



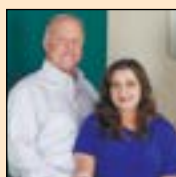
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BFF Best Furry Friend

Q&A

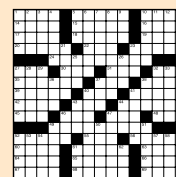
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Q&A with
with Michael Boylan



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Get To Know ...
John and Renay Daigle



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Puzzles



Photo courtesy Patty Everett

The Little Women: Madelyn Wolfram (Beth), Audrey Everett (Meg), Louise Everett (Jo), and Anna Molzer (Amy).

Theatre Troupe 1776 to stage "Little Women"

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Theatre Troupe 1776 takes the stage in March with the classic show, "Little Women." The Troupe will be performing an original adaptation written by Louise Everett. This adaptation follows the classic novel written by Louisa May Alcott. The performance is being directed by Patty Everett.

Theatre Troupe 1776 is a local theatre troupe made up of actors of all ages. They focus on family friendly entertainment and original works. The Troupe works very closely with the Mandarin Community Club performing fund raising Cabarets.

The Troupe will be performing 10 shows of "Little Women,"

Theatre Troupe cont. on pg. 8

New club at Mandarin High School aims to serve others

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

When Kourtney Nguyen and Mandolyn Mansell transferred from Stanton to Mandarin High School they had an idea to start a community service club at their new school. They found that a lot of charities have clubs at the high school level and so they reached out to the Red Cross in August to see what they needed to do to start one at Mandarin. By November they held their first meeting and today have between 30 – 35 members who meet once per month after school to perform community service projects.

"Our club is humanitarian and community related, not just medical," Mansell said, despite the general implications of being associated with the Red Cross.

Mansell said that three mission projects are required annually to maintain their affiliation with the Red Cross, which is overseen by a staff member at the Red Cross of Northeast Florida. The MHS club has already performed three projects and has plans for a few more before the end of this school year, their first in existence.

Members created holiday cards in



Photos courtesy Mandolyn Mansell

Mandolyn Mansell and Kourtney Nguyen with their sickle cell presentation.

their Holiday for Heroes project before the holidays. These cards, along with items collected during a donation drive at the school, were collected by the Red Cross for distribution to military members around the world.

Next came a community awareness project on sickle cell anemia. Club members created informative posters

and Mansell and Nguyen even used this project to compete at a regional HOSA – Future Health Professionals competition held at Toco Creek High School in January. Both Mansell and Nguyen are members of this organization as well and earned fourth place for their project. Additionally, they made a presentation about sickle cell to second graders at San Jose Primary School.

"It was so fun to present our work to the students there," Nguyen said.

In February, the club promoted fire safety to coincide with Sound the Alarm, a program where the Red Cross actually installs fire alarms in homes. Mandarin High School Red Cross members had an activity at their meeting where they made posters fashioned after a clock, with each hour representing a fire safety tip. They hung these posters around their school to educate their fellow students.



Mandarin High School Red Cross Club members with their community awareness posters.

MHS Red Cross Club cont. on pg. 10



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Option 1

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Location: Church of Eleven 22 - Mandarin Campus
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Register to Attend in Person: <http://learndbs.com/1615>


Option 2

Date: Tuesday March 25th, 2025 • 11:00am

Location: COA Center at UF Health Nocatee
351 Town Plaza Ave, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081

Register to Attend: <http://learndbs.com/1614>

RSVP also available by phone: Alaine Keebaugh, PhD (c) 770-356-6410




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Briefs

Mandarin Women's Club hosts brunch and Bingo

On March 27 the Mandarin Women's Club will hold its annual Bingo game and buffet brunch at the Ramada Inn, 3130 Hartley Road in Mandarin. Bingo cards are 10 for \$5, and 10 games will be played. Attendees should bring their dauber or pen and get ready to play. Cash prizes will be awarded.

Doors open at 10:30 a.m. and reservations for the luncheon are required. The luncheon cost is \$25 and must be received by Monday, March 17. To make reservations and obtain payment instructions, call Barbara at (904) 612-6494 or email her at barbara.metallo@outlook.com. Visit www.mandarinwomensclub.com for more information on events, photos, and membership forms.

Garden club to host semi-annual clothing sale

The Mandarin Garden Club will host its semi-annual clothing, jewelry and plant sale on Friday, March 7 and Saturday, March 8 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. each day at the garden club's building, 2892 Loretto Road.

Gently used clothing for men, women and children will be on sale for \$1. Items from the Boutique and jewelry section will be priced separately. The pop-up plant sale outside in the gardens will offer bargains on green plants for your yard. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer questions about plants and gardening.

Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society sale announced

The Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society will host its annual Display and Sale on March 28 and 29 at San Jose Church of Christ, 6233 San Jose Blvd. Event hours are 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Saturday. This show and sale provides the opportunity for attendees to learn from experienced growers how to keep African violets thriving and how to propagate new plants.

This year's theme, "Timeless Elegance," celebrates the beauty and diversity of African violets and their many cousins. The event will feature stunning displays, floral arrangements, and dish gardens of African violets and other gesneriads including streptocarpus, sinningia, primulina, and episcia — all dedicated to this elegant theme. All attendees will receive a free African violet leaf with instructions on how to propagate it.

A "Violets 101: Introduction to Violets" class will be held on Friday at 1 p.m. and Saturday at 12 p.m. Additionally, there will be an educational display and experienced club members on hand to answer any questions and give advice on keeping your plants beautiful. A variety of African violets and other gesneriads will be available for purchase, including mature, blooming plants, starter plantlets, and leaves. There will also be hard-to-find African violet supplies.

