

Mandarin NewsLine

May 2024 Volume 19 Issue 5

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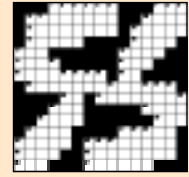
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Photos courtesy Traci Gunston

Greenland Pines Elementary showcases littlest artists

By Traci Gunston
mail@floridanewsline.com

On the evening of March 12, Greenland Pines Elementary School hosted the first annual PreK art show. Presented within the school's multi-purpose room, the show displayed works created by students aged three to five, from within the school's eight preschool classrooms. Each student worked to create three to four pieces of art using mediums such as clay, canvas, paint, recycled materials, and more.

When the doors opened at 5:30 p.m., visitors began their tour with a visit to the "Meet the Artist" wall before stopping at the refreshment table to paint cookies with icing.

Greenland Pines cont. on pg. 2

Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market supports local businesses and church outreach programs

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Back in 2015 the then-pastor of First Christian Church on San Jose Boulevard listened to the wishes of some congregation members and approved the formation of a crafts market in the church's parking lot. Starting with just five vendors, the market grew and became known as the Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market — making it easy to remember the date each month that the market is open.

A few years later, after the pastor and the original congregants had moved away, Mary Buskohl-Coulton agreed to take over the administration of the market.

"I had been to the market and seen its success, both as a customer and a sometime vendor," Buskohl-Coulton said. "I knew how popular it was and so I took it over and set about trying to get the word out to more people."

Buskohl-Coulton said that of the original five vendors, two are still at the market each month. They generally have about 50 different vendors, but that number grows to around 70 during



Photos courtesy Mary Buskohl-Coulton

the Christmas season, when the market is both outdoors and indoors. Vendors include various crafts, food, (including fruits and vegetables in season), jewelry, local honey, baked goods, soaps, Scentsy, candles, a butcher, personal care, clothes, and more.

support some of the church's missions. Buskohl-Coulton said the main programs supported are the Mandarin Food Bank, the church's preschool program, and the Florida Christian Apartments in Jacksonville, which are affiliated with the Disciples of Christ denomination and provide low-income housing for disabled senior citizens.

"When you shop the market you also support outreach programs," Buskohl-Coulton said. "We are family friendly and (well behaved and on leash) pet friendly. Everyone is welcome!"

The Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market is located at 11924 San Jose Blvd. It is open the second Saturday of each month (May's market will be on May 11) from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. During the hot summer months of June, July and August, the market closes an hour earlier, at 1 p.m.



"I do try to keep duplication of vendors to a minimum to provide the widest variety for customers," Buskohl-Coulton said.

Hosted by First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market is considered an outreach of the church and vendor rentals



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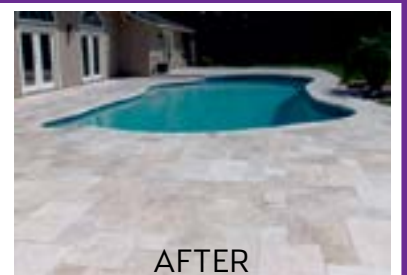
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Greenland Pines cont. from pg. 1

Once inside the gallery area, the teachers and paraprofessionals set up imaginative art displays for students, family members, and friends to tour using trees and mountains to showcase beautiful butterflies, caterpillars, flowers, and purple dinosaurs. The bleachers were transformed into a rainbow displaying carousel horses, magnet painted canvases, and a Chihuly inspired piece created using watercolor dyed coffee filters. Even the basketball goals were utilized in the gallery as a way to show suncatchers and yarn creations dipped in glue. Guests enjoyed student self-portraits, hand-painted knee bowls, collage hearts,



and large painted river rocks as they wandered through the gallery with their little artist.

Following the gallery walk, students and families enjoyed some fun in the interactive kid's zone where students could make a craft, color, and even add their own tiny masterpiece to the tiny art gallery. Finally, as families departed, parents were able to view and bid on a class canvas created by their child's class. The canvases, available via silent auction, served as a fundraiser for each classroom and were the highlight of the evening.



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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Penny Lane!

Breed:
Vizsla

Favorite Activity:
Taking walks and swimming at Walter Jones Historic Park

Favorite Food:
Anything humans eat

Favorite Friend:
Penny's flock of chickens

How did your BFF get her name:
Color like a penny and love for the song "Penny Lane" by the Beatles

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.

Summer Camp and Activities Guide in this issue! Pages 6 - 8

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MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you guess where this is?
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Last month's Mystery Photo was the top of the plaza where Tony's Cantina Mexican Grill is located.

Answers to our Puzzles PG 10

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A. petal B. blooming C. warmth D. sunshine

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May

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. (Beginning Tuesday, June 4, play time will begin at 9:30 a.m. due to warmer weather.)

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.

GriefShare group will meet on Tuesdays through July 23 from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the Cody Enrichment Center at St. Joseph's Catholic church, 4152 Loretto Road. Registration is never closed and each week a different topic is covered. Call (904) 318-9308 for more information and sign up.

3rd and 4th: Annual Plant Sale at Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road on May 3 and 4 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Lawn ornaments, pots and other garden related items are available as well as sales and education from the Rose Society, Orchid Society and Bonsai

Club. The public is invited.

