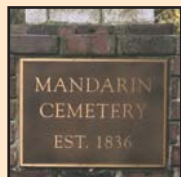


# Mandarin NewsLine

MARCH 2021 Volume 15 Issue 5

A Florida NewsLine Publication



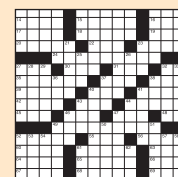
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## All Star Quilters Guild continues philanthropy through challenging year

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

What do 150 women and men with a passion for fabric and quilting do when they get stuck at home for a year due to a global pandemic? Most are blessed with a pack rat passion for collecting fabric that catches their eye, so much so that their significant others quickly discover a few things: 1. There is never such a thing as too much fabric, according to the quilter; 2. Spaces in the home are easily repurposed for the hobby, including spare bedrooms, closets, dining rooms, and even living rooms; and 3. A quilter can disappear into "the zone" for hours, sometimes forgetting that eating or house cleaning or getting dressed might be necessary.

All that extra fabric, called a stash, means there was no excuse this past year when the urge to create called while isolating at home. The result was an amazing collection of philanthropic contributions.

All told, the membership of All Star Quilters Guild contributed 261 quilts to charities that serve children, teens, senior citizens and veterans, plus scores of pillowcases and decorative Christmas stockings. In addition, the group did not abandon the Mandarin Food Bank. In total, the value of the quilts, food, and cash donations exceeded \$26,000 — and that doesn't count the hundreds of face masks donated to various medical and support services.

Holiday quilts were sent to Hart Felt Ministries, serving non-medical needs for senior citizens. Other recipients

**All Star Quilters Guild philanthropy** cont. on pg. 9

## New Daily's coming to Mandarin

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com

Anyone who has driven down San Jose Boulevard towards the Julington Creek Bridge has seen the construction site where the JTA Park and Ride lot used to be. Near the corner of Marbon Road, a new Daily's convenience store is taking shape as part of a larger development that will eventually include single family homes.

According to Max Globber, director of marketing for Petro Services, Inc., which is the management company for First Coast Energy/Daily's, this store under construction will be the biggest Daily's to date — narrowly larger than the Daily's on Kernan Boulevard. The difference, Globber said, is the Mandarin store will



The Daily's on Kernan Boulevard; the Mandarin store will be very similar, but a bit larger  
Photo courtesy Max Globber



The Daily's on San Jose Boulevard under construction.

have a walk-in Beer Cave with automatic doors. At just over 6,500 square feet,

the store will feature Daily's Dash, which offers a variety of food items, including to-go meals and soft serve ice cream. The company's most modern car wash to date will also be on site.

"Part of the reason we

picked this location is because of the residential growth in the area," Globber said. "We couldn't be more excited to build our next Daily's here and join the Mandarin community."

Construction is coming along on time, according to Globber. With the canopy and walls of the structure up, the company anticipates an April opening. Due to COVID restrictions, Globber said there likely won't be an official ribbon cutting ceremony, but the store will offer a variety of grand opening specials.

"Everywhere that we open a Daily's, we have a great rapport with our neighbors," Globber said. "We promise to be a 'nicer' addition to the area."

**New Daily's** cont. on pg. 10

## Mandarin Garden Club announces \$1 Clothing Sale, spring events

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Garden Club's famous \$1 Clothing and Jewelry Sale will be held March 5 and 6 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day at the club, located at 2892 Loretto Road. Gently used clothing for men, women and children will be on sale. Items from the Boutique and Jewelry section will be priced separately and the event will also feature a pop-up plant sale in the gardens. All CDC guidelines will be followed for the event.

The public is also invited to the garden club on March 20 and March 21 at 10 a.m., when the Jacksonville Orchid Society will host its annual "A Walk In The Orchids" show and sale. Attendees



are invited to view beautiful orchids and enjoy a walk through the club's gardens at the same time.

Finally, mark your calendar for the

Mandarin Garden Club Annual Plant Sale on May 1. This event features a huge selection of healthy plants at amazingly low prices.

"The grounds have survived the winter and we are working hard to revive all the wonderful features of the gardens," said club member Diana Openbrier. "The gardens are open for the public to enjoy and learn about the beauty of nature from dawn to dusk, except during special rental dates."

Visit [www.mandaringardenclub.org](http://www.mandaringardenclub.org) for more information about the Mandarin Garden Club, including special occasion rental.

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# A walking tour of Mandarin Cemetery

By Sandy Arpen  
main@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Cemetery on Mandarin Road is interesting in terms of history of the fascinating people who are interred there. The first burial was of George Mott, on May 18, 1836 on property donated by the Belknap family. This property, adjoining an early Presbyterian Church, became the Mandarin Cemetery. It was incorporated in 1940.

Shaded by majestic oak trees, a visitor will find graves of more than 300 souls, some of whom were a big part of the Mandarin's history. For instance, located in the Walter Jones Historical Park is the home of Union Officer Major William Webb (1838 – 1893), whose line of descent reaches back to George Washington and the Revolutionary War. Charles

“Charlie” Moses Brown, Jr. (1904 – 1987) became an acclaimed artist whose primary medium was pottery. In longtime service to the Mandarin community were Walter Jones (1865 – 1928) and his daughter Agnes Jones (1898 – 1992), who served as the postmaster and postmistress. All are interred at Mandarin Cemetery.

There are many others who are included in a walking tour guide that is available at the entrance of the cemetery. Featured here are two:

- Hans Barth (1897 – 1956) born in Leipzig, Germany, was a composer, pianist and harpsichordist. At the age of six he was awarded a scholarship to attend the Leipzig Conservatory, founded by Felix Mendelssohn. He and his family immigrated to America, and he continued his studies in New York. At the age of 14 he gave 13 recitals in one season in New York, including at Carnegie Hall. He developed and composed music for the quarter-tone piano. He performed his “Concerto for Quarter Tone Piano” with the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski, and with the Cincinnati Symphony, conducted by Fritz Reiner. He lived with his wife, Lois, a former student, on the river in Mandarin. His “Peace Symphony” was composed in part during the years he lived in Mandarin. You can hear a recording of him playing at: [www.mandarinmuseum.net/mandarin-history/mandarin-artists/hans-barth](http://www.mandarinmuseum.net/mandarin-history/mandarin-artists/hans-barth).

- Theodore James Flynn (1911 – 1989) was a fourth generation Mandarin resident.



Photos courtesy Mandarin Museum & Historical Society.

He attended school at the old Mandarin School (now the Mandarin Community Club) on Mandarin Road. In 1909 Theodore's father, James, opened Flynn's Store on the corner of Loretto Road and Flynn Road, a typical country general store. As a boy, Theodore delivered groceries and animal feed by horse and buggy. He took over operation of the store in 1946. He and his wife, Josephine, operated the store and raised three children: Joyce, Wanda and Ronald. The family lived upstairs in the building. The Loretto Road store still stands and is now a private residence.

In 1958 the Flynn's closed the store on Loretto Road and opened Flynn's Feed and Hardware at the corner of State Road 13 (now San Jose Boulevard) and Westberry Road. Theodore retired in 1973, turning the store over to his son, Ronnie. That store was later sold and became Hagan Ace Hardware.