Briefs cont. on pg. 7



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BFF

Best Furry Friend
of the month

Breed:

Maltipoo

Favorite Activity:

Exploring the woods

Favorite Food:

Puppy Patty (unseasoned beef patty from
In-N-Out)

Favorite Friends:

Everyone she meets! But especially her
"uncle" Bentley (my mother-in-law's Maltese-
Yorkie)

How did your BFF get her name:

We got her while we were stationed in
California, near the Sequoia National Park. Her
red fur reminded us of the red tree bark on the
Sequoia trees.

Meet Sequoia!



Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in Mandarin NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Mandarin NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.



Happy St.
Patrick's Day
from your
friends at
Mandarin
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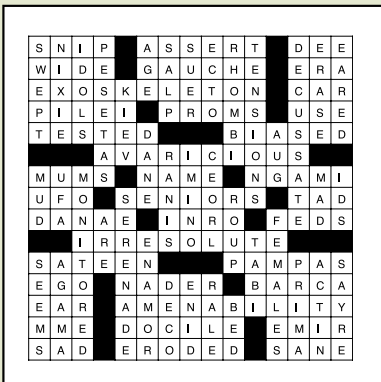
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MYSTERY PHOTO



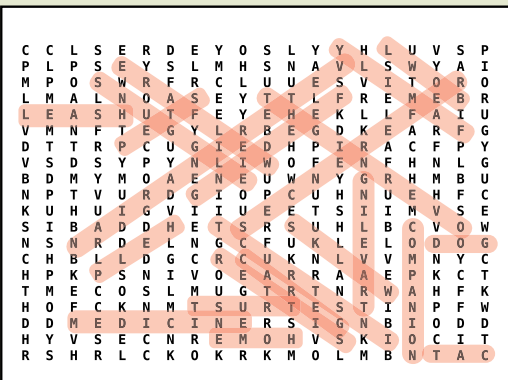
Can you guess where this is?
Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.
Last month's Mystery Photo was Tommy Hazouri Park.



Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 8



A. caregiver B. puppy C. boarding D. travel



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(At Marabell)
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March

Community Calendar

What's Happening in Mandarin

Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. at Tommy Hazouri Park (formerly Mandarin Park). The courts are at the park entrance next to the tennis courts. Try to get there a few minutes early for court assignments. Beginners are welcome. Just show up (a few minutes before playing time), unless it rains.

Parkinson's Exercise Group meets every Thursday from 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. at 4911 Losco Road. People of all ages and stages of Parkinson's as well as spouses and caregivers are welcome to attend these free classes. Contact group leader Kathryn Donaldson at serving4_him@yahoo.com or (904) 710-1449 for more information.

Toast of Jax Toastmasters meets every Saturday, except on holiday weekends, at 8:30 a.m. at Baha'i Community Center, 5034 Greenland Road. Guests are welcome. The meetings can also be attended online at <https://toastofjax.toastmastersclubs.org/>.

Acoustic Jam Session is held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Kids' Building of Trinity Mandarin, located at 2955 Orange Picker Road. This jam is open to everyone and all levels of ability are welcome. Come to play with the group or just sit back and enjoy the music. For more information, contact Burt Coulliette at (904) 302-0423.

Playing HOOKie, a group for those who enjoy knitting, crocheting and looming (with all items donated to charity) meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road in St. Johns. Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookie2022@gmail.com for more information.

MomCo (formerly known as MOPS), a fun and safe place to connect with other moms, share breakfast, and hear from guest speakers on various topics, will meet every other Tuesday from 9:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. on the Mandarin Presbyterian Church /Loretto Road Campus with childcare provided. Space is limited; visit mandarinpres.com/momco to register. Email MOPS@mandarinpres.com for more information.

1st: Legacy Grandparenting Summit 2025 will be held on March 1 at Mandarin Presbyterian Church from 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. This event aims to help grandparents create a spiritual legacy within their families. Attendees can look forward to inspiring speakers, worship, music, opportunities for connection and valuable grandparenting resources. Visit mandarinpres.com/legacy for more information.

1st: Walter Jones Historical Park buildings, including the 1898 St. Joseph's Mission Schoolhouse for African American Children, the 1875 Webb Jones Farmhouse, the 1876 Barn, and

the Losco Winery, are open the first Saturday of each month (this month, March 1) from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Historic Mandarin Store & Post Office, located at 12471 Mandarin Road, will also be open. Museum volunteers will be inside each building for guided tours. Admission is free; Donations help support the museum's programming and operations. Visit www.mandarin-museum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

1st: Meet the Maple Leaf Divers at the Mandarin Museum, 11964 Mandarin Road, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. on the first Saturday of each month (this month, March 1). This is an informal, conversational-style event; drop in anytime within the two hours to chat with Dr. Keith Holland and his team and view the museum's expanded Maple Leaf exhibit. Admission to Meet the Maple Leaf Divers and Mandarin Museum is free. Donations help support the museum's programming and operations. For more information, visit www.mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784.

2nd: Music Under the Oaks community music jam, hosted by the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society and North Florida Folk Network will resume on Mandarin Museum's front lawn on the first Sunday of each month (this month, March 2) from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Bring a chair or blanket and relax and listen. This is a free event; donations support the operations and programming at Mandarin Museum. Visit www.mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

4th: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, March 4 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church on the Loretto Road Campus in the Kids Space at 2501 Loretto Road. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

7th and 8th: Mandarin Garden Club's \$1 Clothing, Jewelry and Pop-up Plant Sale will be held at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268 1192 for more information.

