

COUNTY CONNECTION



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Marion Celebrates its

Altruistic ALL-STARS

Compiled By Christy Jergens, Marion County Office of Public Information

Some people visit Marion County's government offices to ask a question. Some people visit to obtain a service. A select group, however, chooses to spend its free time by giving back to the community in our government offices and locations. Since 2005, Florida has celebrated each April as Florida Volunteer Month. As part of this year's Florida Volunteer Month, County Connection staff wanted to highlight and thank some of Marion County's dedicated volunteers.

1 Don Hankey

Don Hankey, U.S. Navy Retired, first volunteered with Marion County Veterans Services in 1999. One of the original volunteers for Veterans Services, he has "seen the park transform from two rickety sheds to the beautiful four acre memorial park." Always willing to assist with a friendly smile and a hearty laugh, Hankey helps conduct Ocala-Marion County Veterans Memorial Park tours and assists with park programs and beautification efforts.

2 Mary Ellen Idziak

Mary Ellen Idziak is the captain of the cat room at the Marion County Animal Center. An Animal Services volunteer

since 2001, she faithfully comes to the shelter twice a week to help the shelter's cats in whatever way she can. Idziak assists customers and staff, doing everything from helping visitors select the perfect cat for them to clipping cat claws and topping off the felines' water bowls. Idziak is the cat room staple that contributes to many cats finding homes.

"I try to get a feel for the cats' personalities so I can help make good matches with potential adopters," she said. "Many cats, especially the ones who are surrendered by their owners, are lonesome and starved for attention."

3 Tom Idziak

Like his wife Mary Ellen, Tom Idziak also reports to the Marion County Animal Center twice a week. Volunteering with dogs since 2001, he walks them, socializes with them so they're more comfortable around others, teaches them basic commands and helps break any bad habits.

One of Idziak's favorite parts of volunteering is getting to see the successes as they happen. "I like that I can see results

Continued on page 2.



Mission Statement

Marion County provides professional and resourceful public services for our citizens through strategic planning and cost-effective implementation of county initiatives, generating positive results that set the standard for quality local government.

TOP STORY

Marion Celebrates its

Altruistic ALL-STARS (CONTINUED)

first-hand every time a dog gets adopted," he said. "We're really helping to save lives and find animals great homes."

4 Gene and Robin McCarthy

Volunteer Chief Gene and Volunteer Lieutenant Robin have seen Marion County Fire Rescue evolve through the years. Gene retired from the Springfield, Massachusetts Fire Department in 1985 and began volunteering with MCFR in 1986. Robin began volunteering one year after her husband.

Gene initially helped with the truck upkeep, but his prior fire department experience led him to get fully involved as a volunteer firefighter; Robin, a nurse, earned her EMT and paramedic certifications through fire rescue. Together the pair operated one of the few rescue units in service at the time and assisted with teaching fire safety to school students.

Gene now serves as a Volunteer Coordinator and assists with ensuring that volunteers are up-to-date on their training and that equipment needs are met. The pair doesn't expect recognition for what they do though, stating "knowing that you're making a difference is recognition enough."

5 Raymond McNeal

Growing guru Raymond McNeal started his volunteer career with UF/IFAS Marion County

Extension Service in 1987. Currently, McNeal teaches a master gardener class and volunteers at the department's plant clinic twice a month, where he answers questions about vegetable gardening.

Extension Agent Norma Samuel said the department is delighted he volunteers with them. "Everyone is always amazed about his knowledge of vegetable varieties and new pest control products," she said. "He is passionate about vegetable gardening and enjoys sharing his knowledge of growing vegetables with others."

6 Patty Minto

Patty Minto, Marion County Parks and Recreation Department volunteer, decided to join the county volunteer force in early 2009. Wanting to upgrade her professional office skills, Minto set up shop in the Parks and Recreation department assisting with data entry, customer service and division programs. According to staff, one of her favorite projects is the "Brown Bag Bunny Brunch."

Minto's volunteer efforts last beyond state borders too. She enjoyed volunteering so much in Marion County that she

now volunteers for her local county library when she returns home to Michigan for the summer.

7 Jim Wrye

Jim Wrye believes that veterans should support other veterans, so after more than 20 years in the military, he joined the volunteer ranks at Marion County Veterans Services. A retired member of the U.S. Air Force, Wrye conducts tours of the Ocala-Marion County Veterans Memorial Park, which includes brief history lessons, and assists during park programs and with park beautification efforts. Wrye has volunteered at the park for three years.



BEST-KEPT SECRET

AN AFFORDABLE DAY AWAY KP HOLE

By Gina Peebles, Marion County Parks and Recreation



Warmer weather is arriving, and with it, a desire to have some fun in the sun. Luckily for area residents, an affordable day away is nearby at Marion County's KP Hole Park (9435 SW 190th Road, Dunnellon).

Families can spend the day on the Rainbow River at KP Hole. The park is open daily and offers swimming, picnicking, canoeing and kayaking. Tube rentals are available on a seasonal basis.

