

Mandarin NewsLine

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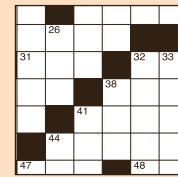
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DCPS School Choice Expo is over. Now what?

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The School Choice Expo may be over, but the process for matching students with the right schools continues. With Feb. 28 as the application deadline, families still have the opportunity to research prospective schools, attend virtual tours of campuses, and talk with individual school leaders to determine which school programs are a good fit for their student's interests.

VPK enrollment is also included in this application process. Families must apply online to be entered in the lottery.

Below are a few suggestions to make the enrollment process easier to navigate.

- Visit School Match 2021: For access to recorded presentations from individual schools, schedule virtual tours, and contact with school leadership. A show planner account is required to access these resources.
- Review the 2021-22 School Choice Reference Guide: Every school is listed and includes a snapshot of their programs and educational offerings. A special section detailing the application process, VPK lottery, and important dates is included.

- Know the different school types: With some exceptions, traditional schools can be divided into three different categories: Magnet schools, special transfer option schools, and attendance area (neighborhood) schools. Magnet schools offer a specific focus, theme or career area. For example, Andrew Jackson's theme includes cyber security and video gaming, and Wolfson's focus is on college preparatory leadership. Special transfer option schools are non-magnet schools that are outside a student's attendance zone. Attendance area schools are the schools within the attendance zone of

DCPS School Choice cont. on pg. 7

Mandarin Rotary Club serves community

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Rotary Club of Mandarin is a community service organization; its product is serving. Formed 45 years ago and part of Rotary International, the local club has approximately 59 like-minded members who enjoy helping others and living out Rotary's motto of "Service above Self."

Recently, the Rotary Club of Mandarin donated a brand new, badly needed Ford van to the Mandarin Food Bank to transport food products from local supermarkets and other donors for distribution to families in need. The volume of food needed during the coronavirus pandemic has increased dramatically, and the transport van will be invaluable in sustaining Food Bank operations.

The funds to purchase the van were raised by the Rotary Club in its annual charity fundraising event. Rotary Club member Ed Washington arranged for the van purchase from Bozard Ford of St. Augustine, which provided the van at a significantly reduced price as its contribution to the Food Bank. Rotary Club President Bill Gowan arranged with FastSigns of

Jacksonville to have the van "wrapped" as a Food Bank vehicle. FastSigns did that work at half price as its contribution to the Food Bank.

On Nov. 23 and Dec. 18, just prior to Thanksgiving and Christmas, 14 members of the Rotary Club of Mandarin assisted the Mandarin Food Bank in delivering hundreds of turkeys and dinners to community members in need.

During the 2020 holiday season, 17 members of the Rotary Club of Mandarin raised money for the Salvation Army by ringing Christmas bells and collecting donations from customers at the Mandarin Oaks Publix. This is an annual



Photos courtesy Rotary Club of Mandarin
Associate Director of Operations Burt Davidson, who accepted the van on behalf of the Food Bank, Rotary Club member Mark O'Connor, who works closely with the Food Bank to coordinate club assistance, and Rotary Club President Bill Gowan.

community service project for the Rotary Club.

On Nov. 21 and 22, members of the Rotary Club of Mandarin and their families built a wheelchair ramp free of charge at the home of mobility challenged Franklin Owen and his wife Lula. This construction project was part of the club's ongoing program to build at least one ramp per

Mandarin Rotary Club cont. on pg 8

Italian American Club supports Wreaths Across America

By Steve Verrigni
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Dec. 18, 2020, the Italian American Club of Jacksonville participated in the Wreaths Across America ceremony at the St. Augustine National Cemetery. Members assisted in decorating each headstone with a Christmas wreath to remember a fallen hero. Six members and family, ranging in age from 13 to 76 years old, attended and assisted with wreath placement.

The beginning of Wreaths Across America can be traced to 1992, when Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine had a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holiday season. Owner Morrill Worcester realized he had an opportunity to honor our country's veterans and arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington National Cemetery in one of the older sections that had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year.



Photos courtesy Mary Ann Wetzel
Ned Wetzel, Mary Ann Wetzel, Steve Verrigni at St. Augustine National Cemetery.

The tribute became annual and went on quietly for several years, until 2005, when a photo of the stones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in

snow, circulated around the internet — and the project received national attention. Thousands of requests poured in from all over the country from people wanting to emulate the Arlington project at their National and State cemeteries. Unable to donate thousands of wreaths to each state, Worcester began sending seven wreaths to every state, one for each branch of the military, and for POW/MIAs. In 2006, with the help of the Civil Air Patrol and other civic organizations, simultaneous wreath-laying ceremonies were held at more than 150 locations around the country.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans and other groups who had helped with their annual veterans wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America, a non-profit

Italian American Club cont. on pg 8

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Shop and Drop is successful!