4th: 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 May 4 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.

4th: Meet the Maple Leaf Divers at the Mandarin Museum, 11964 Mandarin Road, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Saturday, May 4. 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.

4th: Mandarin Frog Paint Party at Mandarin Museum on Saturday, May 4 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.

5th: 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, May 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.

7th: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church in the Woody Room (left-side far door) at 11844 Mandarin Road. The guild's traditional "Ugly" Auction of member provided sewing related items (not magazines) will be held. Bring a checkbook for your new treasures. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

11th: Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on May 11 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/ for more information.

11th: The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society celebrates a Mother's Day English Tea honoring female ancestors on Saturday, May 11 beginning at 12 p.m. at the Historic Riverdale Inn, 1521 Riverside Ave. The program will feature Carol Clay and a handout on researching your female ancestors will be included. The cost is \$50 for members and \$60 for non-members. Visit www.sgesjax.org to register for the meeting or call (904) 778-1000 for more information.

16th: Third Thursday Lecture featuring "Our Mandarin Neighbors" will be held on May 16 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.

16th: "Health Risks and Remedies in Your Garden" will be presented by Master Gardener Jan Duncan on May 16 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

20th: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, May 20 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Sandy Fitzpatrick of Hissyfitz Designs will be sharing

her machine applique expertise. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

21st: "Camellias" will be presented by Walter Bryant, Florida Native Plant Society on May 21 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

23rd: Mandarin Republican Club will meet on Thursday, May 23 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.

23rd: Mandarin Women's Club's monthly meeting and luncheon featuring the annual fashion show will be held on May 23 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn Mandarin. The luncheon will feature the club's "Glammy Awards," for members only. The cost of the lunch is \$25 and reservations and payment must be received by May 16 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.

23rd: "Basic 105 - Horticulture" will be presented by Wayne Hobbs, UF/IFAS Extension Clay County Environmental Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator, on May 23 at 7 p.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited to this free event. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

31st: The Italian American Club of Jacksonville will hold its popular Spaghetti to Go on Friday, May 31 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.



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with Duval County School Board Member
Lori Hershey, District 7

Q: Do you have an update [as of interview date of April 17] on the search for a new superintendent for Duval County Public Schools?

A: We received 21 applications by the deadline date. On April 23, at a Special School Board Meeting, the semi finalists will be selected and then on May 7 at 2 p.m. in the Cline Auditorium, again at a Special School Board Meeting, the finalists will be selected. The public is welcome to attend.

Next, on May 13 and May 14, the finalists will be onsite for one-on-one meetings with school board members as well as the board's focus group. Each board member was able to nominate two people to serve on this focus group; from District 7, we have Reagan Copeland and Dr. Wendy Northfleet. Both have students enrolled in the district and are engaged in the community. Also during these two days in May, there will be an opportunity for the finalists to engage with district leadership and teachers.

Finally, on May 23 at 9 a.m., the school board will meet in a Special School Board Meeting to select our new superintendent. I expect a successful conclusion to the search.

Q: What can you share about the school consolidations and feeder pattern changes in the district?

A: While no schools in District 7 are considered for consolidation, there will be changes to some of our feeder patterns. Our interim superintendent, Dr. Krizner, asked for a consultant to recommend changes to feeder patterns and school consolidations for cost considerations and in order to direct the next five years of our Master Facilities Plan. The

school district will set up a website in the coming weeks to allow parents to learn about the feeder pattern proposed changes and give feedback. During May and June, community meetings will be held in each district to allow the community another opportunity to get information and give feedback. The District 7 meeting date is TBA.

The school board will also set up a focus group to further engage community members. Information from the website and the community meetings will be considered and a recommendation will come to the school board in October for the board to take action.

Q: Do you have any kudos to share?

A: I'd like to recognize Dr. Michael George, principal at Atlantic Coast High School, who was named the State of Florida Principal of the Year! This is a high honor not only for Atlantic Coast High School and Duval County Public Schools, but it also acknowledges the high level of principal leadership in our district. We are very excited for Dr. George and for this recognition.

Graduation season is upon us. Atlantic Coast High School will hold its graduation ceremony at 1 p.m. on May 30 and Mandarin High School's will be held at 1 p.m. on May 31, both at the VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena. Congratulations to the Class of 2024!

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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



with Jacksonville City Council Member
Michael Boylan, District 6

Q: Can you give an update on your Town Hall meeting about the Hartley Road improvements that was held on April 17?

A: We had a good turnout of around 50 people. In addition to another lane on Hartley between San Jose and Old St. Augustine Road, there will be a 10 foot sidewalk on the north side and a 30 foot multi use path on the south side for pedestrians or bicycles. People seemed glad that the project is coming along. There was a concern addressed regarding traffic during the course of construction, and we learned that there will be an effort to maintain two lanes open at all times. Other items discussed were the intersection at Pine Acres and whether a roundabout or traffic signal could be considered in the future (not as part of this project). Also, the intersection of Hartley at San Jose was discussed. Currently, there are three lanes: one for left turns, one for straight and one for right. The project proposes two left lanes with the center lane marked for Interstate 295 access. This would make the right lane for straight or right turns, since a right turn on red is not permitted at this intersection. Construction is set to begin in June 2026 with an anticipated completion two years later.