From Oct. 1 to mid-May, the park is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from mid-May to Sept. 30, the park is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or until no parking is available). The daily user fee is only \$3 per person; children under five are free.

Rainbow River visitors can see everything from freshwater fish and turtles to regional birds such as heron, ibis, anhinga, cormorants and the occasional hawk searching for dinner. Some lucky day-trippers may even get to see the occasional alligator or river otter.

Designated an Outstanding Florida Waterway and Aquatic Preserve, the Rainbow River is a must-visit spot for nature lovers and fun seekers alike.

KP BASICS

Tube rentals are \$9 plus tax, which includes return shuttle service. Guests bringing their own flotation device (60" maximum) may purchase a pre-paid return shuttle pass for only \$7, which includes tax.

The average **tubing/float trip** from KP Hole to Blue Run of Dunnellon Park is approximately four hours. Your float time may vary based on weather and/or water levels. Tubing with return shuttle service is available daily April 1 through Sept. 30.

Canoe/kayak rentals require a credit card or \$50 cash deposit. Safety equipment is included. Each canoe can accommodate up to three people. Prices are per hour/per vessel with a minimum one hour charge required.

Down-river trip-riders explore the Rainbow River and then are transported back to the park from Blue Run of Dunnellon Park. The average trip is two hours.

- Single Kayak – \$25 plus tax (includes return shuttle pass).
- Double Kayak – \$35 plus tax (includes return shuttle pass for two people).
- Canoes – \$35 plus tax (includes return shuttle pass for three people).

Up-river trip-riders paddle upstream to the headsprings and drift back to KP Hole. The average trip is 1 ½ to two hours.

PARK AND RAINBOW RIVER RULES:

- No pets (excluding service animals).
- Coolers are subject to search. No alcohol.
- No disposable containers (such as cans, plastics, glass, styrofoam or paper) are permitted on the Rainbow River.
- Divers and snorkelers are required to float a "diver-down" flag.
- The entire Rainbow River is a designated "Idle Speed/No Wake" zone.
- The main springs are protected. Motorized vessels, anchoring, diving and fishing are not permitted beyond the marker buoy.
- Exiting the Rainbow River at any point except Blue Run of Dunnellon Park is considered unlawful trespassing and violators may be subject to arrest.

KP Hole Park is located at 9435 SW 190th Ave. Road in Dunnellon. For more information on your next family adventure, contact the park at 352-489-3055 or visit online at www.marion-countyfl.org.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Celebration of New Beginnings

By Cheryl Amey, Marion County Community Services and Heather Danenhow, Marion County Office of Public Information



April is Fair Housing Month, and Marion County Community Services is celebrating with style, hosting several activities that will highlight affordable housing, job preservation and community development programs throughout Marion County.

On Saturday, April 17, 2010, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., citizens are invited to attend the 10th Annual Ocala/Marion County Homebuyer Expo at the Central Florida Community College Webber Center (3001 SW College Road, Ocala).

The Home Buyer/Home Owner Expo is presented annually through a partnership among local affordable housing providers and agencies such as Habitat for Humanity, Ocala Housing Authority, Rural Development, Florida Low-Income Housing, Green Path Debt Solutions, Community Legal Services of Mid-Fla., Alarion Bank, UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service, Marion County Community Services, Marion County Board of County Commissioners and the City of Ocala.

Then, on Saturday, May 15, 2010, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Marion County Community Services will host "Celebration of New Beginnings." This event, which is free and open to the public, offers an open-house and tour of the first homes available for purchase through Marion County's Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Thanks to the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, Marion County government received \$6.3 million to acquire and rehabilitate foreclosed and abandoned homes in targeted areas hit hardest by foreclosures and declining property values.

All homes acquired and rehabilitated through the neighborhood stabilization program will use "green" technologies, such as high-efficiency HVAC and Energy Star appliances, energy-efficient windows, dual-flush toilets, tankless water heaters and added insulation.

Buyers must meet income-eligibility requirements and agree to live in the homes as their primary residence. Prospective buyers may purchase homes at discount prices from areas in Silver Springs Shores, Marion Oaks and Rainbow Park.

For more information, call Marion County Community Services at 352-671-8770, visit online at http://www.marioncountyfl.org/Community-Services/community_default.aspx or e-mail James Simon at james.simon@marioncountyfl.org.

Congratulations! Congratulations to Marion County Community Services Director Cheryl Amey, who won the James E. Huger Distinguished Service Award in March at this year's Florida Community Development Association Conference.



COMMISSION CORNER

By Heather Danenhower, Marion County Office of Public Information



Commissioners From L to R: Mike Amsden, Vice Chair Stan McClain, Chair Barbara Fitos, Charlie Stone and Jim Payton

April Marks the One-Year Anniversary of the

“Doing More With Less” PLAN

On April 21, 2009, the Marion County Board of County Commissioners unanimously adopted a three-year plan, called “Doing More with Less,” to serve as a roadmap to drive Marion County’s initiatives into the future. The document focused on five core county issues: improving internal and external communication, stimulating economic development, addressing the future of solid waste, preserving water resources and enhancing transportation infrastructure.

