Loretto’s Wisdom Warriors score big at first robotics tournament

Contributed by Bev Pool, Loretto Elementary School PTA

They scored!

The Wisdom Warriors, Loretto Elementary’s FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Lego League team, recently attended their first tournament in Apopka, Florida, on December 3. The Wisdom Warriors were the youngest team at this tournament, as fourth and fifth graders battling against teams composed of middle school children. They were also the team that traveled the farthest, driving two hours to reach the tournament nearest to Jacksonville. Despite all that, the Wisdom Warriors placed ninth out of 16 teams – defeating several veteran teams. This is quite an accomplishment, as this is their rookie year.

Each year FIRST Lego League comes up with a different theme. The theme for this year was “Food Factor.” Since September, the Wisdom Warriors team (as well as other teams throughout the world) have been studying food safety.

The tournament was comprised of three sections: robot competition, presentation, and core values. During the robot competition, the Warriors’ robot, El Toro, had two and a half minutes to complete as many tasks as possible on a playing field. Team members had to build and program the robot to complete these tasks, which were all related to food safety.

For their presentation, the students researched food safety and had to choose an area where they felt an improvement could be made. They chose to focus on hand washing. They then created a product, the SmartSink, which dispersed the proper amount of soap as well as the correct temperature water for optimum hand washing cleanliness. The SmartSink was created to be used in restaurants and features an alarm that notifies the manager if an employee does not wash his/her hands for the proper amount of time (30-40 seconds). After creating their product they had to come up with a creative way to present it. The team decided on a skit of a newscast introducing the Wisdom warriors cont. on pg. 13

Mandarin (step) mom walks 1,000 miles for charity: watch for her!

During 2011, Tessa Dahlke (pronounced Dol-ke) of Mandarin walked over 1,000 miles to raise funds for her favorite charity. She had already begun walking to reach a second 1,000 miles during 2012. If your commute takes you along Julington Creek Road between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., you’re likely to see her since she rarely misses a day.

Dahlke began her walk in early 2011 to raise funds for the Sua Sponte Foundation and also in an effort to reach some inner peace. She raised over $6,400 for the foundation which supports United States Army Rangers who are injured and the families of those who are killed in action with insufficient resources to get them past the crisis. This cause is very near and dear to Dahlke and her husband Roger Dahlke whose son, SSG Jason S. Dahlke, an Army Ranger, was killed by enemy gunfire in Afghanistan in 2009.

While the walk cannot undo the tragic event of Jason Dahlke’s death, it has helped toward emotional healing since it both honors Jason Dahlke and raises funds for the brotherhood he so proudly was a member of.

You are welcome to join the Facebook group “Remembering Jason Dahlke” to see pictures and learn more. Many Mandarin residents likely remember Jason since he grew up in the Mandarin area attending area schools, which he also met his future wife and love of his life, Niki Norvell.

Anyone who would like to pledge to the 2012 Dahlke “Walk a Mile for a Ranger” can call Tessa Dahlke at 262-7046 or send a check directly to the foundation. Please make checks payable to Sua Sponte Foundation.

Stephen DeAngelo, a graduate of Mandarin High School and Gabbi Froeba, a Bartram Trail High School graduate, were delighted to represent their corner of the community and participate in the game and all the activities surrounding Jacksonville’s Gator Bowl this past January 2.

We are always excited to cheer for the University of Florida Gators and our amazing fans, but in our own backyard—coming home to Jacksonville made this Gator Bowl even more special!” exclaimed Froeba.

Over the last decade, cheerleading has grown into a widely recognized and respected athletic activity, one that requires a great deal of strength and determination. Both DeAngelo and Froeba believe it is a privilege to represent the University of Florida as students and as athletes— but it is also a big responsibility. Imagine classes, papers and homework plus a very rigorous extracurricular schedule! Cheerleaders must maintain a certain grade point average to stay a member of the squad and skipping class is never an option.

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What's New

Community Happenings

The Mandarin Community Club officially started its 2012 membership drive in January. Best known as the organizing host and sponsor for the Mandarin Art Festival held every Easter weekend, the club also hosts a variety of other programs throughout the year and is a great way to become involved in the community. Membership is open and encouraged of all interested parties, especially those living in Mandarin. The club is located at 12447 Mandarin Road. For further information, please contact the club at 268-1622 or visit the website www.mandarincommunityclub.org.

The Mandarin Senior Center will hold a Valentine’s Dance on Tuesday, February 14 from 5:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at the Senior Center, located at 3848 Hartley Road in Mandarin. There will be no alcoholic beverages and host fees are $5 per person and tickets can be purchased in advance at the center or call 262-7109.

Don’t miss the event of the year, Laugh for Charity, hosted by the Rotary Club of Mandarin on Thursday, March 22, 2012 at The Comedy Zone in the Ramada Inn Mandarin Conference Center. The evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails, hors’ d’oeuvres and a silent auction, followed by the comedy show and live auction at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost $50 and one hundred percent of the ticket proceeds will benefit the Mandarin Williams YMCA and the Clarke School for Hearing and Speech. For additional information or to purchase tickets, please contact JollyZing@aol.com or call 282-1945.

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 and improve the quality of their lives. Visitors are welcome! For additional information, please call 733-0516 or email alex9520@comcast.net.

The North Florida Daylily Society holds its meetings on the second Sunday of each month at 2:15 p.m. at the Orange Park Library, located at 2054 Plainfield Avenue, just off Kingsley Boulevard. Daylily experts provide programs ranging from preparing daylilies for planting to how to prepare daylilies for shows. The club membership includes daylily enthusiasts from the Beaches to Middleburg. Guests are welcome to attend.

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

The 12th annual El Cheapo Sheephead Tournament will be held on Saturday, February 25, leaving out of the Mayport Boat Ramp at Mike Scallon Park. The registration fee is $80 and junior entries are $10. For additional information, please contact www.jsfish.org or call 241-077.

The next meeting for the South Jacksonville Republican Club will be Saturday, February 4, 2012 at the Golden Corral, located at 11470 San Jose Boulevard South. The breakfast social will begin at 9:30 a.m. followed by the club meeting at 10:00 a.m. We will be gathering in the enclosed Meeting Room in the restaurant. This meeting will for the elections of our club’s 2012 officers. If you are a Republican candidate and would like to introduce yourself to our club members, please attend.

The February general meeting of the All Star Quilters Guild will be held on Monday, February 20 at 9:30 a.m. in the First Christian Church, located at 11924 San Jose Boulevard. The program will be “Fearless Design” and will feature a discussion about forming small groups on different quilting topics. Visitors are welcome. For more information, please contact Dot Butler at 642-6574 or visit us at www.orgsites.com/fl/allstarquiltsguild.

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

Anchors away! The North Florida Cruising Club will be hosting a Nautical Rummage Sale on Saturday, February 4 from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. in the parking lot of New Orleans Cafe, located at 12760 San Jose Boulevard on Julton Creek in Mandarin. Sailors from various local clubs and organizations will be selling, giving or bartering boating equipment and nautical themed household items. Please call Barbara Burke at 310-5140 for more information.

The Bumble Bee Circle of the Mandarin Garden Club will be meeting on February 2, 2012 at the center or call 268-1622 or visit the website www.mandarincommunityclub.org.