8th: Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on March 8 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/ for more information.

9th: Mandarin Parkinson's Support Group meets at Church of Eleven 22, 4911 Losco Road, on the second Sunday of each month (this month, March 9) from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. This month will feature a certified nutritional therapist. Contact group leader Kathryn Donaldson at serving4_him@yahoo.com or (904) 710-1449 for more information.

13th: Mandarin American Legion Post 372 general meeting will be held on March 13 at 7 p.m. at Williams Family YMCA 10415 San Jose Blvd., on the second floor. Riders of the Legion will be held on March 16 at 10 a.m. and Sons of the Legion will be held on March 27 at 7 p.m. at the same location. Visit <https://alpost372fl.org/> for more information.

13th: Pick, Press, Preserve will be the program at the Magnolia Circle on March 13 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

15th –16th: Jacksonville Orchid Society presents "Orchid Jungle," the annual orchid show and sale on March 15 from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and March 16 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The event will feature exquisite displays of blooming orchids created by amateur and professional growers and attendees can find out how easy it is to grow orchids. There will also be daily lectures/demonstrations on orchid culture and orchids and supplies available for purchase. Visit www.jaxorchidsociety.org for more information.

17th: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, March 17 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program will feature three quilters discussing "Modern Marvels." "Show and Tell" is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstar-quilters.org for more information.

18th: Unimaginable Ways to Recycle presented by Joyce Datz will be the program at the Dogwood Circle on March 18 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

20th: Third Thursday Lecture will be held Thursday, March 20, from 6 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Mandarin Museum, 11964 Mandarin Road. Museum volunteers and Master Gardeners from the UF/IFAS extension office will present an informative evening at the museum's Florida-Friendly Landscaping Garden. The event will include a plant clinic, soil sample testing, and a special presentation in the 1898 Schoolhouse. Refreshments and plant clinic begin at 6 p.m.; the program is at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

20th: Caring for Trees presented by Master Gardeners and tree stewards Mark Klinepeter and Melanie Carrier will be the program at the Cherokee Rose Circle on March 20 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

27th: Mandarin Women's Club's luncheon will be held on March 27 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn in Mandarin. This month features the club's annual Bingo game and attendees should bring their dauber or pen and get ready to win cash prizes. Bingo cards are 10 for \$5. The luncheon cost is \$25 and must be received by Monday, March 17. To make reservations and obtain payment instructions, contact Barbara at (904) 612-6494 or email her at barbara.metallo@outlook.com. Visit www.mandarinwomensclub.com for more information on events, photos, and membership forms.

27th: Climate Change in Real Life presented by Urban Forestry Extension Agent Larry Figart will be the program at the Live Oak Circle on March 27 at 7 p.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

27th: Mandarin Republican Club will meet on Thursday, March 27 at St. Mary's Seafood, 11290 Old St. Augustine Road. Social time begins at 6 p.m. and the meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. First time visitors are welcome.

28th: The Italian American Club of Jacksonville will hold its popular Spaghetti to Go on Friday, March 28 from 5 p.m. until the spaghetti is gone at the club building, 2838 Westberry Road. Take out only; cash, credit and debit cards are accepted. Dinners cost \$13 and there are small charges for extra meatballs, cannolis and pizza rolls. No phone orders. Call (904) 586-2700 for more information.

28th –29th: Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society annual display and sale will be held on March 28 (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.) and March 29 (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.) at San Jose Church of Christ, 6233 San Jose Blvd. Admission and parking are free. Visit <https://jacksonvilleviolets.org/> for more information.

29th: North Florida Genealogical Society (formerly SGES) will take a field trip this month to the SAR Battle of Thomas Creek Commemoration on Saturday, March 29 at 10 a.m. at Seaton Creek Historic Preserve Park. It will be the 248th anniversary of the Battle of Thomas Creek, which was the southernmost battle of the Revolutionary War. The park is located off Interstate 95 at Exit 366 then head west 2.5 miles on Pecan Park Road to 2145 Gold Star Family Parkway /Arnold Rd. that accesses the Jacksonville National Cemetery and Lem Turner Road. Visit www.sgesjax.org or call (904) 778-1000 for more information.

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with Jacksonville City Council Member Michael Boylan, District 6

Q: Do you have any rezoning items to discuss for Mandarin [as of interview date of Feb. 12]?

A: There's a proposal for 62 Pulte homes, which are consistent with the area, to be built off Aladdin Road that will be headed for the Planning Commission in late February. We did hold a community meeting a few months ago and the applicants have addressed as many of the concerns raised at that meeting as they feel they can. The application will be presented to the Land Use and Zoning (LUZ) Committee on March 4 and this would be the place for people to be if they have an opinion about this proposed project. It will come before the full City Council the following week as a quasi-judicial matter.

Q: What insight can you share about the two "missing middle" bills (2024-0686 and 2024-0689)?

A: These are still in the development state and are not scheduled for public hearing until March 11. The idea behind these bills is to introduce diversity of housing (such as duplexes and triplexes) in certain areas, but at this time, Mandarin is not included in the map. I like the idea of limited diversity in housing opportunities, but as far as these specific bills go, I'm not yet informed enough to

make a decision at this point.

Q: What's the latest on the repaving of Beauclerc Road?

