



## Orange Blossom Notes

December 2009

The Springfield Improvement Assn. & Woman's Club  
210 7th Street West, Historic Springfield, FL 32206  
Phone 904-633-9308 President Pat LaMountain  
[www.springfieldwomansclub.org](http://www.springfieldwomansclub.org)

## Springfield Woman's Club Holiday Home Tour

December 4th and 5th, 2009

4:30 pm to 9 pm • Tours leave every 15 min.  
Tickets \$12.50 in advance or \$15.00 at door  
1303 North Main Street (904) 633-9308



[www.springfieldwomansclub.org](http://www.springfieldwomansclub.org)

Guided Tour, wine, cookies, wassail, and holiday cheer!  
Eight homes and three condos to see.

### WOMAN'S CLUB MEETING AND HOLIDAY PARTY

The December meeting will be held on December 8 and will consist of the Woman's Club Holiday Party and a thank you dinner for the homeowners who opened their homes for the December 4 & 5 Holiday Home Tour.



At the November 17 Woman's Club meeting, Tamara Baker, an engineer and co-owner of Baker Klein Engineering located in Springfield was the guest speaker. Tamara explained some of the projects her company has worked on and gave us a clearer understanding of engineering from the structural aspect including live and dead loads, weather forecasting regarding wind speed, and invited us to stop by for a tour of her office building.

Pat expressed thanks to Kelly Kellett for the \$531 and 8 pieces of jewelry she donated to the club which were proceeds from the Kentucky Derby themed party held at the club.

Research is being done regarding application for grants which could be used to cover costs of renovating possible donated real property to be voted on by the club in 2010. A memorial service will be held on Sunday, November 22 in memory of Lisa Neary who was responsible for saving the Woman's Club. A memorial bench at Klutho fountain to honor Lisa is planned. The club donated \$250 towards the bench, and donations from the community will be collected by SHEC.

Pat presented new member Cindy McVay with a membership pin.

Discussion occurred regarding Christmas Holiday tour plans. Volunteer bakers are needed to provide cookies for the tour. Tickets are available on the club's website, at Three Layers, and at 3rd and Main. Ads are coming in. An American Sign Language interpreter will be available during the tour.

Pat advised Springfield's Relay for Life kickoff is on December 10, and we need to form a Woman's Club team.

Submitted by Bev Miller, Secretary

### THE CHRISTMAS TREE—HOW IT ALL GOT STARTED



Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with greenery, ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. In many countries, it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness.

Many ancient people believed that the sun was a god and that winter came every year because the sun god had become sick and weak. They celebrated the winter solstice (December 21 or 22) because it meant that at last the sun god would begin to get well. Evergreen boughs reminded them of all the green plants that would grow again when the sun god was strong and summer would return.

Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it. Devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce. Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the

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**Editor's Notes**

The Blossom is available on the Springfield Woman's Club website at [www.springfieldwomensclub.org](http://www.springfieldwomensclub.org) and at various businesses in Springfield: A to Z Sandwiches, Carl's Restaurant, Hola's, SPAR, Three Layers, Tommy's breakfast-in-a-cup place, in the lobby at the University of Florida/Shands Proton Beam, Premier Pharmacy, and at the Woman's Club.

If you are not receiving notification via e-mail that the current issue of the Blossom is now posted on the website, please provide your e-mail address (along with your name and street address) to [catnapper01@comcast.net](mailto:catnapper01@comcast.net) so you can keep up with the neighborhood news!

Showcase your business in the next issue by submitting a business card size ad and \$25. This is a great inexpensive way to get the word out to Springfield residents! Many thanks to all our current and past advertisers!!

Please send articles for publication in the Blossom to the editor at [catnapper01@comcast.net](mailto:catnapper01@comcast.net) by the 23rd of each month. It makes my job easier if I receive information from others. Thank you to all those who do submit articles each month; however, we're always looking for more information to include.