Letters to the Editor policy

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

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

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Why benchmarking matters

Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning — Benjamin Franklin

One of the topics of greatest concern to our citizens is how the budget cuts, past and impending, impact our agency. As I walk the streets with our StAdCo members and citizens in the neighborhoods; when I am taking calls during my monthly call in show on First Coast Connect on WJCT; or when I talk to reporters throughout the week and at our monthly Awards Ceremony – the one thing people want to discuss is “How is the city’s financial crisis affecting your organization?”

Let me take a few minutes and share some thoughts with you on this critical matter.

To the public we serve and for me, our ability to respond to calls for service in a timely manner and solve crime is the #1 priority and remains so. And with a three-year trend forward in both murder and violent crime incidents (our lowest numbers of overall crime in 40 years), sustaining those declines and having the money to keep “working smart” on this critical issue is what keeps me up at night.

The privilege of being your elected Sheriff also brings with it the obligation every response to a 911 call at night.

Critical issue is what keeps me up at night. It is the challenge of maintaining lowest numbers of overall crime and violent crime incidents (our three year solid downward trend). #1 priority and remains so. And I am committed to working with the City Council and Mayor to find reasonable, equitable solutions to these long term problems. I will also tell you again that responsible leadership is about making tough choices — we cannot just randomly say “cut x% percent.” We can’t cut our way out of this financial crisis in Jacksonville.

And we can’t cut funding for a top tier law enforcement agency that has already been cut to the bone. Especially when you consider that Jacksonville currently spends less per capita for law enforcement than any other major county in the state.

We can’t make additional cuts without jeopardizing tremendous gains made in reducing murder and overall crime; community problem solving initiatives that are planting long term prevention and intervention anti-crime “seeds” in very challenged neighborhoods; and surpassing national benchmarks for solving crimes (also known as the “clearance rate”).

In the area of efficiency – I don’t think there is another law enforcement agency that can demonstrate how lean it operates and still maintain such impressive outcomes. It was Winston Churchill who said that one should not only strive to succeed, but to bring value to all you do. I think the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office does that.

I am deeply rooted in some basic management philosophies that one of them being that every process can be improved upon to eliminate waste and outcomes can always be improved.

Moving forward, we are going to continue to be challenged to show our success; demonstrate the value; and justify the management decisions about the operation of this agency. We will rise to that challenge.

We are developing a new tool to increase these “value added” benchmarks that we have built into our operation. I want to demonstrate, on a consistent basis, how lean, efficient, and effective we are. I call it JSO at a Glance. I am already using critical matrices that we use to measure ourselves and benchmark against proven policing methodologies. In the coming months we will be placing this “dashboard” on the front page of our website. I hope you will bookmark it and visit it often. Please visit the rest of this story at www.jacksonville.org and go to Sheriff’s Message in our Newsroom to read what these benchmarks are.

I hope 2012 brings you all the blessings our great city and nation have to offer. I appreciate all of you who tell me that the men and women of the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office are in your prayers.
By Contributing Writer Matt Schellenberg, City Council Member, District 6

While visiting friends in New Orleans for Christmas, I realized that I was seeing and appreciating that city from several different perspectives—the past, the present and the immediate future—both personally and as your humble, but very proud representative on the City Council. I was struck by the familiar cultural characteristics of the place where I had worked about 30 years ago and the parallels and similarities I could now make with my own hometown, which is currently challenged to formulate and adopt a collective vision.

There is one glaring difference, however: New Orleans is not in the process of defining or re-defining itself and Jacksonville seems to be having difficulty or re-defining itself and is not in the process of defining, however: New Orleans is just not “there” yet. Realistically, what will it take to be a tourist destination and convention site? Jacksonville, however, is just not “there” yet. Realistically, what will it take to be a tourist destination and a convention site?

New Orleans, with its colorful French Quarter, Mardi-Gras atmosphere, jazz musicians and tantalizing cuisine, is a major tourist destination and convention site. Jacksonville, however, is just not “there” yet. Realistically, what will it take to be a tourist destination and a convention site? I would like to suggest that we look to the west at New Orleans as an example of how we can celebrate ourselves once we clearly recognize what we have, what we are and what we want to be seen by both insiders and outsiders alike? And how will the public and private sectors work harmoniously to make it happen?

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I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and is ready for an exciting New Year! Duval County’s high schools are off to a great start for the new year! Following the recent news I reported last month of the district’s improved graduation rate, our school system witnessed nine of its high schools’ grades rise in 2011. Overall, 16 of 19 high schools scored A, B or C grades (84 percent).

Frank II. Peterson Academies of Technology, Paxon School for Advances Studies and Stanton College Preparatory School all received “A” grades. Schools with a “B” grade were Mandarin, Fletcher, Sandalwood, Robert E. Lee and Douglas Anderson through high school, 85 percent of your Duval County public schools have made excellent, good or satisfactory grades.

Duval County’s public schools have the highest graduation requirements in the State of Florida and have continued to see an increase in our graduation rate. The 2011 graduating class (Mandarin High had the largest with over 700 graduates) was the second group of students to complete an even more rigorous college ready curriculum that includes Algebra II, an additional science requirement and two years of a world language.

Florida Lottery – Ofentimes I am asked what has happened to the lottery dollars that were supposed to be going to our public schools?

Nearly three quarters of lottery money goes to “Bright Futures Scholarships” and the remaining to our schools. And, most of those dollars go into what is referred to as categorical funding, designated for specific programs, with the remaining going into operations for use in the district’s general fund. During the last three years, however, there have been no additional dollars going into operations, which is really sad. From 1993 to the present, the total lottery revenue for Duval County has declined from $29.8 million to $4.7 million. This fiscal year 2011-2012, categorical dollars totaled $4.7 million and $15,000 (less than 1%) dropped to zero. The categorical funding is designated for school recruitment and for School Advisory Committees (SAC).

Parents, Duval County Public Schools has begun hosting Regional Financial Aid nights at local high schools. Financial aid representatives will provide information about State and Federal financial aid programs and will be answering questions about completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other financial aid forms. Parents and students are invited to participate in any of the free sessions. Mandarin High School will host its Financial Aid night on February 2, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

If you live in Mandarin, please check our website at www.iacofjacksonville.com for the latest information.

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

Join the Jacksonville Humane Society for the fourth annual Trail of Tails: Fun Walk and Festival on Saturday, March 3, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Jacksonville Landing, Registration is $15 per person, $25 per person for members of teams of four or more, $15 for students K-12 and $10 for children (ages five to 12). All proceeds increase by $5 the day of the event. Families walk all of their own dogs for free. A festival featuring silent auction, food, fun and free kids’ crafts’ follows the event. Registration for The Ramsgate Homeowners Association will hold its next meeting on Thursday, February 9, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Community Center. Our purpose is to promote creativity and experimentation in cake decorating, sugar art, chocolate, pastries, candes and just about anything edible that can be done with sugar enthusiasts and swapping ideas and techniques to visit www.sagfl.blogspot.com for meeting dates.

The River City Women’s Club will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, February 15 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn Mandarin, located at 3130 Harley Road. Lunch and a program will follow the meeting. Dinner clubs will form members and guests playing many popular board and card games. The club meets every third Tuesday and reservations are required by Thursday, February 9. Please call 262-8710 for reservations or other information.

Local businesses are also supported by our local non-profit organizations. All of our non-profit organizations are making our area a better place to live.

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 member chairman at mandarinmomsclub@gmail.com.