Though implementing the plan doesn’t solve all of Marion County’s challenges and more hard work is needed, commissioners and county leaders have made great strides to improve services to citizens. Some of the plan’s and county’s accomplishments include the following.

Improve Internal and External Communication

Unresponsive and inaccessible government is unacceptable. To improve customer service and enhance communication, commissioners and staff have:

- Created County Connection, this e-publication, to serve as an important information artery for Marion County citizens, employees and community leaders. More than 3,500 people receive County Connection delivered to their e-mail inboxes each month.

- Implemented a [Marketing Communication Handbook](#), [Media and Public Information Handbook](#) and [Language Access Communication Handbook](#) to improve the consistency and reliability of Marion County’s information as well as equitably reach Marion County’s diverse population.

- Reinitiated the Citizens Academy to provide citizens with a behind-the-scenes look at many Marion County services and departments. The program lasts for eight weeks and started March 4, 2010.

- Developed a new mission statement and guiding principles for Marion County government to empower and motivate employees and provide employees direction and focus.

- Upgraded Marion County’s Web site, www.marioncountyfl.org, to include a one-click Customer Service Center, an Ask/Advise option so citizens can communicate with the county administrator and monthly “moving forward” reports about county activity.

- Initiated regular meetings with county employees and department directors as well as community leaders from the Economic Development Corporation, Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce, City of Ocala, Central Florida Community College and local media.

Stimulate Diversified and Sustainable Economic Growth

With more than 15 percent of Marion Countians unemployed, Marion County leaders and elected officials have partnered with various economic development leaders to develop a joint economic development plan and unified position on funding infrastructure. To help get the job done, Marion County hired Lucienne Gauffillet, Marion County’s first Sustainable Growth Manager. Since June, commissioners and staff have:

- Provided Marion County Economic Development Incentive Grant, or EDFIG, dollars to the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Lockheed Martin, Intellon Corporation, Rasmussen College, Santelli Tempered Glass, Inc., Signature Brands, LLC, and Fire Programs Software. Two other EDFIGs were awarded but never paid because the companies were unable to fulfill the requirements of their contracts. To date, the EDFIG program has helped facilitate the potential creation of nearly 500 jobs.

- Established Marion County as an economic recovery zone, a federal designation that allows Marion County to take advantage of bonding

opportunities as part of the stimulus package. As part of the program, the public sector is eligible for up to \$6.8 million in bond money for infrastructure use, such as roads, utilities, parks, fire stations and many other facilities. The private sector is also eligible for tax-exempt status, as well as \$10.2 million in bond money for facility construction or expansion, land purchase or machinery and equipment acquisition.

- Helped develop a subsidized employment program with Workforce Connection and other economic development partners, serving as a state pilot program to hire more than two dozen people to work on projects within Marion County government during the first phase of the program. The second phase is already underway, which means more jobs for Marion County citizens.

- Suspended transportation impact fees to encourage economic development and called for the creation of a long-term Transportation Impact Fee Relief Program to establish specific criteria to promote and incentivize economic development and job creation.

- Approved a resolution to move forward with the Magna project, the potential development of 677 acres for an industrial/business park located on the northeast quadrant of I-75 and U.S. Highway 27.

- Updated the Procurement Services Department Ordinance, adopting a “buy local” preference policy and forming a small business program to help stimulate the economy and keep locals working.

Address Long-Term Solid Waste Disposal

Marion County has three solid waste disposal options: burn it, bury it or haul it away. Marion County can bury solid waste for only nine more years because the Baseline Landfill will reach its capacity. County leaders tried to haul it, but that proved expensive. Staff is continuing to research methods of expanding the current landfill and forming regional partnerships. So far, commissioners and staff have:

- Investigated the feasibility of building a waste-to-energy incinerator to turn Marion’s trash into energy in the form of electricity or heat. However, the

COMMISSION CORNER

three waste-to-energy companies could not demonstrate the reliability of their waste-to-energy technology or prove that they could obtain financing.

✓ Hosted a regional solid waste meeting in October to discuss disposal options. Representatives from Marion, Alachua, Levy, Sumter, Citrus, Lake and Hernando Counties attended. Commission Vice Chair Stan McClain participated as board liaison.

✓ Recycled 128,000 tons of trash, or 35 percent, exceeding the state standard of recycling 30 percent.

Protect Marion's Water Resources

Springs protection remains one of Marion County's top legislative priorities. In June, commissioners approved a Springs Protection Ordinance that will improve the water quality of Marion County's first magnitude springs, including Rainbow Springs and Silver Springs. The ordinance, more than four years in the making, encourages proactive measures such as low impact development, advanced stormwater systems and Florida-friendly landscaping. However, this ordinance serves as the first step, not the final step, to protecting Marion County's most precious resource – water. Other initiatives include the following:

✓ Received the Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce Walt Driggers Environmentalist of the Year award, recognizing the board's environmental stewardship. In 2009, commissioners supported multiple retrofit projects to prevent untreated stormwater from directly discharging into the Floridan Aquifer or a surface water body and advocated the need for public education workshops on water conservation, stormwater pollution prevention and proper use of fertilizer.