Photo courtesy ElderSource

In September 2020, ElderSource held a community Shop and Drop event where local residents dropped off donated items for seniors and caregivers to the agency's Mandarin office. From that event, ElderSource was able to collect an abundance of supplies that went into more than 155 holiday care packages that were then delivered to seniors in the community. The seniors were delighted to receive a special holiday treat and were grateful for those who had shown kindness.

2021 PBS Kids Writers Contest entries now accepted

By NewsLine Staff
 mail@floridanewsline.com

WJCT Public Media has launched the 2021 WJCT PBS Kids Writers Contest. The organization will accept entries through March 15, 2021. Starting its 27th year, the annual contest invites students in kindergarten through third grade to submit their original writing and illustrations. The 2020 contest collected more than 200 stories from Florida, Georgia, and other parts of the country as far away as California and Alaska.

The annual contest is an initiative designed to promote the advancement of children's literacy skills through hands-on, active learning and is open to any child in kindergarten through third grade who writes and illustrates their own story.

All writers and illustrators, who enter and meet the requirements of the contest, will have their work published online at wjct.org and receive a certificate. First-, second-

Kids Writers Contest cont. on pg. 10

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Bentley!



BREED:
Dachshund

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Playing with my squeaky toys

FAVORITE TREAT:
Bananas!

FAVORITE FRIEND:
My dachshund brother, Bo

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Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet or sponsor the BFF contest.

Love and Marriage



Special Section
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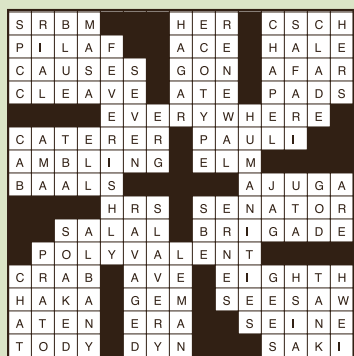


MYSTERY PHOTO



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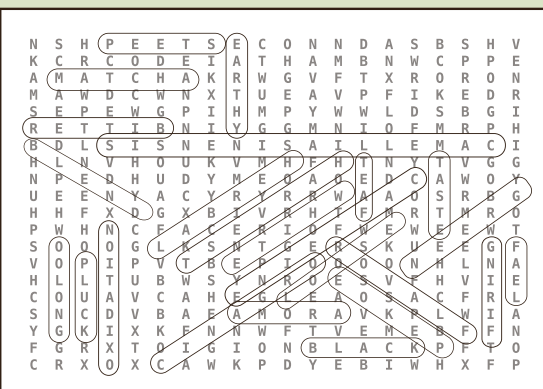
Last month's Mystery Photo was the building at Alberts Field.
Our winner was Kris Hawkes. Congratulations!



Answers to our Puzzles
PG 10

CRYPTO FUN
Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Answers: A. leaves B. brew C. cup D. boiled



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Q & A

with Duval School Board Member,
 District 7, Lori Hershey

Q: Do you have any community meetings planned?
 A: I will host a Chat with the Superintendent, on Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 5:30 p.m. at Mandarin Oaks Elementary School. This is a good time for the community to ask questions of the superintendent as well as get an update on the state of our schools. This meeting will be held virtually and families will receive a link from the district via email. The link will also be available on the district website and on my district Facebook page.

Q: What is the latest information regarding School Choice?
 A: The School Choice Expo was held virtually on Jan. 9 and information is still available on the district website. With Feb. 28 as the application deadline, families still have the opportunity to research prospective schools, attend virtual tours of campuses, and talk with individual school leaders to determine which school programs are a good fit for their student's interests.

Q: Can you tell us what is happening at this time with the Half Cent Sales Tax?
 A: The Citizens Oversight Committee met for the first time on Jan. 19. They will be providing quarterly reports to

the school board. At this point we don't have anything to announce for District 7, but upcoming projects include the removal of portables and an addition at Mandarin High School; renovations at Crown Point Elementary and Greenland Pines Elementary; and renovations and some new construction as well as removal of portables at Loretto Elementary. The historical structure at Loretto will remain.

Also regarding construction, the board has approved a new roof for Twin Lakes Academy Elementary School. This is part of a backlog of maintenance projects we've been unable to address, but finally the construction should happen soon.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 7?
 A: Graduation dates have been released. Mandarin High School will hold its ceremony on Thursday, June 3 at 6 p.m. and Atlantic Coast High School will hold its ceremony on Tuesday, May 25 at 6 p.m. The ceremonies will be held at each school campus, outside on the football field, due to ongoing pandemic concerns.