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The Italian American Club will celebrate Valentine’s Day February 14 at 6:30 p.m. The program will feature Dr. Roberto E. Garcia, M.D. F.A.C.S. plastic surgeon at their meeting on Thursday, February 23 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Mandarin Inn, located at 3130 Harley Road. The price of the luncheon is $15, or $16 for members. Reservations are required by February 17. The Mandarin Women’s Club is a social club, giving all women of the area the opportunity for making new friends and strengthening old friendships, learning new things and sharing the enjoyment of north Florida. Some of the many activities include day trips, antiquing trips, as well as Bunco, bridge, Mah Jongg and Mexican Train gatherings. For more information, please call Kay at 321-5254. For reservations for the monthly luncheon/program held the fourth Thursday of most months at the Ramada Inn, please contact Iris at 268-2459.

Sugar Arts Guild of North Florida meets monthly at the South Mandarin Library, located at 2125 San Jose Boulevard. We are an organization of sugar artists, cake designers and confectioners from North Florida who enjoy getting together every month to visit, watch a demonstration and sample the work of others. Our purpose is to promote creativity and experimentation in cake decorating, sugar art, chocolate, pastries, candies and just about anything edible that can be done with sugar. Please join us and experience the fun of sugar and its endless possibilities.

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Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD) is the leading cause of vision loss in people 50 and older and as you age, the risk increases. It is a chronic condition that causes central vision loss and affects more than 25 million people worldwide.

ARMD occurs when the macula—the central part of the retina that is important for reading and color vision—becomes damaged. In some individuals, tiny dot-like deposits, known as drusen, accumulate beneath the macula. While these deposits do not necessarily cause visual loss directly, they indicate that a person is at risk for developing further problems with the macula.

Further degeneration can result in areas of tissue loss, called atrophy which can develop which can lead to visual loss in the “dry” form of macular degeneration. In approximately 10 percent of patients, abnormal leaky blood vessels may develop in the macula leading to the “wet” form of macular degeneration. Although this is thought to be the more severe form of ARMD, there are effective treatments that have been shown to help stabilize and in some patients improve their vision.

Some common symptoms of ARMD are gradual loss of ability to see objects clearly, distorted vision, a gradual loss of color vision and a dark areas appearing in the center of vision. If you notice any new distortion or visual changes, it is critical to contact your eye care provider immediately.

Clay Eye physician and retina specialist Russell Pecoraro, M.D., says, “Age Related Macular Degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss in our senior population. I am excited to see new and better treatment options being developed to help patients maintain and improve their vision.”

Clay Eye Physicians and Surgeons have recognized the need for a facility specifically dedicated to diseases of the retina and have established the Northeast Florida Macular Degeneration and Diabetes Eye Institute. Comprehensive eye exams play an important role in your overall health and wellness and it is imperative that you schedule one every year for optimal vision health. In addition to measuring your vision, regular eye exams can help identify early signs of certain chronic health conditions, including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and high cholesterol.

Clay Eye Physicians and Surgeons was established in 1977. They currently have offices in Orange Park, Fleming Island and Mandarin. Look for their ad in this issue of Mandarin Newsline!
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Tax Tip of the Month  
IRS agents in TAX EXAMS are now requesting taxpayers’ electronic software data files, thus giving agents access to more data than we, as tax practitioners, wish to give them. It is not acceptable to remove six or seven years from the data file given to the agent. With this in mind, the quality of the bookkeeping becomes even more important. Please consult us for advice as to how to properly prepare an IRS EXAMINATION.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Politically correct (PC) is a term I also despise. However, I, Bruce Richardson’s commentary in the December 2011 issue was so wrong that I thought I had to provide another perspective. I read Richardson’s rant a second time. The whole point is that he was condemning for their religious days. December 25 is not even the closest. The major religions that celebrate December 25 are not on opposing sides. As the majority’s beliefs or traditions. And most of these traditions are not “new.”

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Tax Tip of the Month  
IRS agents in TAX EXAMS are now requesting taxpayers’ electronic software data files, thus giving agents access to more data than we, as tax practitioners, wish to give them. It is not acceptable to remove six or seven years from the data file given to the agent. With this in mind, the quality of the bookkeeping becomes even more important. Please consult us for advice as to how to properly prepare an IRS EXAMINATION.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Politically correct (PC) is a term I also despise. However, I, Bruce Richardson’s commentary in the December 2011 issue was so wrong that I thought I had to provide another perspective. I read Richardson’s rant a second time. The whole point is that he was condemning for their religious days. December 25 is not even the closest. The major religions that celebrate December 25 are not on opposing sides. As the majority’s beliefs or traditions. And most of these traditions are not “new.”

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Worth the wait for Eagle Scout Award

Mandarin native Dean Phillippi, left, Jerry Phillippi center and Christopher Phillippi right.

Dean Phillippi, and his son Christopher Phillippi both from Mandarin, recently surprised Dean Phillippi’s brother Jerry Phillippi (originally from Mandar in) with a long well past due Eagle Scout Award recognition and lost Eagle Award medal.

Jerry Phillippi physically received his Eagle Scout medal from his Boy Scout Troop 9 in Washington, Pennsylvania in the late 1950s. It took more than half a century for the former scoutmaster and the Laurel Highlands Boy Scout Council to officially recognize and honor him as one of its own.

Shortly after Jerry Phillippi earned the Boy Scouts of America top rank, his scoutmaster, Harry Malik Sr., died unexpectedly from a heart attack and Troop 9, which met in Washington, Pennsylvania, disbanded before the Eagle Award Ceremony could take place or the paperwork could be filed for his award. A number of years later, Jerry Phillippi’s medal, merit badge patches and newspaper clippings were all destroyed in a flood, further destroying his connection to the long-forgotten troop.

But on December 3, Jerry Phillippi, now living in Conover, North Carolina was caught completely by surprise when his brother, Dean Phillippi, who is an Assistant Scoutmaster and Chaplain for BSA Troop 101 in Mandarin and his nephew, Christopher Phillippi, a Life-Rank Scout, presented him with a replacement medal, and paperwork.

Dean Phillippi said the task proved to be quite difficult given the lost paperwork, unfortunate circumstances surrounding the former scoutmaster and the fact the Boy Scout Council had changed several times since the 1950s.

“Amy brother is like a hound dog,” Jerry Phillippi said. “He keeps after something until he finds it.”

Every child born today automatically has $49,000 of national debt – before they leave the hospital

By J. Bruce Richardson

As it should be, it’s about the children. A child born today is automatically burdened with a huge share of an untenable national debt of $16 trillion – about $49,000 per child – before they ever leave the hospital.

We hear the silliness of “celebrating diversity,” but simulta neously suppress true diversity unless defending some allegedly downtrodden person or group?

Nothing is wrong with tolerance; it’s a legitimate goal. But on December 3, Jerry Phillippi physically received his Eagle Scout Medal from his Boy Scout Troop 9 in Washington, Pennsylvania in the late 1950s. It took more than half a century for the former scoutmaster and the fact the Boy Scout Council had changed several times since the 1950s.

“Amy brother is like a hound dog,” Jerry Phillippi said. “He keeps after something until he finds it.”

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Learn about a vegan diet

The non-profit organization endXmeat, which is an acronym for “Environmental Nurture, Dietary eXcellence and the Movement to End Animal Torture” will be providing one-on-one free mentorship for individuals interested in making a transition to a plant based vegan diet.

A plant based diet has been shown to dramatically treat and prevent the vast amount of degenerative diseases that now plague our industrialized civilizations including cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, obesity and diabetes. This shift in dietary habits, according to the World Health Organization, will create a planetary revolution of “green” sustainability as well as preserve our environment for future generations. Equally as important, plant based diets are the most compassionate lifestyle for ending the needless suffering and torture of the billions of "food" animals we consume yearly.