✓ House Speaker Larry Cretul appointed Commission Chair Barbara Fitos to the Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida, a state commission tasked with thinking boldly and developing innovative ideas to address Florida's growth and water resources.

✓ Approved text amendments to the Marion County Comprehensive Plan to include language that evaluates population and water usage for the southeast portion of the county through 2020 and enlarges springs protection zones to protect groundwater quality.

✓ Worked with the St. Johns River Water Management District to develop the 2009 and 2010 "Water Less" campaigns, teaching citizens water conservation techniques.

✓ Established formal public education plans for the Marion County Stormwater Division and Marion County Utilities Department to create awareness about stormwater issues and reduce needless water consumption.

Enhance Marion's Transportation Infrastructure

Marion County crews currently maintain 2,814 miles of roads, 53,530 traffic control signs, 112 traffic signals, 17,407 drainage structures and 2,124 drainage retention areas throughout the county. However, with Marion County's vast 1,600 square mile territory and a backlog of approximately \$800 million in road infrastructure expansion, county leaders are taking steps to address those challenges. This includes the maintenance of the county's 400 miles of unpaved roads. To date, county leaders have:

✓ Invested approximately \$27 million in major transportation facilities using a combination of federal funding, impact fees and bond revenue. Those projects include: County Road 200A, Southeast 31st Street, Southwest 60th Avenue, County Road 484, Northwest 80th Avenue, Northwest 44th Avenue and Marion Oaks sidewalks. Marion County was the first local agency in District 5 of the Florida Department of Transportation to receive a notice to proceed for a stimulus project.

✓ Secured a federal grant for \$622,400 from the Department of Energy to help with the synchronization of traffic signals and replace one-third of the existing incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient, light-emitting diodes. This technology has a longer life cycle and uses less energy to operate.

✓ Received \$4 million from the Florida Department of Transportation and \$3.6 million from federal earmarks to complete the Sharpes Ferry Bridge replacement project. The county additionally allocated \$4 million to this project.

Effective public outreach involves conducting research, identifying specific and measurable objectives and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives. Marion County leaders will continue using this approach as they celebrate successes and work to improve services for citizens. The "Doing More with Less" plan will also evolve into a 10-year strategic plan, "Marion County 20/20: A Clear Vision for Our Future."

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

By Karen Jensen, Marion County Public Library System and Peveeta Persaud, Marion County Fire Rescue

VOLUNTEERS LEAD THE WAY

1 Sara Dassance

Volunteers contribute many hours to Marion County's libraries – 15,737 hours in the 2008-2009 fiscal year alone. One of those volunteers is Sara Dassance, who helps with the Library Express program. Library Express provides story times at preschool locations throughout the county to children who may not be able to attend traditional, in-house library programs.

Wearing colorful aprons that denote the Library Express volunteer position, Express volunteers play a vital role in enhancing the library's efforts to foster a literate community and instill a joy of reading in young children. One of the most satisfying parts about Dassance's volunteering experience? Watching the children's expressions.

"The children are always so excited to see the library lady arrive with her books," Dassance said. "It is a joy to watch their faces as stories unfold and to know I am sharing my love of books with them."

2 Gerard Stroh

Gerard Stroh joined Marion County Fire Rescue in 1997, after a 26 year career with the FDNY and a six-year volunteer career with the Lindenhurst, NY firefighters. Stroh currently serves as a combat level volunteer, which means he is trained on the use of air packs and can assist in extinguishing fires inside burning buildings. He is the highest ranking volunteer at Friendship Station 21 (which houses both full-time and volunteer personnel).



NEWSFLASH

Water Conservation Month— Every Drop Counts!

By Nia Haynes, Marion County Utilities

As we thaw out from the winter and think about how to salvage our freeze-dried landscapes, we should consider how we use our water resources both inside and outside the house. April is Water Conservation Month, and the St. Johns River Water Management District has partnered with Marion County Utilities to help coordinate its "Water Less" public education campaign.

You may have already seen the billboards or noticed the PSAs on TV and the radio. The "Water Less" campaign is designed to make citizens aware of our regional watering restrictions. April and May are typically high water consumption months; however, through the campaign and awareness activities, water officials want to keep that water usage rate as low as possible. For more information about this campaign, including the days that you can water, visit www.marioncountyfl.org.

As part of the month's festivities, Marion County Utilities is also planning a water audit for several facilities. This water audit will help the county find areas of high use and suggest retrofits that can be done to curb water consumption. Several county facilities have already implemented water-saving devices, such as the use of waterless urinals.

Citizens can learn more about how their water use by performing a water audit at home. Visit www.marion-countyfl.org/waterconservation.htm to download a home water survey. Residents can also check out tips for saving water indoors and out. After all, every drop counts when it comes to water conservation.