A: The repaving of this road is finally all but completed after multiple years and multiple asks.

Q: Do you have any updates on the Mandarin Road sidewalk?

A: I just heard from JTA that they and their surveyors have forwarded their environmental report to the federal government (necessary because federal funding was secured for this work). We are planning a community meeting at the end of March to let people know what the surveyors have found to be the least impactful route for the sidewalk installation. Great care is being taken to preserve as many trees as possible, just as we did with the prior stretch of sidewalk. We will keep everyone posted as to the date of the community meeting via our bi-weekly email. (In order to be added to our email list, simply contact my office and make the request.)

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.



with Duval County School Board Member Melody Bolduc, District 7

Q: Can you share any information about what the school district is considering with regards to the new requirements for school start times?

A: I've had lots of community feedback on this issue. Right now, it looks very favorable for the upcoming legislative session, which will be considering a House Bill and a companion Senate Bill that would return start time decisions to local districts. We have the support of our local delegation for this. It is still a good idea for parents to continue to contact their legislators through March to let their voices be heard as this decision is made.

Q: What insight can you provide on the proposed changes to scheduling for next year?

A: At our workshop today [interview date of Feb. 11], the superintendent told us he is leaning towards a seven-period day for middle school since this is the preference of middle school teachers and he's leaning towards a 3X3 block plus one skinny period schedule for high school. This means high school students would have three classes one day for a longer period of time and then another three classes per day for this longer period of time. In addition, they would have one shorter class daily.

Q: Why are these schedule changes being considered?

A: First of all is the budget. Both of these proposed schedules would provide seven classes per year, which will save money yet still provide the required credits needed for graduation. Secondly, it would address teacher vacancies that we are experiencing. The number of teachers would not be reduced, just the number of vacancies. Finally, it would allow for all teachers to have parity in planning.

Q: Can you comment on the recently received NAEP and FAST test scores?

A: First on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress): this is a national test and random students' scores are chosen and then the results are compared to other similarly sized districts. Due to this random nature, there is really no way for us to measure or to analyze the data. We will continue all the work we do to improve student outcomes.

For the FAST: these are progress monitoring results and constituents should know when looking at the scores, they represent a percentage of students who are already showing grade level proficiency for the end of the year test. So these are actually decent scores that we received, but of course we are hopeful that they will go up significantly from here.

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

Q&A with Melody Bolduc cont. on pg. 8

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Celebrate Reading with your local library

By Jeremy Yates
mail@floridanewsline.com

Jacksonville’s annual Celebrate Reading Week returns March 2 – 8 with appearances by local children’s book authors, live entertainers, beloved book characters, and more. This week of fun literacy-themed events ends with a “Bananas About Books” Family Reading Day on Saturday, March 8, from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Main Library (303 N. Laura Street).

Special guest performer, Shana Banana, will lead kids in a “Book Character Parade” around the library after her scheduled performance at 9:30 a.m., so don’t forget to dress up. Mayor Deegan’s River City Readers Bookmobile will be parked outside and kids can also pick up a free book and lunch (while supplies last). Visit bit.ly/BananasAboutBooks for a complete schedule.

Check to see if your child is hitting their developmental milestones by attending a free “Books, Balls & Blocks” Developmental Screening Event (for families and children, aged birth to eight) held during storytime on Saturday, March 22, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Southeast Regional Library (10599 Deerwood Park Blvd.). Children will engage in developmentally appropriate play while parents/guardians complete a questionnaire. There will also be prizes and giveaways.

The Best of Elementary Art Show returns March 27 through April 29. Celebrate these emerging artists (from your local elementary schools) at an Open House Monday, March 31, from 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Mandarin Library or Tuesday, April 1, from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at South Mandarin Library.

And bring your elementary-age kids back to the library for fun programs. Explore S.T.E.M. books and hands-on activities with Junior Scientists. Or read about and create your own art with Junior Artists. Stop by the Mandarin Library Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. or South Mandarin Library Tuesdays at 4 p.m. (Note: These program alternate week to week between “Scientists” and “Artists.”) Check ahead of time at jax-publiclibrary.org/events.

Coming soon ... annual Mandarin Art Festival

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Art Festival returns once again as a Mandarin Easter weekend tradition to be held on Saturday, April 19 from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and on Sunday, April 20 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Founded in 1968, the festival has been a community favorite for decades and is now the largest event within Mandarin.

The art festival showcases the talented artwork of more than 100 professional national and local artisans in the unique festival setting under the oaks of Mandarin and on the grounds of the historic Mandarin Community Club. All the artists selected have gone through a jurying process to determine eligibility, and a lucky few will be chosen by judges for awards in their category.

One of those artists is Harry Hearne from Murphy, N.C., who participates each year.

“Over 30 years ago the Mandarin Art Festival was one of the first juried art festivals I participated in,” Hearne said. “Having grown up in St. Augustine but living in Tennessee, the Mandarin show gave me the opportunity to successfully sell my work and enjoy being back in the area. What continues to draw us back to the show is the historic setting, the great hospitality of the customers and staff, and the glorious live oaks. We look forward to our return every year.”

As part of the festival, don’t miss the Green Market to procure products from an array of local home-grown businesses including honey, artisan soaps, cheese straws, spices, rubs and sauces. The Children’s Art Show proudly displayed in the 150-year-old historic club building displays the work of local elementary and middle school students. The Children’s Art Show will be judged by the well-known artist, Pablo Rivera.

