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April 2014

Girls on the Run motivates girls to be stronger physically and emotionally

By Cassy Fiano



With a new generation of kids spending more and more time inside and plugged in—to TVs, to computers, on phones and tablets—many parents are looking for fun ways to get their kids outside and active. For parents of daughters, Girls on the Run may be the answer. Girls on the Run is a 10 to 12 week program for elementary-aged girls that meets in the spring and the fall. Their mission is to inspire girls to be healthy, confident and joyful

through interactive lessons and games to teach positive values like healthy living, communication, service and gratitude. Through Girls on the Run, the girls learn about themselves, being a member of a team and being a member of a community. Running is integrated into these lessons throughout the program, culminating in a 5K event.

Sherry Warner is the coach for the Greenland Pines Elementary and Losco Park region. She first heard of Girls on the Run

through her sister-in-law, whose daughter was participating. Warner's daughter was the same age and she wanted to know more.

"I was intrigued to hear about a program that taught such great tools for helping girls obtain and maintain a positive self-image and I liked that it included outdoor play and exercise," Warner recalled.

Warner and her daughter, who was eight at the time, loved the program. When it came time to sign up her second daughter, though, it was no longer being offered at that site because there were no coaches. Warner saw an opportunity and enthusiastically jumped in. Now, her youngest daughter at 10 years old is in her fourth season and her oldest daughter, now 16, volunteers as a junior coach. Warner makes sure to make each practice fun, even dressing up in tutus and crazy socks to psych up the girls.

While Girls on the Run helps girls thrive through physical activity, it's about so much more than just a workout. War-

Girls on the Run cont. on pg. 11

Meet the "Model Citizens of Mandarin"

By Karl Kennell



Gerry Dionne, Frank Ryczek, Skip Haines, Peter Elias, Joe Lyons, Bill Bonner, Smokey Choquette, Willie Rivers and Bill Bellamy

We recently had fun discussing a fine art known to young and old alike: building scale models. And the members of the "Model Citizens of Mandarin" model club know their stuff! Members of the club come from all background types and ages, yet they all have a common bond. They share a true love for building and creating scale model miniatures— from classic scale sailing ship models, to hot rods, aircraft, military and historical

subjects, to accurate scaled down miniature dioramas of 1930s gas stations to PT boat base dioramas of WW II South Pacific islands. These are not the models that you might remember from your youth. You know the ones that always had the extra glue on the cockpit window or the decals in the wrong place. With the members of this model club you can name it and it can be perfectly built.

The Model Citizens of Mandarin model club first came

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Coming in May! Summer Camp & Kids' Activities Guide!

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MAA celebrates Opening Day

By Contributing Writer Melissa Salek

"1-2-3, play ball!" called out Mandarin Athletic Association (MAA) board Vice President Bryan Van Duyn at the Mandarin Athletic Association's (MAA's) celebration of the start of the 2014 youth baseball season, held at Burnett Park on March 8. In celebration of the beginning of spring season games, MAA hosted about 500 people at their opening ceremonies and annual Family Fun Day activities.

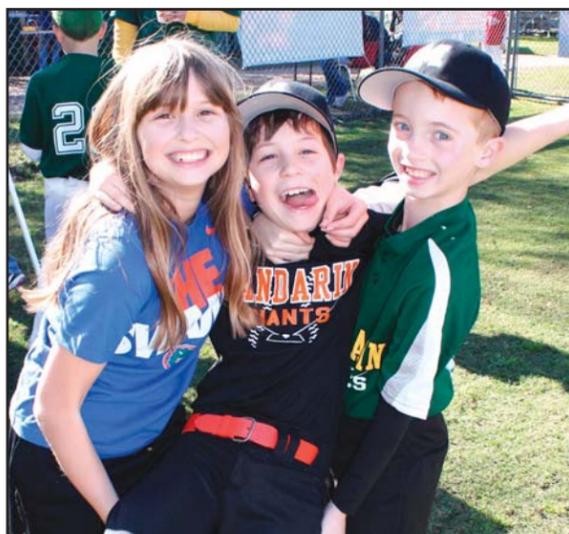
"Hi, Mom," yelled an enthusiastic minor T-ball player, waving wildly to his parents in the crowd as the opening ceremonies began. Twenty-eight teams with about 320

baseball players ages four to 15 paraded across the main field, lining up for the brief program. Christopher DuClos, son of MAA

coach Mike DuClos, sang the national anthem. Long-time MAA supporter and Tools for a Time owner Geoff Youngblood then led the prayer and threw out the first pitch. Afterwards, the crowd dispersed to the surrounding fields to either play their first ball game or enjoy the Family Fun Day activities, including bounce houses, slides, carnival booths, a live DJ and food, including meals from the local restaurant PDQ.

"I like the jumpy houses and the games," said rookie ball player Wesley Fesperman. "My favorite

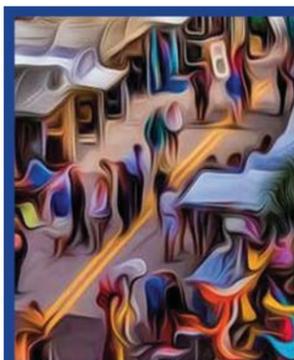
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Hayden Kirby, Brendan DePratter and Elyssa DePratter enjoy MAA's Family Fun Day activities. Photo by Erin Hillwig.

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E Pluribus Unum: Civics for one and all

By James A. Lee, M.Ed., Ed.D. ABD, Peer Teacher Evaluator, St. Johns County School District, jal@rtpublishing.com

Are you an engaged citizen? If so, how do you know? What defines an engaged citizen? How do we encourage our children to become engaged citizens? As for myself, I vote. I donate to charities. I even occasionally write a civics article for our community newspaper. But is that it? Do such simple tasks for me to call self an engaged citizen? Civic engagement is an extremely well researched topic. And yet, answers to such questions as these still tend to evade us. Is the quality or devotedness of citizenship measurable? Well, as it turns out, yes, it is.

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a leader in documenting the level of involvement of Americans and using that data to promote greater civic involvement. The NCoC has published a "Civic Health Index" that uses several criteria for measuring our national civic engagement. Additionally, several states, including Florida, have published state civic health indexes. The Florida state report was the product of the Florida Joint Center on Citizenship, a partnership between the Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida and the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. These reports provide some interesting and telling stories about just how good (or not so good) we are at one of our most basic responsibilities.

According to the NCoC website, the "Civic Health Index" identifies four separate

areas of civic engagement:

1. Electoral engagement. Percentage of eligible United States citizens over 18 years old who were registered to vote in the 2010 elections and percentage turnout among eligible voters in the 2010 elections;
 2. Non-electoral political engagement. Percentage who contacted a public official and percentage who bought or boycotted a product based on the social values of a company;
 3. Group engagement. Percentage who belong to any group, i.e., religious, school, neighborhood or sports/recreation;
 4. Community engagement. The percentage who reported undertaking any volunteer activity, percentage attending a public meeting, percentage exchanging favors with neighbors and percentage working with neighbors to fix a problem in the community.
- The national and state reports survey people of various demographics about their involvement in these areas. The most recent Florida report in 2011 (<http://www.ncoc.net/FLCHI2011>) focused on the civic health of Millennials (defined as those born between 1982 and 1993—essentially, those who came of age at the turn of the millennium). Just a few of the interesting findings included:
- Florida's Millennials have one of the lowest rates (ranked 48th in the nation) of participating in any type of civic, community, school, sports or religious group.
 - Civic engagement levels of

Millennials in Florida are between 7 and 20 percentage points below that of Millennials in the most engaged states in the nation.

- Less than half of the Millennial generation in Florida was registered to vote in 2010 and of those who were registered, a little over one-in-five actually voted.

You can learn more about how you and your family can improve your civic engagement at:

<http://www.ncoc.net/>
<https://www.icivics.org/>
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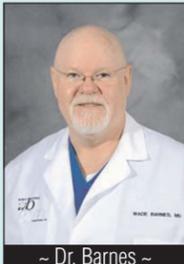
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What's New

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.

Community Happenings

The Mandarin Council of the JAX Chamber hosts monthly networking events. Their next lunch meeting is on April 10 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Bucca di Beppo near the Avenues Mall. April's lunch will feature guest speaker Matt Rapp with the Players Club at The PGA Tour. The next breakfast meeting will take place at the Red Elephant Grill and Pizza on Thursday, April 24 beginning at 8:00 a.m. Learn more about the Mandarin Council and RSVP for these events at www.mandarinCouncil.org. We live, work and play in Mandarin!

Please join **Mandarin Senior Center** for its sixth annual Health Fair to be held on Friday, April 25 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Meet more than 30 health care providers and private organizations that will be on-site conducting screenings for hearing, vision, cholesterol, as well as skin cancer and heart disease. Indulge in some tasty foods prepared by expert chefs from the area's top retirement and assisted living facilities. Elder Law attorneys and home health providers will be on hand to answer your questions and don't forget to take some time for a back massage during your visit. These experts will be sharing information on community resources specifically for and about senior citizens and so much more! All seniors and their family members are welcome. Come join us for a day of health! The Mandarin Senior Center is located at 3848 Hartley Road. For additional information, please call 262-7309.



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AARP Tax Assistance will be available each Tuesday at the

What's New cont. on pg. 4

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From the City Council Member's Desk

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

Mandarin News: The month of March started off busy in Mandarin. March 1 was opening day for MSA baseball and softball. I was invited to throw out the first pitch to start the games. At Alberts Field for baseball: high and outside. At Palmetto Leaves for fast-pitch softball: low and inside. They gave me a second chance on the fast-pitch softball: a double bouncer—but at least it was across the plate! Maybe I should practice before next year or better yet, stick to golf. One other item regarding Alberts Field: I've pledged a portion of the Loblolly Funds to help cover the costs of replacing the dugouts and repairing other necessary items at that park. The new playground is in and I plan to have the tennis courts resurfaced as well. Our parks are heavily used and these updates are long overdue.

March 1 was also Flag Day. I celebrated the occasion at "Tools for a Time." Sheriff John Rutherford, Mike Weinstein, Jerry Holland, the Supervisor of Elections, Bill Gulliford, the president of the City Council, Congressman Ander Crenshaw and I enjoyed commemorating the flag and the sacrifice and freedom that it represents. A big "thank-you" to Geoff Youngblood for the use of his facility.

Finally in March, Emily Lisska (a Mandarin resident and a great resource on the history of Jacksonville) and I entertained 40 students from Loretto Elementary at City Hall. I was able to get the City Hall staff to open up the Council Chambers and let the students sit in the Council seats and vote and talk

as if we were actually in session. We were also blessed to have Judge Flowers visit and he spoke to the students about the judiciary role in government. I think I had as much fun as the kids. I would be delighted to welcome any and all students and parents to take advantage of this opportunity. It's your government and I would gladly spend the time with you at City Hall.

Don't forget about the Town Hall meeting on April 24 at 6:00 p.m. at Loretto Elementary. Mike Sharrit, a Mandarin resident who is running for Circuit Court Judge, current county Judge Gary Flowers and Geoff Youngblood, another Mandarin resident running for the At-Large seat being vacated by Stephen Joost, will each speak briefly at the meeting. Assistant Chief Mike Johnson, our Zone 3 Commander, who covers the Mandarin area, will answer questions relating to

crime, traffic and other issues. It will be a very busy town hall meeting, but there will still be plenty of time to ask questions. It starts promptly at 6:00 p.m. and ends at 7:30 p.m., but I stay until all questions have been answered. Please come and join the discussion.

City Hall News: Surprise, surprise...the Mayor's Pension Task Force recommended a tax increase. As I stated in the daily newspaper recently, the people who live in Mandarin are smart, mobile and can easily move across the Julington Creek Bridge and not be troubled by the ever-increasing taxes and debt obligations of Duval County. What will the city do to cover the tax revenues lost when people flee the county? Increase taxes again? What happens then? I don't know. Ask Detroit.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at MattS@coj.net or 630-1388.

What's New cont. from pg. 3

South Mandarin Branch Library from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. through April 8. For a complete list of the free tax assistance sites, please visit the library website at <http://jaxpubliclibrary.org>.

The 46th annual Mandarin Art Festival will take place on the grounds of the Mandarin Community Club, 12447 Mandarin Road, on April 19 and 20. Be sure to include a stop at the club table, located in front of the main building. Once again this year, the Mandarin Commu-

nity Club is sponsoring a prize drawing for some fantastic items including tickets to the 2014 Players Championship, a "Dine Around Town" gift basket with gift cards to some of Jacksonville's most popular restaurants, a pair of tickets to a Jacksonville Jaguars home game of your choice and a framed, signed print by popular local photographer/artist Lee-Margaret Borland. Chances are \$1/each with proceeds from the drawing benefiting general grounds maintenance of the club including the adjacent Billard Com-



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memorative Park. Also for sale at the club table will be a new Mandarin Art Festival T-shirt featuring the artwork of Mandarin resident/artist Julie Fetzer. For further information on the Mandarin Art Festival or Mandarin Community Club, go to www.mandarincommunityclub.org or call 268-1622.

The Model Citizens of Mandarin are looking to recruit new members who enjoy building scale models, whether plastic, wood or otherwise, to join us every Wednesday at the Hobby Lobby located on Old St. Augustine Road in Mandarin. We are into all phases of model construction from model cars, planes, dioramas and complex sailing ship models and everything in between. Meetings last from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. and are held in the store classroom. If you are new to scale model building, we will teach you how to build better models. If you are an experienced scale modeler, we will hold you in the highest regard. Membership is free! Please call Frank Ryczek, Jr. at 262-7942 or Skip Haines at 219-9594 for more information.

Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.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.