In return for signing a one-month pledge in March, participants will receive the following services free of charge: a mentor (one or more people), person support, nutritional and meal planning classes, weekly recipes and a group grocery tour.

Please visit www.meetup.com/endXmeat/ and sign up to Take the Vegan Pledge!

These services will be provided in support of the No Meat March extravaganza hosted by the Girls Gone Green.

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Check out the small business healthcare tax credit

By Contributing Writer Herb Drill

My wife is a CPA licensed in Florida and Pennsylvania, so tax advice is available to me 24/7, 365 days a year. For those of you without a CPA in the family, the Internal Revenue Service offers (good golly Miss Molly) free tax tips (www.irs.gov).

This tip, especially for the many Mandarin small businesses, applies to employers who “pay at least half of the premiums for employee health insurance coverage.” This occurs under a “qualified arrangement” which “may be eligible” through the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit.

The credit can enable small businesses to offer health insurance coverage to the “firm’s employees.” It helps those already offering health insurance to “maintain the coverage they already offer at their firm’s targets are small firms which employ 25 or full-time equivalent workers earning an average $50,000 or less.

For tax year 2010, small employers which have already filed and determine they’re eligible for the credit can file an amended 2010 or 2011 tax return. For tax years 2010-2011, the maximum credit for eligible small employers is 35 percent of premiums paid. On January 1, 2014, the maximum tax credit will be 50 percent of premiums paid by eligible small employers.

The credit phases out gradually for firms with average wages $25,000 to $50,000 and for firms with the equivalent of between 10 and 25 full-time workers. More eligibility data and credit calculating is on the IRS website. Concerns about the credit page of www.IRS.gov.

You should always consult your tax advisor regarding any tax credit or tax matter.

By the way, news agency Reuters reports a study shows 30 large United States corporations paid no income taxes 2008-2010. Pepco Holdings, a Washington, D.C.-area power company, had the lowest effective tax rate, at negative 57.6 percent, among the 280 Fortune 500 companies studied. The statutory United States corporate income-tax rate is 35 percent and all 280 corporations examined were profitable over the period.

The average effective tax rate for the companies 2008 through 2010 was 18.5 percent, said Citizens for Tax Justice and the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, both think tanks. The report listed General Electric Co., Paccar Inc., PG&E Corp., Computer Sciences Corp. and NIOncore Inc., among the 30 which paid no taxes.

Mandarin’s Herb Drill is a career journal (herbdrill@gmail.com)

Encore

A new way to experience the world’s best in performing arts!

By Betty Swenson Bergmark, Professor Emeritus, Jacksonville University

Movie theatres are not just for the movies any more. Live, one night entertainment events are taking over the silver screen across the country. A part of NCM Media Network, NCM Fathome is marketing a communications and entertainment network that spans more than 450 cinemas nationwide.

During the latter part of 2011, I accidentally came across one of their offerings for a film presentation by the Royal Shakespeare Company of the “Juicy Wives of Windsor,” performed at the restored Globe Theatre in London. It was hard to believe that it was to be shown at one of the major cinemas and was therefore easily accessible. I was not disappointed! In fact, the acting and production were outstanding and one almost forgot that one was watching it on a cinema screen. I started to keep my eyes open for announcements of other productions, but strangely only openings appeared limited. This occurs under a “qualified arrangement” which “may be eligible” through the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit.

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Ocala resident to discuss historic Battle of Olustee

Keith Kohl, resident of Ocala, Florida will be detailing the February 1864 Union–Florida Civil War events leading up to the largest battle of the war in the state. Kohl will present the lecture in a period Civil War uniform. He will discuss the Battle of Olustee at the Third Thursday Lecture at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 16 at the Mandarin Community Club.

The free quarterly event is sponsored by the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society and the Mandarin Community Club. It will be held at the Community Club, located at 12447 Mandarin Road. Refreshments will be served at 6:30 p.m. prior to the lecture.

Kohl, a Living History re-enactor for 28 years, has portrayed numerous impressions covering several periods of Florida history. The American Civil War and especially Florida’s role in the conflict is a keen area of interest to him.

He has taken part in Living History reenactment events all around the eastern United States and in England. Kohl is an avid writer, often combining his passion for writing and history. Additionally, he has written numerous articles for newspapers, programs and magazines, both in print and in online format on the internet.

Kohl recently published book, Florida’s Civil War Years, addresses the political and military aspects of the Civil War in Florida as well as the experiences of the civilians remaining at the home front. The work is highlighted by numerous illustrations, including period photographs and drawings, maps and author’s photographs.

The annual reenactment of the Battle of Olustee is held February 17–19 at Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, in Olustee, Florida. For more information, please contact http://floridastateparks.org/olustee-battlefield/events.cfm.

For more information about the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society, please contact the society at 268-0784 or email mandarinmuseum@bellsouth.net.
Constitution for the United States of America

Page 12,

Prior issues of Mandarin NewsLine
Please refer to the prior issue for 2011 issue of Mandarin NewsLine.

Section 7. All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills.

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States;[2] If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the Objections at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such Reconsideration two thirds of that House agree to pass the Bill, it shall be sent, together with the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered; and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a Law. But in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses shall be determined by yeas and Nays, and the Names of the Persons voting for and against the Bill shall be entered on the Journal of each House respectively. If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return, in which Case it shall not be a Law.

Every Order, Resolution, or Vote to which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (excepting a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the same shall take Effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be reponed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

Section 8. The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but All Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish PIRACIES and FELONIES committed on the high Seas, and OFFENSES against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

As a community service, Mandarin NewsLine community newspaper will be publishing the Constitution for the United States in its entirety over the next several issues. Please check back next month for the continuation.
By Contributing Writer Dot Butler, Publicity Chairman, All Star Quilters Guild

to serve community

Wisdom warriors cont. from pg. 1

The All Star Quilters Guild was very generous of the month for classes, sit and sews or community service of the month for classes, sit and sews or community service programs.

Under the direction of Sha-ron Moran, community service chairperson, the All Star Quil-ters Guild was very generous of the month for classes, sit and sews or community service programs.

The final category was core values. This is where the teams were given a task that had to be completed as a team to see how well they work together. The team members were also asked questions regarding the core values of the Lego League.

Coaches Gina Riley (third grade teacher at Loretto) and Phillip Riley (senior at Stanton College Preparatory School) are very proud of their team members. The team did a phe-nomenal job, especially with this being the first year for the whole team.

The Wisdom Warriors would like to thank their sponsors, Beach Diner and J and J De-signs for their support.

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All Star Quilters Guild happy
to serve community

Community service is an important part of the All Star Quilters Guild. In 2011, we were busy with programs, classes, meetings and our participation in QuiltFest, but still found the time for the following community projects:

Mandarin Food Bank – Four food drives were held and delivered to the Mandarin Food Bank.

Meals on Wheels – Forty placemats were delivered to the Mandarin Senior Center for their program. Twenty placemats were delivered to the downtown Meals on Wheels and 10 placemats to the Green Cove Springs Meals on Wheels. These placemats were all made by members to give some cheer to recipients of meals on special occasions.

Quilts of Valor – Twelve quilts made by members of the All Star Quilt Guild and 14 smart sinks.