Theodore Flynn spent much of his time working toward the betterment of this community. He worked with others to establish the Mandarin-Loretto Volunteer Fire Department and to purchase its first fire truck. He served on the Local Government Study Commission of Duval County, which planned the City of Jacksonville/Duval County Consolidation. He served as president of the Mandarin Athletic Association and was active in the

North Florida [Baseball] League in which the Mandarin Orange Pickers community baseball team played. For more than 34 years he served as board member, secretary and then president of the Mandarin Cemetery Association. He was a masterful organizer and fundraiser, putting on fried chicken (or shrimp or fish) dinners to benefit Loretto School, the Mandarin-Loretto Volunteer Fire Department, the Mandarin Athletic Club and the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, of which he and his wife were life-long members. Upon his death, the headline of his obituary in the Florida Times-Union read “Mr. Mandarin dies at age 77.”

Community members are encouraged to stop by, pick up a brochure and follow the map to the 10 numbered graves to learn about some very interesting people; however, every person there is interesting. It is a beautiful place to be outside in the fresh air and walk through Mandarin's history.

*Sandy Arpen is a volunteer with the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society. Thank you to Don Stanley, Bill Morrow and Tracey Arpen for the information found in this article. The Mandarin Museum is located at 11964 Mandarin Road in Walter Jones Historical Park. Visit [www.mandarinmuseum.net](http://www.mandarinmuseum.net) for more information about Mandarin's history and the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society.*

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Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answers to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and you could win a Gift Certificate!  
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Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet or sponsor the BFF contest.



## Happy St. Patrick's Day

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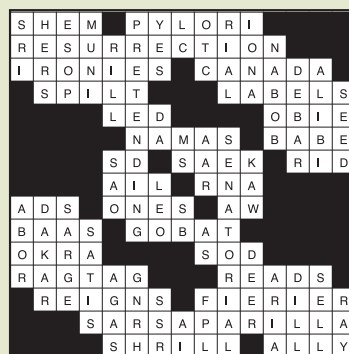


## MYSTERY PHOTO



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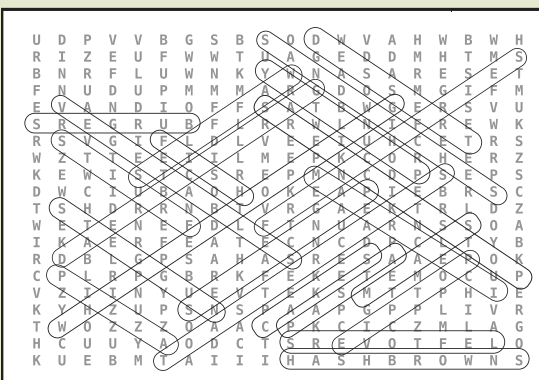
Last month's Mystery Photo was First Christian Church.  
Our winner was Marty Harris. Congratulations!



Answers to our Puzzles  
PG 10

## CRYPTO FUN

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## with Jacksonville City Council Member Michael Boylan, District 6

### Q: What can you tell us about the Art in Public Places project?

A: Losco and Chuck Rogers parks in Mandarin will be enhanced by new interactive works of public art. At Chuck Rogers Park, the art will be soccer themed, since the park is utilized by a youth soccer league. At Losco Park, the new interactive sculpture will complement the number of amenities already included in the park such as trails, playground, picnic shelters, picnic tables and benches. We are in the process of securing bids and project ideas from artists and a community board for Art in Public Places will make the final decision and award the projects in late March. We are hoping to have installation done by the end of July. Funding for this art comes from the lease of the communications tower at Alberts Field. All funds from this lease must be used for parks.

### Q: Do you have an update on park and/or public works improvements in Mandarin?

A: The project to change the two three-way intersections of Orange Picker Road and Brady Road into a single four-way intersection is moving along. The parking lot configuration for Alberts Field that saves the most trees in the parking area has been agreed upon by Parks and Recreation and the layout of the parking and roadway supplies needed are being gathered to establish a cost estimate, which will move the project from the planning to the design phase.

Pickleball courts are coming to Walter Anderson Park, adjacent to the baseball field along Orange Picker Road. The

Parks Department has begun surfacing of the courts and work is supposed to be finished by this summer.

Mandarin Park's dock and kayak launch project has been awarded and the contract execution is underway.

County Dock Road is having traffic calming devices installed between Mandarin Road and the County Dock. A lower speed limit is also coming on this road.

### Q: What else do you have to share with District 6?

A: Councilmember Joyce Morgan and I are hosting a series of workshops, via Zoom, entitled "Safer Together." The focus is on the relationship between the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) and the community it serves. My focus as council member is to try to enhance community policing efforts. The workshops are also attended by JSO management and are facilitated by Dr. Tammy Hodo, a Mandarin resident with a great deal of experience in diversity workshops. Future dates of these workshops are:

March 5, 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.; April 5, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.; May 3, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.; and May 21, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Community members who are interested in attending should contact my office for the Zoom call information.

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

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



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

### Q: Can you give us some background [as of interview date of Feb. 18] on the recent bill you have filed regarding failing septic tanks within the city of Jacksonville?

A: We have 65,000 failing septic tanks. The mayor has already started an initiative to address the three neighborhoods with the worst septic tanks and my bill is designed to jumpstart the mayor's efforts to demonstrate our desire to begin this project and include the other 32 neighborhoods that have been identified. Four neighborhoods in Mandarin — Julington Creek, Julington Hills, Hood Landing II and Beauclerc Gardens — are included and have a total of more than 3,600 septic tanks among them.

A: I want to work together with the mayor to get this project going. The bill I introduced to City Council seeks to borrow \$100 million for septic tank removal. It's an important start, but it's only a small drop in the bucket compared to the more than \$1 billion we must invest to fix this massive problem and right a six decades old wrong. This project will need funding continuously for the next 20 years. It is the biggest project we will have and needs to transcend multiple councils and mayors over the years. But it must be done.

### Q: This is a very large project. How would funding be handled?

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

A: They can email me at [THazouri@coj.net](mailto:THazouri@coj.net) or call (904) 255-5217.

## FYI Contact Numbers

**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

**Property Appraiser:** Jerry Holland, [jholland@coj.net](mailto:jholland@coj.net); (904) 630-2011

**Supervisor of Elections:** Mike Hogan, [mhogan@coj.net](mailto:mhogan@coj.net), (904) 630-1414

**Tax Collector:** Jim Overton, [taxcollector@coj.net](mailto:taxcollector@coj.net), (904) 630-1916

**Clerk of Court:** Ronnie Fussell, (904) 255-2000

**Jacksonville City Council**  
District 6: Michael Boylan, [MBoylan@coj.net](mailto:MBoylan@coj.net), (904) 255-5206  
At Large, District 3: Tommy Hazouri, [thazouri@coj.net](mailto:thazouri@coj.net), (904) 255-5217

**Duval County School Board**  
([www.duvalschools.org](http://www.duvalschools.org))  
District 7: Lori Hershey, [hershey@duvalschools.org](mailto:hershey@duvalschools.org), (904) 390-2375

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State Senate District 4: Senator Aaron Bean, (904) 757-5039

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U.S. Senate:  
Senator Marco Rubio, (202) 224-3041  
Senator Rick Scott, (202) 224-5274



## with Duval County School Board Member, District 7, Lori Hershey

### Q: Do you have an update on the Chat with the Superintendent you hosted in February?

A: I'd like to thank everyone who was a part of this event and to the community members who attended. The superintendent gave many updates, including on the coronavirus and COVID dashboard (<https://c19sitdash.azurewebsites.net/>) and the master plan for the half cent sales tax ([www.ourduvalschools.org](http://www.ourduvalschools.org)). Allison Busuttill, who represents District 7 on the Citizens Oversight Committee for the half cent sales tax, was at the chat as well. Visit <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/Page/310> to see that committee's dashboard.