Q: Can you comment on the pending construction of sidewalks on Loretto Road between County Dock and Mandarin roads?

A: This project includes full curb, gutter and sidewalk and has been in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) for multiple years. The delay has been a matter of cost as every time the project goes to bid, the cost is markedly higher. We plan to meet soon with neighbors who are immediately impacted to address their concerns. We do understand and appreciate the importance of preserving trees and the character of the area. As such, the proposed sidewalk will be meandering in order to avoid as many trees as possible. We had similar concerns raised about the Mandarin Road and Orange Picker Road sidewalks, but as someone who frequents these sidewalks, I have the opportunity to talk to neighbors about them. The sidewalks are very much appreciated.

Q: What is the latest on the Orange Picker Road realignment?

A: I just stopped by there on April 16 and the road will be closed to begin digging up the road the next day. It will be closed for two months, until mid-June. Due to some of the underground infrastructure work, they will not be able to complete the new extension in advance of closing the existing road in an effort to shorten the road closure. I've been advised that the full two month closure will be necessary.

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

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Summer Camp Activities Guide[®]



Visit your library in May!

By Jeremy Yates
mail@floridanewsline.com

In honor of Jewish American Heritage Month this May, Mandarin Branch Library is hosting a History Chat program on Monday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m. with presenter Marcia Jo Zerivitz, Founding Executive Director of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU in South Beach. Inspired by the book, "Jews of Florida: Centuries of Stories," the program will explore how the Jewish community has contributed to Florida's history and growth.

The Friends of the Mandarin Library are hosting another Book Sale on Friday, May 31, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Saturday, June 1, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. There will be a wide selection of items for every age with individual items priced \$5

and under. You can also fill a bag with books for just \$10 (bags provided by the Friends). Stock up for all your summer reading!

Our popular Little Readers storytimes (for ages birth through five) continue Fridays at 10:15 a.m. or 11 a.m. at Mandarin Branch Library or Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. or 11 a.m. at South Mandarin Library. Registration is not required, but space is limited. Please arrive early.

Drop in and read to a therapy dog! Sammy the Golden Retriever visits South Mandarin Library Wednesday, May 1 and 15 at 2:30 p.m. Yona, the Newfoundland Dog, visits South Mandarin Branch on Wednesday, May 8 and 22 at 2:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 11 at 2:30 p.m.



Come to the Friends of the Mandarin Library's Book Sale on Friday, May 31, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Saturday, June 1, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

For reading and hands-on activities for children aged five through 12, check out STEAM & Stories Mondays at 3:30 p.m. at Mandarin Branch Library. For even more art and reading fun, attend Junior Artists (ages five through eight) Tuesdays at 4 p.m. at South Mandarin Library. Explore even more Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math concepts every week at Junior Scientists (ages five through eight) Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. at Mandarin Branch. There are also fun "Junior Labs" for the older kids.

Want to practice sculpting? The Dragon Tea Society is looking for apprentice sculptors to learn the ins and outs of

crafting with polymer clay. You'll create tea dragon care supplies and go home with your very own tea dragon. Sculpture Lab (for ages nine through 12) continues Wednesdays at 4 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library and Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Library through the end of May.

Homeschoolers (ages 10 through 14): Learn to use different icing tools and techniques for creating edible, frosted masterpieces at Frosting Lab Fridays in May, 11 a.m. at South Mandarin Library.

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



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 - For children 3 yrs (as of 9/1/23) to 6th grade*
- Afternoon Camp Options 12:30 PM - 5:00 PM | \$100
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Summer Camp Activities Guide[&]



Pool safety essentials to live by

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

A backyard pool can be a wonderful summer oasis. Swimming immediately cools people off on hot and humid days, and even provides thorough exercise that works many different muscles in the body. And summer revelers know that swimming and splashing in the pool is an entertaining activity for people of all ages.

Though pools are great summer spaces, one downside of pool usage is the potential for drowning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that, every year in the United States, there are an estimated 3,960 fatal unintentional drownings — an average of 11 drowning deaths per day. In addition, around 8,080 nonfatal drownings occur. It's important to note that many of these incidents are unrelated to pool usage, as boating and even bathtub accidents contribute to drowning as well. But a 2020 review of 2,213 unintentional immersion deaths and other water-related injury deaths in Canada by the Canadian Red Cross found that immersion deaths were most likely to occur

when swimming and wading. Children aged one to four, males, and people with seizure disorders or other medical conditions like autism are among those at a higher risk for drowning.

Pools are fun, but it's a great responsibility to keep all swimmers safe. The following are some pool safety measures to put into effect.

- Keep water sanitary. Make sure pool water is chemically balanced so that it is comfortable to swim in and will not harbor any pathogens that can make swimmers ill. The pool equipment company Pahlen says the ideal water pH is 7.4 because that is the same as the pH in human eyes and mucous membranes, and it also supports good chlorine disinfection. The free chlorine content of a pool can range from 0.5 to 1.6 to keep it sanitary. A quality testing kit can help pool owners balance water.
- Learn your local ordinances. Local ordinances will spell out which precautionary measures are required by law for people who have a backyard pool. These often include a fenced yard, a fence around in ground pools that is at least



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Pools are fun, but it's a great responsibility to keep all swimmers safe.

four feet high, self-latching gates, and/or pool ladders that can be locked or closed when the pool isn't in use.

