April 2025 Volume 20 Issue 4



page 3 **BFF Best Furry Friend** 





page 9 Get To Know ...

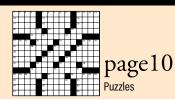


Photo courtesy Rotary Club of Mandarin 2024 Run for the Hungry.

## Fourth annual Run for the Hungry registration open

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

The Rotary Club of Mandarin's fourth annual 5K race and 1 Mile Fun Run will be held on Saturday, April 26. The event kicks off at 8 a.m. for the 5K and 9 a.m. for the 1 Mile Fun Run, starting and finishing at Mandarin Presbyterian Church, 2501 Loretto Road.

"Lace up your running shoes and get ready for a fun-filled morning," said Rotarian Leo Gurman.

The race is primarily for the benefit of the Mandarin Food Bank at St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the Daily Bread Food Pantry at Mandarin Presbyterian Church. Runners can help feed the hungry by bringing a canned good to packet pickup or on race day.

Run for the Hungry cont. on pg. 9

Support our Advertisers!

## **Easter weekend means Mandarin Art Festival**

By Susie Scott mail@floridanewsline.com

Spring is in the air and that means another annual Mandarin Art Festival. Colorful and unique art, music, shopping, food court, Children's Art Show, Bake Sale and much more are scheduled. The art festival has been an Easter weekend tradition since its launch in 1968 and is now a family weekend must do.

"Volunteering to work with the Mandarin Art Festival gives me the opportunity to not only see some of the best art work being done today as well as meet and visit with the artists doing that magnificent work," said Laura Miller, former festival co-chair and 2025 volunteer.

More than 100 juried local and national artist exhibitors of fine art and fine craft will showcase their amazing talent under the majestic oaks of old Mandarin over the weekend of April 19 – 20. In addition to the opportunity to leisurely stroll the more than 100 booths, patrons can visit the adjacent Billard Commemorative Park where more than a dozen Green Market vendors sell their locally



Mandarin Art Festival volunteers at the Mandarin Community Club table at the 2024 festival.



Festival chair Susie Scott with prize-winning local artist Tim Bullard

produced consumable original products. And if you want to see the budding artwork of local middle schoolers aspiring to be the next generation of artist exhibitors, step inside the 150-year-old

> historic Mandarin Community Club building where 15 schools will be represented.

All that walking around making you hungry? The food court offers cuisine from around town and around the world, including empanadas, pirogis, lobster rolls, loaded tater tots, Argentine food, hand crafted lemonade, Latin fusion and good old American andwich options. Make you selection and dine in comfort in the outdoor pavilion while listening to local musicians setting a casual tone.

There will also be an oldfashioned bake sale on Saturday with donations from community club members, a prize drawing offering, club merchandise with the official 2025 Mandarin Art Festival tee shirt for sale. Everyone is welcome to come out to enjoy this event but no pets are allowed. Free shuttles will transport guests from Albert Field and the Mandarin Masonic Lodge and will bring you right to the gates. A \$2 suggested donation is requested at the gate to support the mission of the Mandarin Community Club to promote and ensure the preservation, beautification and environmental wellbeing of Mandarin; to provide educational programs and meetings for the club's membership and the community; to enhance the cultural and recreational life of the citizens of Mandarin and to maintain the historic structures and property owned by the club.

Visit www.mandarinartfestival.org for more information.



www.newslinedigital.com

© (904) 886-4919

## **GROW YOUR BUSINESS** WITH US!

**Programmatic Advertising** Social Media Marketing Search Engine Optimization Web Design & Development



#### **Briefs**

## St. Johns Riverkeeper has been defending Florida's longest river for 25 years

For 25 years, St. Johns Riverkeeper has served as a trusted voice and ardent advocate for the protection and restoration of the St. Johns River and its watershed.

"Our founders believed that we all have a right to clean water and a healthy river," said Lisa Rinaman, the St. Johns Riverkeeper. "For the last 25 years, we have worked diligently each and every day to defend the river, hold polluters accountable, raise awareness, educate youth, and engage citizens to take a stand for the St. Johns."

Throughout the 1990s, newspaper headlines like "Study shows river loaded with toxins," "Report says quality of St. Johns worsening," and "Effluent is pushing St. Johns into decline" were common. State agencies and environmental regulations were not keeping up with the pollution and impacts from the rapid growth and development occurring throughout our St. Johns River's Watershed.

Frustrated by the declining health of the river, several concerned citizens recognized the need for an independent watchdog group to advocate for the St. Johns and hold regulatory agencies and polluters accountable. In October 1998, they organized a meeting of various citizen stakeholders to explore the possibility of starting a Riverkeeper program for the St. Johns. A steering committee was created, and the diverse group that ranged from environmentalists to angers

rallied around one common goal — protecting the St. Johns River. Due to their hard work and determination, St. Johns Riverkeeper received its license from the Waterkeeper Alliance, setting the stage for 25 years of advocacy for our St. Johns River.

St. Johns Riverkeeper is celebrating its 25th anniversary throughout 2025. The group is hosting a variety of events to help the public explore the watershed and learn about the river — including a 25th Anniversary luncheon on the banks of the river in Jacksonville, the watershed-wide Great St. Johns River Cleanup, and 25 Taps for the St. Johns, a celebration of local breweries. Visit https://stjohnsriverkeeper.org/25-years/for more information.

#### **Showcase quilts needed**

Quiltfest Inc. of Jacksonville has opened the submission window for quilts to be showcased at the Prime Osborn Center from Sept. 18 - 21, 2025.

This judged event is open to all quilters and will feature up to 450 quilts.

Visit https://quiltfestjax.com/enter-yourquilt/ for a complete list of categories and rules.

## Mandarin Women's Club hosts popular fashion show

Mandarin Women's Club will welcome spring with the group's annual Spring Fashion show on Thursday, April 24. The luncheon and fashion show will be held at the Ramada Inn in Mandarin, 3130 Hartley Road and will feature club members who will model outfits provided by the Petunia Patch.

The fashion show will begin at 10:45 a.m. followed by lunch. Doors open at 10:15 a.m. and reservations for the luncheon are required. The luncheon cost is \$25 and must be received by Monday, April 14. 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.

## Eye surgeon group announces new ophthalmologist

Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons recently welcomed comprehensive ophthalmologist, Dante Sorrentino, M.D. to the practice. Dr. Sorrentino received his medical degree from Florida International University-Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami. He completed his ophthalmology residency at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and has worked at The Permanente Medical Group as well as St. Michael's Eye and Laser Institute prior to joining Clay Eye. Dr. Sorrentino has more than 10 years of experience in the medical field.

Dr. Donald Downer, ophthalmologist and cornea specialist with Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons, said, "We are happy to have Dr. Sorrentino as a new member of our team. Clay Eye has been serving patients in Northeast Florida for over 48 years and it has always been our mission to put the needs of patients first. It is evident that Dr. Sorrentino shares that same passion. The experience and skillset of Dr. Sorrentino are complemented by his energy and enthusiasm. We're excited to have Dr. Sorrentino contribute to the future success of Clay Eye."

Clay Eye Physicians and Surgeons offers comprehensive eye care in the following specialties: glaucoma surgery, diabetic eye disease and macular degeneration, laser cataract surgery, cornea surgery, medical/surgical retina, LASIK surgery and cosmetic eye procedures. In addition, the practice offers routine eye exams, contact lenses, and boutique eyewear for the entire family. Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons was established in 1977 and is now a 16 physician group with offices in Orange Park, Fleming Island, Mandarin, Riverside and Middleburg. Visit www.clayeye.com for more information.

#### Retired psychologist unlocks secrets of haunting characters

Psychologist turned bestselling mystery writer Jack Lawrence has a fresh perspective on creating compelling, psychologically rich characters that engage readers and keep them hooked. He's going to share that key with members and guests of Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime writers on Saturday, April 12 at 11:15 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library.

Briefs cont. on pg. 14



# Love the way you hear with personalized hearing care.

Your hearing is as unique as a fingerprint. That's why at HearingLife we provide personalized hearing care and solutions tailored to help you get the most out of your hearing — and life.