Q: How can our readers contact you?
 A: They can email me at HersheyL@duvalschools.org or call me at (904) 316-3609.

Q & A

with Jacksonville City Council President
 Tommy Hazouri, At Large District 3

Q: What is the latest on the COVID vaccinations being held at the Mandarin Senior Center?
 A: The Mandarin Senior Center has been successful in handling COVID-19 vaccinations and we want to give a special thanks to Darryl Parks and the fine staff at the senior center for their coordinating efforts in administering the vaccine. As of Jan. 20, all new vaccinations will be solely administered at the Regency Center; however, anyone who received their first shot at the Mandarin Senior Center should plan to return to the Mandarin Senior Center for their second shot when it's the proper time.

Q: What can you tell us about the new construction on San Jose Boulevard at the old JTA Park and Ride lot?
 A: I am sure everyone has noticed the land being cleared at the corner of Marbon and San Jose — we are getting a Daily's gas station and a new single family home development. Both are in the construction phase and have an estimated completion date of fall 2021.

Q: What is the timetable for the City Council to consider redistricting?
 A: Census results will come out in April and with that, redistricting will begin. I have appointed Garrett Dennis as the chairman of this committee along with Councilmembers Randy DeFoor, Brenda Priestly Jackson, Reggie Gaffney, and Randy White. The committee is charged to produce logical and compact districts and to consider significant physical boundaries, and political boundaries with considerations of race, gender, and economic status. Their first committee meeting was on Jan. 14 and they will meet on the fourth Thursday of each month through June.

Q: What are your thoughts on the now defeated Lot J proposal?
 A: The vote is in and it came down to six of my fellow colleagues and myself who felt that the Lot J deal was not the best deal for Jacksonville.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you?
 A: They can email me at THazouri@coj.net or call (904) 255-5217.

FYI Contact Numbers

<p>Duval County Local Government (coj.net) Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Mike Williams, (904) 630-2120 Patrol Zone 3: Assistant Chief Paul Restivo, (904) 630-8100</p> <p>Property Appraiser: Jerry Holland, jholland@coj.net; (904) 630-2011</p> <p>Supervisor of Elections: Mike Hogan, mhogan@coj.net, (904) 630-1414</p> <p>Tax Collector: Jim Overton, taxcollector@coj.net, (904) 630-1916</p> <p>Clerk of Court: Ronnie Fussell, (904) 255-2000</p> <p>Jacksonville City Council District 6: Michael Boylan, MBoylan@coj.net, (904) 255-5206 At Large, District 3: Tommy Hazouri, thazouri@coj.net, (904) 255-5217</p>	<p>Duval County School Board (www.duvalschools.org) District 7: Lori Hershey, hershey@duvalschools.org, (904) 390-2375</p> <p>State of Florida Elected Officials Governor Ron DeSantis, (850) 488-7146 State House District 16: Representative Jason Fischer, (850) 717-5016 State Senate District 4: Senator Aaron Bean, (904) 757-5039</p> <p>Federal Elected Officials U.S. Congress District 4: Representative John Rutherford, (202) 225-2501 U.S. Senate: Senator Marco Rubio, (202) 224-3041 Senator Rick Scott, (202) 224-5274</p>
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with Jacksonville City Council Member,
District 6, Michael Boylan

Q: What is the latest on the realignment of Orange Picker Road near Alberts Field?

A: Planning is underway for the re-alignment of Orange Picker Road from Acornshell Way to Brady Road, changing the two three-way intersections of Orange Picker and Brady roads to a single four-way intersection and providing expanded paved parking facilities for Alberts Field. The tree survey of the area has been completed, the parking lot for Alberts Field has been reconfigured to save the larger of the trees and the plan has been submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department for their review and acceptance. They have signaled that they would like to save more trees and have provided a marked-up plan showing their preferences. There is \$700,000 in CIP (Capital Improvement Program) budgeted this year, so I fully expect the realignment of the road as well as the construction of the nearby dog park to be completed by the end of this calendar year or the very beginning of 2022.

Q: Do you have an update on Deep Bottom Creek, which we discussed a few months ago?

A: Deep Bottom Creek runs roughly from the Walmart area and through north Mandarin before it empties into the St. Johns River. Drainage improvements related to hurricane flooding north of Hartley Road are needed and a project has been identified to increase the size of an existing culvert under Hartley Road and then make the necessary changes to the system to provide attenuation. Design and permitting is ongoing. The contractor mobilized and started construction in mid-November and the basin pond is being excavated.