- Rely on non-slip surfaces. The pool environment can be wet and slippery. Utilizing materials like non-slip deck surfaces or rougher concrete finishes around pools can help reduce some slips and falls. The pool resource Poolonomics says people should be instructed to avoid running near or around the pool.
- Inspect water returns and drains. PoolSafety.gov warns that hair, limbs, jewelry, or bathing suits can get stuck in a drain or suction opening in a pool

or spa. Broken or missing drain covers should be replaced immediately and no swimming should occur until the issue is remedied.

- Install other barriers. Barriers, alarms and pool covers can save lives and prevent access to pool water when the pool area is not in use.
- Learn how to swim and perform CPR. Families can take swimming lessons to become better swimmers. Learning how to perform CPR on adults and children can save lives. Courses are available at many hospitals and community centers or through the Red Cross.



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Summer Camp Activities Guide[®]



When is the right time to look into summer camp?

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Summer camp provides children weeks of entertainment, camaraderie and opportunities to learn and grow. It also offers a welcome respite for parents and other caregivers from having to provide recreation for kids during summer vacation, especially if those kids will be attending a sleepaway camp.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
According to HealthyChildren.org, a division of the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is important to start researching summer camps as soon as possible.

Many children are emotionally ready to attend camp between the ages of eight and 10. Some need a little more time to mature. Parents may think they have plenty of time to investigate camps. Chances are if the weather has already warmed and summer vacation is on the horizon, then it's already too late to get kids into most summer camps.

According to HealthyChildren.org, a division of the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is important to start researching summer camps as soon as possible. Many start booking as early as January of the current term year. Furthermore, popular programs fill up quite fast. Even though summer weather may be furthest from one's mind in the middle of winter, this is the time when summer camp decisions must be made.

Start by asking for recommendations from others. The difficulty with this approach is that many people are very

protective of their camp choices, especially if the programs are particularly popular. They may not be inclined to give up the secrets to their good thing, especially if that means kids will have to compete for limited spots. Parents also should conduct an internet search of camps in the area and look at online reviews and ratings.

Find out if the camp is accredited by the American Camp Association. This will not guarantee a risk-free environment, but ACA accreditation is a better bet for providing a camp that is safe and nurturing.

Price also may be a factor in the camp decision. Camps are not all priced the same, so it may require doing some math to figure out what is the best value. Location also can be a consideration. Having to drive a long distance away for camp can be a deterrent to some people.

How to find the right fit for summer camp

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

Many adults fondly recall their days at summer camp. The increase in households with two working parents has made it more important than ever to find a camp to accommodate youngsters who need to remain engaged and entertained throughout summer vacation. That reality has led to more summer camp options, but it's not always so easy finding one that's the right fit for a child.

No two children are the same and kids change quite a bit as they grow up. So a camp that worked for an older child or even one that accommodated a younger camper may not make the perfect fit this summer. With that in mind, parents can consider these tips to find the right summer camp for their children.

- Ask around. Even if no two campers are the same, it can benefit parents to ask around when shopping for a summer camp. Summer camp spots are limited and it's not uncommon for competition for available spaces to develop, which can make it more difficult to gather information. However, ask neighbors whose children have outgrown summer camp if there's one they might recommend (or would not recommend).

- Pursue a package deal. Though package deals might not result in lower rates, approaching a camp with the parents of your child's friend or friends may work in your favor. Kids undoubtedly will be more excited about camp if their friends will be there as well. Camp officials may

see these quasi-package deals as beneficial and a quick and easy way to fill spots.

- Ask kids how they want to spend summer. Specialized camps run the gamut from sports camps focusing on a particular sport to general outdoor recreation camps to camps that cater to young musicians. More general camps offer a wide range of activities throughout the summer, and that might appeal to children less interested in specialized camps. Ask youngsters for their input before making a final decision. Involve kids in the search by showing them websites of prospective camps and asking them what they think of each one.

- Make sure the camp suits your schedule. Kids' preferences are not the only opinions to consider. In households with two working parents, moms and dads must find a camp that aligns with their work schedule. Many camps offer half-day sessions and/or full-day sessions, but some offer just one or the other. If parents need full-day sessions, they might need to begin their search early to ensure they can secure a spot before they fill up.

- Identify what you can afford. Camp costs vary significantly, so parents should identify how much they can afford before they begin their search. Doing so may eliminate various camps right off the bat, saving parents precious time as they try to find a camp for their children before spots fill up. Many towns offer local camps at schools, and these may be an affordable option.

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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Suzanne Fisher

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Suzanne Fisher said she mostly traveled domestically — via car — as a young girl with her parents, but that was enough to pique her interest in international travel. A native Floridian, she was born and raised in Bartow, a small town and “great place to grow up” located in central Florida. After high school, she relocated to Tallahassee to attend Florida State University. Her degree in fashion merchandising and marketing led to a lengthy and successful career in retail, beginning in St. Petersburg with Robinson’s department store. She served as an assistant buyer before moving on to department manager, assistant store manager and store manager with The Limited. But she always loved to travel and in the early 1990s enrolled in a travel school that she said was like an “international geography lesson.” She gained valuable knowledge and eventually became an agent at the Cruise Center in Mandarin. By 1999, she and her business partner, Kathy Harris, negotiated with the owner of the agency to buy it themselves. They have expanded the Cruise Center to be a full service travel agency with many travel partnerships that offers far more than just cruises. Suzanne lives in Mandarin with her husband Scott and two “fuzzy” cats: Sophie and Ali.

