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Mandarin knitting group's goods go abroad to grateful soldiers

By Donna Keathley

When you see a group of ladies knitting on Wednesday mornings at the Mandarin Senior Center and another group knitting at the Williams Family YMCA, you would never believe their international fame! Thumbing through their scrapbook with Trudy Ferrantello, the leader of the "Kit Wits," the story unfolds.

After years of participating in a ministry that provided knitted goods to area needy infants, the idea of providing items for servicemen and women was born—and Ferrantello was off and running, sharing the lap blanket pattern with talented ladies in the Mandarin area. That's when the two knitting groups began to utilize their skills to make brightly colored lap blankets and toboggan hats and the rest is history.

News spread quickly and requests came from places these women had never heard of. There were even more ideas mushrooming from the lap blankets, like the request for wall hanging quilts for the Helmand Province, Afghanistan's medical facility. A Navy nurse had the bright idea to lace a blanket on a dowel and brighten up the place!

A letter from a young lady aboard the USS Roosevelt, which was on its way to the Northern Arabian Gulf, is proudly displayed in the scrapbook. She tells the story of her crew receiving much needed warm hand-knitted caps to wear in the Mediterranean during a brutally cold winter. Then there's the thank you note from G.R. Ross, over at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station's USO office, thanking them for the 30 blankets that they just shipped overseas. The main theme of all those thank you notes rings out: we can't believe you care!

Lanette Phillman's letter says, "As much as the hats helped out in the cold, it was

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Meet Piper McInall

Sharing history through the eyes of a local young girl

By Karl Kennell

When a young girl thinks about getting dressed up she usually doesn't make her choices from a wardrobe that harkens back centuries. However, when 15 year-old Piper McInall decides to dress up, she does just that. McInall she is a re-enactor of girls from days gone by. She began re-enacting when she participated as a sixth grader in the annual San Augustin re-enactment at the Colonial Spanish Quarter Museum in St. Augustine. The event is a popular annual Girl Scout event held each year in March.

Recently McInall donned her costume and portrayed a girl from the 1740s in Spanish Colonial St. Augustine at the 12th annual Winter Celebration at the Walter Jones Historical Park in Mandarin.

"I've always been interested in history," she says. "Re-enacting is interesting because you get to experience how people have lived in the past. It's a great way to make history come alive."

McInall, a 10th grader who is home schooled, is the daugh-

Re-enactor cont on pg. 8

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Josh Allen
ja@rtpublishinginc.com

Women's Club celebrates the season

By Contributing Writer Tess Hart-Ross, Mandarin Women's Club

Santa did not show up, but the Mandarin Women's Club "Elfettes" were exceptional in shaping the club's Christmas party into an event filled with great food, lively conversation, seasonal music, original handmade decorations and individually wrapped presents for everyone. Santa must have made his deliveries earlier!

The yearly celebration was organized by the club's renowned event planner, Debi Harrison and held at the Westminster Woods club house. As guests drove across the Julington Creek Bridge on their way to the party, they were treated to the spectacle of decorated boats parading under the bridge. What a great incentive to get in the holiday spirit!

Sharing the evening with husbands always gives an additional rowdiness to the celebration. No one is allowed to take anything too seriously and the conversation and laughter reflect their spontaneity. "Potluck" usually means taking your chances but not with these great cooks. The combination of everyone's choice offering made for a feast, a warm and wonderful holiday feast!

The Mandarin Women's Club is a social club, giving all women of the area the opportunity for meeting new friends, seeing old friends, learning new

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What's New

Community Happenings

Do you have community or club news you would like included in Mandarin NewsLine? Then contact Martie Thompson at: editor@mandarinnewsline.com or 886-4919.

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Publisher Rebecca Taus
publisher@rtpublishinginc.com

Editor Martie Thompson
editor@rtpublishinginc.com

Advertising Sales, Linda Gay
lg@rtpublishinginc.com

Advertising Sales, Josh Allen
ja@rtpublishinginc.com

Graphic Design,
Brittany Lehman
graphics@rtpublishinginc.com

RT Publishing, Inc.
12443 San Jose Boulevard
Suite 403
Jacksonville, FL 32223
Ph: 904-886-4919

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The Italian American Club would like to wish everyone a very happy, healthy New Year. As of January 1, 2012 we have a new slate of officers and board of directors: President: John Buffa Koch; First Vice President: Greg Clapp; Second Vice President: Donalee Wright; Treasurer: Mario Cortese; Assistant Treasurer: Lucy Cortese; Recording Secretary: Vicky Clapp; Corresponding Secretary and Editor: Patty Koch. The 2012 board of directors are Maurice Cooper, Joseph Cornello, Madaline Gagliano, Frank Mullaney, Vinny Russo, Stephanie Shaffer, Mena Vesce and Past President Carlo Clemente. The Club Chaplain is Rev. Daniel Cody.

Donate your unwanted car by December 31 to Cars4Charities and you will get a year-end tax deduction of at least $500 on your itemized federal taxes. You'll also help one of hundreds of respected charities at the same time. Cars4Charities will handle the entire donation process, from start to finish. They'll turn your unwanted vehicle into cash and send the entire net proceeds to the charity you select from their impressive list. The process is effortless. You can even donate your car online at www.cars4charities.org. Your vehicle does not have to run or be in good condition and it will be picked up in a matter of days, free of charge. Cars4Charities will provide you with all the paperwork you'll need. To claim your 2011 deduction, your title must be signed and postmarked by December 31, 2011. For details, please visit www.cars4charities.org or call 1-866-448-3487 (GIVE-4-US)

Letters to the Editor policy

At RT Publishing we welcome Letters to the Editor. We request they be no more than 250 words. All letters must include writer's name, address, and telephone number. Only the name will be published. E-mail to editor@rtpublishinginc.com. Anonymously sent letters will not be published.

The River City Women's Club will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, January 18, beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn Mandarin, located at 3130 Hartley Road. Lunch and a program will follow the meeting. The cost of the lunch is $15.50 and reservations are required by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 12. Please call 262-8719 for reservations or additional information.

The Mandarin Women's Club program for Thursday, January 26 will be Game Day to include Bridge, Bunco and Mexican Train. The program will be held at the Ramada Inn, located at 3130 Hartley Road and doors open at 9:00 a.m. Club membership is open to all women. The price of the luncheon is $15.50 for members and $16.50 for non-members and reservations are required. Please call Iris at 268-2459 by January 20.

The January General Meeting of the **All Star Quilters Guild** will be held on Monday, January 16 at 9:30 a.m. in the First Christian Church, located at 11924 San Jose Boulevard. The program will be presented by Becky Goldsmith of Piece O' Cake Designs. Visitors are welcome. For more information, please contact Dot Butler at 642-6574 and visit us at www.orgsites.com/fl/allstarquiltguild.

Are you troubled by someone's drinking? **Al-Anon Family Groups** can help. Let us share our experience, strength and hope. Join us every Monday night from 8:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. in the First Christian Church of Jacksonville, located at 11924 San Jose Boulevard or visit us at www.jaxafg.org.

The next meeting of the **South Jacksonville Republican Club** will be held on Saturday, January 7, 2012 at the Golden Corral restaurant on San Jose Boulevard. Social time will begin at 9:30 a.m. followed by the club meeting at 10:00 a.m. We will be gathering in the restaurant area. The election of the 2012 club board will be discussed as well as a meet and greet of Republican candidates for the upcoming Florida Primary election along with a question and answer period.

AARP Driver Safety Program for drivers 50 and older will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 10 and 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at Memorial Hospital, 3625 University Boulevard South. The fee is $12 for AARP members and $14 for non-members. You must attend both days for certification to qualify for an auto insurance discount. To register, please call 391-1320.

The North Florida Acoustic Neuroma Support Group will meet on Saturday, January 21, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. at Mandarin United Methodist Church, located at 11270 San Jose Boulevard. Please call 287-8132 or 738-5063 for additional information.

What's New cont on pg. 5

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The Sheriff Reports

By Contributing Writer John H. Rutherford, Duval County Sheriff

New Year's resolutions for preventing crime

- Form a Neighborhood Watch group. Citizens tell us that they want to help prevent crime and there is no better place to start than close to home. These watch groups work to keep people connected; they are committed to reporting suspicious activity to the police. Simple things, like picking up a neighbor's newspaper when they are out of town can eliminate a "sign" for thieves that the home is empty. Watch meetings include tips like these from JSO officers and more. Call 630-2160 or visit our website at coj.net/jso and click on Community Affairs. JSO also offers a River Watch program, for citizens with homes and businesses on the river and the Business Watch program also helps businesses in commercial areas.
- Join a Sheriff's Advisory Council. ShAdCo members are committed to building relationships with the officers that work in their neighborhoods and those officers are committed to keeping members informed about what is going on. Monthly meetings include discussions about crime patterns or trends, as well as information about enforcement activity by JSO. Neighborhood walks and monthly meetings help keep members informed about the issues in their sector of the city and the zone. Again, call JSO's Community Affairs at 630-2160 for more information. Applications are also available online at www.coj.net/departments/sheriffs-office.aspx – Community Affairs.
- At home: Make sure you know your neighbors and are familiar with the cars they drive and their children. Have phone numbers and know how to get in touch with one another. This is helpful when something odd or suspicious happens in the neighborhood. Keep doors closed and locked when home, never standing open or left unlocked. This is especially important with garage doors and sheds, not to mention gates and entries to the back yard. Proper exterior lighting and close trimmed shrubs, plus many other tips for "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" are taught at Neighborhood Watch meetings. This information is also available by visiting the Community Affairs pages of our website.
- Away from home: In the car, keep your doors locked and valuables out of sight. Don't visit ATM machines at night/alone. Don't keep checkbooks or other materials in the car that can cause your identity to be stolen.
- Know your children's friends and the parents of their friends. Know their teachers and check homework and be active in a child's school life. Let the teachers and administrators know about dangerous activities your kids talk about—even if it is a "rumor." Make sure you know where your kids are when they are not at home or school, and who they are with. All the time. Know the laws regarding curfew and truancy.

Please join us in our fight to prevent crime before it happens, by following some of these tips and becoming involved with your Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. As always, I appreciate your support of the men and women of the JSO, who work hard everyday to keep our city safe and secure.

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Knitters cont from pg. 1

Lap blankets sent to the troops in Afghanistan.

the idea that someone back home was thinking about us and cared so much that made our day!"

So the ladies keep knitting and the two groups keep growing in numbers. They teach newbies how to knit.

"Even if you can't knit, you can learn to operate a knitting loom," says Ferrantello. "We love to receive donations of yarn and none is wasted, everything is used."

The community has embraced the cause, with corporations like Ring Power picking up shipping costs for the blankets headed to Kabul. Everyone who hears of the knitting mission jumps in to help. Ferrantello relays a story about one of the Knit Wits working on a blanket in the waiting room of her doctor's office. It seems that a gentleman overheard her telling someone where the blanket was going and he handed her some money to cover her material costs.

The local soldiers are not forgotten, with caps and blankets going to injured vets in area hospitals to include St. Augustine and Gainesville. Anywhere there are service men and women who need these items, the Knit Wits will get them there! These ladies are a powerful source!

You can join the Knit Wits at the Mandarin Family YMCA on Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or on Wednesdays at the Mandarin Senior Center on Hartley Road from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Any donations for the group can be dropped off at the Williams Y.

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Tax Tip of the Month

IRS is imposing a lot more penalties on taxpayers these days—especially for negligence and tax understatements. However, almost 25% of these penalties levied on individuals for 2010 were abated.

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From the City Council Member's Desk

By Contributing Writer Matt Schellenberg,
City Council Member, District 6

An inside perspective of City Hall

Local, state, and federal governments all try to pass laws that make life fair—but this is an unattainable goal.

The fact is, life is not fair—a sentiment I've mentioned to my children dozens of times. Each person is different and blessed with varying, god-given talents and characteristics. Some are tall, some are short, some are athletic, some are gifted in art, some are black, some are white, some are thin, some are heavy, some are handy and some aren't.