The Easter weekend tradi-tion of the Mandarin Art Festi-val, which has spanned multiple generations, is gearing up for another huge event. The longest continually-running festival in northeast Florida, the art festi-val has hosted tens of thousands of guests and many hundreds of artists from across the coun-try. Dozens of booths under the majestic oaks of Mandarin Road offer art lovers a variety of painting, pottery, sculpture, jewelry, glass, photography and more fine art and fine crafts.

Founded and produced by the historic Mandarin Commu-nity Club, their board, members and community volunteers all work as a team to bring this event to the community. The Festival includes a Children’s Art Show featuring the work of students from local schools, homemade goodies at a fun-draising bake sale, a green market with local foods and handmade goods and a club sponsored raffle with exciting and valuable prizes.

Volunteers and sponsors are needed! Be a part of this fun and exciting community event! Volunteers are needed so call the club at 268-1622 to volunteer or to place a business ad in the event program as a sponsor. Information and photos from previous years is available online at www.mandarincommunityclub.org.

Free agent with every policy.

Mandarin Community Club is dedicated to the pres-ervation and beautification of Mandarin; to providing educa-tional 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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44th annual Mandarin Art Festival gears up for success

The Easter weekend tradi-tion of the Mandarin Art Festi-val, which has spanned multiple generations, is gearing up for another huge event. The longest continually-running festival in northeast Florida, the art festi-val has hosted tens of thousands of guests and many hundreds of artists from across the coun-try. Dozens of booths under the majestic oaks of Mandarin Road offer art lovers a variety of painting, pottery, sculpture, jewelry, glass, photography and more fine art and fine crafts.

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Free parking is located on Mandarin Road at the Mandarin Presbyterian Church with free shuttles running continually during the show hours of 10:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.

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daniel, Inc. Foster Home – Thirty-eight quilts and pil-lowcases were made for the Safe Harbor Boys Home. A donation of $1000 was made in 2011. Several new quilts were made in 2011 for boys new to the Safe Harbor program.

Under the direction of Sha-ron Moran, community service chairperson, the All Star Quil-

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Mardi Gras revelries are legendary in Louisiana; in fact, Fat Tuesday is a legal state holiday. Lake Charles, in southwest Louisiana, proudly hosts the second largest Mardi Gras festival after New Orleans. The city presents a bounty of activities in a family-friendly manner—no Bourbon Street mistakes: Lake Charles celebrates Mardi Gras, Lake Charles is likely the second largest Mardi Gras festival after New Orleans.

Lake Charles area are Cajuns, descendents of the French-speaking Catholic Acadians of Eastern Canada. During the mid-1700s, the Acadians refused to swear allegiance to the British crown and were deported. The king of Spain offered them land grants in what was then the Louisiana Territory. Sadly, most of the land offered was alligator-filled swamps and barren prairies. But the folks thrived and became known as Cajuns, the shortened form of “Arcadian” accented with a southern drawl—“Cajun.”

Many Louisiana foods have French roots and foreign sounding names such as po’ boys, étouffée, muffaletta, gumbo, andouille sausage, cracklins and boudin. You can follow the Boudin Trail in the Lake Charles area to taste the specialty—a mixture of sausage and rice encased in natural casing. Boudin is usually made in Mom and Pop type shops using a secret family recipe. The spicy snack can be a bit messy and a little awkward, but a lot delicious.

Lake Charles is a great place to visit and meet Paula Stevens, owner of Delicious Gourmet Donuts and Bakery in Lake Charles. The bakery specializes in Carnival king cakes, making over 5,000 each Mardi Gras season. What’s a King Cake? A dessert made from sweet dough twisted into a circular shape and decorated with icing and purple, green and gold sugar crystals. King Cake resembles coffee cake more than layer cake. Traditionally King Cakes are served on January 6 (also known as “Twelfth Night”) (12 days after Christmas or Kings’ Day, when the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem). A plastic baby representing the Christ child is “hidden” in every Carnival cake and if you happen to find it in your slice, you are responsible for providing the next King Cake for a party. So, once Carnival festivities begin, they continue until peaking on Mardi Gras Day or Fat Tuesday.

Post winners advance to Department of Florida Ladies Auxiliary Veterans of Foreign Wars. Department of Florida winners are submitted to Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary National.

Greetings in the Lake Charles area to taste the Many Louisiana foods have French roots and foreign sounding names such as po’ boys, étouffée, muffaletta, gumbo, andouille sausage, cracklins and boudin. You can follow the Boudin Trail in the Lake Charles area to taste the specialty—a mixture of sausage and rice encased in natural casing. Boudin is usually made in Mom and Pop type shops using a secret family recipe. The spicy snack can be a bit messy and a little awkward, but a lot delicious.

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Greetings in the Lake Charles area to taste the Many Louisiana foods have French roots and foreign sounding names such as po’ boys, étouffée, muffaletta, gumbo, andouille sausage, cracklins and boudin. You can follow the Boudin Trail in the Lake Charles area to taste the specialty—a mixture of sausage and rice encased in natural casing. Boudin is usually made in Mom and Pop type shops using a secret family recipe. The spicy snack can be a bit messy and a little awkward, but a lot delicious.

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Youth Scene

All you need is love

By Megan Crawford

Ah, Valentine’s Day... Whether you love it or hate it, everyone’s familiar with this holiday. Unfortunately, many people feel like they have to either be in a relationship or a little kid anxious to get a box of Sweet Hearts in order to feel the love. Let’s be honest, cupid tends to neglect those who don’t have dates for this mushy (some might say cliche) celebration. So, what’s a single boy or girl to do on Valentine’s Day? Well, you could stay home and eat pizza topped with onions and garlic as if you don’t care or you could go do something fun. You’d be surprised at the number of possibilities; besides, you’ll probably have more fun with a buddy than you would without a date anyway (and the fun with a buddy than you would probably have more fun, and you could have more fun with a buddy than you would have with a date anyway). The fun with a buddy than you would probably have more fun, and you could have more fun with a buddy than you would have with a date anyway.

Youth Arts update

Almost, Maine details struggles and love

By Danielle Winsarsky

Sweet Lips, Tennesse, Burns Down, South Carolina; Lame Deer, Montana; Oatmeal, Texas: the names of some of these communities may sound silly, wacky or perhaps even fabricated. But they’re all actual places that for one reason or another have been given some rather unusual names.

The next production to be put on by Douglas Anderson School of the Arts (DAS) is called Almost, Maine, a story of struggle and love.

As one of the characters in the first of the play’s eight vignettes says, “You’re in an unorganized territory. Town-ship 11, Range 7. It’s not going to be on your map, cause it’s not an actual town, technically... See, to be a town you gotta get organized. And we never got around to getting organized, so... we’re just Almost.”

Says Sarah Thornton, who plays the character of Marva-lyn, “Everyone constantly walks between the line of two emo-tions: hope and regret. Almost, Maine takes place in the perfect..."}

Another snippet of dialogue: “I’m a pastry chef. I’ve been plating desserts for the main course of life..."
Purposeful Parenting

Be grateful!

By Allie Olsen

Did you hear about Jimmy Kimmel’s social experiment, the Bad Christmas Present? Parents were given a choice to give their children one gift early, a gag gift, then recorded their reactions. You can imagine what ensued.

I saw some trying to be grateful; one young girl played with her squshy banana like play-doh and another clip showed two who were the ugliest. Hitting, crying and yelling “I hate you!” after opening a tacky t-shirt, coloring books for boys or a can of beans. Well, what did you expect?