Celebrate the 150th anniversary of the sinking of the Maple Leaf with the grand opening of a new exhibit about this Civil War shipwreck on Friday, April 4 from 12:00 noon until 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 5 from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the **Mandarin Museum and Historical Society**, located at 11964 Mandarin Road. The exhibit contains

rare artifacts and the event will include Dr. Keith Holland from St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Civil War reenactors and period music. For additional information, please call 268-0784 or visit www.mandarinmuseum.net.

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.

The 82nd Airborne Division, Jacksonville All Airborne Chapter meets on the second Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at Golden Corral on San Jose Boulevard. Anyone from any branch of service, who has graduated from any of the military jump schools and is qualified to wear their branch of services' Jump Wings, is welcome to join the chapter. For additional information, please contact chapter chairman Emil Knowles at 622-6946.

Mark your calendar for the **North Florida ORCAS Scale Model Boat Show and Fun Sail**, to be held on April 19 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Colonial Manor Lake Park (San Jose Duck Pond), located at 3625 San Jose Boulevard. For additional information, please visit www.northfloridaorcas.org.

The North Florida Acoustic

What's New cont. on pg. 5

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From the Florida House

By Contributing Writer Representative Charles McBurney, State Representative, District 16

Every state Representative and Senator has a variety of duties and responsibilities they are required to perform during the regular session. The first and most significant responsibility is passing a balanced State budget, which is the legislature's only constitutional requirement. Negotiations between the House and Senate will take place throughout session, all to reach the primary goal of a balanced budget that effectively meets the critical needs of our state without raising taxes. This year as a result of fiscally responsible management of the budget, we expect to have a significant budget surplus of approximately \$1 billion.

I have the privilege to be assigned to many key areas of our state's budgeting process. I currently serve on the full Appropriations Committee, the Joint Legislative Budget Commission and serve as chair of the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee. The Joint Legislative Budget Commission is a constitutional entity comprised of House and Senate members, who work together to set long term budget goals for our state. I am proud to be one of the six House members who serve on the commission.

As chair of the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee, I have been tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the budget of the largest group of agencies and largest group of state employees in the entire state budget, including the Department of Corrections, Department of Law Enforcement, the court system and the Department of Legal Affairs (Attorney General). Last year, our subcommittee proposed a total budget of \$4.3 billion which included funding for over 44,410 positions. Last year's budget significantly reduced a deficit in the Department of Corrections, targeted maintenance issues unmet during the recession and saved millions by taking the clerk of courts out of the budget. Last year's proposal not only met the needs of our state, but also exhibited fiscal responsibility with a spending reduction from the previous fiscal year. We hope to bring to the table this year a similar budget for our state citizens.

Looking ahead to this year's budget, the legislature is fully committed to funding the state's key priorities such as public safety, education, transportation and economic development. I am aware that

there will be certain areas of concern in this year's budget. Some of these areas that are already on the horizon include early education appropriations, changes in insurance funding, healthcare access and funding, changes in prison population and regulations and juvenile detention shared cost around the state. Along with a budget surplus, Florida House Speaker Will Weatherford and Florida Senate President Don Gaetz recently announced their joint 2014 Work Plan Florida Agenda. Along with numerous proposed policy changes, the plan announced a potential \$500 million in tax and fee cuts from a variety of areas in the budget. This would reduce the amount of taxes and fees being collected from Floridians

Although there is at times conflict between groups regarding the future of our state's budget, I am certain that we all will come together in the end to develop a balanced budget that not only reflects the needs of our state, but delivers a fiscally responsible budget to our children to ensure them a brighter future. We must continue to stay true to our fiscal principles and budget effectively to maximize every dollar available.

What's New cont. from pg. 4

Neuroma Support Group will meet on Saturday, May 3, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. at Mandarin United Methodist Church, located at 11270 San Jose Boulevard. Please call 287-8132 for additional information.

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, non-partisan 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. This month's meeting will be held on Friday, April 18 with a guest speaker from "The House that Love Built," the Ronald McDonald House. Visitors are welcome!

The April general meeting of the **All Star Quilters Guild** will be held on Monday, April 21 at 9:30 a.m. in the First Christian Church, located at 11924 San Jose Boulevard. There will be an informative program on quilting and "Show and Tell" of members' work. Visitors are welcome. For more information, please contact Dot Butler at 642-6574 or visit www.orgsites.com/fl/allstarquiltguild.

The **Italian American Club** is getting many requests for rentals for weddings, anniversaries and birthday parties. We have a new rental agent, Wanda Freay, who will be glad to help you plan your big event. For further information about the club, please call 268-2882 or visit www.ia-cofjacksonville.com. The club is the best kept secret in Mandarin.

Mandarin Garden Club's annual Garden Festival and Plant

Sale will be held on Saturday, April 26 from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the clubhouse, located at 2892 Loretto Road. Admission is free and there is plenty of parking next door at the Masonic Lodge. Inside the clubhouse will be overflowing with a wide selection of reasonably priced plants that grow very well right here in Mandarin. Outside will be vendors selling the most wonderful gardening related items and there will be a barbeque lunch available to purchase. Free coffee and water are available inside the building. Enjoy touring the beautiful garden club grounds that are tended by Duval County Master Gardeners! For additional information, please contact info@mandaringardenclub.org or 268-1192.

The Duval County Extension Master Gardeners are offering **Plant Clinics** at the following locations on Saturday, March 29, 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at Hagan Ace Hardware on

San Jose Boulevard, Hall's Ace Hardware on San Jose Boulevard and the Lowe's Store on Oldfield Crossing in Mandarin. They will be answering your gardening questions, giving out gardening publications and accepting soil samples for pH only. If you would like directions on how to take a soil sample, please visit: <http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/Howtotakeasoiltestsamplereb.pdf>.

The April meeting of the **River City Women's Club** will close out this year with the installation of officers for the coming year. The 10:30 a.m. luncheon meeting will be held at the Mandarin Ramada Inn on Wednesday April 16. Checks will also be presented to representatives for our chosen charities for this year, Safe Harbor Boys Club and the Duval County Council of the PTA Eyeglass Fund for Children. The cost of the luncheon is \$16. For reservations, please call 267-8719. For other information, please call 288-0078.

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2012 Kia Niro EX

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The Friends of South Mandarin Library are smelling popcorn! We think a popcorn machine would brighten up the Children's Department, so we are working on finding the proper one. Our June Book sale will help fund this project. Mark your calendar for June 21 and 22, for the second annual Book Sale. The group meets on the second Thursday of each month in the library at 2:15 p.m., following the Book Club. Please join us and support your cultural home at South Mandarin Library!

The Mandarin Women's Club is fortunate to have as guest speaker at their April 24 luncheon J. Perry Smith, author of the book "The Unlikely Priest." Smith is a Vietnam

veteran, married and a dad and was a CIA Operations Officer before spending 22 years as an FBI Agent. Later, he was ordained an Episcopal priest and he recently retired after serving five years as Canon Pastor at St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville. The luncheon will be held at the Ramada Inn Mandarin with the doors opening at 10:30 a.m. The price to attend is \$16; reservations are required and can be made by calling Marilyn at 260-8431 by Thursday, April 17. The Mandarin Women's Club is a social club with numerous activities and is open to all women no matter where they live and we're always eager to meet new friends! For further information about the club and how to join, please call Diane at 880-5354.

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Duval Soil and Water Conservation District Board update

By Contributing Writer Greg Tison

After a long and hard winter this season, springtime is finally beginning to show its arrival in our area. Trees and flowers are starting to bloom out and how refreshing it is to see the change of season.

Last month I told you about the then-upcoming Fred B. Miller Jr. Envirothon for high school students. That event was held on March 6. Although the weather was cold and rainy, it did not dampen the competitive spirit of the students. Over 200 students from area high schools came together on the grounds of the Diamond D Ranch on Jacksonville's Westside to learn and test their skills in areas of forestry, soils, aquatics, wildlife and a current issue.

Congratulations and hats off to the participating students from Atlantic Coast High School who won first, second and third place in the compe-

dition. All students and their teachers from all the schools who competed are to be congratulated for their outstanding work that day. All students from all the schools were very respectful and well mannered. Their schools and especially the parents have reason to be very proud. Young people today don't receive much credit today on the behavior side, but seeing this group of kids should give us all hope for nation's future. These students are the academic leaders of their schools. They are great role models for their peers.

For a few hours on that day these students were exposed to our natural environment setting and they also saw a way of life – life on a farm and ranch. After all, that way of life and hard work is what built our country. As the manager of the Jacksonville Farmers Market, I

frequently give tours to small children, mostly preschool and grade school. Unfortunately, most of them can only comprehend that their food comes from Wal-Mart. They don't seem to understand that it originated on a farm somewhere.

But the Envirothon event gives our kids a broader understanding of how our environment works together to produce the things that sustain our lives. I look forward to next year's event seeing more students involved. I would also like to say thank you to Michael and Galynna Griffin for hosting this year's event at the Diamond D Ranch.

If you have any questions concerning the Duval Soil and Water Conservation District or the Envirothon Event, please feel free to email me at lgitison@bellsouth.net.

See you next month!

Political Commentary

Liberals love public transportation because it seems so democratic

By J. Bruce Richardson

Limousine liberals are often greatly in favor of public transportation, as long as it doesn't have a direct impact on them where they live. Liberals love public transportation because it seems so democratic when everyone rides in the same vehicle. Cities which have robust public transportation systems usually have stronger systems in lower income areas, with barely enough routes in higher income areas to provide necessary service for maids and gardeners.

But, in these extraordinary times, more and more people across the board are becoming

aware of the benefits of public transportation not as a primary means of transportation, but as a welcome means of choice for alternative transportation.

Sadly, traveling by local bus usually equates to traveling with people who can't afford to own a car, especially in the south. We've never crossed the line to understand public transportation can equal freedom from exorbitant gas prices, soaring insurance costs and ever-escalating maintenance costs on high tech vehicles.

Denizens of urban areas often own a personal vehicle, but only use it when convenient, not as daily transportation. It's tough for those accustomed to having an iron steed waiting in the driveway to spend 20 bucks for a cab ride or to take public transportation instead of simply driving themselves. But, when you add up the cost of gas, insurance, maintenance and general wear and tear on a car, 20 bucks for a cab ride may be a bargain and a couple of bucks for a bus ride can be a gift.

One of the things keeping public transportation at a minimum in Jacksonville is the availability of cheap or free parking. In large cities, high hourly and daily costs of parking a car forces drivers to think about public transportation.

Getting to the crossing point of a city being friendly to both cars and public transportation is tough. When you have nearly useless demonstration projects like the Skyway Express, it's easy to understand why politicians are reluctant to invest in new transit systems. If the Skyway Express was doubled in size, running to San Marco Square, down Riverside Avenue and over to the EverBank Field complex, it may have a chance to become viable. But, it was built too small and has become a financial lemon. The question now is, who's going to have the guts

to make it the size it needs to be on the hope it will become successful?

A younger generation is becoming less enchanted with private automobile ownership and relying more on transit. If they stick to current patterns, public transportation may blossom. An older generation of car-loving drivers is going to have to enter retirement homes before that happens.

The second thing which must happen is a change in cultural attitudes. Public transportation must no longer be considered just a conveyance for maids and gardeners. Is it a racist thing? Probably. For all of the false accusations of racism thrown around these days without regard to truth, that is probably one that can stick.

J. Bruce Richardson is a longtime journalist and consultant who writes in Jacksonville print publications exclusively for RT Publishing, Inc. He has led projects in Washington as well as Ottawa, Canada, and authors an Internet-based transportation column which is read in more than 60 countries. He lives and works in Jacksonville.

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*The weekend of April 19 and 20 features the 46th Annual Mandarin Art Festival

Springs Protection Awareness Month adopted

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

Demonstrating a continuing commitment to long-term springs protection, the St. Johns River Water Management District's governing board recently approved a proclamation designating April as Springs Protection Awareness Month. The designation is expected to help increase awareness about the importance of Florida's springs and encourage residents and stakeholders to participate in enhancing the quality and flow of springs.

Senator Charles Dean has proposed a resolution to the Florida Legislature declaring April as Springs Protection Awareness Month. Water management districts across the state are joining him in recognizing the importance of increasing public awareness about the value of springs.

The District has been working with other agencies for many years through various programs to increase knowledge and understanding about the region's springs, while also working to protect springs systems. The District launched a Springs Protection Initiative in 2012 that combines science, projects, planning and regulatory programs to reduce nitrate loading and protect spring flows.

The initiative brings together science, District regulatory programs, projects and outreach in a focused approach to achieve

springs protection. Currently, nine springs protection projects are under way in the Silver Springs, Wekiwa Spring and Volusia Blue Spring systems.

"Nearly \$47 million has been committed this fiscal year to springs cost-share projects within the St. Johns District," said Casey Fitzgerald, director of the Springs Protection Initiative. "By adopting this proclamation, the district governing board expresses its commitment to conserve and restore the ecological balance of the springs' systems, which also supports Floridians' quality of life and our regional economy."

The District is actively pursuing additional springs protection projects for a new round of cost-share funding, to which the District has dedicated \$13 million in its preliminary budget for the fiscal year that begins October 1, 2014. Governor Rick Scott has recommended \$55 million for springs protection and restoration in his fiscal year 2014-2015 proposed budget.

Visit floridaswater.com/springs/initiative.html for more information about the District's work to protect springs.

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Computer-aided technology assists radiologists

Baptist Health is using a new advanced computer-aided detection system to assist radiologists in helping to identify breast cancer earlier in women. The system, developed by VuCOMP, is called M-Vu CAD and works by analyzing mammographic images and marking areas of suspicion using sophisticated mathematical algorithms.