Other enjoyable activities throughout the festival include live musical entertainment, food choices at a number of food trucks and vendors and the annual Bake Sale, which remains a festival favorite for homemade baked goodies. And while at the festival visit the 100-year-old Mandarin Store and Post Office listed on the National Register of Historic Places to step back in time.

Free parking is available offsite at Albert Field on Orange Picker Road and the Masonic Lodge on Loretto Road; shuttles will run continually throughout the show times to and from these locations. A \$2 donation per person at the gate is suggested and helps support this event and the non-profit Mandarin Community Club. Due to insurance requirements you must leave pets at home unless certified as a Service Animal.

Visit mandarinartfestival.org or mandarincommunityclub.org for more information.

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Archived issues of Mandarin NewsLine may be found online!
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Life

travel • pantry raiders • gardening
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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

John and Renay Daigle

John and Renay Daigle have been mixing their business and personal lives for the past 20 years. As principals of Daigle Creative, the couple, married for 29 years, say it's important to respect each other's area of expertise when it comes to business — and to find other things to talk about at dinner than how their days went. John was raised in Green Cove Springs and had a career in journalism prior to joining Daigle Creative. Renay, originally from New Jersey, moved to Mandarin with her family as a teenager. Both graduated from the University of Florida before settling down in NE Florida. They have two grown daughters.

Q: How did you choose your career paths?

John: My dad was in the military and I actually went to UF on a ROTC scholarship. My dad's plan was for me to join the Army, but that's not where my heart was. I decided to get my degree in journalism and I did one year of active duty before I joined the Florida National Guard and began my journalism career. I worked for Clay Today, the Daytona-Beach News Journal, and finally was able to get a job at the Florida Times Union. I eventually became the editor at the Jacksonville Business Journal.

Renay: I knew in high school that I wanted to be in advertising. I always loved the Super Bowl commercials. After I graduated from UF, I moved to Jacksonville to take a job with an agency where I had previously interned,



Photo courtesy BEC Photography
Johns and Renay Daigle

only to have that job disappear in the midst of some big layoffs the company needed to do. I had to quickly find another job. I wanted to do the writing side of advertising, but all the jobs that were available were in sales, so I took one. I ended up being good at it.

Q: How did you meet?

Renay: I roomed with his sister at UF. He would come over to visit and she thought we would hit it off since we were both writers. He was four years older than me and had already graduated, but was still in Gainesville working.

Q: What inspired you to start your own business, Daigle Creative?

Renay: I was working at a mid-sized agency when I became pregnant with our first child. I wanted to work from home but that wasn't possible, so I started Daigle Creative as a consultancy in 2000. At first, I freelanced for other agencies, but then started getting my own clients. I wrote ad copy, newsletters, and annual reports. I mostly worked at night while my daughter slept and during nap time.

John: When Renay quit her advertising job to stay home and start Daigle Creative, I went to work for Jackson-

ville University as the Marketing and Communications Director. I eventually joined Renay at Daigle Creative in 2005.

Renay: Our agency is 25 years old. We will celebrate our 29th wedding anniversary and our 20th anniversary of working together this year, so I joke that we should be able to add them together for almost 50 years!

Q: What is the most challenging thing about owning the agency and working together?

John: One of the toughest things is certainly not the creative aspect, because we are both good at that. But the financial side ... we had to learn that side of the business. We have also learned to respect each other's lane, which provides a clear division in expertise and helps determine who gets the final say.

Renay: The first few years were the hardest, but we both think the other is very good at what they do and feel lucky to work together.

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

John: I enjoy tennis and pickleball and working out. I converted our garage to a gym. I also do a lot of gardening and home improvement projects now that we are empty nesters. Also, for the last few years, I've been an adjunct professor at UNF, teaching a class on political advertising.

Renay: I'm a beach person and go to the beach every chance I get. I'm an avid reader. As a self-actualization project, I've recently taken up public speaking. Also, as a breast cancer survivor, I consider myself an advocate and like talking to and encouraging other women.

Briefs cont. from pg. 2

plies, including the club's special soil-less potting mix formulated specifically for African violets.

Admission and parking are free. Visit jacksonvilleviolets.org for more information.

The Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1992 with the purpose of creating and stimulating interest in African violets. The club is committed to providing education on cultivation and propagation of African violets and meets on the third Sunday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Garden Club of Jacksonville, 1005 Riverside Ave., in Jacksonville.

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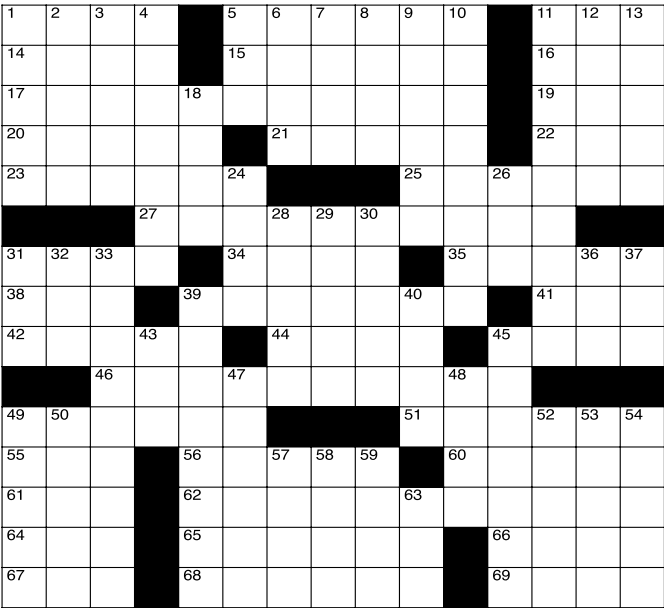
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Cut a little bit off
5. State with confidence
11. River in NE Scotland
14. Not narrow
15. Lacking social polish
16. Amount of time
17. Frame
19. Automobile
20. Toadstools
21. High school dances
22. Utilize
23. Challenged
25. One-sided
27. Showing extreme greed
31. Potted plants
34. Everyone has one
35. Lake in Botswana
38. E.T. rode in one
39. Juniors' parents
41. Small amount
42. Mother of Perseus
44. Ornamental box
45. Gov't investigators
46. Uncertain
49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
51. The vast grassy plains in S. America
55. Your consciousness of your own identity
56. Noted consumer advocate
60. Spanish sports club
61. Body part
62. Tractability
64. Woman (French)
65. Ready and willing to be taught
66. Muslim ruler title
67. Depressed
68. Gradually gave way
69. Clear-thinking