Q: It looks like vertical construction is beginning on both the Daily's station as well as the new apartment complex on San Jose Boulevard?

A: Yes, the reality of these new developments along San Jose Boulevard is becoming more apparent. My responsibility is to continue to manage this growth.

Q: The Lot J development proposal is now dead, although you voted in favor. Could you explain your thought process?

A: My idea all along was that this was a public/private partnership. I understand all too well the opportunity this project would have created for residents and businesses in the area around the stadium and I'm disappointed it didn't play out. I also understand that many Mandarin residents found the project unpopular because it was a downtown project, but sometimes in my role I have to look at the big, city-wide picture. I have heard from many residents who did not support the project via email and I have tried to be diligent in my response to constituents.

Related to Mandarin, though, is the news in mid-January that the National Park Service had declined the proposal to consider the Shipyards as replacement property for Metropolitan Park. This is relevant to us because the property on County Dock Road is still in the mix as part of a new swap proposal.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you?

A: Community members can email me at MBoylan@coj.net or call (904) 255-5206.



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February

What's Going On in Mandarin?
A modified calendar of events

Community Calendar

The Italian American Club of Jacksonville announces its Board of Directors meeting on Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m., a General Membership dinner meeting on Feb. 14 at 1:30 p.m. and the popular Spaghetti to Go on Feb. 26, from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. All activities are at the club building, 2838 Westberry Road. Visit www.iacofjacksonville.com or call (904) 586-2700 for more information.

Northeast Florida AHEC announces the following free Quit Tobacco Class, which includes free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges: Saturday, Feb. 6, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Mayo Clinic Primary Care, 7826 Ozark Drive in Jacksonville. Call (904) 482-0189 for more information or to sign up.

The First Coast-Jacksonville Women's Connection will host lunch and a program on Wednesday, Feb. 10 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Bonefish Grill. Stampin' Up demonstrator Kelly Felmet will present "Heart to Heart" and attendees can take home their own creation. The guest speaker is Barbara Haggermer of Naples, a novelist who writes about serious subjects, but makes them fun to read. The cost of the luncheon and program is \$24. Reservations are required by Feb. 8 by contacting Mihae at mihae.brown@gmail.com or (916) 662-2263. First Coast – Jacksonville Women's Connection is affiliated with Stonecroft (www.stonecroft.org).

The All Star Quilt Guild will meet at 10 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 15 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. No refreshments will be served due to Covid 19. Bring your own mask. New members are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

The Jacksonville Camera Club meets the third Wednesday of each month from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. at Shepherd of the Woods Lutheran School, 6595 Columbia Park Ct. There is social time of 30 - 45 minutes before the meeting. This month's meeting will be held on Feb. 17 and will feature a presentation by Kally Malcom, associate professor of photography at UNF. The club also conducts photo outings, digital and print contests and provides photography education for all levels of photographers. Visit jax.jaxcameraclub.com for more information.

Living Health: Chronic Disease Self-Management Program will be held for people 60 years and older on Fridays, Feb. 26 – April 2, from 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Get a free book and learn how to maintain or improve your quality of life. This online live webinar can also be accessed by phone. To register, call Northeast Florida AHEC at (904) 482-0189 or (877) 784-8486.

Shuffleboard at Mandarin Park is on hold for now. Keep an eye out for the announcement of resumption of play in a future issue of Mandarin NewsLine.

Briefs

ElderSource offers free interactive online classes

ElderSource has announced a pilot program with GetSetUp, a new online learning platform, to offer a collection of online classes specifically for older adults seeking educational and entertaining activities. The classes, available at no cost through the end of June, are accessible on the GetSetUp website (www.getsetup.io) using a tablet, personal computer or smartphone and with the coupon code, "ELDERSOURCE."

The GetSetUp platform is unique as the classes are presented in real-time, not a pre-recorded lecture, and encourage interaction among participants and the instructor. GetSetUp Guides, who are older adults and retired educators, help participants "learn by doing" and encourage discussion and questions during the class.

Presentation topics, which change daily and often repeated, are numerous and include how to use Zoom, smart phone, social media platforms, and other technology; how to order groceries and prescriptions online; introduction to wine appreciation; virtual tours of museums and cities; health and wellness sessions; and travel and gardening guides, just to name a few.

Call ElderSource at (904) 391-6699 for more information.

