

ORANGE PARK COUNTRY CLUB/LOCH RANE

# Behind the Gate

FEBRUARY 2024 HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 2

## Budget-friendly Valentine's Day ideas

The National Retail Federation indicates Valentine's Day is the fifth largest spending event in the United States after the winter holidays and Mother's Day. Each February, people clamber to get gifts for their sweethearts and create romantic memories through fine dining and decadent desserts.

According to Finder, a tool used to navigate complex decision-making processes, Americans were expected to spend a combined \$50 billion on gifts and activities in 2021, with gifts averaging \$187. Men tend to spend more than women on Valentine's Day.

Everyone may be spending more on Valentine's Day this year due to inflation. In 2021, used cars and trucks, oil, meats and poultry, airline fares, and women's apparel were just some of the items that increased significantly in price. Finding ways to be frugal may be challenging this February, but these ideas are a start.

### DIY card

While a card may be the smallest purchase on your shopping list, you can still save an average of \$3 to \$5 on a card by making one yourself or sending a free digital greeting.

### Dine in

Restaurants are popular options for couples on Valentine's Day, but they can be busy and prices may be inflated. Many also offer limited prix fixe menus. By making a meal at home and picking and choosing less-costly ingredients, couples can save a substantial amount of money.

### Be flexible with jewelry

You don't have to spend a fortune to make an impression with gifts. Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but other stones are often less costly. Try giving a birthstone as an alternative. If gold is out of your price range, many sterling silver options are just as beautiful. In addition, consider warehouse retailers for jewelry purchases, as they may have lower costs.

### Frugal flowers

The cost of roses definitely goes up near Valentine's Day, so consider giving another flower. Lilies can be lovely or maybe that special someone has a signature flower. A flowering plant, which will cost less than many bouquets and will last far beyond Valentine's Day if given care, is another alternative to consider.

### Save on chocolate

Sweet treats are the name of the game, but many popular chocolate boxes can be pricey this time of year. Plan ahead and keep a stockpile of chocolates from Halloween or Christmas. Then use floral wire or pipe cleaners to turn bite-sized packages into a handmade chocolate bouquet. Otherwise, purchase various chocolate bars and package them with hot chocolate, chocolate cookies and other decadent offerings in a themed gift basket.

***Saving on Valentine's Day comes down to being creative and focusing on the sentiment rather than the price.***





## OPCCOA/LRIA Steering Committee Report

January 18, 2024 / by Randy Rutan

January's meeting was called to order at 6 pm by Tom Mackin sitting in for Daniel Butler. There was a quorum of the committee members present including a new member from OPCC. We welcome Jerry Deans.

**2023 BUDGET:** A review of the 2023 Budget gave us some good news. We ended the year under budget.

**JOINT LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE:** Corey Scott reported that the requested irrigation map is still being worked on. They hope to have it ready by February. There will be paper copies as well as an electronic copy. There were some emergency irrigation repairs that had to be made along Loch Rane Blvd. including 3 clocks not working, 2 underground breaks, 2 bad heads and 2 bad valves. \$1,000 was approved for these repairs. The committee is looking for ways to save money on flowers. There was conversation about the truck that is typically parked in the medians. The truck belongs to an aaoO Services employee who weeds flower beds in both neighborhoods. It was suggested that aaoO Services provide the employee with a sign for his vehicle. It was noted that the brick walls at the 4-way are crumbling. Corey Scott said that the Landscape and Roads Committees are working on this problem and the costs will probably come out of general funds.

**ISSUES AT THE GATE:** Due to concerns about traffic at the gate when having big events at the Club, The Grove has reached out to Giddens Security for suggestions. Giddens has made the recommendation to upgrade from GateKey to Gate Sentry which allows for operation from mobile devices. The good news is that the resident's current data can be uploaded from GateKey to Gate Sentry.

The Gate staff has indicated that notifying the property managers about residents who have malfunctioning barcodes so that they can send Friendly Reminder letters to those residents has mostly solved the problem. CCSO roving patrol is issuing Warnings to vehicles parked on common property, parked on the street and if in Loch Rane parked facing the wrong direction. The data from the Warning Notice is entered in a Ticket Log which is provided to the property managers so that they can follow up with Friendly Reminder letters.

It has been reported that the gatehouse roof is spongy. It was suggested that a roofing company be asked to come out and take a look. The shed at the gatehouse is in disrepair. The wood is rotted. It needs to be removed and replaced. It houses the gate garbage cans.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 22 at 6 pm at the Community Building.