### Q: Can you give information about the upcoming end of the year assessments for students?

A: While the Florida Department of Education has allowed online learning, such as Duval Homeroom, for students, the state requires testing to occur in school facilities. This includes the Florida Standards Assessments, Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Assessments, and end-of-course assessments. Seniors who need to meet testing requirements for graduation must come to the campus for the SAT, ACT, PSAT Math, PERT, Algebra 1, or the Geometry end-of-course assessment to meet these requirements. Each school is prepared to ensure that all COVID-19 safety precautions are used during the assessment time. These precautions include temperatures taken at the front door, masks required for all students and staff, a well-ventilated room away from other students who normally attend school in person, and social distancing

adhered to within the testing classroom. At this time, the state has informed the district that there will be no waivers of the state standards assessments or the high school end-of-course exams. The state is not expected to waive testing requirements for this year's potential graduates.

### Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 7?

A: I'd like to congratulate the following athletes from Mandarin High School who have signed to play their sport in college: Summer Alexander, softball, East Georgia State; Brennan Baker, baseball, Tallahassee Community College; Zach Mizrahi, baseball, Daytona State College; and Madison Price, diving, Indian River State College.

From Atlantic Coast High School, congratulations to: Rachel Bernard, volleyball, Ursinus College; Rian Covington, swimming, FSU; Dominic Dominguez, soccer, American University; Rutledge Feltel, baseball, Wheaton College; Emma Fisher, softball, Pitt Community College; Shurell Jefferson, softball, Tallahassee Community College; Allison McMullen, volleyball, St. Joseph's College; Erin Moon, softball, University of West Florida; Aaron Potter, baseball, St. Johns River State College; and Niklas Shaffer, soccer, University of North Florida.

Additionally, I'd like to remind families of Spring Break this month, from March 8 - 12.

### Q: How can our readers contact you?

A: They can email me at [HersheyL@duvalschools.org](mailto:HersheyL@duvalschools.org) or call me at (904) 316-3609.

## Rotary Club builds another wheelchair ramp

By NewsLine Staff  
[mail@floridanewline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewline.com)

On Jan. 23, the Rotary Club of Mandarin, in partnership with Hart Felt Ministries, built a wheelchair ramp free of charge at the home of mobility challenged Neil Esinger and his wife Patricia.

This project was part of Mandarin Rotary's commitment to build at least one wheelchair ramp per quarter for local residents in need of help. This new ramp has greatly enhanced Esinger's mobility.

In addition to its wheelchair construction program, the club provided financial support to 14 additional nonprofit charities in 2020, including the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech, Family Support Services of North Florida, Children's Resiliency Project, Determine the Difference Feeding Center, Interfaith Center of Northeast Florida, Arc of Jacksonville (supervised residences for individuals with intellectual and developmental issues), Jacksonville Classical Academy Charter School, Jericho School for Autism, Northeast Florida Long Term Recovery Operation, Mandarin Garden Club, Mandarin Food Bank, Hart Felt Ministries, and NAS Jacksonville United Services Organization (for children's Christmas gifts).

According to club president Bill Gowen, support for these organizations was made possible by the online fundraising efforts run by Rotary Club member Wes Caldwell and the contributions of the club's 59 members.



Photo courtesy Louis Dunbar

Neil and Patricia Esinger with Rotary Club member workers Ken McCauley, project leader Louis Dunbar, Paul Hardaker, Mark O'Connor, and Peter Cummings. Also working on the project but not shown were Jill Dunbar, Club President Bill Gowen, Brian Hall, Jimmy Johns, and Jock Hart.

The Rotary Club of Mandarin is dedicated to service to others, with a motto of "Service Above Self." The club hosts a breakfast meeting at 7:30 a.m. every Tuesday morning at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center on Hartley Road. Currently, members attend in person or via Zoom.

Contact membership chairman Wes Caldwell at [wes@dannagracey.com](mailto:wes@dannagracey.com) or visit the club's website, [www.mandarinrotary.org](http://www.mandarinrotary.org) to learn more about the Rotary Club of Mandarin and its opportunities to serve the community.

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# March

**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 March 3 at 6:30 p.m., a General Membership dinner meeting on March 21 at 1 p.m. and the popular Spaghetti to Go on March 26, from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. All activities are at the club building, 2838 Westberry Road. Visit [www.iacofjacksonville.com](http://www.iacofjacksonville.com) or call (904) 586-2700 for more information.

**The Jacksonville Symphony** announces a Symphony Special with a virtual fundraiser on March 5 and a live concert on March 6. This 2021 Symphony Gala will feature Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major, Bizet's Carmen Suite No. 2 and Gershwin's I Got Rhythm Variations. Conductor will be Courtney Lewis and Jean-Yves Thibaudet will be featured on piano. Visit [www.jaxsymphony.com](http://www.jaxsymphony.com) for more information and for tickets.

Northeast Florida AHEC announces a free **Tools to Quit Tobacco Class**, which includes free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges on Saturday, March 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 Jacksonville Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution** will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, March 9 at 11:30 a.m. The speaker will be Allan Bliss, PhD., of the Jacksonville Historical Society. Call (904) 333-5222 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 March 17 and will feature the results from the club's first tri-annual digital contest. The club also conducts photo outings, digital and print contests and provides photography education for all levels of photographers. Visit [jax.jaxcameraclub.com](http://jax.jaxcameraclub.com) for more information.

**The All Star Quilters Guild** will meet at 10 a.m. on Monday, March 15 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program is "Fabric Production" by Danisse from Miss D's in Palatka. No refreshments will be served due to Covid 19. Bring your own mask. New members are welcome. Visit [www.allstarquilters.org](http://www.allstarquilters.org) for more information, including options for joining the meeting via Zoom.

**The fourth annual Craft Show**, presented by Mandarin Women of the Moose Chapter 1218 will be held Saturday, March 27 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Sunday, March 28 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Mandarin Moose Lodge, 4450 Losco Road. All proceeds benefit Mandarin Women of the Moose Chapter 1218. Email [rprohrs@aol.com](mailto:rprohrs@aol.com) for more information.

**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.

# Daughters of the American Revolution sponsors grave marking

By NewsLine Staff  
[mail@floridanewsline.com](mailto:mail@floridanewsline.com)

The Jacksonville Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution held a grave marking ceremony on Feb. 3, 2021 at Evergreen Cemetery in Jacksonville. A special plaque was designed and placed to honor Henrietta Shoemaker Christopher. She was Florida State Regent twice and also was the first Florida State Regent to preside over the state. As such she held the title of Honorary State Regent.

Prior to serving at the state level, Christopher served as Jacksonville Chapter Regent. The Jacksonville Chapter is fondly known as the "Mother Chapter of the State of Florida" as it was established in 1895 in Jacksonville.