River Garden CEO announces retirement

After more than four decades of leadership, Martin A. Goetz is set to step down in March 2021. Goetz joined River Garden as associate administrator in 1978 and assumed the role of CEO in 2004. Over Goetz' 43-year tenure, River Garden has grown to include a 180-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility; The Coves, an 80-unit independent living community; a Medicare certified home health agency; adult day care; and a Foundation.

Now in its 75th year, River Garden Senior Services is a not-for-profit, mission-driven community agency offering an ar-

ray of elder care programs and services on a 40-acre campus in the Mandarin area of Jacksonville. Sponsored by the organized Jewish community, it serves clients from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds while maintaining an environment supportive of Jewish identity and informed by Jewish values.

Goetz has received several honors over the years including the "Young Executive of the Year" Award in 1994 and "The Dr. Herbert Shore Award of Honor" in 2016 from the Association of Jewish Aging Services. LeadingAge Florida also awarded him its "Distinguished Service Award" in 2003 and "Chairman's Award" in 2007. Goetz holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kent State University, a Master of Science in Health Services Administration from SUNY at Stony Brook and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Florida. Goetz and his wife, Susan, have two adult children.

Mauri Mizrahi will succeed Goetz as River Garden's Chief Executive Officer in late March 2021. Mizrahi has served as Associate Administrator at River Garden since 2017.

COVID-19 vaccination appointments do not require payment

Attorney General Ashley Moody has released the following tips to help avoid COVID-19 vaccine-related scams:

- Know that anyone asking for money in exchange for an appointment is a scam.
- Check with county health departments for local vaccine distribution guidelines.
- Be wary of any website where pop-up ads solicit a vaccine appointment.
- Look for "https" or a padlock icon in the website name to ensure that you are on a secure website.
- Report suspicious solicitations or COVID-19 vaccine-related advertisements to the Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM (866-966-7226) or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.

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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Kristina Rice

Kristina Rice said, "I like to help people," and indeed she has devoted her life to helping others — with a particular affinity for helping veterans. Currently she is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) with the Wounded Warrior Project, where she spends her time helping veterans who have mental health crises. Previously, she worked on providing emergency financial assistance for veterans with the Wounded Warrior Project and served on the DAT (Disaster Assistance Team) for the American Red Cross, where she was responsible for providing immediate necessities after a disaster and then connected people to other needed services.



Photo courtesy Kristina Rice
Kristina Rice

Rice was born on an Army base in Germany as both of her parents were on active duty. When the family returned to the States, they came to her mother's hometown of Jacksonville and Rice attended local schools like Mandarin Middle School and Mandarin High School. It was while living in Riverside and working for a restaurant that she met her husband, Andrew. He ultimately joined the Air Force and she went

back overseas for more of the military lifestyle. They lived in Guam, where she had a daughter, Lorelei, and England before moving back to Mandarin four years ago.

Q: How did you become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker?

A: While we lived in England, I earned bachelor's and master's degrees (in sociology and social work, respectively) at an American university that catered to service members. My husband got out of the service so I could pursue my LCSW. I moved with my daughter back to Jacksonville and had an interview with Wounded Warrior Project three days later. I started the job and bought our house in Mandarin all before he joined us from England. You must have supervisor hours as part of the LCSW process and usually have to pay

per hour for another LCSW to supervise you. Local LCSW Beth Shorstein gave her time pro bono to me for the required weekly sessions for two years so I could continue working at Wounded Warrior Project. I can never thank her enough. I received my LCSW in October 2019.

Q: What do you like best about working at Wounded Warrior Project?

A: Definitely being able to work with the veterans. Sometimes it's heartbreaking, but we have some great success stories. There is nothing better than knowing that you've helped someone reach their full potential.

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

A: We love to be outdoors. We have a beagle and a basset hound and we do a lot of hiking, something we also loved doing in England. We were in the forest there every weekend. We also love the beach and paddleboarding and kayaking. Plus, I run three times a week with my mom, who is my best friend. I also volunteer with Free Flow, an organization that provides showers for the homeless. I think it is important to give back.

Q: Where was your favorite place to live overseas?

A: England. We loved the culture and the slower pace. We lived in a very small village with no stoplights. We would walk to the market to get our groceries. There were castles and ruins to explore ... so many wonderful things to do outdoors and there is so much history.

Q: What would people be surprised to know about you?

A: I have an adventurous spirit. I participated in roller derby when we lived in Guam and England and I went skydiving recently with my mom. When I'm not working, I'm making sure to have fun.

DCPS School Choice cont. from pg. 1

the student's primary residence. (Note that services such as transportation can vary based on the type of school a student is attending. For example, transportation is provided for most magnet programs, but not for special transfer option schools. Understanding what category a school falls under may assist with answering questions about its educational options.)