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## OPCC Board of Directors Meeting

January 16, 2024 / By Bob McKinney

We had a good turnout for the first meeting of 2024. It is encouraging to see residents attend to hear and participate in the Board's meetings.

We review the ARC's decisions each month. This month, the ARC approved two roofs, one paint job, one paver job, and one tree removal. That was a fairly high number of projects for a normal January when residents are trying to recover from December spending. Roofs continue to be regularly requested due to the age of many of our homes. It is not unusual, these days, for insurers to decline coverage for roofs over fifteen years old.

Our lake report stated there remains a problem with beaver dams at the spillway at hole two of the old golf course. There are plans to tackle the issue, but the pesky rodents are master dam builders.

The Grove Event Center is moving along. We may see real work this month. While the center's management company has not been officially decided/announced, the pickleball portion of the new center is closing in on becoming a reality. You can see the presumptive developer of that portion at <https://thehubpickleball.com>. I believe every month, going forward, will reveal real progress on the Grove project.

Work was approved to replace the duct work at the community building and marcite and

associated work at the wading pool. Neither of these projects are inexpensive but necessary. These costs are why we need to ensure a healthy Reserve Fund balance.

We took the first steps in reviewing the new Covenants that are shown on our website as Amended & Restated Covenants 2004 Ver 1. This document will be updated as the questions/comments we receive are considered. We covered Articles I and II at this meeting which were fairly straight forward. A couple of the statements require clarification and may be deleted. Please review Articles III and IV prior to the next meeting. We expect to tackle a couple of Articles at each monthly meeting to maximize the input rather than try to deal with large portions at one time.

You should feel free to contact any Board member about the revised covenants at any time. We realize not everyone can attend our meetings or wants to do so. We still value and want your input. Our email addresses and phone numbers are readily available on our website.

Plan to attend the February meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at the Community Building

## Submit Your Stories

Help contribute to your community newsletter!

This newsletter is produced for Loch Rane and Orange Park Country Club. If you'd like to offer content for publication, here's how to get started:

Stories/Photography: Send your articles and/or high-resolution JPEGs to Randy Rutan at [randy@randyrutan.com](mailto:randy@randyrutan.com). Articles should be sent as Microsoft Word attachments that are saved

as ".doc" files. Photos should also be sent as attachments not embedded in an email.

The March 2024 Deadline for content: Sunday, February 18, 2024.

About this Newsletter  
Publishing/Advertising:  
[Brittany@claytodayonline.com](mailto:Brittany@claytodayonline.com)

## 2024 OPCC Board of Directors

**Tom Mackin, President**  
904-276-4634 • [TMackin106@aol.com](mailto:TMackin106@aol.com)

**Mark Blakewood, Vice-President**  
904-838-0961 • [markblakewood@comcast.net](mailto:markblakewood@comcast.net)

**Fred Scott, Treasurer**  
301-535-6264 • [sgtfredscott@verizon.net](mailto:sgtfredscott@verizon.net)

**Randy Rutan, Secretary**  
845-797-7842 • [randy@randyrutan.com](mailto:randy@randyrutan.com)

**Jerry Deans, Member at Large**  
904-449-3970 • [deansjd794@comcast.net](mailto:deansjd794@comcast.net)

**Bill Engelbrecht, Member at Large**  
904-537-8359 • [cwejax65@gmail.com](mailto:cwejax65@gmail.com)

**Bob McKinney, Member at Large**  
904-375-9554 • [bobpat4FL@comcast.net](mailto:bobpat4FL@comcast.net)

## Publication Policy

The function of the community newsletter, "Behind the Gate" is to serve the entire gated community of Loch Rane and Orange Park Country Club and is a product of Clay Today.

Priority will be given to reporting news and activities of the community and other news and events that directly affect the residents. Second priority will be given to articles of general interest as space permits. Articles and photos must be sent to Randy Rutan at [randy@randyrutan.com](mailto:randy@randyrutan.com) by the deadline date below. Due to space limitation, all articles are subject to editing.

Letters of opinion must be signed, as well as brief and in good taste. Views expressed are those of the writer and do not express the viewpoint of the publisher, OPCCOA or LRIA.

Acceptance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement or approval of any product or services by the publisher, OPCCOA or LRIA. The publisher reserves the right to refuse advertising that does not meet the standards of the publication.