What did we expect? A gift should bring happiness to both parties. Of course a nine year old boy wouldn’t want a Hello Kitty shirt, but can’t he take a joke or bless someone else with it? The girls who got “boy” coloring books had a brother; I expected them to laugh and switch books.

Every January, my column focuses on saving tips. I’ve covered how to write a proper thank-you note and creative ones also (these articles are available on the website). But what about being thankful in the first place?

Reality check: there are millions of children who would be grateful for any long-sleeved shirt in winter or an additional meal one day, whether it’s a PB and J or can of food. Does our abundance and desire to bless our children necessarily result in the arrogance and selfishness the Bad Gift Project exposed?

No! Most of us try to instill kindness in our children. We haven’t forgotten the adage, “To whom much is given, much is required.” -Luke 12:48

Here’s a story for you. Mom was very frugal. She repurposed things long before it was the cool thing to do. We shopped little and carefully and were generous within our means. Her mom did the same and they instilled gratefulness and generosity in my sister and me.

One summer, my sister and I visited family in South Florida. After breakfast, they insisted we drink the milk from our cereal bowls because “there are starving children in Somalia who would love to have that milk.” The forced milk drink left a bad taste in my mouth (pun intended).

There are good ways to teach thankfulness and care for others and there are bad ways. Here are some gentle ways to teach gratitude to your children:

1. Play the kind words game. If your child receives a gift of something less desirable, like socks or another baby doll, ask them to write five kind words about it in big letters on a card. Add Thank You. Whaaal? A quick and sincere, thank you card.

2. Pass it on. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Can you help your child think of someone who would love the gift? It would be better to share with others who need it just because it was a gift.

Confession- I tried it. I gave my kids a bag with six items, one for each. I recorded their responses for laughs: www.gracefullmom.com. Let’s teach our children not to be self-pitying, but to make lemonade.

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Movie Review

Tower Heist

Directed by: Brett Ratner. Starring: Eddie Murphy, Ben Stiller and Casey Affleck. Review by T.G. Stanton

Okay, But, Could Have Waited for Cable (3 out of 5)

This month’s movie review belongs to the film Tower Heist, an action-comedy film for adults and teens.

What can lead ordinary men to robbery? Managing a residential apartment in New York City, Josh Kovacs, portrayed by Ben Stiller, soon finds out. Josh Kovacs manages this apartment and manages the other employees and he often befriended and trusts many of the tenants. Arthur Shaw, played by Alan Alda, is one such tenant—an accountant, entrusted with the employees’ retirement funds. The FBI shortly arrest Mr. Shaw for fraud and Josh finds out the money is gone. With the savings gone, one friend and employee attempts suicide and others lose their jobs; anger fuels him to seek out and confront Mr. Shaw.

There seems to be no recourse and no hope of recovering the money, though Josh’s temper gets him fired. Thus, a plan is hatched. Josh, Charlie, performed by Casey Affleck and other employees decide to get the money back on their terms, but they need some help. Help and comedy come in the form of Slide, represented by Eddie Murphy, a local street character that Josh has run into on occasion. The action begins from here as they scheme and concoct plans to get their money back. Staying under the radar of the local FBI presents its own challenges and roadblocks to their plans, but the plan does somehow come to completion.

This film has a cast of actors that have done tremendous work in the past and they deliver in this film, yet they seem to be so much hammed or left out by the script or director. The laughs are there but few and the action, which is required to perform a complex set of technical skills. In addition, there are appearances, pep rallies, cheering for several sports and the local events to add to an already busy collegiate schedule.

As cheerleaders, DeAngelo and Froeha believe they have been blessed with the opportunity to be surrounded by amazing teammates, incredible trainers and two of the best coaches in the Southeastern Conference, who all while they are having the best college experience of their lives!!

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Autism Symposium features national experts

Two national experts on autism will speak in Jacksonville at the fourth annual Autism Symposium: Current Medical Evidence and Interventions Regarding Autism, presented by Wolfson Children’s Hospital, UF Jacksonville and Nemours Children’s Hospital. The symposium will address medical evidence about the causes of autism as well as strategies in treating children with the disorder. Guest lecturers are:

- Ami Klin, PhD, a professor and chair, Division of Autism and Related Disorders, Department of Pediatrics, Emory University School of Medicine, and director, Marcus Autism Center, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. He is a Guggenheim Foundation Eminent Scholar at Emory University. Dr. Klin is an internationally known psychologist and researcher. He is the former director of the Yale Child Study Center, Autism Program at Yale University School of Medicine.
- Celine A. Saulnier, an associate professor, Division of Autism and Related Disorders, Department of Pediatrics, Emory University School of Medicine, and clinical director of research, Marcus Autism Center, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. Dr. Saulnier is a former associate research scientist, Yale Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine. Parents, caregivers, special needs teachers, social workers, psychologists, nurses, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, behavioral therapists, marriage and family therapists and mental health counselors are encouraged to attend. Lunch is included in the $45 registration fee. Pre-registration is required and will be accepted through Friday, March 9, 2012.

For general questions, please call 202-6039. Online registration is also available. For additional information, please contact Jane Moore at(editor@mandarinnewsline.com).
John Peyton, Rinaman has protected the environment and been working to identify opportunities to protect the environment and our waters. I am honored to once again have the chance to combine my advocacy with my vocation for the betterment of the St. Johns River.

As a former senior-staff member for Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton, Rinaman has extensive experience building consensus around issues and was instrumental in implementing numerous initiatives and policies that directly improved the environment. Locally, her work has focused on creation and implementation of irrigation, fertilizer and Florida Friendly landscaping ordinances to better protect the St. Johns and local waterways. She also played instrumental roles in helping secure state funding for water quality improvements, including the successful establishment of the Manatee Protection Plan, and pushing for policies to fulfill the city’s commitment in the River Accord.

For the past two years, Rinaman has also served as a member of the St. Johns Riverkeeper Water Policy Group (WP), a group that advocates for water conservation and reuse and policies that are more protective of our freshwater resources. She has provided critical expertise, helping the WP group to identify strategic opportunities and develop and implement effective strategies.

For years, Lisa has served as a tremendous advocate for the river in Jacksonville and Tallahassee. Under Lisa’s leadership, our community can be confident that their voices will be heard and the interests of the river will be well-served when these issues are on the table,” said Arminman.

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Boy Scout scholarship announced

President Patricia McQuaig of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Charles E. Bennett Post 1689 announced the kick-off of this year’s VFW Scout of the Year scholarship competition. The VFW Scout of the Year scholarship program provides a $5,000 award to an outstanding scout who is the recipient of a Boy Scout Eagle Award, a Venture Scouting Silver Award or a Sea Scout Quarter- master Award. The second-place winner receives a $3,000 award and the third-place winner receives $1,000.

The deadline to submit entry to Charles E. Bennett Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1689 is March 1, 2012. VFW Post winners advance to Department of Florida Veterans of Foreign Wars. Department of Florida winners are submitted to Veterans of Foreign Wars National.

Interested scouts may visit the Veterans of Foreign Wars website at www.vfw.org and download the VFW Scouting Scholarship form. For additional information, please contact Patricia McQuaig, Charles E. Bennett Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1689 Jacksonville at 743-6787 or visit www.vfw.org.
For 2010, the analysis of factors contributed to boating accidents determined that:
- Almost three-fourths of all fatal boating accident victims drowned and of those, 88 percent were not wearing a life jacket.
- Only 9 percent of deaths occurred on boats where the operator had received boating safety instruction.
- Operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, excessive speed and alcohol rank as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.
- Alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was listed as the leading factor in 19 percent of the deaths.