Unfortunately, governments continue to enact measures that they believe will equalize the unattainable. In fact, one of the most over-used words in the government lexicon is "fair" and this word typically serves as an excuse for government intrusion into our lives. When you hear a politician use it, you know to prepare for some new tax or regulation.

And what is fair? In 1960, there was a young man who started a small gas station on Moncreif Road in Jacksonville. Through hard work and after overcoming many adversities, Herb Peyton turned his one small gas station into the Gate Petroleum Company. Then there's D.W. Hutson—he started out hanging drywall and now he's one of the most successful developers in Jacksonville. A young Andy Crawford started out by borrowing $5,000 from his parents. He has since founded, grown and sold two major waste management companies here in Jacksonville. Finally, a young, single mom named Madeleine Mille bought the local Weight Watchers franchise, which she expanded and made very successful. All these individuals worked hard, played by the rules and made great contributions to our local economy—and these stories are occurring all the time in Jacksonville.

But then we have the "Occupy Jacksonville" demonstrators. These people, with their incredible sense of entitlement, sit around all day living off the public dole. This is what happens when government takes from productive, hardworking citizens and distributes to the lazy and unambitious. Each one of these people has been given special talents—it's sad to see them wasting those talents, as well as their time, camping out at City Hall.

Life is life with all its struggles. Nothing government can do will stop us, the citizens, from having to deal with those struggles. Government cannot solve our problems or prevent dilemmas in our lives, but they keep trying and dare to call their interference "fair."

In my opinion, when everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, then the system is fair. And this is exactly what our Constitution and Bill of Rights provide. Not an equal outcome, which is what the Occupy protesters want, but an equal opportunity.

Please feel free to contact me at Matts@COJ.net.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Matt Schellenberg

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What's New cont from pg. 3

NAS Jacksonville Skin and Scuba Diving Club meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Ramada Inn, located at 3130 Hartley Road in Mandarin. The club is open to all divers and those who are interested in diving. For more information, please visit www.nasjaxscubadivers.org or contact the club president, Dave Martin at 413-8773.

The Bumble Bee Circle of the Mandarin Garden Club will meet on January 5, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. We will learn about bees and honey! Children ages five through 18 are welcome with an adult. Please buzz by the Mandarin Garden Club and join in the fun.

Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. at Mandarin Park (south end of Mandarin Road) next to the tennis courts at the park entrance. Beginners are welcome. Just show up unless it rains.

The MOMS Club of Jacksonville/Mandarin-SE offers support for stay at home and part-time working moms living in zip code 32258. With the club you will have enriching activities for you and your children, during the day when you need the most support. A sample of activities includes park days, beach days, monthly socials, playgroups and field trips to the zoo and museums. For additional information, please email semandarinmoms@yahoo.com.

Sugar Arts Guild of North Florida meets monthly at the South Mandarin Library, located at 12125 San Jose Boulevard. We are an organization of sugar artists, cake designers and confectioners from Northeast Florida who enjoy getting together every month to visit, watch a demonstration and sample each other's creations. Our purpose is to promote creativity and experimentation in cake decorating, sugar art, chocolate, pastries, candies and just about anything edible that can be done decoratively. We welcome anyone interested in meeting other sugar enthusiasts and swapping ideas and techniques to visit www.sagnfl.blogspot.com for meeting dates.

The Mandarin Chapter of AARP meets the third Friday of every month at 2:00 p.m. at Augustine Landing, located at 10141 Old St. Augustine Road. We are a non-profit, nonpartisan membership organization, affiliated with the national AARP. Our activities and programs are designed to help people age 50 and over improve the quality of their lives. Visitors are welcome! For additional information, please call 733-0516 or email alex9520@comcast.net.

The Children's Writers Jacksonville group is meeting on Tuesday, January 3 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in Room B at the Southeast Regional Library, located at 10599 Deerwood Park Boulevard. Special speakers are Frances Keiser of Sagaponack Books and Jane Wood of Jane Wood Books. The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Janet Walter at jgwalter@comcast.net.

The next meeting of the **Sierra Club** will be on January 9, 2012 at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, located at 2001 University Boulevard West. Social time will begin at 6:30 p.m. and the program will begin at 7:00 p.m. Why is wilderness important and why should preserving Utah's Red Rock Wilderness concern us in Florida? Jackie Feinberg of the Utah Wilderness Alliance will answer these questions as she shares a multimedia slide show narrated by Robert Redford highlighting this 1.4 million acre area of sweeping plateaus, unique geological formations and 10,000 year old archeological sites that surround Canyonlands National Park. These lands, currently protected by the Wilderness Act of 1964, are under threat by proposed strip mining and off-road vehicle tracks. Come for the visual feast. Leave with some action steps you can take to preserve them. The event is free to all and refreshments will be provided. Please bring your own cup to reduce waste in the landfill. For additional information, please contact Janet Larson at 247-1876.

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School District Journal

By Contributing Writer Tommy Hazouri, School Board Representative, District 7

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and is ready for an exciting New Year!

The School Board recently held its annual Organizational Meeting and elected a new chairman, Betty Burney and vice-chairman, Fred "Fel" Lee, for the coming year. We also held a Board Development meeting and set long range goals for the coming year, as well as goals for the first quarter. When these are completed, we will meet again and establish our next quarter's goals.

The Duval County School Board provides governance and oversight for the Duval County Public School System. DCPS is one of the largest urban school districts in America and we are proud that our school system has earned a grade of "B" from the Florida Department of Education.

As the Duval County School Board strives to move our schools and our students towards genuine educational excellence, we have formulated the following overarching goals to realize the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement. The long range goals are:

1. Superintendent Accountability: Define and implement the mechanism for holding the superintendent accountable for the successful execution of the district's strategic plan and increasing student achievement.

2. Transparency of the Duval County Public School System: Increase public awareness of the district's successful school offerings (i.e., Accelerated High Schools, Academic Feeder Patterns, Career Academies, Magnet Schools and Neighborhood Schools).

3. Strengthen Board/Superintendent Relationship: The board and superintendent will effectively impact student achievement through continuous learning opportunities that strengthen teamwork/collaboration skills.

The board has outlined three goals to be implemented during the first quarter, January through March, 2012.

1. Communications and transparency: Enhance internal and external communications for employees and citizens alike.

2. Increase morale: Strategically implement opportunities to impact employee morale and increase employee motivation.

3. Succession planning: Design and implement an effective, proactive succession planning system that allows DCPS to be well prepared for expansion, the loss of key employees as a result of retirements/promotions and/or organizational redesign. Successful succession planning will build bench strength for DCPS.

Important Dates:
January 2: Winter Holiday (schools and district offices closed)
January 9: School Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m. - Cline Auditorium, 1701 Prudential Drive
January 11: Student Early Release Day
January 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday (schools and district offices closed)
January 20: Teacher Planning Day (No school for students)
January 25: Student Early Release Day

Thought for the Month:
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Water management district streamlines permitting process

By Contributing Writer Teresa H. Monson, St. Johns River Water Management District

As part of the St. Johns River Water Management District's work to make its permitting process more efficient, the district's Governing Board voted today to approve consumptive use permitting changes that will save applicants time and money while maintaining the district's commitment to environmental protection.

Consumptive use permits (CUPs) allow water to be withdrawn from groundwater or surface water for reasonable beneficial uses—such as public supply—in a manner that does not interfere with existing legal uses and protects water resources from harm.

District staff had identified several areas for improvement in permitting rules, including expanding the modification of permits by letter, reducing reporting requirements for small water users and simplifying the water use type categories. Under the new rules, the types of CUP modifications that can be requested by letter will be expanded. This simplified modification process will streamline the permitting tasks for applicants as well as district staff.

Water users with allocations of less than 100,000 gallons per day will no longer be required to submit semi-annual water use reports under the new rules. Instead, they will submit an "Annual Statement of Continuing Use" card that will contain several easily answered questions. In addition, the number of water use types will be reduced from 23 to seven to simplify the process.

"The District recognized the opportunity to improve the CUP process," said Governing Board Chairman Lad Daniels. "This new process takes greater advantage of technology, specifically the Internet and personal computer functions, to improve the speed of processing applications and compliance submittals without compromising any of our standards."

Dreaming of writing a mystery?

Local author June Weltman will lead beginning and experienced writers through a step-by-step process of how to write a mystery novel during an eight-week adult education class at Mandarin High School, starting Thursday, January 19. The classes are held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Weltman said the class focuses on writing mysteries for children and teens, but it is also appropriate for writers who want to write adult mysteries without explicit violence.

Registration will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on January 3, 4 and 5 at Mandarin High School, located at 4831 Greenland Road.

Weltman is the author of Mystery of the Missing Candlestick, a mystery for ages nine through 13 that won a special award from the Florida Historical Society. She has led writing workshops since 2006 and uses Edgar and Agatha award-winning children's and young adult mysteries as the basis of class lectures and discussions.

For information about the class, please call Kathy Cook, community education coordinator, at 260-3911, Ext. 1043 or visit www.duvalschools.org/mhs.

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Political commentary

They strap on a gun to go to work

By J. Bruce Richardson

Everyday when they go to work, they strap on a gun. Every time they put on their uniform, they are in danger of some lunatic taking a shot at them just because they wear a uniform and protect us. Anyone who has a law enforcement officer as a loved one knows the constant, underlying fear their loved one will violate the first rule of law enforcement: come home safe after your shift.

We owe a huge debt to those who serve and protect us daily. Often, the hours are dreadful, rewards only come in the form of a job well done and stress is huge. Traditionally, police officers have been tragically underpaid, with little or no benefits. Thankfully, that has changed and now members of the law enforcement community receive decent pay and benefits, with a good financial future for retirement.

In Jacksonville, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), the union which represents the rank and file of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, is making it hugely difficult for taxpayers to muster much respect and sentiment for Sheriff's Office certified law enforcement employees.

As of press time for Mandarin NewsLine, the issue of whether or not the FOP will join with the entire rest of the employees of the City of Jacksonville taking a needed minor reduction in salaries has not been settled. For months, the FOP held out for a raise; other people were losing their jobs and others were glad to just have a job, yet the FOP demanded a raise for its members.

The FOP is doing great harm to its members and literally telling the non-working involuntary taxpayers of Jacksonville it doesn't matter how difficult life may be for them, FOP members still want a salary increase. A lot of the luster has gone out of the crown of respect and achievement for law enforcement. Greed is never a pretty sight.

Yes, it was wrong for decades to underpay law enforcement officers. And, yes, it's a relief to have their salaries at a livable wage considering what each one of them puts on the line every minute of every day. But, in a time when everyone else is sacrificing some, it's also wrong for the FOP to hold its members as a group which should not offer even a minor sacrifice.

Some things need to change; perhaps Nelson Cuba, the longtime head of the local FOP needs to give up the perks of his office and go back to being a full time deputy on the street. In other Florida cities, local FOP chapters have been voted by the membership to be decertified as their bargaining unit because too many reasonable offers were brushed aside during negotiations. Maybe that needs to happen in Jacksonville, too.

Never doubt we are forever grateful to the nothing-less-than brave men and women who serve in law enforcement. But, never doubt we will ever allow ourselves to become their economic slaves and roll over to every demand. We all deserve better than that.

J. Bruce Richardson, a resident of Jacksonville, has created many successful marketing, advertising, public relations, fund-raising and political campaigns. A former newsroom staffer of the late Jacksonville Journal, Mr. Richardson has an educational background in management and finance. His column appears monthly in Mandarin NewsLine.