The publisher of "Behind the Gate" agrees to indemnify and hold harmless OPCCOA and LRIA for any claims asserted against or financial liabilities incurred by them arising from commercial content of this publication or anything contained in any advertising copy, including without limitation any claims of whatever nature asserted by advertisers or potential advertisers.

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# Loch Rane Board of Directors Meeting

By Brian Rogers

The regular January Meeting for the Loch Rane Board of Directors took place on 1/23 and was well attended by members!

## Welcome new BOD Members!

This month saw the election of Sonya Kirk to the BOD! The BOD also selected Charles Honaker for the additional vacant seat for 2024. We would like to again thank previous members Marie Bryan and John Burke for their choice to volunteer and serve!

## Annual Yard Sale

The annual yard sale will take place on the first Saturday of May, rain or shine! Be on the lookout for more updates and the signup form to participate!

## Dues/Assessments

There is still \$22,000 in outstanding annual dues for 2023 by residents, and \$21,000 outstanding from the 2023 assessment. Please make efforts to work out a payment plan with the cam team to avoid being turned over to the association attorney for collections efforts.

## Roving Patrol

The changeover to OPCC officers conducting the nightly roving patrol appears to be going well! Unfortunately, it appears to be highlighting a larger problem of residents parking on the street overnight. These violations will be cited by the officers and are subject to the Association fine policy. Parking of any vehicles on the streets overnight is prohibited.

## Arran/Cameron Retention Pond

We received word from the civil engineer that the redesign of the pond at the end of Arran Court was being met with extreme difficulty and "red tape" from the powers that be (SJRWMD and such). It was estimated that this planning and approval process to develop a viable solution to repair the drainage for this pond is likely to be measured in YEARS vs months, and that is simply to obtain the proper permits/permissions/etc. to begin to get quotes for contractors to perform the work itself. We are hoping to reach out to a previous contractor who provided the fantastic solution on the other Arran Court retention pond to see if something similar can be done in the meantime.

## Devonshire Repaving/Repair

Focus for 2024 still remains on the repaving and repair of Devonshire to include the excavation of the abandoned pipe that runs down the center of the road and is the source of the "depression" on the surface. We expect the cost of this entire project to be a significant % of the 2024 special assessment if we choose to go that route. We hope to begin soliciting bids for this project in the first quarter of 2024 to give us a better idea on the total cost.

The next BOD meeting is set to take place on 2/27 @ 6:30pm in the Community Building. All residents are encouraged to attend!

## 2024 Loch Rane Board of Directors

**Brian Rogers**, *President*  
rogersbw@gmail.com

**Chuck Bryner**, *Vice-President*  
bryner@comcast.net

**James Hudgins**, *Secretary*  
james.hudgins@hotmail.com

**Gary McMahill**, *Treasurer*  
mcmahidga@aol.com

**Kathryn Marko**, *Member at Large*  
navynomad@hotmail.com

**Sonya Kirk**, *Member at Large*  
addedrevenue12@gmail.com

**Charles Honaker**, *Member at Large*  
wade247@yahoo.com

## 2024 Steering Committee

**Daniel Butler**, *Chairman*

**Randy Rutan**, *Secretary*

**Jerry Deans**, *Member*

**Kathy Marko**, *Member*

**Gary McMahill**, *Member*

The Steering Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the community building. The purpose of the committee is to oversee issues of joint interest in the common areas of Loch Rane and OPCC. Homeowners of both communities are invited to attend.



## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA What Do You Know About This Organization?

By Karen Kircher

In northeast Florida, we are blessed with a vibrant youth organization that has evolved over time but still supports the strong values of citizenship, fitness, and reverence. It's the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

You have seen these friendly, helpful young people selling mulch at our Community Center, as well as popcorn and camp cards (discount cards) at various locations around the area. They do more than that. Our young men and women, and girls and boys, participate in many activities that help build strength, community awareness, self-reliance, the ability to function well in the outdoors, as well as many other accomplishments.

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. These are not mere words. They guide leaders and youth through life.

Scout Oath: On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey

the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law: A Scout is Trustworthy; Loyal; Helpful; Friendly; Courteous; Kind; Obedient; Cheerful; Thrifty; Brave; Clean; and Reverent.