CLUES DOWN

1. Brushed aside
2. Water sprite
3. Ones to look up to
4. Monetary units
5. A number everyone has
6. Marine invertebrate
7. One who takes you to court
8. Indicates outer
9. Parallelograms
10. Strains
11. Cross
12. A way to remove
13. Some pages are dog-
18. Ukraine city
24. A citizen of Denmark
26. Summer month (abbr.)
28. Hindu queens
29. Jewelry brand
30. Fictional rider of Rohan
31. Wet dirt
32. Russian city
33. Observed
36. Furious
37. Drivers' licenses
39. Musical composition
40. Auction
43. They ____
45. Women
47. Inspire with love
48. Japanese ankle sock
49. Appears
50. Old World lizard
52. The leading performer
53. Type of protein
54. Pennsylvania town
57. Art ____; around 1920
58. ____ Blyton, children's author
59. Abnormal breathing
63. A place to sleep

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

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CARE
CAT
COMPANION
DOG
FAMILY
FEEDING
HELP
HOME
INSTRUCT
LEASH
MEDICINE
OVERNIGHT
PETS
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WALKS
WELFARE

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

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Solve the code to discover words related to pet sitting.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 10 = R)

A. 26 22 10 4 12 2 9 4 10
Clue: Babysitter

B. 6 21 6 6 8
Clue: Young dog

C. 16 14 22 10 13 2 7 12
Clue: Overnight animal care

D. 1 10 22 9 4 24
Clue: Vacationing

Theatre Troupe cont. from pg. 1

March 20 – 23 and March 27 – 30 at the Mandarin Community Club. Showtimes will include both matinees and evening shows. Tickets are reserved seating (\$20 or \$18 for students/seniors) and are available at showtixnow.com as well as at the door.

Q&A with Melody Bolduc cont. from pg. 5

A: Currently the school board is debating the means of parental permission for health and sex education curriculum. Currently we utilize an “opt-out” decision, but in the interest of transparency, we are considering going to “opt-in / opt-out.” So this would require a decision to be made by parents one way or another. We

are looking for an easy and accessible way for parents to accomplish this. Parents should send me or all board members their feedback on this.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

A: They can email me at BolducM@duvalschools.org or call me at (904) 390-2375.

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GARAGE SALES

March 15: MOVING SALE; household furnishings, kitchenware, linen, artwork, tools, clothing, yard equipment, patio furniture, collectibles and more; 1552 Greenridge Circle, Fruit Cove area. 8am-3pm

Rotary Club of Mandarin builds 86th ramp



Photo courtesy Leo Gurman

By Leo Gurman
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Rotary Club of Mandarin continues its commitment to improving accessibility for local families by constructing its 86th wheelchair ramp on Jan. 30. This latest project, a collaboration with Heart Felt Ministries, demonstrates the club's dedication to helping those with mobility challenges live more independently.
Heart Felt Ministries, through its Fall Prevention Program, provided the wood for the ramp, while Rotary Club members provided the manpower and expertise. Led by Rotarian Louis Dunbar and his wife Jill, the team included Mark O'Connor, Jill Dunbar, Mac Coble, Paul Hardaker, and Ken McCaulley.

This ramp marks a significant milestone for the club, which has been building ramps for 11 years. By the time you read this, they will likely have completed their 87th ramp.
The Rotary Club of Mandarin's commitment to service extends beyond local projects. They are active participants in Rotary International's global initiatives, including promoting peace, and the Polio Plus program to eradicate polio.
The Rotary Club of Mandarin meets every Tuesday at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast at the Ramada Inn on Hartley Road in Mandarin. Contact Membership Chairman Delonyx Cortez at membership@mandarinrotary.org for more information.

Literacy Week celebrated at Crown Point



Photos courtesy Mary Eyler
First graders with Heather Marie, author of "The Adventures of Pickle Juice and Patty Cakes."

By Mary Eyler
mail@floridanewsline.com

Crown Point students celebrated Literacy Week Jan. 27 – 31. Students and teachers participated in various literacy activities throughout the week, including: "Read My Shirt," "100-Year-Old for Reading," "Buddy Reading," and "Dress as Your Favorite Book Character." On Thursday, the students paraded the hallways displaying their favorite book character.
On Friday, Crown Point invited Heather Marie, the author of "The Adventures of Pickle Juice and Patty Cakes," to join in the celebration. Marie read one of her books and held discussions on its themes of kindness and accepting differences in others. The students also created their own story timeline.