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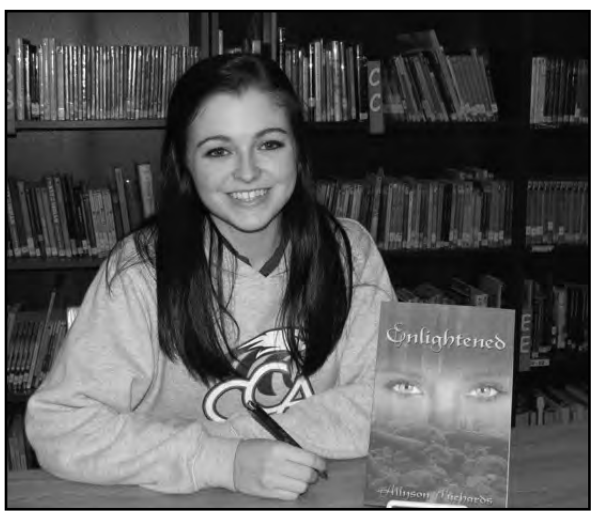
School hosts second annual Author Extravaganza



Allyson Richards and her first book

Christ's Church Academy (CCA) high school student Allyson Richards and 16 other local authors of children's books gathered at the school on Monday, December 12 for the school's second annual Author Extravaganza, where they met with students, parents and other children in the community to discuss and sign their books.

Richards, 18, was 15 years old when she wrote her first book, Enlightened, which she is now developing into a four-part series. Enlightened is a story about 16-year-old Alexis Randall, who battles a disturbing curse. Richards is also writing other stories and recently traveled to New York for an interview with Teen Kids News about her life as a teen author, which will air in March 2012.

"I have to do a lot of prioritizing," Richards said about juggling writing, school, cheerleading and a busy social life. "School and academics come first, then I plan times that I can write—for fun and for my project."

Richards and the other authors participating in the Author Extravaganza also donated a portion of the proceeds from the sale of their books to CCA's elementary program. Other local authors in attendance were Al and Sherry Bohl, Larry Levy, Jennifer Swanson, Jenny Bjork, Heather Surface, Eric Reinhold, Eileen Erikson, Katherine Ciriello Clark, Cynthia Enuton, Jane Wood, Stephanie Mayberry, Cheryl Dubberly, Betsy Lee, Nancy Murray and Karen Putzke.

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Faith News

The Alexandra Miller Speaker Series presents "Taking it Step by Step: Facing the Challenges of Everyday Life" with Rabbi Kerry Olitzky on Thursday, January 26, 2012 beginning at 7:00 p.m. Sponsored by Jewish Family and Community Services, this year's program will be held at the Jacksonville Jewish Center, located at 3662 Crown Point Road. The program is free and open to the community. To RSVP, please call 394-5737.

Celebrate the New Year with the **famous annual choir "Festival of Lessons and Carols"** at St. John's Cathedral on Saturday night, December 31 at 5:00 p.m. Tim Tuller will conduct the choir in music by Walton, Preston, Lauridsen, Kelly, Cornelius and Mathias and others. There will be carols for the audience to sing in this beautiful, candlelit Cathedral. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is open for everyone in this free event. For additional information, please call 356-5507.

Ladies, come and join us for a **study of the Gospel of John.** CBS (Community Bible Study) meets Thursday mornings at Christ Church PCA, located at 9794 Old St. Augustine Road from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. while Duval/St. Johns County Schools are in session. All are welcome and childcare and children's classes are available. Registration is $25 for adults and $10 for children. Please contact Sandy Mitchell at 731-1452 or sandy.mitchell57@yahoo.com for additional information.

A book review session on the book "Because He Lives - Faith, Hope and Love in Action" will be held on January 12 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin United Methodist Church, located at 11270 San Jose Boulevard in Kasey Mogle Friendship Hall. Expand your concept of mission. Because He Lives - Faith, Hope and Love in Action is a non-fiction story of how God used Joseph and Marilyn Chan in Cambodia. Learn how the Methodist Church has made a difference in the lives of women in Cambodia. Listen as Catherine Ritch Guess, author of the book, shares her personal experiences in Cambodia and as an author. Guess is an appointed Circuit Riding Musician through the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. Her book is available in paperback, online and in book stores. Please contact Linda McAnarney at 230-6563 for additional information.

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Saturday - 4:30 p.m.
Weekend Mass Schedule
Saturday - 5:30 p.m.
Sunday - 8:00 a.m.,
10:00 a.m., 12:00 noon
Hispanic Mass
Sunday - 8:30 a.m.
Historic Church
Polish Mass
2nd & 4th Sunday -
10:00 a.m. - Historic Church
Traditional Latin Mass
Sunday
11:15 a.m. - Historic Church
Weekday Mass Schedule
Monday – Thursday
8:00 a.m. Historic Church
Friday - 8:15 a.m.
Main Church
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Re-enactor cont from pg. 1

ter of Janet and Steve McInall of Fruit Cove. She is a senior Girl Scout in Troop 1405 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Currently she is working on her Girl Scout Gold Award project, which not surprisingly is related to history. She is actively involved in a Girl Scout's life and her troop. This summer she was one of only 14 Girl Scouts chosen from a selective application process for a trip to Iceland. There she met local Icelandic scouts, hiked, discovered waterfalls and cruised out for a bit of whale watching.

She does not only limit her interests to being a re-enactor or the Girl Scouts. She is an accomplished pianist and cello player, performing with the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestra. She has even combined her interest in history and re-enactment by lending her talents to a re-enactment musical group. Before going to college and studying to become an architect she hopes to spend the prior summer volunteering at the Girl Scout World Center in Switzerland. This past summer she participated in a pre-college summer program in architecture at the University of Miami, which helped cement her desire to pursue a career in architecture.

"I love dressing up and sharing history," she says. Though she enjoys history, acting and speaking, her real passions are the Girl Scouts, music and architecture. Piper McInall is a shining example of a well-rounded young girl who has a great understanding of the needs of other people through volunteering, sharing history and the joys of music plus having a desire to provide esthetic beauty through the architecture of the world.

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David and BatSheva: Lascivious and lust or judicious and just

Take off your 21st Century hat, don your Biblical Era one and decide what kind of monarch King David was in his time. The marriage between King David and BatSheva is surrounded by a cloud of controversy; did he commit adultery or was this union a legitimate one? We will be exploring whether a grave injustice had been done to either BatSheva or her former spouse. Why was King David in such a hurry to marry? Why BatSheva? This story is replete with twists and turns that will have your head spinning.

You can explore these ideas with Rena Schochet, at Coffee Roasters of Florida, located at 9735 St. Augustine Road as part of Federation's Shalom Jacksonville's JAVA PM at 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, January 12. Kosher coffee and refreshments will be served.

Rena Schochet, wife of Torah Academy of Jacksonville's principal Rabbi Avi Schochet, arrived in Jacksonville for the start of the school year. She has a bachelor's degree in Organizational Behavior and is a trained facilitator, mediator and life coach. Schochet's extensive experience in both adult education and coaching has led to speaking engagements on three continents and four countries. Her talks vary from Torah studies and Bible-based biographies, to coaching workshops and exposés on cults and cult-exiting activities. Schochet's career has taken her to Johannesburg, South Africa, Toronto, Canada and Sunnyvale, California. As a Life Coach, her skills are focused on inter-personal relationships and communication.

The program promises to be fascinating. Jewish newcomers and locals are invited to attend; however, there is limited seating. Please RSVP by January 10 to shalomjax@jewishjacksonville.org or 448-5000 x206.

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Church launches January 8 in a permanent location– Everybody's Invited!

Access Church announces they will begin meeting in a permanent facility at 4911 Losco Road beginning on January 8. The church has been working to upgrade the former Guardian Lutheran School for the past three months. The property on Losco Road includes 11 acres of land and 26,500 square feet of buildings. The upgrades include a 400-seat auditorium, themed environments for children through fifth grade, space for teens, offices and 200 parking spaces.

Access Church started in 2006 when a few families realized that there were more than 800 churches in Jacksonville and yet 80 percent of the city wasn't attending church.

"Our city needed a place where children and adults could get excited about attending and inviting their friends," said Rich Barrett, the lead pastor of Access. "We needed a place where skeptics could feel welcomed and heard. We wondered, 'What if we could design something new and different?'"

These families moved forward with the goal of creating a place where the teaching was practical and made sense, the music really connected and was unlike anything most people had heard in church and the kids had fun. Several had experienced this type of environment at North Point Community Church in Atlanta. And in March 2007, Access Church launched as a video campus or strategic partnership of North Point Ministries and its lead pastor, Andy Stanley. Stanley is the popular preacher who draws more than 20,000 adults to three Atlanta campuses each Sunday. Attendees say that his messages have the unique ability to connect with believers and skeptics alike.

"Our goal is to lead people into growing relationships with Jesus Christ," Barrett said. "We do this by creating environments where people are encouraged to pursue intimacy with God, community with insiders and influence with outsiders. We share the mission, values and strategy of North Point Ministries, as well as Andy Stanley's practical, biblical teaching."

For the last four years, volunteers and a local staff team have strived to create irresistible environments for children and adults at the UNF Fine Arts Center. Each Sunday they unloaded a truck and two trailers and set up 30,000 pounds of gear. Then two hours later they packed it all up and towed it away. The permanent location on Losco Road will mean that the Access Church environments will have a permanent presence in the community instead of being stored in a truck.

"When we saw how our friends, neighbors and co-workers responded to their experience at Access Church, we knew all the work of unpacking and packing every week was worth it," Barrett said. "But we are so excited about the amazing opportunity God has given us to occupy a permanent space. We plan to create appealing environments for years to come in Jacksonville."

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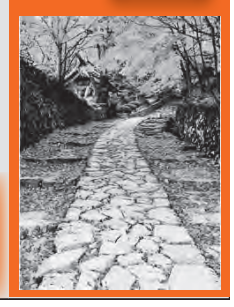

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Happy New Year
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Explaining "agency" – representing people vs. paper

By Contributing Writer Denise Bash, Realtor, Prudential Network Realty

One area of confusion for buyers and sellers is the role real estate licensees have in real estate negotiations. There are three basic options in a real estate transaction that a brokerage firm can assume: no brokerage agreement, transaction broker and single agent.

In a no brokerage agreement the agent is simply handling the paperwork of the transaction and cannot represent or negotiate on behalf of the buyer or seller. As a transaction broker, the agent provides limited representation and does not have a fiduciary relationship with the buyer or seller. A single agent is working in a fiduciary capacity and must provide loyalty, confidentiality and obedience to the principal whereas other forms of representation will not. More and more buyers and sellers are looking for full representation from their broker that a single agency provides.

As a transaction broker, the buyer or seller is a customer of the agent and has given up their right to undivided loyalty from the licensee. In other words, a transaction broker may not work to the detriment of either party in a real estate transaction, but conversely cannot work to benefit either party either. Many brokers have opted for this limited representation to avoid legal responsibility.

The highest degree of accountability comes with single agency. As a single agent, the broker has a fiduciary relationship and owes complete allegiance to the buyer or seller, who is then referred to as a principal or client. This means that the single agent is not only allowed to work to the benefit of their principal, by law the agent must work to achieve the best terms for their principal.

A single agent must provide loyalty, confidentiality and obedience to the principal, whereas other forms of representation do not. More and more buyers and sellers are looking for full representation from their broker that a single agency provides.

As our industry evolves and customers continue to demand a higher degree of accountability from their real estate broker, agents are faced with the question of whether they want to represent people or paper and in the end, it is the buyer or seller that will decide if they want to be a principal or a customer.

Area Market Update: Mandarin, Beauclerc and Bartram

All numbers based on an average of sold listing during the past 30-days: November 8 – December 8, 2011

Number of Houses Sold 82
List Price $176,772
Sold Price $170,253
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Sold Price per Square Feet $82.75
Square Footage 2031
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Local restaurant undergoes renovation

There is no doubt: Amos is becoming very famous again. The newly improved Famous Amos Restaurants are an absolute delight: bright and cheery instead of dark and dreary.

It is easy to see that a lot of time, money and effort are being spent on the six Jacksonville area restaurants, including the Mandarin location. And the work continues—there is still much to do, but the clean new look is very impressive. A visit to the Mandarin Famous Amos, on San Jose Boulevard, is a must for all your dining needs. They are open daily from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and 24 hours on Fridays and Saturdays.