20% OFF<sup>†</sup>
HEARING AID PURCHASES

TRADE IN your old hearing aids
RECEIVE \$500\*\* toward the purchase
of a new pair of hearing aids

CALL TODAY TO SCHEDULE YOUR
FREE HEARING TEST\*





Megan Burton
Au.D., CCC-A, Audiologist,
Certificate of Clinical
Competence - Audiology

5960 Beach Boulevard Suite 1 Jacksonville, FL 32207

904.927.3616

13820 Old St. Augustine Road Unit 153 Jacksonville, FL 32258

904.902.4944

When calling, mention code AG60-1

\*See office for details. \*20% discount is off standard list prices. One offer per purchase. Offer cannot be combined with any other offer or discount, including the HearingLife Value Plan (HLVP). Not valid on prior purchases. Offer not available to any consumer who has private or federal health insurance coverage. Private pay purchases only. The CROS system and Essential products do not qualify for this offer. Hearing aids must be purchased by 4/30/25. Exclusions apply. See office for details. Offer valid from 4/1/25 thru 4/30/25. \*\*One offer per purchase. Limited to one trade-in per customer. No cash value. Not valid on prior purchases. Offer not available to any consumer who has private or federal health insurance coverage. Private pay purchases only. The CROS system and Essential products do not qualify for this offer. Other terms or exclusions may apply, see office for details. Offer valid from 4/1/25 thru 4/30/25. Information within this offer may vary or be subject to change.

# FLORIDA News Line

Mandarin NewsLine ● The CreekLine ● Ponte Vedra NewsLine

450 State Road 13 North Suite 106 PMB 101 St. Johns, FL 32259 (904) 886-4919 www.FloridaNewsLine.com

#### **Publisher**

Mark Pettus

Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

#### **Editor**

Martie Thompson

Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

#### **Bookkeeper**

**Emily Whitehead** 

Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

#### **Social Media**

SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

#### **Advertising Sales**

Linda Gay

Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com

(904) 607-5062 cell

Mandarin NewsLine community newspaper is a free monthly publication delivered to all addresses in Zip Codes 32223, 32258, and selected neighborhoods in 32257. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2025.













# Best Furry Friend of the month

#### Breed:

Cockapoo (cocker spaniel, poodle mix)

Favorite Activity:

Digging in the backyard

Favorite Food:

**Pumpkin** 

Favorite Friends:

All of the dogs at daycare, but especially my mom's dog, Lilly

How did your BFF get his name:

He looks like a teddy bear!





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.



## When you advertise, you encourage repeat business, create traffic, and attract new customers!

Don't miss our May issue Featuring our Summer Camp & Activities Guide **Deadline 4/16/25** 

Call Linda Gay today to reserve your space 904.607.5062



Summer Camp Guide in this issue! Pages 12 - 13

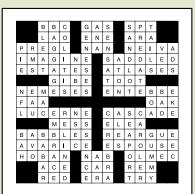
## Table of Contents

- 4 What's Happening in Mandarin
- 5 Q&A with Melody Bolduc
- 8 Mandarin Library events
- 11 Jimmy's Fishing Report
- 15 Gardening
- 16 Travel



Can you guess where this is? Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.

Last month's Mystery Photo was the Harriet Beecher Stowe Community Center on San Jose Boulevard.

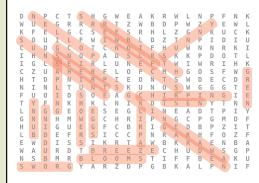


Answers

Puzzles PG 10



A. flowers B. buds C. warmth D. rainy





## **Brian E. Floro DMD, PA General and Family Dentistry**

(904)268-0830 • www.florodental.com

Located near Quest and Brooks Rehabilitation Corner of Loretto Road and San Jose Blvd. 11705 San Jose Blvd., Suite 211 • Jacksonville, FL 32223

**Exams and Cleanings • Placing and Restoring Dental Implants Extractions • Root Canals • Crowns and Bridges** Veneers and Teeth Whitening • Clear Braces with ClearCorrect

#### **New Patient Special**

**Exam, Digital X-Rays** This offer is exclusive to self-pay patients and may not be used with any insurance program Must present coupon. Expires 4/30/2025 Brian E. Floro DMD PA 11705 San lose Blvd. • 268-0830

Whitening for Life!

Contact the office for details Must present coupon. Expires 4/30/2025 Brian E. Floro DMD PA 11705 San Jose Blvd. • 268-0830





#### St Johns **Jax Beach** 450 SR13 at Racetrack Rd

(next to Publix) 904.230.3242 wbu.com/jacksonville 4138 Third Street South (between Trader Joes & Staples) 904.246.6832

wbu.com/jacksonvillebeach

## **World Golf Village**

One Regularly

**Priced Item** 

Valid in-store the participating

stores listed. Coupon not valid for Seed/Bird Food, Camera Feeders, Optics, Gift Cards,

DSC Memberships, or Sale Items.

Cannot be combined with other coupons/discounts. Offer expires 4/30/25. ONE COUPON PER CUSTOMER

180 Capulet Drive #5 (At Murabella) 904.209.5754 wwbu.com/staugustine



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 Katheryn 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.

**1st:** Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, April 1 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.

**1st:** Griefshare, a 13-week Christian-based support group for those who have either recently or in the past lost a loved one, will start on April 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Cody Enrichment Center, 4152 Loretto Road. Each class consists of a 30 minute video and discussion of questions from the workbook. Visit www.griefshare.org for more information or call (904) 318-9308.

5th: 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, April 5) 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.mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

5th: 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, April 5). 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.

6th: Mandarin Lutheran Church will celebrate its 40th anniversary at the church, 11900 San Jose Blvd. on Sunday, April 6 at 9 a.m. All past and present members are invited to unveil and dedicate a new Peace Pole, hold a celebratory service, and walk down memory lane during a light lunch, Call (904) 268-4591 for more information.

6th: 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, April 6) 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.

10th: Mandarin American Legion Post 372 general meeting will be held on April 10 at 7 p.m. at Williams Family YMCA 10415 San Jose Blvd., on the second floor. Riders of the Legion will be held on April 20 at 10 a.m. and Sons of the Legion will be held on April 24 at 7 p.m. at the same location. Visit https://alpost372fl.org/ for more information.

10th:Planning meeting and Dump Salad will be the program at the Magnolia Circle on April 10 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

**†††:**Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on April 12 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/ for more information.

12th: Mandarin Parkinson's Support Group meets at Church of Eleven 22, 4911 Losco Road, on the second Sunday of each month (this month, April 12) from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. This month will feature a c ertified nutritional therapist. Contact group leader Katheryn Donaldson at serving4\_him@yahoo.com or (904) 710-1449 for more information.

12th - 13th: Second annual Florida Bonsai Festival, presented by the North Florida Bonsai Club, will be held on April 12 and 13, from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. each day at Florida Bonsai Nursery and Supply, 12985 Chameleon Drive. The weekend will feature workshops and demos as well as Bring Your Own Tree sessions with noted artists. General admission is \$15 per day or \$20 for the weekend; visit https:// flbonsaifest.square.site/ to register or for more information.

13th:Easter Eggstravaganza will be held at Mandarin Presbyterian Church, 2501 Loretto Road, on Sunday, April 13 from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. This community event features egg hunts, inflatable obstacle courses, pony rides, a petting zoo, crafts, games and snacks. Visit mandarinpres.com/eggstravaganza for more

5th:Planning meeting and Dump Salad will be the program at the Dogwood Circle on April 15 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

**7th:** "Lessons in Chemistry," or How and When to Fertilize, will by presented by Beth Marlowe, Urban Garden Coordinator of the Duval County Extension, at the Cherokee Rose Circle on April 17 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

17th: Third Thursday Lecture hosted by Mandarin Museum on April 17 from 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. will feature artist Vina Schemer, who will provide a gallery tour of her exhibition, "Evolution in Clay: A Vina Schemer Retrospective." Refreshments begin at 6:30 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. Mandarin Museum is located at 11964 Mandarin Road, inside Walter Jones Historical Park, Admission is free thanks to sponsor, Endless Summer Roofing Company. Visit www.mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

19th Egg hunt pictures with the Easter Bunny will be held on Saturday, April 19 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Mandarin Lutheran Church, 11900 San Jose Blvd. This free family event is open to the community. Call (904) 268-4591 for more information.

21st:The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, April 21 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program is a trunk show by Mary-Jeanine Ibarguen, editor of the Florida Quilt Network newsletter. "Show and Tell" is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

24th Mandarin Women's Club's annual fosbion at fashion show and luncheon will be held on April 24 beginning at 10:15 a.m. at the Ramada Inn in Mandarin. The luncheon cost is \$25 and must be received by Monday, April 14. 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.

24th: Health Risk and Remedies in Your Garden will be presented by Jan Duncan, Master Gardener, at the Live Oak Circle on April 24 at 7 p.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information.

24th: Mandarin Republican Club will meet on Thursday, April 24 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.

25th:The Italian American Club of Jacksonville will hold its popular Spaghetti to Go on Friday, April 25 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.

25th - 26th: Annual Plant Sale will be held at the Mandarin Garden Club on April 25 and 26 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. The public is invited. The Mandarin Garden Club is located at 2892 Loretto Road. The public is invited. Call (904) 268-1192 for more information

27th: North Florida Genealogical Society (formerly SGES) will host an open house and lineage society showcase at its library, located at 6215 Sauterne Drive, on Sunday, April 27 from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. All are welcome to visit the library and meet representatives from some local lineage societies. Visit www.sgesjax.org or call (904) 778-1000 for more information.