Principal Bret Hartley and assistant principal Dr. Leah Murphy led the parade.

Fishing

Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewslines.com

March is here. Our super hot February might have us a little ahead this year so far. I was seeing water temperatures around 70 degrees in certain places pretty early last month, so lots of spawning has already been occurring on the bass and speck side of things. They'll still be at it this month, but I suspect it will be tapering off by the end of it. Post-spawn fish will be hungry and looking to put some weight back on near the same areas they had been staging prior to moving into shallows. The same baits I mentioned last month will still be good bets: jigs, minnows, and shiners. Flipping soft plastics into heavy cover will also be good for bass or bowfin, which I think are tons of fun. Just watch out for those teeth.

The river will see more and more saltwater fish trickling in this month. Redfish usually show up first followed by sheepshead, trout, and flounder. The redfish will be on the smaller side, so try to use mini portions of their usual fare. If you still have any minnows left from speck fishing, those work pretty well. You can tip a jig with them or fish them under the same

floats you use for specks. I mainly focus on docks. Try to put the baits right behind the pilings in the eddies. A piece of crab might entice the bigger redfish as they show up.

Sheepshead will be moving up river after spawning at the inlet and offshore. Use fiddler crabs, clams, and shrimp around the most barnacle encrusted structure you can find. I don't say this enough, but if there's no current where you're fishing — go find some.

Speaking of shrimp, this is our last chance to throw a shrimp net as the season closes for April and May. I usually have pretty good luck catching enough for bait this month, sometimes more than I catch in June, surprisingly. These will be the best shrimp you can get for any of the saltwater species showing up.

If you're a trout snob it's going to be very dependent on how fast the salinity goes up. Last spring they really keyed in on smaller baits since there were so many anchovies around. Small jigs or twitch baits are good. Tight lines.

Greenland Pines Cou-Gears advance to state Lego League competition



Photo courtesy Kara Coleman
Greenland Pines Elementary Cou-Gears.

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Greenland Pines Cou-Gears are part of the First Lego League Challenge, a Lego-based organization that gives teams (with students from fourth through eighth grade) an opportunity to learn STEM skills, coding and teamwork. Each year a new theme is chosen and given to all teams. This year, the theme was "Submerged" and teams had four parts to address: Innovation Project, Robot Design, Robot Games and Core Values. Teams have to work together to find an ocean-themed problem that they can help solve, and the Cou-Gears' choice was about submarines that can reach the Midnight Zone. Students had to talk to experts and use feedback given to them to improve their project. They also had to design a Lego robot that, through coding only, would maneuver around a themed table while completing various missions for points (Robot Games). Then, at competitions, they had to present their project to a table of judges and discuss as a team why they chose their problem and how

it would help others, talk about the robot they designed, and answer a variety of questions from the panel. Each of these parts are weighted and combined for an overall score.

At the district competition in November 2024, the Cou-Gears didn't know what to expect for their first tournament besides getting experience for future years. They wore their team tees, Lego-inspired glasses, and made sure they had fun while learning about the competition. They won an award for their Innovation Project, placed third in the Robot Games, and qualified for the regional tournament in Alachua County in January.

In Gainesville, 60 teams from Northeast Florida competed, each with their own robot, Innovation Project and hopes for advancing even further. At the end of the two-day event, the Cou-Gears earned fourth place for Core Values (sportsmanship) and did well enough in the other categories to qualify for the two-day state competition at Sea World Orlando in February.

MHS Red Cross Club cont. from pg. 1

"I'd say the most important thing we do is spark a conversation and get people thinking about things they don't usually think about," Mansell said. "We like to think that with our projects, we are making an impact and showing that we can touch a lot of people."

Upcoming projects for the club include attending training to learn about armed conflict around the

world as part of the Red Cross' International Humanitarian Law activities and also making comfort kits of necessities for children.

Both Mansell and Nguyen said they have made a lot of connections due to their involvement with the Red Cross Club. They interact with other volunteers who are their age all the way up to some who are retirement age. They also meet monthly with their Red Cross liaison, who provides guidance for the club.



Mandolyn Mansell and Kourtney Nguyen helped to educate students at San Jose Primary about sickle cell.

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Gardening

Spring is here

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
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Since the January freezes, the weather has warmed up and we have had periods of lovely sunny weather. We are now in our historically dry season and rainfall has been minimal, but despite that, many of our early spring plants have been showing signs of regrowth. This has highlighted plants that were either damaged or died back to the ground, but not necessarily killed outright.

As always, it pays to be careful about how much trimming and pruning we do until our last average frost date has passed, but with our change in heat zone to 9b, and generally higher temperatures year on year, it's harder to say when that is. Referring to NOAA's data (<https://tinyurl.com/y8vb9zc9>) the average last freeze date in Jacksonville, calculated from data till 2020, was Feb. 25. After more recent winters, we can assume that the average date is now earlier; however, the local day-to-day weather forecast is our best resource.

Lawns that might previously have come through the cold season without suffering from a freeze may be looking dead, but most turf in northeast Florida will simply be dormant. When a lawn begins to show signs of life we can think about the spring application of fertilizer, but not before. A broad set of lawn care guidelines can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/zj2rtjmr>. If you need more information, check out the "Florida Lawn Handbook" at the link in the article. And remember that master gardener volunteers are available each weekday, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., by calling (904) 255-7450 (or you can email them at duval@ifas.ufl.edu).