Wild CAVING EXPERIENCE BRICK CITY ADVENTURE PARK

By Christy Jergens, Marion County Office of Public Information and Gina Peebles, Marion County Parks and Recreation

Marion recreational opportunities are getting wilder. Crawl, climb and "cave" your way through the day with the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department's Basic Wild Caving Experience at White Cliff Cave in Brick City Adventure Park (1211 SE 22nd Road, Ocala).



Spelunkers, a.k.a. cave explorers, should be prepared for strenuous activity if they decide to take a walk on the wild side. Caving requires climbing and crawling on the stomach, hands and knees on rocky surfaces and in tight spaces. Participants should wear long pants and sturdy footwear as well as bring gloves and a change of clothes. The program costs \$30 per person and is limited to eight participants. Upcoming caving dates are April 10 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (ages 16+) or May 8 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. (ages 8+).

For more information or to register, call Marion County's Parks and Recreation Department at 352-671-8560.

Census Day Arrives!

By Christy Jergens, Marion County Office of Public Information



April 1 has arrived; have you completed your census form yet? April 1 marks Census Day across the nation, the day when everyone is required to mail their completed census forms. If you haven't completed your form yet, fill it in and mail it out today to help Marion matter.

The shortest in U.S. history, the census takes only 10 minutes to complete and provides critical demographic information about Marion County that will:

- Influence how the federal government allocates \$400 billion to communities for services, such as school lunch programs and centers for senior citizens.
- Determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Establish boundaries for legislative and congressional districts.
- Determine locations for retail stores, schools, hospitals, new housing developments and other community facilities.

Census Bureau representatives will begin visiting residences in person in late spring and throughout the summer if the resident hasn't mailed in a completed form.

Safe and confidential, the census will not ask for private information, such as social security numbers or bank information. Instead, it will ask for demographic information, including: whether your housing unit is rented or owned, the address of the residence and the names, genders, ages and races of others living in the house. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share your responses to the questionnaire with anyone, including other federal agencies or law enforcement entities. All census workers will carry official identification.

The 2010 Census – it's fast, easy and confidential. Mail your form back today to make sure Marion counts. For more information on the 2010 Census, visit Marion County's Web site, www.marioncountyfl.org, or contact Christopher Rison of Marion County Growth Management at christopher.rison@marioncountyfl.org or 352-438-2400.

Marion to recognize public safety's unsung heroes **911 Staff**

By Sharan Reif, Marion County Public Safety Communications and Christy Jergens, Marion County Office of Public Information

If you've ever had to place a 911 call, you're undoubtedly relieved to hear the reassuring tone of a 911 dispatcher when he or she picks up the line. 911 staff answer thousands of emergency calls each month, and with each call, remain calm and collected while simultaneously giving and obtaining critical and potentially life-saving information. In their jobs, these emergency telecommunicators serve as an information hub to ensure that patients and victims quickly receive care during times of crisis.

Starting April 11, Marion County will celebrate National Telecommunicator Week to recognize public safety communications professionals for their hard work, sacrifice and dedication to the vital and demanding role they play in emergency response.

Later in the month, Marion County Public Safety Communications will also receive Emergency Fire Dispatch Center accreditation, one of the highest certifications a dispatch center can earn. Only 15 centers in the world earned this accreditation, and only 10 centers globally are dually accredited to handle both fire and medical emergency calls. This demonstrates Public Safety Communications' compliance with all international standards for emergency fire and medical dispatching.

Although they don't respond to the physical scene of an emergency, public safety communications staff plays a critical role in making sure emergency crews have all of the vital information they need to quickly respond to the victim upon arrival. Celebrate National Telecommunicator Week by thanking Marion County's professional and proactive 911 dispatching staff.

National Library Week

By Karen Jensen, Marion County Public Library System

April 11-17 is National Library Week, an observance sponsored by the American Library Association and libraries across the country to celebrate the contributions of our nation's libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support.

Join the Marion County Public Library System as the community celebrates National Library Week with special activities:

Three Cheers for Libraries!

Sunday, April 11, 1:30 p.m. at the Marion County Public Library, Headquarters-Ocala location

Attend a special dedication ceremony of the children's story room mural that local artists Anita Anderson and Mary Trowbridge recently created. Then, stay tuned for the tinkling of the Old 88 as the party continues around the piano. The highlight of the party will be a tribute to Fran Kolonia, a remarkable Friend of the Library. Light refreshments will be served. This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Ocala Public Library.

Brown Bag Luncheon with the John Campbell Folk School

Tuesday, April 13, 12 p.m. at the Reddick Public Library

Need a creative vacation? Bring your lunch and your adventurous spirit and join Ashley Wiest for an overview of the John Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina. Registration is required. Call 352-438-2566 for more information or to make reservations.



A P R I L I S Heartworm Disease Prevention Month

By Elaine Delorio, Marion County Animal Services

Sissy, a five-year-old Sheltie mix sweetheart, played happily in her kennel at the Marion County Animal Center. She was sure she'd be adopted quickly; she was well-behaved, quiet, loved people and was already housetrained. But seven weeks later, potential adopters continued to pass her by as soon as they saw that Sissy had tested positive for heartworms.