Call today 904-262-0197 for your Complimentary Water Test & Analysis.



#### **CLEAN WATER FOR YOUR HOME**

Affordable Water solutions for vour home with the best customer service in the industry.

- · Water Softners & Filtration Systems
- Service on most makes and models
- Delivery of Salt & Potassium for your





STAVERMAN Audiologist/Owner

300+ Five Star Reviews

**FREE** Consultation

**Risk-Free 60-Day Free Trial** Try it at home, work and play!

Call 904-262-5550 Today! Your Community Resource for Better Hearing www.StavermanHearingCenters.com 12276 San Jose Blvd., Suite #710



## with Duval County School Board Member Melody Bolduc, District 7

#### Q: Can you share any legislative updates?

A: March 5 was "Duval Day" in our state legislature and a contingency including myself and several other board members and the superintendent went to Tallahassee to meet with our legislative delegation. We were warmly welcomed. We had two appropriations requests. First, we requested funds for a fusion center to shore up student safety and security. This would marry all of our technology to tap into the nearest six cameras (of the thousands we have monitoring our schools) whenever a faculty member pushes the button on their Centegix badge. It would also immediately alert law enforcement. Secondly, we requested increased VPK funding to allow for special training for teachers known as CLASS.

There are two bills we are keeping an eye on and request that parents do as well, in addition to contacting their legislators. First is a bill to restore autonomy to local districts on school start times. I talked about this bill last month and it seems all of our delegation is listening to our concerns. They have received copious calls and emails from constituents as well. Secondly, we are very worried about an education bill in the House (HB 123) because there is a stipulation in the bill that as a district, if enrollment has decreased (as it has in Duval), the district can't buy any property. This is problematic for a couple of reasons, because some areas in the northern part of the county are shrinking but some areas, particularly the southeast portion, are growing. It also would hinder our ability to potentially sell the School Board building on the river if we decided to, because we wouldn't be able to buy another property.

#### Q: What is the latest information that volunteers need to know regarding background checks for the school district?

A: The school board has defined a difference between a chaperone and a volunteer within its policy, in order to follow the new law. "Volunteers" can continue to assist teachers and school staff with the current level of screening, but they are not allowed to be alone with students. "Chaperones," as newly defined in policy, would have to be Level 2 background screened, which includes fingerprinting, so that they can go on field trips. There will be a visible distinction between the two on their visitor identification badges. This will take effect next school year and does not affect those who are accompanying students on field trips this school year.

#### Q: Can you share any insight on the district's first book challenge?

A: Our first book challenge was five months ago involving the book "Identical," which was removed in accordance with policy. A formal book review was held in early March; the appeals committee recommended putting this book back on our shelves. Now it is up for a board vote, possibly in April, pending public notice of the meeting. The process for challenging and potentially removing a book is very involved. We went into the procedures in great length at our Agenda Meeting on March 11, so interested parties can view that archived video on the school district website. Alternatively, they can email me and I can send them the entire report.

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

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

## **Mandarin Rotary: Building local and international bridges**

By Leo Gurman

mail@floridanewsline.com

The Rotary Club of Mandarin is building bridges of accessibility, one wheelchair ramp at a time. The club's latest project, completed on Feb. 21, marks the 88th ramp built.

The team, led by Louis Dunbar and supported by Jill Dunbar, included a dedicated group of Rotarians: Mark Mouro, John Meux, Mark O'Connor, Bill Gowan, Ken McCauley, Mac Coble, Paul Hardaker, Sam Folds, and Robert Meek. The ramp was made possible thanks to a long-standing partnership with Heart Felt Ministries, who generously provided the lumber as part of their Fall Prevention Program.

The club also actively builds international connections, for example, assisting children's feeding centers in Alajuelita and Horquetas, Costa Rica. They partner with 6:8 Ministries in these efforts. This dedication to global service underscores their commitment to creating a better world.

The Rotary Club of Mandarin offers a unique blend of local engagement, global collaboration, commitment to sustainable change, and emphasis on fellowship and leadership. If you are interested in joining this dynamic group, the club meets for breakfast every Tuesday at 7:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn on Hartley Road in Mandarin. Visit mandarinrotary.org for more information.

Did you know? **Archived issues of Mandarin NewsLine** may be found online! Visit www.floridanewsline.com





904 742 8777 or vaterlizzi@gmail com



MANDARIN COMMUNITY CLUB · 12447 MANDARIN RD. WWW.MANDARINARTFESTIVAL.ORG

# DB

Dianne K. Briery CPA PLC Certified Public

Accountant

#### **LET US SIMPLIFY YOUR ACCOUNTING NEEDS**

## 46 years of serving clients!

- Tax Planning and Prep for Business/Individual
- QuickBooks Consulting/Training
- Church Accounting Clergy Taxation
- Pension Plans IRAs

#### TAX TIP

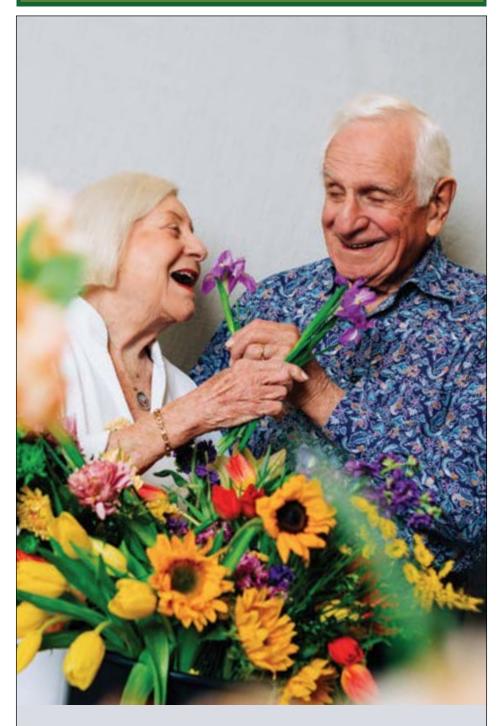
You can avoid underpayment penalties and interest if you make necessary estimated tax payments OR have enough federal withholding. Penalties are assessed if you do not meet the rules to be safe from penalty. Generally speaking, as long as you pay at least as much as your PRIOR YEAR tax, or 90% of the current year tax, you will not incur current year estimated tax penalties. If your income level is over a given amount, the estimated payments are required to be 110% of your prior year tax.

Call today for your no cost consultation

No cost consultation limited to ½ hour.

904-880-3200 | www.dkbrierycpa.com

Located in the Julington Creek Business Park •12627 San Jose Blvd, Suite 601 • Jacksonville, Florida 32223



## Where Quality is In Bloom.

With 79 years of excellence, we've learned that collaboration, dedication and an unwavering commitment to our mission are essential to ensuring a bright future for our community's seniors.

Visit RiverGarden.org or call 904.260.1818.



Long-Term Nursing & Memory Care | Rehab & Therapy | Senior Living | Adult Day

A not-for-profit agency sponsored by the organized Jacksonville Jewish community.



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

## Q: Can you give an update on the proposed Pulte development on Aladdin Road?

A: This request by Pulte to develop 62 homes on 43 acres (16 acres of which would remain in conservation) was unanimously approved by the Planning Department, the Planning Commission and the LUZ. What we are seeing here is a rare example of infill development and this is the third attempt to get the rezoning approved. Each time the developer at the time attempted to be responsive to feedback from the community. I was very diligent in making sure our constituents knew when this application was being heard at the various stages, and it was formally approved by the City Council at the March 11 meeting.

## Q: What is the latest on the Arpen farmhouse and attempts to save it by relocating it?

A: Due to the demonstrated effort and sufficient progress to move it, I requested a second two-week postponement of the vote on the appeal. It will come before the council on March 25 and I think the appeal will likely be approved with conditions which require the house to be moved within 60 - 90 days.

## Q: What is happening with the Mandarin Road sidewalk extension?

A: I'm awaiting the official response,

but apparently the cost of this extension is significantly higher than the \$3 million we have in funds from the federal government. We are now working with Congressman John Rutherford's office to secure additional funding. I imagine the sidewalk will be delayed at least a year due to this. We still want to go ahead with the planned community meeting to share the proposed extension and we are looking to hold it in late April.

## Q: What can you tell us about Duval DOGE?

A: There have been a lot of conversations about a local version of DOGE. Councilmember Salem introduced the idea for a review, which is fitting in his role as chair of the Finance Committee. Some of this is politics as usual; that being said, efficiency is something we all aspire to see, in tandem with the administration.