As always, Famous Amos offers full service catering.

With changing daily lunch and dinner specials like homemade pot roast, baked chicken with dressing, meatloaf, chicken parmigiana, eggplant parmigiana and country fried steak, served with fresh local, in-season vegetables, Famous Amos Restaurants has something for everyone. In fact they also have daily vegetarian options so there really is something to suit all tastes. Of course, breakfast is still served all day long.

The Early Bird Breakfast Special is extremely popular at all locations. Currently our featured breakfast is the "2 x 4 Special" which consists of two eggs, four sausage or bacon, grits, toast and honey.

Famous Amos Restaurants began over 40 years ago when, at midnight on January 1, 1967, the doors of the first restaurant were opened. We invite you to come on by and find out why the people of Jacksonville have been coming back for Famous Amos Restaurants' county cooking for over 40 years.

MJGDS students make a difference

By Contributing Writer Talie Zaifert, Martin J. Gottlieb Day School

The Martin J. Gottlieb Day School students and faculty joined together to feed the hungry in the community during the Thanksgiving holiday. Students in the MJGDS Middle School delivered 61 turkeys, 75 bags of groceries and 31 gift cards to needy families at Beauclerc Elementary School, JFCS, the Mal Washington Foundation and a number of individual families referred to the school. MJGDS provided three kosher food baskets complete with kosher turkeys and gift cards to local families. Twelve families of students at Beauclerc Elementary School who were recently evicted from their homes received bags with ready-to-eat foods and gift cards for local restaurants.

For many of these families the economy has hit hard and they are having a difficult time making ends meet. The Thanksgiving baskets made it possible for these families to enjoy the holiday. The baskets provided nourishment for their bodies and their souls!

MJGDS families were able to sit around the table this past Thanksgiving holiday and reflect on the fact that they were able to make a difference this Thanksgiving. Each dollar, each can and each box that MJGDS students provided added up to make the deliveries possible.

New book provides advice from top pain specialists

Chronic pain sufferers now have a new weapon in their fight to manage and control their pain. Pain Wise: A Patient's Guide to Pain Management, a new book by doctors who specialize in pain management, is a must-have resource for chronic pain sufferers. The book explains in simple language the causes of pain, as well as effective Interventional Pain Management (IPM) techniques and advice on how to choose the best physician to treat chronic pain. According to a recent federal report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), chronic pain affects 116 million Americans and costs the United States approximately $560 to $635 billion annually.

Dr. Andrea Trescot, based in St. Augustine, Florida co-authored the book with Dr. Francis Riegler (California) and Dr. David Kloth (Connecticut). Together they bring years of experience as long-time practicing IPM physicians, educators and members of the American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP), a physicians' group dedicated to the promotion and development of IPM.

Pain-Wise includes expert advice and information on:

- How to choose a pain specialist that is right for you
- All of the most common interventional pain management treatments
- Getting the most out of your doctor visits
- Minimally invasive disc surgery
- Implantable pain relief devices
- Cancer pain management

Pain-Wise offers renewed hope to chronic pain sufferers, many of whom become frustrated, depressed and exhausted after visiting doctor after doctor, trying drugs and treatments that do not address the root cause of their pain.

"Pain medicine has improved dramatically in the last few years," states Dr. Trescot, the current United States Chair for the World Institute of Pain. "It is important to know what your options for pain relief might be, and we hope that this book will help to describe and explain those options."

Dr. Trescot is a well-known and respected pain management physician and an esteemed member of the team of specialty physicians at Orthopaedic Associates of St. Augustine. She is a member of the most-respected state, national and international pain societies and a national expert on a variety of pain techniques, having authored more than 50 articles and textbook chapters in addition to her recent book, Pain Wise.

Pain Wise: A Patient's Guide to Pain Management, published by Hatherleigh Press. Ltd., is available for purchase wherever books are sold.

Women's Club cont from pg. 1

things and sharing the enjoyment of northeast Florida. Some of the many activities include day trips, antiquing trips, as well as Bunco, bridge, Mah Jongg and Mexican Train gatherings. For more information, please call Kay at 521-2524. For required reservations for the monthly luncheon/program, held the fourth Thursday of most months at the Ramada Inn, please contact Iris at 268-2459.

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Children and adults alike enjoy Winter Celebration

The hayride was one of the most popular activities at the 12th Annual Winter Celebration in Mandarin, hosted by the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society. The white Percheron and Belgian horses took families for rides through the Walter Jones Historical Park.

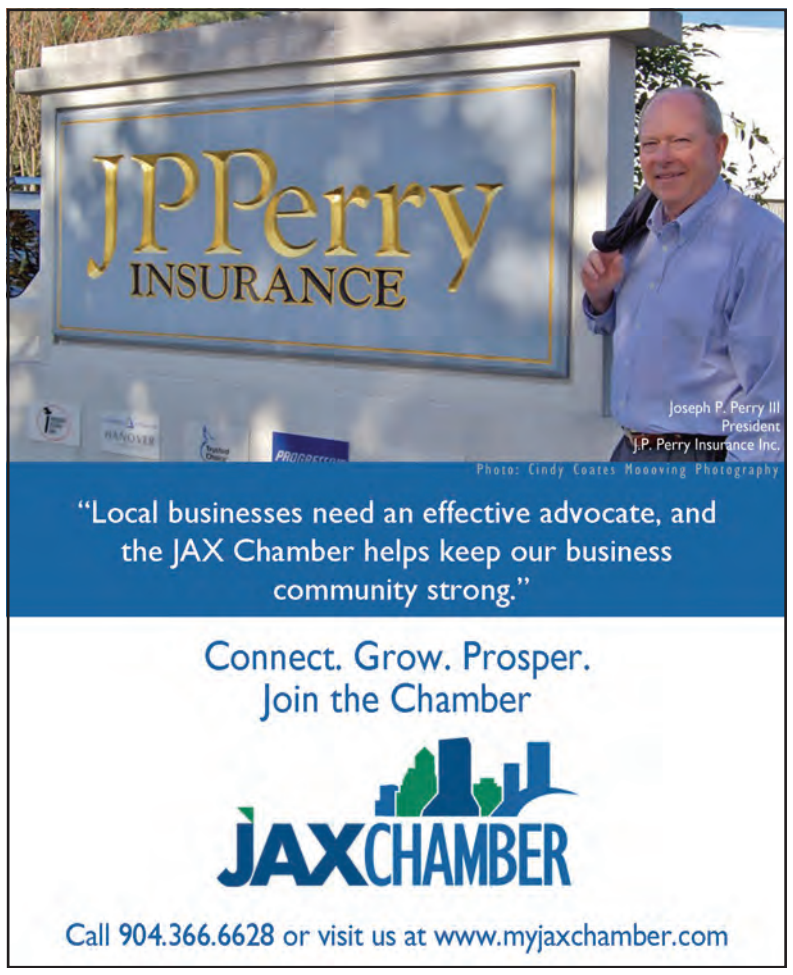
An estimated 1,500 children and adults enjoyed hayrides, train rides, historical reenactors, music, crafts and Santa Claus at the 12th annual Winter Celebration in Mandarin at the Walter Jones Historical Park on December 3.

"It was an absolutely wonderful Winter Celebration," said Karen Roumillat, event coordinator for the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society, which sponsors the event. "Last year we had about 1,200 people, so this is a record. It keeps getting bigger and better. The community support was awesome and so were our volunteers."

"The music from the Mandarin Presbyterian Children's Choir, Jacksonville Community Band and North Florida Folk Network was appreciated by everyone," she noted. "Many people sat and listened."

New Year's traditions from around the world

- The baby and old man have been symbols of the new and old year since the time of the ancient Greeks.
- The Romans derived their name for the month of January from their god Janus, who had two faces, one looking forward and one looking backward.
- In Spain and Portugal, celebrants gather with 12 grapes in their hands. As the clock strikes midnight announcing the new year, a grape is eaten for each strike of the clock.
- In Greece, a special New Year's bread called vasilopita is served and in it is hidden a lucky coin or charm. The bread is served at midnight and whoever gets the charm will have good luck all year.
- Many Europeans eat cabbage or other greens to ensure prosperity for the coming year.



Tips for transitioning through a divorce

By Contributing Writer Katherine B. Ashley, CPA, CDFA™ (Certified Divorce Financial Analyst)

To be sure, divorce ranks near the top of the list for major life transitions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to keep emotions in check while trying to make decisions that will affect you for the rest of your life. This broad framework should help shape your actions and decisions during this particular life transition.

- Be prepared – You will waste time and money by not being prepared. Don't bury your head in the sand and hope it will go away. In this case, ignorance is not bliss. Make copies of important papers while you have access to them. Not having financial information will put you at a severe disadvantage when it comes time to divide assets. Keep a notepad handy to list questions as they come to mind. Bring your necessary paperwork to all meetings.
- Be realistic – In the long run, you suffer the most if you do not brace yourself for change. There will now be two households running on what was once one household budget. There are only two ways to balance the budget: (1) Increase income and/or (2) decrease expenses. There are, however, many different ways to accomplish this. As hard as it may be, face reality and explore all options.
- Be your own ally – Stand up for yourself. Sure, you have probably made mistakes but who hasn't? This does not make you less valuable or less important as an individual. If you cannot overcome feelings of worthlessness, do something for yourself and find a therapist. This may turn out to be one of the best things you ever did.
- Be smart – It's not always what you know but who you know. Seek advice. Do It Yourself should not apply when going through divorce. There are legal and financial professionals who will educate you and advocate for you on your behalf. More importantly, they can be objective and help you make decisions you will not regret for the rest of your life.

Every life transition has its challenges and difficulties. Treat them as opportunities for change and growth. You can become better and stronger because of it.

For additional information, please contact kashley@kbacpa.net.

Visit our website: www.MandarinNewsLine.com

Encore

A library is more than books!

By Betty Swenson Bergmark, Professor Emeritus, Jacksonville University

So many times I hear of events going on at the Main Branch of the Jacksonville Public Library, but since I use the local branch for my reading needs, it hasn't registered what a wonderful variety of outstanding presentations are available there, or what I have been missing.

One of the major on going presentations is the library coordination with the Jacksonville "Art in Public Places" program, which works "to advance the appreciation and expression of art and culture through art education, funding and technical assistance and communication and advocacy." In fact, as one approaches the main entrance to the library on Laura Street in downtown Jacksonville, one cannot miss the greeting offered by the bronze and painted stainless steel statue appropriately entitled "Wisdom." Sculptor Larry Kirkland uses the owl, a traditional symbol of wisdom, to identify the building as a place of information and learning.

In the main library one can enjoy Kathryn Freeman's Grand Staircase murals depicting local events, history, literary figures, architecture and popular pastimes which are a part of Jacksonville's history. Also available in the Grand Reading Room is a large geometric abstract painting by expressionist artist Al Held. Originally the library commissioned four works, but only one was completed before his untimely death in 2005.

In a different art form are the works of 10 notable photographers displayed in the lower level gallery.