In 2018, a big change occurred in the BSA. The movement was opened to girls to become members of Cub Scouts. Sponsoring organizations, such as churches or civic organizations, could choose to have a Cub Scout Packs with all-boy Dens, or a Pack with all-girl Dens, or a Pack – Family Pack, with all-boy Dens AND all-girl Dens. Dens are not co-ed. It is important that young boys and girls learn to develop their skills in a group of similar age and gender from Kindergarten-age through age 10.

Following the introduction of girls into Cub Scouts, the BSA went on to introduce girls and young women into the program formerly known as "Boy Scouts." This program was reassigned the

name "Scout BSA" which was formerly used in the 1970-80s. Girl Troops were established. Currently, BSA has all-boy Troops and all-girl Troops. The leadership development that takes place in the age groups of 11 through 17, is crucial. Individual Scouts BSA members have the opportunity to go on to become Eagle Scouts.

The introduction of girls into the BSA is not new. Young women have been a part of the older youth Explorer program for many years. Young women, ages 14-20, have been a part of the Venturing program since 1998. Girls now comprise over 16% of youth membership in the North Florida Council.

Next time you see young people in the familiar dark blue of Cub Scouts or the khaki and dark green of Scouts BSA, realize that they are the bright future for our community. They are learning the values and skills that will serve them and us well into the future.

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## DO YOU KNOW?

### FROM THE GROVE TEAM

The owners of the Country Club and golf course let us know that they are in the process of signing all of the paperwork to lease some property to The Hub which is a major pickleball entity out of California. The Hub will oversee the construction and operation of the pickle ball courts. You can learn more about The Hub and the kinds of activities they offer by visiting their website at [www.thehubpickleball.com](http://www.thehubpickleball.com),

We were also told that renovations of the clubhouse should begin this month and that the putting green near the clubhouse will be made into a parking lot. There is more news to come.

### FROM LOCH RANE'S PROPERTY MANAGER, Gina Cabral of the CAM Team

The most common question regarding violations in The Loch Rane Improvement Association is "What exactly is the management company looking for when they are inspecting the properties?"

When inspecting the properties of Loch Rane, we look at the overall appearance of the property. Appearance can mean anything from landscaping to boats, trailers, and recreational vehicles. Violations such as boats, trailer, and recreational vehicles occur because they are prohibited to be stored in view.

Landscaping can be open to interpretation, so when we drive through the property, we do our best to take a good photograph of the violation in question and add information to the notice to better explain. Landscaping violations include, but are not limited to mowing, keeping the yard free of weeds, edging, out of hand shrubs, anything dead or in need of removal.

Maintenance of your home includes pressure washing your home to keep it clean of mildew, including your driveway. Not allowing items to pile up in front of home (i.e. trash, landscaping equipment, boxes, etc.). Removing your trash cans after they are emptied and more.

As always, if you contact The CAM Team after receiving your first notice, we will work with you on a plan to bring your property into compliance. [LochRane@TheCamTeam.com](mailto:LochRane@TheCamTeam.com) or 904-278-2338

For more information, please refer to your Loch Rane Amended and Restated Declaration of Covenants & Restrictions that can be found on the front of the website.

### FROM OPCC'S PROPERTY MANAGER, Karen Gowen of Lifestyles Property Services

In February, it's time to think about the curb appeal of your home and its

maintenance. Many driveways need pressure washing and repairs to heavy cracking. This is a good time to start working with contractors to help maintain the beauty of your home.

### FROM OPCC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In 2023 the Board worked with the Association's attorney to clean up the 1988 Covenants & Restrictions that we currently operate under. Language that applied to the developer and language that has been replaced by Florida Statutes passed since 1988 has been deleted. The document is much easier to understand. Now we want to work with the Community to determine if there are other statements in the document that are no longer relevant or need to be updated to reflect current Statutes. You can go to our website to review the documents. The shortcut to our website is [www.opcc.info](http://www.opcc.info). Then click the OPCCOA tab. Next choose Governing Documents. The 1988 Covenants that we operate under now are called Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions & Easements. The revised version we are currently working on is Amended & Restated Covenants 2024 ver 1. Please look at the documents and compare. We are looking for your input on Articles III & IV at the February 20 Board meeting.

### PLAN AHEAD FOR THE COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

The Community Garage Sale will be on Saturday, May 4, 2024. More details to come.

### CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

The Behind the Gate Team would love to have contributions to the newsletter from residents. If you have an idea for an article please contact Karen Kircher at [k.kircher@comcast.net](mailto:k.kircher@comcast.net).