Just like every other dog that has heartworms, Sissy got the disease when an infected mosquito bit her. The heartworm larvae then grew to full-grown, adult worms and began settling in Sissy's heart and lungs. If not treated, the heartworms would continue reproducing, crowd her heart and lungs and eventually kill her. But Sissy still had the chance to live a long and happy life. All she needed was someone to take her home who was willing to get her treatment to kill the worms and ensure she received preventative medication.

Heartworm disease doesn't have to be fatal, and that's why Marion County Animal Services tests all of its dogs for heartworms and makes sure adopters understand the responsibility that adopting a heartworm positive dog brings. Animal Services volunteer Tom Idziak knew this when he adopted Sissy. He took her to a vet for the six-week treatment that would rid her of heartworms and placed her on the monthly preventative medication that would keep her heartworm free. Today, Sissy is loving life as a healthy (and slightly spoiled) dog who found both her health and her forever home after being adopted from the Animal Center.

April is Heartworm Disease Prevention month, and Animal Services wants to remind all Florida residents that Marion County dogs need heartworm preventative year-round. Heartworms can seriously harm or kill an animal, but like Sissy, heartworm-positive dogs can have happy endings if they receive treatment. A simple pill that costs less than a specialty coffee can keep pets healthy, happy and heartworm-free.



2 0 1 0 M A R K S

Earth Day's 40th Anniversary

By Dennis Slifer, Marion County Solid Waste and Christy Jergens, Marion County Office of Public Information

It's almost common place now for consumers to be green and environmentally conscious, but the path to a more earth-friendly lifestyle has been 40 years in the making.

The first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970, and included 20 million demonstrators and the participation of thousands of local communities and schools. Because of its success and the concerns brought up thanks to the event, the federal government began to take steps to help protect the environment, including the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Today, Earth Day is celebrated by more than a billion people in 174 countries.

Marion County Solid Waste wants area residents to show their support for Earth Day by making a commitment to recycle. Help conserve our natural resources by remembering and following the three Rs -- Reduce, Reuse

and Recycle. For information or on how to help the environment, visit www.energy.gov/energytips.htm.

UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service is holding multiple events April 19-24 as part of its "Plant-It! Earth

Week" activities. Residents can partake in these activities to celebrate Earth Day for an entire week. For more information, call 352-671-8400.



PLANT-IT!
Earth Week

April 19 - 24, 2010

County Fertilizer Education Program to Hit Area Stores This Spring

By Norma Samuel, UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service

Spring is here, and it's time to fertilize your plants, but "Be Wise When You Fertilize" is what your inner voice should say every time you pick up a bag of fertilizer. Fertilizers play an important role in helping to beautify the home landscape. However, if improperly applied, they can contribute to aquifer and waterways pollution.

In fall 2008, Marion County introduced its Fertilizer Ordinance. Now, springs protection efforts in Marion County are about to get even bigger with a new fertilizer education program aimed at educating area stores and consumers on fertilizer best management practices.

Through the "Be Wise When You Fertilize" public education slogan, the inspiration for a countywide media campaign launched in the fall of 2008, educators want to encourage the use of slow-release fertilizer and correct application techniques.

County educators and UF/IFAS Marion County Master Gardeners are partnering with local stores to bring citizens an important message. "Most fertilizers contain nitrogen

and phosphorus, two nutrients which, if over applied, can cause pollution through runoff and leaching," said Barbra Hernández, public education specialist with the county's Stormwater Management. "This program reminds applicators to take a soil test, read instructions on fertilizer packages, apply only as directed and only on problem areas."

As part of the program, customers will have a chance to visit the in-store fertilizer best management practices booth to ask fertilizer and gardening questions as well as pick up literature to take home. Store staff will also be able to sign up to receive free fertilizer training. "Area stores are well aware of the importance of our springs, and we are excited to have them partner with us in water resources protection," Hernández said.

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners Office of the County Engineer (Stormwater Management) and UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service partnered together to bring this program to citizens. To learn more, call 352-671-8364 or visit www.marioncountyfl.org.

Visit area stores on the below dates and times for in-store information:

April 3

Home Depot
3300 SW 35th Terrace, Ocala
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Lowe's
4600 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

April 17

Home Depot
3300 SW 35th Terrace, Ocala
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Kmart
2403 SW 27th Ave., Ocala
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Want to bring the free fertilizer education program to your store? It's simple. Call 352-671-8364.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

Compiled By Natasha Masciarelli, UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service



The UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service hosted its 2010 Marion County

Master Gardeners' Spring Festival March 13-14. More than 9,000 people came to the event, where they shopped and chose from more than 120 booths and had the opportunity to attend educational gardening events.

Garden Sense

Tips for the April Garden

By Jo Leyte-Vidal, UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service (Master Gardener)



Pictured is an old garden rose, Mrs. B. R. Cant, from Doris Mauricio's (Extension Service) garden. This type of rose loves North Central Florida; it remains green all winter and begins blooming again in April.

Warm weather insects are beginning to surface now that temperatures are hotter. Be on guard for aphids. This a piercing, sucking insect that will work on the underside of the leaf, feeding on tender new leaves and stems.