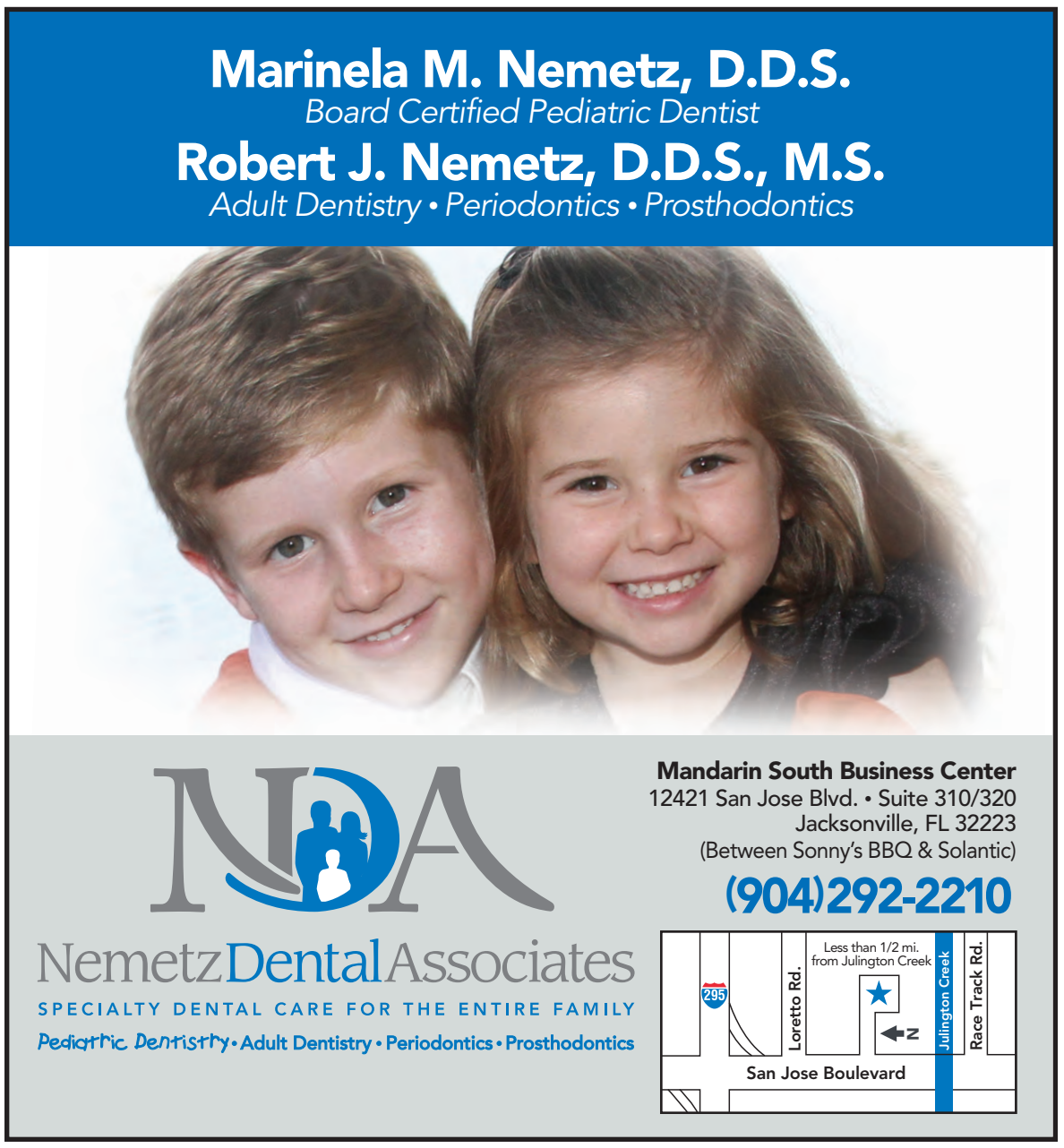
To quote the Art in Public Places brochure, "Libraries are excellent learning environments—open to all. Introducing people to art in libraries encourages connections between the written word and visual art. Visual literacy or the ability to 'read' what is seen, enhances the enjoyment of books and develops observation skills."

But visual art is not the only thing offered. Among the many special events, one of the most popular is the "Intermezzo Sunday Concerts" offered monthly in the Main Library's Hicks Auditorium at 2:30 p.m. The concerts showcase the artistry of prominent First Coast musicians. Coming up in 2012 – on January 8, "The Sterling Brass" will be featured and on February 12, you can enjoy Tugci Taro, renowned pianist.

Also coming up in January, the Jacksonville Public Library Masterpiece Theatre Book and Film Club will feature a showing of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" at 12:00 noon until 1:00 pm on January 25. Read the book, watch the movie and then join other attendees to discuss this Masterpiece classic.

Continuing from December 28 through February 17, 2012, the national touring exhibit "Lincoln and the Civil War" will be on display. The official opening on January 4 will feature guest speakers, re-enactors, music programs and much more.

This is just a small sampling of some of the offerings presented at the Main Branch of our Public library. For more information on these and other programs, please visit the website www.jaxpublicliblary.org or call 630-2665.



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This handsome fellow is named Ernie. He is a 1-year old Labrador Retriever mix who has been at JHS since August 2011. Ernie is a very smart boy who loves to play catch, knows how to sit and stay and gets along well with other dogs. At the end of the day he would love to curl up and snuggle with you. Won't you please come in and give Ernie a home today!?

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1 year old
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44th annual Mandarin Art Festival: an Easter weekend tradition!

By Contributing Writer Susie Scott, President, Mandarin Community Club

The clock is ticking as plans unfold for the 44th annual Mandarin Art Festival, an Easter weekend tradition in Mandarin for generations which includes food, fun and fabulous art!

Thousands will stroll past dozens of booths set under the majestic oaks on the grounds of the historic club building. As a juried art show, only fine art or fine craft exhibitors are accepted in the longest continually running festival in northeast Florida. Patrons will enjoy the skilled workmanship of multiple mediums including sculpture, pottery, glass, photography, painting, jewelry and more.

And to inspire the young artists in our local schools, a Children's Art Show will display entries selected for judging inside the club building.

Look for the return of the ever popular bake sale, green market and raffle prizes!

The Mandarin Community Club, founding organization, will host and manage operations with the help of the dedicated club board, members and volunteers. Volunteers are needed, so please consider being a part of this annual special event. Call the club at 268-1622 to volunteer or to place a business ad in the event program as a sponsor. Information and photos from previous years is available at www.mandarincommunityclub.org .

The Mandarin Community Club is dedicated to the preservation and beautification of Mandarin; to providing educational forums for the community; to enhancing the cultural and recreational life of the area; and to maintaining the club's historic properties.

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Youth Scene

A musical resolution

By Megan Crawford

What does it mean to have a New Year's resolution? For many people, it means making self improvements, like losing weight or gaining a more positive outlook on life. However, resolutions aren't just for old people trying to lower their cholesterol; they're also a great excuse to learn new skill. From water-color painting to ventriloquism, the list goes on and on. However, there's only one skill that has been proven to literally bring music to peoples' ears. Clearly, this is none other than learning to play an instrument. It may not be easy, but the results will leave you with more songs to sing in the shower.

You've heard of famous musicians who began playing their instrument when they were three. Would it surprise you to know that most people don't start off that way? Gabby Le, a junior in high school, began playing the flute when she was in middle school. She also played in a school band, which introduced her to other instruments including the guitar, electric bass, French horn, trumpet and ukulele.

"It made me appreciate music more and want to learn more about it." Le says.

The emotion that comes from the music is her favorite part about playing a tune.

"If you play a happy song, you can relate that to a happy time in your life and it makes it that much better," she explains.

How does she deal with getting nervous on stage?

"I kind of get into my own little bubble and with that I can just soar. I try not to look at the crowd too much and just pretend they're not there."

Any advice for future rockstars? "It's hard, but just put your heart into it and you'll get out what you put in. If you're not gonna try, you're not gonna succeed," Le opines.

Sometimes the best way to master an instrument is to focus on only one. Just ask Alexa Velez, a college freshman, who has been playing the piano since she was five. She recalls the exciting day when her Baldwin piano arrived: "From there it just grew into something else I wouldn't have been able to picture at that age."

After she started entering competitions, Velez states that her musical abilities really "took off." These experiences also taught her more about improvisation.

"I can just make whatever up in my head and it just goes through my body and out my fingers," she states.

What's Velez's biggest difficulty? "Finding music that you really want to play is the hardest part, because I believe that is what really motivates you to learn the piece. If it's something that you absolutely hate, it's going to be a lot harder to master the piece." Long story short, don't pick boring songs.

Hopefully this article has taught you that, if you play from your heart, learning an instrument can be as easy as a scale. All you have to do is pick your weapon, start learning some notes and have a rockin' New Year.

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Community Club hosts holiday dinner

By Contributing Writer Lynn Cuda, Mandarin Community Club

The Mandarin Community Club hosted a Holiday Dinner Celebration for their members on December 15. Held at the club building, located at 12447 Mandarin Road, the event was intended to show appreciation to members for their support over the past year. Attendees were treated to a traditional holiday dinner and entertainment by Broadway Kid Starz under the direction of Kathleen Myrick.

Donations for the Mandarin Food Bank were collected, a tradition the club has sponsored for over a decade.

Election of the officers and board for the upcoming year also took place on December 15. Those elected for 2012 were President, Susie Scott; Vice President, Emily Lisska; Treasurer, Robert McLean; and Secretary, Betty Wolfe. A complete listing of the newly elected At Large members appears on the club website, www.mandarincommunityclub.org.

Perhaps best known as the host and sponsor for the annual Mandarin Art Festival held every Easter weekend, the Mandarin Community Club invites all interested parties to become members. The 2012 membership drive starts this month. For more information, visit the web site or call 268-1622.

MHS Happenings

Happy New Year, Mustangs!

By Contributing Writer Rondene Grinam, MHS Student

Mustangs bring in the New Year at full speed! Winter Break is over and now is the time to snap back into learning mode. This month is full of club meetings, sporting events, scholarship deadlines and there's still plenty of time to get those grades up as high as possible before report cards go home on January 27!

The Envirothon Club will meet every Tuesday this month at 2:00 p.m. in Room I202. These first meetings will consist of setting up focus groups for various topics. Members should consider their strengths and interests in the following: aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soils and current issues. The Brain Brawl Club will meet every Thursday and Friday of this month at 1:45 p.m. in Room F103. Students, be sure to check PlanetHS.com for new updates on club events. Parents, be sure to create your own account at PlanetHS.com to stay up-to-date on your child's activities.

The Medical Academy will be hosting a Parent Night on January 10 at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. This is for all current and prospective medical academy students and parents to see what the academy is all about.

Seniors, scholarship deadlines are swiftly approaching. Stay on top of scholarship information by corresponding with your guidance counselor or following the Scholarships page on PlanetHS.com. Also, as those college acceptance letters continue to roll in, save copies for your counselor and earn your very own graduation caps on the College Acceptance bulletin board!

On Wednesday, January 4, there will be an SAC meeting in the Conference Room, upstairs, next to the Guidance. The meeting will begin promptly at 12:00 noon. Also, the PTSA is currently holding their Cookbook Fundraiser. Cookbooks are on sale for $10.00 and all of the money stays at MHS to support our yearly school efforts like scholarships, teacher appreciation luncheons, challenge day activities, vision screening and much more. The recipes were submitted by students, faculty and staff right here at Mandarin High School. Support you school by purchasing a MHS Cookbook by calling 607-9622 to place your order.

Yearbooks are still on sale for $90. Order at yearbookordercenter.com and when prompted, enter the school code: 2340. Get yours now!

Students will get two more breaks this month on January 16, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and on January 20, for a Teacher Planning Day.