Q: What brought you to Jacksonville?

A: I came to Jacksonville in 1987

Get to Know ...

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



Photo courtesy Suzanne Fisher
Suzanne and Scott Fisher

when the Jacksonville Landing had just opened to be an assistant store manager at The Limited. I had never been to Jacksonville before and I had just one day to find an apartment to live in. Eventually I became store manager of the store in the Orange Park Mall. I moved around a bit more with The Limited before coming back to Jacksonville and becoming a store manager for a ski store. But I was starting to get burned out on retail ... nights and weekends. So that’s why I went to the travel school and changed careers.

Q: What do you recall about your early years working as a travel agent?

A: When I first started at the Cruise Center in 1991, we had just one computer and it wasn’t connected to the internet. We did everything via phone and mail and there was lots of paperwork. I have no idea now how I did my job then!

Q: Where did you and Scott get married?

A: Scott is my soulmate and travel buddy. Fittingly, we were married on the Grand Princess ship, somewhere between Jamaica and Grand Cayman ... by the captain!

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: My favorite part is when a client comes back home and had an amazing trip. Knowing that I helped them create great experiences and memories is very satisfying. I would say, even more so now than pre-COVID (a horribly stressful time for travel because everything was just shut down), people value their time with family and friends.

Q: Do you have a favorite destination?

A: I have a few. One favorite is Alaska. On our first trip to Alaska, Scott and I loved it so much that we purchased a vacation home in Seward that we call “Fisher’s Hideaway.” Seward is a magical place and we go there twice a year. Another destination I’ve fallen in love with is Tahiti, French Polynesia. We love the culture and the people. We’ve been there for our 10th and 20th anniversaries.

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

A: My profession affords us the ability to travel more than the average person; we probably travel about six weeks out of the year. When I’m not traveling, I like to spend time with family and friends. Also, we are outdoor people, who enjoy kayaking, hiking and fishing together.

Q&A with Michael Boylan cont. from pg. 5

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

A: For the past six months, I’ve been chairman of the council’s Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office Facilities Committee, and we are tasked with taking a look at the administration building as well as the jail. We’ve been working with the Northeast Florida Regional Council who is drafting a report from the five working groups within the committee. On May 8, I’ll host a meeting of the full committee to review this draft report and then I expect to present it to the full city council at the first meeting in June. One thing we are recommending (and is already in progress) is for the sheriff’s office administration to lease space in the Florida Blue building on Riverside Avenue. The resulting space in the administration building can then be used to address the most pressing needs of the detention center, which includes the need for an infirmary.

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.

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Briefs

Mandarin Women's Club rolls out the red carpet

On Thursday, May 23, the Mandarin Women's Club will roll out the red carpet to celebrate its own with the Glammy Awards. This members only luncheon will be held at the Ramada Inn in Mandarin, 3130 Hartley Road. This is the last luncheon before the club's summer break and club members will be celebrated with "Thank You" awards, door prizes, and the crowning of "Miss Congeniality."

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, May 16. To make reservations and obtain payment instructions, members should call Jo-Ellen at (904) 635-8722 or email her at joshifty@aol.com. Visit www.mandarin-womensclub.com for more information on events, photos, and membership forms.

March marks second consecutive month of below-average rainfall for the District

In March, rainfall across the St. Johns River Water Management District was slightly below the monthly average, with frontal systems being the main source of precipitation. Northern counties received the majority of the rain, while southern counties experienced drier conditions. Despite variations, overall rainfall across the District remains above the annual average.

A comprehensive report outlining March's hydrologic conditions was presented at the District's Governing Board meeting on April 9, featuring the following highlights:

Districtwide, March's

rainfall averaged 2.70 inches, just 0.77 below the monthly average.

County-wide monthly rainfall totals ranged from a high of 4.80 inches in Nassau County, to a low of 0.86 inches in Brevard County.

Over the past 12 months, the District has received above-average rainfall, with a cumulative total of 57.61 inches, surpassing the long-term average by 6.60 inches.

County-wide totals varied between 53.37 inches in Alachua County to more than 63 inches in Volusia County.

Upper Floridan aquifer conditions were varied, but generally fell within the high or normal range by the end of March.

Districtwide groundwater levels, expressed as a single index, fall within the 81th percentile, which is in the high range for this time of year.

Visit www.sjrwmd.com for further insights into rainfall totals and other hydrologic data. Visit WaterLessFlorida.com for tips to help landscapes thrive while saving water and money.

"A Police Wife's Survival Guide" to be presented to crime writers

Wives of law enforcement and first

responders live in continual stress. Just ask Vikki Downey, the May speaker at the Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime meeting on May 4 at 10:15 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. They must be supportive, understanding and stoic. They must protect their children from fears they have themselves. They must navigate their place in the world and educate friends and family about safety matters.