Attending the ceremony were special guests Kay Yarborough, Florida State Regent and Cindy Addison, Florida State Defense Chair. Jacksonville Chapter Regent, C. Maria Miller, conducted the ceremonies for members. The dedication was concluded with Fred Emery playing "Taps" on the trumpet.

As a surprise gift, Yarborough was presented with a doll customized to her likeness. The doll was dressed in a suffrage costume holding a Votes For Women sign. The doll was immediately named Henrietta to further note the commemoration.



Photos courtesy Carol Curtis

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**Briefs**

**ElderSource and AARP present live Facebook program for seniors and caregivers**

ElderSource, the Area Agency on Aging and Aging and Disability Resource Center for Northeast Florida, and AARP Florida have collaborated to present a live, monthly 30-minute program on Facebook that features a myriad of entertaining and educational topics for seniors and caregivers.

The next program is scheduled for Thursday, March 18 at 12:30 p.m. and will focus on how caregivers can incorporate self-love and self-care into their health routines.

Launched in August 2020, "Let's Do Lunch" airs on Facebook the third Thursday of each month at 12:30 p.m. and is hosted by ElderSource CEO Linda Levin and Justine Conley, AARP Florida Associate State Director. Topics presented have included the 2020 Census and voting in the fall election, yoga to reduce stress, creating art to experience joy, cooking with an Italian twist and facts and myths about the COVID-19 vaccines.

Visit the ElderSource or AARP Florida Facebook page on Feb. 18 to view the program; past programs can also be accessed on each organization's YouTube Channel. Call ElderSource at (888) 242-4464 for more information.

**Jacksonville Orchid Society announces show**

The Jacksonville Orchid Society will host "A Walk in the Orchids" show and sale on March 20 – 21. The show will be held at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. Show hours are 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Sunday. Visit [www.jaxorchidsociety.org](http://www.jaxorchidsociety.org) for more information.

**Joy Agger earns Minnie Schreiber Staff Leadership Award**

On Dec. 9, 2020, River Garden CEO Martin Goetz announced Joy Agger, RN, as the recipient of the 2021 Minnie Schreiber Staff Leadership Award. Agger is a 20-year member of the staff and currently works in River Garden's nursing department as a Resource Nurse. The late Minnie Schreiber, for whom the award is named, was River Garden's board president from 1974 – 76 and remained a board member until her death in 2010. During her service on the board she was a passionate advocate for the welfare of staff and in her honor the board established this annual award in her name.



Photo courtesy River Garden  
Joy Agger

Agger started working at River Garden in 2000 when she was new to Jacksonville and looking for promising job opportunities. River Garden soon became her permanent home-away-from-home and colleagues describe her as authentic, flexible, and efficient. "Her patients trust her completely," said Bernadeth Palompo, Assistant Director of Nursing. "She embodies qualities that we all admire and she is my go-to when I need help with a family or resident. Joy has a wonderful way of helping everyone understand what needs to be done, and then she follows through."

Agger is the mother of two adult girls, Katrina and Renee. Her daily companion is her dog, Blue. In her free time, she enjoys shopping, hiking and sitting by the pool pondering life.

**Healthy buyer demand for real estate gets 2021 off to a good start**

The year 2021 looks to be an active one for new construction based on robust numbers from December; however, higher material costs and limited supply of building lots should temper the number of new units.

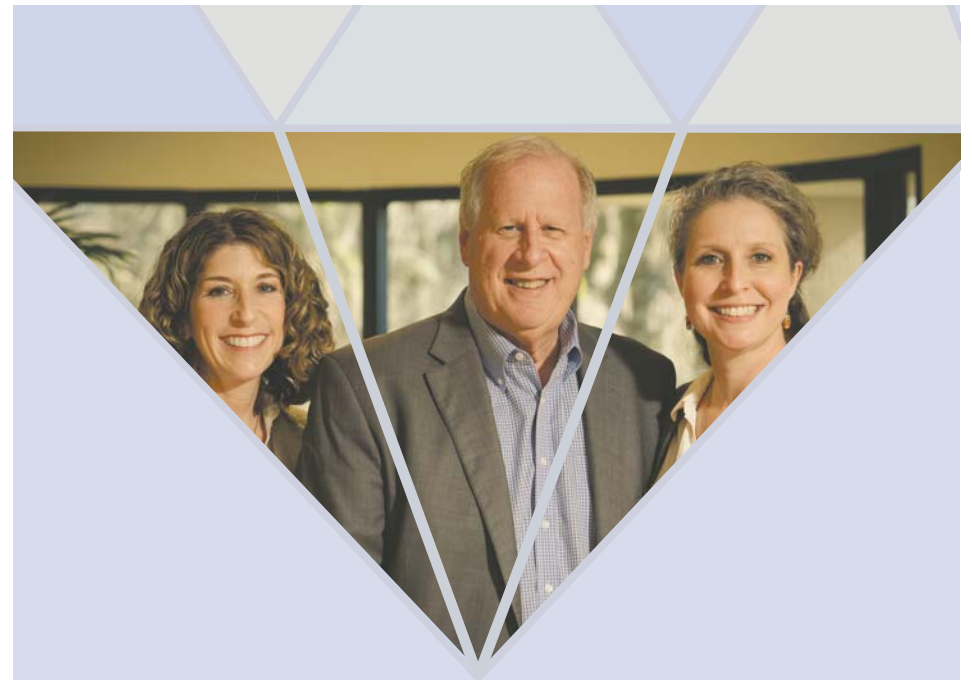
Available inventory saw another steep decline in January, decreasing by 51.6 percent — which topped December's decline of 46.9 percent.

The Mortgage Bankers Association's January research estimates approximately 2.7 million homeowners with mortgages are currently in forbearance plans. Some of these homes may eventually come to market, but given the strong appreciation in most market segments in recent years, these eventual home sales are likely to be mostly traditional sellers. A modest increase in short sales and foreclosures at some point this year would not be surprising. January 2021 highlights include:

- New listings in the Northeast Florida region decreased 14.9 percent to 2,989.
- Pending sales were up 17.9 percent to 2,970.
- Inventory levels fell 51.6 percent to 4,296 units.
- The median sales price increased 10.8 percent to \$256,995.
- Month supply of inventory was down 57.6 percent to 1.4 months.

Visit NEFAR.com for complete January 2021 housing market reports and more information.

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## Mandarin Community Club seeks members

The 2021 Membership Drive for the Mandarin Community Club is underway. Membership is open to all interested parties. Area residents are encouraged to join to help support the community and become more aware of events and activities in and around Mandarin. Dues start at \$35 a year. The club is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization and is located at 12447 Mandarin Road. Visit [www.mandarincommunityclub.org](http://www.mandarincommunityclub.org) for more information.



Photo courtesy Brett Nolan

## As vaccines outpace COVID-19 infections, be wary of vaccine-related scams

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

As of mid-February, the total number of doses of COVID-19 vaccines administered in Florida is now outpacing the total number of Floridians who have been reported to have contracted the novel virus. As the state starts to turn the corner, Attorney General Ashley Moody issued a Consumer Alert to warn Floridians about COVID-19 vaccination scams. With the continuing rollout of vaccines and increasing number of Floridians seeking to secure appointments, scammers have devised multiple methods attempting to take advantage of the highly anticipated vaccination distribution.