When growing summer annuals from seed, follow the advice on the seed packet. Right Plant Right Place applies to annuals too. Since they complete their life cycle in one short burst, the application of a slow-release fertilizer combined with a diluted liquid fertilizer as needed will supply the nutrients sometimes missing from our often-sandy soils. If you are creating a new bed, work a thin layer of organic matter such as home-made compost or a similar commercial product into the soil to help with moisture

retention. Even drought-tolerant plants will benefit as long as the soil remains free draining. Remove spent flowers (dead head) to encourage more flowers. Replenish mulch as needed.

As spring temperatures rise, so will the number of insects, both good and bad. Aiming for a healthy ecosystem is the ideal way to balance the insects and bugs we find in our gardens. Some vegetables will attract aphids, but when the plants give off their chemical messages that they are in trouble — and they do! — beneficial insects like lady beetles and green lace wings will show up. Their larvae especially are voracious eaters, and those aphids will be gone, or decimated, in no time. But for your vegetables' sake, don't wait: at the first sign of aphids, use a hard spray of water to dislodge them, or simply squish them, which will keep them in check. The predatory insects will then be safe when they arrive to feed on the inevitable survivors.

Recently there have been some lovely birds in our neighborhood, painted buntings among them. I use the Merlin app, which identifies birds from their song. It's been a real pleasure to discover more birds, and I'm beginning to recognize some of the less visible species from their songs. When birds are nesting and raising young, insect larvae are an important food source, so that's another reason to be prudent when balancing insect populations. There are many reasons why some bird numbers are plummeting; unthinkingly depriving them of their food needn't be one of them.

Check out "Landscaping Backyards for Wildlife: Top Ten Tips for Success" (<https://tinyurl.com/mr3wn5cd>). If you like a more relaxed approach to landscaping this may be for you. Native plants in the landscape also supply birds with food like berries, seeds, and the insects which are attracted to those plants. With insects as the foundation, the Xerces Society article found here: <https://tinyurl.com/4xser3pk>, coupled with your own research, perhaps, on the Florida Native Plant Society's website (<https://www.fnps.org/>) can help you develop your own wildlife-friendly haven. Enjoy!

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Travel

Let’s visit Rhode Island

By Debi Lander
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Although “island” is in its name, Rhode Island is a land-bound state with deep ties to the water. Every Rhode Islander lives within 30 minutes of the Atlantic Ocean or Narragansett Bay. And the Narragansett Bay stretches into the state’s eastern half, adding to the expansive 400-mile coastline.

No wonder the state is known for its beaches, sailing, seafood, and cute coastal towns. Rhode Island is one of the 13 original colonies with a deep colonial history. The city retains its historic colonial-era charm with steeply pitched gabled roofs on clapboard-sided homes.

If a trip to New England hovers in your future, consider visiting Providence. The capital city thrives with a population of just fewer than 200,000, and it is home to eight college/university campuses, including Ivy League Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), a famed art institute. Providence is just an hour from Boston, making it a more affordable alternative to Boston or NYC. The city’s compact size means you can walk to restaurants and other attractions.

WaterFire originated in 1994 and was such a hit that it remains Providence’s premier cultural and civic event. The evening experience is a must; I truly loved it. WaterFire features more than 80 floating braziers set along the Providence River, which are lit to create a mesmerizing effect. The fires are accompanied by carefully curated music, street performances, art installations, and sometimes interactive exhibits. As the flames illuminate the downtown rivers, the event transforms the heart of Providence into a magical, ambient space that invites reflection. Reserve a gondola ride during WaterFire to create an even more marvelous memory.

The Capitol’s massive dome, visible throughout the city, spans approximately 50 feet across and rises to 278 feet. It is one of the largest self-supporting marble domes in the world and is topped by the Independent Man, a symbol of Rhode Islanders’ independent spirit. A tour of the State House includes historic murals, and flags, the original state seal, the state chambers,

and an 1802 Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington. History buffs and art enthusiasts will enjoy a tour of the Stephen Hopkins House Museum and the RSID Museum.

New Englanders favor lobster, seafood, chowder, baked beans, wild-grown blueberries, and beer. Providence, nicknamed the Culinary Capital of New England, is home to the prestigious Johnson & Wales University. The school has produced top chefs nationwide, many of whom stay to work in the area.

No trip to Rhode Island is complete without a visit to the nearby opulent mansions of Newport, just a 45-minute drive from Providence. The Gilded Age mansions, built between the 1850s and 1900s, provide a glimpse into the extravagant lifestyles of wealthy industrialist families like the Vanderbilts and the Astors. These “summer cottages” are timeless architectural masterpieces, blending European-inspired design with luxurious interiors.

Among the highlights is The Breakers, the most famous mansion built by the Vanderbilt family, featuring a 70-room Italian Renaissance-style house with a 45-foot high central Great Hall. This mansion sits on a 13-acre estate overlooking a spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean. The Elms is known for its French Château-style design and impressive gardens. Marble House, another Vanderbilt estate, was completed in 1892 for \$11 million. It contains 500,000 cubic feet of American, Italian, and African marbles, gold-leafed rooms, and a Chinese Tea House on the grounds. (Make reservations to dine in the teahouse through their website.)

If time permits, stroll along the three-and-a-half-mile scenic Cliff Walk for dramatic panoramic ocean vistas with waves crashing against the rocks below, or explore the Museum of Yachting and the famous International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Visit www.bylandersea.com to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander’s stories and travel tips.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
The Breakers in Newport.



Colonial buildings add to the charm in Providence.



Marble House interior.



Rhode Island Capitol in Providence.