**Bev Miller, Newsletter Editor**

**HANUKAH**

In Judaism, an 8-day festival of dedication and lights takes place in December. It celebrates the recapture of the Temple in Jerusalem from King Antiochus IV of Syria in 164 BC by the Maccabees, and its rededication. To complete the rededication, the Maccabees were only able to find enough oil for one day in which to light the Temple's eternal light; but miraculously, the oil lasted 8 days; long enough to make new oil.

The word Hanukah (or Chanukah) means "rededication". An important part of the Hanukah celebration is the menorah. This is a candleholder with 8 candles which must be in a straight line and a main candle, the "shamash", a little bit above them. The shamash is used to light the other candles. On the 1st night of Hanukah, the shamash is lit and is used to light one candle and on the next night another candle is added and so on, until the 8th night when all the candles are lit. This procedure of additional light recalls the greatness and growth of the miracle. The light tells the old story of victory and miracles, and it symbolizes the growing light of Israel.

**Reprinted from [encyclopedia.farlex.com/Hanukah](http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/Hanukah) and [www.swycaffer.com/divpeg/hanukah](http://www.swycaffer.com/divpeg/hanukah)**



**In Memory of Lisa Neary**  
**Phil Neary's letter presented at the memorial service**  
**(reprinted in part)**

Thank you for coming today and for being a part of Lisa's world. Lisa loved old houses, and she discovered this old neighborhood. We would drive up and down the scary streets admiring the houses and the architecture. Early pioneers would flag us down and tell us all about Springfield and encourage us to buy a house. About 1985, we bought 221 E. 7th Street. We moved into the house that winter, and it was cold. It had a tin roof with 1,000 holes, no hot water or heating, and a 60-amp circuit box. That winter, the downstairs toilet froze, and we burned a ton of coal in the fireplaces.

Springfield and the determined pioneers lit a spark in Lisa that was contagious. She got involved in all the issues and joined the organizations. I remember SPAR asked us to volunteer in the clean-up committee for the Home Tour, and she was upset when she found out that Fred Pope and we were the entire committee. She couldn't understand why everybody wasn't involved.

Lisa's energy was contagious. She inspired residents to volunteer for all kinds of neighborhood projects. When she discovered the Woman's Club was closing and the building was up for sale, she contacted the Federation of Woman's Clubs and encouraged many women to join. Thanks to her energy and the new members, the organization was saved.

She hated unkempt streets and easements. In the Block Captains Program, she participated in block cleanups in almost every block in Springfield. She started the Yard of the Month contest. The winners received a beautiful sign in their yard recognizing the award and their choice of a free tree. She participated in the Springfield Citizens on Patrol Program and patrolled the streets every Friday night for 2 years.

It was Lisa's energy that started the Springfield Christmas Tour of Homes at the Historic Springfield Community Council. The first year, it started at the HSCC office on Pearl Street, and we used residents' vans to move the tour goers.

Lisa and I learned how to write grants that the City offered to depressed communities like Springfield. Those grants paid for all the live oaks and crepe myrtles you see on Pearl, Liberty, 1st and 10th Streets. But, it was Lisa and a small core of volunteers who got the whole neighborhood to come out and dig holes and plant the trees. It was another \$5,000 grant that paid for the beautiful wrought iron Springfield Entrance markers, but it was Lisa who convinced renowned artist David Ponsler to design, build and help install them.

Then, Lisa and Melissa Miller thought they should try for the ICETEA grant made for city governments to beautify Federal highways. Usually a city government would take months putting the grant together and present it to the Federal government. Lisa and Melissa wrote the grant to repair the balustrades along Hogan's Creek in Confederate Park. The Woman's Club was awarded the grant which was for hundreds of thousands of dollars along with matching dollars from the City of Jacksonville.