Below are a few emerging COVID-19 vaccine scams reported by consumers and the news media in Florida and nationwide:

**Paid appointments:** Scammers may post fraudulent appointment booking pages or call, text or email offering to set up a vaccine appointment or expedite access to a vaccine appointment for a fee. Know that any offer requiring payment in order to place the consumer on a waitlist, secure an appointment or expedite access to the vaccine is a scam.

**Supposed in-home vaccinations through Medicare:** Fraudsters claiming to be from Medicare may offer seniors in-home vaccination appointments and request a senior's Medicare card in order to schedule, but this too is a scam. While Medicare cards no longer use Social Security numbers, the card number is still private data

that could be used to commit Medicare fraud and should be protected. Additionally, know that Medicare representatives will never visit seniors at home nor call to sell something.

**Scam appointment calls:** Scammers may also call would-be victims posing as county health officials or a vaccination site representative setting up an appointment. Rather than requesting payment, these callers are seeking private information to be used to commit identity theft or fraud. These scam artists may even tell victims to arrive at a known local vaccination site at a specific date and time to bolster the ruse. Be wary of anyone soliciting personal information — such as a Social Security number, Medicare card number or credit or banking information — in order to secure an appointment.

**Identity theft using vaccination cards:** Do not share vaccination cards online. Vaccination cards issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include the recipient's full name, birthdate and vaccine location — information scammers can use to hack online accounts or commit identity fraud. Additionally, these cards may be used to create convincing-looking fake vaccine documentation.

Anyone who suspects a COVID-19 vaccine-related scam should report it to the Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting [MyFloridaLegal.com](http://MyFloridaLegal.com).

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March 12, 13, & 14

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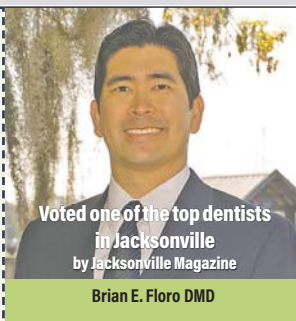
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## Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewslines.com

### Jim Schmitt

Jim Schmitt, Duval County's Teacher of the Year for 2021, said he always knew he would end up being an educator. He named his mother (not a teacher herself) as a main influencer for him — and in fact all four of his brothers also ended up in education. A native of Farmingdale, Long Island, Schmitt earned a degree in history from the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis. He then spent five years in the Navy and ended up stationed at Mayport. When he left the service, he landed at Northwestern Middle School where he taught math before teaching his first love, history. He was named Northwestern's Teacher of the Year before moving on to Paxon School for Advanced Studies where he taught AP US History and honors economics. It was after five years at Paxon that he took a position at Mandarin High School teaching AP Government and AP US History. He took a brief sojourn into the world of administration and served as assistant principal at Mandarin



Photo courtesy Jim Schmitt  
Jim Schmitt at the 2021 EDDY Award Ceremony.

High School and Raines High School before coming back to Mandarin High School again as a teacher in the AICE program, where he now teaches AICE US History and AICE Global Perspectives. Schmitt's wife, Debbie, herself a retired principal, also teaches at Mandarin as does his step daughter — making teaching quite the family business.

**Q: What was it about your mom that influenced you to become an educator?**

A: There was something special about her. She would always take my brothers and me to museums and she and I would spend hours looking at exhibits and reading everything. Meanwhile, my brothers and my father would race through. She also had a

great fondness for Norman Rockwell paintings from "The Saturday Evening Post." Two in particular resonated with me — the one with Ruby Bridges going to school and "New Kids in the Neighborhood." We would spend lots of time talking about them.

**Q: What would you say is your teaching philosophy?**

A: I remember something my 10th grade humanities teacher, Mrs. Hartford, would always say when we learned something new: "But, do you appreciate it?" It's important to know what led to an event and what follows from it. We need to look at history through a variety of lenses, not just our own. It's important to find empathy.

**Q: What do you think is important about coaching students?**

A: I have coached baseball and track/cross country in the schools where I have taught. I like working with kids for multiple years, helping them find their voice and to grow. It's part of the reason I came back to the classroom from administration. I started realizing that I wanted a closer connection with the kids. The direct contact I get from coaching and teaching really matters to me.

**Q: How did you find out that you were Mandarin High School's Teacher of the Year?**

A: I was in the middle of teaching my class. Everyone who knows me knows not to mess with my teaching minutes, but one day, I walked my principal with balloons to let me know I had been selected by my colleagues to be the school's Teacher of the Year — which is such an honor. My students really embraced it and that's what makes it even more special for me. Still, after we celebrated this news, I said something like, "We still have 10 minutes left in class!"

**Q: What were the next steps in becoming the Duval County Teacher of the Year?**

A: I was named one of 15 semi-finalists and then one of five finalists, all via Zoom this year. The five finalists all had to be interviewed, record themselves teaching in their classrooms (in lieu of a visit by the selection committee) and have our resumes evaluated before we went to the socially distanced EDDY Celebration in late January, where I was named Teacher of the Year. All of the finalists were such great candidates. I don't really like being in the spotlight, but I realized that I needed to take on a role like an ambassador for my school and I do this willingly in gratitude. My career has been a wonderful path. I think I landed in the right place.

All Star Quilters Guild philanthropy cont. from pg. 1

included Community PedsCare, Daniel Memorial, Safe Harbor, the St. Augustine VA Center, and Quilts of Valor.

The All Star Quilters Guild meets at 10 a.m. on the third Monday of each month at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. New members are welcome and should bring their own mask. Visit [www.allstarquilters.org](http://www.allstarquilters.org) for more information.



Photo courtesy Sondie Frus  
Holiday quilts on their way to Hart Felt Ministries.

### Get to Know ...

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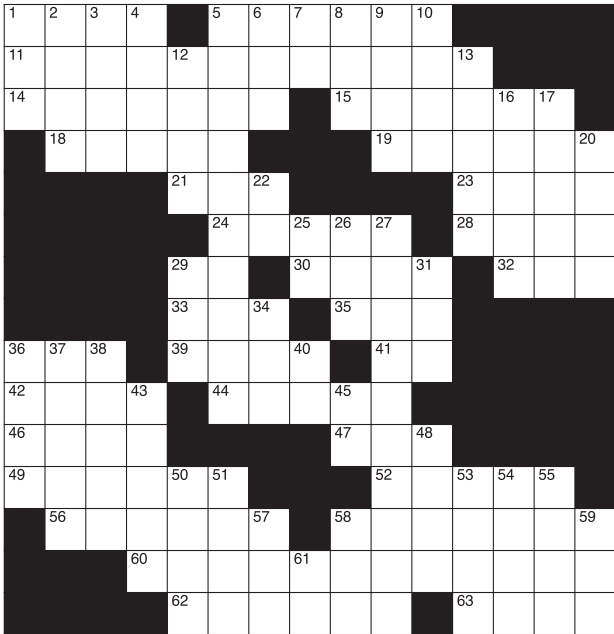
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# Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



