well and generates heat. Layer brown and green material, keep it moist not wet, and turn it regularly (<http://tinyurl.com/2s484xp2>).

- If the ground is uneven, bring in good quality topsoil and incorporate it widely in and around the new planting area. Leave it to settle, without compacting the area.

- If the new tree is to be planted in the right of way, consider taking advantage of the City of Jacksonville's free tree planting program: <http://tinyurl.com/3stjbb33>.

- If you are going to plant the tree yourself, go check out <http://tinyurl.com/2t4uv3y3> for more information.



Photo courtesy Lesley Arrandale
Flatwoods plum blossom

Spring is historically a drier season here, so take particular care to water any new plantings appropriately, especially woody shrubs and trees, which can be pricey investments. Make sure to mulch correctly — no "volcano" mulching please! Mulch heaped up around tree trunks just invites fungal diseases, so when replenishing mulch in established beds and around trees, always keep it away from the actual plants it's intended to protect. For information about different types of mulch see <http://tinyurl.com/4e39hcyz>.

The next "New Leaf – Yard & Garden" newsletter will be out in early March (<http://tinyurl.com/mw59am22>). Don't forget to check it out.



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Travel

Dreams Come True in
Lucerne, Switzerland

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

As a child, I fondly remember the book “Heidi,” about a young orphan girl sent to live with her grandfather in the Swiss Alps. She develops a deep love of the mountains and nature. Looking back, I believe I was drawn more to the illustrations than the storyline, as I clearly recall wishing to see the Alps, chalets, and grazing cows. My chance finally came when I signed up for a river cruise from Basel, Switzerland, to Cologne, Germany.

My travel buddy Judy and I flew to Zurich and boarded a train directly from the airport to Lucerne. Swiss Rail makes it easy. I’m glad I listened to a friend’s recommendation to spend two days in Lucerne because the beauty and ambiance of the city can’t be overstated. The stunning Old Town rests on Lake Lucerne’s banks, surrounded by stunning mountains featuring Mt. Pilatus, rising approximately 7,000 feet.

After a five-minute walk from the train station, Judy and I dropped our bags at the hotel. We set off to explore the enchanting city by crossing the famous Chapel Bridge. This covered wooden bridge rests on stilts with a picturesque tower first built in 1333. Lush flowering window boxes line the railings, and religious paintings grace the architectural archways.

A stroll through the pedestrian-only

historic center included fascinating houses painted with historical scenes or artistic details of former artisan guilds. You’ll see fountains, flowers, unusual rooflines, and inviting shops.

We then headed across town to the Lion Memorial, another famous landmark carved into a rock face. Next to the monument lies the Glacier Garden Museum, a place that truly surprised us. The interactive displays start with geology, the Ice Age, and the formation of the Alps. Stairs within the rock gardens lead to fantastic views above the lake and city. The unexpected fun came when we entered the Mirror Maze and lost our way among our mirrored reflections and the path. This hall of 51 mirrors was built in 1896 for the Swiss National Exhibition in Geneva and moved to Lucerne in 1899. We left exhausted from laughing at ourselves. I absolutely recommend a visit.

In the evening, we dined on (you guessed it) cheese fondue. When in Switzerland, you must try it as well as decadent Swiss chocolates.

The following day, we signed up for a day tour beginning with a lake cruise that transported visitors to the entrance to the most vertical cog railroad in the world. The thrilling and speedy ride up Mt. Pilatus presents an ever-changing landscape. We left



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Going up on the cog railroad.

the fog-enshrouded lake behind and ascended to clear, sunny skies at the summit. Here, I basked in the soaring panorama of the Alps: Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau, a dream come true. We also met hearty hikers who climbed the peak, something I do not dream about.

A gondola ride zipped us partway down the mountain, stopping where visitors can enjoy toboggan runs or challenging rope courses. We lingered at the dramatic background and rode a second gondola down to the outskirts of Lucerne. The day ended with a sunset cruise on the lake, albeit without a memorable sunset, but the narration answered many questions

about the area.

Before leaving on a train to Basel, we wanted to visit the impressive Jesuit Church but found it closed. But, we discovered a fascinating cuckoo clock store (very pricey) and numerous chocolatiers. We missed Lucerne’s many museums but delighted in every minute of our stay. The city becomes a photographer’s jackpot and the perfect way to start a trip through Switzerland and Germany.

For information: www.luzern.com

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



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