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*(continued from page 4)* **In Memory of Lisa Neary**

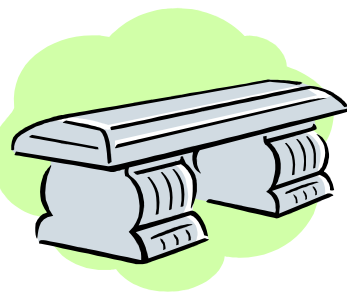
During the ceremony in Confederate Park, Mary Ed Austin suddenly realized that the check he was giving to the Woman’s Club was real and not a copy. He turned to Councilman Terry Fields and said, are you sure this is what you want to do? He asked because the city’s match was from the Councilman’s park funds. I can still see Lisa holding one end of the check and Mayor Austin the other. Lisa got the check.

All of the improvements to the park including the fencing, landscaping and the dog park are from that grant. The interest earned from that grant helped pay for many of the street markers you see on every corner. Even the new signs you will see when Main Street is completed are paid in full.

Lisa and I both were anti-demolition of old houses. Lisa encouraged residents to speak at the Preservation Commission meetings against demolition and fought for more protection for old structures. I can think of 15 condemned houses that the City wanted to demolish that we bought. All of those houses are now occupied by families.

Lisa loved Springfield, and a restaurant and jazz club was something she always dreamed of. My sister, Debbie Neary, had owned a store in Washington State called the Alpen Bear that sold stuffed animals and specialty coffee. Together, the Epicurean Market & Café opened offering breakfast, lunch, specialty coffee, and organic groceries. Later on, the jazz club opened on the second floor. The café was one of the first new businesses to open on Main Street.

So many of the things that she had fought to accomplish were finally happening. The improvements on Main Street and 8th Street, restoration of the park system, and so many homes being restored. She made many friends and was one of the most generous people I will ever know.



Donations for a bench in Lisa Neary’s name may be given through Springfield Heritage Education Center (SHEC). Checks should be made payable to SHEC and may be dropped off at the Trautmann house at 133 5th Street W. The bench will be placed at the Mary Dillon Fountain in Klutho Park.

11 Hanukah Begins	26 Kwanzaa Begins
21 Winter Begins	26 Boxing Day (Canada)
24 Christmas Eve	31 New Year’s Eve
25 Christmas Day	

**DECEMBER CALENDAR**

- 4 First Friday, 400 Block of East 6th Street, 7 p.m.
- 4&5 Holiday Home Tour 4:30–9 p.m., begins at 3rd & Main
- 7 SACARC General Meeting
- 8 Woman’s Club Mtg. & Thank You Dinner to Homeowners  
210 W. 7th Street, 6:30 p.m.
- 9 Historic Preservation Mtg., 3 p.m.
- 10 Business Assoc., 1321 Main Street, 6-7:15 p.m.
- 14 SPAR Council Bd Mtg., 1321 Main St., 7-9 p.m.
- 18 Mommies Group Family Dinner, 6 p.m.
- 24 Garden Club, 7 p.m.
- 28 Block Captains, 1321 Main St., 7-9 p.m.

**FUSION**

Miro, who prefers to be addressed as just that, is the owner of a new and unique wine bar located at 1827 Pearl Street in the old A and P building called Fusion. Miro, who is originally from Bosnia, with a beautiful accent and a very interesting person to talk to, came to Springfield and, like the rest of us, fell in love with the people.



He lived in Brentwood and saw the current building on Craigs List and just knew it was in the cards for him to open his business there. Beautifully decorated and with a ceiling of black and red umbrellas, a wonderful bar, and many tables that invite people to come and enjoy his warm and welcome establishment.

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**SPRINGFIELD FOOD DRIVE**



We are helping The Bridge this year by collecting canned goods and non-perishable food items. The Bridge has meat for 140 families this holiday season. Cash donations are also welcome. Please bring the items to the December 8 meeting to help complete food baskets for the Bridge’s undertaking.





Kwanza is an African-American holiday celebrated from December 26 through January 1. The celebration was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga. It was established as both a way to celebrate the new year and a reminder of the history of black communities in the United States. It is patterned on the African celebration of harvest during which tribute is paid to their heritage and achievements, ancestors, reverence to the Creator and creation, commemoration of the past, recommitment to cultural ideals and celebration of the good. The celebration has also become an opportunity for most African-American communities to teach younger generations about African culture, rituals and language.