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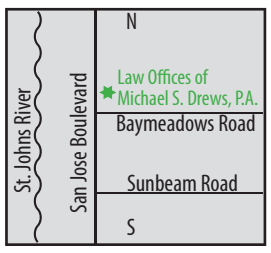

Happy New Year
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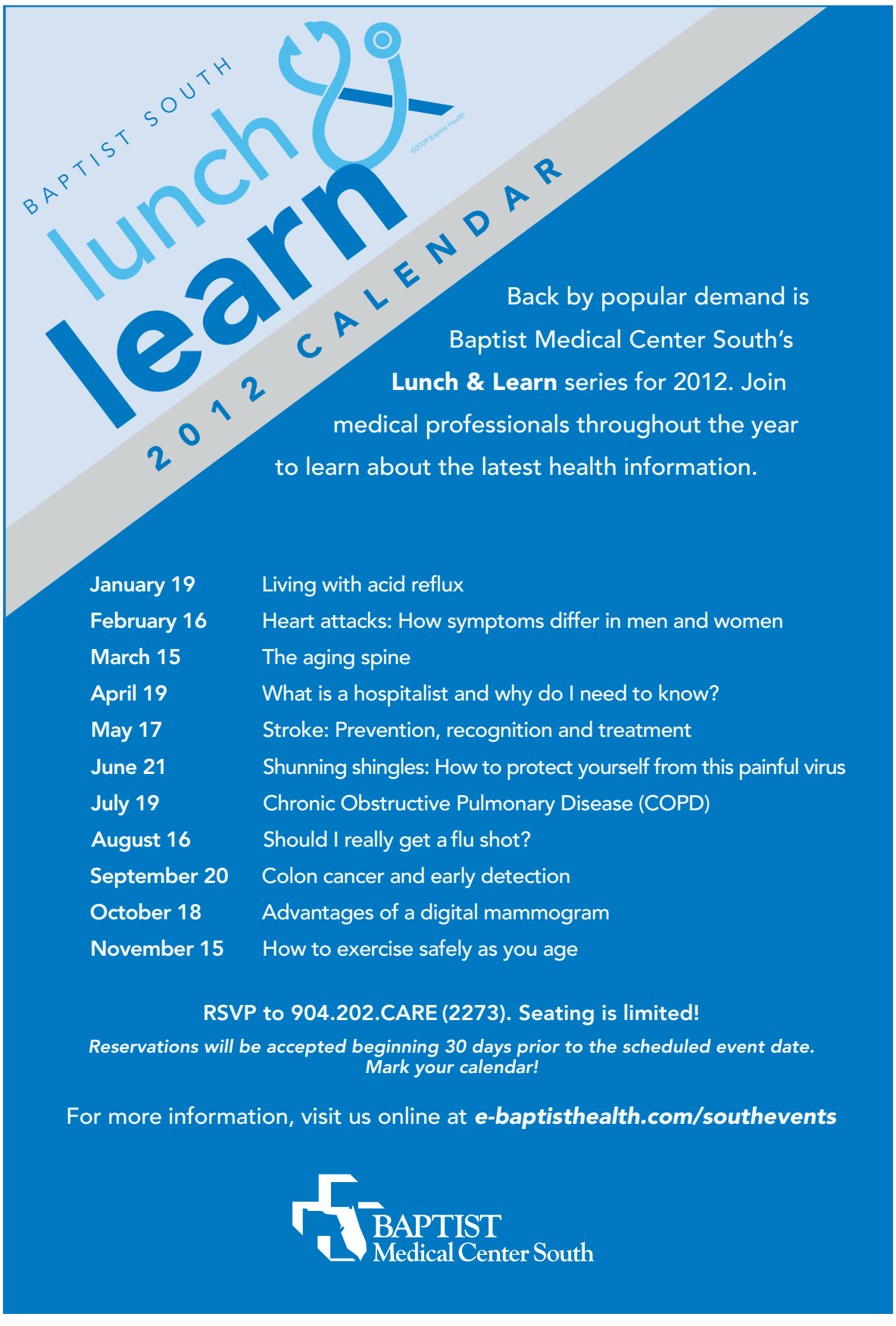
Mandarin NewsLine!

The Northeast Florida Conservatory Concert and Jazz Community Bands performed Sunday December 18, 2011 at Mandarin Presbyterian Church.



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Congratulations to Loretto's Teacher of the Year

Cara Miller was recently chosen as the Teacher of the Year for Loretto Elementary.

Miller states, "While growing up I was lucky enough to have the best teachers in the world: my parents. They taught me that patience, creativity and determination can conquer all. They helped me come to the realization that I was meant to be a teacher. My love for children and understanding their differences motivates my drive to meet my students' needs."

After graduating from the University of North Florida in 2002, Miller began working for Duval County Public Schools. She began her career as a fourth grade teacher at Richard L. Brown Elementary and later transferred to Loretto Elementary where she has spent the majority of her career as a third grade teacher.

Miller concludes, "I am honored to be Loretto Elementary's 2012 Teacher of the Year!"

Loretto Elementary School's 2011–12 Spelling Bee Winner

Congratulations to Loretto Elementary School's 2011-12 Spelling Bee winner – Nicole Gipalo in Lorraine Hannah's classroom! The second place finisher was You Jeon from Alethea Tarabishi's classroom; the third place finisher was Lily Skinner from Alethea Tarabishi's classroom; and the fourth place finisher was Alexis Allen from Sandra Fountain's classroom. The winning word was "parasite."

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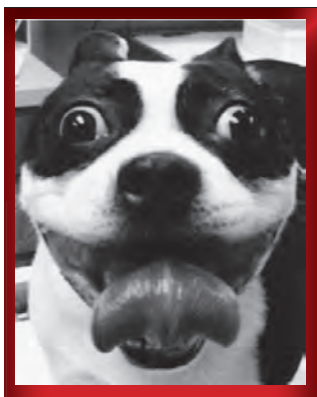

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Youth Arts Update

By Danielle Wirsansky

Dancers and choreographers face intense competition; only the most talented find regular work. The specialized training provided by Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DA) helps those that decide to pursue this intense career later on in life. To showcase the students' hard work, there is an annual Student Choreography Dance Concert held each year. It will be held January 5 at 7:30 p.m. in the DA Theatre.

All dance majors are required in their junior or senior year to take Choreography, a class teaching students the other, more unknown side of dance.

Said Sofia DeCerce, a senior and Mandarin resident, "It's really an important part of becoming a well rounded dancer. You never really realize how much goes into a dance piece until you're the one who has to choreograph it yourself."

Complex movements and dances on stage and screen do not happen without a lot of hard work. Dancers spend years learning dances and honing skills, as do most choreographers. Together, they then translate those skills into movement that expresses ideas and stories.

Joshua Yarbrough, a senior currently taking Choreography, had his piece accepted into the concert after a rigorous audition process. Titled, *Every Soldier Has a Home,* it is a blend of modern dancing and hip-hop and tells the story of the soldiers who go to war and the families they left behind.

"It is a beautiful piece. I have talented dancers performing my piece and I really have enjoyed working with them," he shared.

Becoming a choreographer usually requires years of experience. Katherine Hardison, who took Choreography her junior year, said, "It really teaches us respect for teachers and choreographers because it is so difficult and stressful to do."

The concert is open to all genres of dance and the decision left to the discretion of the student choreographer. Many of the choreographers choose to do some form of modern choreography, but everything is represented from ballet to hip hop. Guest artists are also brought to this concert, as well as the Senior Piece in which all the senior dancers perform together for the last time.

Claudia Weeks, a senior, is thankful for having had the opportunity to take the Choreography class. "I feel like I can express myself more freely and may put more of my emotions into the piece I am dancing."

Children with special needs benefit from church and business partnership

Jon Edenfield, Madelyn Speagle, Russell Howarth and Pastor Johnson

On Wednesday, November 20, Great Strides Rehabilitation presented an award to the staff and children of Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran School for their outstanding efforts to help children with special needs.

Approximately two years ago Dr. Madelyn Spiegel, principal of Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran School and Jon Edenfield, director of Great Strides Rehabilitation formed a partnership to provide a transition class for children with special needs. This class provides the opportunity for children with special needs to participate in a mainstream learning environment with support and assistance from the staff of Shepherd of the Woods School and therapists from Great Strides Rehabilitation. The class currently consists of nine children who range in grade levels from kindergarten to second grade.

Parents of the children report that their children have made tremendous progress and attribute it to this special class.

For more information on this class please call shepherded the Woods Lutheran School at 641-8385.

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SENIOR NEWSLINE
NEWS & VIEWS FOR SENIOR ADULTS

River Garden Gala raises $170,000

The Selevan Family and friends really know how to party. Donna Berger, Faye Hyken, Rebekah Selevan, Jack Selevan, Susan Baldock, Talie and Dana Zaifert and Andrew Selevan.

More than 480 guests enjoyed an evening of dinner, dancing and entertainment by Rockapella at the 19th annual River Garden Gala, held on November 12 at the Renaissance Resort at World Golf Village. The event was co-chaired by Dorothy Verstandig and Maxine Romo, and SunTrust Bank served as Premier Gala Sponsor.

This year's Gala raised a total of $170,000 in support of River Garden and its residents. Since 1993, the Galas have raised more than $2.7 million for River Garden's frail elderly. More than 50 percent of River Garden's residents receive Medicaid and the Home must raise approximately $1.3 million a year to make up the difference between the cost of care and the amount received from Medicaid.

"Without the philanthropic support of our caring friends and members of the community," said development director Kathy Osterer, "we would be unable to maintain the standards of quality care that enable our residents to live with dignity in a safe, caring environment."

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The link between diabetes and oral health

(ARA) - People living with diabetes need to take care of and monitor their health very closely. While monitoring their blood glucose is usually top of mind, the 26 million Americans living with diabetes may be surprised to learn that 95 percent have a form of gum disease. This is compared to only 50 percent of the general population. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that people with diabetes are twice as likely to develop serious gum disease as people without diabetes.

"People living with diabetes are at an increased risk for developing periodontal disease because they are generally more susceptible to bacterial infection, and have a decreased ability to fight bacteria that invade the gums," says Dr. Maria Emanuel Ryan, professor of oral biology and pathology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, New York.

A big misconception is that patients always experience pain if they have gum disease; this is not the case and it is especially important for diabetes patients to know and watch for the following signs and symptoms:

- Bleeding gums when you brush or floss.
- Red, swollen, puffy or sore gums.
- Gums that have pulled away from your teeth.
- Changes in the way your teeth fit together when you bite.
- Pus that appears between your teeth and gums.
- Constant bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth.

If you do suffer from diabetes and have any of the signs and symptoms of gum disease, it's important you visit your dentist to determine if there is any oral care procedures you can follow to give you better oral health.

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New addition for local senior home

River Garden is pleased to announce the opening of its 10,000 square foot building expansion project. The addition houses a new therapy pavilion and a new adult day care/activities pavilion, enabling River Garden to greatly expand their outpatient and home healthcare services. The Therapy Center will now be able to increase its outpatient capacity by up to 50 people per day and Adult Day Care by up to 30 clients per day, seven days a week.

Martin Goetz, CEO said, "We are structuring the River Garden system of senior services so that our care community can be responsive to the needs of 'baby boomers' as they transition to 'senior boomers.' Many of those baby boomers will seek to receive care in their own homes, rather than in a long-term care facility. This expansion and renovation project will allow us to continue to meet our mission and be well-positioned to meet the ongoing care needs of seniors regardless of where they might choose to live."

The project also includes refurbishment of the existing facility as well as relocation and expansion of the medical clinic, pharmacy, admissions and home healthcare areas, providing triple the available space in which to meet with residents, clients and families in an atmosphere of privacy and comfort.

Construction of the 10,000 square foot addition began in the spring 2011. The existing building will remain open throughout the multi-stage construction/renovation process, which has been organized and scheduled to minimize disruption for residents, outpatient clients, staff and families.

SENIOR NEWSLINE
NEWS & VIEWS FOR SENIOR ADULTS

The specially designed cooking demonstration kitchen in the new Adult Day Care/Activities Pavilion is a big hit with residents and staff. (Shown is Adult Day Care staff member Martha Mercado-Quintero)

Children bring holiday cheer

By Contributing Writer Jennifer Christensen

Jitterbugs, a local Kindermusik Studio, had lots of fun this past December bringing festive joy to the senior citizens at Augustine Landing. Jitterbugs was invited to bring babies and toddlers from their youngest classes for an afternoon of musical activities to celebrate the holiday season, inviting the seniors of the retirement community to join in and play. From laughing, playing, singing and dancing these tiny tots and older adults helped each other build creativity, self-expression and friendships.