Baptist Health is also using in tandem with M-Vu CAD another tool called M-Vu Breast Density to evaluate the appearance of structures and textures in the breast to differentiate between fatty and dense regions. While a few other hospitals in Florida use VuCOMP's advanced computer-aided detection, Baptist Health is the first in northeast Florida to use the technology and the first in the state to use VuCOMP's automated breast density, according to the company. The technology is being used at all of Baptist Health's mammography sites at Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville, Baptist Medical Center South, Baptist Medical Center Beaches, Baptist Medical Center Nassau and the Baptist Clay Medical Campus.

"We are very pleased that Baptist Health has decided to bring to its patients M-Vu CAD and M-Vu Breast Density, two powerful imaging technologies for the early detection of breast cancer," said Jeffrey Wehnes, president/CEO of VuCOMP. "Baptist is the first provider in Florida to have the pair. This

demonstrates a strong commitment to offering patient access to the most advanced breast imaging tools available."

Christine Granfield, MD, medical director of Breast Imaging for Baptist Health, said VuComp's new system is more accurate at highlighting abnormalities, calcifications or masses.

"VuCOMP utilizes the most advanced aerospace digital informatics in their technology," Dr. Granfield said. "VuCOMP, compared to other Computer-Aided Detection (CAD) companies utilized, offers a far superior product with more accurate marks and far fewer erroneous marks as we have seen in other products. The technology is like having another set of eyes to look at the images. We are excited to be the only Health System/Center in northeast Florida utilizing this advanced technology."

The added breast density technology also helps to more accurately assess a patient's level of breast density, Dr. Granfield said, which can be important information for the referring physician regarding managing the patient's care.

"The future of early detection lies in the hands of radiologists equipped with advanced imaging and analysis tools," Dr. Granfield said. "With these advanced tools, they will further help extend lives, shorten treatment times and reduce costs."

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MAA cont. from pg. 1

is the cake walk."

Some have been coming to opening day at MAA for quite a while.

"I grew up playing baseball at MAA, with my dad as a coach," said Jason Sparks, now coaching his son with the Gators T-Ball team. "I love to work with the youth of Mandarin."

MAA is a not-for-profit organization run by volunteers. It is in charge of running the baseball program at Burnett Park and Greenland Park as well as all maintenance at the ball park except lights and trash. While registration fees pay for day-to-day costs, improvements to the park are paid for by fundraisers.

Family Fun Day is one of MAA's main fund raisers.

"Fundraising is extremely important to keep the park running," said event organizer Margery Macklin. "The money that we receive from fundraising goes to the maintenance of the park, equipment for the kids and all the necessities to keep MAA baseball an enjoyable experience for the whole family."

MAA youth athletic organization that oversees several sports programs – baseball, football/cheer and flag football. For more information about MAA baseball, visit the website at www.letsgomaa.org or Facebook at MAA jax.Baseball.

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Political Commentary

Want to improve our city? Hop on the bus!

By David Milton

If you could invest in one change in Jacksonville and that one change could improve your financial health and the financial health of the city, could improve your quality of life and could decrease everybody's use of our natural resources, would you make the investment? Several major American cities are already making that investment – they're strengthening their public transportation infrastructure.

A recent report by the non-profit, non-partisan American Public Transportation Association shows Americans riding buses, trains and subways in numbers not seen since 1956 – the year suburban growth exploded and sucked the life from many city centers. For public transportation advocates, this is good news: people across America – people in red states like Texas, in blue states like New York and in purple states like Florida – want to use public transportation.

People want to use public transportation because they see the benefits to their personal pocketbooks. Instead of spending money on things like car insurance, car maintenance and gas, people can save that money or spend it in other ways. Many cities also see the budgetary benefits of quality public transportation because they can reduce spending on endless road construction and maintenance costs. Other cities recognize the broader economic benefits of quality public transportation: getting lots of people with different skills and expertise to work in a vibrant area – a task dependent on quality public transportation – boosts a region's wages and productivity.

People using public transportation also see how public

transportation contributes to a higher quality of life. For example, instead of staring aimlessly at taillights during your commute, you could catch the bus and work, read, text or daydream during your ride. Having a sense of place also improves the quality of life. When your eyes are glued to the road, you don't get to see your surroundings, but when you're able to gaze out the window, you'll see things you wouldn't usually get to see. You get to know your city. Quality public transportation also leads to more biking or walking and each of us knows how good it feels to get even a little bit of exercise.

Finally, proponents of public transportation recognize the numerous environmental benefits of public transportation. Widespread public transportation means lower demand for oil – a finite resource. Additionally, the use of public transportation takes one vehicle – and its accompanying pollution – off the road.

Some will object. They'll say public transportation is too undependable or doesn't take them where they need to go. Those objections identify real problems that must be resolved, but those

problems are solvable. Others will claim that public transportation is a taxpayer-subsidized boondoggle. It's true, public transportation doesn't usually turn a profit; however, investments in public transportation pay off in many other ways: quality public transportation saves money, boosts quality of life and saves our environment.

We're improving our public transportation infrastructure, but that progress is occasionally hampered by political opportunists and a lack of political will. If we want Jacksonville to continue to prosper, we must invest in quality public transportation. After all, it takes money to make money.

Dave Milton is a husband, father and local attorney who's interested in doing his part to make sure Jacksonville is a city where every person feels at home and every person has a chance to pursue his or her American Dream. When Dave isn't with his family or at work, he's involved with his church, scouting and other civic and non-profit organizations. If you have any thoughts or other comments to share, please email Dave at davidm.milton@gmail.com.

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New Christian business website offers sneak peek

Jax Christian Business, who launched their online directory website in December 2013, is hosting a gala event on Tuesday evening, May 6 to offer local business and church leaders a sneak peek at their remodeled design and to raise awareness about how the website can help them increase business and promote their public events. The live web demonstration is the focal point of an evening of music, food, high-end raffle prizes and sponsor showcases.

Churches that hold public events and Christian business leaders in every industry are welcome to attend. The demonstration will illustrate features like special offers, self-managed

accounts, a community events calendar, and customer reviews. Jax Christian Business will also reveal plans for monthly events to showcase directory members and provide networking and referral opportunities.

The project is headed by Lynn Erhorn, a Christian counselor and life coach with a background in the New York corporate arena.

She says, "I'm passionate about cultivating and preserving a spirit of excellence in each individual I work with. Jax Christian Business gives me the opportunity to do that in the business world and on a much greater scale. I'm calling for the community to rally

around great customer service and around ethics in business based on biblical principles and devotion to God."

She sees the website becoming the place Jacksonville will go first to find out what's happening in the faith community through the events calendar and to find their next hair dresser, real estate agent, doctor or attorney through the directory.

Gala sponsors include Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and 4Rivers Smokehouse and local worship leader Karen Hornsby is among the musical guests. Tickets for the limited-seating event can be purchased at <https://jcbgala.eventbrite.com>.

Duval schools earn results that could make some "green" with envy

"It's not easy being green," but Duval County Public Schools has met the challenge and recent state reports indicate it is working! Based on the recently released Florida Department of Education annual District Energy Cost and Plan Maintenance Report, Duval County Public Schools is the third lowest of 67 school districts in the state for energy costs per full time equivalent (FTE) and near the bottom third on cost per square foot. This accomplishment is meaningful and bolsters the 20th largest school district in the nation's efforts to promote a culture of conservation within its community of schools and administrative offices.

"We are pleased to see that our conservation efforts and thoughtful planning are reaping positive results," said Superintendent Nikolai P. Vitti. "This report shows our effective management of resources and proactive approach to reducing costs, particularly in energy conservation. It is also rewarding to know that we as a community, including students, are working together to conserve and protect our resources while at the same time, creating a healthier environment for ourselves and future generations."

Superintendent Vitti has recommended and the Duval County School Board has approved several energy and water conservation projects

starting in the spring of 2012 that have helped achieve these exceptional energy conservation results. These projects possess paybacks of four years or less which effectively reduces their costs to zero.

In 2010, the district founded the Green Champions program as a way to engage school occupants in a district-wide sustainability initiative, "The Greening of DCPS." Central office personnel reached out to school-based personnel to recruit earth-friendly teachers and staff who would champion green, sustainable practices in their schools. The response was overwhelming and the Green Champions' network was established. The program goals

are to reduce costs by eliminating waste, conserve natural resources, and incorporate sustainability into the curriculum allowing students to engage in these efforts.

The Green Champions' program has produced tangible results since its inception. Energy and water consumption have declined by more than 35 percent. Recycling quantities are increasing, and solid waste quantities are decreasing, contributing to cost savings that are redirected to critical district programs. Duval County Public Schools won Florida's Best Green School District Award in 2012 and won Florida's Sus-

tainability Legacy Award in 2013 in recognition of these efforts.

The annual District Energy Cost and Plan Maintenance State Report can be found at www.fldoe.org/edfacil/aemor.asp.

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North Florida Women's Chorale announces spring concert

The North Florida Women's Chorale (NFWC) is now joyfully rehearsing for a concert they are excited to present to audiences in Jacksonville and in St. Augustine in the spring of 2014. The 30-voice chorale, under the direction of Kerry Fradley with Maureen Rhodes accompanying, will perform "Chocolates and Other Delights,"

a program celebrating many of life's simple sweetesses. It will include songs of the bittersweet, such as Life Has Loveliness, Ubi Caritas and Tiger; and songs of aspects dark and light, such as Nigra Sum, Hot Chocolate and the calypso-esque Buy Me Chocolate.

The chorale will first perform "Chocolates and Other Delights" on Sunday, April 27 at 3:00 p.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church located at 3976 Hen-

dricks Avenue.

As part of St. Augustine's Romanza Festiva, the chorale will also perform "Chocolates and Other Delights" on Saturday, May 17 at 12:30 p.m. at Memorial Presbyterian Church located at 32 Sevilla Street in St. Augustine.

Both events are free and open to the public.

For more information about NFWC, please see our website, www.womenschorale.org.

NEFAR releases February 2014 housing sales results

There were 2,728 new listings added to inventory in February; an 11.9 percent increase over February 2013. Despite the jump in sellers deciding that now is the time to make their move, overall inventory fell 3.5 percent year over year to come in at 9,324 homes. The reduced inventory equates to just 4.9 months supply.

Closed sales increased 1.7 percent year over year, with 1,550 sales taking place in February. The closed sales mix for the month was 851 traditional and 699 lender mediated (45.1 percent lender mediated).

Median sales price for all of February sales was \$138,743, nudging up slightly from last February's \$137,050. The median sales price varied markedly between the two sales types, however: \$192,750 for tradi-

tional sales and \$76,100 for lender mediated sales.

Interest in buying a home continues to be high, indicated by 2,076 pending sales for the month; a 14.1 percent increase over the 1,819 pending sales of February 2013.

2014 NEFAR President Linda McMorrow says, "New listings coming onto the market are more traditional sales, less lender mediated. Of the 2,728 new listings in February, just 34.7 percent (946) were lender mediated while 1,782 were traditional. This is positive news that bodes well for Northeast Florida's future."

February 2014 real estate sales and activity is available from the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors on NEFAR.com.

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Be sure to visit the new local Thai restaurant

Husband and wife team Louis Zhang and Kham Gin recently opened Thai Cuisine Noodle House in the Medical and Merchants Center on San Jose Boulevard in Mandarin. This family-owned eatery is the third Thai restaurant the couple has owned; they had very good reviews from restaurants in Daytona Beach and on Beach Boulevard before opening here in Mandarin. Louis Zhang and Kham Gin are originally from Thailand and have been in this country for over 10 years. Kham Gin is the chef and she cooks the food in the northeastern Thai style, with rich and natural flavors. She specializes in using natural herbs, coconut milk instead of dairy and there is never any MSG added. All meals are freshly prepared and cooked to order.

Louis Zhang's favorite menu item is on the Chef's Special menu, #069-Basil and Chili Sizzling Fish. He invites you to try it and see if you agree! The Thai Cuisine Noodle House, with its appealing blue color scheme, has a warm and cozy feel, perfect for a memorable dining experience. There is also a back room that is great for private parties. Louis Zhang and Kham Gin say that they enjoy running the restaurant and find it to be a lot of fun to serve people. Additionally, they enjoy finding special flavors to cook with so that they can prepare wonderful dishes to tempt their customers' palates. Be sure to see their ad in this issue of *Mandarin NewsLine!*

Computer Classes at the Library!

Join E-library Specialist Donna Peretzman for MS Office 2010: Excel 1 at the Mandarin Branch Library on Thursday, April 10 and at the South Mandarin Branch Library on Friday, April 11. MS Office 2010: Word II will be offered on Thursday, April 17 at the Mandarin Branch Library and on Friday, April 18 at the South Mandarin Branch Library. No registration is required and all classes begin at 10:15 a.m. Please call 262-5201 (KR) or 288-6385 (SOM) for more information.

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Celebrate National Humor Month at the library!