**Reprinted from [facultystaff.richmond.edu](http://facultystaff.richmond.edu) and [shape.org](http://shape.org)**

*(continued from page 2)* **THE CHRISTMAS TREE**

scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

Most 19th century Americans found Christmas trees an oddity. The first record of one being on display was in the 1830s by the German settlers of Pennsylvania, although trees had been a tradition in many German homes much earlier. As late as the 1840s, Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not accepted by most Americans.

To the New England Puritans, Christmas was sacred. The influential Oliver Cromwell preached against the heathen traditions of Christmas carols, decorated trees and any joyful expression that desecrated that sacred event. In 1659, the General Court of Massachusetts enacted a law making any observance of December 25 (other than a church service) a penal offense; people were fined for hanging decorations. That stern solemnity continued until the 19th century, when the influx of German and Irish immigrants undermined the Puritan legacy.

In 1846, the popular royals, Queen Victoria and her German Prince, Albert, were sketched in the Illustrated London News standing with their children around a Christmas tree. What was done at court immediately became fashionable—not only in Britain, but with fashion-conscious East Coast American Society. The Christmas tree had arrived.

By the 1890s Christmas ornaments were arriving from Germany and Christmas tree popularity was on the rise around the U.S. Europeans used small trees about four feet in height, while Americans liked their Christmas trees to reach from floor to ceiling.

The early 20th century saw Americans decorating their trees mainly with homemade ornaments while the German-American sect continued to use apples, nuts & marzipan cookies. Popcorn joined in after being dyed bright colors and interlaced with berries and nuts. Electricity brought about Christmas lights. With this, Christmas trees began to appear in town squares and having a Christmas tree in the home became an American tradition.

**Reprinted from [www.history.com/christmas/christmas-trees/how-it-all-got-started](http://www.history.com/christmas/christmas-trees/how-it-all-got-started)**

### Holiday Home Tour 2009



Tour will be on Friday and Saturday evenings December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, and will start at Third and Main with wine and festivities. Buses will leave once you have had time to enjoy yourselves at that location. Tickets will be sold from 4:30 pm to 9:00 pm when the last bus leaves.

The calendars are in color this year and include all the important meeting dates and can be purchased for \$12.00 additional each. And, yes, Friday night is Springfield night; and tickets can be purchased for \$10.00 for residents at local businesses for that night only. There will also be an American Sign Language Interpreter provided for a 7 p.m. tour on Friday night.

As usual, homemade cookies will be offered at the Springfield Woman's Club during the tour; and we need lots of cookies. People come to the tour expecting these cookies, so, please help by baking some cookies. Cookies will be accepted any time during the week beginning November 30. Please contact Pat LaMountain at 434-4888 about dropping off your baked cookies.

If you haven't volunteered yet as a van/bus driver, greeter, house watcher, etc., volunteers are always needed. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

*(continued from page 6)* **FUSION**



His first idea was to have a coffee bar and then decided to make a nice wine bar. Miro offers 46 kinds of wine, 22 kinds of beer, and some of the finest espresso and illy coffee. Every Wednesday is jazz from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Thursday night is ladies' night with specials those nights. He is looking to extend the live jazz band to Friday and Saturday evenings.

He says his main thing in life now is to cater to the people in Springfield and make his place an elegant and friendly place to come and close out the world for a while and enjoy a glass of wine or one of his unusual beers.

Miro and his beautiful soul mate, Marina, are also residents of Springfield. Miro lived and studied commercial photography for 8 years in Sturgard, Germany. His love is restoring old cars for the last 7 years; and as you pass Fusion, you can see one of his beauties parked in front of his store. His favorite is Mercedes and classic cars.

Miro is 34 years old, very interesting, well versed and very sociable. He likes the people in Springfield because he thinks they are real people. He wants to be known as a friend, grow his business, and especially wants to make people feel safe when they come into his place.

**Submitted by Pat LaMountain and Sharlene Dano**