^a Schedule an online appointment with School Choice: Families can go online to schedule an appointment with a school choice specialist. This is a new option this year. To make an appointment, visit www.duvalschools.org/schoolchoice and click on "Make an Appointment." Telephone conferencing or in-person meeting appointments are available. Families can also email questions to school_choice@duvalschools.org. Military families can submit questions about military transfer option priority to MilitaryTransferOption@duvalschools.org.

- Know the deadline: The deadline to submit a school choice application — including VPK — is Sunday, Feb. 28, 2021. Applications are online and available in the parent/guardian focus account. Visit <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/focus> for a step-by-step guide on creating a parent account.

Remember, the school choice process is only for families wishing to select a school for their student that is outside of their attendance area school. No action needs to be taken if families wish to have their children attend their attendance area school or keep their children enrolled in their current school of enrollment.

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Love and Marriage

Create a chocolate charcuterie board

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Charcuterie boards have become a staple when entertaining or dining out. Charcuterie boards traditionally feature a variety of cured meats, cheeses, bruschetta, and even olives — but boards can be adorned with any tasty morsel their creators desire. Borrowing from that idea, savvy home chefs can create a sweets-based charcuterie board that's sure to amaze.

To start out, figure out which nibbles your loved one will desire the most. The chocolate charcuterie board can be entirely sweet, or a mix of sweet, savory and even salty offerings. Some ideas for a chocolate charcuterie board include:

- Chocolate truffles
- Chocolate-dipped fruits
- Chocolate-covered pretzels

- Chocolate bark
- Melted chocolate fondue and assorted dippers
- Classic chocolate candies
- Assorted nuts like almonds and cashews
- Fudge squares
- Homemade turtle candy
- Chocolate nut rolls
- Dried fruits, such as figs and dates
- Graham crackers or butter cookies

Just as you would for any charcuterie board, choose an attractive wood board large enough to hold all of the desserts. Arrange the chocolates and other foods with an eye for presentation. Use fresh berries or mint leaves to fill in any gaps and add a little extra flair to the arrangement.

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Mandarin Rotary Club cont. from pg. 1

calendar quarter for local citizens in need. The club works in partnership with Hart Felt Ministry, which identifies worthy recipients and funds material costs for construction of the ramps by members of the Rotary Club.

The Rotary Club of Mandarin is a community service organization that meets at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesdays for breakfast at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center on Hartley Road in Mandarin. Members may attend in person or via Zoom. If you would like to learn more about the club and its opportunities to serve the community, contact Membership Chairman Wes Caldwell at Wes@dannagracey.com or visit mandarinrotary.org for more information.



Louis Dunbar, who spearheads the club's wheelchair ramp construction program, Franklin and Lula Owen, and club members Jock Hart and Robert Meek. Working on the project, but not shown are Jill Dunbar, Steve Lazar, Paul Hardaker, Drew Hardaker, Brian Hall, Julie Graham, Mark O'Connor, and Ken McCauley.

Italian American Club cont. from pg. 1

501(c)(3) organization, to continue and expand this effort. In 2008, more than 300 locations held wreath-laying ceremonies in every state, Puerto Rico and 24 overseas cemeteries.

In 2014, Wreaths Across America and its national network of volunteers laid more than 700,000 memorial wreaths at 1,000 locations in the United States. This was accomplished with help from 2,047 sponsorship groups, corporate contributions, and donations of trucking, shipping, and thousands of helping hands. The organization's goal of covering Arlington National Cemetery was met in 2014 with the placement of 226,525 wreaths. The wreath-laying is still held annually, on the second or third Saturday of December.



St. Augustine National Cemetery.

Gardening

New Year, New Hope

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

We gardeners always hope for good results in our landscapes and gardens, and although it's still early in the year as I write, the buds on my eastern redbud tree (*Cercis canadensis*) have been showing pink since the first week in January. I've already spotted a few honey bees cruising among the flowers and hope that other pollen- and nectar-eating insects will also find them. Even some backyard birds like to nibble on flowers.

A stand of cardinal's guard (*Odontonema strictum*) withstood the latest cold snap and is feeding at least one resident hummingbird. Zebra longwing butterflies are also venturing out on milder days. Fire-bush (*Hamelia patens*) fruits are clearly a magnet for catbirds. They are quite comical to watch, as they acrobatically tackle the fruits hanging at the tips of slender twigs. It won't be long before the bushes are stripped. I hope they are finding alternative food, perhaps holly berries or fruits of the Carolina cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*). Sadly there are too many feral cats in my area for me to put out feeders. For many birds, though, suet-based food is welcome during the winter months, and the dense nutrition helps prepare them for breeding.