By Contributing Writer Lynne Baldwin, Branch Manager/Senior Librarian, Mandarin Branch Library

The Southeast Region Libraries have joined forces to bring you the very first annual Humor Fest. Plan to visit the four branches (San Marco, Mandarin, South Mandarin and Southeast) for programs during this month-long event. All you need to bring is your sense of humor. Everyone knows laughter is good for the soul, and it's also a great way to get kids into reading! Humor Fest is sure to put a smile on your face but don't be surprised if find yourself chuckling, howling or guffawing. We'll tickle your funny bone with silly jokes, ridiculous riddles and crazy cartoons. From laugh-out-loud movies to hilarious shows, anything goes when you join the sidesplitting fun at Joke Fest, Improv Night, Film Fest and more. Caution: Attend at your own risk. The following programs could make you smile, laugh or giggle uncontrollably. Joke Fest (For parents and children ages 3 -11): Saturday, March 29 at 11:00 a.m., Southeast Regional Library. Come join us for a morning of laughs at our first annual celebration of children's humor. Parents and children are invited to choose a joke to share from our joke box. Our celebrity hosts are the Greenfield Elementary School "Joke Masters" who have been chosen by the school to show off the reading and public speaking skills they learned from studying

jokes and humor. Improv Comedy For Teens (For teens ages 12-18): Wednesday, April 9 at 7:00 p.m., South Mandarin Branch Library. Learn the skill of Improv comedy! This class is designed for teens that want to learn improvisation for personal development and for those who have aspirations of becoming a performer. Shake those stage fears and prepare for comedy greatness. Stop! Drop! And Read! The Fun of Family Life (For all ages): Saturday, April 12 at 2:00 p.m., Mandarin Branch Library. Celebrate the fun of family life as we recognize the birthday of humor writer Beverly Cleary and her hilarious character, Ramona Quimby. We will literally drop everything. Just like Ramona, we want you to drop your dinner tray! Your balanced books! Your egg-in-a-spoon! At least once a day, drop everything and read (D.E.A.R.)! Family Humor Film Fest (For all ages): Thursday, April 17 at 4:00 p.m., San Marco Branch Library. Laugh with San Marco branch staff as they share their favorite family humor movies. Cartoon Festival (For all ages): Friday, April 25 at 4:00 p.m., Southeast Branch Library. Join us for the staff choice of cartoon favorites from the Children's Department. Popcorn provided with the laughs.

Laugh With Lucy - Film Festival (For all ages): Saturday, April 26 at 3:00 p.m., Mandarin Branch Library. Share a laugh with your children and join the Mandarin Teens as they show their favorite episodes from the classic comedy of "I Love Lucy." Snacks and drinks will be provided. Family Humor Hour - Stories and Jokes (For all ages): Saturday, April 26 at 3:00 p.m., South Mandarin Branch Library. Laugh with Jacksonville storyteller Dr. James Mittelstadt as he shares his favorite stories especially for parents and children. Children will be invited to share jokes from the library's humor collection. Cartoon Festival (For all ages): Saturday, April 26 at 4:00 p.m., South Mandarin Branch Library. Join us for the staff choice of cartoon favorites from the Children's Department. Popcorn provided with the laugh. So enjoy a whole month of laughs at the library and don't forget to stop by and share a joke at the library booth at the Mandarin Arts Festival on April 19 and 20 and at the Mandarin Senior Center Health Fair on April 25. I leave you with this quote from Groucho Marx - "Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana." See you at the library in April!

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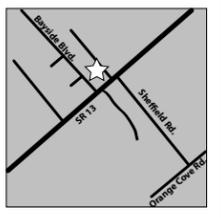
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Much to see in Augusta besides golf

By Contributing Travel Writer Debi Lander, www.bylandersea.com

Golfers dream of obtaining tickets for entry into the hallowed grounds of the Augusta National Golf Club. They'd pay just about anything to see the Masters tournament, but odds run slim for nabbing admission (officially known as badges) through the annual lottery. So coveted is access that many old-time Augusta families pass the rights down in their wills, but there's much to see and do in the beautiful city of Augusta, Georgia, besides golf.

A drive from Jacksonville

takes about four-and-a-half hours and spring is the optimal season for a getaway. Start your tour at the Augusta Museum of History to grasp the beginnings of the southern settlement founded by British General James Oglethorpe. He moved there after he established Savannah. In the early years, Augusta functioned as a trading post and later thrived with plantations of cotton and tobacco.

The museum's second floor features a permanent exhibit "Celebrating a Grand Tradition,"

which explores how the sport of golf evolved and highlights the area's four oldest clubs: Palmetto Golf Club, Augusta Country Club, Forest Hills Golf Club and Augusta National Golf Club. Duffers enjoy many valued artifacts, six statues of golf's greatest players and, of course, the official Green Jacket.

The Godfather of Soul James Brown got his start as a boy shining shoes on the streets of Augusta. The History Museum honors the hometown singer's rise to fame with a lively collection of his awards, music, personal items and family photos.

Afterward, head downtown and find the life-sized statue of James Brown on Broad Street. Snap your own photo or pose for the world's only James Brown "cam." The camera takes your picture and sends it to your cell phone within minutes. Revitalization of the downtown began about 15 years ago and today this area prospers. You'll discover approximately 30 locally owned and operated restaurants ranging from fast food to fine dining. Frog Hollow Tavern, Bee's Knees and Boll Weevil Cafe and Sweetery stand out.

Work off the calories with a



stroll on the Augusta Riverwalk. Here you can meander among blooming gardens and two tiers of bricked walkways and ramps beside the Savannah River. Perhaps you'll be lucky enough to catch a concert at the outdoor amphitheater which seats 1,800.

My favorite activity was an hour-long canal cargo boat ride. First, I stopped into the Augusta Canal Discovery Center and checked out the films, models and interactive exhibits which explained the importance of waterways. I had no idea that gunpowder was manufactured in Augusta during the Civil War or that Augusta played a major industrial role as the supplier to the Southern troops. The canal ride takes you past the remains of the Confederate Powder

Works, including a 168-foot-tall chimney, the only permanent structures constructed and completed by the Confederacy.

Art lovers will find the Morris Museum of Art worth a visit. It is the first museum devoted to the art and artists of the American South. The Sacred Heart Cultural Center also features many art exhibits and includes some exquisite architectural features. Lastly, if you have time, a trolley tour is a great way to hear some of the local legends about events in the city, the historic homes and Medical College.

"I Feel Good" is one of James Brown's famous songs and those words describe how Augusta made me feel. Go see for yourself.

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Local attorney honored

Congratulations to Mandarin resident Bill Gallogly, who received the President's Pro Bono Service Award, presented by the Florida Bar in a ceremony at the Supreme Court of Florida on January 30, 2014. This prestigious award recognizes attorneys who have volunteered free legal services to those who cannot afford them. Gallogly was recognized for his work in the 4th Judicial Circuit, where for the past 16 years, he has served low income people through Jacksonville Area Legal Aid. In the past three years, he has provided over 450 hours of pro bono assistance in the areas of Social Security, probate, wills, advance directives and guardianships. A believer in giving back, Gallogly has volunteered his time throughout his career and has been representing clients on a pro bono basis for the past 40 years in South Florida and Northeast Florida.



Have a "Mandarin Art Festival" Easter weekend!

By Contributing Writer Susie Scott

Make the 46th annual Mandarin Art Festival on April 19 and 20 part of your Easter weekend plans this year! Over 100 juried fine artists and fine crafters each year attract thousands of patrons from all over to seek out their favorite artists and explore the many booths. The perfect setting for finding unique items from paintings, to photography, to jewelry, to sculpture, to woodworking, to furniture and so much more. Find that perfect gift for yourself, your home or for anyone.

Under the historic oak trees of Mandarin Road, a unique setting for a festival, the community has come together for 46 years to support this event. It just gets better every year!

Inside the historic Mandarin Community Club building, the Children's Art Show exhibits the talents of students from a

number of local schools while enjoying the smells from an old fashioned bake sale fundraiser that is impossible to resist. And don't pass up the temptations at the food court with local festival foods and international cuisine.

Children's activities including face painting and balloon art, free art clinics by Young Rembrandts and live music on the show grounds and historic tours of the Walter Jones Post Office and General Store complete the experience.

And, did we mention the green market featuring local and hand crafted specialties?

Outside the club, stop by the club table to learn more about the Mandarin Community Club and its mission and many activities that benefit the community. Purchase prize drawing tickets for an array of gift baskets and items or buy your official art

festival tee shirt or club sponsored merchandise. Proceeds from the prize drawing and the festival are used to support the club programs and maintain their historic buildings. There is a \$1 entry fee at the gate. No pets, please.

Free parking at Mandarin Presbyterian Church on Mandarin Road and Alberts Field on Brady Road will be served by free shuttle service to the club from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Founded in 1923, 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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Girls on the Run cont. from pg. 1



While Girls on the Run is a well-rounded organization, the importance of physical activity for girls can't be overstated. As Warner says, being active is an important part of healthy living and overall wellness. Girls on the Run helps instill that into girls at a young age and build a foundation to put them on track for a healthy future in a fun, empowering way.

To sign your daughter up for Girls on the Run or to volunteer as a coach, visit the Girls on the Run website, www.gotrnefl.org or call their office at 619-6763.

ner has found it to be a rewarding experience.

"I get to see the wonderful influence it has on my own daughters, but now I have a whole family of other coaches and young girls that I feel a special kinship to. It's girl power, it's empowering and it builds the girls up and helps them be stronger physically, mentally and emotionally," she says.

Warner asks at the end of each season what Girls on the Run means to them and girls have said that it helps them love themselves, feel like they belong, stand up to bullying, to be who they are and to never give up. The girls often give back to their communities, through anti-bullying programs like a "Kindness Campaign" and donating goods to organizations like Wolfson Children's Hospital, animal shelters and food banks.

Check out the Lego Club at the library



The first early release Wednesday of each month from 3:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m., be sure to come to the South Mandarin Library! Come have some fun to celebrate early out. Each month has a new theme. Use your imagination to create anything from a spaceship to an entire city. Legos are provided. This program is for kindergarteners through sixth graders.

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Library manager honored



Mandarin Assistant Manager Stacey Van Hoy is presented with a JPL Award for Modeling the Way from Library Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Brenda Simmons-Hutchins and JPL Deputy Director Carolyn Williams at the board meeting on February 13.

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Are your allergies driving you nuts?

Are you suffering from itchy, irritating, red, watery eyes? Here are four quick tips for happier eyes, contributed by Baymeadows Vision Center.

Tip 1: Wash your face throughout the day. Help wash away pollen and other irritants. Be sure to

wash your hands first.

Tip 2: Leave shoes outside. Shoes can track in pollen and other allergens.

Tip 3: Stay inside. When the pollen count is high, stay indoors with windows and doors shut.

Tip 4: Use your rewetting drops. This makes a big difference to contact lens comfort on pollen-heavy days.

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~George Washington

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Be sure to see the Baymeadows Vision Center ad in this issue of *Mandarin NewsLine!*

Reduce utility bills: Make your home energy and water efficient

By Contributing Writer Gerri Boyce, JEA

With spring and summer fast approaching, this is a great time to consider ways to reduce electric and water utility bills by making your home more energy and water efficient. The Jacksonville Public Library (JPL), JEA and the Green Team Project are partnering to offer free Do-it-Yourself Home Energy and Water Evaluation Kits and training workshops at the following library locations:

- Webb Wesconnett Regional Library Saturday, June 14, 10:30 a.m.
- Highlands Branch Library Saturday, June 14, 10:30 a.m.
- Jacksonville Public Library (JPL), JEA and the Green Team Project are partnering to offer free Do-it-Yourself Home Energy and Water Evaluation Kits and training workshops at the following library locations:
 - Saturday, April 12, 10:30 a.m.
 - Mandarin Branch Library Saturday, May 17, 10:30 a.m.

The kit tools come in backpacks made locally from recycled billboard vinyl. Developed by JEA, the backpack includes energy efficiency measuring tools to help you conserve energy, identify problem areas in your home and tips on how to fix them. They also include water use evaluation tools to find water leaks and estimate your water costs, discover if your faucets and appliances are water efficient and determine if your outdoor irrigation system is watering effectively.

Registration for the workshops is required. Attendance at each workshop is limited to 20 individuals on a first-come, first-served basis. Slots fill quickly so early registration is recommended. For more information and to register, please visit www.greenteamproject.org.

If you need special accommodations, please contact the Youth Services and Programming Office at 630-1420 or JPLPrograms@coj.net. Please provide 72 hours notice when requesting accommodations.



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South Mandarin Branch Library

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Family fun at Crown Point Sock Hop

By Contributing Writer Mary J. Eyer, Inclusion Teacher, Crown Point Elementary



annual Sock Hop Dance. The PTA invited the school Panthers and their parents to kick off their shoes and dance to music from the '50s and '60s.

The students dressed up for the occasion and arrived wearing white t-shirts, rolled up jeans, bobby socks, colorful skirts and tops. The

As the students were exchanging their Valentine cards on the morning of February 14, the Crown Point Elementary School PTA board members were busy decorating and getting the multi-purpose room ready for the

DJ played great music and there was lots of dancing! Parents participated as much as the children.

It was a fun event enjoyed by all! Thank you Crown Point PTA for all that you do for our children!

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Women tour Maclay Gardens State Park

By Contributing Writer Sharon Weed

The travel group of the Mandarin Women's Club had been planning a trip for several months to the Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park in Tallahassee, with the hope that it would be a warm and sunny day and there would be lots of ladies going; however, on Friday, March 7, only five hardy souls departed Mandarin in chilly weather and drizzling rain. It was an uneventful drive over through several rain showers, but after we exited Interstate 10 on our way to lunch, we found that we were on the wrong road!

After several u-turns and backtracking, we arrived at the Kool Beanz Café and had a wonderful lunch, which our leader Suelynn topped off with Chocolate Mint Crème Brulee.

From there, we drove on to the gardens and met our guide John and began our walking tour. Although it was cool, the rain had stopped. We were a little disappointed that the cool winter had delayed the azalea blooms, as there were acres of azalea bushes with only a few blossoms open. But John led us by gigantic Tulip trees that



were in full bloom, with clouds of lovely pink to purple blossoms stretching many feet high. And there were huge camellia bushes under the oaks, blooming with pinks, reds and whites and even some variegated ones. One favorite spot was a little walled garden with a fountain in the center with beds of pansies in honor of Mrs. Maclay, as pansies were her favorite flower.