### 1<sup>st</sup> THURSDAY GALS WANT TO COME BACK IN MARCH

Remember before the Pandemic how much fun the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday Gals would have at their monthly get togethers at the Community Building. Well, we'd like to get that going again. It is a great opportunity for you to gather with other ladies from Loch Rane and OPCC to enjoy coffee and treats and the feeling of community that comes gathering with your neighbors. Our conversations are lively! We will meet monthly beginning Thursday, March 7 from 10 – 12 at the Community Building. Please contact Frances Smith if you are interested. Call 904-579-3008 or email [fksmith63@comcast.net](mailto:fksmith63@comcast.net).

## KUDOS

Jerry Deans and Tom Mackin were the winners in this year's election to the OPCCOA Board of Directors. We are grateful to both of you for volunteering your services and being willing to contribute your time and energy to our community.



Karen Kircher has joined the Behind the Gate team. Her knowledge and energy are much appreciated.



## FUN THINGS TO DO IN CLAY COUNTY THIS MONTH

Found on this website - [www.exploreclay.com](http://www.exploreclay.com)

- Feb 2 – 11** "Catch Me If You Can: The Musical" at Island Theater, Fleming Island  
[www.theislandtheater.com](http://www.theislandtheater.com)  
for dates, times, and tickets
- Feb 2** Lorrie Morgan at Thrasher-Horne Center 7:30 pm  
[www.thcenter.org](http://www.thcenter.org)
- Feb 4 & 18** Orange Park's Farmers Market at City Hall, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Feb 9** Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder at Thrasher-Horne Center, 7:30 pm
- Feb 10** Grand Funk Railroad at Thrasher-Horne Center, 7:30 pm
- Feb 11** Clarke House Historic House Tours, 1039 Kingsley Ave, 2:00-4:00 pm
- Feb 14 – Mar 2** "Breaking Up is Hard to Do: Songs of Neil Sedaka" at Spotlight Center, 1809 East West Pkwy, Fleming Island  
Dinner Shows: 5:30 pm  
Matinees/Lunch: 11:00 am  
[www.spotlighteventscenter.com](http://www.spotlighteventscenter.com)
- Feb 16 – Mar 3** "A Gentleman's Guide" at Orange Park Community Theatre 2900 Moody Ave, Orange Park  
Dinner Shows: 8:00 pm  
Matinee/Lunch: 2:00 pm  
[www.opct.info](http://www.opct.info)
- Feb 16 – 18** Florida Peacemaker's Cowboy Shooting at Clay County Fairgrounds  
Times vary [www.flpeacemakers.com](http://www.flpeacemakers.com)
- Feb 16** Rumours: A Fleetwood Mac Tribute 2024 at Thrasher-Horne Center 7:30 pm
- Feb 17** 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday Market at the Park, in front of City Hall in Green Cove Springs, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Feb 22** Dancing with the Stars Live 2024 Tour at Thrasher-Horne Center, 7:30 pm
- Feb 24** Northeast Florida Scottish Highland Games & Festival at Clay County Fairground, Green Cove Springs  
[www.neflgames.com](http://www.neflgames.com)



*Orange Park Farmers Market*



*Grand Funk Railroad*



*NE FL Scottish Games and Festival*





## SAVE THE DATE - JOIN THE LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

The Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet at Club Continental at 11:30 on Wednesday, February 21. The hostesses, Trudie Ann Mitchell, Margie Dunston and Marti Phelps are busy planning something fun. The theme for the luncheon will be KEEP THE LOVE ALIVE. If you haven't been to a luncheon yet, come join us. The food and conversation are always good. The cost is \$20 including gratuity. If you want more information about the Ladies Luncheons please contact Frances Smith at 904-579-3008 or fksmith63@comcast.net.



**WELCOME**  
WELCOME  
**to the neighborhood**

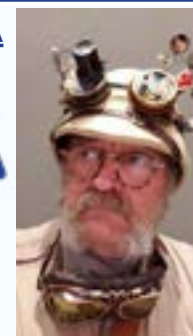
**Les & Ashley Batts**  
 295 Gleneagles Drive

**John Benton & Jennifer Powers-Benton**  
 582 Oakmont Drive

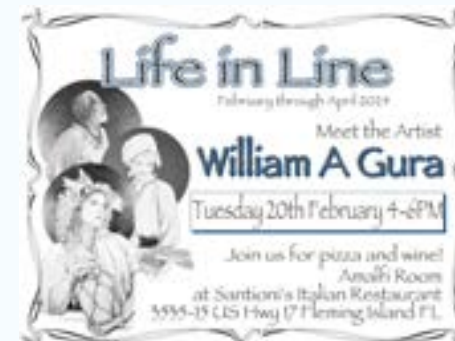
**Michael & Dianne Storey**  
 3138 Country Club Blvd.

### MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR, BILL GURA

Bill is a Loch Rane resident who is a fabulous artist. Two pieces of his work will be included in the Art Guild of Orange Park Display at The Thrasher-Horne Center at 283 College Drive in Orange Park. You can meet Bill at a reception at Thrasher-Horne Center on February 5 from 6 – 9 p.m. It will be catered by Anthony's Gourmet Catering.



Bill's art will also be exclusively featured in the Amalfi Room at Santioni's Italian Restaurant located at 3535-15 US Highway 17 in Fleming Island from February – April. On Tuesday, February 20 there will be a reception from 4 – 6 p.m. You will get to meet Bill and enjoy free pizza and wine.



Your neighbors are proud of you, Bill!



# AG DAY

## Fun for Kids



### ON THE FARM WORD SCRAMBLES

- NRBA \_\_\_\_\_
- OOSRETR \_\_\_\_\_
- OSLI \_\_\_\_\_
- NGAIR \_\_\_\_\_
- MRERFA \_\_\_\_\_
- EENFC \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWER KEY: Barn, Rooster, Silo, Grain, Farmer, Fence

**DID YOU KNOW?** An adult Holstein cow weighs about 1,500 pounds!



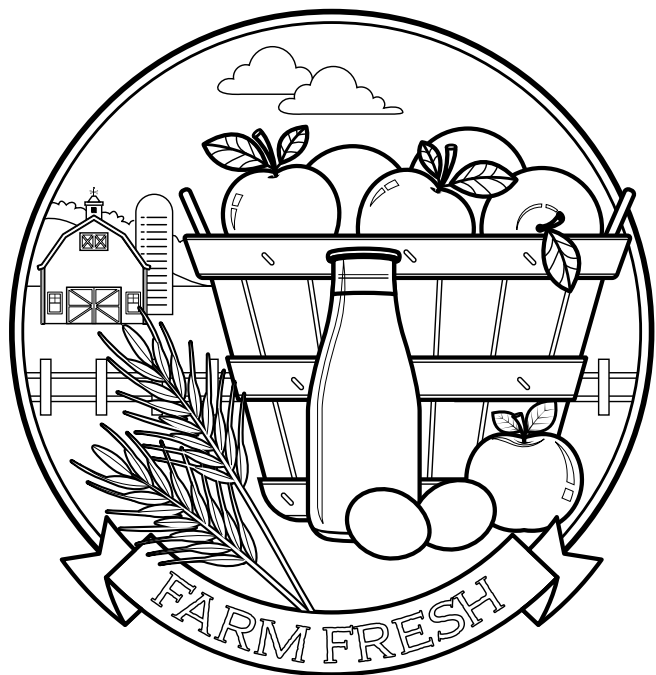
### FARM FUNNIES

**Why didn't anyone laugh at the farmer's jokes?**  
They were too corny!

**Why was the cow laughing?**  
He was aMOOsed!

**Why did the police inspect the chicken coop?**  
They suspected fowl play!

**Why can't a farmer tell a secret?**  
The corn has ears!

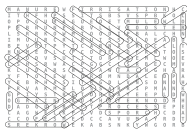


## FARM FINDS WORD SEARCH

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

### WORDS

- Acres
- Agriculture
- Barn
- Bloom
- Cat
- Corn
- Cow
- Crops
- Dairy
- Dog
- Donkey
- Duck
- Farmer
- Farmhouse
- Fence
- Fields
- Grain
- Harvest
- Hay
- Hen
- Horse
- Irrigation
- Lamb
- Land
- Manure
- Mule
- Pasture
- Pig
- Plow
- Pond
- Process
- Rooster
- Season
- Silo
- Stable
- Tractor
- Trough
- Weathervane
- Wheat
- Workers



Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

## Knight Maze

Help our little knight to find the exit of this labyrinth by avoiding all the enemy knights!