From that information, the preparation to be going as safe as you and your passengers can be on the water clearly includes three simple actions — everyone wears a life jacket while the operator doesn’t drink alcohol and has taken a boating safety course. Even the factors of inattention, lookout and speed would be improved by having received instruction. And the best route for that instruction is through contact with experienced instructors who provide the right emphasis and immediate feedback to enhance learning. The Auxiliary provides that opportunity through its most popular course, About Boating Safely. Especially important for boat operators aged 24 or younger, Florida law requires boat operators born on or after January 1, 1988 to pass an approved boating safety course and carry the resulting Florida Boating Safety Identification Education Card along with a picture ID.

For 2012, Flotilla 14-8 will present the one day course in the Mandarin area on Saturdays including February 11, March 3, April 14, May 12, June 23, July 14, August 11, September 15, October 12, November 10. The convenient location is the Stella Building, located at 2900 Hartley Road, just off South Boulevard on the north side of Interstate 295. The class will run from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with 30 minutes for lunch. A fee of $25 is charged for each student and just $5 more for the second member of a family. Please call Bob Strong at 721-1346 for specifics, to register or to find out when and where similar courses are offered in the Jacksonville area.

Visit the Olde Mandarin Corner Market on first and third Sundays!

By Contributing Writer Susie Scott

Whether out on Sundays or looking for a way to enjoy a Saturday outing, come on over to the corner of Brady and Mandarin Roads to stroll through the Olde Mandarin Corner Market on Sunday afternoons from 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m.

Local produce, honey, homemade foods, handmade crafts and community interest booths all await you! The Olde Mandarin Corner (OMCM) even offers a book swap...bring one, take one! Inspired by the Riverside Arts Market, OMCM will continue to operate after the December end to the Riverside venue to provide Mandarin with access to a different way to shop locally.

Free and open to the public, there is plenty of free parking on the grounds of the historic Mandarin Community Club where you can enjoy the outdoors while shopping in the booths located under the giant oaks.

Scheduled upcoming OMCM spring dates are February 5 and 19 and March 4. Event days are subject to change due to weather.

Please visit the OldeMandarinCornerMarket.com or check it out on Facebook!

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Music School receives grants
ByContributingWriterLittle,Follisa-14-8

Northeast Florida Conservatory recently received grants totaling $40,000, including $20,000 from an anonymous donor and $20,000 from Spanx Inc. founder Sara Blakely. Blakely has donated the funds in memory of Laura Pooley, the daughter of Conservatory founder Richard Dickson and his wife, Janet. She recently appeared in The New Yorker and Forbes magazines and has appeared on Oprah’s show among others. Everyone talks about Spanx!

The Conservatory has a planned project called Laura’s Friends, whose purpose is to provide opportunities to children and organizations where music is absent or limited and children are deprived or disadvantaged and have no access to music education and performance.

The Northeast Florida Conservatory is now beginning its second year as a non-profit community school of the arts and component of National Guild for Community Arts Education and New Horizons Music International Association. The distinguished facutly consists of Jacksonville Symphony players and college music instructors.

Captain David’s Fishing Report

St. Johns River is fascinating body of water
By Captain David Urka

Did you know the St. Johns River is Florida’s longest river and one of just a handful of rivers worldwide that flow north? Did you know the St. Johns River is 310 miles long and the drop in elevation from its source to its mouth is just 30 feet? That is less than an inch per mile. Did you know the St. Johns flows at a speed of 1/3 mile per hour making it a “lazy river”? Did you know the St. Johns River is known as a blackwater stream because of its tea or coffee colored water which is caused by the leaching of tannins from decaying leaves in its watershed?

Did you know the St. Johns River is a fascinating body of water, rich in a 10,000 year history. Although many people think of the St. Johns as a North Florida river, it actually originates in the St. Johns Marsh just west of Vero Beach in South Florida. It is primarily fed by rainfall but receives a significant amount of its water from the Florida Aquifer.

Early Spanish explorers first named the St. Johns “Rio de Corrientes” which means River of Currents. Later on in 1562 when the French established an outpost called Ft. Caroline, they named the river “River de Mau”, which meant River of May. In 1565 the Spanish renamed the river “Rio de San Juan” or St. Johns River.

The St. Johns River played an active role during the Civil War with sinking of more than 12 ships in 1864. Among those sunken ships was the ship which was sunk just off Mandarin Point by a Confederate mine.

The St. Johns is host and home to many hundreds of species of plants and wildlife. Over 1183 species of fish share the river from its beginning to its end. Many of those different species are available right here for our angling pleasure throughout the year.

There are many ways the St. Johns has and continues to influence all that surrounds it. Community, recreationally, economically and environmentally are just some of the effects it has on us here, but its greatest effect on us is its daily presence providing us with so many ways to use, admire and appreciate Florida’s longest river.

Fishing Report: Until weather worsens, you can still take a chance on a redfish or two on the end of docks. Pretty days will be good for a bream bite.

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

The Mustangs' basketball team is slowly building up to their post season. Losing just four seniors from the previous year, the Mustangs hope to make it further in the playoffs and surpass their record of 14-12 from last year.

Kameron Mitchell, point guard for the Mustangs, leads the team along with the four other seniors: Thomas Ginn, Robby Murray, Christian Colon and Imran Alnahdy. Mitchell has put up some impressive stats averaging 24.3 points per game. His efforts are aided by wings Alnahdy and Ginn as well as junior Myers Kamble. All of the Mustangs work hard. "We work on game situations and shooting which is our strongest asset," remarked Coach MCCarter.

Throughout practice, the Mustangs work on defense, ball control and other aspects of the game including game situations to better them and hopefully ready them for victory. The team has been putting forth much effort in practice to reward them in their games and excite the crowd that gatherings to watch them work their magic.

The Sixth Man Club regularly attends to encourage their fellow Mustangs with their witty cheers and roaring support.

Atlantic Coast, a big rival of Mandarin, pulled out a victory over the Mustangs in their first game on December 12 towards the beginning of their season. The nail hitter left Mandarin short of the one point needed to tie the game up. But Mandarin improved through the course of their season and rallied back to beat the Stingrays by 12 points in their second match-up against each other on January 6. This promising game shows the boys' potential as they push to better themselves and prepare for post season.

Now, with their season wrapping up, the Mustangs are pulling to move up in their district play after having lost by one point to Flagler Palm Coast back in November as well as losing to Sanalwood back in January. More than 10 points.

The boys will play away at Bishop Kenny on February 1 and the district Tournament will be at Mandarin High School on February 10.

The biggest challenge on the boys’ basketball games is their defense.

Local Sports Scene

by Chad Cushnie

National Signing Day on February 1

Dozens of local high school athletes will be making their college choices official on Wednesday, February 1. Each year, the first Wednesday in February is known as National Signing Day. It’s the first day that the NCAA allows high school football players to formally sign letters of intent to the colleges of their choice.

Most top recruits in the area have already made up their minds where they will be playing college football. The verbal commitments that these young men have made up to the programs of their choice are non-binding until they sign an official letter of intent on February 1.

Bolles offensive tackle John Theus is the top-rated prospect in the area according to several recruiting websites. He has been verbally committed to the University of Georgia since this past summer. First Coast High School wide receiver Chris Black will sign with the University of Alabama while quarterback Nathan Peterman graduated from Bartram Trail High School in December in order to enroll early at the University of Tennessee.