At the end of the garden tour, we toured the house that was the southern home for New York financier Alfred Barmore

Maclay and his family. He bought the property in 1923 and created this masterpiece of floral architecture on the hills overlooking picturesque Lake Hall. After Maclay's death in 1944 his wife continued developing the gardens and in 1953 donated them to the state for everyone to enjoy.

Traveling is just one of many activities enjoyed by the Mandarin Women's Club and we welcome all ladies regardless of where they live. Join us and get involved by calling Diane at 880-5354!

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Forever homes needed for dogs like "Lainie"

"Lainie" Westermann turns Sweet 16 this month. Lainie was adopted from the Jacksonville Humane Society on Beach Boulevard when she was just eight weeks old. All these years later, Lainie is still enjoying life in Mandarin with her forever family. The Westermann family encourages anyone looking to add a doggie or kitty cat to their family to consider a shelter animal like they did 16 years ago with Lainie. The Westermanns thank Dr. Peter X. Prince and the staff at Augustine Loretto Animal Clinic for the wonderful veterinary care Lainie has received her whole life and continues to receive in her golden years.



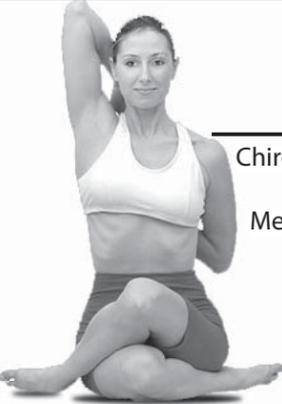
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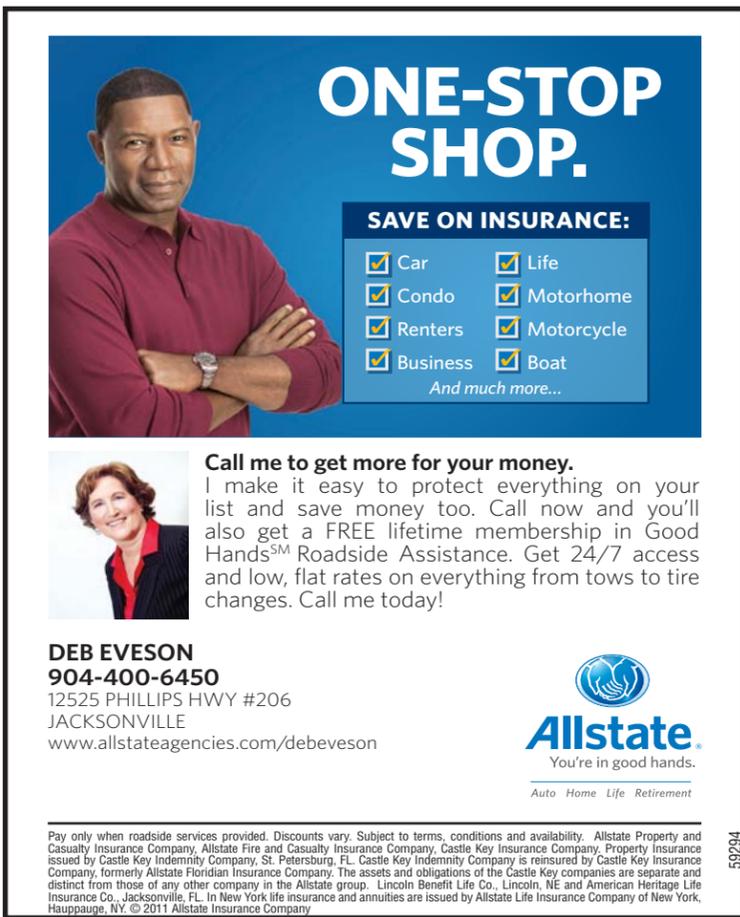
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Model Citizens cont. from pg. 1
together as a group of dedicated scale model builders about eight years ago. They initially met at the old Hobby Town USA store on University Boulevard West, but soon after found themselves being nudged out due to other groups meeting on the same night. Skip Haines, the organizer for the club, sought out other venues and contacted the store manager at the Hobby Lobby in Mandarin. The store manager agreed for the club to use the store as a meeting site and even offered the usage of the store classroom as a place to gather.

The model club has seen members come and go, but currently there are about a dozen or so regulars who meet every Wednesday evening at the Hobby Lobby store. Each and every meeting is different as members come together to show and tell about their most current projects under construction.

The oldest member of the club is Bill Bellamy, who at the age of 92 is still young at heart when it comes to his expertise of scale model building. Bellamy has produced an exact scale replica of a two masted schooner he served upon when he was only 14 years old. Using a hand sketched plan as his guide, he started with only a piece of laminated cedar, which he carved and shaped into the hull then brought it to a meeting. Frank Ryczek, who was the past president of the Jacksonville Ship Modeler's Society was floored by Bellamy's creation and offered



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Realty group supports Big Brothers Big Sisters

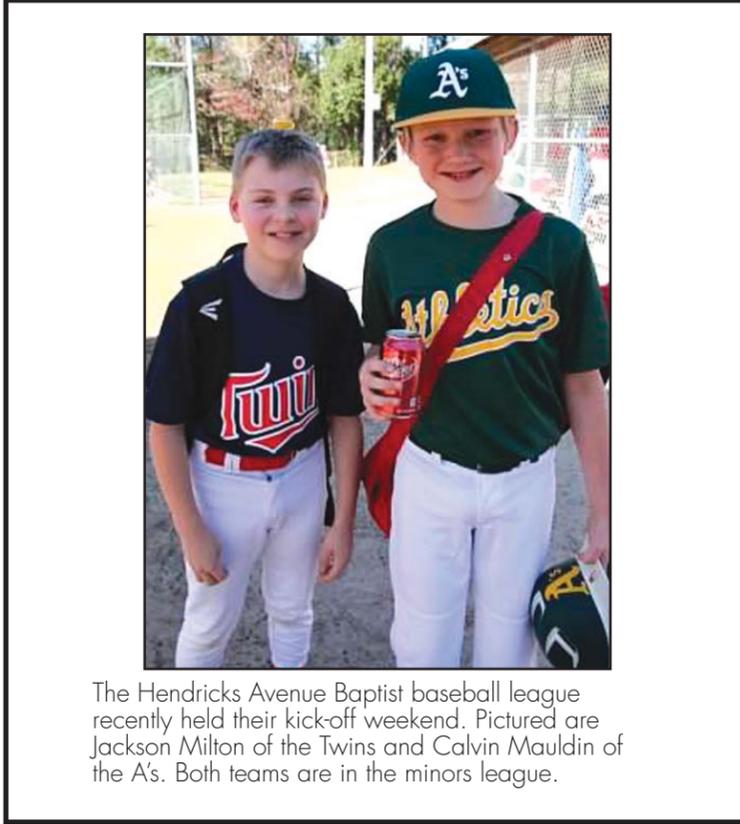


Beach Grill restaurant in St. Augustine Beach. "It was such a fun night with plenty of big hair and excitement," King said. "The Boys and Girls Club is a great part of our community and we are thrilled we could support their efforts and the children who benefit from the club."

The Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Johns County is a mentoring program serving St. Johns County through community-based and school-based programs. More information is available at www.bbbsstjohns.org.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty raised more than \$1,400 for Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Johns County during the 19th annual Tips for Kids Sake. During the 1980s-themed event, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty broker/manager Ann King and agents Rebecca Romaine, Karen Peil and Molly Butler took on the challenge of waiting tables and raising big tips as celebrity servers at South

"Our team members at the St. Augustine office are incredible. They do so much for the community and make such a positive impact with their charitable efforts," said Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty Founder, President and CEO Linda H. Sherrer. "We are very proud of their commitment to community service and efforts to make a difference in the local community."



The Hendricks Avenue Baptist baseball league recently held their kick-off weekend. Pictured are Jackson Milton of the Twins and Calvin Mauldin of the A's. Both teams are in the minors league.

encouragement to him to finish his model.
If you are a beginner fledgling scale modeler who wants to branch out and learn how to make better models, the group will take you under their wings. If you are an advanced modeler, they will hold you in the highest regard. Membership is absolutely free and open to all with a budding interest in building scale

models and those who want to learn the tricks from the old guys and younger guys as well. The Model Citizens of Mandarin meet every Wednesday night at the Hobby Lobby store, located on St. Augustine Road at 5:30 p.m. Bring in your current and past made models for weekly show and tells. For more information, please call Frank Ryczek at 262-7942 or Skip Haines at 219-9594.



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Local scouts compete in Pinewood Derby

By Contributing Writer Melissa Salek



Wolf Scouts Curren O'Brien, Matt Salek and Alex Lin check their derby cars in with Jim Royal, event organizer. Photo courtesy of Boy Scout Phillip Roussin.

Miniature wooden cars of all shapes and sizes zoomed down a sloping, long wooden track recently at Cub Scout Pack 101's annual Pinewood Derby, held at Christ's Church Academy (CCA). Cub Scouts, with the help of their parents and scout leaders, transformed a block of wood into imaginative wooden cars, including traditional-shaped race cars and even a hot dog car. The scouts then competed against their den members for a chance to represent the Pack at the district Pinewood Derby, which will be held March 29 in Jacksonville.

The following boys will be representing their den at the District Pinewood Derby:

- Tigers: Graydon Gunning, Jon Sipe and Vageesh Paridala
- Wolf: Alejandro Bautista, Joshua Nikielski and Kaden Little
- Bears: Nicholas Driussi, Na-

- thaniel Martin and Anthony Scott
 - Webelos I: Ethan Foster, Gavin O'Brien and Kyle Beckstrom
 - Webelos II: Parker Weaver, Ethan Roussin and Alex Harm
- Overall Pack winners were Parker Weaver, first place; Nicholas Driussi, second place; and a tie for third place between Nathaniel Martin and Alejandro Bautista.

Boy Scout Troop 101 and Cub Scout Pack 101 are chartered to Christ's Church and meet on Monday evenings at CCA. For more information about Cub Scouting or Pack 101, please contact the Cubmaster at cubmaster@pack101.com or visit the website at pack101.com. For information about Boy Scouting or Troop 101, please contact the Scoutmaster at trp101sm@gmail.com.

Creative readers at St. Joseph

By Contributing Writer Lisa Jaquett, Third Grade Teacher, St. Joseph Catholic School



ter, then created a puppet which was used to present a report. Later in the year they became sleuths looking for clues while reading a mystery book. Nonfiction reports about snakes, soccer and ballet were some of the favorites. The students just completed a biography report which they were required to dress as the person in the book and give an oral report based on the person's point of view. The outfits were very creative and quite adorable!

What will the rest of the year bring? Well, a fiction book report with a mobile requirement is next, followed by everyone's favorite book report—the cookbook report! The students will use their measuring skills and ability to read different types of books to complete a project that involves cooking and bringing in samples for the class to taste. Yummy!

We are so proud of our St. Joseph's students who have

found a new appreciation for books and a deeper love for reading.

Third grade students at St. Joseph Catholic School have become more adventurous readers. The students were required to read a variety of books this year and complete book reports.

These have not been the typical book reports with a paragraph and a picture. The students read fiction books with an animal as the main charac-

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GradNation Community Summit scheduled

Jacksonville will host a GradNation Community Summit with America's Promise Alliance, the nation's largest partnership dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth, Mayor Alvin Brown announced. The all-day summit will be held Friday, April 4 at the Jacksonville Public Library's Main Branch. The agenda will focus on how to improve high school graduation rates and better prepare young people for college and the workforce. Jacksonville joins 99 other communities across the country that will host similar summits through 2016 in an effort to achieve a 90 percent graduation rate nationwide by 2020 with the support of America's Promise, which was founded by Gen. Colin Powell and is currently led by his wife Alma. Jacksonville's graduation rate is at an all-time high of 72 percent, with a 75 percent graduation rate statewide.

"Jacksonville's success as a city depends on the success of our children and young people," said Mayor Brown. "Education is key to that success. We must have high expectations for our kids, and we must provide them with the support they need to

meet and exceed those expectations. This summit is an opportunity for all of us to work together to ensure the success of the next generation."

Jacksonville is hosting a GradNation Community Summit as part of Mayor Brown's Education Initiatives, a series of coordinated programs. These include Mayor's Mentors, which pairs trained volunteers to provide support to at-risk middle school students and Learn2Earn, which provides a week of college immersion at local universities to high school students who would be the first in their families to attend college.

Mayor Brown and the City of Jacksonville will welcome Alma Powell as the keynote speaker at the summit's opening. Other nationally recognized speakers will also be featured, including Dr. Howard C. Stevenson, a professor of education and Africana studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Robert Balfanz, co-director of the Everyone Graduates Center and a research scientist at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

The work of America's

Promise Alliance is focused on helping increase access to five academic, health and life resources, known as the "Five Promises" – caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education and opportunities to help others. Research shows that with these critical supports at home, in school and in the community, children are more likely to achieve academically, socially and civically.

For more information about the Jacksonville Summit and to learn how to get involved, please visit coj.net/edsummit.



On March 11, 2014, Loretto Elementary School partnered with Publix Supermarket on San Jose Boulevard to host its annual FCAT Family Night. In an effort to provide our students with real-world application of concepts and skills taught in the classroom, math packets were created for third, fourth and fifth grade students. The packets were made up of word problems that included actual items in the store. Upon arrival, students picked up a packet, clipboard and pencil. Then, with parental assistance, students headed down several aisles to find out

prices of items. Next, they began the computations. Once the packet was complete, students submitted it to receive credit. The teacher with the most student participation received a treat. Not only did FCAT Family Night reinforce concepts and skills that are taught, it was also a fun way to get parents and community involved with preparing our students for the FCAT.