## Q: Will Losco Regional Park be renamed?

A: Yes, it was unanimously approved by City Council to rename Losco Park to Richard H. "Dick" Kravitz Regional Park in recognition of his long time public service. It could be said that there would be no parks in Mandarin without Dick Kravitz. We will continue to honor the Losco family with a marker inside the park.

**Q&A with Michael Boylan** cont. on pg. 9

## Crown Point celebrates Valentine's Day





Photos courtesy Mary Eyler

The Crown Point PTA sponsored a Mommy & Me breakfast on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. More than 200 parents and children attended the event. The PTA provided breakfast items and arts and crafts activities for moms and their students to complete together.

## Greenland Pines Elementary hosts inspiring Career Day

By Janine Santangelo mail@floridanewsline.com

Greenland Pines Elementary held an exciting Career Day on Feb. 21, bringing together students, parents, and professionals from various fields to inspire and educate the young minds about future career possibilities, with the help of countless volunteers, school staff and administration, and the Greenland Pines PTA. The event provided students with a unique opportunity to explore different professions and gain valuable insights into the working world.

Greenland Pines' Career Day featured a diverse lineup of guest speakers, including a local news station meteorologist, representatives from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Jacksonville Fire Rescue

Department, the United States military, pharmacists, software developers, engineers, and many more. These professionals shared their experiences and offered advice to the students, with many showcasing the amazing vehicles and tools they use in their everyday work lives. Interactive sessions and hands-on activities allowed the children to engage directly with the professionals, to ask questions, and even try out some of the tools and equipment used in different jobs.

Parents and community members played a crucial role in the event, volunteering their time and expertise to make the day memorable for all students in the school.



# Personalized financial advice to help achieve your goals

Ameriprise Financial

Not FDIC or NCUA Insured I No Financial Institution Guarantee I May Lose Value Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER" and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S. Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC. © 2022 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.



## **Chris Thompson**

CFP ®, CMFA ®, CRPC ®
Managing Director – Private Wealth Advisor
Certified Financial Planner
Certified Military Financial Advisor
Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor

#### 904.380.2290

818 A1A North, Suite 301
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
chris.thompson@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/chris.thompson
St Johns County resident since 1993



Photos courtesy Michelle Hinkley
Meteorologist Corey Simma from Action News Jax spoke
with classes and recorded the weather with Greenland
Pines Elementary's TV Production Team.



Allison Busuttil (engineer/project manager, parent) shares information about her career with a class.



## Your carefree oasis of luxury awaits!

Feel right at home at one of our Starling communities.

Live in unparalleled environments that feature resort-style amenities and comfortable residences. Select from luxurious independent living, assisted living or memory care lifestyles.

Whether you're sampling the delectable dining options, enjoying the full-service salon or pursuing a new hobby, Starling is all about embracing life with friends, family, and community.

Learn more at www.StarlingLiving.com.













904-686-3700



ASSISTED LIVING and MEMORY CARE



904-834-4511



904-337-6350

### WELLNESS • ENGAGEMENT • CULINARY • SERVICE

Call today to learn about current specials!



Greenland Pines Elementary's younger students enjoyed learning about careers and visiting with personnel and trucks associated with those careers.



# Doesn't it make sense to keep your car at the same place as your home?

Get auto and home insurance in one package policy, with one payment, one claim and one deductible.

Simplify and save.

Contact me for a quote for PACKAGE INSURANCE.



Ask for a Licensed Insurance Agent 10991 San Jose Blvd, Jacksonville FL 32223 (in Walmart) 904-437-5755

Coverage is subject to all policy terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations. Discounts and savings opportunities subject to eligibility requirements. Subject to underwriting requirements. Insurance underwritten by one of the following companies: Auto Club Insurance Association, MemberSelect Insurance Company, Auto Club Group Insurance Company, Auto Club Property-Casualty Insurance Company, Auto Club South Insurance Company, Auto Club Insurance Company of Florida, or non-affiliated insurance companies. ©2019 The Auto Club Group. All rights reserved. 19-IN-0140D LC 6/19

## Watering restrictions: What you need to know

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns River Water Management District's watering restrictions are designed to ensure the efficient use of water for landscape irrigation. The restrictions allow enough water to maintain healthy landscapes year-round. time when watering may occur, the amount of water that may be applied, and the days when watering may occur for residential and nonresidential locations. These days depend on whether the address ends in an odd or even number, and on the time of year.

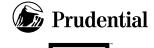
The mandatory restrictions specify the

#### As of the start of Daylight Saving Time in March, homes with odd numbered addresses or no addresses may water on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Homes with Photo courtesy MetroCreative even numbered

## Prudential Financial Planning



Andrew E. Laino CLU®,CFP®, CLTC® Financial Planner CA Insurance License #0E93910 844-954-8700 andrew.laino@prudential.com Comprehensive Financial Planning



Andrew Laino is a financial Planner with, and offers securities and investment advisory services through LPL Enterprise (LPLE), a Registered Investment Advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC, and an affiliate of LPL Financial. Financial professionals are licensed insurance agents of Prudential. These financial professionals are permitted to brand under "Prudential". LPLE and LPL Financial are not affiliated with Prudential.

Water only when needed and not between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Watering in early morning and early evening hours, when temperature and wind speed are lowest, reduces losses from evaporation and wind that can occur during the middle of the day. This also allows the water to seep into the ground to the grass and plant roots, promoting

> Water for no more than one hour per zone. Apply moderate amounts of water

healthier plants with deep root systems.

to create a healthy, drought- and stresstolerant lawn. For most Florida soils, applying no more than three-quarters of an inch of water per application is enough to revitalize the grass. Saturate the root zone, then let soil dry to encourage healthy, deep root growth. Overwatering promotes weed growth, disease and fungus.

These restrictions apply to private wells and pumps, ground or surface water, and water from public and private utili-

Visit www.sjrwmd.com for more information.

# DON'T LEAVE YOUR FUTURE

## **SECURE A PLAN FOR LIFE**

TO CHANCE

Make the safe bet with an active, engaging, maintenance-free lifestyle at Westminster Woods on Julington Creek. Enhance your lifestyle with:

- Housekeeping
- 24-hour security
- Delicious, chef-prepared dining options
- Fishing and boat docks
- Heated, outdoor swimming pool
- A wide range of important aging services
- And more!

Call (904) 861-6425 today to learn how you can save thousands!



WestminsterWoodsFL.org

25 State Road 13 Jacksonville, FL

## **Celebrate National Library Week at your library**

By Jeremy Yates mail@floridanewsline.com

addresses may

Tuesdays and Fridays.

water on Thursdays and Sundays.

Nonresidential properties may water on

Millions of people across the country visit their libraries every week. From young families stopping in for storytime to students exploring Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (S.T.E.M.) through free labs and hands-on activities, libraries help connect the dots from one part of our journey to the next.

National Library Week, April 6 - 12, 2025, is a celebration highlighting the valuable role libraries, librarians, and library workers play in all of our lives.

This month, explore S.T.E.M. books and hands-on activities with Junior Scientists or read about and create your own art with Junior Artists. Programs run 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays at the Mandarin Library and 4 p.m. Tuesdays at South Mandarin Library. Programs alternate week to week between "Scientists" and "Artists." See the schedule at jaxpubliclibrary.org/events.

Celebrate fantastic junior artists like yours at our annual Elementary Art Exhibition. Art work will be on display at Mandarin and South Mandarin Libraries through April 29.

With S.T.E.A.M. & Stories (for ages five through 12), you get S.T.E.M. + Art, along with reading and fun, hands-on activities every Monday at 3:30 p.m. at Mandarin Library.

Drop in for the second annual Egg Hunt from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. on April 12 at Mandarin Library. There will be fun treats and a craft! Also on Saturday, April 12: Discover fascinating animals



Photo courtesy Jacksonville Public Library

and plants through hands-on activities and storytelling. Join us for Read with a National Park Service Ranger (a new program for ages five through 12) from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. at Mandarin Library.

Kids (aged nine through 12): Discover your inner LEGO Legend this April and May. Join the Masters of Spinjitzu as they search for their missing leaders. You'll help them solve problems and complete building challenges! Discover Lab: LEGO Legends runs Wednesdays from 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. at South Mandarin Library and Thursdays from 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. at Mandarin Library.

Teens (aged 12 - 17): Do you often read a book and think, "That's not what I would do?" Now's your chance to be in charge of the story. Teen Lab: Engineer Your Adventure runs 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. on Fridays, starting April 11, at South Mandarin Library.

Save the date: The Friends of South Mandarin Library Book Sale is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 1-2and from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on May 3. Fill up a brown paper bag full of books for \$10 (plastic bags, \$5). Individual items will be \$1 and up.



travel - pantry raiders - gardening

## fishing - entertainment - puzzles

Get to Know...