For 25 years, Vikki Downey navigated the challenging role of being a police wife, despite having no law enforcement background in her family. Her husband John started his journey as a police officer at the age of 29. While John Downey pursued his career, Vikki Downey taught school while raising their children. She has dedicated her life to empowering fellow police spouses, often through personal support, but also helping them supplement family income.

This will be a hybrid meeting. Register for this meeting at <https://nefloridasistersincrime.org>. Contact

floridasistersincrime@gmail.com for more information. Bring your coffee and bring a friend; the group welcomes misters and sisters.

No April Fools here as ladies of the Mandarin Women's Club made flower arrangements at Harbor Chase. Photo courtesy Kathy Sisbarro

2024 Mandarin Art Fest a glorious weekend success!

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewline.com

The Easter weekend Mandarin Art Festival tradition continued this year with huge crowds due no doubt to the star of the show — the glorious weather. After

two years with a soggy Sunday, this year — for two full days — thousands of guests strolled under the magnificent live oaks of historic Mandarin to savor the creativity in more than 130 artist booths and more than a dozen Green

Market vendors. Attendees also popped into the 1870s building to enjoy the Bake Sale and the Childrens Art Show.

“Patrons enjoyed a bounty of beautiful artwork on display while Mother Nature treated everyone to sunny skies and a light cool breeze,” said Susie Scott, Mandarin Art Festival chair.

Guests kicked back in the newly constructed Harriet Beecher Stowe pavilion that made its debut on Easter weekend with local musicians setting the mood and an array of international cuisine options from the newly relocated adjacent

food court.

“It was wonderful to connect with so many families who have visited us for generations,” said Scott. “A fun time was had by all and we thank you.”

The juried and judged Fine Art and Fine Craft Festival was founded in 1968 and has been an Easter weekend tradition and treat for guests for the 56 intervening years and serves as the primary fundraiser for the Mandarin Community Club, a local non profit 501c3 whose mission focuses on preservation, education and beautification.

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Photos courtesy Mandarin Community Club
Mandarin Community Club board members Wanda Bosworth and Kelley Swain with Life Member Angeline Cook McClamma.







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Fishing

Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewline.com

And here we are in the slow simmer before the rolling boil of the summer. The river changes a lot in April, May, and June. As the average temperatures rise and the rains remain on a weekly basis, the salinity slowly creeps up — usually peaking in June. Our frequent afternoon thunderstorms tend to bring an end to this. Until then, knowing how salty the river is can help you find marine species this time of year, especially trout.

Spotted seatrout are a lot more sensitive to salinity than redfish, so they will be pushed up and down the river as it fluctuates. For instance, you might catch them south of the Buckman one day, but if we get rain or the wind blows from the south, they'll most likely be pushed north of the Buckman by freshwater working its way out of the river. Keep this in mind if you're suddenly not finding them around. They may just be a short boat ride to the north where the salinity is more favorable.

Redfish will be all over the river this month and hungry for about any bait you throw at them. We've got to make

it one more month until we can put live river shrimp on the menu, but crab, mullet, and croakers have you covered until then. I do great on artificials like bucktails if you want to keep it simple. Docks and shell bars are great places to look for them.

On the same docks there's bound to be good numbers of sheepshead that will take clams or crab. I've yet to find an artificial for them. Give each dock or whatever structure you're fishing a good 15 minutes before moving because they can be slow to find your bait at first, but they'll sniff it out eventually. A little chumming goes a long way too.

If you haven't had your fill of surf fishing for whiting and pompano yet, this will be your last good month until the fall so keep that in mind. Look for clear water and invest in high quality bait. It can mean the difference between catching fish or not most days.

That's all I have for this month so get out there and go fish when you can. Tight lines.

Mandarin High School teacher wins DAR Outstanding History Teacher Award



Photo courtesy Betty Reed

Betty Reed, Regents Council president; Cindy Addison, Florida State Regent; Jim Schmitt, Florida Outstanding America History Teacher; Lynn Cason, Florida State Historian; and Connie Taylor, Jacksonville Chapter Regent.

By Betty Reed
mail@floridanewslines.com

James Schmitt's journey started simply. He was requested to speak as the keynote speaker at the annual Constitution Luncheon held by the Daughters of the American Revolution in September 2023. His presentation impressed the audience. Following, members of Jacksonville Chapter DAR, voted to award Schmitt their certification as DAR Outstanding American History Teacher of the Year 2023. This is the local level and his first win. Schmitt was submitted as Jacksonville's Chapter DAR candidate and received the Outstanding American History Teacher 2024 by the Regents Council of Northeast Florida, Area 4, consisting of eight chapters and more than 1,000 daughters. This secured his regional award. With this recognition, Schmitt was immediately submitted as the candidate for the State of Florida award. He nailed that competition as well and now advances to compete for the national award which will be awarded in July of this year.

The ceremony for the State of Florida award was held March 8, 2024 at the Omni Hotel, Championsgate in Orlando. Schmitt was presented the certificate award and monetary recognition by Florida State Regent, Cindy Addison and Florida State Historian, Lynne Cason. He was accompanied by his wife, Debbie, who is also an educator and retired principal. Schmitt stated he was proud to represent the 11,000 plus Daughters of the American Revolution in the state of Florida.