Basketball heats up in February:

As March Madness approaches, the high school basketball games on the schedule during the month of February will determine which teams could be contenders in the NCAA Tournament.

The University of Florida lost overtime to Butler in the Elite Eight last year. This year, the Gators hope to make the Final Four for the first time in school history. On Tuesday, February 7, the Gators will visit Kentucky, one of the top teams in the country. Then on Saturday, February 11, UF has the chance to average a loss from earlier in the season when Tennessee travels to Gainesville. The game after that will be on Valentine’s Day in Tuscaloosa against an Alabama team that began the season ranked in the Top 25. This game should stretch tell us a lot about Florida’s chances to make some noise in March.

The biggest challenge on Florida State’s schedule this month will come on Thursday, February 23 when Duke visits Tallahassee. On Friday, February 24, UNF will visit UJ for the regular season finale for both teams. This game will play at Veterans Memorial Arena. For the Ospreys, it should be a tune up for the Atlantic Conference Tournament. The Dolphins have struggled this season, therefore they won’t be competing for the conference tournament.

Quick Hits:

The college baseball season begins on February 11, 2012. Florida, FSU, UF and JU will all begin their seasons that day. The Gators appear to have a strong team returning. Last season, they were the national runners-up, losing to South Carolina in the finals of the College World Series.

The NASCAG season will rev up this month in Daytona culminating with the Daytona 500 on Sunday, February 26.
By Contributing Writer Master Gardener Camille Hunter with Duval County Extension, University of Florida/IFAS

Free fertilizer for your lawn

Lawns are pretty much dormant right now, but the grass will be growing again soon. This year, how would you like some free fertilizer for your lawn? Of course you would. If whoever mows your lawn throws the grass clippings when the lawn is mowed, they are throwing away some good lawn fertilizer. Lose the bags and leave the clippings on the grass instead of removing them. It is best to haul them away with the trash and keep them off the wet lawn. Also remove the clippings if you are dealing with a lawn affected by disease to avoid spreading it.

Mow when the lawn is dry, which it should be. Mowing wet grass won't clump up if the grass is dry, which it should be. Mow the clippings when the lawn is dry and take the easy way out. Let the clippings fall where they may.

Clippings may also form clumps if you let the grass get too tall before mowing, so don't do that. Mow most St. Augustine grasses when the grass is about four inches high, cutting it back to three inches and you shouldn't have any clumping. You really shouldn't even see the little one-inch clips.

What about thatch, that thick layer of spongy matter? Isn't that caused by layers of grass clippings? The answer is absolutely not. Thatch is a spongy layer of dead and living shoots, stems and roots that build up over time. Thatch occurs primarily because of too much fertilizer, especially nitrogen, plus improper mowing and over watering. Lawn clippings do not contribute to thatch.

From a purely environmental point of view, keeping your clippings on the grass also keeps them out of the landfills, keeping them out of the landfills, and take the easy way out. Let the clippings fall where they may.

...Continued from Page 21

Dr. Craig J Oswald, D.C.
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TaeKwonDo school earns medals at recent tournament
By Contributing Writer Ralph Brown

On December 10, 2011, KTiger TaeKwonDo school competed in the 2011 Florida State Team Trial Championship in Tampa, Florida and won handsomely. The medals spanned the entire range of events from forms and sparring to breaking and demos. All told, the school came home with 24 gold medals, six silver medals and four bronze medals.

Mentored by Master Kim, who has a lot of experience in Olympic-style sparring and Mr. Ahn coaching on the sidelines during the tournament, KTiger students consistently rose to a level of sparring excellence and now have the medals to prove it. The demo team won a beautiful trophy. Their techniques were more traditional and disciplined; consequently, they had colored belts that competed easily against other demo teams consisting of black belts.

Danny Kim competed against six other black belts and won the gold in forms. He was only promoted six months ago, but he did better than the other, more experienced black belts, due to KTiger’s high standards and more modernized teaching of the forms. All KTiger students are united and the families are very supportive of the dedication involved. Students and their families work as a team that promotes hard work and discipline, yet fun.

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Mike Mularkey was named head coach of the Jaguars on January 11, 2012. Mularkey has 18 years of NFL coaching experience including two seasons as head coach and eight as an offensive coordinator. In five of the eight seasons he was a coordinator Mularkey’s team went to the playoffs. Prior to Jacksonville, his previous coaching stops were at Tampa Bay, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Miami and Atlanta. Mularkey is the fourth head coach in Jaguars history, including Mel Tucker who served as interim head coach for the final five games of the 2011 season.

A veteran of 27 years in the NFL, Mularkey played nine seasons as a tight end for the Minnesota Vikings and Pittsburgh Steelers. The Ft. Lauderdale, Florida native attended the University of Florida, where he played tight end before being drafted by the San Francisco 49ers in 1983.

Mularkey, 50, spent the past four seasons (2008-11) as offensive coordinator for the Atlanta Falcons, a team that advanced to the postseason in three of those four seasons. The Falcons produced a 43-21 mark in Mularkey’s tenure, the fifth-best record in the NFL. Over the four seasons the Falcons offense ranked ninth in total yards (354.8 per game) in the NFL, seventh in points (24.5), eighth in rushing yards (115.7), third in fewest turnovers (84), fourth in fewest sacks allowed (93) and sixth in third down conversions (44.2). The Falcons produced the top two single-season totals in team history for yards per game during Mularkey’s tenure (2008, 2011).

In 2010, Mularkey was named “Coordinator of the Year” by The Sporting News. That season the Falcons set a franchise record for first downs (353) and scored the third-most points (414, 25.8 avg.) in team history.

Mularkey served as head coach of the Buffalo Bills from 2004-05, leading the club to a 14-18 overall record. In his first season he directed the Bills to their first winning season in five years with a 9-7 record as the club tallied wins in nine of its final 12 games. The 2004 campaign is the last time the Bills have posted a winning season.

From 1996-2003, Mularkey spent eight seasons on the Pittsburgh Steelers coaching staff under head coach Bill Cowher, including the last three seasons as offensive coordinator. Under Mularkey’s direction as coordinator, Steelers finished third and fifth, respectively, in the NFL in total offense in his first two years. The Steelers led the NFL in rushing in 2001 with a 171.4-yard average per game, finishing that campaign with a 13-3 record and an AFC Central Division title while advancing to the AFC Championship game. In 2001 Mularkey tutored quarterback Kordell Stewart, who threw for 3,109 yards and was voted to the Pro Bowl.

Mularkey entered the NFL coaching ranks in 1994 with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers as quality control coach before he was promoted to tight ends coach the following season.

Drafted in the ninth round by the San Francisco 49ers in 1983, Mularkey played nine seasons in the NFL. He was released by the 49ers at the end of his first training camp and was signed by Minnesota. He spent the next six seasons with the Vikings before being signed as a Plan B free agent in 1989 by the Steelers, where he played for three seasons. Mularkey concluded his career with 102 receptions for 1,222 yards and nine touchdowns in 114 games played.

53rd Cum Laude Society induction held

On Friday, January 6, 2012, a special assembly was held in St. Johns Country Day School’s Performing Arts Center to honor 10 students selected for membership in the Cum Laude Society. Newly inducted members include seniors Pilar Brito, Austin Engelbrecht, Lane Brito, Patrick, a scouting assistant from the Gators from 1979-82. He and his wife, Betsy, have two sons, Patrick, a scouting assistant with the Jaguars and Shane, a student at the University of North Carolina.

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