### CLUES ACROSS

1. One of Noah's sons
5. Openings
11. Rising from the dead
14. Expressions for humorous effect
15. North American country
18. Flowed over
19. Tags
21. Long-lasting light bulb
23. Off-Broadway theater award
24. Khoikhoi peoples
28. Beloved movie pig
29. South Dakota
30. Tai language
32. Get free of
33. Afflict
35. Transmits genetic information from DNA
36. Commercials
39. Digits

### CLUES DOWN

1. A title of respect in India
2. His and \_\_
3. Employee stock ownership plan
4. A type of bond (abbr.)
5. Acting as if you are
6. Affirmative

7. Not caps
8. Type of medication
9. Monetary unit
10. Private school in New York
12. Small stream
13. A person of wealth
16. Exclude
17. Someone who vouches for you
20. Vegetable part
22. Gov't lawyer
25. Term to address a woman
26. Swiss river
27. About senator
29. \_\_ Paulo, city
31. Native American tribe
34. "Titanic" actor
36. Campaign for students' rights (abbr.)
37. Capital of Senegal
38. Slang for military leader

40. Football's big game
43. Women who threw themselves on funeral pyres
45. Equally
48. Forest animal
50. Heavy stoves
51. Releasing hormone (abbr.)
53. Song
54. Type of pickle
55. Offer in return for money
57. Soviet Socialist Republic
58. Burns wood (abbr.)
59. Beloved singer Charles
61. Three-toed sloth

⊙ \* ☐ ⊕ ~ ◊ ✦ ✕ ✖ ✗ ✘ ✙ ✚ ✛ ✜ ✝ ✞ ✟ ✠ ✡ ✢ ✣ ✤ ✥ ✦ ✧ ✨ ✩ ✪ ✫ ✬ ✭ ✮ ✯ ✰ ✱ ✲ ✳ ✴ ✵ ✶ ✷ ✸ ✹ ✺ ✻ ✼ ✽ ✾ ✿ ♂ ♀ ♁ ♂ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓ ♔ ♕ ♖ ♗ ♘ ♙ ♚ ♛ ♜ ♝ ♞ ♟ ♠ ♡ ♢ ♣ ♤ ♥ ♦ ♧ ♨ ♩ ♪ ♫ ♬ ♭ ♮ ♯ ♰ ♱ ♲ ♳ ♴ ♵ ♶ ♷ ♸ ♹ ♺ ♻ ♼ ♽ ♾ ♿

## CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to frozen foods. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 22 = E)

**A. 21 16 22 22 3 22 16**  
Clue: Cold storage

**B. 15 22 21 8 9 1 22 16 7**  
Clue: Extra portions

**C. 21 15 5 7 2**  
Clue: Done quickly; in a \_\_\_\_

**D. 20 12 22**  
Clue: Frozen water

## FROZEN FOODS WORD SEARCH

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

### WORDS

- BURGERS
- CAKES
- DESSERT
- FISH
- FRENCH FRIES
- GARLIC BREAD
- HASH BROWNS
- ICE CREAM
- LEFTOVERS
- MEALS
- NUGGETS
- PANCAKES
- PASTA
- PIZZA
- POT PIE
- POTSTICKERS
- POULTRY
- SANDWICHES
- TOASTER CAKES
- VEGETABLES
- WAFFLES
- WHIPPED TOPPING

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

### All Star Quilters Guild philanthropy cont. from pg. 1



Photos courtesy Martie Thompson  
The car wash under construction.



The Daily's on San Jose Boulevard is scheduled to be completed in April.

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# Crown Point celebrates 100th Day of School

By Mary Eyer  
mail@floridanewline.com

On Monday, Feb. 1, kindergarteners and first graders at Crown Point Elementary School — including online and brick and mortar students — celebrated 100 days of school. Even during these unprecedented times, Crown Point teachers and students took time to celebrate their hard work.

Students had a lot of fun with the number 100; they

participated in various activities, such as making gumball machine crafts with 100 gumballs, writing about being 100 years old, counting to 100, flipping a coin 100 times, and stacking 100 cups. They also decorated 100-day Smarter hats and made 100 Cheerios and Froot Loop necklaces. First graders came up with 100 reasons why they love first grade. It was a busy, fun-filled day for the Panthers.



Photos courtesy Mary Eyer  
Charlotte Keever flipped a coin 100 times.



William Firestone and Jaslynn Sampson celebrated the 100th Day of School.

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## Help save migratory birds by turning off lights at night

Northeast Florida is the second-largest area that birds migrate along the Atlantic Coast. Undertaking such a long journey comes with its challenges, but one significant hurdle has had a huge impact on bird populations over the past several years: the increase of artificial light shining into the night sky. According to the National Audubon Society, 70 percent of North American bird species migrate and 80 percent of those species migrate at night — primarily small songbirds.

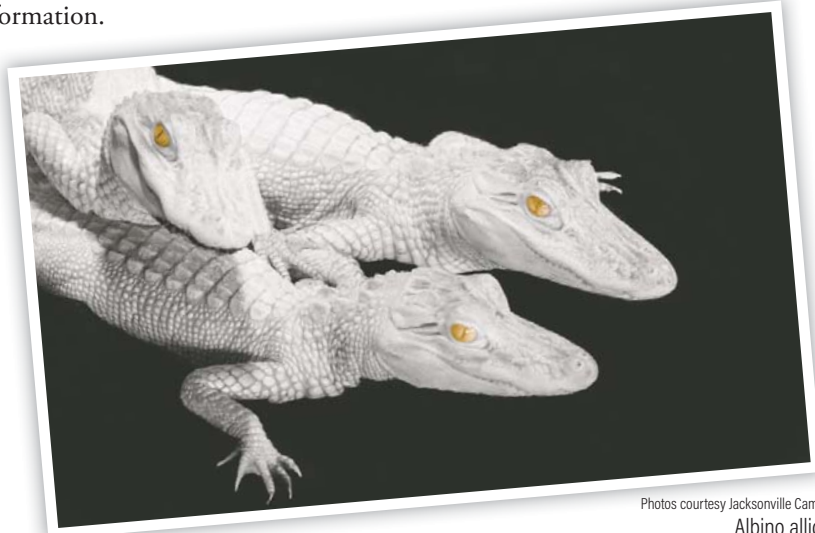
How can you help migratory birds during their Spring (February – May) and Fall (September – November) Migrations?

- Turn off your lights during the darkest period of night — between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. during migration seasons.
- Direct your lights to point downward, instead of upward into the sky.
- Switch floodlights to timed lights or motion sensor lights.
- Encourage the businesses you frequent to turn off their lights or reduce the amount of time their lights are on at night.

*Source: Lights Out Northeast Florida, a collaborative partnership between Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, Duval Audubon Society, and St. Johns County Audubon Society.*

## Camera Club to visit Alligator Farm

The Jacksonville Camera Club's March outing will be held at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm on March 20, 2021. Great egrets, wood storks, blue herons and roseate spoonbills are among the species that are feet away from the boardwalk building nests and incubating eggs. And hundreds of hungry alligators in the swamp below are waiting for any misstep in the nesting process. Visit [jax.jaxcameraclub.com](http://jax.jaxcameraclub.com) for more information.