This victory has brought Schmitt into the spotlight, showcasing his exceptional talent in the field of American history. To secure these accolades, letters from his principal, his students, his recommending chapters, himself, and additional community service along with a resume must be considered by judges outside the DAR organization. This packet combines to secure the recognition. Schmitt is a veteran as well as a coach and participant in other community services.

Marine Fire Station opens



Photo courtesy Michael Boylan

A new Marine Fire Station opened in late March at 10562 Scott Mill Road. Local dignitaries, including Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan and Jacksonville City Council Member attended the official ribbon cutting ceremony.



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Cultural Arts Night held at Crown Point



Holly Shapiro and her family viewing third grade art work.

By Mary Eyler
mail@floridanewslines.com

On March 14, the Crown Point arts department hosted a cultural arts night that included a huge display of artwork from students and from around the world. The event also included the Cathedral Arts dance group who performed a few dances while attendees enjoyed all the artwork displayed. There were

amazing works of art from Brazil, Puerto Rico, Albania, and many other arts from Central America and Mexico. The children enjoyed participating in all the arts activities each station offered. There were the Chinese arts shapes, Guatemalan Quetzal, and Italian chef hats. Food trucks were on site for families to purchase dinner to eat in the courtyard area.

Solar eclipse mania hits The Bolles School



Photos courtesy The Bolles School

By NewsLine Staff
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Bolles students were treated to a celestial spectacle as they witnessed the solar eclipse on April 8. Equipped with solar eclipse glasses and pinhole cameras, those who had permission to participate in the viewing observed the moon's majestic transit across the sun while learning about the science behind the phenomenon.

While both Bolles lower school

campuses organized formal viewings, students on the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus benefited from a special lesson during convocation from middle school science teacher Betsy Bailey. She shared interesting facts about the solar eclipse and its 115-mile-wide path of totality, emphasizing the rarity of the event and the intense power of the sun's rays. Some upper school students also took a look at the eclipse between classes and after school.

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Former River City Science Academy student makes headlines

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Former River City Science Academy student Rex Thais has quickly risen to prominence in the pickleball community, showcasing exceptional talent and determination at just 13 years old.

Thais's journey into pickleball began around two years ago when he witnessed his parent playing the sport and expressed a keen interest in trying it out himself. Despite his young age, his natural athleticism and dedication propelled him forward rapidly. Within a year of entering his first tournament, Thais nearly



clinched victory and has since ascended to the top 5.0 level in pickleball.

Not only has Thais excelled on the pickleball court, but he also demonstrated outstanding academic prowess during his time at River City Science Academy. As a straight "A" student and a member of the National Honor Society, Thais exemplified the school's commitment to academic excellence and holistic student development.

In a remarkable move, Thais has recently taken the placement exam at Florida State College at Jacksonville and will be bypassing high school to pursue higher education while continuing his pickleball journey.

Pickleball, being the fastest-growing sport in America, presents unique challenges, particularly for young athletes like Thais, as there isn't a dedicated junior division. Despite this, Thais competes against full-grown adults, showcasing his exceptional skill and tenacity on the court.

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Orthodontic practice has new owner

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Dr. Craig Hadgis is the new solo owner of the local orthodontic practice that he joined in 2018. The new name of the practice is Smiles by Dr. Craig Hadgis, Orthodontist.

"I am proud to be able to continue to serve the orthodontic needs of the local community with the changeover of our practice, and continue to treat patients of all ages, children, teens and adults," said Dr. Hadgis. "My family and I have strong ties to the local community and we are very grateful to be able to make a difference in the lives of our patients by helping create a healthy and beautiful smile to last a lifetime."

Dr. Hadgis has more than a decade of experience in the orthodontic field

including digitally planned orthodontics, Invisalign, Damon, Insignia and Light-Force appliance systems. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering and Masters degree in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Michigan. Dr. Hadgis received his Doctorate of Dental Surgery and post DDS degree in Advanced Education in General Dentistry from the University of Detroit Mercy. He earned his Orthodontic Speciality Certification from the School of Orthodontics at Jacksonville University.



Photo courtesy Dr. Craig Hadgis
Dr. Craig Hadgis

Dr. Hadgis is certified by the American

Board of Orthodontics and has served as president and treasurer of the St. Augustine Dental Society for the past five years. He is a member of the American Board of Orthodontics, College of Diplomates of the American Board of Orthodontics, and American Association of Orthodontists. In addition, Dr. Hadgis is also a member of the World Federation of Orthodontists, Southern Association of Orthodontists, Florida Association of Orthodontists, the American Dental Association, Florida Dental Association, the Northeast District Dental Association and the Jacksonville Dental Society.

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Gardening

Summer in the time of climate change

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewslines.com

Moving into the summer months, it's worth keeping a close eye on the weather. So far, predictions are for more and stronger hurricanes as we move into a La Nina situation. Storms during La Nina conditions generally have a greater impact in the Gulf of Mexico and the western Caribbean Sea, both of which are close to home. More immediately, NOAA has temperature and rainfall prediction models, which can be found here: <https://www.cpc.ncep.gov/>

Weather is such a fundamental consideration when gardening, but we are also faced with increasingly warm temperatures overall. You may recall, the climate zone boundaries here in Duval County have been revised, so this is a reminder to review the recommended planting zones for anything you are hoping to plant. It's worth looking at more southerly planting advice and rule out more northerly plants.