By Martie Thompson editor@floridanewsline.com

Jimmy Orth

Jimmy Orth is the executive director of the St. Johns Riverkeeper; this year, the organization is celebrating its 25th anniversary as an advocate for and educator about the St. Johns River. Jimmy is a native of Jacksonville and grew up in the Mandarin area. He has a marketing degree from Florida State University and a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of North Florida. He started working with the Riverkeeper 21 years ago, right after he finished his master's degree at UNF. "The St. Johns Riverkeeper was looking to hire its first executive director at the time," he said. "I took a chance on them and they took a chance on me ... and 21 years later, here I am." Orth is married to Genora Crain-Orth and has a 17-year-old son. The family has two dogs and "an unknown number" of cats (including two inside cats and outside cats).

## Q: Have you always been interested in the St. Johns River?

A: Growing up near the river, we were always exploring the area and riding our bikes. I had friends who lived on the river and we would jump off their docks into the river or fish along the shoreline. As I grew up, I had buddies who had boats, so we would go skiing. In my early years, the river was imprinted on me, but I didn't consider myself an environmentalist until I attended an Earth Day celebration in Tallahassee and eventually became involved in the Sierra Club. That's what led me to go back to school to get my

## Get to Know ...

Interested in being featured? Email Martie Thompson at editor@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Jimmy Orth

master's in Public Administration ... I hoped for a job with an environmental non-profit.

## Q: What does the St. Johns River-keeper do?

A: Primarily, we advocate for the river and try to find policy solutions to protect the river. We educate adults and children about the river and plant seeds for the next generation of advocates. If we introduce people to the river, and they experience it, then they will care about it. We also investigate problems in the river, such as recently in areas south of Mandarin where we have seen a lot of grasses disappear after Hurricane Irma. Normally these grasses grow back after a time and we're trying to figure out why they haven't.

## Q: What do you like the most about your job?

A: Probably the people I've met along the way. There are so many who care about and have a deep connection to the river, such as fishers and boaters. I like seeing people get involved as volunteers and donors and I like the education work we do with kids. I'm also proud of the fact that we're still here and moving forward. We haven't given up. This is a challenging job and there are many obstacles to protecting the river. We don't win all the battles, but we keep going.

We can all agree that we need to protect the river, regardless of political persuasion. We all want a clean and healthy river; how do we work together to get that? I think we've done a pretty good job on this over the years.

## Q: What volunteer opportunities are available with the St. Johns Riverkeeper?

A: We have administrative opportunities as well as we always need people to man a Riverkeeper booth at various events, which gives the opportunity to educate people about the river. We need a strong constituency for the river, so one thing people can do is respond to our Calls to Action and write letters on various subjects to their elected officials. Also, river cleanups are always popular. They're a good way for groups to get together and see the tangible results of their efforts.

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

A: I like doing projects around the house and also paddling and hiking outdoors. I walk every day and listen to a lot of podcasts.

[Editor's Note: Visit https://stjohnsriverkeeper.org/ for more information or follow them on Instagram or Facebook.] Run for the Hungry cont. from pg.1

Last year, with more than 475 runners participating and contributions from valued sponsors, the Rotary Club of Mandarin donated more than \$36,000 to local charities, including a combined \$25,000 to the Mandarin Food Bank and Daily Bread Food Pantry. This year, they aim to surpass that amount.

The Rotary Club of Mandarin has a long history of supporting local and international charities, thanks to the generous support of local businesses and residents. In recent years, they have provided seven thermal imaging cameras to the Mandarin division of Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department, grants to K-9s for Warriors, donations to Polio Plus (a program to eradicate polio), a van to the Mandarin Food Bank, and thousands of dollars to other local charities.

Visit https://1stplacesports.com/ races/rotary5k for more information about the race and to register.

**Q&A with Michael Boylan** cont. from pg. 6

#### Q: What's the latest on your attempt to fund a preservation and beautification effort for Mandarin?

A: An appropriation of (up to) \$152,000 from the council's Contingency Account in order to engage a consulting entity to bring together various homeowner and neighborhood associations within the district for the purpose of creating an organization/ plan that advances the well being of our community was approved by the full council. I'm now working with the Neighborhoods Department in drafting an RFP.

## 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.





G

Answers on page 3 Provided by MetroCreative



#### **Dr. Jessica Proctor**

"For Bright Florida Smiles"

904-268-7552 www.MandarinSouthDentistry.com

#### **CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. English TV station
- 4. It fuels cars
- 7. Where ships dock (abbr.)
- 10. Indigenous people of Thailand 11. Midway between northeast
- 12. Small Milky Way constellation 50. Discuss again
- 13. Fritz \_\_\_, Austrian chemist 15. A Brit's grandmother
- 16. Colombian city
- 19. Visualize
- 21. Charged
- 23. People's assets
- 24. Informative books
- 26. You can do it with your horn
- 27. Agents of your downfall
- 30. Central Uganda city
- 34. Supervises flying

- 35. Type of tree 36. Alfalfa
- 41. Dishwasher soap brand
- 45. Hall where military eats
- 46. Ancient Greek City
- 47. Speaks incessantly
- 54. Extreme greed
- 55. Adopt or support
- 56. Fantasy writer Russell
- 57. Seize
- 59. Early Mesoamerican civilizati
- 60. Noted pet detective Ventura
- 61. Automobile
- 62. Georgia rockers
- 63. Color opposite green 64. Amount of time
- 65. Attempt

#### **CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Sheep sound
- 2. Some can be emotional 3. Inflammation of colon lining
- 4. Origins
- 5. Comedienne Gasteyer
- 6. Perceived by the senses
- 7. A place to play ball
- 8. Occur before 9. Animal body parts
- 13. Thanksgiving dessert
- 14. Root mean square (abbr.)
- 17. 1960s teen idol Bobby 18. Promotional materials
- 20. One point east of northeast
- 22. Piers Anthony protagonist
- 27. Popular sports league 28. Cologne
- 29. Partner to cheese

- 31. Constrictor snake
- 32. Not good 33. Supplement with difficulty
- 37. Hug with fondness
- 38. Enforced again
- 39. Small amount of time (abbr.)
- 40. Substance 41. Anterior parts of the brain
- 42. Brews
- 43. Where ships load cargo
- 44. Holiday season singer
- 47. "humbug!"
- 48. Monetary unit of Macao
- 49. Popular children's book elephan
- 51. Glutinous

58. Swiss river

52. Function 53. Old world, new

SPRING HAS SPRUNG WORD SEARCH

#### R K U В D Ι Ζ C 0 0 Α D S U D Ε G Н R L Κ D 0 S C Е G Ι N D N R N G Н G U G U Ε G F C В R Ι G Ε D В В Ε F R S Ι C C Ρ N R Ι Κ R T В Ε U U Ε Ρ Υ Α R Ζ D G В K A

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

### **WORDS**

AWAKENING **BLOOMS** BREEZE BUDDING BUNNY CHIRPING **EGGS** FLOWERS GARDEN GREEN GROWS INSECTS NEST POLLEN REBIRTH SAPLING SHOWERS SPRING SUNNY

**TREES** 

C.

D.

APRIL



7 22 19 21 10

Clue: Blooms

6 15 11

Clue: Beginnings of flowers

19 23 10 12 16 Clue: Temperate climate

10 23 9 26

Clue: Lots of wet precipitation

## **Happy Spring!** From your friends at Mandarin NewsLine



**Community Marketplace Call** (904) 886-4919 for advertising rates



## Snip's TREE & STUMP SERVICE



## **Paul Oklevitch ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST**

Over 35 Years Exp.



• Tree Preservation • Plant Health Care • Insect & Disease Treatments

LICENSED (904) 268-1017 INSURED www.snipstree.com





 Driveways
 Walkways Pavers Concrete Removal

Patios

floridaconcreteworks.com • Concrete Removal
• Driveway Extension

Catering to the needs of the homeowner since 2002

Call 904.838.1836 and let's talk about what we can do for you!

www.inshapeladiesfitness.com 9425 Craven Rd. Your Local Ladies Gym! 904.846.2419 IN SHAPE LADIES FITNESS Yoga, Pole, Zumba, and so much more! Senior Classes M-F 8:30am

Family friendly, kids welcome

**We offer Fictitious Name Advertisement** Call for more info! (904) 886-4919

TIME

Make the smart and ONLY CHOICE when tackling your roof!