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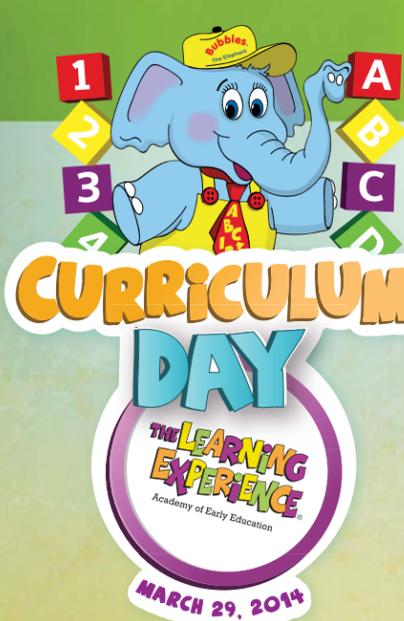
Saturday, March 29 is Curriculum Day at The Learning Experience® of Mandarin! This special day is a celebration of learning that showcases the important recent advancements in early childhood education and additions to our proprietary L.E.A.P.® (Learning Experience Academic Program) Curriculum that has nearly 90% of preschoolers reading by the time they enter kindergarten!

As part of this celebration, our center will be having a curriculum-themed open house and conducting VIP tours from 10:00AM to 2:00PM on March 29. Our open house and VIP tours will provide parents and caregivers with an opportunity to experience our state-of-the-art learning center and engage in exciting curriculum and enrichment activities that will help you understand why our programs are crucial for your child's early development.

We encourage you to bring family and friends.

We hope to see you and your guests for Curriculum Day at The Learning Experience® Mandarin!

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Crown Point Elementary celebrates Dr. Seuss's birthday

By Contributing Writer Mary J. Eyley, Inclusion Teacher, Crown Point Elementary

During the week of March 3, the kindergarten students at Crown Point Elementary School celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday. They read many of his books and participated in various Dr. Seuss themed activities. The activities included wearing a t-shirt from somewhere the students have visited to go along with the book, "Oh! The Places You will Go."

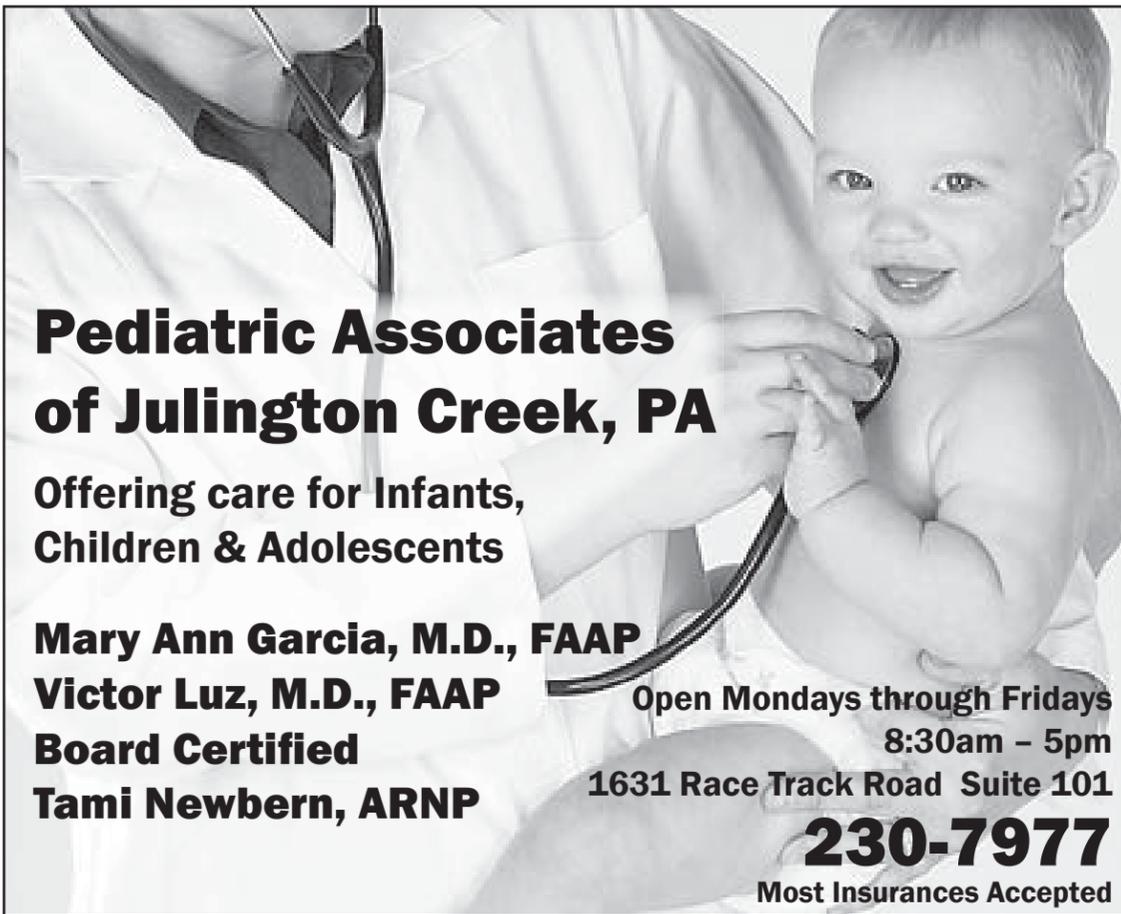
Students wore silly socks and read the "Fox in Socks."

On Thursday, the students dressed as their favorite character from Dr. Seuss books and paraded through the hallways to share their costumes with the rest of the school. They arrived on Friday dressed in their pajamas and read "The Sleep Book" and "I Am Not Going

to Get Up Today!"

It was a memorable week and a celebration of a brilliant poet, cartoonist and author. From one classroom here and another classroom there, Dr. Seuss books were read everywhere!

Thank you teachers for all the activities you've planned, the enthusiasm you've shown and the love of books you've helped foster!

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Local gymnast wins division

Eric Nakamura, an eighth grader at Landon Middle School, placed first in his division, 9, during the 2014 Men's Florida Gymnastics Tournament held at Clearwater, Florida. He is a member of First Coast Gymnastics and the son of Dr. and Mrs. Takashi and Manami Nakamura of Mandarin.



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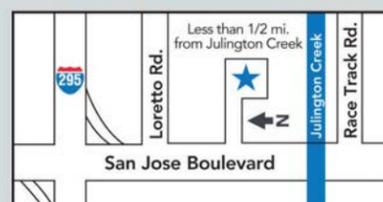



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Local school partners with South African company to create Purim app

By Contributing Writer Hannah G., Eighth Grader, Martin J. Gottlieb Day School

The Martin J. Gottlieb Day School has partnered with South African company, Jewish Interactive, to create video games all about the Jewish holiday, Purim. The middle school created several interactive video games over the past five months. One was recently selected to be coded by Jewish Interactive and can now be downloaded from the iTunes store. In its first two weeks, the app received over 750 downloads.

The game, "Whack A Haman," was created to make learning about the Jewish holiday Purim fun. Every middle school student learned the steps on how to create a video game from start to finish. Each student took on jobs such as art director, audio engineer, quality control and project manager.

Before the actual game was built, the students had to first research Purim and find additional facts than they already knew. They had to



come up with game concepts and create a storyboard. The students had to write scripts to explain the steps and rules of the game, record sounds and design the graphics. All the steps were prepared on a Google Doc that was shared with Jewish Interactive so that the company could be a part of the process.

Students are currently working on the final step of their job, which includes marketing their app. They are calling local news stations, tweeting about it on Twitter, creating flyers to advertise the game and brainstorming on additional ways to market the "Whack A Haman" app.

Students are future scientists and engineers

By Contributing Writer Lizette Woodward, Junior High Science Teacher



Catholic middle school students strive for excellence and this was validated by the results from the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair held on Monday, February 10, 2014 at the Morocco Shrine Center. There

were a total of 27 public, private, Catholic middle and Catholic high schools participating in the fair. The Diocese of St. Augustine was well represented with 131 projects out of the total of 402 high school and middle school projects presented at the fair or 32.5 percent of the projects. The middle school students won a combined total of 40 place awards and 25 special awards

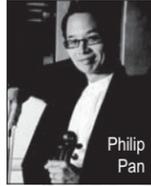
equaling to about 50 percent of all place awards given at the fair.

St. Joseph Catholic School winners included Kaitlyn Devine, in eighth grade, who received a first place award for her project in the junior Behavioral Science category; Ethan Hobensack in sixth grade, who received a second place award in the junior Engineering category; Joseph Dray, in seventh grade, who received a fourth place award for his junior Physics project; and finally, Margaret Gupton, in eighth grade, who received a fourth place award for her project in the junior Medicine and Health category. Congratulations to all the students for their hard work and dedication.

 Angela Muller
 Annie Frehn
 Ariadna Perez
 Arvid Smith
 Bernie Vaughn
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 Cliff Newton
 Don Reynolds
 Glynda Newton
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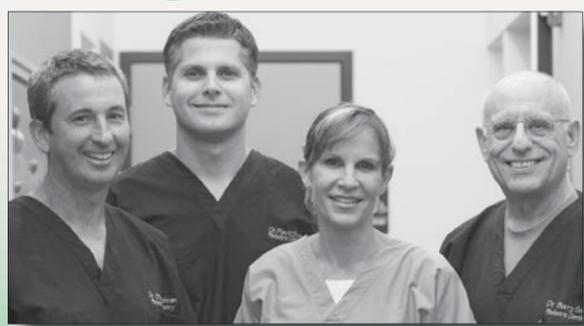
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Mandarin Band News

By Contributing Writers Brooke Sapolsky and Levana Osher



The Mandarin Band section leaders raising the bar: Naomi, Karen, Mark C., Connor, Alex, Jay, Matt and Mark M.

Once a year band and guard students get the opportunity to show their creative talents and prove their abilities to accomplish their personal style in music and dance. This performance of the PRISM Concert is fast-paced with quick transitions into each performance. This provides students with the ability to perfect their talents on their own by achieving their personal vision. The PRISM concert this year will be held in May.

While PRISM gives students a chance to play fun music on his/her own, leadership is about bonding the band to allow it to achieve the highest potential. The importance of developing leadership in our program is necessary in order to continue to offer the students a high quality program. There is a unique and exciting aspect to marching and concert band which young people seldom find available to them elsewhere. Each performance is a special opportunity where students experience a sense of community and realize that the sum of who they are is far greater than any one individual. Without this ever being on the curriculum, these young artists are learning how to be team players, how to fit into a community and how

ance in perfecting their skills. The program also has several leadership roles such as librarian, historian, tech crew, secretary and the drum majors. These monthly articles are written and/or coordinated by two people in the historian/publisher leadership role.

Leadership positions are highly needed in a band to keep the band functioning normally and to teach students how to take control of the program to an extent and create the program that's theirs. Students that desire to be in a leadership role will start attending after school leadership sessions once a week in April to prepare themselves and submit an application for the new season. These sessions will bond the leadership in a way to make the band run as

smooth as possible.

While Mandarin band excitedly looks forward to a new marching season, it is always good to take a look back. After preparing a few selections of music for about three months, both of Mandarin's concert bands performed a concert for a panel of judges during MPAs or Music Performance Assessments. This concert is meant to give both the musicians and directors feedback on how to improve. As the Mandarin bands took the stage, they sat down ready and determined to play the music the best they possibly could, which they both proceeded to do. While the concerts of both the Symphonic Band and Wind

Ensemble demonstrated all of the hard work that was put into the music, there is always room for improvement. As the new marching season is quickly approaching, all of the musicians will continue to look back on this concert to find ways to improve.

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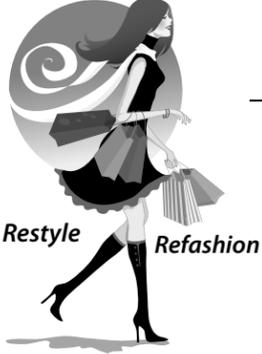




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Come to the Caribbean with the River Garden Auxiliary

Do you have island fever and long for gentle tropical breezes? Then you won't want to miss "A Taste of the Caribbean," the 18th annual River Garden Auxiliary Special Event to be held on Thursday, May 8 at the Jacksonville Marriott Hotel.

Island music will get you moving to the beat while you shop the silent auction featuring one of a kind items and gift certificates from local restaurants and businesses and a raffle with weekend trips as the grand prizes. A fabulous lunch and a fashion show presented by TJ Maxx with Auxiliary members as the models will make you

sorry to return to Jacksonville after an exciting and enjoyable day in the islands.

This year's event is co-chaired by Rhoda Goldstein and Ilana Manasse. There is still time for you not to miss this them by calling Rhoda at 268-8124 or Ilana at 733-7765 for further information and reservations.

The River Garden Auxiliary members work to financially support River Garden Senior Services and its programs, and volunteer thousands of hours to help provide for the needs of the residents. All monies raised by the Auxiliary are returned to River Garden to enhance the lives of the residents.



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Purposeful Parenting

Frozen and friendships in family

By Allie Olsen

I bawled during *Frozen*. Not once. Not even twice. I cried through the whole darn thing. It was the love Elsa and Anna display for one another that did it to me. Afterwards, I started thinking... how can I help our kids cultivate that kind of love?

So, with the goal of creating an atmosphere of family harmony, I sat down with a notepad and a pen (yes, I'm a paper girl) and made a list:

1. Model kindness: Speak with respect, leave room for mistakes and work together to fix problems.
2. Have fun together: Set aside homework and housecleaning for a family game, walk, book on the couch or just a

quick hug. Don't let anyone bow out repeatedly—family fun is mandatory!