The Kindermusik program is based on research demonstrating the benefits of music at each age of a child's development; stimulating their minds, bodies and sense of play. Psychologists, neuroscientists and experts in early childhood development have shown that music does more for children than bring them joy. It improves the connections made by their brain cells needed for practically every kind of intelligence. By combining seniors with these small children, Jitterbugs develops motor, social, cognitive, emotional and sensory skills in both age groups. It more importantly stimulates their sense of fun! Owner Liz Wilson sums up the core of the Jitterbugs Studio, "Kindermusik classes offer a great bonding experience. In a world like ours today where everything moves so fast, Kindermusik slows us down and helps us keep the right things in perspective. We share time together, create friendships, laugh, cry and watch our children grow. Kindermusik fosters the core values we want our children to secure in their early lives." Overall it encourages a love of music in the hearts of all involved.

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Captain David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka

A large number of Florida's East Coast manatee population calls the St. Johns River home. On any given day from late spring to late fall, the gentle, slow-moving animals can often be seen just off the banks of the St. Johns River or one of its tributaries. Sometimes they create quite a spectacle as they play or feed and at other times they are nothing more than a quick glimpse or passing swirl in the water. Even as their numbers have increased in recent years, the giant aquatic mammal still remains elusive to many of its would be spectators.

The manatee is a migratory animal that annually leaves our areas of the St. Johns River when the water temperatures fall to 68 degrees. They will seek winter refuge by traveling south, finding springs which maintain a constant water temperature of 72 degrees. These springs will serve as their winter retreat until the St. Johns once again returns to tolerable temperatures.

The largest natural wintertime habitat on Florida's East Coast for the manatee is Blue Springs State Park. A daily count of well over 100 manatees is common throughout the winter at the spring. A near quarter mile run of crystal clear spring water flowing to the St. Johns River enables anyone who has never been able to observe manatees in their natural settings to do so for hours at a time. The coldest days provide the greatest numbers for viewing as the warmer days encourage the animals to leave the spring in search of food.

Blue Springs State Park is a relatively quick ride. Just take Interstate 4 West to the Deland Exit 114 and turn right following the signs to the park. As winter progresses and ideas for family outings fade, why not plan a visit to Blue Springs for everyone to catch more than a glimpse or passing swirl of Florida's official State marine mammal?

Fishing Report: Yellowmouth and croaker in the usual spots as long as the mild weather holds. Stripers being caught around Shands Bridge. Look for sea trout around the downtown bridges during the evening under lights.

Whether you catch one, some or none, the family time spent fishing will last a lifetime.

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United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Update

Waterway management

By Contributing Writer Ralph Little, Flotilla 14-8

All boaters benefit from the lights, markers and buoys that provide the equivalent of highway signage and permit safe navigation. They identify dangerous or controlled areas and give directions and information. These waterway devices are collectively known as Aids to Navigation (ATON) and each Auxiliary flotilla has a person dedicated to reporting their status for maintenance in the local area. ATON in a tidal zone like the Mandarin section of the St. Johns River are perhaps especially important for their role in channeling boat traffic in generally shallow water. For all the water you see in this area, it is amazing how shallow much of it is, especially at low tide. There are also problems in St. Augustine with boats running aground in the inlet.

Storms, collisions, silting and current can destroy or move ATON. In the river, many ATON are privately placed, but fulfill key purposes in creeks, canals and inlets and embellish navigation capabilities. Typically, river ATON will consist of channel markers on bridges and posts, any of which may be lighted. Other sign markers and buoys provide information about wake and manatee zones, anchoring, and shoals.

Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville began a 90-day Waterways and Management Study (WAMS) on December 1 which will be a major review of the Intracoastal Waterway ATON from Cumberland Sound, Florida (Fernandina) south to day beacon #84 in the Matanzas River. See link at www.d7publicaffairs.com/go/doc/586/1188967/. WAMS studies are conducted periodically to better facilitate safe and effective navigation on area waterways. This study will examine the effectiveness of ATON with a focus on:

- The overall effectiveness of ATON, traffic patterns and waterways being utilized
- Waterway markings in accordance with most recent Army Corps of Engineer surveys
- Suitability and evaluation of ATON currently in use
- Review of ATON signal displays
- Accuracy of navigational publications and charts

Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville personnel encourage interested parties to provide comments on existing ATON and recommendations for the establishment of new aids in the area at anytime. Submit comments, information and/or recommendations to Chief Warrant Officer Steve McDonnell, Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville Waterways Management Division at 564-7565 or via e-mail to steven.d.mcdonnell@uscg.mil.

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"Olde Mandarin Corner Market" continues!

By Contributing Writer Susie Scott, President, Mandarin Community Club

Looking for an interesting handmade item? Locally made crafts? How about produce and a green market? Well, look no further than the "Olde Mandarin Corner Market" (OMCM) on the grounds of the historic Mandarin Community Club on the first and third Sunday of each month.

Located at the corner of historic Mandarin Road and Brady Road, hobby art, crafts, local unique and handmade items such as soaps, jewelry, honey and more can be found among the many booths of this outdoor weekend event. Inspired by the Riverside Arts Market, OMCM will continue to operate into the spring long after the December end to the Riverside venue to provide Mandarin with access to a different way to shop locally.

The Corner Market is open to the public from 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m. There is plenty of parking and all are welcome!

Scheduled spring dates are January 8, 22, February 5, 19 and March 4. Event days are subject to change due to weather and holiday schedules. Please visit www.oldemandarincornermarket.com or check it out on Facebook!

MHS Sports Roundup

By Natalie Cleghorn, MHS Student

Mandarin Mustang soccer is taking shape after losing several seniors from last year such as Michael Rauco, Anthony Alvarez and Hector Vega, who signed with University of West Florida to continue his soccer career. Now it is up to seniors John Mella, Matt Lucas and Cody Tarczinski among others to lead the boys' soccer team to another victorious season.

The Mustangs train hard during the season to prepare for the tough schedule that Coach Jason Cooley puts together. During practice, the boys scrimmage and run drills to increase their speed and strengthen their endurance. Endurance plays a huge role in soccer as well as communication. While communication is important in any sport, it is especially so in soccer where the ball never stops rolling.

"The game is always changing and you need to communicate with your team to be successful," said junior Matthew Rauco. Rauco plays defense for the Mustangs, a vital part of the game. A successful team is made up of a strong defense and attackers such as Tyler Carroll, Kacper Grzeszczak and Rihad Kobiljar who lead the team to victory. Among the biggest rivals of the Mustangs are Atlantic Coast, Orange Park and Fletcher. The Mustangs have already proven themselves against Fletcher back in December with a 4-0 win and hope to continue their successes throughout the rest of the season.

To maintain a victorious soccer season, the boys spend much of their time off the field bonding and becoming a more cohesive team. The soccer team supports other Mustang sports and attends softball, volleyball and basketball games. They were present at several softball games last year when the Lady Mustangs carried their season into the playoffs and were cheering them on every step of the way.

As junior Austin Adams said, "We have each other's backs."

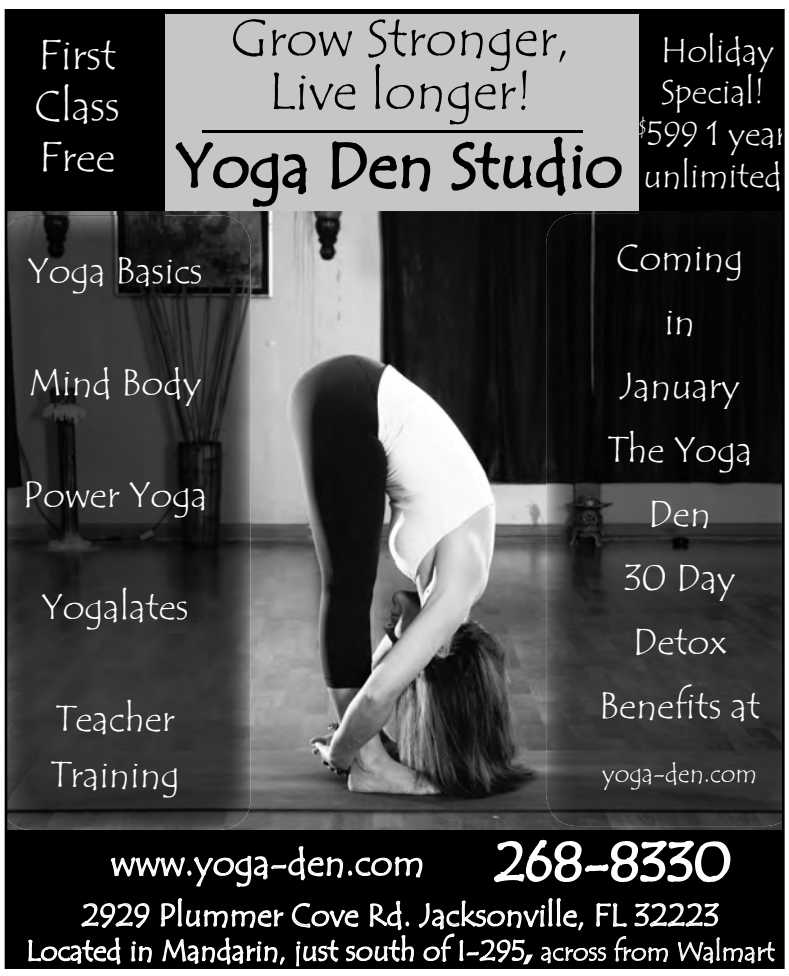
The Mustangs prove that they are leaders on and off the field and spend much of their time with each other.

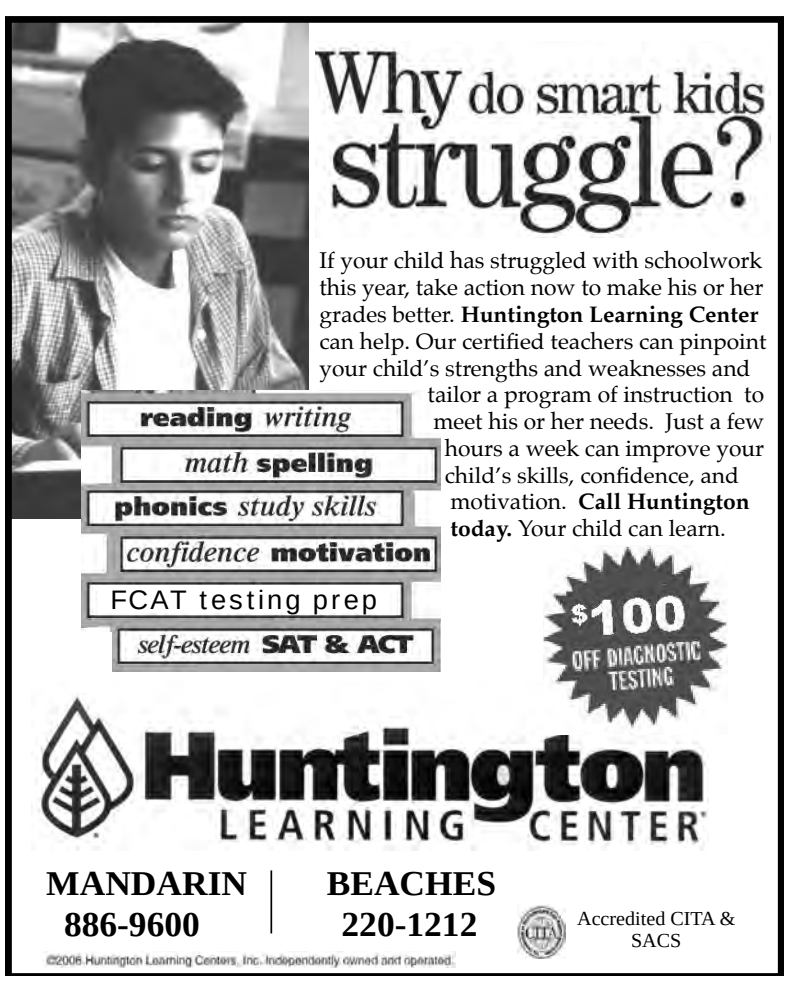
Among the many traditions the boys have, one stands out on its own. It is the tradition to eat at Zaxby's before every Fletcher game and this tradition keeps the boys focused and pumped for the upcoming game.