FREE ESTIMATE

1.833.370.1234

#### **AUTOS/MISC**

Donate Your Car to Veterans Today! Help and Support our Veterans. Fast - FREE pick up. 100% tax deductible. Call 1-800-245-0398

New Phone Number! Do Not Run In AL Attention oxygen therapy users! Discover oxygen therapy that moves with you with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. Free information kit. 1-833-650-5419

#### MISCELLANEOUS

New Ad Copy! !!OLD **GUITARS WANTED!!** GIBSON, FENDER, MARTIN, Etc. 1930's to 1980's. TOP DOL-LAR PAID. CALL TOLL

FREE 1-866-433-8277 Do Not Run In: OR, VT, WV Inflation is at 40 year highs. Interest rates are way up. Credit cards. Medical bills. Car loans. Do you have \$10k or more in debt? Call National Debt Relief and find out how to pay off your debt for significantly less than what you owe! Free quote: Call 1-844-955-4930

We buy houses for cash as is! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy three step process: Call, get cash offer & get paid. Get your fair cash offer today by calling Liz Buys Hous-

es: 1-844-877-5833 Do Not Run In OR & Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, is concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. Call AmeriGlide today! 1-833-399-3595 Home break-ins take less than 60 seconds. Don't wait! Protect your family, your home, your assets now for as little as 70¢/ day! 1-844-591-7951

Jacuzzi Bath Remodel

can install a new, cus-

tom bath or shower in

as little as one day. For

a limited time, waving

all installation costs!

(Additional terms ap-

ply. Subject to change

and vary by dealer.

Offer ends 3/30/25.)

1-844-501-3208

MobileHelp Ameri-

## **Job Finder April:**

Starling operates several luxury senior living communities throughout the greater Jacksonville area. We are always looking for talented folks to join our team. Visit www.StarlingLiving.com/careers to view our current

ca's premier mobile medical alert system. Whether vou're home or away. For safety & peace of mind. No long term contracts! Free brochure! Call 1-888-489-3936 Replace your roof w/ the best looking & longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! 3 styles & multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off install + Additional 10% off install (military, health & 1st responders.) 1-833-370-1234 Consumer Cellular - same reliable, nationwide coverage as the largest carriers. No long-term contract, no hidden fees free activation. All plans feature unlimited talk & text, starting at just \$20/mo. Call 1-877-751-0866

DIRECTV Stream - Carries the most local MLB Games! Choice Package \$89.99/mo for 12 mos Stream on 20 devices at once. HBO Max included for 3 mos (w/Choice Package or higher.) No contract or hidden fees! Some restrictions apply. Call IVS 1-866-859-0405 Do Not Run In FL Wesley Financial Group, LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt & fees cancelled in 2019. Get free info package & learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. 833-308-1971 Bath & shower up-

dates in as little as 1

day! Affordable prices

- No payments for 18

months! Lifetime war-

ranty & professional

installs. Senior & military discounts available. 1-877-543-9189

Do Not Run In AK, AZ, ID, MT, ND, NM, NV, SD Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debrisblocking gutter protection. Schedule free LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-833-610-1936

Do Not Run In MN, MT, NH, NM, RI, VT, WA

Dental insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400+ procedures. Real dental insurance - not just a discount plan. Get your free Information Kit with details! 1-855-526-1060 www.dental50plus.com/ads #6258

Become a published

Expires 12/31/2024 MADE IN THE U.S.A. ( ) Lall today and receive a FREE SHOWER PACKAGE **PLUS \$1600 OFF** 

author. We want to read your book! Dorrance Publishing trusted since 1920. Consultation, production, promotion & distribution. Call for free author's guide 1-877-729-4998 or visit dorranceinfo.com/ads Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a

free 5-Year warranty

with qualifying pur-

chase\* Call 1-855-948-6176 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

1-855-417-1306

purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-InTub. Not applicable with any previous tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must pres offer at time of purchase. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445

SERVICE DIRECTORY

AGING ROOF? NEW HOMEOWNER? STORM DAMAGE? You need a local expert provider that proudly stands behind their work. Fast, free estimate, Financing available. Call 1-888-878-9091 Have zip code of property ready when calling!

Water damage cleanup & restoration: A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do complete repairs to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-888-872-2809. Have zip code of service location ready when you call!

## **Act II Players announce** upcoming events

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

The Act II Players, an acting troupe based in Mandarin, is all about learning, performing and having fun. The troupe has been busy planning upcoming events, and invites the community to join whether to perform, to play a behind-the-scenes role, or to come enjoy a show.

"Run for the Roses Cabaret," a radiant evening of cheer and charm through song and dance as well as traditional Kentucky Derby food and drinks, will be staged on May 3 at 6 p.m. Audition to sing, dance, and/or perform a monologue on Monday, April 7 at 6:30 p.m. (Video submissions accepted at info@ actiiplayers.org) Rehearsals will be held April 28 and 29 at 6:30 p.m.

"Bright Star: The Musical," a Theatrical Rights Worldwide Production), with music, book, and story by Steve Martin and Edie Brickell will be staged in July. "Bright Star" is a heartwarming, toe-tapping musical that takes audiences on an unforgettable journey of love, resilience, and redemption. Set against the stunning backdrop of the American South in the 1920s and 1940s, this Tony-nominated show weaves together two timelines to tell a deeply moving story inspired by a true event. Featuring a soulful, bluegrass-inspired score, "Bright Star" celebrates the power of hope, the bonds of family, and the discovery of a long-buried secret that has the power to transform lives.

Directed by Jacksonville native Juliet Fixel (New York City choreographer, director, and owner/artistic director of JFix Productions and Choreography) and Ava Fixel (artistic director of Act II Players), this production will bring together singers, dancers, musicians and artists of all kinds. The troupe is seeking actors who sing, singers who dance, musicians who sing or dance and contemporary/modern dancers. Dancers with all levels of vocal ability are encouraged to attend (must be 18 to audition for this show). Full availability for June/ July is imperative due to the condensed rehearsal period.

Auditions (for actors who sing, singers who dance, musicians who sing or dance): April 10 – 11, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. Prepare 32 bars of a musical theatre, folk, or bluegrass song. Accompaniment will be provided. (Musicians are encouraged to accompany themselves.) Auditions (for contemporary/ modern dancers): April 12, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Come prepared to move. Callbacks: April 13, 10 - 2 p.m. Rehearsals will start in mid-May; performance dates are July 18,19, 25, and 26, at 7:30 p.m. and July 20 and 27 at 2 p.m.

All In-Person Auditions will be at the Act II Players Rehearsal Facility: Almost Home Daybreak, 3604 Cardinal Point Drive.

Email info@actiiplayers.org for more information.

## The **Pantry Raiders**

## Pecans add the perfect finishing touch

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Pecans can make any recipe better. Whether they add a nutritious crunch to oatmeal, star as the lead ingredient in pecan pie or give cookies that little something extra, pecans elevate the foods they touch.

In this recipe "Twice-Baked Sweet Potatoes" from "Simply Scratch" (Avery) by Laurie McNamara, honeycovered pecans are the crowning touch on sweet potatoes, helping to make this side dish one to remember at any special meal.

#### **Twice-Baked Sweet Potatoes**

(Serves 4)

2 medium sweet potatoes, scrubbed

1 tsp. olive oil

4 tbsp. unsalted butter

2 tbsp. pure maple syrup

2 tsp. chili powder

½ tsp. ground cinnamon ½ tsp. kosher salt, plus a pinch

2 tbsp. honey

3/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans

Preheat the oven to 400F.

Massage the olive oil onto the sweet potatoes and set them on a small baking sheet. Bake for 1 hour or until a knife glides through effortlessly. Let cool until safe to handle. Keep the oven on.



Twce-Baked Sweet Potatoes

Halve the sweet potatoes horizontally and carefully scoop out the flesh into a medium bowl. Set the skins aside. Add the butter, maple syrup, chili powder, cinnamon, and 1/4 teaspoon of the salt and use a potato masher to mash the filling until smooth.

In a small bowl, combine the honey, pecans, and a pinch of salt.

Place the skins side by side in a small baking dish. Spoon the filling in, dividing it evenly, and top with the honeyed pecans. Bake for 5 minutes. Serve warm.

# Summer Camp Activities Guide



## **Summer camp options abound**

By Newsline Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Summer camp season will be here before parents know it. While children anxiously await the last day of school, adults know that it can be challenging to keep kids occupied and mentally stimulated when they aren't in the classroom. Although it may be alright to enjoy a few days lounging around and playing video games, too much sedentary behavior is not good for anyone, even children. Families turn to summer camp to provide children with activities to occupy their time when school is not in session.

Camps catering to a variety of interests are open to youngsters, so there's likely one out there to excite every

child. Each year, more than 25 million children and adults take part in the camp experience, says the American Camp Association. Summer camp gives kids a chance to spread their wings and enjoy new adventures. When seeking camps, families can consider interests, proximity, cost, and other variables. Here are some of the different types of camps families can consider.

Day camp: Day camps are a popular choice. Day camps tend to be general recreation camps that offer an array of activities. Campers are dropped off (or bussed) in the morning, and arrive home early evening. These camps are readily accessible and run by various organizations. Some camps enable you



Summer camp options abound. It's only a matter of identifying a path for children and then seeking a camp that offers the desired program.