To keep up a supply of vegetables, start warm season crops indoors as soon as possible: <https://tinyurl.com/y62cptl5>.

- Ensure seed trays or repurposed containers are clean. They must have drainage holes.
- Moisten the seed soil and fill containers about three-quarters full. Don't pack it down.
- Follow seed packet instructions for planting depth. Cover seeds lightly.
- Spray gently with water to ensure the seeds are in contact with the soil. Don't drown them.
- Cover containers with plastic wrap or similar.
- Put them in a warm place and keep the compost moist but not saturated.

It's not necessary to put the seed trays in bright light until they have begun to germinate. At that point, immediately

remove the covering and move them to a position where they'll receive up to 16 hours of bright light every day. This is more easily achieved with grow lights. A sunny windowsill will do in a pinch, but seedlings will become leggy without enough light. Don't allow them to dry out, but don't over water either.

Unless you grow your seeds singly in four- or six-pack cells (sow two seeds per cell for insurance), or similar, it will be necessary to pot up your seedlings when they have at least their first true pairs of leaves. Otherwise, thin to one plant per cell. Use a diluted fertilizer every week or two, to give them a chance to develop sturdy roots before planting them out in the garden. At this point you may realize you have overestimated what you can handle, and surely no one likes to throw out plants! If you have neighbors who are gardeners, this might be an opportunity to swap or share.

Young plants need a gentle introduction to the outside world, beginning with a couple of hours of morning sun and gradually increasing exposure, for a couple of weeks before you intend to plant them out. Avoid putting them on a concrete base as they will quickly get too hot and too dry. Ease back on watering and fertilizing to prepare them for being in garden soil. Be mindful that garden soil may need additions of organic matter (compost) and fertilizer, preferably a week or two before you plant out your vegetables.

Check out the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>) for more information, as well as the monthly newsletter, The Neighborhood Gardener (<https://tinyurl.com/yyy75on7>). Our local bi-monthly newsletter, A New Leaf, can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxo8ozsj>. There's a great deal of information for vegetable gardeners in the latest issue.

These instructions apply similarly to growing flowers from seed. This can be particularly rewarding for annuals like gaillardia, zinnias, and cosmos, and other beauties that attract and feed butterflies and pollinators, to our benefit. Find out more here: <https://tinyurl.com/rvwavyz>. Enjoy!



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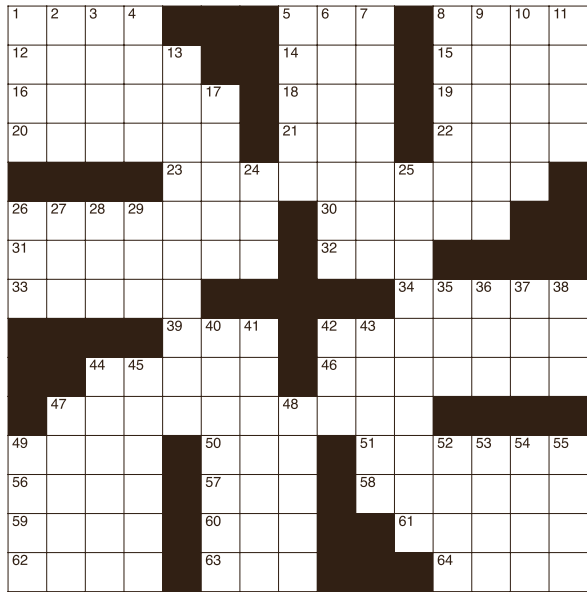
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Nuclear near reach weapon
5. Of she
8. Hyperbolic function
12. Rice dish
14. A team's best pitcher
15. Strong and healthy
16. Induces
18. Popular manga series
19. From a distance
20. Split
21. Consumed
22. Cushions
23. All over
26. One who provides food
30. St. ___ Girl, brand of beer
31. Walking slowly
32. Wood
33. Semitic gods
34. Bugle

39. 60-minute periods (abbr.)
42. Congressman
44. Plant of the heath family
46. Subdivision of an army
47. Having many different forms
49. Shellfish
50. Latin for hail
51. Between sixth and seventh
56. Maori war dance
57. Precious or semiprecious stone
58. Teeter totter
59. Deity
60. A major division of geological time
61. Fishing net
62. Small Caribbean bird
63. Field force unit
64. Japanese beverage