"The brotherhood and bond we have with each other is amazing," said Rauco.

The boys hope for another run into the playoffs similar to last year's where the Mustangs traveled to the semifinals but lost a close one to Boca Raton.

The Mustangs face off against Tallahassee Leon away on January 13 and are home against Creekside on January 19.





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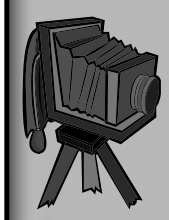

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St. Joseph Catholic holds Parade of States

By Contributing Writer Joseph Dray

On the afternoon of November 28, St. Joseph Catholic School classes Pre-K to eighth watched in awe as fifth grade swept by, holding their state parade floats up high as the Bishop Kenny Band livened their journey across campus.

A month before, Mrs. Worthington, the social studies teacher for the fifth and sixth grades, announced that the fifth graders would be making floats for the "Parade of States." All 49 students chose a state and constructed a miniature parade float to advertise their section of the United States of America. Mrs. Albright and Mrs. Worthington, the fifth grade teachers, led the parade by holding the banner at the front of the long line of fifth graders and floats.

All students did a fantastic job and deserve a pat on the back for all the effort they put into their floats. Not only should they receive applause, the Bishop Kenny Band should have congratulations also. Even though the sight of the floats was already drawing the school's attention, the band made it explode with excitement and popularity!

In conclusion, everybody performed outstandingly during the fifth grade "Parade of States." Well done!

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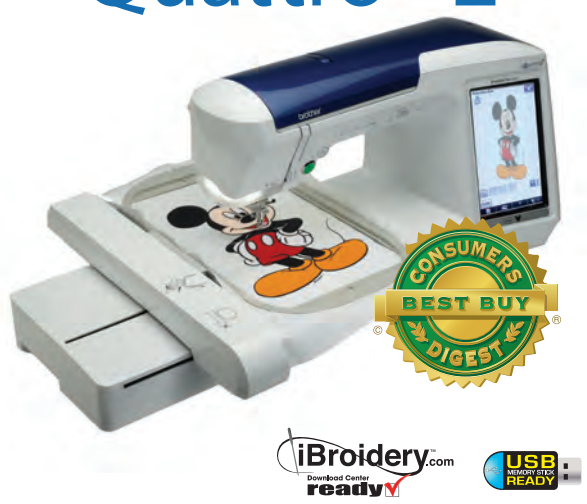

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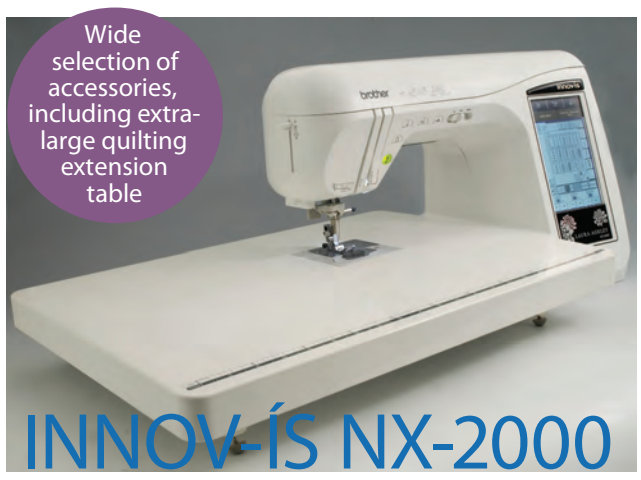

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Gardeners learn about winter plants

The Mandarin Garden Club's Live Oak Circle got their hands dirty at the November 17 meeting. Each member assembled and took home their own beautiful cool season container garden.

Master Gardener Susan Westermann instructed the group on combining cold tolerant flowering annuals and herbs together in one pretty pot. All the plants used can tolerate our Jacksonville winter weather. That means no need to cover or drag the pot inside each time the weather report predicts cold temperatures.

On January 19 at 10:00 a.m., the public is invited to attend at no charge a fun and informative program by Jim Armstrong titled "Eat Your Yard." The meeting will be at the clubhouse at 2892 Loretto Road.

Mandarin Garden Club membership is open to all gardening enthusiasts from beginners to advanced.

For meeting or membership information, please contact mandaringardenclub@comcast.net or 268-1192.

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Garden Club sponsors Bonsai workshop

The Dogwood Circle of the Mandarin Garden Club recently hosted Joe Stumph for their program on Bonsai. Bonsai, pronounced "bone sigh," is a Japanese word derived from a Chinese word punsai meaning "shallow pot and tree." Bonsai, literally translated means bon – tray or dish and sai – tree or plant: thus, tree or plant planted in a dish.

Bonsai is both art and horticulture. Historical evidence shows that Bonsai appeared in ancient China 2000 years ago. It appeared in Japan possibly as early as the sixth century. Approximately 1300 AD bonsai appeared in Japanese drawings. In the United States, Bonsai became popular after World War II, when civilians and military stationed in Japan reported seeing beautiful miniature trees.

Bonsai is an art of illusion. The roots, trunk, branches, foliage and environment all contribute to the composition. The design should be simple to create a tree which may be familiar to us in nature. Many woody trees or shrubs can be utilized in creation of Bonsai. The design utilizes easily recognized components of a tree, such as a tapered trunk, visible surface roots, branches, coverings on trunk and branches – the result is a tree.

Gardening

Turn a brown thumb green

By Contributing Writer Master Gardener Camille Hunter with Duval County Extension, University of Florida/IFAS

A good friend once told me she had a brown thumb. She explained that she had poor luck at growing things and definitely had a brown thumb instead of a green one. I don't believe in brown thumbs. We are all potentially green thumbed. Sure, we all know annoying people who seem able to grow anything. Meanwhile our newest house plant, supposedly easy to care for, isn't looking good and not because of neglect. In fact, you may be guilty of too much TLC. If you water on a regular schedule, say every Saturday, and throw in a double shot of fertilizer, you may be killing plants with love.

Which brings up the question everyone asks: Just how much and how often should I water my plants? It's an important question because your plant's life depends on it. Those of us with green thumbs know the answer, which is that it depends—on the plant, on the environment and even the time of year. It may be different for every plant and in every season.

The best way to water is when the plant needs it. For most plants, it's when the soil is dry an inch deep. Stick your finger into the soil up to the first joint to find out. If the soil is still moist, don't water. If it is dry, water slowly until water begins to run out the bottom. If the soil is very dry the water may run right through. In that case, water a little every ten minutes or so until the soil softens and is damp throughout. After a few minutes spill out any excess water standing in the saucer.

There are some exceptions to this advice. A few plants, like Peace Lily (Spathiphyllum), need constantly moist soil or the leaf tips will turn brown. On the other hand, cacti and other succulents have built-in water storage systems and need much less. I once met someone who loved cactus because of its infrequent but beautiful flowers. She claimed she watched the weather channel and only watered her cactus when it rained in Arizona.

One very important thing for all potted plants is good drainage. Excess water must be able to flow out the bottom and not get trapped in the pot. Don't ever let anyone talk you into a pot that doesn't drain. It is extremely difficult to maintain proper soil moisture without good drainage, plus occasionally running water through the soil flushes out fertilizer residues.

I have good luck using a liquid fertilizer labeled for house plants, but I apply it at only half the rate or less if I'm trying to keep a plant from growing too fast. I also forgo fertilizer in the winter months when most plants are resting.

Just as important as water and fertilizer is light. Most plants need bright, sunny light but not necessarily hot, direct sunlight. A few do well in semi-shade but very few tolerate shade all day. If this is all you have, try a Cast Iron Plant (Aspidistra). As the name implies, this is a very easy plant that needs only very good drainage and anything from shade to bright light but not hot, direct sun.

Follow these simple guidelines and watch your brown thumb turn green.

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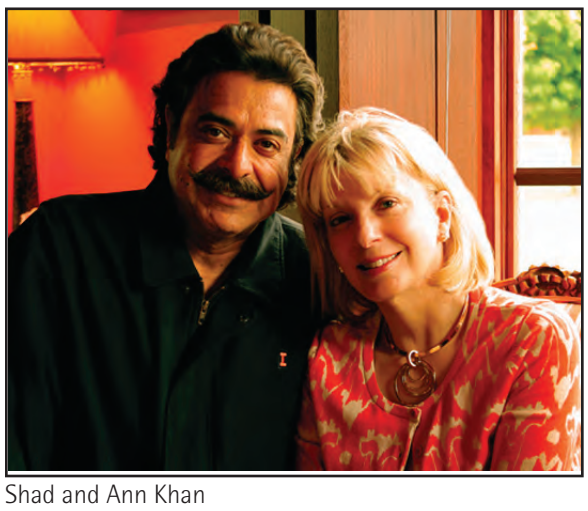
New ownership: Weavers sell team

After nearly 17 seasons, there has been a change in ownership for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Shahid Khan, owner and chief executive officer of Flex-N-Gate, purchased the Jaguars from original and longtime owner Wayne Weaver. Weaver said Khan is committed to keeping the franchise in Jacksonville.


Shad and Ann Khan

"That's my dream, to see this team be successful in Jacksonville – I've found an owner who has that commitment and has that passion," Weaver said in an emotional press conference in December.

Weaver called the announcement, "bittersweet."

"But it's at the right time and for the right reasons," Weaver said.

"I am honored to have recently signed an agreement with Wayne Weaver and his partners to purchase the Jacksonville Jaguars," Khan said in a statement at the time. "I have known Wayne for some time and have long admired his spirit, which nearly 20 years ago – against all odds – helped make the Jaguars and the National Football League a reality for Jacksonville and North Florida. Wayne's legacy will be lasting and I will always be grateful for Wayne's trust and confidence in my commitment to the Jaguars, the NFL and the Jacksonville community."

Weaver has been the majority owner since the team's inception, having been crucial to the team's successful bid for an expansion franchise in 1994. The team has a 136-131 regular-season record during his tenure as owner.

The Jaguars have made six post-season appearances, with appearances in the AFC Championship Game following the 1996 and 1999 seasons.

Weaver said he has known Khan for about five years and they had discussed Khan possibly having an ownership role. Weaver said Khan has said he will keep senior management and staff intact and that he plans to buy a home in Jacksonville.

Weaver and Khan signed the purchase agreement in early December following approval from NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. It was then reviewed and approved by the NFL Finance Committee on December 6. The sale was then approved by NFL Owners as a group at the NFL Owners Meeting on December 14, with the deal expected to be closed "sometime in early January," Weaver said. Weaver said Khan is purchasing 100 percent of the team and will take over effective January 4.

Weaver said although there is nothing in writing from Khan stating that he will keep the team in Jacksonville, "It's a commitment I had to be comfortable with. There's not a doubt in my mind that this team is going to be in Jacksonville," Weaver said. "All I ask is that the community give them (the Shads) the same kind of support (the city has given the Jaguars under Weaver)."

Khan, 60, a native of Pakistan and a graduate of the University of Illinois, began working for Flex-N-Gate in 1970. He left the company in 1978, then purchased it in 1980, after which it has "enjoyed impressive growth under his active ownership and guidance."

Weaver, in announcing the sale, called Khan "an American story." Flex-N-Gate group now employs more than 10,000 associates in 48 states, with annual sales of $3 billion.

Khan is president of the Chief Executives Organization and an active member of the World Presidents Organization. In early 2011, he was awarded the prestigious Order of Lincoln Award, which honors individuals whose contributions to the betterment of humanity have been accomplished in Illinois or whose achievements have brought honor to the state because of their identity with it, whether by birth of by residence or whose dedication to the principles of public service inspire Illinoisans to respond to what Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature."

Khan is married. He and his wife, Ann, have two children, Tony and Shanna.

In September of 2011, the Khan Annex of the College of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Illinois opened. The Khans also have supported Illinois athletics with their gift to the Shahid and Ann Khan Outdoor Tennis Complex at the university.

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