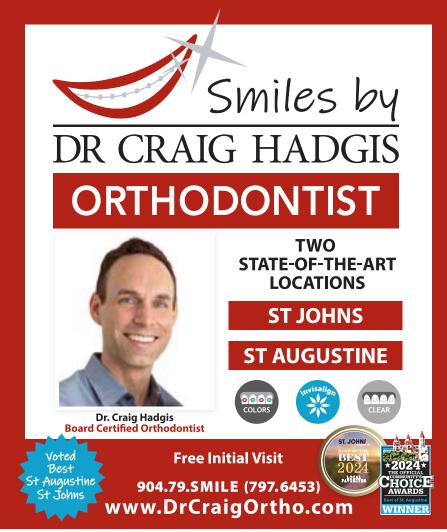
to pay by the week, rather than committing to an entire season.

Sleep-away camp: Like the name implies, sleep-away camp hosts campers overnight, typically for several weeks. This may be children's first extended time away from home, and there's bound to be a few nerves that spring up. Round-the-clock activities and chances to bond with their peers can help kids overcome fears of being away from home.

Academic camp: Academic camps focus their attention on various subjects, putting like-minded children together. Academic summer programs ensure children's brains stay active, helping students avoid that dreaded "summer slide." Some of these camps mimic a school day so they are familiar to kids. Academic focus may vary from general academia to specific subjects like STEM to astronomy to the arts.

Scout camp: Boys and girls participating in scouting programs often have the option to attend summer camp. During camp, kids will have an opportunity to earn badges and advance their rank. Many scout districts have relationships with a specific scout campsite where troops from all over live and advance together for a week or so during the summer.

Fitness and sports camps: Fitness-minded campers or those who play particular sports can investigate camps that focus on fitness and sports performance. These may be more rigorous than other types of camps since they involve lots of physical activity. Wilderness preparation camp is another type of camp that may fit into this category. It will highlight survival training and help mold active hikers and campers.





Did you know?
Archived issues of
Mandarin
NewsLine
may be
found online!
Visit
www.
floridanewsline.
com

# Summer Camp Activities Guide<sup>a</sup>



## Benefits of attending summer camp

By NewsLine Staff mail@floridanewsline.com

Summer camp is something akin to a rite of passage for millions of youngsters each year. Many adults look back fondly on their experiences at summer camp, often crediting such times as formative periods in their lives.

Summer camp benefits children in myriad ways. Recognition of the many advantages of attending summer camp can serve as a great reminder of just how fun it can be for children to spend their time away from school at a camp of their choosing.

- Campers continue to socialize throughout summer. Socializing isn't just for the school year. While children in high school might be independent enough to come and go with their friends during summer break, kids who are still in elementary school or middle school might not be old enough to handle such freedom. That can make it hard to stay in touch with friends, which in turn can contribute to feelings of boredom and loneliness. Camp provides ample opportunities for young children to socialize during a time of year when they might not see their school friends as often as they're used to.
- Campers can expand their horizons. Though some summer camps are exclusive to residents of certain communities, many tend to feature children from numerous towns or municipalities. Such camps provide an opportunity for campers to expand their horizons by engaging with youngsters who come from different backgrounds. Indeed, the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University notes that summer camp may be the first time children spend substantial amounts of time with people whose backgrounds differ from their own.
- Camp can get kids off their devices.



Summer camp benefits children in myriad ways

Modern children are growing up in a digital world, and parents know how hard it can be to get kids to put down their devices and get outdoors. But the key to making that pivot could be access to outdoor play spaces. A 2025 study from researchers at the University of Michigan published in the journal "Health and Place" found that efforts to reduce kids' screen time are more successful when children are given a chance to play outside. Many summer camps are structured around outdoor play, making them a potentially invaluable ally as parents seek to help children cut back on the time they spend using their devices. Children who do not attend camp and live in households where both parents work or in singleparent households where Mom or Dad works may be forced to spend much of summer indoors, which could increase the frequency with which they turn to devices to occupy their time.

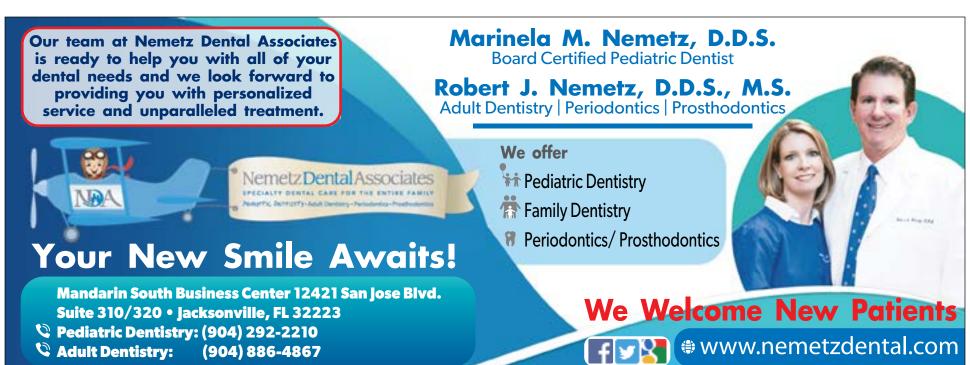
• Camp adds structure to summer days. Once a school year ends, the structure a school day provides vanishes into thin air. Couple that with extracurricular activities that go on hiatus during summer vacation, and kids accustomed to structure are left with little to do and no need to schedule their time. That can add an aimlessness to summer days. Camp can provide the structure kids are accustomed to but still offer a break from responsibilities like homework or the commitments required of extracurricular activities.

**Summer Camp & Activities Guide** 

returns in our May issue!

**Call (904) 886-4919 to include your business!** 





## **Effective Marketing. Better Results.**

Advertise with your community newspapers!





Unearthing Mother Nature brings gifts of abundance.
At HarborChase, a bounty of locally grown produce,
dairy and seafood artfully moves from land and
sea to the well-appointed table.

Senior living inspired by new heights of excellence.







Mandarin | (904) 584-9806



## **Jimmy's Fishing Report**

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewsline.com

Happy April everybody! We've got a lot to look forward to this month as our seasonal saltwater species really start to pile into our area. If you're not done with your freshwater exploits this is probably the last month you want to brave confined areas like our local creeks especially on the weekends. Some specks might still be spawning, but most will be transitioning back out to the river or deep water havens in the creeks. Bass will mostly be done as well and making similar travel plans, except replace deep water with shallow heavy cover areas. They'll all be hungry though, so that's a plus. The creeks will still be absolutely gorgeous with a flush of green on all the trees so if we get a nice cool day, I'd take advantage of it.

I'm really excited to talk about saltwater fish this month. April is usually the height of the spring transition when waters warm to 70 degrees and it will likely be the last time we'll see that temperature until the fall. The surf will be teaming with pompano and whiting as they make their migrations north and the river will be filling up with everything from tarpon to croakers.

Some of the first signs of this will be the bait schools moving into the river. On calm days anchovies and small menhaden can be seen feeding at the surface. Both are filter feeders so they will skim algae and plankton. Underneath them will be the plethora of saltwater species we've been waiting for, such as redfish, trout, ladyfish, etc.

Shrimp will also be filling the river this month, but we'll have to wait until June 1 to throw a net for them. We can use store bought fresh dead or if you have any frozen from last year that will work too. Artificial shrimp like Gulp or DOA will also be productive. I mentioned this last month, but try to match the size of your lures to the size of the bait around. The shrimp, anchovies, and menhaden will be on the smaller side so try to match those. It really matters sometimes.

Sheepshead fishing should be great. I like to anchor up current from a structure, whether it's a bridge or dock, and put small pieces of shrimp or clams on the bottom very close to those structures. Minimize everything — hooks, weights, and leaders. Tight lines.

#### Briefs cont. from pg. 2

Lawrence will talk about creating core fears and desires of your characters — using real psychological principles — to elevate your story. Learn how to create unforgettable protagonists and villains whose motivations feel deeply human, making every twist and turn resonate with readers on a deep emotional level. From detectives to masterminds and their victims, discover how psychology can transform your character development process from flat to unforgettable.

Northeast Florida Sisters in Crime is a chapter of the national organization and serves mystery, crime, and thriller writers and readers. Programs feature speakers in forensic science, psychology, and law enforcement fields. Bring your coffee and bring a friend. The group welcomes men and women to learn more about writing, promoting, and enjoying crime fiction. Contact floridasistersincrime@gmail.com for more information.

# Visit us online! www.floridanewsline.com



# Gardening

## Assessing "Ecosystem Services": A way of looking at our landscapes

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale mail@floridanewsline.com

I came across the term "ecosystem services" in several training sessions last year, and it seemed a bit pretentious. The lectures were, after all, by leaders in their fields at The University of Florida so it's not a term in everyday use. But it just prompts us to consider what we want from our yards and gardens, while considering the needs of the creatures that share our spaces.