2. Monetary unit
3. The color of the sky
4. Dough used to make tortillas
5. Popular comic strip character
6. Distinct form of a plant
7. Replenishment
8. Has its own altar
9. Expedition to see animals
10. Group of related organisms
11. His and ___
13. Frenetically
17. Small integer
24. Unit of energy
25. Studies of culture
26. Taxi
27. Doctors' group
28. Don't know when yet
29. Former measure of length
35. Popular CBS series
36. Skin condition

37. Christian creator and ruler of the universe
38. They ___
40. Caused severe damage
41. Work done under harsh conditions for no pay
42. One point east of due south
43. Sea eagles
44. Drenched
45. State capital
47. Italian city
48. Sweetheart (archaic)
49. Brief talk
52. Popular disco group: Bee ___
53. First Chinese dynasty
54. Military vehicle
55. Chinese Moslem

CLUES DOWN

1. Prevents oil spills



Solve the code to discover words related to tea.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 12 = E)

- A. 19 12 25 6 12 26**
Clue: Parts of a plant
- B. 18 24 12 1**
Clue: Make by soaking or boiling
- C. 23 5 11**
Clue: Vessel
- D. 18 2 16 19 12 8**
Clue: Heated water

TEA TIME WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- AROMA
- BITTER
- BLACK
- BLEND
- CAFFEINE
- CAMELLIA SINENSIS
- EARTHY
- FIRING
- FLAVOR
- GREEN
- HARVEST
- HERBAL
- LEAF
- LOOSE
- MATCHA
- OOLONG
- ORGANIC
- OXIDATION
- PEKOE
- PLUCK
- STEEP
- TASTE
- TEA
- WHITE

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

Kids Writers Contest cont. from pg. 2

and third-place awards will be presented for stories from each grade level; winners will also receive a WJCT PBS Kids prize pack, the opportunity to create a video reading of their story and an invitation to share their story live at Be My Neighbor Day on Saturday, May 9. Winning stories will be eligible for the People's Choice grand prize, a \$100 savings bond.

"WJCT Public Media is proud to provide a platform for our youngest neighbors to share their unique stories through the WJCT PBS Kids Writers Contest," said David McGowan, president and CEO of WJCT. "Through this contest, we hope to inspire students and their communities to experience the joy of creativity."

Visit wjct.org/writerscontest for more information, including official rules and tools to help students create their stories.

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Nutrition Check

What is your fiber in February?

By Kristen Hicks-Roof, Ph.D., RDN, LDN; Marissa Schwam, B.S.
mail@floridanewsline.com

We keep hearing about fiber and how beneficial it is to consume fiber in our diet. What is fiber and what foods have the most fiber? Fiber is part of plant-based foods such as grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and beans. It travels through the body undigested and helps to protect from certain cancers, helps ease bowel movements, and helps to keep us full longer.

There are two types of fiber: soluble and insoluble. The insoluble fiber is found in whole-wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts, beans, cauliflower, green beans and potatoes. This type of fiber does not dissolve in water, which helps move food through the digestive system quicker. On the contrary, soluble fiber does dissolve in water and this helps bulk stool and absorb any harmful substances in the gut. You can find soluble fiber in dried beans, oats, oat bran, rice bran, barley, citrus fruits, apples, strawberries, peas, and potatoes. Often, both types of fiber are found in our foods. Now that we understand why fiber is considered important, how can we get more fiber in our diets?

Increase fruit and vegetable intake: Beans such as edamame have up to 9 g of fiber in just a half cup. Other types of beans (pinto, kidney, black) generally have about 3 – 5 g of fiber. Fruits like apples, blackberries, strawberries and raspberries have 4g of fiber per serving. Even your favorite snack foods such as popcorn or guacamole have fiber in them.

Make half your grains whole: Whole grains are a great source of fiber. You can get 3.5 g of fiber from one cup of cooked brown rice, 4g of fiber in one cup of traditional oats, 2g of fiber in a slice of whole grain bread, and 6g of fiber from one cup of cooked whole wheat pasta. Don't like the taste of whole grains? Try substituting just half of your grains whole as a seamless transition.

Have a fiber goal: Having a goal for the amount of fiber you want to consume in a day will help remind you to include foods with fiber in your diet. But how much do we need? The recommended daily intake for fiber for adults is 25g a day for women and 38g a day for men. How do you fare?

Including fiber in our diet is beneficial for our health for the short term and the long term. Fiber can help remove cholesterol from the body, flush harmful substances out of the body, and help provide bowel movement regularity. We encourage you to add in fiber in your diet to help keep you healthier, happier and regular this new year.

Kristen K. Hicks-Roof Ph.D., RDN, LDN is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida.



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