Photos courtesy Jacksonville Camera Club  
Albino alligators



Baby birds in their nest



Spoonbill storks feeding





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## The Pantry Raiders

### Spring ahead with fresh flavors

By NewsLine Staff  
[mail@floridanewslines.com](mailto:mail@floridanewslines.com)

Now is the time to trade in those hearty, filling dishes that are perfect for cold winter nights for lighter fare. Recipes like "Pasta Primavera" from "Seasoned America" (William Morrow and Company, Inc.) by Chef Paul Prudhomme can be brought out in spring and enjoyed throughout the warmer seasons. In Italian, "primavera" means "spring," making this classic, vegetable-infused pasta dish a favorite this time of year. The vegetable inclusions below can be switched out for your own favorite produce as well.

#### Pasta Primavera

Makes about 8 cups

Seasoning Mix:

- 2 ½ tsp. dried sweet basil leaves
- 1 ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. dried thyme leaves
- ¾ tsp. white pepper
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. onion powder
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 cup thin strips prosciutto
- 2 cups cauliflower florets
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- ½ cup sliced carrots (cut on the diagonal)
- 2 cups sliced zucchini
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. minced fresh garlic
- 1 cup asparagus tips or ¾ cups snow peas
- 1 cup chopped green onions
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 9 oz. of your favorite pasta

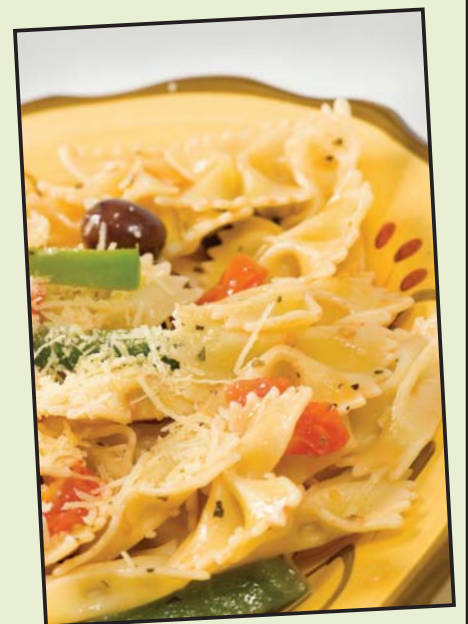


Photo courtesy MetroCreative  
Pasta Primavera

Combine the seasoning mix ingredients thoroughly in a small bowl.

Heat olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over high heat. When oil is very hot, add the prosciutto, cauliflower, mushrooms, carrots, and zucchini. Add the butter and, as it melts, stir in the garlic and the seasoning mix. Stir in asparagus tips or snow peas and green onions. Stir well and cook just until the vegetables are crisp-tender, about 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the cream and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to medium and cook until the sauce has thickened a bit, about 3 minutes.

Cook the pasta according to package directions; drain. Add the cooked pasta to the skillet, toss well and remove from the heat. Serve immediately.

# Fishing

## Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka  
mail@floridanewline.com

If you fish, and have lived here for more than a few years, then you are probably getting excited. If you are new to our area and fish, or a recent transplant who wants to start fishing, then it's time for you too to get excited. March has arrived, and it is officially spring for our part of the state. That means if you fish, or you are looking to get started, now is the best time of year.

Just like birds, many fish have begun their migrations northward to our area waters. Other species of fish are waking up from their winter dormant retreats of deeper, warmer water and are hungry and ready to spawn.

You don't have to look far to get started fishing this time of year. The Mayport Jetties, the surf, the St. Johns River, the Intracoastal Waterway, and area creeks and streams are all coming alive as water spring progresses and water temperatures rise.

For freshwater, bass, bream, and catfish will be your main catches. For saltwater, drum, whiting, sheepshead, pompano, and bluefish are likely to make the early springtime scene. For our brackish area of the St. Johns River you can expect almost any species of freshwater fish along with a handful of saltwater species.

Freshwater fishing is a great way to get started, especially for kids. Equipment can be simple and inexpensive. Live worms, bread, or even hot dogs can be used for bait. No boat is needed, as any shore or bank to a nearby creek or pond will provide all the access needed. Same

accesses would apply to the bass fisherman, with a plastic worm on a Carolina rig, or even better, a live shiner on a float.

If you're ready to give saltwater fishing a try, then the beach is the perfect place to begin. Again, no boat is needed, and costs are minimal. An average size rod with a fish finder rig and dead shrimp for bait is all that is required. Springtime fishing in the surf is probably the best and easiest time of year for whiting and blues, with other species following close behind.

Boat owners are fortunate to have the ability to target varieties of species throughout the year. But still, the month of March and springtime also offer boaters fishing opportunities that don't necessarily exist the rest year. Just off the beach, boaters can expect a Spanish mackerel run that will provide the best Spanish mackerel fishing for the year. In-shore starting at the jetties, sheepshead, black drum, and reds will be available with more black drum in the Intracoastal Waterway and throughout the lower St. Johns River.

Fishing Report: Largemouth bass are your top contenders on the freshwater scene. Fishing the surf is almost a sure thing for nice catches of whiting, blues, and pompano. Local bait shops should have all the information needed to get you started and even where to go.

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

## Did you know? Replace floors and ceilings to transform room

Though new flooring and ceiling tiles might not offer the wow factor of a remodeled kitchen, a 2019 study from researchers at the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University found that replacing floors and ceilings was the most popular home improvement project in the United States in 2017, the most recent year for which data was available at the time of the study.

More than five million homeowners replaced carpeting, flooring, paneling,

or ceiling tiles in their homes in 2017. The popularity of such projects may have something to do with the relatively low cost associated with them, as the experts at BobVila.com note that overhauling surfaces underfoot and overhead costs an average of \$3,283. That places floor and ceiling tile replacement projects among the least expensive home improvement projects homeowners can undertake, even though such renovations can immediately and dramatically transform the look of a room

## Nutrition Check

## Fiber, what's the big deal?

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

We've all heard that dietary fiber is good for us, but do you actually know why that is? To answer this question, let's talk about what fiber is and how we can add more of it to our diet. Fiber is the part of a plant that cannot be completely digested in the human body. As fiber exits the stomach and enters the colon, our intestinal bacteria can feed off it, and then it is ultimately excreted. It might seem counterintuitive to say that we need to eat more of what we cannot digest or absorb, but there are many health benefits that come along with increasing your fiber intake.

Fiber helps maintain bowel health by regulating bowel movements so that they are not too hard or too loose, which decreases the risk of developing diverticulitis (inflammation of the colon) and colon cancer. Fiber also increases the weight and size of your stool making it easier to pass, decreasing the chance of constipation. Additionally, high-fiber diets may lower cholesterol levels and benefit the heart by reducing inflammation and hypertension. Finally, fiber tends to make us feel full quicker, stay satisfied longer, and helps control blood sugar levels as it can slow the absorption of glucose.

Here are a few simple ways you can increase your fiber intake:

1. Choose whole grain options. Look for the whole grain symbol when choosing items such as bread, pasta, cereals, and other carbohydrate rich foods.
2. Eat the skin of your fruits and vegetables instead of peeling it off. The skins contain not only ample amounts of fiber, but also extra vitamins and minerals.
3. Sprinkle some seeds and/or nuts over snacks and meals like salads, smoothie bowls, oatmeal, yogurt, etc.
4. Add berries to your meals such as blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries.
5. Eat more beans. Beans are a good source of fiber and they are also high in protein. Some bean-rich meals include hummus, chili, three bean salad, black beans burgers, bean stew, and bean soup.