A safe and effective control is to spray under the leaves with a mixture of insecticidal soap and a horticultural oil. The soap washes away the protective coating on the surface of the insect and disrupts normal membrane functions inside the insect, while the oil smothers the bug. The insect must come in direct contact with the spray in order for it to be effective. Product labels will state the amounts to be mixed. Only spray plants that show infestation.

Welcome lilies to your garden this month, including Amazon, Aztec, canna, blood and spider varieties. Also available are walking iris, celosia, impatiens, marigolds, amaranth, balsam, lobelia and strawflowers.

With annuals, remember to regularly dead head and pinch them back so they remain blousy and full of blooms. For spring-blooming shrubs, azalea and camellia, prune them as soon as the last flowers fade and then shape them again before July 1.

PETS OF THE MONTH

By Elaine Delorio, Marion County Animal Services



Kodiak



Harry Porker

Kodiak

Kodiak (ID No. D-2010-1457) is as furry as he is friendly. This fluffy Chow mix is the color of sunshine and has a personality to match. He's about 4-5 years old and is hoping you'll bring him to his forever home. Kodiak's adoption fee is only \$40 and includes his spay/neuter surgery, county license, current vaccinations and microchip.

Harry Porker

Already have a dog and cat? How about a pot-bellied pig? Harry Porker (ID No. O-2010-61), a swell swine, would make a pig of a pet. Don't let his prickly back fool you; he's as sweet as his belly is big. Scratch his back and you'll have a friend for life. Harry Porker is available at the Marion County Animal Center for only \$25.

Call Marion County Animal Services at 352-671-8700 for more information or visit the department Tuesday - Friday from 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. or Saturday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Calendar of Events

Compiled by Sharan Reif, Public Safety Communications and Elizabeth Leger, Public Safety Communications

April 2010

Marion County Board of County Commissioners

April 6	9 a.m.	County Commission Meeting	McPherson Governmental Auditorium
April 8	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Blood Drives (Florida's Blood Centers)	McPherson Governmental Complex
April 20	9 a.m.	County Commission Meeting	McPherson Governmental Auditorium
April 20	2 p.m.	County Commission Meeting - Zoning	McPherson Governmental Auditorium
April 27	4 p.m.	Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization Meeting	McPherson Governmental Auditorium

Marion County Animal Services

April 2	12 - 1:30 p.m.	WVLG Radio Station Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages
April 3	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Cat Adoptions at PetSmart	534 U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake
April 9	12 - 1:30 p.m.	WVLG Radio Station Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages
April 10	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Cat Adoptions at PetSmart	534 U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake
April 16	12 - 1:30 p.m.	WVLG Radio Station Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages
April 17	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Cat Adoptions at PetSmart	534 U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake
April 23	12 - 1:30 p.m.	WVLG Radio Station Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages
April 24	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Cat Adoptions at PetSmart	534 U.S. Highway 441, Lady Lake
April 30	12 - 1:30 p.m.	WVLG Radio Station Dog Adoptions	1101 Main St., The Villages

Marion County Parks and Recreation

(Programs may require pre-registration and a small fee; please call 352-671-8560 for more information.)

April 1	10 a.m.	Kayak and Koffee	KP Hole
April 2	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Park Explorers	Brick City Adventure Park
April 5 - 8	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Spring Break Adventure Camp	Brick City Adventure Park
April 7	9 - 9:30 a.m.	Preschool P.E.	Brick City Adventure Park
April 7	10 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Home School Art and P.E. Program	Brick City Adventure Park
April 10	10 a.m.	Art Van-Go	Baseline Road Trailhead
April 10	10 a.m.	Quarterly Memorial	Ocala-Marion County Veterans Memorial Park
April 10	12 p.m.	Art Van-Go	Liberty Community Park
April 10	2 p.m.	Art Van-Go	Wrigley Fields
April 10	9 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Basic Wild Caving Experience (Ages 16+)	Brick City Adventure Park
April 10 - 11	7 a.m.	Overnight Kayak Camp-out	Ocklawaha River
April 13	10 a.m. - 12 p.m.	Kayaking 101	Carney Island
April 14	9 - 9:30 a.m.	Preschool P.E.	Brick City Adventure Park
April 14	10 - 12:15 p.m.	Home School Art and P.E. Program	Brick City Adventure Park
April 15	10 a.m.	Kayak and Koffee	Ray Wayside
April 16	9:30 a.m.	Kayak Outing	Rainbow River
April 19	10 a.m.	Home School Adventure Education (Ages 12-16)	Brick City Adventure Park
April 20	10 a.m.	Kayak Outing	Withlacoochee River
April 21	9 - 9:30 a.m.	Preschool P.E.	Brick City Adventure Park
April 21	10 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Home School Art and P.E. Program	Brick City Adventure Park
April 24	9:30 a.m.	Kayak Outing	Silver River
April 26	10 a.m.	Home School Adventure Education (Ages 8-11)	Brick City Adventure Park
April 28	9 a.m. - 12 p.m.	Interpretive Outings	Marshall Swamp
April 28	9 - 9:30 a.m.	Preschool P.E.	Brick City Adventure Park
April 28	10 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Home School Art and P.E. Program	Brick City Adventure Park