If you understand your own microclimate that will also be helpful. Windbreaks on the north side of your property can protect tender plants from winter winds, while summer sun will bake unshaded areas. So, it's fairly straightforward to imagine how the plants you grow will be impacted by their position in your yard.

I recently — hopefully! — worked out how to tackle a problem area in my yard. The back of my two-story house faces roughly north-northeast, so during the winter months a fairly wide strip of ground is in deep shade. As spring progresses, the sun moves so that this area gets more and more sun. But when looking at plant labels the recommendations for light are that the plant likes sun, part sun, shade or whatever, without referring to winter light levels. So I've decided I'm going to try a bed of mostly deciduous flowering perennials, and maybe a few small shrubs and clumping grasses, that need full sun to thrive. That will be the light in summer. With luck the low light in winter won't adversely affect them, but I'll have to wait until this time next year to find out.

It's been a joy to see the spring burst of activity all around us, from the greening up of our deciduous trees, shrubs, and perennials, to the "evergreen" oaks finally dropping their old leaves for the new ones

to grow in immediately behind them. (As a transplant, I'm still amused by this apparent "autumn in spring!") Leaves can make valuable mulch, either by composting for later use or by shredding them using a mower to use in the near term.

Of course, weeds are the inevitable problem as temperatures rise. Spreading mulch two to three inches thick can help prevent them germinating, but there's little recourse if you choose to avoid herbicides other than old-fashioned weeding. Tackle them while small, especially if you're dealing with tree seedlings like golden rain trees and Carolina cherry laurel. Know your weeds' roots and make sure that if they're deep and sturdy they need to come out. Small annual weeds can probably be raked over and left to dry on the soil surface. Anything that's going to seed needs to be bagged and disposed of.

I haven't been growing vegetables recently but have been missing the pleasure of picking my own produce. I'll be trying a new approach, probably in the fall, growing in fabric pots. Meanwhile, native plants have been my focus, aiming to support the insects and other creatures that support our soil health and ultimately our own. It's these interrelationships that are so important in our attempts to nurture the natural world. I hope you are taking part to bolster the environment for our descendants. They will surely thank you.

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Travel

I'm big on Little Rock, Arkansas

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

I wasn't sure what to expect from a visit to Arkansas, but I'm now big on Little Rock. The vibrant and clean capital city offered visitors many activities and interesting sites.

First up, I was curious about how the city got its name. Seems it derived from a rock formation along the river, named le petit rocher (little rock) by the French explorer Bénéard de la Harpe in 1722 to distinguish it from a larger cliff across the river. Well, so much for that story.

My hotel overlooked the Arkansas River, which is crossed by six bridges and has a meandering 11-block riverwalk along its shore (a total 15.7 miles loop.) I soon encountered the fantastic Vogel Schwartz Sculpture Garden, which features more than 80 whimsical and thought-provoking metal works.



A tour of the National Park Historic Central High Site included an impassioned slide show presentation from a National Park ranger that had some of the participants in tears. The riveting story of the Little Rock Nine's integration struggle captured our hearts. In September 1957, nine 15-year-old black students met the stringent requirements to attend Central High, yet were barred from entering. It took presidential intervention with federal troops and the National Guard to silence the mob and rebellion. While not Little Rock's proudest memory, the event remains an important step in U. S. civil rights history. The group also walked around the exterior high school grounds as students still attend Central High. The tour finished at the Arkansas Capitol Building nearby. Here, life-sized statues of the nine students grace the lawn and act as a reminder of the past. If time permits, capitol buildings are always excellent.

On a lighter note, I toured the Esse Purse Museum, one of only two purse museums in the world. The handbags and their typical contents were displayed in chronological order as well as by category such as animal skin bags, evening bags, and totes. The little museum offered a fasci-



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
The Arkansas River in Little Rock.

inating glimpse into women's fashion through the years.

A quick breeze through the newly redesigned and renovated Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts revealed its use as a public gathering area and museum. The entire structure, an architectural gem, cleverly uses space and entry is free. The glass-walled living room has become a favorite spot where locals come to work or read. The displayed art is chosen from the AMFA Foundation's 14,000-object collection.

No visit to Little Rock is complete without seeing the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Museum. The facility houses a year-by-year display of events during Clinton's tenure, backed up by 80 million documents stored in the adjoining archives. Visitors can browse presidential memorabilia and family photos, learn about state dinner protocol, see examples of garments

worn, and what gifts are given and received. My favorite part of the library museum is the replica of the Cabinet Room and the Oval Office, as they were during Clinton's presidency. Sometimes, folks can even sit behind the presidential desk for a photo.

You can't travel to a city and not taste the local fare. I was especially delighted with the cheese dip at Dizzy's Gypsy Bistro. Seems that cheese dip is very popular in Little Rock and the creamy concoction at Dizzy's has won the World Championship Cheese Dip title more than once. I loved how it didn't harden or clump up and yet was not stringy.

If you get a chance to visit Little Rock, it may not rock your world, but I believe you will find something of interest.

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



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