When it comes to the pretty neighbors — the birds and butterflies that many gardeners hope to attract, it seems easy enough. Give them food, water, and shelter, and they will come. But I've learned that it's not that straightforward. For example, while birds are nesting and rearing their young, they need high protein insects to fatten their brood, so a feeder offering seed isn't enough.

Now we might begin to consider the ecosystem services of our plants. Are they attractive to our local insects, buzzing with bees and other pollinators? Some flowering plants might not have the necessary characteristics to support our insect life. While I love the perfume of the tea olive near my drive, I haven't seen insects homing in on its tiny flowers. Maybe they lack nectar and pollen that is easily accessible? Maybe the flowers simply don't produce enough? Maybe there is something in its genes that makes it clear that it's an exotic introduction, not a native plant? It certainly doesn't attract any egg-laying insects; there are never any caterpillars browsing its leaves. No bird food here.

Modern cultivars of some of our classic flowers are hybridized and bred for characteristics like vigor, larger flowers, and a longer blooming season. But sometimes that's at the expense of what a flower is supposed to do—and that's produce seed after being fertilized by sometimes specialized insects. With those changes, insects may no longer be able to access the food, if it's even still available.

And of course, we sometimes resort to dousing a plant in insecticides if it has a severe infestation of "pests," which we could otherwise consider "bird food," especially if those pests are caterpillars. Maybe that plant's ecosystem service is simply to attract food for the birds?



Photo courtesy Lesley Arrandale Crossvine (Bignonia capreolata)

So ecosystem services, while sounding like jargon, is a term that encourages us to evaluate what role our plants play in our environment. My oldtimey tea olive (Osmanthus fragrans) isn't very useful, except to give me pleasure with its sublime perfume. It isn't even dense enough for nesting birds, although they use it to perch in their journeys around my yard. But the native crossvine (Bignonia capreolata) winding its way through a rangy old beautyberry (Callicarpa americana) provides food for bumblebees who happily nose their way into the trumpet-shaped flowers. And the tangled vines provide a perfect place for northern cardinals to nest.

We can also evaluate ecosystem services when it comes to our pleasure. Like my tea olive, maybe some of your choices will benefit only you. After all, a yard that doesn't give you pleasure won't be satisfying to live or work in. But a yard that is devoid of other creatures doesn't work for me. Even if a yard is picture perfect, without the unexpected encounter — that black racer slipping out of sight under the shrimp plant, the now rare sight of lovebugs mating on our Simpson's stopper (Myrcianthes fragrans) — where is the mystery? Where is the fun?

There will be attractive plants to tempt me, but if they hold no value for our wildlife I shall think twice before choosing them over native plants.

Visit us online! www.floridanewsline.com

## **Mandarin Garden Club announces annual plant sale**

By Joann Butler mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Garden Club will hold its annual Plant Sale on Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. each day at 2892 Loretto Road. A wide variety of low-cost, high-quality plants and hanging baskets will be for sale, plus various lawn ornaments, pots and garden related items.

The Florida Friendly Landscape will be available for public education and Master Gardeners will be available for consultation. The Jacksonville Rose Society, the Orchid Society, African Violet Society and the Bonsai Club will be available for sales and public education.

Gift items made by the Garden Club's Crafty Ladies will be available for purchase. There will be handcrafted unique items that will make wonderful gifts for Mother's Day, Graduation Day, birthdays or any other special occasion. Club members will sell baked goods in the café. Coffee and water will be available for free. There will also be several new vendors including a baker who will be bringing her sourdough bread and other goodies. The Master Gardeners Crafters Boutique will be open and garden designers and growers will also be onsite.







#### **Iceland in Winter**

By Debi Lander mail@floridanewsline.com

Floridians enjoy some of the mildest winters in the U.S., but I grew up in Virginia, recalling snow-filled child-hood memories. Craving a winter wonderland, I set off for Iceland, hoping to see snowfall and the Northern Lights.

Surprisingly, flights from New York or Boston to Iceland take only five hours — closer than many imagine. Yet, everything in Iceland feels foreign — in the best way. The language is complex and nearly impossible to pronounce, the currency can be perplexing, but almost everyone speaks English. The highland is the dramatic range of landscapes — otherworldly in any season.

As my plane landed, I glimpsed a layer



Awesome Diamond Bead

of white blanketing everything, a vision of Game of Thrones' icy Wall. Unable to check into my hotel so early, I headed straight to the Blue Lagoon.

Iceland's most famous attraction was actually formed by accident. In 1976, wastewater from the Svartsengi geothermal power plant created a mineral-rich pool. Initially deemed unsafe for bathing, it soon became a local secret as workers discovered its soothing effects. By 1981, researchers confirmed the water's healing properties, and in 1992, the Blue Lagoon officially opened as a spa retreat.

After showering, I descended steps into an indoor extension of the pool before slipping through a curtain into

the open air. The cold morning wind jabbed me, but the water felt silky and warm. Steam rose against the black lava fields, creating an ethereal atmosphere. I smoothed the silica mud — provided onsite — over my face letting it dry as I meandered around. I explored a small cave, the steam room, and a sauna. Fully relaxed, I finally made my way to Reykjavík.

Reykjavík is a blend of Nordic charm and modern energy best enjoyed on foot. I passed colorful buildings adorned with street art, visited Hallgrímskirkja, the striking church with panoramic city views, and admired Harpa Concert Hall's shimmering glass facade. Along the waterfront, I paused at the Sun Voyager, a sleek steel rib-like sculpture reminiscent of a Viking ship.

The next morning, I set off on a small-group tour of the Golden Circle, arriving at Thingvellir National Park just as the sun crept over the horizon (winter daylight comes late). Fresh snowfall blanketed the landscape, turning it into a magical scene A tiny church stood near the winding Öxará River, looking like something from a fairytale.

At Gullfoss, a thundering two-tiered waterfall, snowflakes swirled around me as mist rose from the canyon below. The Hvítá River plunges 105 feet into a rugged abyss. I took in the view from multiple vantage points — each more picturesque than the last, and wished I could have lingered longer.

Next was Haukadalur, a geothermal field alive with bubbling mud pots and steaming vents. I watched Strokkur Geyser erupt, a sudden burst of scalding water rocketing skyward before vanishing just as quickly. Unlike Yellowstone's Old Faithful, Strokkur's displays are brief but frequent.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander Blue Lagoon in the early morning.

Another long day took me along Iceland's stunning south coast to Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon and nearby Diamond Beach. Icebergs, freshly calved from the glacier, floated across the lagoon before washing ashore, glistening like diamonds against the black sand. The surreal contrast of ice and volcanic shore is mesmerizing — I could hardly tear myself away.

No winter trip to Iceland would be complete without chasing the Northern Lights. Bundled up and full of anticipation, I ventured beyond Reykjavík to escape light pollution. But luck was not on my side; only the faintest shimmer of green and purple flickered across the cloudy sky. Still, the magic of Iceland in winter left me spellbound as I returned to sunny, warm Florida.

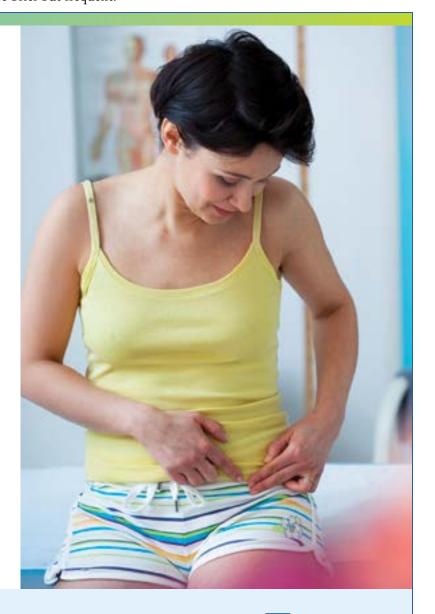
Visit www.bylandersea.com to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.

## Could it be a hernia? 8 silent signs

Yes, women get hernias — but the signs are not always obvious. Most common is a bulge in the abdomen, but here are some other symptoms that you may be more likely to ignore:

- Pain in the pelvic area
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever
- Constipation
- Feeling full and bloated
- Heartburn
- Weakness and muscle fatigue in the upper leg or groin
- Pain when lifting or coughing

If left untreated, your hernia could grow, get more painful, or even become dangerous at some point. And a hernia won't go away on its own. The good news is today's minimally invasive hernia treatment options, including robotic-assisted surgery, can offer you fast recovery.





For more information or to request an appointment: Visit BaptistHernia.com, call 904.202.2019 or scan the QR code.