3. Serve one another and serve together.
4. Build a sandman. A snowman is completely out of the question in Florida, but I think we could certainly build a sandman! And if we name him Olaf, maybe he'll come to life and make the kids laugh when they really want to hurt each other... or maybe we'll just make a fun memory.
5. Leave time in our schedule for silliness. Instead of hurrying from activity to activity, I'm planning white space on our calendar. I think it'll

help me be more patient and all of us to have time for fun.

Often, my parenting goals have more to do with making my life easier than they do truly helping my children grow to godly, respectful adults. For example, I want them to get along because their bickering really annoys me. This not intentional, it's just my default on long, busy days.

This month, I'm challenging myself to create an atmosphere of family harmony. I'm reminding myself that saying yes to anything is saying no to another, very important, thing. Because a little mamma magic can go a long way in creating family harmony.

Jewish Family and Community Services draws several hundred to gala

Jewish Family and Community Services, a 96-year-old social service agency for children and families, drew several hundred people to its "You Can Count on Us" gala March 6 at the Marriott Southpoint in Jacksonville. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver and Lawrence and Linda DuBow served as honorary co-chairs for the event, which celebrated JFCS' work and raised money for its programs that serve about 15,000 people a year in Northeast Florida. Former PGA Tour and WNBA executive Donna Orender emceed the event.



Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver pose with Jewish Family and Community Services CEO Colleen Rodriguez and Lawrence DuBow at JFCS's "You Can Count on Us" gala.

Shannon Miller sets the standard of an active lifestyle at local school

The very same day that the 2014 Winter Olympics started in Sochi, the most decorated American gymnast in history, Shannon Miller, made a special appearance to talk to the children at Hendricks Day School. Hendricks values health and fitness and makes efforts to educate their students on different options to remain active.

After a day full of activities such as yoga, cross training and an obstacle course, the kids were able to sit back, relax and enjoy a pep talk about staying active. A video of her Gold medal-worthy balance beam routine introduced Miller to her young audience. She explained that it is possible to achieve any type of dream, if you first take the journey step-by-step. The theme of competition was prevalent throughout

the day and Miller noted that if you want to succeed, you must not limit yourself, but rather challenge yourself. She also noted that her Olympic dream budded at the age of 11 and by the age of 19 she had won a gold medal.

Centering on personal growth with inspirational words, Miller's message to the students at Hendricks was that dedication creates results. She was thoroughly impressed to see that some of the students had been practicing sports for most of their lives and had plans to continue. She encouraged the students to continue to pursue athletic success, as there is a sport for everyone. Miller has suffered multiple injuries in her athletic career, but it has been her determination that made her so successful. One

saying that Miller reiterated multiple times to the children was "Fuel your body for success!"

An ovarian cancer survivor, Miller is now fully recovered and a full-time proponent of healthy lifestyles. A mother of two, Miller recognizes the need to treat your body right with the use of both health and fitness. She is the founder of Shannon Miller Lifestyle, and has created a business around providing health and wellness information in a grand scheme in 2012. Her website, www.shannonmillerlifestyle.com features many resources including blog posts, healthy recipes, links to fitness tips and much more. During her visit to Hendricks, she made sure to talk about how important moderation is in regards to both fitness and nutrition.



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Faith News

Freedom Christian Fellowship welcomes you to their annual Easter Egg Hunt being held on Saturday, April 19 from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. for children ages birth to 12. There will be lots of candy, prizes and fun! Freedom Christian Fellowship is located at 3423 Loretto Road in Mandarin. For more details, please call 268-2244.

Weekly, members of the public gather for a conversational examination of their experiences around a particular life issue prevalent in today's society. These coffee and conversation events are held at **Lifetree Café** right here in Mandarin. You will meet friendly people and share experiences, opinions, and stories about the "topic of the week" in a small, intimate setting. You're welcome just as you are, your thoughts are welcome. During April, we will discuss: April 1 and 2: "Friends for Life." Ten buddies, 38 years, one weekend a year; April 8 and 9: "Family Secrets." What Mama never told us; April 15 and 16: "Living with Autism." A peek into a hidden world; April 22 and 23: "After the Attack." Picking up the pieces and moving on; and April 29 and 30: "Life's Myths." What really leads to happiness. Lifetree Cafe is held Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. at Mandarin Senior Center, located at 3848 Hartley Road and Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. at Hope Lutheran Church (open to everyone), located at 9000 Cypress Green Drive. Admission is free and so are the refreshments! Find out more about topics and location from the Mandarin NewsLine online calendar entry or call George Treiber at 731-0731.

Mandarin United Methodist Church, located at 11270 San Jose Boulevard, announces their annual **Easter Musical**, to be held on Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The community is invited to attend!

Join us on Wednesday, April 2 from 9:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. for our monthly **Jewish Java** at Village Bread Café

on San Jose Boulevard. Enjoy free coffee with the purchase. There's even a door prize. Jewish Java is a perfect entry point for newcomers and those newly interested in making community connections. The casual setting, friendly locals and good food are a winning combination. New people have so many questions and our in-the-know locals and Java regulars have the answers. It doesn't matter how long you have lived in Jacksonville, you have an open invitation to join us the first Wednesday of every month. It's the perfect place to find out the latest happenings in the Jewish and general communities. Plan to join us.

JCA's J Institute will launch its Lunch and Learn series with "Dealing with Difficult People in the Workplace." The program, scheduled for Thursday, April 24 from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m., will be led by psychologist Jonathan Gross. Dr. Gross will discuss common personality pitfalls that can be detrimental in the workplace and will provide proven tactics to help deal with workplace issues. These strategies are also transferable to situations beyond the work environment. This program is open to the entire community and is free to JCA members and human resource professionals and is \$5 for guests. Bring a brown bag dairy lunch. Registration is required. Please visit www.jcajax.org/ji or contact the JCA registrar at 730-2100 x228 to register.

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An evening of celebration and service



Relief Society President Sherry Herrington, along with her counselors, Hattie McClennan and Julie LeFevre, with a few of the gift bags that were assembled during the service project.

More than 150 women from 11 congregations, including one in Mandarin, of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their friends recently celebrated the 172nd anniversary of the organization of the Relief Society, the auxiliary of the church for adult women. The evening included dinner, fellowship and a service project. They filled 50 birthday bags with party hats, dessert plates, cake mixes, icing, candles and other donated items for a complete birthday party. The bags were donated to area shelters.

From its beginning on March 17, 1842, Relief Society women have been guided by their motto, "Charity Never Faileth." Now, 172 years later, their mission to seek out and care for those in need has not changed.

The Relief Society is the oldest and largest women's organization with 5.5 million members worldwide. Its purpose is to build faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes and help those in need. To find out more about the history and work of Relief Society, go to Mormon.org and search "Relief Society."

School holds successful scholarship auction

In case you missed the news, Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran Church and School (SOTWLS) held its eighth annual scholarship auction on March 1, 2014. The money raised provides scholarships for students who might not otherwise be able to afford a faith based private education at SOTWLS. As in the past, this year's auction had a theme. Themes in the past have been the '50s, '60s and last year's theme was the movies! This year we celebrated the world of sports. Those attending the auction were invited to wear their favorite team's colors or come dressed as your favorite sports personality. It was interesting to see which team had the most fans!

Keeping with the sports theme, we had a couple sports themed items in our auction this year. We had an autographed football signed by the Jacksonville Jaguars cheerleaders, The Roar. We also had a very special autographed football up for auction signed by none other than Tim Tebow—that's right, former Heisman Winner and Florida Gator Tim Tebow. His autograph came courtesy of his brother Robbie Tebow. The ball was a stylized white Florida Gators football with Tim's autograph.

So maybe football isn't your thing and you wanted something different? There were plenty of other items available for you to bid on either online, in our silent auction, or in the live auction portions of the scholarship auction. We had a variety of baskets to bid on. Each basket had a theme—a movie themed basket, food lover's basket, a craft basket and a few more that would have tickled your fancy.

We also auctioned off a do it yourselfer's dream, a workshop quality Rigid drill press.

Over 100 people came out and enjoyed food, beverages and lots of auction action. They held their paddles high and helped us raise \$10,000 for scholarships for students in need. Thanks to all the people who sponsored, donated, attended and bid at the auction!

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Parish Penance Service
Thursday, April 3
7:00 p.m. – Main Church

Holy Week
Holy Thursday
April 17
Reconciliation 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Mass 7:00 p.m. – Main Church

Good Friday
April 18
Reconciliation
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Live Stations of the Cross –
2:45 p.m. (Rectory Parking Lot)
Reconciliation
5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Solemn Liturgical Observance
with Holy Communion
7:00 p.m. – Main Church

Holy Saturday
April 19
Easter Vigil Mass 8:30 p.m. –
Main Church

Easter Sunday
April 20
6:30 a.m. Sunrise, 8:00 a.m.,
10:00 a.m. 12:00 noon Mass –
Main Church
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MHS Sports Roundup Focus on track and field

By Hazel Odell, MHS Student

The Mandarin High School boys' and girls' track teams are championship teams that look forward to finishing another winning season.

The MHS track and field teams are notorious for practicing through all conditions. The athletes were bundled up in layers during north Florida's terrifying sub-50 degree temperatures. They were either protected by raincoats or soaked during the downpours. They were fighting the sun with sunscreen and sweat when Jacksonville's blistering weather grew the courage to show itself.

Unlike most sports, track has a huge team that is split up into smaller squads. The athletes range from distance runners to hurdlers to sprinters to pole-vaulters to throwers and to jumpers.

Five dedicated coaches lead the teams, with James Schmitt as the head. The other coaches are Sidney Forrest, Daniel Wilcox, James Donovan and Carson Mendez.

The season is long and can last over four months for athletes who make it to the state level.

On the surface track is an individual sport, since each athlete competes against a selection of other athletes at competitions. But to be victorious at meets, MHS track and field must have a large number

of talented and hardworking athletes so that they can earn more points.

The camaraderie between the athletes is evident when one visits the track on a given afternoon. The squads warm up, work out and cool down together. Words (and screams) of encouragement are shared.

"[The throwing squad] welcomed me with open arms; we're like a family," said sophomore Madison Thomas, who joined the throwing squad this year. "Each team member is more than willing to help somebody with whatever they need."

As of Thursday, March 8, the teams have had eight meets, with most of them being at home. Both teams have won the majority of their meets, but they are both working hard to improve upon their weaknesses.

As the season moves forward, training to compete at the Gateway Conference Championship becomes stressed. The boys have been champions for the past six years; the girls have been champions for five. The meet will take place on Wednesday, April 2 at 1:00 p.m. at Wolfson High School.

The team's last non-championship meet of the season, Friday Nite Spikes, will take place at Bartram Trail High School on Friday, April 4, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Captain David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka

Can you guess this fish? One of the most abundant fisheries in North American coastal waters is that of certain fish that is a favorite for many who fish our areas of the St. Johns River. This fish is important commercially with millions of pounds caught annually. This fish is a fast-growing species reaching maturity in two to three years making it resilient to being overfished. When mature, this fish will leave the bays and estuaries it normally inhabits through the warmer months and spend its winter months offshore in the Atlantic.

This particular fish is amongst the first of saltwater fish to be caught every spring for much of the Atlantic Coastal United States. We can expect this fish to be showing in our local waters now through fall. As the temperature of the water increases, you can expect the quantities and sizes of this fish to increase also. Being tolerant to a wide range of salinities enables this fish to endure many of our varying summer and fall weather patterns.

Average size of this fish is about 12 inches long with an average weight of about one to one-and-a-half pounds. In the late summer it is not uncommon to catch these fish nearly double their average weight. This fish has a state record of 4 pounds, 15 ounces. The table fare for this fish is considered very good. Its flavor is often described as light, sweet and pleasant. It can be prepared in any variety of ways as long as it is not eaten raw. The filets are firm and pinkish in color and turn white and flakey when cooked.

This fish can be caught from our local piers and docks on the

river or by boat, fishing holes, ledges, mud bottoms, shell bottoms and bridge pilings. This fish will bite a large variety of baits including shrimp, worms, clams, crab, cut fish and squid. A bottom rig with a 1/0 hook on a light to medium rod and reel would be your preferred setup. The end or start of a changing tide is when these fish seem to bite best, but don't rule them out at any tide or any time of the day.

Belonging to the Scaenidae family of fish, this fish is kin to more than 270 similar species throughout the world. Chefs often refer to this fish and its family members under a common, generic and more palatable name: Corvina. This fish shares one common trait in particular with all of its kin—this is the ability to rub its stomach muscles against its swim bladder, producing a croaking noise. For others in the family, it is more of a drumming sound. Some of this fish's closest cousins are the red drum (redfish), black drum, weakfish and speckled trout, which makes for a pretty decent family line. If you haven't guessed by now, this fish is the most prevalent species in our area of the river, making itself available for us to enjoy by catching and eating for much of the year. Yes, it is the Croaker.

Fishing Report: Largemouth peaking for the spring. Ponds, creeks and the river should be producing well with live or artificial baits. Time to start looking for croaker in the river. This is a good time of year to try worms for bait along with other baits when fishing for them.

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 The cheapest safety ever

By Contributing Writer Ralph Little, Flotilla 14-8

It may read like a plug for our flotilla website, <http://SafeBoatingJacksonville.com> but it really isn't. Well, okay, I do think its creator, Paul Burns, has loaded access to about every safety and convenience tool for boaters - including weather, charts and safety. While just directing you to the site would satisfy my title, it is actually the use of the online Float Plan that is the topic. I can hear some groans out there from those that just want to have fun on the water, but read on.

I'll direct you to some shortcuts to minimize the agony of another safety step. The plan is your back-up to cheat Murphy's Law and Mother Nature and give peace of mind. Left with a friend or authority likely to take action if you are overdue from your fun, it will be the cheapest insurance you ever had.