Marion County Public Library System

April 1	3 p.m.	Family Game Day	Belleview Public Library
April 1	2 p.m.	Introduction to the Internet	Freedom Public Library
April 2	1 p.m.	Friday Movie Matinee Classics	Dunnellon Public Library

Calendar of Events (Continued)

April 2010

April 3	2 p.m.	Florida-Friendly Principles for Your Landscape	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 4		All Libraries Closed	
April 5	2 p.m.	Monday Movie Matinee	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 5	3:30 p.m.	Spring Break Frog Festival (Grades K-5)	Dunnellon Public Library
April 5	2 p.m.	Frog Stories (Grades K-5)	Dunnellon Public Library
April 6	4 p.m.	Teen Book Discussion (Ages 13-18)	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 6	1 p.m.	Tuesday Movie Matinee	Bellevue Public Library
April 6	1 p.m.	Friends of the Dunnellon Public Library Meeting	Dunnellon Public Library
April 7	10:30 a.m.	Price It! Antiques and Collectibles Database	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 7	3:30 p.m.	Novelist Plus Database	Bellevue Public Library
April 7	2 p.m.	Spring Break Movie Matinee	Forest Public Library
April 8	1 p.m.	E-mail Plus	Bellevue Public Library
April 8	2 p.m.	Using E-mail	Freedom Public Library
April 11	1:30 p.m.	National Library Week Family Fun	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 12	2 p.m.	Monday Movie Matinee	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 13	1 p.m.	Tuesday Movie Matinee	Bellevue Public Library
April 13	2 p.m.	Rain Gardens	Freedom Public Library
April 13	12 p.m.	Brown Bag Lunch - John Campbell Folk School	Reddick Public Library
April 14	10:30 a.m.	Intro to Computers	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 15	10:30 a.m.	Herb Gardening	Bellevue Public Library
April 15	1 p.m.	Basic Word Plus	Bellevue Public Library
April 15	3 p.m.	Family Game Day	Bellevue Public Library
April 15	10 a.m.	Friends of the Fort McCoy Public Library Meeting	Fort McCoy Public Library
April 15	11 a.m.	Water Conservation and You	Fort McCoy Public Library
April 15	2 p.m.	Computer Basics	Freedom Public Library
April 17	2 p.m.	Poetry Aloud! Celebrate National Poetry Month	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 19	2 p.m.	Monday Movie Matinee	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 20	1 p.m.	Tuesday Movie Matinee	Bellevue Public Library
April 20	5 p.m.	Just for Teens! Duct Tape Crafts	Bellevue Public Library
April 20	2 p.m.	Plant-It Earth: An Earth Day Celebration	Dunnellon Public Library
April 21	10:30 a.m.	Online Searching Basics	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 21	3:30 p.m.	Value Line Database	Bellevue Public Library
April 21	2 p.m.	Wednesday Movie Matinee (Ages 13-Adult)	Forest Public Library
April 22	1 p.m.	Introduction to Library Databases	Bellevue Public Library
April 22	2 p.m.	Wii Fun	Dunnellon Public Library
April 22	2 p.m.	Introduction to the Internet	Freedom Public Library
April 24	1 p.m.	Meet Arthur's sister! The Real D.W. Comes to Ocala	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 24	8 a.m.	Spring Fling	Marion Oaks Public Library
April 27	1 p.m.	Tuesday Movie Matinee	Bellevue Public Library
April 27	10:30 a.m.	Baby Songs and Nursery Rhymes	Dunnellon Public Library
April 28	2 p.m.	Art Performance for Tweens and Teens	Freedom Public Library
April 28	2 p.m.	Mid-Week Madness: Games (Ages PreK-6)	Headquarters-Ocala Library
April 28	2 p.m.	Family Flix	Bellevue Public Library
April 28	4 p.m.	Crafty Kids	Dunnellon Public Library
April 28	2:30 p.m.	Kids Club	Forest Public Library
April 28	2 p.m.	Teen Poetry Party	Freedom Public Library
April 29	1 p.m.	Intro to Computers	Bellevue Public Library

Marion's libraries also offer many story time opportunities. Contact your local library branch for more information.

UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service

April 3	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	"Ask an Expert" Fertilizer Education Program	Home Depot, 3300 SW 35th Terrace
April 3	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	"Ask an Expert" Fertilizer Education Program	Lowe's, 4600 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
April 17	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	"Ask an Expert" Fertilizer Education Program	Home Depot, 3300 SW 35th Terrace
April 17	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	"Ask an Expert" Fertilizer Education Program	Kmart, 2403 SW 27th Ave.

*Event dates and times are subject to change without notice.

- To submit a Marion County government sponsored event, e-mail Sharan Reif at sharan.reif@marioncountyfl.org. Please include the following information:
- Date of event.
 - Time of event.
 - Name of event and target audience.
 - Location of event, including numeric address.