*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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# Travel

## Grand Lake and Rocky Mountain National Park

By Debi Lander  
mail@floridanewsline.com

John Denver's "Rocky Mountain High" speaks to the euphoria of the Colorado landscape, capturing serenity when he sings, "The shadow from the starlight is softer than a lullaby, Rocky Mountain high." You can get that feeling, warmed by ideal summer temperatures and transported by breathtaking scenery — just head to

the resort town of Grand Lake and Rocky Mountain National Park. You'll find them a two-hour drive from Denver.

Grand Lake sits north of the Colorado River headwaters, at the base of Shadow Mountain. The tiny town, established in 1881, boasts a year-round population of only 282, but swells during warm sum-

mer months bringing visitors, many of whom return year after year.

Though small, history runs deep. The village aptly sits on the shores of Grand Lake at the surprising elevation of 8,369 feet. It's home to the world's highest yacht club, the Grand Lake Yacht Club. They annually host a race whose competitors vie for the ornate silver, ever so prestigious trophy, donated by legendary tea purveyor but less-well-known yachtsman Sir Thomas J. Lipton. Grand Lake is indeed remarkable, ranking as the deepest and largest natural body of water in Colorado.

The old-fashioned boardwalks add a touch of Western and boating flare along Grand Avenue. Look for hitching posts and Wild West-style architecture, art galleries, boutiques, and gift shops. Stop into the casual restaurants and watering holes, often featuring live music.

Naturally, water activities remain the big draw. The marina handles boat rentals of all types: kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, and stand-up paddleboards. The lake offers the perfect place to drop a fishing line in search of cold-water varieties, mainly sockeye salmon and trout.

Landlubbers spend relaxing afternoons on the Grand Lake beach's sandy shores, enjoying temperatures in the 70s to mid-80s. But only those brave enough dare a swim in the frigid water.

The Rocky Mountain Repertory Theater offers a contrasting bonus. The long-running theater brings in professional actors and actresses and puts on top-notch full productions of Broadway favorites.

One of the biggest draws to Grand Lake is its status as the western gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park. Colorado's crown jewel encompasses more than 265,000 acres of wilderness — prime territory for viewing wildlife, hiking, camping, mountain biking, and horse-back riding.

Trail Ridge Road, nicknamed the "Highway to the Sky," ranks as the highest continuous paved road in the U.S., connecting Grand Lake to Estes Park. Bring a jacket and get ready to spin up and down 48 miles of twisty, hairpin turns,

and steeply graded pavement edging sheer drops.

In no time, you'll enter the aspen forest at mid-mountain. Snap selfies at the Continental Divide sign along the Milner Pass. The Divide marks the split where rainwater falls either to the East or the West.

Expect your ears to pop and whoa's and ohs (or perhaps something stronger) to spill from passengers. Even if you don't get out of your car, the Rocky Mountain National Park smacks you in the face. The bold scenery envelops you and sends imagination soaring.

The tree line dwindles, and winds pick up near the summit. Stop at the Alpine Visitors Center (elevation 11,796 feet) to see tundra exhibits speaking to the



Photos courtesy Debi Lander

The author at the Continental Divide



Driving into Rocky Mountain National Park



Grand Lake

altitude's harsh conditions. The Trail Ridge store offers indoor bathrooms, hot coffee, and a National Park gift shop. You can hike a short distance to the trail summit from here.

Back in the car, begin your descent toward Estes Park, a ride more enthralling than the uphill. The panorama changes around each turn, and thankfully there are many pullouts and small parking lots. Sharp, snow capped mountains, rolling hillsides, and deep valleys extol the mountain beauty and diversity. It's a Colorado Rocky Mountain high for sure.

Visit [www.bylandersea.com](http://www.bylandersea.com) to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.

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# Gardening

## Signs of Spring

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale  
mail@floridanewsline.com

It is early February as I write and already there are signs of spring, with redbuds and maples blooming, and honey bees taking their fill of pollen and nectar. Bees and other insects are also enjoying the profusion of flowers of some Chinese greens, another valuable early food source. Our local population of hummingbirds can be spotted, if fleetingly, feeding on still-flowering shrimp plants.

While many lawns are probably still in winter dormancy, by early March we will be seeing them showing more green. As we go into the seasonally drier spring, it is well worth ensuring that irrigation systems are functioning properly. Check out [tinyurl.com/2xx6fmcz](https://tinyurl.com/2xx6fmcz) for articles covering many aspects of how best to manage your lawn and landscape irrigation. It does need stressing that flower, vegetable, and shrub beds need different watering schedules to lawns.

It is also worth reminding ourselves about fertilization best practices. One widely observed, but not advisable, lawn practice is the use of “weed and feed” products. While it’s tempting to be able to apply something once, and be done, any seasonal weed problems should either be tackled before they emerge (using a pre-emergent product) or spot-treated in the case of perennial weeds. Applying a weed and feed product at the correct time to deal with weeds would mean the lawn fertilizer component being applied too early, before the grass is fully growing and able to take advantage of the fertilizer. That is really doing your lawn a disservice when it’s trying to come back from its winter rest, as well as being a waste of money.

See [tinyurl.com/1v22ian9](https://tinyurl.com/1v22ian9) and links therein for more information.

Many people enjoy seeing wildlife around their homes, and in Florida we are lucky to have some beautiful birds all year round, but especially during spring and fall migration. I had been waiting to see the more usual characters, like American robins, which in the past have descended in flocks to rummage through leaf litter, and they duly arrived on Feb. 13. Just a few days before, I was lucky to spot cedar waxwings ([tinyurl.com/12fnu9kn](https://tinyurl.com/12fnu9kn)) high in my neighbor’s bare-branched hickory. They enjoy fruits of trees like the loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*) and Carolina cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*), but seemed to be zipping in and out of the trees after insects. Overwintering birds include the black and white warbler (<https://tinyurl.com/2es2l2zx>), which is so striking, and also cheeky yellow-rumped warblers (<https://tinyurl.com/qagdk15o>).

By expanding my plant palette I hope to attract a wider variety of insects, especially pollinators, but with a quick draining sandy soil, they will need to have at most a medium requirement for water, and preferably lower needs. Native plants will feature, such as those found in this Xerces Society recommended list: <https://tinyurl.com/44693m98>, and of course Florida-Friendly flowers have a place too (<https://tinyurl.com/3rynujbjq>).

A favorite shrub of mine, the classic tea olive (<https://tinyurl.com/37sw6jwe>) has the most beau-

tiful perfume imaginable and is an easy-care evergreen candidate for a trimmed hedge or more relaxed specimen in a mixed backdrop to a flower border. It would be a good choice for part of a relatively low cost, low maintenance landscape (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep442>), which could help us aging folks — or anyone with limited time to work in the yard.

Check out the monthly “Neighborhood Gardener” from the Univer-

sity of Florida Master Gardener program (<https://tinyurl.com/n3edz023>), as well as our own Extension bi-monthly newsletter “A New Leaf – Yard and Garden” (<https://tinyurl.com/3q9btfy3>). Both of them cover a wide range of topics to help in our Florida gardening activities. Enjoy!



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