As usual, I ask forgiveness of readers without computer access, but I think my message is for all and non-computer Float Plan forms are to be found. One is in the pamphlet A Boater's

Guide to the Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats on pages 69-74. That is available from Auxiliary Vessel Examiners, marinas and marine stores.

On the website, navigate (pun intended) from the homepage to Local Boating Info, then to File a Float Plan. All the information you need will open as floatplancentral and the big green button puts you in the plan itself. Paddlers and fishermen into solo trips or who don't always find a pal are probably the most needful of leaving a plan. If I can get over it, so can you. The shortcuts you will want to take are to use the General Purpose Plan and fill out all the items that don't change, like vessel description, communications, safety equipment on board and most operator and passenger data. Then save the form on your hard drive, leaving only itinerary information and passenger changes to fill out for each trip. You can then either email it or hand a copy to whoever holds your plan. It is key that the holder will act and be someone like a relative or friend who can't go with you, a marina operator or park authority. The accompanying Boater Emergency Guide helps your holder to begin the search process.

Experienced boat operators teach our About Boating Safely course at the Florida Tackle and Gun Club at 9010 San Jose Boulevard. Please call Bob at 721-1346 to reserve a place in the May 17 class or check our website.

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Gardening: Spring is here again

By Contributing Writer Master Gardener Lesley Arrandale with Duval County Extension, University of Florida/IFAS

"It's Spring Again...I'll bring again, Tulips from Amsterdam," run the lines of a song from my childhood. What, I wonder, are your childhood memories of spring? I suspect people's memories are as diverse as this melting pot that is northeast Florida.

And when it comes to gardening, if our parents or grandparents indulged there will be plenty of memories. But as fond as we are of the past, in our gardening endeavors we have so many modern choices that the question of what to grow can be overwhelming.

By the end of March the stores will be full of six-pack vegetables and herbs and myriad annuals, plus gorgeous blooming perennials to tempt us. But beware—not all that glitters... as the saying goes. Try to be disciplined about your purchases. Always remember "right plant, right place" and resist that impulse buy. And consider that although some plants are available, they may not always be suitable for your microclimate.

When it comes to newer varieties of vegetables, some are resistant to the diseases that can plague them. "Solar Fire" tomatoes, developed at the University of Florida, are one example. These are adapted to hold up well to summer heat. According to The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at UF: "Solar Fire is resistant to races 1, 2 and 3 of Fusarium wilt as well as Verticillium wilt race 1 and to gray leafspot. It has moderate resistance to fruit soft rot, a bacteria that attacks damp tomatoes after the fruit has been harvested." They are available in stores later than most varieties, ready to be planted for a summer crop.

Flowers with fancy double blooms aren't always a good choice, as this quality can come at the expense of nectar and ease of access for bees and other pollinators. Old fashioned flowers can encourage a variety of insects, most of which are beneficial. To help further, look out for native Florida plants, like coreopsis and Gaillardia, with simple daisy-like flowers.

How is your lawn? By the time it begins to green up, consider your fertilization schedule. Apply the minimum recommended amount, aiming to use an iron booster in the summer and a final application of fertilizer in the fall. Avoid "weed and feed" products, which can hurt the roots of trees and shrubs. Apply herbicides only where there are weeds! Mow your grass high, three-and-a-half inches to four inches for standard St Augustine and water as needed. Although in summer we are allowed to water twice a week, hold off when rain is expected or the grass looks green and water perhaps on the next available day. Who knows, it might rain before then anyway.

For fertilizer recommendation and watering regulations, check out the Florida Friendly website: http://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm. Each heading in the article will take you to a detailed chapter answering all your questions – and more.

As always, I recommend our own Extension Service newsletter, A New Leaf. The March/April edition is available at <http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/nleafMarchApril2014.pdf>. No computer? No problem. Call 255 7450 and ask to be put on the New Leaf mailing list.

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Our Home Improvement Guide!

Helpful irrigation tips to save water

By Contributing Writer Jimmy Orth, Executive Director, St. Johns Riverkeeper

According to the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), we are reaching the sustainable limits of our groundwater supplies and must seek other sources, such as the river. One of the major reasons that we are in this predicament is because of how inefficiently we use water. Nearly 50 percent of the water that we use goes on our lawns and plants and about 10 percent of the water used inside our homes is wasted due to leaks. This is the same water that we drink, feeds our wetlands, bubbles up and creates our magnificent springs and provides 20 to 30 percent of the flow of the St. Johns.

By using water more effi-

ciently, we can save money and prevent the need for expensive and risky plans to siphon water from our river.

A recent study found that homeowners can reduce their water consumption by over 30 percent by simply readjusting the automatic irrigation system on a regular basis. The lesson here is don't just set it and forget it. Pay close attention to the weather and rainfall patterns and frequently adjust your irrigation timers accordingly. Often, rainfall can provide all of the water that your lawn and plants need. Also, carefully inspect and adjust your sprayheads on a regular basis, making sure that your sprinklers are

not also watering the sidewalks, driveway or street.

If you are a JEA customer, you can call (866) 664-8644 to schedule a free water checkup and irrigation audit to improve the efficiency of your system.

The type of plants and grasses that we use in our landscaping is another major reason for our wasteful watering practices. By gradually expanding beds with low-maintenance, native plants and reducing the size of our lawns, we can eventually save a tremendous amount of time, money and water. The rule here is "right plant, right place." Pick the plants that are the most appropriate for the specific conditions of your yard (sun or shade, moist or dry soil, etc.) and will require the least amount of water and fertilizer.

We also often apply much more water than our plants and grass really need to remain healthy. Over-watering can actually result in a shallow root system, making your lawn less drought-tolerant and more susceptible to weed growth, disease, fungus and insects. Irrigate only when your lawn shows signs of stress from lack of water—when the leaf blades begin to fold in half, the lawn turns a bluish-gray color or footprints linger.

If you have an irrigation system, consider installing a soil moisture sensor. These inexpensive devices can cut your sprinkler system water usage by more than half by continuously checking soil moisture levels and preventing your sprinklers from operating when watering is not needed.

Follow the local irrigation ordinance that only allows watering up to two times a week (March through November) and before 10:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. If your street address is an odd number, watering is allowed



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Nine ways to improve curb appeal

Homeowners who want their homes to make strong first impressions must prioritize curb appeal. Homes with strong curb appeal sell well and can impart a welcoming feel to all visitors. Improving curb appeal need not be expensive, and the following are a handful of ways to improve the appearance of your home.

1. Install a bold-looking door in a vibrant color or one with a custom design. This helps the home stand out from other properties in the neighborhood.
2. Edge the driveway to create a distinct border between the driveway and the lawn or other landscaping features. This helps homes appear neat and well kept.
3. Use outdoor lighting to make a home more inviting. Outdoor lighting also makes properties safer to traverse at night.
4. Clean a home's exterior to remove mildew or discolorations from the siding, driveway, patio, and other outdoor elements.
5. Improve landscapes with fresh plants and seasonal color. Homeowners without the time to plant can consider container gardens, which don't take much time to assemble but still add appeal to a home's exterior.
6. Prune planting beds and add new mulch to restore color.

7. Add shutters and accent trim to a home's exterior to improve on the beauty of the house.
8. Install new fencing or give a fresh coat of paint or stain to an existing fence.
9. Replace concrete paths with tile or stone walkways to make entryways more impressive and inviting.



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Mandarin Garden Club news

By Contributing Writer Susan Westermann, Mandarin Garden Club

You know spring has sprung when it's time for the annual Mandarin Garden Club Garden Festival and Plant Sale. Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 26 from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at 2892 Loretto Road. Admission is free and there is plenty of parking next door at the Masonic Lodge. From beginner gardeners to expert gardeners, you don't want to miss this most popular gardening event.

Have you always wanted to start a little butterfly garden or expand your existing butterfly garden? This is the place to purchase reasonably priced butterfly garden plants, see the butterfly garden on the garden club grounds and get easy-to-understand expert butterfly gardening advice.

Have you always wanted to start a charming little antique rose garden in that special sunny spot in your yard or expand your existing rose garden? The easiest to grow antique roses will be available to purchase at a bargain price and garden club ladies will be available to assist you in how to successfully grow antique roses.

Native plants are always a popular addition to any garden. You will be able to purchase some of the easiest to grow natives and see how they grow in the native plant garden in front

of the clubhouse. A wide selection of pass-along plants that all southern gardens should have will be available along with vegetables, herbs, ornamental grasses, shrubs, trees, perennials, annuals, succulents and cacti. Wonderful garden-related vendors will be available to supply you with garden art, handmade herbal soap, unique recycled denim creations, glass totem garden sculptures, life-like hand carved birds and much more. Jacksonville's own herb expert Linda Cunningham will have at her booth all the very best kinds of herbs to grow. Cunningham not only sells the very best herbs, she can teach you anything you want to know about growing and using herbs. The 65th anniversary Mandarin Garden Club Cookbook will also be available.

A wonderful barbeque lunch will be available to purchase, along with delectable homemade sweets made by garden club members. Coffee and water will be available at no charge



It is easy in Mandarin to attract to your yard the Florida state butterfly, the Zebra Longwing. One of the plants they love is the beautiful, easy to grow, pass along plant the Firebush.

inside the building. The always knowledgeable and helpful Duval County Master Gardeners will be on hand to help with your gardening questions. The Mandarin Garden Club booth will be available for membership questions and special events building rental questions. The garden club grounds behind the clubhouse will be open for all to enjoy the butterfly garden, herb garden, perennial garden, veggie garden, bromeliad garden, native plant garden ornamental grass garden and the children's Bumblebee Circle Garden. Sit a spell on one of the many garden benches and enjoy the flowers and nature.

For additional information, please contact info@mandarinalgardenclub.org or 268-1192. Good Gardening!

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Homebuilder continues to grow in Mandarin area market

KB Home (NYSE: KBH), one of the nation's largest and most recognized homebuilders, continues to expand its new home choices throughout the greater Northeast Florida market with the recent debut of two new communities in Mandarin: Whitmore Oaks and Westberry Manor.

"We are very excited to introduce these two new communities and provide more opportunities for homeownership to the residents of Mandarin," said Todd Holder, president of KB Home's Jacksonville division. "At Whitmore Oaks and Westberry Manor, homebuyers can enjoy the charm of established neighborhoods with convenient access to major job centers while taking advantage of the ability to build a home personalized to meet their lifestyle and budget needs."

Single-family homes available at Westberry Manor offer two one-story and five two-story floor plans ranging in size from 2,100 to over 3,500 square feet and include practical design features such as spacious great rooms and expansive kitchens. Westberry Manor is close to area shopping, dining and recreation at nearby Julington Creek and the St. Johns River.

KB Home's Whitmore Oaks offers three one-story and six two-story floor plans that range from 2,004 to 3,555 square feet, with up to six bedrooms and four baths. Located on Old St. Augustine Road, Whitmore Oaks

offers easy access to Interstate 95 for quick commutes. Homes at Whitmore Oaks and Westberry Manor start from the mid \$200,000s and are available with no community development district fees.

KB Home offers homebuyers the chance to design and customize their homes from floor plan to structural options through its unique Built to Order™ approach. Models at Whitmore Oaks and Westberry Manor showcase the various components that can be included in a new KB home such as a covered patio for outdoor entertaining, a master bath with separate

tub and shower, and a gourmet kitchen with a double oven and cooktop. Homebuyers are guided by a personal design consultant at the local KB Home Studio to help them build a home that is unique to their style and taste.

KB Home has been building in Jacksonville for more than a decade and with the recent openings of Whitmore Oaks and Westberry Manor, the builder has enhanced its presence in the popular Mandarin market. KB Home plans to continue to invest in this area with the upcoming grand opening of another single-family community, Abby Glen, on Sunbeam Road this summer.

Star Power!

The third grade students at St. Joseph Catholic School are learning about stars, galaxies and constellations. They researched several websites, read books and used their science notes to learn about these stars. After learning about the constellations, the children then created and even named some new ones! Some of the newly named constellations are: Softy the Teddy Bear, Bumblebee, Hands, Harley the Dog, Chelsea the Cheetah and Shield for Christ.



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Make plans to attend the first judged African violet show in over a decade

The Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society will hold its show and sale, entitled River City Violets, on March 28 and 29, 2014 at the San Jose Church of Christ in Jacksonville (in the Family Life Center Fellowship Hall). The church is located in the Lakewood area, at 6233 San Jose Boulevard. This show will be judged by the standards of the national organization, African Violet Society of America (AVSA.ORG). Show hours are Friday, March 28, from 12:00 noon until 6:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 29, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

The African Violet, America's number one houseplant, will be on display as never seen before! The cultivation and propagation of this popular plant has attracted a large following in Florida and in our Jacksonville community. The club will showcase prized

specimens in all classes which include standard, semi-miniature and miniature varieties. In the last few years the smaller semi-miniature and miniature have really grown in popularity. These are very pretty miniaturized versions of the standard violet and are rarely seen in your big box stores. We will even have a few rare microminiature varieties, to show off. The club will highlight these categories and hope to make them available to the public. We will also show plants with foliage that will amaze you such as variegated, ruffled and girl foliage. This will be an opportunity to view a variety of bloom colors like fantasies, reds, whites, bi-colors and striped.

Throughout the show, club members will be on hand to offer advice on violet growing, as well as trouble shoot specific problems individual

growers might have. Plants will be on sale, from show plants to mature blooming plants. For growers wanting to start or renew their collection, an extensive selection of starter plants (babies) and leaves will be available. Supplies will also be available, including hard to find violet

pots and reservoirs, special fertilizers and a special soil mix for our preferred wick watering system, which will also be displayed.

For more information about African Violets or the Jacksonville African Violet Society, please visit jacksonvilleviolets.org.

It is better to offer NO excuse than a bad one.

~George Washington



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